

THE SQUARE RIGGER



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

www.chesapeakechaptermgclub.com

SPRING 2013

Chairman's Comments

We've just held our first event of the year, Winter EatOut 2013, with a good turnout. Approximately 34 people showed up at the noonday affair. Our thanks to John Hambleton and his wife Evelyn for their efforts in putting the event together.

On Sunday, March 3, John Tokar held a meeting to plan this year's Original British Car Day which will take place during the first weekend in June. We covered all aspects of the event, but John could still use volunteers, so please give him a call or email him at (410) 775-0500 or jtokar51@verizon.net.



It was announced at the EatOut that Bob Eicher is organizing a Show & Tell Tech Seminar in April at Steve Woodall's carriage house, to be conducted by members of our Club. The premise is that with approximately 80 members we should be able to rely on some of you to offer your expertise in subjects that will benefit the rest of us. If you were not able to attend the EatOut, to get a good idea of what Bob has in mind check the event listing on page 5. And if you possess expertise that ought to be of interest to our our members, give Bob a call at (301) 601-2013 or send him an Email at rweicher@msn.com .

Right after that Tech Session, we will have our annual Mini-GOF organized by Ralph and Michelle Cattaneo at Solomon's Island. It has been many years since our Club last held an event there, and we look forward to this one taking place on the first weekend of May.

Milt Babirack is planning our Fall Ramble for the month of October, details of which will be forthcoming. Since it is still in the planning stage, he welcomes any suggestions, as he mentioned in a previous Email. Better hurry though. His phone number and email are (703) 501-7924 and mbabirak@babirackcarr.com .

Finally, as I've mentioned in the past, we need a need a new Newsletter Editor. Tom Carolan is stepping down with this issue. He's concluding almost five years in the job and will be happy to help his successor master the cycle of putting The Square Rigger together four times a year. Our thanks and well wishes go to Tom for his good work, and we look forward to the emergence of a new Editor.

Safety Fast!

Shaun English

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Editor's Corner

March 1, 2013

The Chesapeake Chapter of the New England MG-T Register was organized during the summer of 1971 by NEMGTR register 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 web site: 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. □

NOTICE

I am sorry to report that this will be the last issue of this Newsletter to bear my imprint. After five years in the job, advancing years and declining health have conspired to render it more of a struggle and a burden than the pleasure it always used to be. I remain grateful for the support and encouragement I have received from so many members over the past five years, and I earnestly hope that a capable replacement will materialize to carry the editorial flag in the months and years ahead. The past four decades should mark merely the beginning, not the end, of the illustrious history of The Square Rigger.

Sincerely, Tom Carolan



Membership News

Milton Babirak, Membership Chairman
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1954 MG TF

Recent Chapter Events

Winter EatOut 2013

As our Chairman has noted, a goodly number of us gathered on Sunday, February 3, for a tasty brunch at Alexandria's Indigo Landing Restaurant. The atmosphere was congenial, the conversation brisk and absorbing. A surprise highlight of the occasion was a champagne toast and cake provided by Mike and Christine Cole in celebration of Bob and Judi Eicher's 40th wedding anniversary. Plans were discussed for an innovative "show & tell" Tech Session tentatively planned for Saturday, April 27, and many kind things were said about your Editor's work on this Newsletter, in recognition of which he which he received a much appreciated award from our Chairman. Above all, John Hambleton and Lin Snider deserve great credit for for their determined efforts to make this EatOut a success.





Upcoming Chapter & Chapter-Related Events

Show & Tell Tech Session

Members will have received an email notice, dated Feb. 5, describing this innovative event, scheduled for Saturday, April 27, at Steve Woodall's carriage house at Fairfax Station. Its purpose is to enable members who have carried out unique repairs, improvements or restorations of their T-Series cars to share their experiences with the rest of us. We're in the process of enlisting potential presenters and expect to circulate further details on this subject in the weeks ahead.

MiniGOF 2013



Members will have received a separate Email notice, dated February 15, announcing plans being prepared by Ralph Cattaneo to hold this annual event at Solomons Island, MD over the weekend of May 3-5. It's been 22 years since the our Chapter last visited this waterfront resort community where the Patuxent River meets the Chesapeake Bay. (The experience was described in our Newsletter as "fabulous".) In the 30's, boat building brought international fame to Solomons with such names as *High Tide* and *White Cloud*. Perhaps the best known Solomons-built yacht was the *Manitou*, built in 1937 and sailed by former President John F. Kennedy. Today, however, little boat building is done at Solomons. Charter boats, recreational boats, antique and gift shops, fine jewelry shops, wineries, and tourism are the major attractions filling much of the landscape. So pack good walking shoes and come join us for a fun-filled weekend, May 3-5, 2013 — dates which happen to coincide with the Maritime Festival.

Please Note: A registration form for this event is being circulated to members along with this Newsletter.

We have reserved a block of rooms at the **Hilton Garden Inn**, 13100 Dowell Road, Solomons, MD, 20688. The room rate is \$109.00 per night, plus tax. The limited number of rooms will be held until April 14, so make your reservations early (directly with the motel at **410-326-0303**) and be sure to mention our group code # **CMG**. The rate can be extended Thursday night through Sunday night if you'd like to extend your stay.

Make your room reservation, NOW!!!

Schedule of Events

Friday, the 3rd:

Check-in at the Hilton Garden Inn, 13100 Dowell Road, Solomons, MD 20688. Phone 410-326-0303 and be sure to mention our event — the Chesapeake Chapter MG T Register Mini-GOF — and pick up your welcoming packet (dash plaque enclosed).

