

THE SQUARE RIGGER



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

www.chesapeakechaptermgclub.com

FALL 2012

Chairman's Message

Having just received the registration form for the MGCC/Hunt Country Classic in the mail today, I'm reminded that summer is just about over and we have only a few more months in 2012 to use and enjoy our cars. We've had a pretty busy time so far this year with one more event left in October: The Fall Ramble. Thanks to the planning efforts put forth by Bryan Seiling, Nanci Edwards, Milt Babirak and John Williams, I think the trip this year will be outstanding. We will be touring Gettysburg in mid-October and will have approximately two dozen members attending.



In August the Club held its second tech seminar conducted via a live interactive webcast over the Internet. Thanks to the gracious hospitality offered by Nancy and Steve Woodall we were able to hold it in comfortable surroundings that would make any other club jealous. Additionally, this event being the brainchild of our membership chairman Milt Babirak, shows what can be achieved when a member gets an idea of how to provide value to the membership of the Club. I'm sure that if any other member has an idea for another event, it will be equally well received and successful. Please let me know.

There is another event that takes place every Saturday and Sunday at 8:30 a.m. in Clifton, VA. I got involved with it through Dan Howard, another member with an idea on how to promote driving our cars. Essentially, we rendezvous in a parking lot on the outskirts of downtown Clifton and then caravan to a diner for breakfast. Mostly British cars, but you go for the camaraderie as well. Contact Dan at bigjohnandsparky@gmail.com for details.

As I have mentioned in the past, the Club is looking for a new editor for this Newsletter. Tom Carolan is preparing to retire and will be happy to work with someone to make the transition a smooth one. Contact either Tom or me, and we can discuss the benefits package.

Safety Fast!

Shaun English

Chapter Officers

Chairman

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

Vice Chairman

(Vacant)

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

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

September 1, 2012

The Chesapeake Chapter of the New England MG-T Register was organized during the summer of 1971 by NEMGTRegister members in the Baltimore-Washington-Northern Virginia 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 dating back to the year 2000, 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, etc., 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're 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.

Membership News

Milton Babirak, Membership Chairman

We welcome:

Jaime and Whitney Steve
325 N. Saint Asaph Street,
Alexandria, VA 22314
Tel. (202) 841-5493
jaime.steve@patterenergy.com
1933 J2, 1951 TD (2), 1955 TF,
1962 MGA, 1967 MGBGT,
1968 MGB, 1068 MGB(LE)



Remembering Ron Holmlund

By Mike Hughes

When I joined the Washington D.C. Centre of the MG Car Club in the summer of 1971, Ron Holmlund was long-time member who, along with his wife Gwenn, took me under his wing and “showed me the ropes.” One of his most favorite Centre activities was our annual Braille Rally, which was then not even a decade old. He had participated in his first one in his MGA and continued doing so for many years more in his TF, so naturally it was important to him that I bring my '66 MGB out that July of '71 to run the Braille Rally. It was great fun, and I was an avid participant in the Braille Rally for many years myself until a job change made it almost impossible to participate in Saturday events. He was very proud of the fact that BMC chose our first Braille Rally to unveil the new MGB in Washington, photos of which made a bit of a splash in the Washington Post the following day.

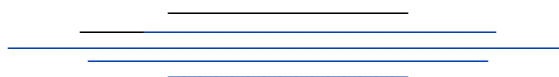
When I acquired my '51 TD in 1973, it was Ron who told me about the newly formed Chesapeake Chapter of the New England MG-T Register, and I joined it a few months later. The Chesapeake Chapter was formed by a number of T-Series-owning MGCC members who found it increasingly difficult to keep up with the faster and more reliable “modern” MGBs, MGCs and Midgets in the Centre’s then very active Championship Autocross and TSD Rally schedule and wanted to have an organization more oriented toward preservation and maintenance of the older models. Ron and I were the only ones who maintained membership in both clubs. Ron was the guy who nominated me to run for the position of Club Secretary, and later for Club President, and he remained an active member of the Washington D.C. Centre well into the 1980s.

The MGCC Washington D.C. Centre celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Braille Rally this year. It saddens me that Ron will not now be with us as we mark that anniversary.

Francis E. Old III

By Tom Carolan

News that Chip Old had been taken from us in early June reached me only a couple of weeks ago. Although I never had an opportunity to meet him in person, I came to know him in recent years through email exchanges related to periodic comments and suggestions he contributed to this Newsletter. In addition to being a charter member of our Chapter when it was founded in 1971, he served ably and effectively as our Technical Advisor in 1972-73, turning out dozens of articles for The Square Rigger filled with sage advice and laced with his special brand of wry and gentle humor. (Some of them have been resurrected lately in these pages.) Chip also served as Technical Editor of The Sacred Octagon for twelve years. We will miss his presence among us, and we offer our condolences to Wendie, his wife, to Jennifer, their daughter, and to their entire family. Messages may be sent to them c/o wendieold@me.com



Recent Chapter Events

International Interactive Internet Tech Session

We're grateful to Bob Rowke for providing this report, along with the accompanying photos.

Twelve Chesapeake at Steve Woodall's car-to view, along with several on-line viewers, a webinar that included four technical know-how needed to software and internet provided by Shaun English's assisted by his own young buff at age 13).

Although the first hour-tially planned as a live weather conditions in recorded tour of historic from the cockpit of a TD and a brief tech session on replacing brake shoes. The segment on brakes was filmed from a home garage complete with lift and panoramic window view of rural Sweden's countryside that rivals Steve Woodall's space and setting.



Chapter members gathered riage house on August 11 eral on-line viewers, a we-presentations. The techni-make the hard wiring, nections all work was pro-son, Shaun Michael, ably son, Hunter (a vintage car

long presentation was ini-webinar session, poor Sweden resulted in a pre-towns in Sweden as seen



The second hour of the webinar provided a video without narrative of the Hutson Motor Company, Ltd. in the UK. The Company manufactures T-Series and Jaguar E-type tubs and body panels using methods that appear to be quite similar to the original manufacturing processes, i.e., a lot of reliance on handwork and fitting. Although no prices were provided in the Hutson film, someone viewing the webinar indicated that a skinned tub over a new ash frame for a T-series runs about \$5000.

