

# THE SQUARE RIGGER



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

[www.chesapeakechaptermgtclub.com](http://www.chesapeakechaptermgtclub.com)

## WINTER 2012

From The Editor:

We were dismayed to learn recently that our Chairman, Shaun English, had suffered a stroke and been hospitalized in early November. He'd apparently been undergoing great strain and anxiety over the prolonged illness and hospitalization of his wife, Gail.

Shaun is convalescing at home now and receiving therapy that promises to restore him to better health in the weeks ahead. The other good news is that Gail has also almost fully recovered and may be released from the hospital soon.

Members wishing to send get-well greetings to both Shaun and Gail may address them to: [spenglish@aol.com](mailto:spenglish@aol.com)

In the meantime, we would do well to keep them in our thoughts and prayers.

## Chapter Officers

### **Chairman**

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

### **Vice Chairman**

(Vacant)

### **Secretary/Treasurer**

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

### **Membership Chairman**

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

### **Events Chairman**

Lin Snider  
P.O. Box 145  
Walkersville, MD 21793  
(301) 845-6381  
[snidelf@aol.com](mailto: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](mailto:tjcarolan@comcast.net)

### **Historian**

Tom Carolan  
[see above]

### **Chairwoman Emerita**

Ruth Renkenberger  
8245 Ingleton Circle  
Easton MD 21601  
(410) 822-6061  
[renk@atlanticbb.net](mailto:renk@atlanticbb.net)

## Editor's Corner

December 5, 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](http://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:**

**Daniel and Nancy Donahue**  
4318 18th street N.,  
Arlington, VA 22207  
Tel. (703) 525-0788  
[wdan.donahue@verizon.net](mailto:wdan.donahue@verizon.net)  
1953 MG TD



## Recent Chapter Events

### Len Renkenberger's Memorial Service

Friends who took part in Renk's memorial service last Saturday report that it was "very well done, as befitting the man." Attendance was described as overflowing (well over 100), with representatives of various car clubs in evidence, including a substantial number from our own Chesapeake Chapter. Wonderful tributes were paid by family members and friends, among them Ralph Cattaneo, Dale Lindsay and NAMGAR's Bob Vitrikas. Afterwards, Ruth hosted a reception at her home which was also very well attended. Bob Vitrikas reports he was flabbergasted to learn that Renk had been interested not only in vintage cars, but in Borzoi dogs, as well. "Seems he turned the page from cars to dogs. A whole new facet about Len that I didn't know. A fascinating, multi-faceted fellow was he!" Virtually everyone spoke of how fortunate they were to have known Renk and to have had him touch their lives. ☐

### Alexandria Scottish Christmas Walk Parade

Also on Saturday, John Hambleton, Jim Bradley, Milton & Louise Babirak, Steve Mefferd and their T-Series MGs joined this annual event in Old Town Alexandria. Bryan Sieling was on hand to snap the attached photos, performing *pasos dobles* in the middle of the parade as it moved down Alexandria's main drag. Jim Bradley found himself having to explain to the wife of a local dignitary why it would be unwise for her and/or her husband to perch on the tonneau cover of his TF in order to wave to the crowd. Clans and bagpipers were everywhere in evidence, and the whole affair is said to have been both rewarding and lots of fun. All who took part are enthusiastic about repeating their experience next year.

After the parade, Jim and Milton visited with Shaun English over lunch. We're happy to report they found him to be in good spirits and headed in the right direction. ☐



# 4

## Fall Ramble 2012

Over the weekend of October 12-14, eleven Chapter couples motored in their LBCs on secondary roads through the rugged Appalachian valleys and mountains of northern Maryland and southern Pennsylvania, drinking in the panoramic views and beauty of the autumnal season.

After assembling at noon on Friday on the Potomac River at Point of Rocks, MD, they drove north through Frederick County, paused for a rest stop in Catoctin Mountain State Park, continued on into Pennsylvania's Franklin County, and then turned east into Adams County, climbing over South Mountain on their way via Fairfield to dinner at the Blue Parrot Inn in Gettysburg and overnight at the historic James Gettys Hotel.

