

THE SQUARE RIGGER



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

[HTTP://WWW.CHESAPEAKECHAPTERMGTCLUB.COM](http://www.chesapeakechaptermgtclub.com)

SPRING 2015 EDITION --- PUBLISHED ON 17 APRIL 2015

Words from Our Chairman

We braved another winter season and nice weather is upon us again.

Although most of us hibernate our MGT's during the colder months, Milt Babirak and I took the last week in January and migrated to Florida to visit as far south as Key West. We took the Auto Train from Lorton, Virginia to Sanford, Florida and drove each of our MGT-D's the rest of the way. Naturally we prepared for just about any mechanical failure but are happy to say that we made the entire trip without incident. Overall each day was an adventure and we enjoyed ourselves. Currently plans are being made for another Florida trip in early 2016 and encourage members to join. A few pictures and some narrative follows in this issue of the TSR.



During the first weekend in May the Club will be holding the Mini-GOF in Shepherdstown, West Virginia at the elegant Bavarian Inn. The Mini-GOF will have several activities including a visit to Antietam battleground, a tasting tour of a winery as well as a chance to visit Shepherdstown. Please contact Lin Snyder snydelf@aol.com if you haven't already. To take a phrase from the Bavarian Inn - "The only thing we overlook is the Potomac".

Following the Mini-GOF we will be hosting the Original British Car Day (OBCD) the first weekend in June. This signature event is looked forward to each year by fellow British Car enthusiasts as well as the general public. Let John Tokar jtokar51@verizon.net hear from you if can volunteer to help with the show.

I received an email from Steve Barry sjberry@yahoo.com at 301-943-5449 who asked if a member would be able to make an appearance with of a 1953 MG-TD for his father's 80th birthday party this May. It would be a nice gesture on our part and he is willing to pay for the service. (His email is in the Want Ads).

Safety Fast!

Your Chairman, Shaun English

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From the Editor

I hope you enjoy this SPRING 2015 issue of **THE SQUARE RIGGER**, our club's quarterly newsletter. To make future editions more fun and interesting, I encourage you please to send me pictures of your cars, and stories about them, interesting articles about other MG cars, or anything else you think our readership will enjoy! Humor is welcome!

Flexibly yours, Stephen Woodall

Welcome to New Members

We send a warm welcome to the following new members:

Steve & Harriett Goldman / sagnoldnews@msn.com / Home Phone: 410-226-1099 / They have a white 1952 MGTD. Steve & Harriett live in Oxford, Maryland and he joined us for the Fall Ramble.

Stephen & Vickie Smith / ssmith15@cox.net / Home Phone: 703-321-0913 / They have a 1952 MGTD and a 1965 MGB. Stephen bought his case from Wayne Cassini at F-40 and is seeking technical advice concerning his car. He is hoping to attend the OBCD at Lilypons this year.

Recent Chapter Events

1st Annual Winter Tour 2015 --- Invasion of the Florida Keys Friday, the 23rd of January through Sunday, the 1st of February 2015

Chapter President, Shaun English, and Milton Babirak took their MGTDs to the Florida Keys earlier this year for the “1st Annual Winter Tour” from Friday, the 23rd of January 23 through Sunday, the 1st of February 2015. They took the Amtrak Autotrain from Lorton, Virginia to Sanford, Florida, just outside of Orlando. The train left in the late afternoon and travelled overnight, arriving in Sanford at 9:30 am the next morning. The accommodations and berths were clean and comfortable and the food in the dining car was excellent. Shaun and Milt then drove their MGTDs from Sanford down the middle of the Florida peninsula to the Keys. The northern most Key is Key Largo and the road connecting all of the Keys via numerous bridges is Route 1, aka “the Overseas Highway.” It is about 115 miles long and ends at Key West. The views from these bridges of the Florida Sound, Atlantic Ocean and the various Keys is one of the most beautiful drives in the US. The weather was great.



Off the Train in Florida



On a Lovely Beach in Key West



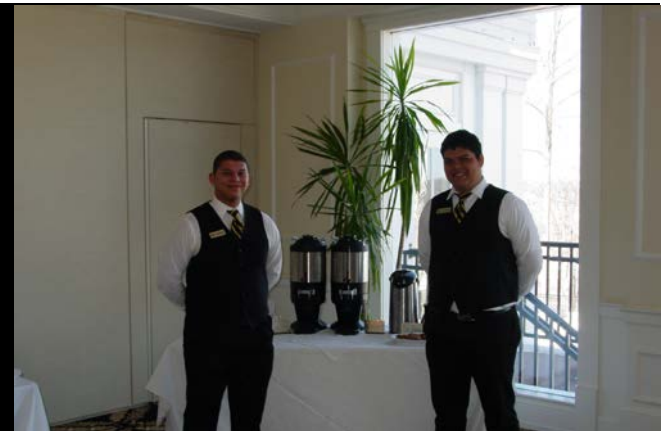
On the Road in the Sunshine

Our 2nd Annual Winter Tour is already being planned for late January or February in 2016. This trip may be to the Tampa-St. Petersburg area, on the Gulf Coast. If you have an interest in coming along with us, please contact Shaun or Milt!

