

THE SQUARE RIGGER



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

www.chesapeakechaptermgclub.com

SPRING 2012

Chairman's Message

Several things are coming up that should be of interest to our members. As many of you know, the EatOut was a success, and there's a section on it in this issue of The Square Rigger. Although the attendance was good, I've had a few requests for the 2013 EatOut to be held at a location that is more central to where most of us live. I am open to suggestions.



On March 10 there will be a planning session for OBCDay at Muldoons in Rockville, MD <http://www.mymuldoons.com/>

Come April 21 and 22 we will be having the Twist Tutelage Tune-Up at Steve Woodall's place. The enrollment is limited to 12 cars and has only one or two openings left. If you are thinking of attending, I suggest not waiting until the last minute because John Twist, who will be conducting the seminar, has committed to working with 12 cars only. Even if you cannot bring your car, I feel it is still worth attending.

May 4 through 6 will see the 2012 Mini-GOF hosted by Mike and Jennifer Ash and held in Yorktown, VA. It was very generous of them to host the event, so please let Mike and Jennifer know if you can help them in any way. mikeash@dmz.com Also, be sure to make your reservations as soon as possible, so that Mike and Jennifer will know what kind of an attendance to expect.

June 3 will see the Original British Car Day being held for the 35th year. As in the past, quite a bit of planning goes into making it a success and, as mentioned above, there will be a planning session, which I encourage you to attend, to assist John Tokar in making year 35 the most successful one yet. Contact John at jtokar51@verizon.net about the planning session on March 10 or if you wish to help, even if you cannot make the meeting on the 10th.

August 11 will feature the Chapter's second live tech session to be held with speakers from Europe and the USA. This is something that utilizes the modern conveniences of the Internet to bring world class speakers to our Club.

Finally, October 26-28 will witness the 3rd Fall Ramble. The route has not been finalized, but since Ramble #2 was better than Ramble #1, I'm betting Ramble #3 will also prove to be outstanding. Stay tuned!

Lately, the weather has been conducive to taking our Ts out, so I would like to promote members driving their cars more. The member who clocks the most miles during the year will receive an award. To qualify, just take a time-dated picture of your odometer before you start driving this year and another one by December 31, 2012. Send me an email copy of the photo when you start so that I can have an idea of how many members are interested.

One final note — members Bob and Diane Little forwarded to me the following attachment. I'm sure you will enjoy it. [Click here: An MG Dating Faux Pas | Car Talk](#)

Safety Fast!

Shaun English

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Editor's Corner

March 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, 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.

An article on pages 10-11 of this issue will make you glad our T-Series cars don't use catalytic converters. ☐

Membership News

Milton Babirak, Membership Chairman

We welcome:

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Recent Chapter Events

EatOut 2012

Twenty-four of us turned out on on Sunday, February 12, for our annual luncheon at Morgan's American Grill at New Market, MD. As always, the venue, food, atmosphere and conversation were all one could wish for. Kudos to Lin Snider for handling the arrangements. It was gratifying to see John Tokar receive a framed and well-deserved citation in recognition of his many years of leadership and service to our Chapter. □



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

[Twist's Tutelage Tune-Up](#)

Membership Chairman Milton Babirak recently circulated an email announcing plans for John Twist, the renowned MG mechanic from University Motors in Grand Rapids, Michigan, to conduct a hands-on tech session on tune-ups for cars of Chapter members. John will train you and actually assist you in tuning up your very own car.

The tech session will be limited to 12 cars on a first-come basis, but there's no limit to the number of people who can attend. Nine of the 12 spaces for cars have been filled, so if you're interested in attending and bringing your car, you may want to register now to insure a space.

The event will be held on Saturday, April 21, and Sunday, April 22, (9:00am to 4:00pm). John has prepared a list of tune-up parts and tools that you will need to bring to the tech session. This list will be distributed to each participant well in advance of the session.

The fee for registrants wishing to bring their cars is \$250.00. The fee for registrants who attend without their cars is \$150.00. Coffee and donuts in the morning and a mid-day lunch will be served on both days. The event will be held at Steve Woodall's home located at 8180 Cottage Rose Court, Fairfax Station, VA. For those wishing to stay overnight in the area on that Saturday, group rates will be negotiated at a nearby motel or hotel. Participants will have the option of having dinner with Mr. Twist at a local restaurant, the cost of which is not included in the registration fee.

Please register by contacting new Chapter member Bob Rourke at rjrourke@erols.com and mail him your check at his home at 4609 N. 32nd Street, Arlington, VA 22207. Please also tell him if you need to stay overnight.

If you have any questions, please contact Bob per the above or Milton at mbabirak@babirakcarr.com or (703) 501-7924.