After a break for lunch, Joe Curto of SU carburetor re-building fame presented a live session on the ins-and-outs of the various SU versions and carb sizes fitted to T- and A-series cars. He emphasized the importance of not taking for granted that the carbs fitted to your car are original, because of all the swapping of carbs and internal parts that has been common and that Joe has seen in more than 30 years on repairing and re-building SUs. He provided several examples of SU bodies and their distinguishing features as aids to determining what might be mounted to your car.



The final one-hour session consisted of a presentation by John Twist of University Motors in Grand Rapids, Michigan on T-Series distributors and the ignition system in general. John walked viewers through a schematic of the T-series ignition system and demonstrated the ignition coil function, possible malfunctions, and the role of the distributor points and condenser in making it all happen at the spark plug end.



All in all it was an interesting and useful session and enjoyed by all, which was due in no small part to the great setting and hospitality provided by Steve and Nancy. □

The 35th Original British Car Day

I'm pleased to report a very positive financial outcome for The Original British Car Day, 2012. Our Chapter made over \$3,000 this year! We owe our success to the hard-working efforts of our volunteer staff, both on the ground during the show and on the planning committee, who worked diligently throughout the year. Many thanks to all of you who made our show such a great success!

One area that was lacking this year, however; was our early notification and advertising campaign. This is perhaps one of the most important areas, and it requires a responsible person. The process must start in December (when all the car clubs set up their schedules for the coming year) and continue right up until show day. So I'm appealing for a volunteer to assume the important responsibility of OBCD Advertising Manager. It doesn't require too much time, and the process is well documented. Several of our newer members have expressed an interest in helping with car shows, so here is your opportunity! Please contact me and I will fill you in on all the details.

Thanks again to all for a job well done in 2012! And don't forget to mark your calendars for OBC-Day 2013, to be held on June 2nd!

— John Tokar



Regalia from the Past (1987)

Larry Berger, whom many of us probably know from his 17 years as president of the M.G. Car Club (D.C. Centre), snapped this photo a couple of months ago at an antique shop in Jasper, Ga.

The bar badge was for sale at \$27.50 and the patch for \$10.00. "Funny thing," Larry said, "is that I have the same badge someplace in my garage." Strange how things like this can turn up in unexpected places. □

OBCDay 2012 Financial Statement

INCOME SUMMARY

Pre-registration (125)		\$1,785.00
Drive-in Registration (138)		\$3,190.00
Vendors, Pre-registered (3)		\$90.00
Vendors, Drive-in (8)		\$360.00
Spectator Cars (368)		\$1,840.00
Stuffer Ads (2)		\$200.00
Program Ads (8)		\$1,050.00
Regalia Sales		\$266.00
Vendor Donation (1)		\$75.00
	Total	\$8,856.00
Cash Box Advance	(-)	\$400.00
		\$8,456.00

EXPENSE SUMMARY

Copy Services (ballots, instructions)	\$227.88
Radio Rental	\$60.00
Trophies	\$762.45
Post Office Box Annual Fee	\$44.00
Post Card Printing/Postage	\$575.52
Program Printing/Graphics	\$1,155.40
Tee Shirts/Graphics Design	\$146.00
Staff Shirts	\$374.91
Dash Plaques	\$486.26
Porta-John Rental	\$590.00
PA System Rental	\$0.00
BCD Meetings/Luncheons/Donuts	\$171.12
Misc. Supplies & Equipment	\$191.32
BCD Trailer Registration	\$0.00
Water & Ice	\$41.79
	Total
	\$4,826.65

GROSS INCOME **\$3,629.35**

DONATIONS

Frederick Pipes & Drums	\$0.00
LHS Band Boosters	\$600.00
TOTAL DONATIONS	\$600.00

NET INCOME **Total** **\$3,029.35**

Upcoming Chapter & Chapter-Related Events

Fall Ramble 2012

This annual event remains scheduled for the weekend of Friday-Sunday, October 12-14. Our planners have mapped out driving tours on secondary roads in spectacular scenic areas between Leesburg, VA and Gettysburg, PA for Friday the 12th, and through a beautiful area around Carlisle, PA (including several covered bridges and state parks), for Saturday the 13th. On Saturday night, we'll enjoy dinner at the excellent 1863 Restaurant in Gettysburg. On Sunday, the 14th, we'll follow a different scenic route for our return home. Our rendezvous points for the weekend will be at Leesburg and Point of Rocks.

Hotel accommodations in Gettysburg can be arranged for additional members who wish to take part in this Ramble weekend. They should contact Milton Babirak 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 1-2. www.vascottishgames.org/

Brits on the Beach 2012

The 15th Annual British Car Day sponsored by the Positive Earth Drivers Club, will take place on Saturday-Sunday, Sept. 15, in the Main Ave. Business District of Historic Ocean Grove, NJ. Judging of cars will be based on participants' choices, and dash plaques will be awarded to the first 130 pre-registered cars. For details, phone (732) 620-2378. www.pedc.org

Annual Battle of Britain Car Show

Sponsored by the British Car Club of Delaware on Saturday, September 15, at Delaware City, DE www.bccdelaware.com/

Hagley Museum Car Show

On Sunday, September 16, 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 **SVBCC Fall Festival**

Classics on the Green

A show and wine festival sponsored by the Central Virginia British Car Club on Saturday-Sunday, September 16, at The New Kent Winery, New Kent, VA. Info at www.classicsonthegreen.com

NEMGTR GOF Mk 92

Scheduled to take place Wednesday-Sunday, September 26-30 in Long Beach, NJ. For info and registration forms, click on: www.nemgtr.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=a

[rticle&id=295:gof-mk-92-registration&catid=40:gathe-ring-of-the-faithful](http://www.gofmk92.com/registration)

MGs on the Rocks

Mounted by MGs of Baltimore at its usual venue, The Rocks State Park near Jarrettsville, MD, on Saturday, September 29.

www.mgsofbaltimore.com

Fall Carlisle Collector Car Exhibition & Swap Meet

To be held at Carlisle, PA, for 5 days, beginning on Wednesday, October 3.