Those who want to get the weekend started with dinner can step across the street to the Ruddy Duck Brewery, say around 6:00 p.m. Space for our group will be reserved.

Saturday, the 4th:

Breakfast cooked-to-order in the hotel's Great American Grill. You will find breakfast **discount coupons** in your registration packet..

Display of our MG Ts will be in place from 8:30 am till 9:30 a.m. on the front lawn of the hotel. Be sure to fill out your ballots.

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For those interested in the history of Solomons, consider a visit to **the Calvert Maritime Museum** — it's **FREE** on Saturday only. The Museum is located at 14200 Solomons Island Road.

Also **FREE** today only: Enjoy a leisurely **tour of Solomons Harbor and river** with a **relaxing cruise aboard the 'Bugeye', Wm. B. Tennison**, berthed at the Museum.

On your own, you may want to tour the **Cove Point Lighthouse** which is open to the public on weekends, or visit the many local businesses in the town's shopping area.

Lunch will take place from 12:30 to 2:00 p.m. at a location **To Be Announced**. Those going onto the Winery tour (see below) will have a short drive.

Winery Tour from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m.: Solomons Winery, located on 10 acres, was founded as a micro-winery in 2002. Wine is produced from grapes grown on the premises along with fruit produced by other growers. You will find award-winning wines for any occasion. After our tour, complimentary wine tasting will be available for us in the tasting room.

Dinner will be held at **Stoney's Solomons Pier**. We will ride there via shuttle, departing from the Hilton at 6:30 p.m. Please remember to wear your name tags. Complimentary wine/beer/sodas will be available at Stoney's on the second floor from 6:30 pm till 7:15 pm. Dinner selections will be from Stoney's menu. The shuttle will return us to the Hilton Garden Inn after the banquet.

Sunday, the 5th:

No planned activities, so enjoy a leisurely morning. You may want to visit the **Antique and Classic Wooden Boats** on display at the Museum.

Have A Safe Trip Home!

Any questions? If so, contact Ralph Cattaneo at (410) 979-6060 or (410) 647-6060. We hope you will enjoy this event, and we'll look forward to seeing you again at OBCDay on the first Sunday of July!

The 36th Original British Car Day

At our EatOut on February 3, John Tokar pointed out that this, our traditional flagship event, will take place on Sunday, June 2, at Lilypons Water Gardens. Noting that last year's turnout of volunteer workers was appreciably higher than in several previous years, he stressed the need to ensure this pattern is repeated this year. A planning session was held on Sunday, March 3, at Muldoon's Pub in Gaithersburg, MD. Members interested in volunteering to help with OBCDay should contact John Tokar at jtokar51@verizon.net, or by telephone at 410-775-0500. By mid-March, we expect to post further details in a flyer, along with a registration form, on our Chapter's web site at www.chesapeakechaptermgtclub/. Members will be notified by mail when this has been done.

GOFMK 93

Our parent organization, the New England MG-T Series Register, Ltd., has announced plans to hold its 2013 Gathering of the Faithful from Wednesday, June 5, to Sunday, June 9, at the Premier Hotel and Resort in North Conway, New Hampshire. For updated information and registration forms, please check the Register's web site at www.nemgtr.org/, or forthcoming issues of its monthly magazine, *The Sacred Octagon*.

2013 FallRamble

John Williams writes: Our annual Fall Ramble is fast becoming a tradition with the Chesapeake Chapter, and for good reason. The event is tailor-made for our cars and the pleasure of driving them on picturesque winding roads through bucolic countryside — the kind of motoring for which they and we feel most at home. Over the past three years, the Ramble Planning Committee has concocted a variety of itineraries, each with its own flavor and charm, and we're at it again in 2013.

While the current Committee members are a dedicated lot, we would welcome any and all new members from the Chapter who want to experience the challenge of devising a new route for 2013 as well as all the myriad details that go into a successful three days of fun and companionship. Those who have participated in the past can appreciate the many phases of planning that must be carried out, from stops for food, rest, and photos; overnights at hotels and inns; meal planning; route planning and measurement, and many other details. While all this may seem onerous, it's actually great fun — you actually get to participate in the Ramble twice — once during planning and again with the satisfaction of seeing your hard work contribute to the Chesapeake Chapter experience.

The current Planning Committee consists of Milton Babirak, Nanci Edwards, Shaun English, Bryan Sieling and myself. Our first meeting took place on February 24 at Bryan and Nanci's home in Arlington, where we exchanged thoughts on possible routes for the 2013 Ramble. After we settle on several alternatives, our next step will be to drive the prospective routes in early spring when the weather permits. We welcome other members who might wish to join us in the enjoyment and excitement of planning these memorable Ramble events. Those interested in participating should contact Milton Babirak at mbabirak@babirakcarr.com ☐

Upcoming Events Sponsored by Others

14h Annual British and European Car Show

Mounted by the Williamsburg British Car Club on Sunday, April 13, at Chickahominy River Front Park, 1350 John Tyler Highway, Williamsburg, VA. www.wmbgbrit.com/carshow_registration_form.htm

Spring Carlisle Collector Car Exhibition and Swap Meet

To be held at Carlisle, PA, Wednesday-Sunday, April 24-28. "Filled with anything and everything." www.carsatcarlisle.com/ce/events/spring-carlisle