Leaving Gettysburg on Saturday morning, they headed west and then north, passing through Chambersburg, the beautiful Michaux State Forest, and a countryside dotted with Amish farms, *en route* to the town of Green Park in Perry County. From there, they doubled back southwest through the Tuscarora State Forest on Pa. Rte. 274 to visit two historic covered wooden bridges — the Enslow "Turkey Tail" bridge (c.1904) at Couchtown and, farther on, its counterpart (c.1891) at New Germantown — all before returning to Gettysburg for a well-earned second night's rest.

Following breakfast on Sunday morning, the group drove south back into Maryland, passing east of South Mountain and Frederick down the lush Green Valley, and finally heading west on Md. Rte. 28 to return to Friday's assembly area at Point of Rocks. Their three-day Ramble had covered almost exactly 270 miles.

Asked to evaluate their Ramble experience, Steve Woodall reports that "Nancy and I enjoyed very much the beautiful scenery and the well-planned countryside driving advice given to our lucky group. Glorious scene after glorious scene unfolded as we drove — from lovely valleys viewed from the spine of a mountain, to deep forests, to covered bridges, to perfectly maintained farms and farmland. It is hard to believe how much beauty is to be seen only a short drive outside the Capital Beltway. Every segment of the several drives, each day, was spectacular. The planners of this special Chapter event — Milton Babirak, Nanci Edwards, Shaun English, Bryan Sieling, and John Williams — truly outdid themselves this year. It will be a hard act to follow in the fall of 2013 — but we look forward to it very much!" □

### Ramble Photos







## Upcoming Chapter Events & Chapter-Related Events

### EatOut 2013

Sunday, February 3, has been selected as the date for our annual luncheon get-together. The venue this year will be the Indigo Landing Restaurant at One Marina Drive, Alexandria, Va. Our event will open with a cash-bar at 12:00 noon, to be followed by a buffet luncheon at 1:00 p.m. Full details on menu, cost, directions, etc. will be circulated to members shortly.

### “Stump the Chapter” Quiz

#### Answer to Quiz Question No. 10

(Fall 2012 Issue)

**Q.** This little buggy looks vaguely British, but who among us can say for sure, much less tell us something about its maker?

**A.** Our web manager whiz, Chris Kintner, was quick to identify this one as an Arkley SS, a kit car designed by John Britten (not to be confused with the New Zealand-born, world-famous motorcycle engineer of the same name). It features a fiberglass body (front- and rear-end) fitted to an MG Midget or Austin-Healey Sprite. The fiberglass sections were manufactured by the Lenham Motor Company in England, with conversions carried out by Britten’s engineering workshop at Arkley in Hertfordshire. Approximately a thousand units were produced beginning in 1969. The car pictured here was offered for sale for \$9,800 in the July 2012 issue of *The Oil Spot*, newsletter of the Birmingham, Ala., Motoring Club. Based on a 1976 MG Midget chassis, its conversion, using Arkley components, was carried out within the past decade. □



#### Safety Fast!

The origins of the famous motto of both the MG Car Club and the MG Car Company may be lost in the mists of time, but here’s a story that, while it may be apocryphal, strikes us as believable.

Back in 1930, when the Company was casting about for a marketing slogan, several ideas were being kicked around in the factory at Abingdon. The one that seemed to offer the most promise was “Faster Than Most!” However, when tested on billboards in and around the neighborhood, pranksters quickly altered it to read: “Faster Than Most Bikes!” That was not funny, of course, in the eyes of Cecil Kimber. At that point, someone pointed out that the slogan of the Oxford Bus Company, “Safety First!,” could be borrowed and altered to read “Safety Fast!” Kimber is said to have embraced the idea in a heartbeat. □

## MG History

### Sports Cars and Cecil Kimber

*Definition: The sports car is a low, small, usually 2-passenger automobile designed for quick response, easy maneuverability and high-speed motoring. It is particularly suitable for motor sports, especially racing, having a low center of gravity, as well as steering and suspension systems designed for precise control at high speeds.*

These characteristics would define the heart and soul of vehicles produced by the MG Car Company, Ltd. as it grew and flourished for more than 60 years.