Winter Eat Out 2015

Sunday, the 15th of February 2015

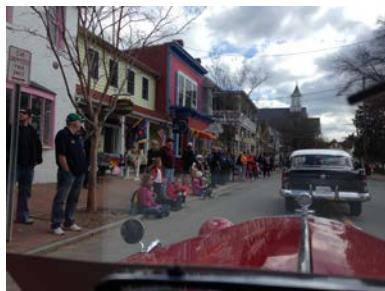
Our 2015 Winter Eat Out event was held again at the beautiful Trump Golf Club, thanks to Milton Babirak. Pictures!



“Rolling Into Spring” Parade

Saturday, the 4th of April 2015

The Classic Motor Museum in St. Michaels, Maryland held a "Rolling into Spring" event, with a classic car parade on Saturday, the 4th of April at 10 a.m. Shaun English and Milton Babirak attended with their cars. The Parade attracted about 40 classic cars. This parade was for the benefit of the Museum, with which our Chapter has a special relationship. The Museum has put up a building on the Museum property, since we were there at the Fall Ramble. It is an original building from the 1860s. Can't wait to see it full of classic cars!



Parade View from an MGTD



Cars Assembled at the Museum

Upcoming Chapter & Chapter-Related Events

Mini-Gof 2015

Our 2015 Mini-GoF is all set to occur, and coming up soon! It will run from Friday, the 1st of May through Sunday, the 3rd of May 2015. Planned for lovely Shepherdstown, West Virginia, there will be lots to see and do!

Lots on what happened in the Summer Edition of The Square Rigger!

The 38th Original British Car Day

Sunday, the 7th of June 2015

Our 38th Annual Meet of the Original British Car Day (OBCD) is scheduled for Sunday, the 7th of June 2015 at Lilypons Water Gardens in Adamstown, Maryland. All hands are needed to help with the show this year so give me call (410-775-0500) or drop me an email (jtakar51@verizon.net) to confirm your participation! I am especially looking for some assistance from our new members. A few of you have already signed up and your help is greatly appreciated.

This year's Featured Marque will be the MGA, in honor of its 60th Anniversary. I've been in touch with the local chapter of the NAMGAR and the word is out. We can expect a good turnout of MGA's this year!

So don't be shy, give me a call and do your part in running a car show that has gained national reputation!

We look forward to seeing you on Sunday, June 7, 2015!

Fall Ramble 2015

Chestertown and Rock Hall, Maryland

30 October through 1 November 2015

The votes are in and counted, and the Chapter membership has opted to hold this year's Fall Ramble in conjunction with the annual 'Downrigging' event in Chestertown, MD, which was described in the previous message soliciting votes between this option and another based around Fredrick, MD. (We plan to make a trip to Fredrick, MD the focus of the 2016 Ramble.)

We have reserved a block of rooms at the Osprey Point Inn and Marina (www.ospreypoint.com) twelve miles from downtown Chestertown. As you will see from the web site, the Osprey Point is a tasteful, attractive inn right on the water with its own marina. We have reserved a block of 13 rooms, but there is a strict deadline of May 15 for all those interested in participating in this year's Ramble to book their room. This can be done on line or by calling 410 639 2194. Be certain to identify yourself as a member of the Chesapeake Chapter group. Room rates run from \$195 to \$280, and the Osprey Point is offering a 10% discount off those prices for the group. There is a variety of room choices, both in the main building and in a converted barn on the premises. When calling, you will probably speak with Terry (the innkeeper) or Jessica (in charge of the marina). The dates are Friday, 30 October and Saturday, 31 October.

A large part of the excitement of Downrigging Weekend is the opportunity to sail on one of the many ships and boats participating in the event. While the Downrigging 2015 schedule has not yet been posted, we expect it to closely resemble that of 2014, which is still on the site as a point of reference. As part of the overall Ramble schedule, we propose that all those interested in sailing book for the Saturday morning sail (October 31) on the Kalmar Nyckel, the largest ship in the flotilla. The Kalmar Nyckel is a replica of a 17th Century Dutch trading vessel, and will probably be illustrated on the Downrigging web site when the 2015 schedule is posted. Again, all those who are interested in sailing should book as soon as possible by calling 410 778 5954. This is the phone of the Sultana Foundation, one of the local sponsors of Downrigging, and the group that handles reservations for the sailing. The morning sail on Saturday will very likely be from 10:00AM to 12:30PM, as with last year's schedule. Last year, the cost was \$55 per person. In case of inclement weather which prevents sailing, a full refund will be forthcoming. Transportation from the Osprey Point to Chestertown for this sail will be arranged. The second half of Saturday will be a scenic drive in the vicinity of Chestertown/Rock Hall, and of course the traditional Saturday night dinner and meeting, at the Osprey Point Inn.

Please book your room at the Osprey Point and, if interested, on the Kalmar Nyckel as soon as possible to avoid disappointment.

Your fall Ramble Committee is now moving to put together an exciting, enjoyable 2015 Ramble. Other events, including the traditional Saturday night dinner and group meeting, and at least one scenic drive in the vicinity of Chestertown, will also be included in this year's Fall Ramble. We're excited about this year's Ramble, which will provide a bit of a different experience from previous years, as we will be part of a large, vibrant, and educational event which will provide something for everyone participating in this year's Ramble.