16th Annual Britain on the Green

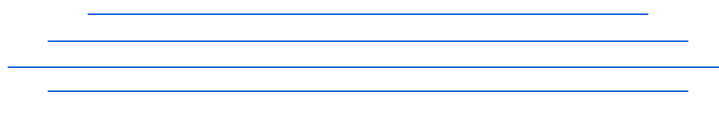
Sponsored by The Capital Triumph Register, this show will take place on Sunday, April 28, at Gunston Hall Plantation, the home of American patriot George Mason. Enjoy seeing dozens of Triumphs and MGs joined by Austin Healeys, Jaguars, Rolls and Bentleys, Minis, Lotuses, and Land Rovers, plus cars you've probably never seen before, such as Jensens, Rileys, and Wolseleys. The price of show car registration includes a dash plaque, a commemorative poster, and a tour of historic Gunston Hall. Spectator admission will be at standard Gunston Hall prices, which includes a tour of the house and grounds as well as the car show. British car regalia and food vendors are available for your enjoyment all day long. Plus you will have an immersion in American Colonial history with period reenactors giving demonstrations in outdoor cooking. For directions and information on admission and registration costs, click on <http://www.capitaltriumphregister.com/bog/>

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 17-19. www.carsatcarlisle.com/ce/events/import ☐

British Car Awareness Week

will celebrated nationwide from Wednesday, May 25 to Sunday, June 2. For details, refer to: www.britishcarweek.org/events.html ☐



Chapter History

SPECIAL NOTICE

It may interest members to know that over the past year we have made a major effort to reorganize our Chapter's History Archive. We have consolidated documents, photographs and other pertinent materials covering the 40-plus years of our club's history in thick loose-leaf binders. Seventeen of those binders hold 211 issues of *The Square Rigger*, membership rosters, and miscellaneous color snapshots, all on pages protected by vinyl plastic sleeves. Two additional binders, also with vinyl plastic sleeves, contain such documents as (A) a nine-page Index of those 211 Newsletter issues showing dates of circulation and noting technical articles and periodic membership rosters; (B) the complete collection of T-Series Tech Notes produced under Len Renkenberger's leadership in 1980 and rescued by Dale Lindsay in 2012; and (C) a copy of our Chapter's by-laws, dating back to 2003.

Last, but by no means least, the Archive preserves our splendid CCNEMGTR banner, lovingly created by the late Jane Snider almost 30 years ago and displayed frequently at Chapter events. It is a unique artistic treasure.

Our collection of Newsletter issues may not be 100% complete, even though we've tried hard, with help from several longtime members, to track down as many of them as possible. Should there be additional members who happen to possess back-issues in quantities small or large, we invite them to request a copy of the Index mentioned above for comparison purposes. Should they discover they have a few issues that we have not accounted for, we would like very much to make copies for inclusion in our Chapter's History Archive.



Tom Carolan, Chapter Historian

Congratulations to Our Webmaster, Chris Kintner!

Those of us who hold current (or even past) membership in the MG Car Club, DC Centre, can only have been delighted to learn that our friend Chris Kintner, its Webmaster and the Editor of its Newsletter, *The Spark*, was recently elected president of that venerable and worthy organization. A product of three generations of MG enthusiasts in his family tree, he and his wife Cheryl have been active Board members in the DC Club for many years. For some years also, he has been helping us manage our own Chapter's website, in which capacity he has been resourceful, responsive and extremely helpful.

We wish Chris great success, smooth motoring, and "Safety Fast" as he takes the wheel at our big sister MG Club!

MG History

The Life and Times of JB 4607

(Chassis No. NA 0518)

By Pete Thelander

Our Fall 2012 issue featured The Three Musketeers, a legendary MG racing team that dominated motor sports in the UK in the mid-1930s. Their cars were taken from the only seven NE-Type Magnettes that were produced in 1934, specifically for racing, by the company's competition department at Abingdon. As we reported in 2012, almost all of them are known to be in private hands today. What follows is our friend Pete Thelander's personal account of how he was able to acquire one of them and restore it over a period of many years. (It was the car that Tazio Nuvolari had been scheduled to drive in the 1934 Ulster Tourist Trophy race.) Pete's story first appeared in the April 1994 issue of The Sacred Octagon. For those who have never read it, we reprint it here with his kind permission. [Ed.]

It was over twenty years ago that I purchased the 1934 MG NE Tourist Trophy Magonette, Chassis No. NA 0518, Registration No. JB 4607. What more appropriate time to pause and record a few words about this historic racing motor car now that its restoration has recently been completed. If you're asking yourself, "What is an NE T.T. Magonette?", I can hardly blame you. After all, they are the rarest of MGs — only seven were built for one race. Let me begin by filling in some historical background.

By 1934 MG was one of the dominant marques in the world of small displacement auto racing. Their success had been achieved with such models as the four cylinder C-type Montlhery and J-4 Midgets and the six cylinder K.3 Magonette — all powered by supercharged single overhead camshaft engines. While the Italians had their premier road race in the Mille Miglia, and the French had Le Mans, the English equivalent was the Tourist Trophy held at that time on the Ards circuit — a thirteen mile course on public roads northeast of Belfast, Ireland. (In later years, it would be moved to other venues.) So when the organizers of the T.T. announced in the spring of 1934 that superchargers would be banned for that fall's event, MG was caught without a suitable model — which, of course, is precisely what had been the intent of the ban!