Readers familiar with this Newsletter will know that the primary mission of the Company under Cecil Kimber's visionary leadership was the production, promotion and sale of sports cars. John W. Thornley, who joined the Company at Abingdon in 1931 and would rise through its ranks to inherit Kimber's role as Managing Director in the years following World War II, summed this up well in Chapter IV of his classic 1950 memoir: *Maintaining the Breed, The Saga of MG Racing Cars*:

"The *raison d'être* of the MG Car Company was to produce and sell, to a discerning public, sports cars for day-to-day use on the road and which could be used sportingly and competitively in club events. Concurrently with this, it was their avowed intention to produce and sell cars, at a reasonable price, ready for racing. It might be thought, therefore, that the sequence of development would be: prototype — record-breaker, or other high speed sample — racing car — sports car, in that order, the accumulated knowledge of the series being built directly into the sports version. Ideal though that may be, it could not be done, for the dual reason that the small-quantity production had to pay its way and the racing cars had to be reasonable in price. The number of people prepared to buy cars and race them, at any price is not large, and to design, tool and construct a model for a run of about a dozen cars or so would make the price of each prohibitive. It was therefore necessary that new developments, after testing by prototype, should be incorporated in the racing and sports versions simultaneously in order that tooling costs could be spread as widely as possible."

Cecil Kimber (b.1888-d.1945) did not invent sports cars, nor was the MG Car Company the first to manufacture them. Any number of its competitors in England and elsewhere were active in the field beginning in the 1920s. Many of them survived — indeed, some even prospered — in the two decades leading up to World War II. The public enthusiasm they generated, especially among younger people receptive to new ideas and technological innovation, soon gave rise to a pastime known as motor sports, a major ingredient of which was racing. Interest in such sports was growing by leaps and bounds, not only in the UK, but on the Continent and in North America as well.

Kimber, realizing the importance of these developments, aimed to be in the forefront of them. Hired as Sales Manager at Morris Garages in 1921, where he took an interest in body styling and coach building, he had a hand in the design and development of the first cars to bear the "MG" label. Although he had also acquired some engineering experience by the time (1929) he joined Sir William Morris's newly-incorporated MG Car Company as its Managing Director, he was never particularly adept at "hands-on" mechanics. His genius lay, rather, in his intuitive marketing skills and in the fact that as the leader and motivator of his workforce, he recognized and understood the environment in which their production needed to be sold.

With Bentley having withdrawn from motor sports after its takeover by Rolls Royce, the MG Company's response to public interest in motor sports (racing, time trials, hill climbs, rallies, land speed records, *et al*) met with rapid success in the early 1930s, first in the UK and then on an international level, many details of which can be read in past issues of this Newsletter. Operating often on shoe-string budgets, the MG marque won international fame and glory for Britain with a continually successful line of sports cars in the hands of famous drivers like Tazio Nuvolari, Reg Parnell, Bobbie Kohlrausch, Goldie Gardner, George Eyston, and many others.

In view of this admirable record, one assumes that Kimber and his associates were shocked, if only momentarily, by the Nuffield Organization's sudden decision in mid-1935 to withdraw its various car companies from racing. As we pointed out in our Fall issue, this was primarily the result of Lord Nuffield's personal dislike of the sport and his growing unhappiness with the independent ways and ambitious managerial style of Cecil Kimber. The racing department in the MG works at Abingdon was almost immediately shut down, its racing teams disbanded, and its cars — including those known as the famous Three Musketeers — sold off to private owners.



## The Cream Crackers



The ever-resourceful Kimber was hard to discourage, however. For some time past, he'd been pursuing a semi-covert policy of providing unofficial "works assisted" support to teams of enthusiasts who purchased MGs and entered them in sporting events wearing the dark brown and cream colors of the official MG Car Club (UK). They would either drive



also Club members, with many of their expenses covered by the factory. The Company would continue this practice throughout the 1930s.