Please send a brief email to Milton Babirak at mbabirak@babirakcarr.com to let him know you are attending the Ramble and whether you will be registering for the sail as well.

Thanks,

Milton Babirak

Membership Chairman, Chesapeake Chapter, NEMGTR

47539 Coldspring Place, Sterling, VA 20165 / 703-501-7924 / mbabirak@babirakcarr.com



Our Club Symbol --- A Real Chesapeake Bay Skipjack, Underway

Technical & Historical & Humor Articles for this TSR Issue

A Dozen Steps for Preparing Your MG for Spring

By Charlie Adams, TSR Technical Editor

1. Start with the brakes by checking your brake fluid level. If the fluid in the master cylinder is down at all from full, look carefully for leaks at the wheel cylinders. If you notice dampness at the master cylinder or a wheel cylinder, rebuild or replace it.
2. Every few years, the brake system should be bled to replace the brake fluid. Brake fluid, except for silicone fluid, accumulates water, which over time will rust steel brake lines and brake cylinders. If one cannot remember when the brakes were last bled, do it again.
3. Take a moment to check the steering system for looseness. On TDs and TFs, take a look at the steering rack universal joint, which consists of the three bolts, nuts and six rubber pads. If the steering is obviously loose, investigate and consider if parts need replaced before putting the car in service.
4. Take a moment to quickly look at the fan belt and cooling system hoses. If you see signs of deterioration or seepage, consider whether to replace them soon or before the next long distance drive.
5. How long has it been since the anti-freeze was changed? If 5 years or more, drain and flush the cooling system.
5. If your engine oil is dirty, plan on changing the oil and filter after the engine warmed up.
6. Next, if your car has been sitting for a few months over the winter, remove the spark plugs and spin the engine briefly until oil pressure registers on the gauge. This will assure good lubrication on initial start-up. Also, a quick looking at the plugs will provide insight into how efficiently each cylinder has been operating. Once oil pressure shows on the gauge replace the plugs.
7. Now start the engine. I often now use a short shot of starting fluid on engines that have not been run for months.
8. Perhaps you will want to adjust the carburetors if the spark plugs show signs of running lean or rich. Keep in mind our engines run a bit cooler if the mixture is slightly rich. Also, once an engine is running well, it is usually unnecessary to change the SU settings for lengthy periods of time.
9. As the engine idles and after shutting it off, look carefully around the carburetors for fuel leaks and assure the float bowls do not overflow. Look under the carbs as well to inspect the where the jets enter the carburetors. I'm tolerant of a slightly damp jet but drips should form there.
10. Check and add air to the tires as necessary. Are the tires aging...sidewall cracks are dangerous and indicate it's time to replace the tires.
11. Lubricate the door hinges and locks, making sure the doors are fully closing to the second step of the striker. Also, it's a good idea to check the lights, especially the brake lights.
12. Finally, take off on a short test drive. Make sure the brakes and steering feel excellent. Perhaps you will want to adjust the valves if they are noisy.

Jumping In With Both Feet – Restoration of My 1949 MGTC – Installation Nr 4

Steve Woodall, Your Smiling Editor

As faithful TSR readers will recall, I began this discussion of my MGTC restoration in our Summer 2014 Edition of The Square Rigger. Over the winter, since last December, I confess that I was not able to make time to get much more progress made. Other priorities prevailed. I hereby pledge that over the next three months, progress will resume! ☺

With all the bodywork and body painting complete, the work that remains largely involves rebuilding the engine, replacing the transmission with a five-speed, rewiring, and reassembly of the body, the interior, and the hood. I look forward to having it done for the Fall Ramble this year. That's my goal!

Window Shopper --- MG-T Series Cars

With Thanks to Classic Motor Sports Magazine, January 2015 Edition



Written by Tom Suddard, from the [Jan. 2015 issue](#)

Source: <http://classicmotorsports.net/articles/window-shopper-mg-t-series/>

The MG T series is an easy car to describe: There's one at every car show, and it looks 20 years older than it actually is. Look past the old-school exterior, though, and you'll find, well, old school underpinnings. The MG T series started with the MG TA in 1936, and over the next four generations and 20 years it kept its prewar character and classic design relatively unchanged.

Meanwhile, American-made cars progressed from small engines and swooping fenders to full-bodied highway cruisers. But that doesn't mean you should overlook the T series. Instead, it means you should buy one. These cars have everything necessary for driving, and nothing more. They're sports cars in their purest form.

The first postwar MG, the TC, still looked like the old TB. And it shared the same engine, too—albeit with slightly higher compression. However, the TC did have a few notable upgrades: a wider cockpit, and normal leaf springs in the front suspension. Yes, we just described a solid axle with leaf springs as an “upgrade.”

Its biggest change was where it was sold: This was the first T series sold in the U.S., albeit only with right-hand drive.

Though the TC was still stuck in the 1930s, Americans didn't seem to care. TCs were a welcome respite from the gigantic cars of the '40s. They were light—about 1700 pounds—simple, and fun. Add in a bunch of young men with disposable income returning from war, and it's no surprise that 10,000 TCs were built before the TD came along in 1950.

The TD's 1250cc engine was a carryover, but the chassis was all new. The body was lower and wider, and the solid front axle was gone—replaced by wishbones and coil springs. Out back, the frame was raised, giving the rear springs more room to move. The result was a more comfortable, better handling car.