[MiniGOF 2012](#)

[BRITS RE-INVADY YORKTOWN!](#)

MAY 4TH – 6TH

Organized by Mike & Jennifer Ash

This year's Mini-GOF will be held in Yorktown, Virginia, on the town's revitalized riverfront. We've held MiniGOFs there on three past occasions, the last being in 2002, sixteen months before Hurricane Isabel totally destroyed the waterfront area, whose subsequent reconstruction has created an ideal place for our event this year.

We have reserved a block of rooms at the Duke of York motel, right on the waterfront. All rooms have a view of the York River. The room rate is \$109 per night, plus tax. The rate can be extended Thursday night through Sunday night if you want more time. The block of rooms will be held until April 22; so make your reservations early, directly with the motel at (757) 898-3232, and remember to mention the "MG Group".

The schedule of events will be finalized at a later date when Yorktown awakens from its winter slumber, but we are offering the following as either individual or group activities:

A river cruise on the York River on the Schooners *Serenity* or *Alliance*.

A rallye/drive through the Yorktown Battlefield, which should be beautiful in the Spring

A visit to the Watermen's Museum on the waterfront

A drive along the Colonial Parkway to Jamestown to visit the site of the first permanent English settlement in America — artifacts and archeological dig

A visit to the Lee Hall Mansion at Newport News for a Civil War experience

Saturday evening awards dinner at the Riverwalk Restaurant overlooking the York River

The opportunity to visit Colonial Williamsburg on your own, or the Williamsburg outlet malls and the Pottery Factory

A tour of the historic colonial town of Yorktown, maybe by *Segway*

Relaxing on the Yorktown waterfront with a choice of two pubs, three restaurants and a deli for lunch, as well as gift shops.

Rooms at the Duke of York motel are limited, so make your motel reservations **NOW!** An event registration form and schedule of events will be circulated by e-mail at a later date.



The 35th Original British Car Day

During its appreciation-luncheon on March 10, our Planning Committee will review arrangements for this, our annual flagship event, scheduled to take place on Sunday, June 3. It's not too early to begin thinking about how we might improve on the respectable turnout of volunteers who helped to make it a success in 2011. We trust all of us, especially those who've not volunteered in the past, will give serious thought to lending a hand this year. Please make your interest known to John Tokar at (410) 775-0500 or jtokar51@verizon.net. As always, we'll be grateful for whatever you can do to help!

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Live International Internet Tech Session

Our Chapter will hold his event will on Saturday, August 11, starting at 9:30am. Ake Ramstrom will talk from Stockholm, Sweden from 10 to 11am on a topic to be determined. A speaker in England will discuss MG history from 11am to noon. Lunch will be served from noon to 1pm. At 1pm, Joe Curto from his shop in College Point, New York will discuss SU carbs, and from 2 to 3pm, from his shop in Grand Rapids, Michigan, John Twist will discuss Lucas electrics, including the MG distributor, coil and ignition circuit. The nearly 30 Chapters of the NEMGTR will be invited to watch this live session via the Internet. The admission fee for this event has yet to be determined, and members can expect to be informed of it and other details via email.

Fall Ramble 2012

This annual event is scheduled for Friday-Sunday, October 26-28. A planning committee met in January at Nanci Edward's home to identify prospective routes. Nanci and the committee's other members, John Williams, Shaun English and Milton Babirak, will survey those routes in the weeks ahead. Further details will be provided in due course. Please keep these dates open if you wish to attend. ☐

Upcoming Events Sponsored by Others

AACA Sugarloaf Mountain Region 42d Annual Auto Parts Meet

To be held Friday-Saturday, March 23-24, 7 am to 4 pm, at the Frederick, MD Fair grounds, 797 E. Patrick Street. For more information contact: Robert Clubb (301) 831-0300, Email: smraaca@aol.com

Spring Carlisle Collector Car Exhibition and Swap Meet

To be held at Carlisle, PA, Wednesday-Sunday, April 25-29. "Filled with anything and everything."
www.carsatcarlisle.com/ce/events/spring-carlisle

13th Annual British and European Car Show

Mounted by the Williamsburg British Car Club on Sunday, April 15 at Chickahominy River Front Park, 1350 John Tyler Highway, Williamsburg, VA. www.wmbgbrit.com/carshow_registration_form.htm

14th Annual Britain on the Green

Sponsored annually by The Capital Triumph Register, this show will take place on Sunday, April 29 at the Collingwood Museum and Library, Alexandria, VA. An enjoyable annual event in a delightful setting beside the Potomac River. www.capitaltriumphregister.com