The most successful and famous of these three-man teams was the "Cream Crackers," composed of PA Midgets driven initially by J.M.Toulmin, J.A.Bastock, and R.A.Macdermid. From 1934 to 1939 they and their col-



leagues competed annually in scores of team trials, hill climbs and races, winning most of them and placing well in the rest.



The team's name caught on at the Lands End Trial in 1935, where each driver placed a cream cracker biscuit under the rubber band holding his car's competition number. Their exploits would become legendary, with their cars described as "unbeatable" beginning in late 1934 when they exchanged their PAs for



supercharged PBs, and again in 1937, when their PBs were replaced by unblown TAs.

It is interesting to note that at more than one event in the mid-1930s, the Cream Crackers found themselves competing against the Three Musketeer cars that had been sold to the Evans family's Bellevue Garage in 1935. One such encounter, at the Abingdon Trial later that year, was reported to have ended in a tie for first place.

The Cream Crackers were disbanded in January, 1939. The dark clouds of World War II were gathering, and Maurice Toulmin had decided to get married.

Looking back at this history, it is not hard to imagine how greatly Kimber's stubborn displays of independence must have grated on Lord Nuffield. They would lead him abruptly to fire his Managing Director in 1941, on a pretext based on Kimber's having working successfully to win lucrative Defense Ministry contracts involving military vehicles, parts and other war material without coordinating his actions with the Nuffield Organization. □

## The Passing of Cecil Kimber

Just over two months ago, our colleague Milton Babirak received an Email message from Tom Beville, his contact at the Hutson Motor Co., Ltd, in Yorkshire, England. It read as follows:

Hi Milton

I thought this might interest you.

Earlier this year my colleague Andy was helping a friend dismantle an old fireplace in his house, when he came across an old copy of the Yorkshire Post newspaper lodged behind the stonework. Please find attached a scanned copy of a cutting taken from that newspaper. The date of the newspaper was Monday February 5<sup>th</sup> 1945.

Please note the name of the attendant on the train.

Best Regards, Tom

Ed. Note: The cutting appears at right. Our efforts to render it more legible failed, so we copied the text (minus the headings) as shown below:

Mr. Cecil Kimber, the racing motorist and designer of the M.G. car, was one of two men killed in an unusual train smash at King's Cross, London, last night.

The 6 p.m. Leeds express (due Leeds 10.40) had left the station when, for some unexplained reason, it ran backwards. The two rear coaches were derailed, one toppling over.

The train, drawn by a single locomotive, had 16 coaches. It left the platform in the ordinary way, but stopped at the tunnel just outside the station. Then it began to back.

Mr. Kimber lived at Whetstone (Middlesex). The other man killed was Mr. C.H.H. Kirk, manager of a fishing company, of Little Bispham, Blackpool. Twenty-five to thirty people were injured. Those taken to hospital included Miss Wynne Tiplady, of Royal Park Avenue, Leeds; Pilot Officer Greenwall, R.A.F.; Corporal Moffatt, R.A.F.; and A.C. Kawaldo, a Polish member of the R.A.F.

A telegram was received to-day by Miss Tiplady's family saying that she was not seriously injured, and was being detained in hospital one night.

James Bond (44), Colton Road, Armley, an attendant on the train, was met by his wife in Leeds today, and taken to the Infirmary, where he was treated for an injured ankle and then sent home.

Several people were trapped in the overturned coach. It was from this that the dead

men were taken. An elderly woman, who was trapped in the same coach, was not hurt.

### Another Train Involved

A train for Aberdeen, at its platform and not due out until 7 p.m., apparently was slightly hit, but none of its occupants was hurt.

A signal gantry collapsed, and all traffic to and from King's Cross was suspended for some time.

Passengers were told over loud-speakers to travel by Underground to Finsbury Park, and there pick up connections to the North.

The Leeds train resumed its journey three hours after the mishap.

Three third-class passengers who received slight injuries were given first-class permits to travel to Leeds on the express leaving at 10.25 p.m. All four persons who were taken to the Royal Free Hospital for treatment were able to leave last night.

A normal service of trains is running to-day.