Also on the chopping block were the giant wire wheels. Instead, the TD sported smaller, modern steel wheels. The final touch? Left-hand drive, a feature that was guaranteed to make the TD an even bigger hit in the U.S. About 30,000 units were produced, making this the most common T series.

In 1953, the final T series was introduced, the TF. The TD's chassis and running gear were carried over, but the body was decidedly modern. The grille was swept back, and the headlights were built into the fenders.

However, the TF's improvements weren't enough. The Triumph TR2 and Austin-Healey 100-4 were also introduced in 1953, and they were simply more modern cars. To compensate, MG increased the TF's displacement in 1954, stuffing 1466cc under the hood of the cleverly named TF 1500.

1955 marked the end of the T series, though, and the beginning of the new era. The MGA was introduced, and with it the MG Car Company had finally abandoned the 1930s for good.

Tom Suddard

MG-T Shopping Advice

John Twist started University Motors Ltd. in 1975, and he's been maintaining and restoring MGs ever since. His first MG was a 1953 TD, serial number TD28822.

A good engine rebuild, including an aligned bore, will reduce oil leakage to occasional spots—but the engine will never be drip-free. Always use high-zinc oil, as this engine has a flat-tappet cam. Superchargers are available for those who want more power.

The clutch has a carbon release bearing. Proper driving means pressing on the clutch pedal only when taking off from a stop or changing gears.

Five-speed fully-synchronized gearboxes are available as an aftermarket option.

A great way to improve the handling of the TD and TF is by adding a front anti-roll bar and radial tires.

The frames are steel, but the bodies are made of wood covered in sheet metal. It is not unusual to have some rotten wood, especially at the pillar at the rear of the door. Seat belts were not available originally, but three-point belts are easily fitted.

John Twist

University Motors Ltd.
4571 Patterson Avenue SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49512
universitymotorsltd.com
(616) 301-2888

Paul Dierschow is the owner of Sports Car Craftsmen, a fantastic repair and restoration shop that sports a T series in its logo.

People love these cars because they remind them of how motoring was in a bygone era. The first modification I'd recommend would be to the driver's mindset. Change your expectations before you even get in the drivers' seat. If you make it past those (mostly mental) hurdles, there are a few common weaknesses in the T series cars that often need to be fixed or examined.

The clutch release is notorious for being abrupt, often screeching the tires upon take-up. The transmission mount is frequently saturated with oil, making it nearly useless. Additionally, a small link pin connecting the transmission tail housing to the rear mounting bracket is frequently damaged or missing.

TD and TF rear axles are notorious for having loose nuts connecting the drums to the axle shafts, producing a horrendous clunk on braking or accelerating. Both of those parts are usually damaged when these symptoms are present and unfortunately, new drums are not currently available.

Lastly, the door latch mechanisms are of a very poor design, causing the striker to be torn from its wood anchorage every time the door is slammed shut. Our solution is to make a reinforcement plate of 1/8-inch steel. That plate is then tucked between the wood buried inside the A-post and the outer body skin that covers it. Machine screws are then cut to precisely the correct length and installed with a thread locking product.

Sports Car Craftsmen LLC
5635 Kendall Court
Arvada, CO 80002
sportscarcraftsmen.com
(303) 422-9272

Preview --- the Car Badge Design for Our 40th OBCD Event



An Input for Future Reference, Thanks to Mike Lutz

...how else when they're anywhere from 125
club to 200 feet apart can a vehicle be drawn to them? There's
p:// plenty of open space in between!
Be safe out there.



Almost time to get the dust off!

It's rally time again!