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

SVBCC British Car Festival

The 31st annual version of this event, hosted by the Shenandoah Valley British Car Club, will take place Friday-Sunday, October 5-7, at Ridgeview Park, Waynesboro, VA. www.svbcc.net

Hunt Country Classic

Willoughby Farm near Middleburg, VA, remains the traditional venue for this show, hosted by the MG Car Club (D.C. Centre) on Sunday, October 7. www.mgcarclubdc.com.

ACA Eastern Regional Fall Meet

This regional show mounted annually by the Antique Auto- mobile Club of America at Hershey, PA will take place Wednesday-Saturday, October 10-13. <http://www.hersheyaaca.org/>

Rockville Antique and Classic Car Show

Will take place from 11:30 am to 3:30 pm on Saturday, October 20 at the Glenview Mansion, Rockville, MD Civic Center Park. www.rockvillemd.gov/events/carshow.htm

Chesapeake Chapter History

Four Decades of Tech Notes and Newsletters

By Dale Lindsay

Did you ever wonder how we kept these old cars running back in the 1970's? Before there was such a thing as the internet or Google, we used a thing called the telephone to find out how to keep our cars running, and we also relied very much on tech articles in The Square Rigger. You've probably noticed that our current Editor and Chapter Historian, Tom Carolan, has been re-printing some of them in recent issues of TSR.

In 1980, then-Chapter Historian George Melick collected all the tech articles we had produced since our club was born in 1971. He saw to it that they were copied, cut, pasted and actually published in a soft-cover, 129-page manual entitled "T-Series Tech Notes." (We were selling copies for \$5.00 apiece.) I had forgotten about that until an issue with my own T prompted me to remember and look for my old copy. I couldn't locate it, but thanks to Len Renkenberger, who lent me his own dog-eared copy, I was able to find what I was looking for. With Len's permission, I dismantled his copy, spent a few days arranging its contents for scanning to a file, and sent it to our web master, Chris Kintner. Thanks to Chris, we now have it installed on our Chapter's web site in a section entitled "Tech Notes circa 1971-1980", where it is available (along with instructions) for downloading. That will take you a minute or so, since the file weighs in at approximately 84 MB. Once downloaded, it can be copied in PDF format for ease in viewing and printing.

The original manual contains hand-written notes by Len, and Page One acknowledges the dedicated club members who helped us keep our cars up and running. Members will find some great information and many laughs in this old but valuable material.

One thing led to another, and I discovered that these "Tech Notes" had apparently never been made a part of our Chapter's History Archive. That situation has now been rectified.

On a related subject, Tom Carolan has been working to track down, copy (as necessary) and preserve as many as possible of the TSR issues that have been produced in the 41-plus years of our Chapter's existence. In addition to the 1971-1980 technical articles mentioned above, I believe that Tom by now has actually added to the archives printed copies of many TSR issues that had been missing, and therefore of the additional technical articles contained in them. John Tokar gave him access to a goodly number of those issues, but he remains on the lookout for more. He hopes that those of us who have managed to save substantial numbers of back copies will bring ourselves to his attention. He'll soon be able to send you an index that you can check to see if you might have an issue or two that he has yet to discover.

Now all I have to do is figure out how to glue Len's copy of "T-Series Tech Notes" back together . . . □

“Stump the Chapter” Quiz

Answer to Quiz Question No. 9

(Summer 2012 Issue)

Q. MG racing history was illuminated in the mid-1930s by the exploits of a group known as “The Three Musketeers.” Who among us can throw a little light on their exploits, on the drivers and other personnel involved, and on what became of the cars?

No one responded to this question, so Milton Babirak and your Editor collaborated to produce an informative answer, with advice from our friend and vintage MG racing guru, Pete Thelander. Read the result in the section entitled **MG History**, starting on the next page.



Winners of the 1935 Welsh Rally. A post-event photo of the award winning team of NE Magnostes (wearing P-Type bodies), with the overall winner, Sam Nash, in *Aramis*, on the left, alongside Freddie Kindell in *Porthos* and Lewis Welch in *Athos*.

Here's Quiz Question No. 10



This little buggy looks vaguely British, but who among us can say for sure, much less identify its marque and tell us something about its maker?

MG History

The Three Musketeers

In the early 1930s the MG Car Company, under General Manager Cecil Kimber's leadership, had become active in sponsoring and supporting teams of sports cars for the specific purpose of winning "trials," which were increasingly popular sporting events in the UK. Consisting of rallies, hill-climbs and the like, they were aimed at testing whether a car could complete an event, not how fast it would go. As cars improved to the point where they could compete too easily, they became timed events. After that, it wasn't long before they started also to include racing on open roads, usually under conditions monitored and controlled by local authorities. Various manufacturers began to sponsor and maintain teams of cars specifically for this purpose.

Beginning in the 1920s, the MG Car Company was not slow to sponsor "works" teams in such competitions, not only in the UK, but also on the international stage. Indeed, it is not an exaggeration to say that as time went on, racing became a top priority in Kimber's efforts to establish MG's *mystique* in the eyes of a motor-mad British public. As reported in our Fall 2011 issue, April 1933 saw his dreams rewarded by the smashing victory of a 3-car MG team of six-cylinder, supercharged MG K.3 Magnettes in the 1,100cc class at the Italian Mille Miglia, the first victory ever achieved by a non-Italian marque in that class. That was followed later the same year by the triumph of a K.3 Magnette driven by the immortal Tazio Nuvolari in the Ulster RAC Team Trophy race at Belfast. This served notice that MGs were on their way to becoming a dominant factor in the world of small displacement sports car racing. These cars were all built at the Company's racing department in the Abingdon factory. Kimber was planning to enter them in the 1934 TT race, only to be surprised when the organizers ruled that cars with supercharged engines would be banned.