### Many World Records

Mr. Kimber's cars secured many world records in the hands of Captain G.E.T. Eyston, the first man to exceed 100 m.p.h. in a baby car, in 1931. A year later, at Pendine Sands (Carmarthenshire), he raised the record to 118.38 m.p.h. and a few months later, on the Montlhery track, near Paris, he did 120.56. The following year the Magic Midget secured every baby car record on the international list.

**LEEDS EXPRESS  
CRASH AT  
KING'S CROSS  
—  
M.G. Car Designer  
Killed**

Mr. Cecil Kimber, the racing motorist and designer of the M.G. car, was one of two men killed in an unusual train smash at King's Cross, London, last night.

The 6 p.m. Leeds express (due Leeds 10.40) had left the station when, for some unexplained reason, it ran backwards. The two rear coaches were derailed, one toppling over.

The train, drawn by a single locomotive, had 16 coaches. It left the platform in the ordinary way, but stopped at the tunnel just outside the station. Then it began to back.

Mr. Kimber lived at Whetstone (Middlesex). The other man killed was Mr. C. H. Kirk, manager of a fishing company, of Little Bispham, Blackpool. Twenty-five to 30 people were injured. Those taken to hospital included Miss Wynne Tiplady, of Royal Park Avenue, Leeds; Pilot Officer Greenwall, R.A.F.; Corporal Moffatt, R.A.F.; and A.C. Kawaldo, a Polish member of the R.A.F.

A telegram was received to-day by Miss Tiplady's family saying that she was not seriously injured, and was being detained in hospital one night.

James Bond (44), Colton Road, Armley, an attendant on the train, was met by his wife in Leeds to-day, and taken to the Infirmary, where he was treated for an injured ankle and then sent home.

Several people were trapped in the overturned coach. It was from this that the dead men were taken. An elderly woman, who was trapped in the same coach, was not hurt.



Miss Tiplady

**Another Train Involved**

A train for Aberdeen, at its platform and not due out until 7 p.m., apparently was slightly hit, but none of its occupants was hurt.

A signal gantry collapsed, and all traffic to and from King's Cross was suspended for some time.

Passengers were told over loud-speakers to travel by Underground to Finsbury Park, and there pick up connections to the North.

The Leeds train resumed its journey three hours after the mishap.

Three third-class passengers who received slight injuries were given first-class permits to travel to Leeds on the express leaving at 10.25 p.m. All four persons who were taken to the Royal Free Hospital for treatment were able to leave last night.

A normal service of trains is running to-day.

**Many World Records**

Mr. Kimber's cars secured many world records in the hands of Captain G. E. T. Eyston, the first man to exceed 100 m.p.h. in a baby car, in 1931. A year later, at Pendine Sands (Carmarthenshire), he raised the record to 118.38 m.p.h. and a few months later, on the Montlhery track, near Paris, he did 120.56. The following year the Magic Midget secured every baby car record on the international list.

The Yorkshire Post's sketchy account did not do justice to the bizarre nature of the train wreck that took Cecil Kimber's life. In the interest of accuracy, we offer below the following additional details regurgitated from our issue of September 2009.

In December 1942, a year after his unhappy dismissal as General Manager of the M.G. Car Company, Kimber joined a London-based engineering firm. Ironically, it was this new career that would help to seal his fate.

London was lashed by driving rain on Sunday evening, February 4, 1945, when he reached King's Cross station from his home in north London, just in time to catch the 6:00 p.m. train to Leeds. He planned to overnight at Peterborough, an early stop, with a view to attending a sales meeting there the next morning.

The London and North Eastern Railway's "Silver Fox" moved out of the station from Platform 15, but the slashing rain caused the locomotive's wheels to slip so badly on newly-laid rails that it stalled.

The train started to roll backwards.

The timetables and routes for outgoing trains had been pre-set to allow the 7:00 pm Aberdeen Express to depart from Platform 10. A signalman detected what was happening to the stricken "Silver Fox," and he tried frantically to switch the by-now runaway train back to Platform 15. However, one of the bogies of its rear coach, containing a no-doubt mystified Kimber, had crossed over the switching points as the train slid too far back down the track. With the front and rear of the final carriage effectively running on different parallel lines, there was no hope of preventing its derailment and collision with a metal signal gantry that sliced the overturned coach in two. Two passengers died in the crash. One of them was Cecil Kimber.