by Steve Dellinger

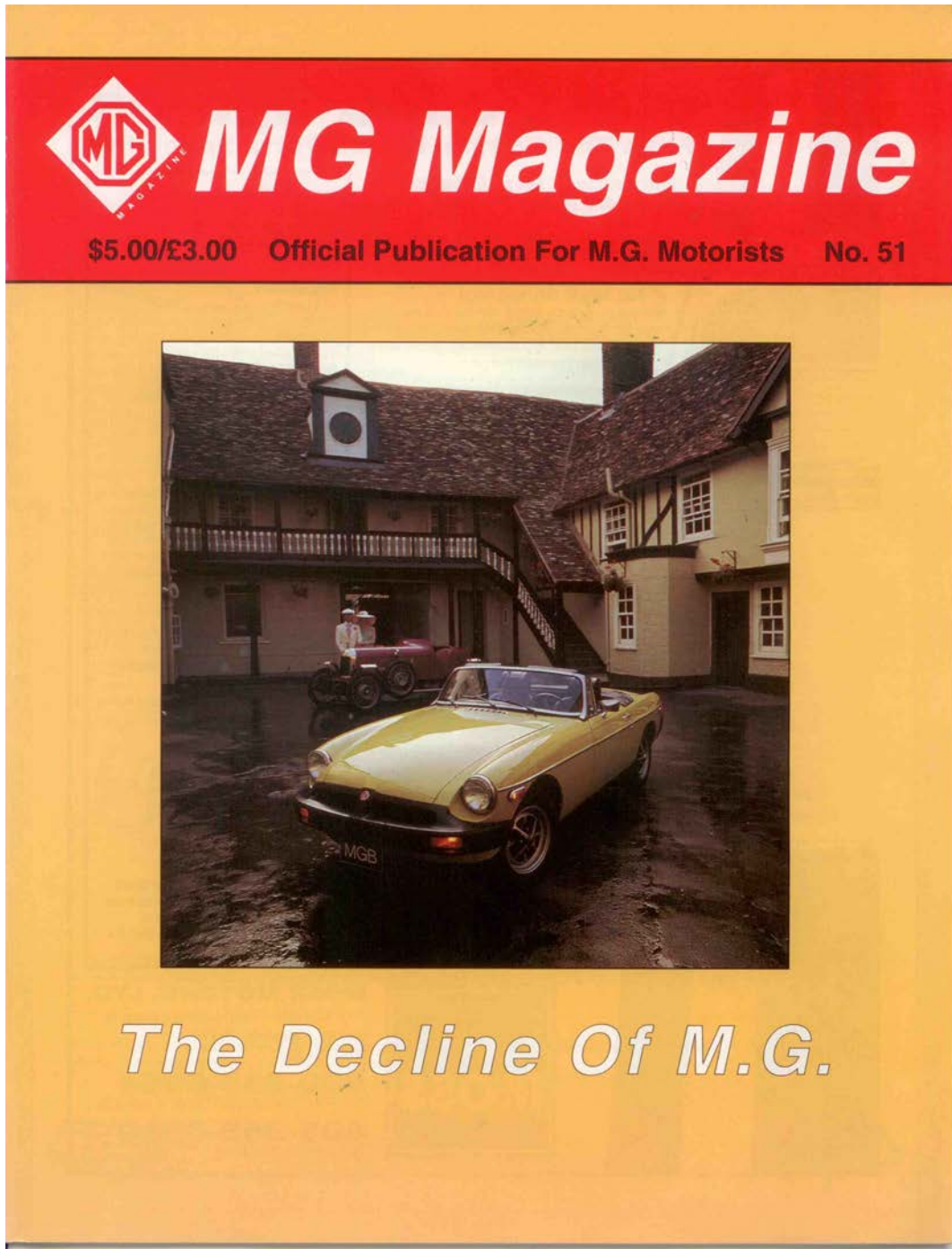
The 25th running of the "Get The Dust Off" Rally is coming soon! LANCO member Eric Salminen is once again the Rallymaster and LANCO President Dennis Blevins is the Registrar. This year's event will be held on Sunday, May 3rd. It will be a time-speed-distance Monte Carlo-style rally covering approximately 60 miles.

The start location will be at 12321 Jerusalem Rd., Kingsville, Md. Registration opens at 10 a.m.; drivers' meeting starts at 10:30 a.m. The rally will finish at the Dejon Vineyards, 5300 Hydes Rd., Hydes, Md. Registration is \$30 per car until April 25th, and \$35 per car afterwards. The registration form can be downloaded from the MGOB website, www.mgsofbaltimore.org.

Instructors from the MGs of Baltimore and the Sports Car Club of America will once again conduct a Rally School prior to the GTDO, so that drivers can learn (or brush up on) the skills of automotive road rallying. The Rally School will be held on Sunday, April 19th, at the Joppa-Magnolia Volunteer Fire Company, 1403 Old Mountain Rd., Joppa, Md. Pre-registration (\$20 per car) is required. Registrations are due by April 11th. Check out the MGOB website or the LANCO website for updated information.

Next, a Long Article on the Decline of the British Sports Car Empire

Thanks to the MG Magazine, Edition Nr 51



The Decline Of M.G.

The Decline of the British

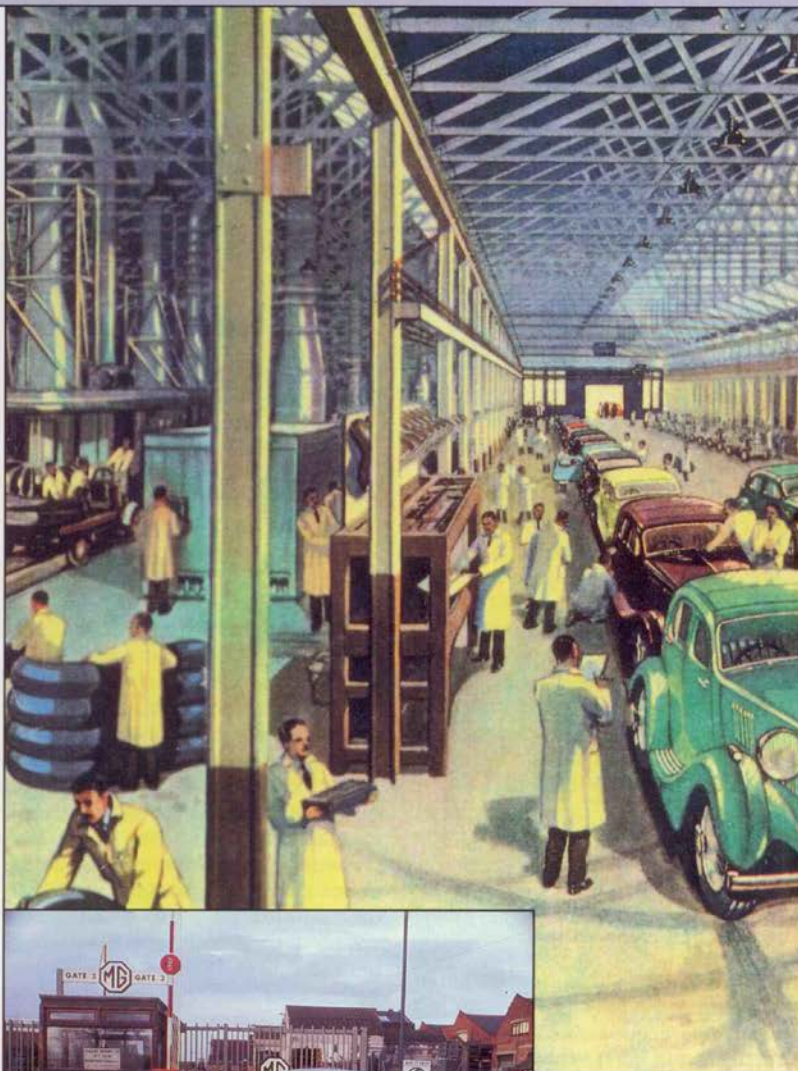
How the English automotive industry lucked into a lucrative U.S. franchise without knowing why, and then threw it away