Fortunately, a successor to the K-Series, the N-Type Magnette, had already entered production at Abingdon. Kimber's technicians pulled seven of them off the line and subjected their unblown 1,271cc six-cylinder OHC engines to performance enhancements (higher compression ratios, larger carburetors, greater valve overlaps, and multiple springs to control valve dynamics at high rpms) that raised their outputs from 56 bhp at 5,500 rpm to 74 bhp at 6,500 rpm. After fitting them with lightweight aluminum bodies and bonnets, two petrol pumps, two sets of shock absorbers, new mud-guards, and specially tensioned wheels, they came up with cars that would carry on the company's success in light sports car competition in both racing and trials. These racing variants of the N-Type would eventually be designated by the MG Car Company as the NE Magnette.

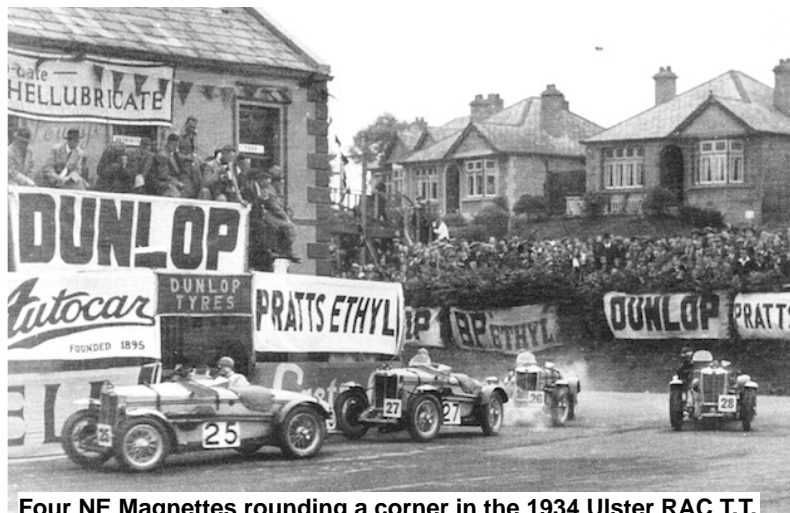
Introduced in July 1934 and designed to operate in groups of three, they were divided into two teams: one under "independent" management and the other headed initially by Mille Miglia hero Capt. George Eyston. Both teams were backed by full MG factory support, and they were organized at first as follows:

	<u>Serial/Chassis No.</u>	<u>Registration No.</u>
	0516	(prototype car)
Independent team	0517	JB4606
	0518	JB4607
	0519	JB4608
Eyston team	0520	JB4748
	0521	JB4749
	0522	JB4750

The three cars of the independent team were completed in time for a trial-outing in the Light Car Club Relay race in July 1934, driven by a ladies' team. Their performance was deemed satisfactory, all three having finished "third overall" in a heavy rainstorm.

Both teams (all six cars) were entered in the September 1934 Ulster RAC Tourist Trophy race, with the Eyston team's cars painted in his standard livery of cream with two horizontal brown stripes. The other three cars were painted British Racing Green, Italian Red, and black, respectively. (The red car, JB4607, was in deference to Tazio Nuvolari, who had been expected to drive it but had to withdraw at the last minute due to a contract mix-up.) Four of the cars (Eyston's among them) did not finish, but two did, including the winner, JB4750 (driven by Charlie Dodson), with JB4606 (driven by A.P. Hamilton) finishing close behind.

Continued on next page



Four NE Magnettes rounding a corner in the 1934 Ulster RAC T.T.

throughout Britain as the team achieved further further success in the Land's End, Edinburgh, Abingdon, Rushmere and Wye Cup Trials, followed by the 1935 the Welsh Rally, where they took the team prize and with *Aramis*, driven by Sam Nash, the overall winner.



NA 0522 Restored to Three Musketeer Configuration



The actual TT wining NE.
During the summer of 1935 3
NEs were modified with alloy
PA bodied for trials competition.



As 1934 progressed, drivers and crews on both N-Type teams developed the habit of referring to three of their six cars as "The Three Musketeers." They dubbed them *Aramis* (JB4750), *Athos* (JB4606), and *Porthos* (JB4608) after the main characters in the classic novel written by Alexandre Dumas (*père*) in the mid-19th Century (and made into several Hollywood movies in the 1950s). The idea quickly caught on and became the Abingdon factory's official competition image. The drivers had their cars painted "English cream," with chocolate-brown mud-guards, with each car's name lettered on its bonnet. This would go over very well with motoring enthusiasts

Unfortunately, good things tend sometimes not to last very long, and so it was to be for The Three Musketeers.

In the summer of 1935, Lord Nuffield completed a consolidation of his various car companies into his new holding company, the Nuffield Organization. This was done ostensibly with a view to improving efficiency and profits. He followed that up in June, however, by suddenly announcing that the Organization's board of directors had endorsed his decision to withdraw his companies from all factory-sponsored racing activities, on grounds that "for the present time, racing for the purpose of development has served its useful purpose." In reality, there was an additional explanation: As recorded by F. Wilson

McComb in his authoritative history of the MG Car Company (Osprey Books, 1978), Kimber had for years been "under constant pressure from Lord Nuffield to restrict MG's expenditures on racing, to show a profit from racing, and to buy as many components as possible from within the Morris group of companies." It would seem, therefore, that the reason for His Lordship's decision to ban motor racing stemmed not only from his personal distaste for it, but also from his growing unhappiness with the visionary goals and aggressive, independent-minded management style of his subordinate, Cecil Kimber.

The racing department at Abingdon was shut down almost immediately. Following the Welsh Rally in July 1935, the Musketeers — which had already been detuned and refitted with P-Type bodies — were sold to the Evans family's Bellevue Garage, to be entered by them in the 1935 Ulster RAC T.T. race — wearing the blue and white colors of their new owners, and minus their former Musketeer names. Kenneth Evans drove the car bearing Serial/Chassis No.0522 (JB4750), Dick Seaman drove the one bearing Serial/Chassis No.0519 (JB4608), and Dennis Evans drove the one bearing Serial/Chassis No.0517 (JB4606). In a 35-car field, the cars driven by Seaman and Kenneth Evans finished 10th and 13th, respectively, while the one driven by Dennis Evans was a DNF

Continued on next page

In the years leading up to World War II, the other three NE Magnettes would be acquired by private owners for racing (often with covert factory support), or by collectors.