Carlisle Import-Kit/Replicar Nationals

This large display of sports and exotic cars, with a host of vendors of parts, accessories, regalia, etc. will take place Friday-Sunday, May 18-20. www.carsatcarlisle.com/ce/events/import

British Car Awareness Week

Celebrated nationwide from Wednesday, May 30 to Wednesday, June 3. For details, refer to: www.britishcarweek.org/events.html

Brits on the Beach 2012

This, the 15th Annual British Car Day will take place on Saturday, Sept. 15 in the Main Ave. Business District of Historic Ocean Grove, NJ, under the auspices of the Positive Earth Driver's Club. Judging of cars will be based on participants' choices; dash plaques will be awarded to the first 130 to arrive. Walk the Ocean Boardwalk just 2 blocks from the show field. Have lunch at one of Ocean Grove's many cafés and restaurants. Stroll the Main Ave. business district and check out the town's antique dealers, gift shops, clothing stores and other businesses. Tour the area and see the historic Great Hall, quaint Tent City and the many Victorian Hotels, Inns and other buildings. This is one car show your wife will want to see! It will be held rain or shine. For full details, phone (732) 620-2378. Email: show@pedc.org. Website: www.pedc.org ☐

“Stump the Chapter” Quiz



Here’s Quiz Question No.8

British car enthusiasts will recognize this little beauty as an Austin-Healey 100-4 sports car — a 1954 model BN1, to be more precise. They proved too costly for designer Donald Healey to produce on his own, so he joined forces with the newly formed British Motor Corporation. Approximately 14,000 100-4s (BN1s and BN2s) were produced in the years 1953-55, most of them for export to America. They filled a niche in BMC’s sports car lineup between the four-cylinder T-Series MGs and the six-cylinder Jaguar XK-120s and 140s. They also contained two interesting features, one mechanical and the other non-mechanical, that were not found on those MGs and Jags. Can you recall what those features were?

Answer to Quiz Question No. 7

(Winter 2011 issue)

Both Shaun English and Steve Woodall called this one right. They identified the Midget in the accompanying photo as a 1934 PA. Its lucky owner is our colleague, Jay Gift, who at last report was on the lookout for a PB. Good hunting, Jay! ☐



An Outline of the History of the MG Car Company, Ltd.

By Captain H. A. Kemp, BSc

This article appeared in The Square Rigger in November 1980.

The MG Car Company was fifty years old in 1979, although its origins lie even further in the past. The birth of MG was inspired by Cecil Kimber, then a General Manager with Morris Garages. Kimber was a motoring enthusiast, and found time, despite his administrative duties, to modify the rather prosaic designs of his employer, William Morris. Kimber's approach was to design special bodywork to fit the Morris Chassis, thus imbuing it with a more sporting character. This venture was so successful that by 1927 the Kimber-modified Morris Oxford was selling at a price one-third higher than the standard car and in such numbers that a separate factory had to be built to produce it.

The success of Kimber's modified and rebodied Morris cars persuaded Morris to underwrite the formation of MG early in 1928. Kimber resigned from Morris Garages and took over as Managing Director of his brainchild, MG. In September 1929 the MG Car Company took over premises in Abingdon-on-Thames, a site which they occupy to this day.

The fledgling company existed solely to build sporting cars of wide appeal; this policy is as true today as it was in 1929 and runs like a backbone throughout MG's history. MGs are still the most popular sports cars in Britain today. Much of its early sales success is attributable to the publicity gained by the marque's racing and record-breaking activities.

By the mid-1930s the MG name had become as synonymous with sports cars as Hoover was with vacuum cleaners. However, in 1935, a financial upheaval within the Nuffield Organisation saw the MG Car Company sold to Morris Motors.

Kimber was ousted as Managing Director and in his place a new man, L. P. Lord, made many changes. Lord was not a motoring enthusiast, but a hard-headed businessman. He set about putting the company onto a more commercial footing but, in so doing, closed the racing shops as one of many economy measures. The swift demise of MG's sporting activities dealt the image of the marque a severe blow. Lord left after one year as Managing Director and, although Kimber regained the post, it was too late to reverse any of the measures instituted by his predecessor. Kimber's influence on the design of MG cars was by now much reduced, the cars being built from Cowley-produced parts for Morris cars. Only the bodywork retained the MG flair.