By Timothy R. Whisler, Ph.D.

You've seen the advertisements. The car is a trim little two-seater, perhaps British Racing Green, with its convertible top lowered to reveal an interior that is at once Spartan and cozy. Its jaunty styling evokes wind blown freedom and quick adventure, and the manufacturer's promise of high performance and a modest price seem almost irresistible. The car has all the characteristics of a classic British sports car except for one: It's not British. It's a Mazda, not an M.G. or a Triumph. This is, after all, 1994, not 1963.

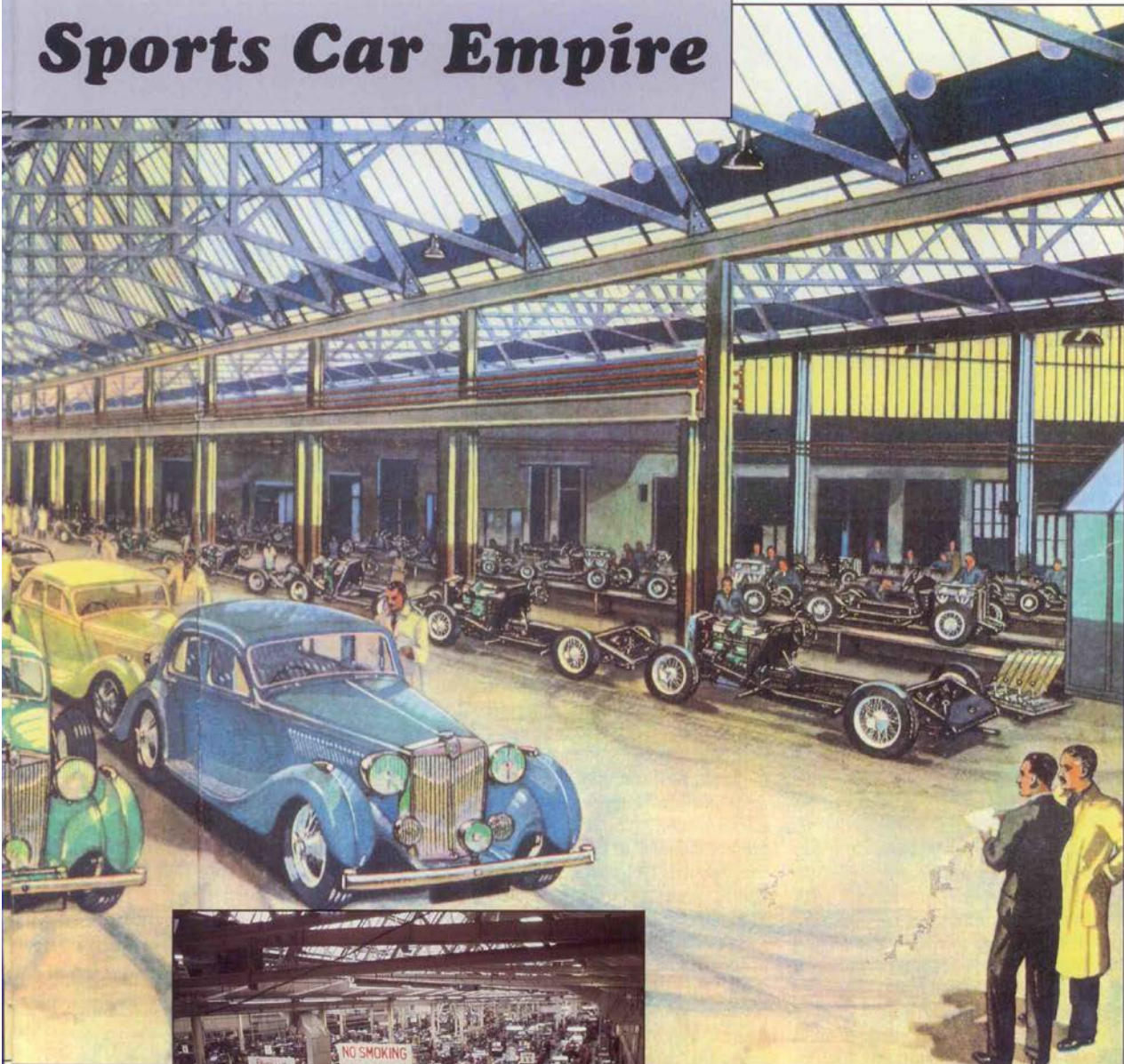
A dozen years have passed since the British stopped almost all manufacturing of sports cars—one of the great niche products of industrial history. Today only upmarket British-built cars such as Jaguar (now owned by Ford) and Range Rover—which is, in fact, a different sort of creature—can be found on U.S. roads. Once-familiar names such as Sunbeam, Triumph, and Austin Healey have passed even from British showrooms. What happened?