The question then arises: Does anyone know where the seven NE-Types (including the Three Musketeers) are today? The answer is that we do have a pretty good idea:



The prototype NE Magnette (Serial/Chassis No.0516) is said to be in a vintage car collection in Germany. Milton Babirak managed some time ago to track down *Aramis* (JB4750) in a private collection in Sweden.

As for JB4607, the red car that was designated for Nuvolari to drive in the 1934 Ulster RAC T.T.,



it lives today in California, meticulously restored, tenderly cared for, and still occasionally raced by our friend Pete Thelander.

Porthos (JB4608) is said to be in a vintage car collection in England, and George Eyston's car (JB4748) can be seen in the York Motor Museum in Australia. An Internet search suggests that JB4749 is privately owned in either Switzerland or Germany. Only the whereabouts of *Athos* (JB4606) appear uncertain.

As it happens, the saga of The Three Musketeers has a coda, since they can be said to have passed their colors and mystique to a further generation of MGs called the "Cream Crackers." That, however, is a story we'll reserve for a future issue of this Newsletter. □



1934 NE Magnette (Eyston Team livery)

More MG History

MG and the War Effort

*This article first appeared in The Sacred Octagon, January/February, 1982.
It recently re-appeared in the newsletter of MG Classics of Jacksonville Florida.*

One of the many factors that ensured the survival and eventual victory for Britain and her allies in World War II was the ability of many small concerns to carry out critical war production despite shortages in manpower, materials and the threat of German bombs. One of these factories was the MG Car Company of Abingdon. With the opening of hostilities in 1939, MG, like all their competitors, closed down car production in anticipation of aiding the war effort with the manufacture of needed wartime material. During the following six years the plant at Abingdon established itself as one of the most successful producers of everything from blood centrifuges to Centurion tanks.

With the onset of hostilities and in anticipation of war work, the plant was stripped. Space was found in a disused factory two miles away from the MG factory for the existing inventory of car parts. The first problem was that heavy transport was scarce, so MG constructed a short wheelbase tractor from available parts. It was a



unique machine with a Morris radiator and knock-off hubs and used a 10 bhp engine to tow three large wagons which boasted wire wheels with knock-off hubs. Suitably named "Bitsy" for its hybrid ancestry, this unique unit faithfully hauled equipment around the plant for the duration of the war with never a hint of a breakdown. Once the factory was prepared, it sat idle, waiting in vain for the Nuffield Organization to send it contracts. Cecil Kimber decided to

send George Propert and Cecil Cousins around the various ministries to bid on any available work rather than wait for the Nuffield bureaucracy to find work for Abingdon.

The first contracts from the War Ministry were for small pressings, such as ammunition racks and other light items and overhauling Carden-Lloyd tanks, which led to a similar job reconditioning heavier Matilda tanks. The firm almost won a contract to recondition machine guns for Spitfires until some official learned that they had no firing range to test the guns. Another contract was to assemble American Lend-Lease trucks, which arrived at dockside in large wooden cases. As the little pressing shop was heavily into various jobs, space was becoming critical, and the wooden packing cases were brought back to Abingdon to form the frames of an enlarged pressing shop. Armoured cars were repaired and tested on the Berkshire Downs, giving the test drivers a completely new experience of testing whilst dodging flour sacks dropped from RAF types practicing in the same area.

Looking for even more work, Kimber, with no knowledge of aircraft production methods, successfully contracted to build the forward, or G-section, of the Albemarle light bomber, a stainless steel tubular structure housing pilot, co-pilot and observer and packed with complicated control gear, the very nerve centre of the whole aircraft. It was this sort of independent contracting outside the control of the Nuffield Organization that led to Kimber's dismissal. Meanwhile, the Air Ministry gave the Albemarle contract to MG, which had no idea how to proceed other than to roll up their collective sleeves and get on with it. They might have felt less comfortable about the "Marble", as they called it, had they realized that three other concerns, one of them actually an aircraft company, had been scratching their heads over this complicated structure for a very long time without making any progress at all. MG succeeded where others failed. They took over all the partially built sections from the other contractors and became sole suppliers of this vital assembly, building a total of 653 themselves and completing a further 285.

This was not an easy task. The plant had to make special tools and jigs. Each unit required 3,500 hours of work, and the shortage in manpower led to the hiring of many women, establishing a training school, and providing bus service for the workers and even a girls' hostel to care for workers far from home.

Continued on next page

The company designed a test rig for all pneumatic, hydraulic and mechanical control gears and electrical and oxygen systems. They were thrilled to discover that they had the only test equipment of its type in the entire aircraft industry, and it was subsequently purchased by a leading aeroplane manufacturer.

The next big aircraft jobs were to produce Lancaster bomber engine mountings, interchangeable 'power units' for Rolls-Royce Merlin engines to facilitate rapid engine replacement in the field, and the specialized manufacture of complete wing spars for the Tempest II fighter, milling the dual leading and trailing edges on jigs.

At the same time the aircraft work was going ahead, the factory was also constructing Crusader tanks, Oerlikon and Bofors gun turrets, and finally the Neptune amphibious tank for the Normandy invasion. Many Sherman, Churchill and Centaur tanks were converted for specialized operations, and in just over a month, MG produced 3,000 sets of 'wading equipment' to allow tanks to get ashore at Normandy.