The start of the Second World War saw sports car production cease at Abingdon. For some time the factory was idle because no wartime contracts were awarded to Abingdon by the Nuffield Organisation. Kimber, angered at this state of affairs, arranged some local contracts to occupy the factory. The Nuffield Organisation management was not pleased by this demonstration of independence, and Kimber was forced to resign. Sadly, he did not survive the war and his guiding influence was absent after the war when, perhaps, it was needed most. [*Ed. note: Kimber died in a freak railroad accident at a London railroad station on February 4, 1945. For details, see the article, **Remembering Cecil Kimber**, in our September 2009 issue, pp. 5-6. See also our appreciation of **The Legacy of Cecil Kimber** in our Summer 2011 issue, page 10.]*

In common with the rest of the car industry, Abingdon's products immediately after the war consisted of remodeled pre-war types. Despite this they sold well, especially in the USA. Britain's greatest need in the post-war period was to earn foreign currency, and when Sir Stafford Cripps, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, closed the Home market in 1947, MG found they could sell ten cars abroad for everyone at home. By 1948, production of the MG TC, the first post-war model, had earned one million pounds of foreign exchange.

The Nuffield Organization was by now quite large. The MG Car Company at Abingdon received a sharp reminder of this fact in 1949 when Riley production was transferred to them. Previously, MG and Riley had been competitors, both in the showroom and on the racing circuits.

The amalgamation of the Nuffield group and the Austin Motor Company in 1952 presented Abingdon with another upheaval. The British Motor Corporation, as the new giant was known, became the third-largest car manu-

facturing concern in the world. The effects upon MG at Abingdon were far reaching; there was now competition within the group as to which part of the organisation was to design and produce the next generation of sports cars. This is typified by the delay in producing the MGA in favour of the Austin-Healey 100. Another problem with which MG have had to contend since this era is that of 'Badge' engineering. This is the practice of applying the badge of a well respected marque to an inferior car in order to make it sell.

One result of proceeding with Austin-Healey 100 production in favour of the MGA (as it was later to become known) was that MG were instructed to produce a remodelled T-series car, by now well out of date. A direct consequence of this decision was that MG lost much of their credibility with the motor enthusiast, and sales fell accordingly. The BMC board, realising their mistake, re-opened the design office at Abingdon, and the MGA was the result. This curvaceous two-seater was a production version of the 1951 Le Mans MG. The car was an immediate success, over 13,000 being built in its first year of production (1956).

The following year Austin-Healey production was transferred to Abingdon from Longbridge, and development began on a model which, in modified form, exists today — the Austin-Healey Sprite.

Early in 1962 the 100,000th MGA was produced. Already much thought had been devoted to the problem of a successor to this popular sports car. Eventually, the MGB was evolved from an earlier record-breaking car code-named EX-ISI. This model remains the flagship of the MG range to this day, being the first sports car to reach half a million production (1956).

The modern history of MG is a sad tale, for this small and spirited company has endured increasing control by giant corporations who remain ignorant of, or unsympathetic to, the ethos of the sports car world. Coupled with this problem is what I call the Nader syndrome. Since 1968, when Ralph Nader originally voiced doubts concerning the safety in a crash of certain American cars, legislation has run riot and the result is truly astonishing. Rather than concentrating on primary safety, i.e. the avoidance of accidents in the first place, governments have concentrated solely on secondary safety — the avoidance of serious injury during all accidents. While this seems laudable enough, many of the measures adopted degrade a car's handling characteristics to the extent that an accident becomes more likely! When the effects of secondary safety are added to the anti-pollution engine, a car of truly unremarkable performance is born. Thus the 1979 MGB is a very poor performer when measured against its 1962 counterpart.

BMC merged again, this time with Jaguar in 1967, and the new organisation became known as British Motor Holdings. The MG Car Company was renamed the MG Division, incurring a slight loss of identity but having little practical effect. Hardly had this merger been completed when in 1968 British Motor Holdings merged with Leyland, a long-established commercial vehicle manufacturer. It rapidly became clear that the merger was, in fact, a Leyland takeover. Lord Stokes was now in complete control of the entire group, and, one of his earliest moves was to amalgamate MG and Austin Morris into one division. This move killed the famous "Abingdon atmosphere," and many of the longer-serving employees opted out at this point. Lord Stokes was responsible, among other moves, for the closure of the Competitions Department at Abingdon, despite the fact that the department was the most successful of its type in the country.

Many of the problems described above persist to this day. Internal politics within the Group determined that the next British Leyland sports car was the TR7. This motor car is not a great commercial success, and American importers often have to sell an allocation of TR7s to get the MGs they need, despite the fact that the Americans would buy the MGs in preference.