Not to be denied entry to "their own" major race, the racing department at the MG Car Company's small racing department set out to devise a suitable car. The K.3 was considered to be too heavy to be competitive without its supercharger, so they turned to their newly introduced N-type Magonette. It is apparent that performance improvement methods were well understood at MG: higher compression, larger carburetors, more valve overlap, multiple springs to control the dynamics of the valve at high rpm (to highlight just a few), all of which raised the output from the standard 56 bhp at 5,500 rpm to 74 bhp at 6,500 rpm. It is interesting to note that when the cam was sent out for polishing last year, the grinder was quite surprised to find the profile was not symmetrical. It seems one of Honda's latest speed secrets is asymmetric cam profiles! — And MG was doing it nearly 60 years ago.

Seven chassis/serial numbers NA 0516 through NA 0522 were pulled from the production line to be modified and prepared by the competition department. (It is worth noting that the prefix for these cars remained NA until it was changed to NE later on.)

The first car was rushed to completion as a prototype. The next three cars — NA 0517, 0518 and 0519 — were completed and registered (JB 4606, JB 4607 and JB 4608, respectively) in time for a trial outing at the Light Car Club relay race 21 July 1934. In an attempt to hide their true identity as the T.T. entries, they were entered as a ladies team by Irene Schwendler with Doreen Evans and Margaret Allen as the other drivers, without any factory connections. All the well known factory people were supposed to not be seen with them. Well, such deception failed completely and everyone knew these would be the cars for the T.T. Their performance was also noticeable — they finished third overall in an appalling downpour.

Meanwhile, much appeared in the press about entrants for the big race. Perhaps most notable amongst these was Tazio Nuvolari, one of the leading drivers of the period and the winner of the 1933 T.T. in an MG K.3. The L.C.C. relay race cars were refurbished and entered for independent drivers A. P. Hamilton, Nuvolari and Norman Black. (Our esteemed leader, Dick Knudson, has come up with a copy of instructions to the shop to paint NA 0518 red for Nuvolari, as well as to carry out other modifications at his request. A strongly nationalistic Italian, he hadn't been happy about the K.3 he drove to victory in '33 having been clad in British racing green, rather than his Italian racing red.



The other three cars were completed, registered (JB 4748, JB 4749 and JB 4750), and entered by the popular MG enthusiast, Capt. George Eyston with himself, Wally Handley and Charley Dodson as the drivers. In a last minute switch, Nuvolari had to drop out due to a sponsorship conflict. The reserve driver, Bill Everitt, took his place.

So six of the cars were entered in the race with the victory

ultimately going to Charley Dodson in JB 4750. A. P. Hamilton finished 14th overall in JB 4606, and the remaining four cars retired with various mechanical difficulties. For more details, Chapter 8, *Reversions to the Unblown*, of John Thornley's bible, *Maintaining the Breed* — provides the best summary of the creation and initial efforts of these cars. A full accounting of the T.T. race is given in the post-victory publicity pamphlet, *The Luck of the Game* — *Again* by Barry Lyndon.

The Nuvolari/Everitt car was sold to H. B. Shaw who also used it for trials work that first summer of '35. The engine was transferred to the ND he also owned (BKL 265) and the NE was returned to the factory to be fitted with what was basically a K.3 engine and pre-selector gearbox in the winter of '35-'36. [Ed. note: this was the same system that powered the three K.3s that swept the team trophy at the 1933 Mille Miglia.] It was purchased and campaigned the next two seasons by F. W. Carr. He suffered a failure in the brake linkage at the '37 Brooklands Easter Meeting and had a spectacular crash — evidence of which was found during the restoration.

So looking back at these cars, they reflect the capabilities of a small dedicated competition team that was presented a very real challenge to come up with a new machine in only about six months and not only met that deadline, but produced another winner. After these early outings, these cars went their separate ways though history, providing many owners with exciting motoring. With advancing age and new developments, they are less competitive and pass into that valley of oblivion for old race cars until the vintage racing movement gains momentum and they emerge once again to thrill a new generation of admirers.

Returning to the present, the subject car was running and looked quite presentable when I acquired it in January 1972. But in a couple of years it began getting cranky and troublesome to keep running. I limped the eleven miles home from the Queen Mary after GoF WEST '76 in Long Beach and checked the compression only to find the valves in need of reseating.

From there it was all down hill. I couldn't decipher the timing marks for either the cam or the ignition, so it sat in frustration. Eventually Henry Stone was invited to the house on one of his visits. (He was the original mechanic for the car in '34 when Nuvolari was supposed to drive it.) We were merrily struggling with it as his wife, Winnie, sat in a lawn chair observing. ("I could watch Henry all day", she would say.) She finally offered the question, "Should this water be coming out back here?" Well, "back here" was the tailpipe!! And the answer was something to the effect of, "Well, not really, my dear. There must be something seriously wrong."

We pulled the plugs and found water coming out of No. 5 cylinder. At that point it was clearly more than I wished to trouble Henry with, so we just tried to dry it out with compressed air, oiled copiously with WD40 and put it away.



After Henry left, I pulled the head and found four holes in the No. 5 combustion chamber — the usual three for two valves and the spark plug — but there was one extra opening rotted into the water passage. I found someone to weld the hole, but still never got it to run again. Seems the welding did nothing to improve my understanding of the timing marks. After a very short while, the whole thing froze up solid. (Seems I didn't get the cylinder dry enough, and the rings had rusted.) To make a long story short — there it sat in abject neglect for the next twelve years while we put three kids through college, married them off and built a major home addition (including a third garage to provide more working space).