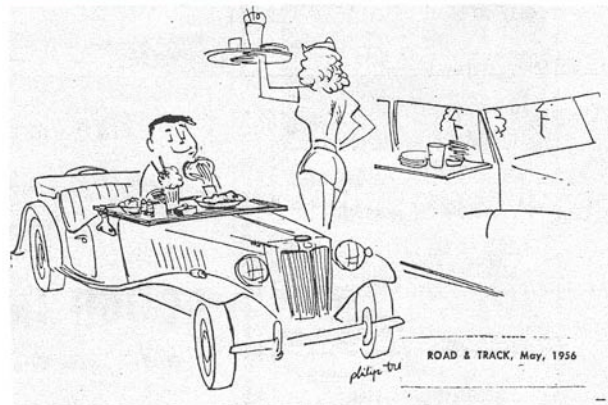
No job was too big or too small for the little company, from building 16-ton tanks to making fuel dipsticks. George Probert decided that they made so many of the latter that every British tank in existence must have had a couple of dozen MG dipsticks before the war ended. The toolboxes in subsequent MG roadsters were surplus wartime pressings. When I questioned Henry Stone about the enclosed battery box found in the MGTC and the MGY, he chuckled and remarked that the factory had run out of ammo boxes by 1950.



Finally, as the wartime urgency subsided, the Tempest spar shop was cleared and car assembly lines laid down again in anticipation of resuming the work for which the factory was best known.

It was the ingenuity of the many small factories all over Britain that epitomized the spirit of Churchill's "We shall never surrender. This ingenuity was never more evident than in the achievements of the little cottage industry assembly plant at Abingdon.

"What we did before the war," said Cecil Cousins with understandable pride, "was nothing compared to what we achieved during the war." □



Technical MattersLaying Up Your "T" for the Winter

By Len Renkenberger

The following article appeared in the November 1977 issue of The Square Rigger

This is a do as I say, not as I do article for two reasons:

- (1) I'll never get around to it, and
- (2) I drive my "T"s in Winter. Nothing gives your cheeks that rosy glow like brisk Winter motoring, ladies.

Regardless, the following should be attended to:

WASHING: Not just with the garden hose. Cold water at low pressure just doesn't get road salts and chemicals off. Go to one of those 25¢ do-it-yourself hot washes. First thing to do when you get there is spray the engine and as much of the underside of the car as possible with gunk (or equal, as they say in government contracts.) When you're finished washing and have rinsed top and bottom, and then driven home, your "T" should be clean and dry and ready for a good heavy wax job.

UPHOLSTERY, TOP & SIDESCREENS: Vic Pallizzi, the best trimmer I know of, recommended Away Vinyl & Leather Upholstery Cleaner (not vinyl top cleaner) and I think it is the best going for vinyl. For leather, use Leatherique Leather Restorer (from Clausen Co., Fords, N. J.) The Rolls-Royce people are absolutely paranoid about leather, and they worship this stuff. 'Nuff said. Leave top up and side curtains installed. If possible, take seats indoors where dry.

OUTSIDE STORAGE: If you use a "waterproof" type cover, put a good layer of soft towels, rags, or blankets under it and try to block off as much air movement under the car as possible. Condensation under the cover plays hell with some paints. If sitting on soil or grass, block up the car until tires are free of the ground and place a sheet of plastic under entire car. Touch up any paint chips, or you're liable to find nice heavy rust spots next spring.

BRAKES & LUBES: It's debatable whether it's best to flush brakes in the fall or spring. Brake fluids absorb condensation. Is it best to have fresh fluid in fall to absorb a maximum amount over winter, or fresh fluid in spring to get rid of winter condensation? For \$2 worth of fluid you might want to do both. Next spring, check for leaking cylinders and hoses. I'm a firm believer in NOT using non-detergent oils. If you use them, you had best run your engine once a week or more. They don't remove the gum and sludge which can easily cause frozen rings, or even a stuck piston, in an engine that sits idle for a winter. In the spring, turn the engine over with the key off until oil pressure builds up, then start it. A thorough, all-points lube job is also in order.

RUBBER PARTS: A good heavy coat of Armor All, repeated after a few days, and not wiped off.

COOLANT: You need not renew it, but you should add a rust inhibitor and run the engine until thoroughly mixed. Incidentally, too strong a mix actually has a higher freezing-point and is too thick for good heat transfer when the engine is running. 67% is maximum, 50% sufficient.

BATTERY: Try to put it in another car. Sitting, charged or discharged, is hard on a battery. Perhaps you can alternate it with the battery in the family tank. If not, remove from the car and set up off the ground. Rig up a headlight bulb, or some heavy user of current, with two wires and alligator clips. Attach it to the battery every couple of weeks, long enough to discharge the battery. Then recharge it with one of those home chargers. Or buy a lifetime battery and take it back every 3-4 years.

Remember, it takes pains to be beautiful! ☐

Technical Matters

Rear Seal Conversions

Here's a useful contribution on an important subject from our Technical Advisor Emeritus, John Wright. It was sent to him by Lawrie Alexander, Britcars.com.

This came to me recently via the MG-T internet group. It would be worth printing in the newsletter as it fully addresses a potential problem some may have experienced with this conversion. After seeing a number of varied comments, I thought some history might be of interest. So, "here's the rest of the story" . . .

I have installed probably 30 of the Moss rear seal conversions. Initially, I experienced mixed results so each time I checked more things and learned more about them. I discovered a number of the things that Al Moss eventually addressed in his instructions. As time went on, I realized that there were two main reasons the seal didn't always work. As a result, I recently developed a way of making the kit work properly, and Moss agreed to my suggestions for changes to the kit and to my re-writing the instructions. Their new 433-419 kit is as perfect as I could make it.

The problem with the original Al Moss design was that it presupposed the crankshaft centerline to be exactly where the factory had put it. Most engines have been line-bored or, at least, line-honed through the main bearing saddles. Very seldom does this leave the crank centered as original. (One I worked on was so far off to one side that, on the left, the seal was crushed against the crank flange, while the other side didn't even touch the flange!)

This problem was addressed by re-boring the holes that secured the retainer half to the block to have flat bottoms instead of being countersunk, making the hole size larger so the retainer could move around and be tightened in place with button-head cap screws. Then a seal alignment tool was provided in the kit to perfectly center the retainer around the flange before tightening the cap screws and sealing the lower half of the retainer to the rear main cap.