At the time of writing this article, the days of the Abingdon-built MG are numbered. Midget production has already ceased, and the MGB lines are only expected to continue in production until the early part of 1981. Thereafter Abingdon will serve as a packing centre for car-kits destined for assembly overseas, an unfortunate end for men who have prided themselves on building the finest volume-production sports cars in the world for over fifty years. The loss to the motorist is the "Abingdon atmosphere" — the feeling that a car built at Abingdon was less likely to fall apart at the seams. Indeed, the MG factory must be one of the very few in the world where enthusiastic owners can knock on the gates and ask to be shown around. The moral of this story is that if you want to own an Abingdon-built MG, it would be wise to buy one now. □

ZDDP Engine Oil Additive

Ed. Note: John Hambleton drew our attention in late January to an item posted on the web site of the MG Car Club/UK that apparently endorsed use of an oil additive called ZDDP in vintage cars which, like our T-Series MGs, have engines with flat tappets. He recalled having used Valvoline VR1 racing oil in his own TD in the past, bottles of which bore labels stating: "enhanced ZDDP for flat tappet engines." John noted, however, that those labels no longer appear on Valvoline bottles, and he wondered why ZDDP seldom, if ever, can be found nowadays in most brands of motor oil available in auto parts stores in our area. The brand recommended on the MG Car Club/UK's web site, he reported, is "Brad Penn."

Unfortunately, we encountered difficulty in navigating the MG Car Club/UK's web site. Once we finally figured out how to do it, the item in question was no longer accessible. But recently (Feb. 29), another article on the use of ZDDP appeared in the February 2012 newsletter of Bay British Cars, an MG club based in Panama City, Florida. Thanks to our membership in the MG Editors Exchange Group, we are able to reproduce it below. We think members will find it worth reading.

Oil Alert for Older Cars

By **Eric Peters**

In order to comply with federal requirements that key emissions control components on new cars such as catalytic converters work (and can be warranted to work) for at least 120,000 miles (previously, it was 100,000 miles) automakers have been pushing for reductions in an oil additive known as zinc dialkyl dithio phosphate (ZDDP), which contains phosphorous (as well as zinc and manganese).

The problem for late model cars is that the phosphorous in ZDDP has been linked with premature catalytic converter failure — or at least, premature loss of converter efficiency.

But the problem for older cars (generally, stuff built before the early-mid 1980s) with flat tappet (vs. roller-type) camshafts is that oils with low ZDDP levels may accelerate wear, and even cause premature failure, of flat tappet camshafts. In a nutshell, the ZDDP additives cushion the high pressure point between the lifter crown and the camshaft lobe, acting as an anti-friction, anti-wear barrier. The stuff is especially critical in just-rebuilt engines, during the initial break-in period.

Levels of ZDDP in commonly available mainstream motor oils — including big-name brands and high dollar synthetics — have been dropping since the new emissions longevity requirements became effective with the 2004 model year, almost eight years ago now. Unfortunately, many owners of older cars with flat tappet camshafts are unaware of the changing formulations — and the threat low-ZDDP (and even possibly no ZDDP) oils may represent.

The situation is analogous to the early 1970s, when lead (a lubricant and octane enhancer) began to disappear from gasoline. Engines that had been designed to burn leaded fuel — especially high-performance engines run at high RPMs — suffered premature valve recession caused by the use of unleaded fuel.

So, what to do about the disappearance of ZDDP?

The first thing is to determine whether your vehicle is equipped with a flat tappet camshaft. If it's an American-brand car or truck older than model year 1980 and the engine is a V-8 or V-6 (or inline six), the odds are virtually 100 percent certain that you have an engine with a flat tappet camshaft.

By the latter half of the '80s and into the 1990s, roller-style camshafts were becoming the norm — and if you have a car from that era or newer, you are probably safe using currently available oil formulations. But it's important to be sure. You won't find information on the type of camshaft your vehicle has in your owner's manual. You'll need to consult a technical service manual — or ask someone who is knowledgeable. The service manager at a dealership for your make/model of car ought to know — or should be able to find out.

What to use?

There are still a few oils on the market that have adequate (pre-2004) levels of ZDDP. These include Shell Rotella T — a conventional (mineral-based) oil that was originally formulated for diesel engines. Rotella T still contains 1,200 parts per million ZDDP, according to Shell — which is as much as five times the amount found in other oils. Don't sweat it that Rotella was/is marketed "for diesels." It's also an excellent choice for older non-emissions controlled engines with flat tappet cams that need their ZDDP. Rotella's also modestly priced and readily available at almost any auto parts store. Shell also markets a relatively synthetic version of Rotella that offers even more protection — as well as longevity and a 5W-40 viscosity for those who operate their vehicles in colder climates. Standard Rotella comes in a heavier 15W-40 blend.

Another choice — in a full synthetic — is Amsoil which carries a line of oils with ZDDP in popular viscosities such as 10W-40 and heavier 20W-50. Redline oil is also still fine for older engines with flat tappet cams. Unfortunately, both Amsoil and Redline can be hard to find at your local store; but if you plan ahead, you can order a case from any one of multiple suppliers online and just keep a stash on hand. Royal Purple is good stuff, too — and (at least in my area, Virginia) is usually available at your local major auto parts place.