A better question might be, What went right? The British sports car industry was chronically plagued by exorbitant design costs, poorly skilled managers and, eventually, engineers, unsophisticated corporate structures, disruptive labor relations, poor production techniques, poor distribution structures, frequent shortages of parts, and horrendous quality control. Yet Austin-Healey, M.G., and Triumph achieved great success in product



The Marcham Road gate to the Abingdon works back in 1976. This was the main entrance to the M.G. factory. Leaving the factory is a ZB Magnette. Today, a traffic circle occupies this gate site . . . the ZB is still running . . .

Sports Car Empire



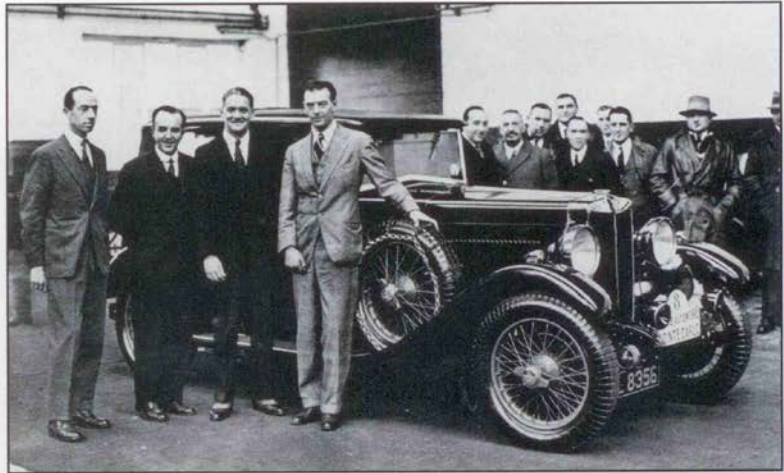
The lovely painting of the M.G. works was done by Harold Connolly, Cecil Kimber's favorite artist. The photograph to the left shows that forty years really didn't change things all that much. Assembly of M.G.s was done by hand and manpower moved the cars down the line.

image, unit profitability and export sales. The firms almost stumbled into their success, and they failed to recognize what their real strengths were. As those strengths wore away, the industry's institutions proved impossibly rigid, and the companies couldn't meet the challenges of changing market conditions and emerging competition. The story contained lessons that Detroit appears to be slowly learning. The British mass-market sports car is dead and buried, but its passing can still teach the Americans something.

The name M.G. Car Company was registered by its proprietor, William R. Morris, in 1930, but the company's operations began in 1911, when Morris opened a car sales and repair shop in Oxford known as Morris Garages (hence M.G.). Morris was an entrepreneur and a tinkerer, not an engineer, but he realized that mass production using common components was fundamental to expanding output and lowering costs.

Morris increasingly focused on volume car production, and in 1922 he appointed Cecil Kimber, a versatile motor man, to manage Morris Garages. The following year Kimber began modifying the engines and bodies of standard Morris models. Initially indifferent to Kimber's M.G. sports cars and sedans, Morris soon came to regard them as an important part of his arsenal in a battle with Austin and Ford. Demand for M.G. customized cars increased throughout the decade, and in 1929 production was moved from Morris Garages to a disused portion of a tannery in the nearby market town of Abingdon on Thames.

Morris believed, as did most British car makers, that the key to healthy domestic sales lay in offering a model in every market segment. His marketing strategy was similar to that of Alfred Sloan at GM: As a British buyer's income and family increased, he could move from a mass-market Morris to a higher-priced Riley, just as an American would trade in his or her Chevrolet for a Buick. By offering its own upgrade, M.G. could sell a car that had "a 20 percent improvement in performance and a 50 percent increase in price," according to



The two men in the dark suits between the co-drivers of the Monte Carlo Rally 18/80 are Cecil Kimber on the left and Sir William Morris on the right. The photo was taken at the factory before the famous mid-winter rally. Note the tire chains fitted to the fender mounted spare.

John Thornley, the general manager of Abingdon from 1952 until 1969.