Once the seal could be perfectly centered, it needed to be positioned properly relative to the flange. This is accomplished (temporarily, until the next batch of retainers can be machined differently) by placing a shim in the retainer to space it further back onto the flange. Then instructions are included to have the back side of the flywheel machined to a depth which prevents it from hitting the now-further-back seal.

So, with the seal perfectly centered and positioned properly on the rear flange, the Moss 433-419 kit should work every time (if the instructions are followed properly!)

As for the need to machine the rear engine casting, this just isn't true. Where the seal retainer fits on the back of the block is the factory-machined surface where the original aluminum slinger was attached. It's the back of the rear main cap that usually needs work, and this is addressed in the instructions. Also addressed is the possibility that the ribs on the block above where the retainer attaches might stand proud — the only reason I can think of that any modification to the block itself is needed.

Incidentally, I have just rebuilt the engine from my own TC, No. 7730, which was last rebuilt in Australia in the early 1980s. Guess what I found in there? A rear seal conversion very similar to the Moss one! Correspondence with the Aussie rebuilder indicates that Al Moss based his conversion on the Australian one. The improvement made was that Al's version joined the two halves of the retainer and used the crank flange without modification. The Aussie one involved machining the flange smaller (except where the flywheel fits) and using a Volvo rear crank seal from a B18 engine.

The Moss kit does not require modifying the crankshaft (other than maybe fitting a Speedi-sleeve to give a good surface for the seal). □



Hints from Austin's Morris Garage

This article appeared in the January 2011 issue of Octagon Topics, newsletter of the Vintage MG Club of Southern California.

Do You Hear Strange Noises?

I get a magazine called **MOTOR**. Usually there are articles in it that are slanted toward domestic and current import cars. However, some of the subjects are appropriate for our little MGs. So I thought I'd dwell this month on some causes for the racket emitting at your feet and wiggling your cochlea.

Noisy Pilot Bushing

This particular one is heard while standing still with your gearbox in neutral and the clutch pedal pressed to the floor. This action allows only the engine to turn over, That means that that bronze bushing in the crankshaft is spinning around the gearbox input shaft or in the crank. There is no lubrication of that porous factory-lubricated bronze bushing, and after probably many miles, it has to wear. When it does, the gearbox mainshaft or the bushing itself gets to jumping around; thus the racket.

Noisy Clutch Release Or Throwout Bearing

This noise starts out slowly and gets worse as you use the clutch pedal. The bearing's carbon face plants itself against the plate on the clutch pressure plate to disengage the gearbox connection each time you shift gears. You may finally hear metal-to-metal grinding away. It is then certainly time to renew that bearing and probably the complete clutch assembly. Look at the faces of the disc and replace it if the rivets are almost or are even with the facings. **NOTE:** Even ball bearing replacements fail — then the howl and rattle you'll hear will drive you nuts!

Noisy Gearbox Mainshaft Bearings

Assume you hear this noise when your car is just standing there all by its lonesome with the gearbox in neutral and the clutch fully engaged (your heavy foot not on the pedal), most likely the input shaft main or needle bearings have gone astray. To prove this, apply a bit of pressure on the pedal. If the noise doesn't change, it is inside the gearbox where the problem resides.

Going Forward Noise(s)?

There are several types of noise that can be caused by wear in your gearbox:

Noise In One Forward Gear

There could be two different problems. When you detect noise only in first, the usual cause in MG Ts is a worn cluster or laygear and the first gear wheel. There is also noise in reverse, as the same gear on the laygear engages that gear, too. Usually, though, the reverse gear itself will not need replacing unless you might have been reversing in a spectacular movie stunt! The laygear is usually the first one to fail become pitted. When the wear becomes severe, the noise develops and is easily detected by ear alone, This noise certainly requires a gearbox overhaul to replace the very expensive cluster gear if not both the first and reverse gears. With any gear it's wear or careless clashing when shifting that causes most of the damage, although the same may be caused by inadequate or incorrect gear oil,

HINT: Always try to 'double-clutch — that is first, quickly pressing the clutch to disengage the gear you are in and second, quickly press the pedal again as you shift to the next gear. And please, don't try this to engage first or reverse while you are rolling.

Noise In All Forward Gears

In all forward gears whether or not the clutch is engaged. the noise usually varies with speed. The problem here is probably the gear- box output shaft bearing or failing side bearings or ring & pinion in the differential.

Continued on next page

Noise Only In Reverse

In reverse, the gearbox uses the separate reverse gear in the short term to transfer power from the input shaft to the output shaft. If this gear or its shaft is worn or the bushing in the gear is bad when the clutch is fully engaged while in reverse, (foot off the pedal). You may be able to locate the culprit(s) by getting under the car (**ALWAYS USE JACK STANDS**) and using a reasonably priced stethoscope (available at most tool stores), listen while a companion revs the engine in the various gears, allowing unloaded noise as well, when the accelerator pedal is released.

Jumping Out of Gear?

When your car jumps out of a gear, it is caused by galling because of inadequate or in- correct lubricant. The suspect gear then wears and is allowed to move back and forth on its shaft. If the gears moves far enough, it can jump out that gear.

The only cure involves a teardown and inspection of the jumping gear and its shaft and other nearby parts. I never believed the rumor that jumping out is caused by the shift forks, and the preceding is really true, Bad U-joints make noise, too!

Brake Cylinders Stuck?

When dealing with your car's hydraulic braking system, many run into wheel cylinders that refuse to return to their original at-ease states. The other day, I spoke to Mike Walsh whose friend has this problem. I suggested that with the stubborn cylinder exposed and all other drums in place that he have a partner slowly press the brake pedal (a successful bleeding having been done) while he watches for a slight movement at the cylinder. You then hurriedly shout to partner to stop and hold the position he has.

NOTE: where there are two cylinders, the working one must be clamped so it cannot move internally You can accomplish this by use of a C-clamp or wide grip vise-grip pliers. Pliers are available at many tool stores. If there is no movement as further pressure is applied, the cylinder should be removed with the brake pipe still attached and heat applied evenly around the cylinder until it is just beyond warm to the touch. When that temperature is reached, have your partner repeat the pedal pressing until there is just a slight movement. If this operation still fails, you can stop the pressure, put a pan or large can under the stubborn cylinder to catch the fluid that will drain until equilibrium is reached, and remove it.