The horrible irony of the tragedy was not lost on his daughter Jean Cook, whom Kimber had been due to give away at her wedding two months later: "The only reason he was on that train was that he couldn't get the petrol rationing coupons to drive to Peterborough in his own MG. His death was nobody's fault, but MG had been his be-all and end-all. It was almost a merciful release; he'd never quite gotten over being fired." □



**Technical Matters****How Old Are Your Tires?**

By Art Fournier

As editor, I get copies of several other clubs' newsletters. The August 2012 edition of the Shenandoah Valley British Car Club's newsletter had an informative article on how to determine the age of your tires, which caused me to look into the subject.

Tire age should be particularly important to us as drivers of cars that have been out of production for 30 years or more. Tires age and should be replaced before they become dangerous and prone to failure.

So, just how do you determine a tire's age? Simple: By law the answer is right on the tire as part of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) identification number. The number may be found near the rim and should begin with "DOT" indicating the tire met all applicable federal standards. This will be followed by characters identifying the plant where the tire was made and its manufacturer. Finally, there will be three or four numbers indicating the week and year of manufacture. Tires manufactured before 2000 will have three numbers; tires manufactured after 2000 will have four. For example, {317} indicates a tire was manufactured in the 31st week of 1997, and "3107" indicates the tire was made in the 31st week of 2007. If you can't find the identification number on the outside of the tire, it will be on the inside.

There's a lot of other information coded into the various letters and numbers on your tires. The U.S. DOT has a web site that can help you decode these:

<http://www.nhtsa.gov/cars/rules/tiresafety/ridesonit/brochure.html>

How old is safe? The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration recommends tires be replaced every six years regardless of mileage or use. That can be a hard pill for us to swallow when you consider that most of our LBCs are only driven a few thousand miles per year. However much tread a tire has, the rubber in the tire begins to deteriorate as soon as it's manufactured due to wear, temperature and sunlight. At some point, the rubber will break down and become prone to blowout or tread loss. And don't forget that spare that's been lurking in the trunk for who knows how long!

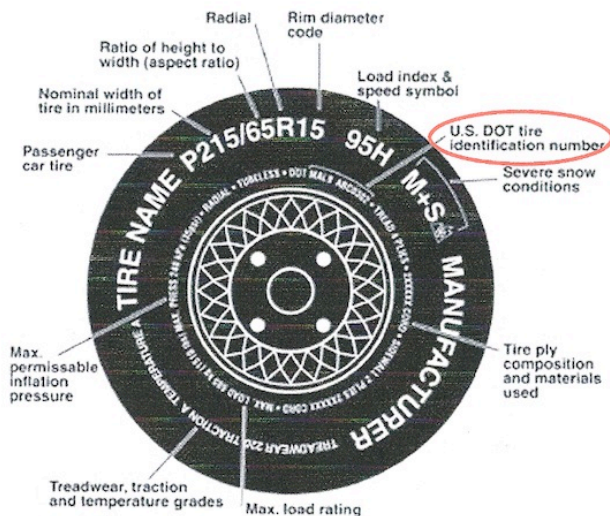
Sure there are bragging rights associated with those original redlines. But don't take a chance with old tires, especially during a "spirited" club driving event. Take a look at your tires. If the age code has three digits, you're well past its safe lifetime and should be shopping for new tires!

*This article appeared in a recent issue of The Standard, newsletter of the Capital Triumph Register. □*

**Air Pressure in T-Series Tires**

Milton Babirak noted that this topic caused considerable discussion among members taking part in the recent Fall Ramble. He had been putting as much as 40 psi in his TD's tires, while others advocated using as little as 26 or 28 psi. This prompted him to research the issue online via the MG BBS web site ([www.mgbbs.com/](http://www.mgbbs.com/)) which produced recommendations ranging from 24 to 32 psi, although there seemed to be a consensus in favor of 26 psi (front) and 28 psi (rear). Several Ramble participants stressed the importance of having a reliable tire pressure gauge, since they viewed most of the ones on the market as inaccurate. Milton plans to drop by his local Firestone dealer to see what kind of gauges they use.