Another option is additives. GM used to sell an over-the-counter Engine Oil Supplement (EOS) that was just what the doctor ordered — and for only about \$12 per bottle. Unfortunately, GM stopped making the stuff, and it's now very hard to find.

Competition Cams does offer something similar — its Engine Break-in Oil Additive. Comp Cams used to recommend this for initial break-in but now recommends that it be added with the oil at every oil change. From Tech Bulletin 225:

"While this additive was originally developed specifically for break-in protection, subsequent testing has proven the durability benefits of its long term use. This special blend of additives promotes proper break-in and protects against premature cam and lifter failure by replacing some of the beneficial ingredients that the oil companies have been required to remove from off-the-shelf oil."

Ed. Note: Well, it finally turns out that ZDDP has not disappeared from Valvoline VR1 after all! On March 1, John Tokar at Vintage Restorations, Ltd. was moved to clarify the issue, as follows:

"I'd like to provide some information on Valvoline VR1 racing oil. My recent conversation with Dave Weakly, a Valvoline Product Support Specialist, resulted in the return correspondence copied below. According to Dave, it was a product-labeling decision to remove the statement "enhanced ZDDP for flat tappet engines" from the VR1 label. The product is unchanged and is a very suitable motor oil for use in our T-types.

"Dave also sent me some tech sheets showing the high zinc and phosphorous content in the oil.

"So, no need to worry — this oil is still a great choice and we recommend it to all of our customers."

For the record, this is what Dave Weakley had to say in his email to John Tokar dated March 1, 2012:

"Thank you for contacting Valvoline Product Support with your question about the Valvoline VR1 and its ZDDP levels.

"The Valvoline VR1 Racing Oils still contain 1,400ppm (parts per million) Zinc and 1,300ppm Phosphorus. Which is more than enough to properly protect an older Flat Tappet Cam style engine. As you have requested, attached is a copy of the Product Information Sheet for the Valvoline VR1 Racing Oils.

"If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact us via email or by phone at 800 TEAM VAL for assistance. Thank you once again for contacting Valvoline and have a great day.

"Best regards, Dave / Valvoline Product Support "

The tech sheets mentioned above are available to members, upon request, via Email. We look forward to perhaps hearing from more of you on his subject, and we're especially grateful to John Hambleton for bringing it to our attention in the first place. (He notes that Dave Weakley's response to John Tokar is much more informative than the clerk/cashier at Advanced Auto Parts.) □

Spring Brake Tune-up with Some Special Notes for TCs

By **Len Renkenberger**, Technical Advisor

This article appeared in the April 1978 issue of The Square Rigger.

Spring is the best time to make sure your brakes are top-notch. Brakes that were fine last summer may have gone bad if your car sat all Winter, or at the very least may have taken on condensation which means rust and pitting of brake cylinders.

If the rubber seals in your brakes are more than 3 or 4 years old, it's cheap insurance to renew them. If your cylinders were not new when you bought or rebuilt your car, it's foolish not to check their bores and renew the rubber. New TC cylinders can't be bought, so you will have to accept rebuilds at periods in keeping with their condition. Slightly pocked cylinders wear rubber parts rapidly. Drain the system completely, and as you disassemble each cylinder lay the parts out in order so you won't have any doubts when reassembling. TD/TF cylinders are pretty cut and dry, so I won't dwell on them.

While you're at it, new hoses aren't a bad idea. For some reason nobody ever replaces hoses.

Assuming your brakes are only a year or so old, all you need do is flush them with new fluid. I've found the following to be the easiest way to do this.

Insert a paper towel or two into the reservoir to soak up as much old fluid as possible. **Don't get it on the paint!** Brake fluid is a great paint remover. After you've removed as much old fluid as possible, open the bleeder screw on one of the wheel cylinders and pump until you get only air. Fill the master cylinder and pump and bleed until you get fluid at the open wheel cylinder. Continue bleeding at this cylinder until you see new fluid. It is usually lighter in color, since the old fluid is clouded by absorbed water or condensation. Continue bleeding for several more pumps to be sure all the old fluid has been flushed out. Move to each of the other wheels and bleed and flush until you are sure the lines and cylinders are filled with new fluid.

I won't go into the old Lockheed fluid only versus U.S. brake fluid controversy here and now. Just look at it this way — is your T worth going any way but first class? Use Lockheed (British) in the yellow cans — not Wagner, Lockheed!