Then you can try to apply more heat to the cylinder on the bench. Then grasping it with pliers gently tap it against the open end, and hopefully the piston will emerge.

That, too, failing you can either send it to a shop that advertises cylinder rebuilding or go to the expense of getting a new one from one of the MG suppliers.

Save your wiring harness!

Everyone who does not have two inline fuse holders should seriously think about getting and using them.

They are installed between the headlamp switch and the park lamp and headlamp terminals. Some come with tips (which you can alternately clip then remove some insulation) and others not. Some you can use Lucas connectors that accept a plug-in terminal. Please twist and solder all the bare ends, That way when one end is inserted under the screw on the switch, there will be good contact.

In the first TD schematic in the factory and other service manuals two connections are made to the Headlamp Switch "T" ~ # 41 (Red wire) and H-#1 (Blue wire).

The second and third schematic connections are the same.

The TF schematic is laid out differently and instead of connecting at the Headlight Switch, the positions at the Side & Headlamp Switch are at #51— #41—(Red wire) for the park and tail lamps, and #52—#1— (Blue wire) for the headlights.

Continued on next page

With the holders in place, if you were to get hit in either front or rear sufficient to break a lamp, you will be fully protected from harness destruction. □

Tire Replacement 101

New Tires on the Front or Back?

By Gary A. Derian, P.E.

Tire maintenance is an important part of vehicle safety, everything a vehicle does: go, stop, and turn, is directed to the roadway through the tire footprints. In an ideal world, all tires would be rotated often, about every 5,000 miles, and all tires would wear evenly and wear out together. Then a new set of 4 tires would be purchased and installed. The cycle repeats.

QUESTION: In the real world it is common for a vehicle to need only two tires replaced at a given time; in this situation, where should the new tires be installed?

SHORT ANSWER: Newer tires should always be installed on the rear of a vehicle.

LONG ANSWER: In the event of a loss in control, the vehicle does not go in the manner or direction the driver intends. In some cases, the front tires lose traction. In this event, the vehicle understeers, it turns less than the driver intends. Sometimes this results in the vehicle traveling to the outside of a curve and sometimes even going off the pavement. In an understeer, the natural reaction of the driver is to lift off the gas and turn a little sharper. Both of these reactions will often bring the vehicle back under control.

Sometimes, the rear tires lose traction. In that event, the rear end swings out causing the vehicle to yaw. This action often occurs very fast and requires quick and precise counter-steering by the driver to correct. Unfortunately this condition is outside the experience of most drivers and rarely can an oversteer be corrected. This often results in a crash.

Therefore, it is always preferable to have a vehicle lose traction at the front than to lose traction at the rear. This is how all vehicles are designed. They all have some built-in understeer.

If the front tires and rear tires are different in age, or tread depth, it is important that the better tires always be mounted on the rear wheel positions. This will maintain a safe handling condition of the vehicle. This seems counter-intuitive because sometimes it seems that the better tires should be installed on the harder working front wheel positions, but that can result in an unsafe oversteering condition.

Another reason to install new tires on the rear is that new tires have a smaller chance of failing than older tires. Just as the rear tires need to have better traction to maintain a controllable vehicle, a vehicle with a rear tire failure is much harder to control than a vehicle with a front tire failure.

Therefore, it is always necessary to ensure that the better tires on a vehicle are mounted on the rear wheel positions. This applies to any 4 tire vehicle. One-ton and heavier trucks that have dual rear tires have more to consider.

Gary A. Derian, a Tire Safety, Pressure and Failure Expert, has a broad background in tire manufacturing and automotive engineering. He has also trained drivers in high performance driving and designed factory automation equipment. These experiences have given him a good sense for many aspects of safe engineering and the protection of end users. His tire experience includes tire safety, pressure monitoring, explosions, failure, design, defects and more.

He spent 12 years with The BFGoodrich Company where he designed the first U.S. built passenger tire capable of 170+ mph, and he owns two patents for tire design. He then went to the National Academy for Professional Driving to develop a drivers training program for Police, Fire and Ambulance drivers. While there, he also performed tire testing and accident reconstruction. To round out his automotive experience, he became Chief Engineer at Avanti Automotive Company and was responsible for all aspects of engineering and manufacturing for the Avanti automobile. Gary is a licensed Professional Engineer in Ohio, and he is a member of the Society of Automotive Engineers. In addition to his patents for tire designs, he holds four other patents as well. □

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 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. Now only \$850. 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.

Contact Richard Embick 5805 Brookview Drive, Alexandria, VA 22310. Tel. (703) 971-2196 ☐

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FOR SALE:

John Hambleton asks us to help a friend's widow sell his **1954 MG TF**: "a classic beauty, original Olde English white w/green upholstery, 55 K, 1250 cc engine, not currently running; good solid car, wire wheels, excellent chrome, minor surface rust spots. Needs new top and side curtains. All original and complete, including tools, very restorable. \$12,000, firm." Contact Jim Lunson at (703) 536-9282.

AN ASPIRING CHAPTER MEMBER NEEDS OUR HELP! :

My name is Dan Donahue, and I have a 1953 MGTD under restoration. I am currently in need of a couple of rocker arms as the two I have I have are pretty worn. A friend suggested that you might have some parts left over from your restoration and that I should try you. The two I need are numbers 168001 and 168002. They are rocker arms nos. 3 and 4 in an 11 $\frac{7}{8}$ assembly. Any help would be greatly appreciated. My Email address is: dan.donahue@verizon.net

FOR SALE:



This pair of original chrome TD headlight rims, Moss part #156-400. Moss price is \$48.95 each. My asking price is \$49 for the pair. Good condition, but should be re-chromed for show quality. Photos available by email upon request. Buyer pays shipping, or I can deliver at some Chapter event. Contact Milton Babirak at mbabirak@babirakcarr.com or (703) 501-7924.