With the New England MG-T Register's announcement in 1990 of the MMM Raid to be held in conjunction with the fall GoF of '91, I was finally motivated to get started on restoring it. I had over a year (which seemed like a lot), but like most restorations, things did not go well, and it soon became clear that I was not going to get enough of the car together to make it worthwhile to haul it 3,000 miles from California for the Raid. At that point I finally stopped and bought airline tickets. It was still a great week — seeing all those MMM cars from England (and some very nice American and Canadian examples as well, I might add.) After returning, it was sort of anti-climatic and hard to get restarted. Besides — quite a few other things had been neglected in the final flurry of activity and they needed to be given some attention.



In order to make the original goal of having the car done for the Raid, I had turned the engine work over to a vintage race car mechanic. He found the head, block and crank of the "original" K-Type engine to be cracked. So I brought him the spare N engine I had tucked away, but it was no better. I could only get an NE crank in the time frame I was working to, so we proceeded to build the spare N block with the original NE head.

Shortly after returning from the Raid, the engine man's landlord phoned to tell him the building was sold and he'd have to be out a week from Friday. . . . And there is my engine all laid out ready for assembly. I was there in two hours to pick up everything and bring it home. It sat there on the garage floor for a couple of months while I finished what I was do-

ing — fabricating headlight stands, windscreen stands, mirror fairing and various other missing small pieces. Once they were done and taken to the painter, I had little choice but to grit my teeth and get started on putting the engine together.

This sudden loss of the engine man was not a total disappointment, since I had really wanted to put the engine together myself but had only gone to him because of the original limitation on time. As the old saying goes — time is money — and here was a case where I expected to have to spend money for the time I didn't originally have. Long time TF friend and former P-51 mechanic, Bud Quist, had offered to help solve the mystery of unraveling two puzzles in one box and putting one of them together. When I had to pick up the engines, I had all the pieces for both engines co-mingled and we didn't really know exactly how either one of them went together. We had no choice but to proceed cautiously and call Mike Allison frequently.



The major pieces like the block, head, crank and pistons posed little problem. But we had to check each rod and

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piston as it was assembled to the crankshaft and rotate it carefully to make sure that the fatter Phoenix con rods cleared the bottom of the bore. It frequently was necessary to grind out a bit more clearance — time-consuming, but absolutely essential. The real challenge came in the accessory drive gears inside the front housing and the dreaded vertical drive. Many combinations had to be sorted out by trial and error to see which worked the best. And new reproduction parts didn't always fit. We had to fiddle with several of them repeatedly.



still remained to sort out the tuning of the carburetors, ignition timing and plug selection. There was an all British car show down in Del Mar near San Diego that was to be its first outing. So we had a coming-out party the day before with about thirty people responding.

But all was not quite unrestrained joy in paradise; the block very quickly showed a new crack an inch below the head surface running from about the no. 2 spark plug to no. 5. It is very fine and does not leak any more than a mere weep. But something is clearly going to have to be done. For the time being, I am nursing it gently while I build up the original K block that was installed in '35. Mike was eventually able to supply a short stroke crank as well, so that project is now moving along.

We hauled it up to Lake Tahoe for GoF WEST '93 the end of June. It still was not running like I felt it really should. But Bob Bazzica from Australia was there and we found a couple of free hours to sort it out. Seems I had gotten the float levels too high and fuel was dribbling out of the jets most all the time. That, along with a closer look at the ignition timing, got the old beast sounding quite serious indeed.

After GoF WEST '93, the next outing was the Monterey Historic Automobile Races in August. The Monterey Historics is one of the finest exhibitions of vintage race machinery anywhere. Since this was a whole new experience for us and we were unfamiliar with the procedures, Fran and I had left on Wednesday to make sure we wouldn't be rushed. We had booked a motel in Salinas for Wednesday night, so checked in there and then headed out to the track to register and leave the

Eventually, we did get it all together and installed in the chassis. Then came the big day when we filled it with fluids and gave it a go. We cranked it long enough to see some signs of life on the oil pressure gauge before we turned the ignition on. When it didn't immediately roar to life, we went back to the distributor and checked the plug leads. They seemed OK . . . Still no life . . . Check again. Eventually we took the cap off to check the direction of rotation and sure enough, we had figured it backwards. Try again and that sweet roar of success!! It was running again after a dozen years!!

With that major milestone successfully completed, we put the rest of the front bodywork on and it looked like a pretty complete car. It



(Continued on next page)

car in the pits. When we returned to Salinas, there was a farmer's market going on, so we walked our way through dinner looking at all the stuff. car in the pits. When we returned to Salinas, there was a farmer's market going on, so we walked our way through dinner looking at all the stuff. When we returned to Salinas, there was a farmer's market going on, so we walked our way through dinner looking at all the stuff.



Thursday was fairly light — just tech inspection in the afternoon. We took advantage of the slack morning to see the aquarium at Cannery Row. When we got back out to the rack, we found Gary Byrd and his very nice Peter Gregory-built K.3 replica pitted right next to us. After taking the car down for tech inspection, we had time to look about the pits at some of the rest of the interesting cars. In particular, I wanted to see the Ken Miles cars, R1 and R2 — the Flying Shingles.

Friday was practice day for everyone. The older cars that would race on Saturday had their sessions in the morning, and the newer, faster cars that would race on Sunday had theirs in the afternoon. Having an older car and being a truly neophyte “race” driver, I was in the first group in the morning session. It was running pretty well, but I had not yet had anything done about the cracked block. I was anxious to not break it early in practice, so I took only a few laps to see that it made it up the hill OK and came in early.