Comments from readers will be appreciated. □



## How to Rebuild Your Steering Wheel

Advice from Cheap Charlie (AKA Len Renkenberger)  
The Square Rigger— Spring, 1976

There you stand with your TD/TF just about ready to roll. (Sure, there's lots to do, but that stuff can be done after the wheels turn). The only thing stopping you is the steering wheel. All that's left of yours is the hub, spokes, and a wire where the rim was. There are a lot of things you'd rather spend fifty clams on. Besides, that glossy, gorgeous new wheel would really make your scruffy interior look bad. Is that what's troublin', you, cousin?

Well, lift your head up . . . and all that rot. Cheap Charlie has come to your rescue. How does about \$4-\$5 for a super colossal, genuine fake racing-type-lookin' wheel grab you?

Break the remains from the wire rim except the little portion that covers the ends of the spokes (leave only the portion on the spokes.) The remains on the spoke ends are built up or repaired using a small amount of the 2-component body repair epoxies, such as White Knight, Bondo, etc., being careful not to go outward beyond the wire rim. File or sand them to a satisfactory shape. Wrap rope around the rim in a tight, continuous coil except where you must go past the spokes. Use small rope for a thin rim, heavy rope for a fat one. When you have fully wrapped the rim, fray the end of the rope and hold it in place with plastic electrical tape or masking tape. Use some more epoxy filler to shape the voids where the rope crossed the area opposite the spoke ends. If you have some fiberglass resin handy, mix up a small batch with only enough hardener to make it set up slowly. Either brush it on the rope and spoke-end area. or make a trough from an aluminum pie plate (à la Mrs. Smith-type pies) and rotate the wheel rim through this several times to saturate the rope. If you don't have the resin, skip this as the resin costs about two bucks. Let it all stand until hardened.

Wrap the rim tightly with two to four layers of friction tape in alternating directions. Follow with one or two wraps of electrical tape. In both cases, stay on the outer edge in the spoke area. Spray paint the hub and spoke ends. Cover rim with a "Sport Grip" or any brand of lace-on steering wheel cover. These are frequently available from accessory stores for about two clams.

O.K., Nuvolari, go get 'em. ☐



## 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:** Here is my 1954 TF, restored a while ago. New top, toneau, brakes, transmission, etc. 68,000 miles. I am not a car guy. I have over \$35,000 in receipts. I got this car in a real estate transaction, and I just want to unload it. I think the car may be worth \$25,000-\$32,000, but prices are all over the map. I hope you can help me sell it by listing it for sale in your publication. I am in Arizona. Thanks,

[KSilverman@theinsurancehousetucson.com](mailto:KSilverman@theinsurancehousetucson.com)



### Vintage Restorations Limited

*English Auto Restoration & Service*

**Ground-Up Or Partial Restorations**  
**Body Panel Repair Welding & Fabrication**  
**Complete Body Refinishing & Wrinkle Finish Painting**  
**Engine & Gearbox Rebuilding**  
**Chrome & Nickel Plating**  
**Routine Maintenance & 150 Point Evaluation**

*Owned & Operated By Classic Car Enthusiasts.*  
*Specializing In MG, Triumph, Land Rover & Jaguar.*

**Authorized MOSS Motors Parts Distributor**

52 North Main Street, PO Box 573  
 Union Bridge, Maryland 21791

[www.vintagerestorationsltd.com](http://www.vintagerestorationsltd.com)

**410-775-0500**



**WANTED:**

**A NEW 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 are pretty worn. A friend suggested that someone among us might have some parts left over from his own restoration. 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](mailto:dan.donahue@verizon.net)



**FOR SALE:**

This pair of original chrome TD headlight rims, Moss part #156-400. Moss price is \$48.95 each. Seller's 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](mailto:mbabirak@babirakcarr.com) or (703) 501-7924.