Now to the TC's. TC brakes are pretty straightforward except for a few relatively minor points. However, those points may conceivably cause problems. First, the master cylinder "tin can": This is especially prone to rust for a couple of reasons. One, if you don't drain it totally and refill it, the condensation just stays in the bottom since the port which lets fluid into the cylinder proper is about an inch above the bottom, and water goes to the bottom. Secondly, it's right beside the exhaust pipe, which accelerates condensation through extreme heating and cooling. The heat is also hard on the rubber parts. Next comes the cotter keys which go through the brake shoe hold-down posts (about in the middle of the shoe). I have seen shoe movement due to new lining wearing in, etc. cause the washers to nearly shear these in 3-5,000 miles. When you disassemble the wheel cylinders, you should find some asterisk-shaped thin metal washers behind the rubber cups. These are intended to prevent the spring from cutting into the cup. Originally, the rubber cup had a little projection on the rear which went into a hole in this washer and held it in place. New seals don't provide for this. Carefully bend two of the tabs of the washer over the spring, but only over the end coil as it will be flexed by movement and break if you bend it over more coils. In that event, or if you just insert it and hope it gets into place, there is a slight possibility of it causing damage to the rubber parts and eventual brake failure. Take good care of these washers as they are no longer made. These parts are another reason to rebuild brakes often as they are rather fragile and condensation attacks them quickly.

TD/TF Handbrake Cables

The ones from Moss are bad news. Their housings are too short and not large enough in diameter. This results in cable ends going about an inch or more too far forward, meaning the springs can't be installed, and you'd have to pull the lever clear to the rear bumper to get things tight. Since the housings are too small, the attachment clamps won't hold the cable in place. They also require either drilling out the guides in the floorboard or filing the corners off the hex portions of the threaded end; otherwise they won't go through the holes. Lastly, for you purists, they bear no resemblance to the originals. Bill Porter advised me that Abingdon's cables are faithful to the originals. □

Technical Tidbits

By **Grady Cook**, Technical Advisor

This article appeared in the April 1979 issue of The Square Rigger.

As usual, I'm having a hard time coming up with a new idea for a tech article. Fact is, there are no new ideas, just variations on old ones. When I purchased our 'TD in 1975, the previous owner gave me the manuals and several years of back issues of TSO. Believe me, I read every one of them, especially the tech tips and articles. Frequently, I forget that maybe not all of you have the back issues, so I guess I'll dig back for some old ideas to re-tread.

One such idea came to mind the other day. In 1976, after the Bicentennial Rallye of the east coast, Len Renkenberger and Tony Roth wrote an article about losing a rear wheel at speed. Seems Renk and Tony were motoring along about 60 mph when the right rear of the car dropped to the pavement, and the wheel, hub and all, went shooting past. Fortunately, neither of them was injured, and aside from a damaged backing-plate, there was no serious damage to the car. They replaced the wheel and continued on their way. Luckily the hubcap had remained on the rim, and the axle nut was contained in the hubcap.

The fact is that a combination of many things — not adequately torquing the axle nut, wear on the axle or drum splines (or both), or a too-small cotter pin — occasionally allows the rear axle nuts on the TDs to work loose. Then, with repeated acceleration and braking the nut can shear the cotter pin (especially if it's too small), and the nut can work all the way off, followed soon by the wheel, hub, etc.

The tale impressed me so that I went right out and re-torqued both axle nuts and put in new, **BIG** cotter pins. Our restoration was still in progress and still had not been driven.

Well, last week when I pulled off the hubcaps to adjust up the brakes a bit before going to the car show at Big Henry's Ford, sure enough the left axle nut was loose!! I pulled the **BIG** cotter pin, torqued the nut one more flat, replaced the hubcap (after adjusting the brakes), and that was that. Just the week before, however, we had made the winery tour in the T, and had the cotter pin been too small, I shudder to think we might have lost it all.

The point is: check those axle nuts frequently, especially before a Mini-GOF weekend. Make sure you have the largest cotter pin that will fit the hole. Add this to all the other little preventive maintenance checks you are (or should be) doing often.

And here's a semi-original idea you might be unaware of:

Are you having trouble getting that grimy old neglected engine cleaned up? Not exactly anxious to invest several dollars in Gunk or some other brand of degreaser? Well, Cheer Up! Help is as near as your laundry room. Mix up a solution of one part Tide and 2-3 parts water. I usually fill a quart jar about 1/3 full of Tide and slowly fill it with warm water. It makes a white milky solution without many suds. After protecting the precious electrical parts with plastic bags or something, apply the solution over the whole engine (or other parts to be cleaned) either by spraying or brushing. I like to use a pumper-type oil can because you can really direct the spray; brushing works very well, however. Allow it to stand 5-10 minutes and rinse with a water hose. You'll be amazed how clean it will come. Just one word of caution — avoid the exterior paint job, as that strong solution will really leave a mark if not rinsed immediately. I scrape off large chunks of grease and dirt, and really bad spots may require two applications, but it is inexpensive, quick and very effective. □