After my practice session, I quickly got out to see the next group which included Gary's K.3 and Al Moss's TC. R1 and R2 were both in the third group. For me, it was great to see them together on the track at the same time. They probably had never been out together before. The featured marque this year was Miller. Harry Miller pioneered race car design in the '20s and '30s. His cars dominated Indianapolis and the rest of the American race scene until the Great Depression when he was forced to sell out to Fred Offenhauser, who developed the cars, but continued to develop the Miller-designed engines under his own name. It was a real treat to see so many in one place. His creations were exquisite and, when taken to Europe, became an inspiration to the fabled Ettore Bugatti.



Thursday evening there was a cocktail and hors d'oeuvres reception amongst the Miller exhibit, and Friday evening there was a trackside barbecue dinner. On Saturday morning, the Ford Motor Company provided a breakfast for participants, and then it was back to the track for warm-up times before the main races began after lunch. I was gaining more confidence in the car so stayed out longer for the second practice session. It was really thrilling to be able to drive the car with as much gusto as you can muster (which in my case was not really a whole lot



as it was all quite strange to me and the engine was not yet broken in). During the lunch break, the Miller cars took a few parade laps. They made a wonderful sight (and sound) as they circled around the track.

Finally came the call for the first race. It was a bit different being led around for the parade lap with thirty priceless cars in fairly close company. There were three or four Bugattis and Millers, a couple of early Grand Prix Mercedes, a 1912 Franklin, plus a gaggle of Ford Model T speedsters and three three wheeled Morgans (including Al Moss), a pair of Austins, and the ultimate winner — a 1922 Grand Prix Sunbeam from the Donnington Collection in England driven by some ringer by the name of Phil Hill. I was started well back in the pack and pretty well stayed there. I had learned during the practice sessions to keep an eye on the mirrors. It wasn't too long before the leading cars appeared, so I just moved over to let them by. Most of us were just parading at a brisk pace, I think. No one appeared to be pushing things near the limit. The Model Ts were interesting. We would run about the same speeds, but they would let off the gas much earlier before the corners — they have only two wheel brakes. I was reluctant to charge past them and stomp on the brakes in front of them, so I just stayed on their tails into the corners. But they would accelerate quite well, and I couldn't catch them on the straights.

It was all over much too soon. Again, we rushed out to see Gary and Al in the second race, and the Ken Miles cars I fell in love with that car the minute I walked up to the newsstand in 1955 and saw it on the cover of *Road & Track*. I never had the opportunity to see it in person before Ken Miles moved on to Porsches and Ford GT-40s and the *Shingle* ceased to be newsworthy, disappearing into the abyss that engulfs last year's race cars.

Saturday evening we had been invited by Bill Motta to the Automotive Fine Arts Society reception at Pebble Beach. That has become a major supplemental exhibit to the Concours. It was nice to meet some of the finest automotive artists and see their work. Sunday morning we went back to take in the famous Concours. The selection and finish of the cars has to be seen to be believed. They were absolutely incredible! Ten or twelve of the cars from the races were invited to be shown and the *Shingle* was so honored along with a couple of the Millers and pre-war Alfas. We soon left to go back out to the track for the afternoon races, load up the car and see the awards ceremony. Al Moss was presented the spirit of the event award for towing his three wheeled Morgan to the event with his TC and then racing both cars! In the evening, Don Martine and Al came by for a late dinner.

It had been a great new experience. What a perfect seat for viewing all those wonderful cars in action. The car ran well. We met lots of nice people. And just had a wonderful time. I was much relieved to have the car performing adequately, although I still considered it to be just running in. It was very exciting to actually be on a race track with a couple dozen other pre-war race cars. It currently has probably less than 200 miles on it (can't tell for sure since it has no speedometer to record miles driven).

Restoring any old car should be fun, but this one has been especially so since it had the added adventure of having been an archaeological expedition as well. The evidence of several known old racing incidents was uncovered and a lot of "I wonder why's" answered. There was time enough — this time — to enjoy the resurrection of the rest of this historic machine and see it return to its former glory. After twenty years, I am more impressed than ever with it, and with the capabilities of MG's small racing department as well.

Postscript: Pete reports that after his article first appeared in 1994, he succeeded in rebuilding and reinstalling the short-stroke K block that was in JB 4607 when he bought it. Eventually he was able acquire one of the original NE NE blocks and has rebuilt it as well. He's even managed to restore its N-Type engine also. He's been driving the car in three or four events annually at Monterey, Sears Point, Coronado and a few other courses since 1993.



(Continued on next page)

“I have actually had three different engines in the car over the past 18 years,” he says. “During the years when it was sitting idle, I swapped some items for a standard NA engine. That was built up during the restoration. It lasted for about five years before the main bearings failed. During those years, I was building the short-stroke K engine and had it ready to put back in the car when needed. I was eventually offered a genuine NE block, which I bought and set about building with the guts from the failed NA engine. (The NA block was sold to someone who needed it more than I did!). The full spec NE engine was finally installed several years ago and is doing fabulous!”

When the Ulster Vintage Race Car Club announced the holding of a 75th Anniversary Commemoration of the Ards T.T. in 2003, Pete took himself and his car to Belfast (see above photo) for the occasion. Of the approximately 170 vintage racers in attendance, JB 4607 was one of 47 that had actually competed on the Ards circuit between 1928 and 1936. □

Technical Matters

The Hubcap Mystery

From Bob Schoeplein

We had a Mini-GOF in Delaware perhaps 20 years ago. I recall something about a “Blue Hen Inn” or thereabouts. I polished “Waldo” before I took off, and I took off all the hubcaps to shine them up. I then carefully lined up the “MG” in the middle of each hubcap parallel to the ground. Satisfied that all hubcaps were on perfectly, I gave each an extra push to make sure they were on tight.

I took the route over the top of the Bay to avoid taking the Bay Bridge. After close to 3 hours I arrived at the Inn. I climbed out and walked around the TD to look at the wheels and the hubcaps. The hubcap “MGs” were pointed every way on the 4 points of the compass! But I had carefully lined each one parallel to the ground!

I went inside, past the registration desk, and straight to the bar. I sat at the bar with a beer (perhaps two) and tried to reason this out. It is not easy for a liberal arts major. Then — probably after the second beer — reality slowly started to seep in.

Hubcaps and wheels and turns. I might try to blame my lapse on driving 3 hours in a TD. That rationalization might be worth another beer. □

Sounds as if Lucas Was the Engineer on This Wiring Job.

Reprinted from the University Motors, Ltd. Newsletter with the kind permission of our friend, John Twist, and a timely tip from Milton Babirak

A Kansas farm wife called the local phone company to report her telephone failed to ring when her friends called — and that on the few occasions when it did ring, her dog always moaned right before the phone rang.

The telephone repairman proceeded to the scene, curious to see this psychic dog or senile lady. He climbed a telephone pole, hooked in his test set, and dialed the subscriber's house.

The phone didn't ring right away, but then the dog moaned and the telephone began to ring.

Climbing down from the pole, the telephone repairman found:

1. The dog was tied to the telephone system's ground wire with a steel chain and collar.
2. The wire connection to the ground rod was loose.
3. The dog was receiving 90 volts of signalling current when the number was called.
4. After a couple of jolts, the dog would start moaning and then urinate.
5. The wet ground would complete the circuit, thus causing the phone to ring.

All of which demonstrates that some problems CAN be fixed by pissing and moaning.

Thought you'd like to know! □

The following articles by Grady Cook and Jay Gift, respectively, are reprinted from the April 1980 issue of The Square Rigger

Moving Disabled Vehicles

In this month's issue there is an engineering drawing of a tow bar attachment for TC's designed by Don Bills. If you have a TC you might consider having a pair made and installed before you need them.

I heard a very sad tale this past week told by an old friend. He has a TC (which he acquired since we first met 16 years ago) which still has the original paint. Recently he had engine trouble and had to have the TC towed by a professional tow truck. Well, the tow truck operator neglected to attach his spreader bar and at the first application of the truck brakes, the poor TC slammed into the rear of the truck, doing serious body damage. Point! With your T-Type (or any other valuable car) be careful how you have it moved if it is disabled, or moved for any other reason. First choice would be to truck it or trailer it, as it's not much (if any) more expensive than a tow truck. Second choice would be to locate a towing firm that uses either a "dolly" or a "sling" arrangement. Both cradle the front (or rear) wheels for positive control of the vehicle. Avoid at all cost a tow truck that just uses a "hook".

Sheet Metal Fabrication

This month our colleague Jay Gift sent me the following article he had written for the Delaware Valley Chapter dealing with sheet metal fabrication. It's an interesting article and a bit ambitious. Pay attention to his last paragraph and make sure you decide whether it is cost-effective to repair the panel if reproductions are available. Also, John Wright had a very good article in a recent NAMGAR newsletter dealing with body repair, etc. of MGAs. If Jay's article tickles your interest, you may want to ask John to resurrect his NAMGAR piece in order to read more.

Probably the most difficult problem that most restorers have in the restoration of any MG or any antique car is the deterioration of the metal of the body and fenders. While most people do some aspect of the restoration of their car, they do not choose or are not able to perform this operation as it should be done. For those who have a complete professional restoration done for them, it is equally important to understand the basics of proper metal fabrication. Body fillers such as Bondo or fiberglass should not be used to cover rusted sections, unless all of the rust can be removed and if there is no hole in the metal. Sand blasting a rusted spot could remove all of the rust particles but should not be done to the entire car. If you have a rusted out area, one that is no longer surface rust, that has become a hole in the sheet metal, it must be repaired by replacing the sheet metal. Using only a body filler at this point will not work, because it will fall out or crack after you've driven the car for year or so. A body-patch panel can be almost any size or shape depending on what is required for the particular car.

The location of a hole or rusted area will determine the need for one or more than one panel necessary to correct the problem. It is basically a personal judgment of whether you should repair rusted section with a patch or replace the entire panel. If the area to be repaired is very large, it may be best to replace the entire panel if the curves in the sheet metal are not simple to reproduce.

There are various types of welders to be used for sheet metal, however, the one that seems to work best for sheet metal is the "Mig" Milleromatic portable welder. There is a continuous feed of the welding wire to the handle that has a speed control, along with six positions for selecting the intensity of the heat. Both are very important for a proper weld.