T-Series Enthusiasm

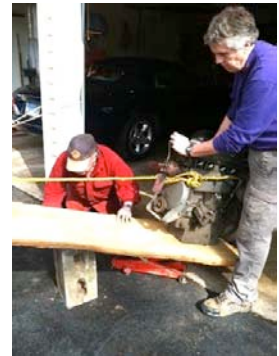
Don't let anyone tell you that enthusiasm for T-Series MGs is a phenomenon of yesteryear. Two Chapter members who joined us only recently have wasted little time in acquiring their own cars, one of them a TD, the other a TC. Here's what they have to say about them.

From **John Debelius**, February 9, 2012:

I acquired this 1952 MG TD from a friend of mine, Pat McKeever. He bought it used in 1957, and it was his daily beater until 1967. He put 120,000 miles on it and kept it going with the innovative use of bailing wire and contributions from a parts car before a crash put it out of commission in 1967. It was an interesting mix of 1951 and 1952 parts, Girling shocks on one side, Armstrongs on the other, etc. Pat had every intention of rebuilding the car, so in the late 60's and early 70's, he disassembled it, stripped the paint off the wings and doors, and started accumulating some needed parts from Moss Motors and Abingdon Spares. However, life got in the way of his project and before he knew it, 40 years went by. Fast forward to 2011, when my fiancée and I were at Pat's house for dinner, and I noticed what appeared to be a frame and some wheels sticking out from under a pile of boxes and gardening equipment. Next thing I knew, I was renting a U-Haul trailer to haul a chassis and filling my car with rusty fenders and buckets of parts. It came with a folder of receipts for parts from Moss and Abingdon, at prices that make you drool today.

Last June I saw some of our club members' incredibly beautiful cars at British Car Day, took some detailed pictures, and got motivated by Fall to start the restoration. What better place to spend winter weekends than in a nice heated garage? People ask who's doing the work, and my standard response is: "I'm having it done at John's Garage. The rates are very reasonable." Ebay has made the task of hunting down parts much easier than the old days of hauling backpacks and wagons through the mud at Hershey and Carlisle and hoping for luck. I'm shooting for completion by Fall of this year, and now that I've said that in writing, I'm feeling the pressure to actually do it. The car will be ivory with red leather. Below are a few photos to help stiffen my resolve.

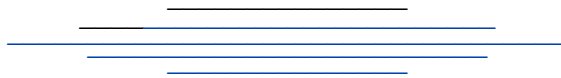
The following photos show my TD in its unrestored condition; Pat McKeever saying a reluctant goodbye; moving the engine out of Pat's garage and into my car; my Invaluable assistant, Donna; the engine, a thing of beauty; and the cockpit (tub), now under restoration.



From **Bob Rourke**, February 20, 2012:

My 1948 TC is a one-owner California barn-find. It was purchased new in San Francisco by Walter Monina, a BMC employee there, and owned by him until his passing in 2011. He accumulated a great collection of spare parts that are included in the sale of the car. Except for the addition of a turn-indicator system, the car is bone stock original and solid. It has been in storage for 30 years or more. I'm planning a frame-off restoration with the goal of keeping it as original as possible. But I do want the car to be a "driver," not a "trailer-queen." So I'm going for achieving reliability, maintainability and safety, rather than a Pebble Beach Concours winner.

Based upon my experience with Intercity Lines, the company that transported the car cross-country, I would recommend them highly. That is the Intercity driver, Randy, and his wife, Jen, on the left side of the truck ramp, with my son, Jon, and me on the right. Driving the car, even at the end of a tow-strap, I think has converted my son from a skeptic of my latest project into an enthusiast. Whether or not I get any work out of him remains to be seen! □



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

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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.

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WANTED:

Our friends in the NY/Conn Chapter wonder if we know anyone who might be able to help this fellow:

"I'm looking for a set of rear fenders for a mid-year 1947 MGTC. I've had my TC since 1970 when I bought it outside of London and brought it back to the U.S. The car had TD rear fenders on it, and so I turned to Moss Motors. At the time the only thing available was fiberglass reproductions. So I put them on the car — anything better than having TD rear fenders on a TC! I'm now looking to do a frame-up restoration. I need a pair of mid-1947 rear fenders to bring it back to its original glory. I hope you might know where (other than Moss Motors) I can acquire a set. You can reach me at 360-579-4207 or by e-mail at geokir2@whidbey.com"

Harold R. Jacobs"

Dated 02/08/2012. Received 02/11/2012 from NY/Conn Chapter NEMGTR ☐