Once you have a welder accessible and have a car that has a rusted out area, you are ready to begin. A trip to a sheet metal shop will give you the desired supplies. If the rusted area on the car is at the door hinge post, near the running board of an MG, and is about the size of a fist, the panel should be welded in to repair the hole. A circular or rectangular panel could be made, but in that location the hole should be enlarged so that you get into good metal for a solid weld. If the section is now rectangular, cut a piece of metal out to fit exactly into that hole. You should not overlap at any point. The panel has to be off the car because of the wood coachwork. The panel would be clamped into place to hold the metal exactly on the same plane as the original metal. After this has been done successfully, the welding would begin. Spot weld or tack the panel into location. Move about one to two inches and spot weld again, making sure the metal is still in line with the panel. It is important to keep the patch panel

flush with the original piece of sheet metal so that there is less distortion to the panel when it is finished. Therefore, less body filler will be required prior to the paint job. After all of the metal has been spotted into place, go back and alternate spots between each original weld to close the gaps. The alternation decreases the metal warping excessively. At this point you are ready for a continuous solid weld to completely bond the patch to the original panel. When that is completed, look on the other side to determine if the weld made a total bond without a seam in each piece of metal. If the bond is not complete, run a continuous weld down the reverse side where needed.

Once the welding is complete, all of the excess weld must be ground off with an electric grinder with a solid grinding wheel/disc. The appropriate safety face and ear protectors should be worn at all times. When grinding, remember to do both sides and to grind off the excess only. The sheet metal should not have any grinding marks in it upon completion.

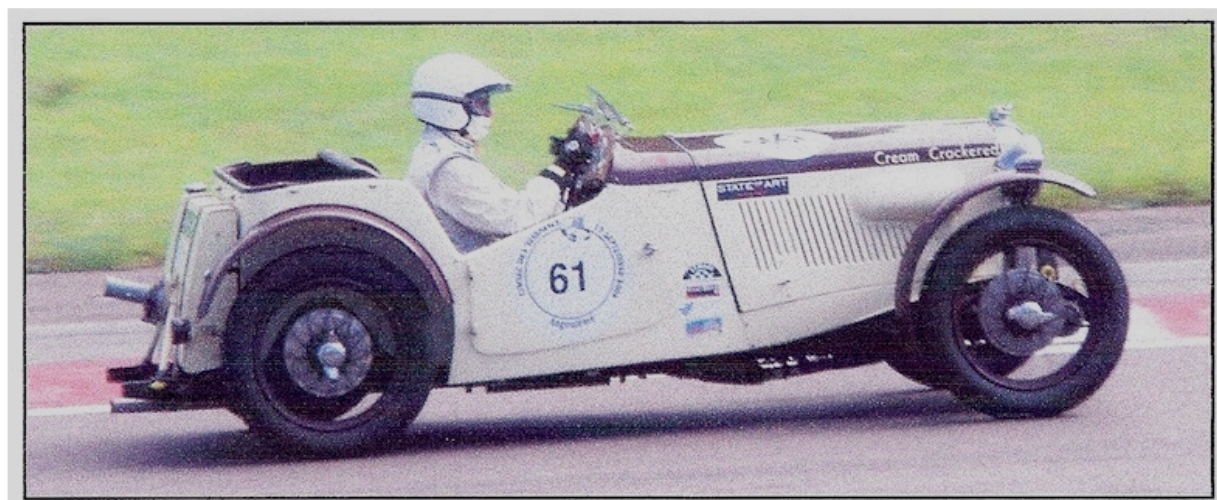
After this process is completed, it is time to hammer and dolly any uneven section. Example: If the welding heat caused the metal to pop in and out at one place, put the body dolly behind the metal and tap the metal to straighten the panel. Flip sides and do the same. Tapping on the weld line will be the best for results. If the panel is straight and meets your satisfaction, the panel is patched.

Sections with a curve in the metal will require a large sheet metal hammer to pound a general curve in the panel prior to the welding stage. Larger panels could be made up while the sheet metal is on the car so that you can bend the metal, on a sheet metal break, for edges. Once the bend has been completed for the bottom under the running board and another break for the curve to the firewall, the panel for the front door post is ready. Simply place the panel on the old remaining sheet metal area and outline the new patch panel. Sheet metal scissors will make an exact cut on the line so that the patch fits perfectly for welding.

For larger replacement jobs, use the original wood coach as the jig to properly fabricate the entire panel. This could be the entire panel under the door, a door skin, or the rear inner wheel well. Cutting a paper or cardboard pattern can be a good way to ensure proper cutting for exact fit. Then, after a series of hammerings, breaks, shrinkings, or stretchings, and spot welds, etc., the panel can be completely fabricated.

Everything can be fabricated for the sheet metal of a car if you have the time, experience, patience, or money. While there is not any piece of sheet metal part that cannot be repaired, in my opinion, a new fender may be less expensive than repairing what you have. You may also have a firewall that needs to be repaired regardless of the cost because there are none currently being manufactured. Any good sheet metal fabricator could produce one, however, with adequate time. Whether you replace or repair a panel, the old panel can be useful as the original from which the replacement is made. So do not destroy the old panels because they will save you considerable time in correcting the sheet metal problem.

Note from (then Editor) Dick Shepherd: *Not putting fiberglass over a hole is a purist's approach. Properly applied fiberglass over small or moderate holes in panels which do not provide structural strength is considered acceptable by many. It's a judgment call. □*



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:



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 or (703)

FOR SALE: Approximately 130 copies of the Sacred Octagon, \$130.00. There's no more room under my bed. No mailing, please! Contact Richard Embick at (703) 971-2196

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Greetings fellow Chapter members,

Despite limited interest in the pedal extenders I recently mentioned I was going to have fabricated, I went ahead and had several pairs made up. I thought you might like to see the final product. I'm impressed with the quality of the machining.

Cheers, Mike Cole