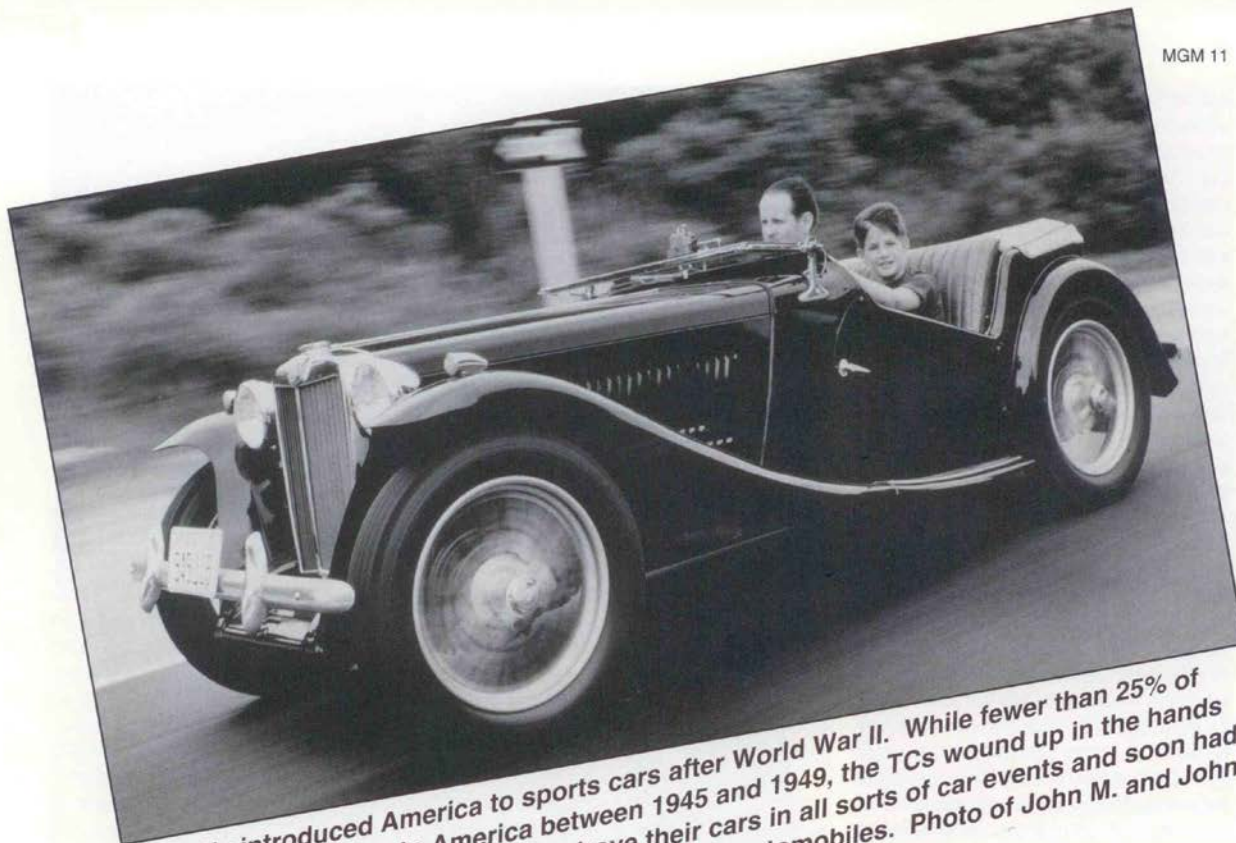
The cars were seldom seen in the United States before 1946. After the Second World War, as Abingdon moved from assembling tank and air plane components back to cars, the restoration of the wider British economy was impeded by shortages of raw materials and hard currency, especially dollars needed to buy food and other essential commodities. The Labour Government decided that British industry must earn those scarce dollars through a campaign known as "Export or Die."

The government pressured the industry to export 70 percent of its output to hard-currency markets and then placed restrictions on domestic car sales to secure compliance. Despite the wartime destruction of European competition and Detroit's inability to meet U.S. demand, the British motor firms, including the Morris and, later, the Nuffield Organisation (Morris had become Lord Nuffield in 1934 and, in 1938, the Riley, M.G., Morris, and Wolsely companies fused), were unenthusiastic about selling abroad. Some firms had exported within the empire before the war, but now they had to establish distribution structures and product image in unfamiliar markets like

the United States. Today comprehensive market research projects and massive advertising campaigns would precede entry into such markets, but in 1947 Nuffield simply shipped a number of cars to the United States and waited to see what happened.

The Nuffield board anticipated that its small sedan, the American-styled Morris Minor, would gain a large market share as a substitute for scarce Detroit models. The car was a huge success in England, but its appeal didn't hold up over seas. British sedans might have looked like U.S.-built cars to Englishmen, but to American buyers they were small, cramped, noisy, underpowered, poorly sprung, and prone to break down. Moreover, they were expensive compared with their American rivals and had few dealers selling them.

The "export or die" campaign did work, however. From 1947 until the early 1960s England was the world's leading exporter of automobiles and stood second only to the United States in total production. And the M.G. TC sports car, not the Minor, became Nuffield's best seller in the United States. The car was introduced by American GIs who had brought their M.G.s home after the war; although the



The TC really introduced America to sports cars after World War II. While fewer than 25% of the total production came to America between 1945 and 1949, the TCs wound up in the hands of many enthusiasts. These enthusiasts drove their cars in all sorts of car events and soon had many Americans re-thinking the way they used their automobiles. Photo of John M. and John B. Lavery in an Export Model TC is by Bruce McElfresh.

model was familiar to British consumers, Americans had never seen anything like it. It was an accidental sensation: the M.G. offered unique driving characteristics and classic styling. The compact design, with convertible top, was a sexy, indulgent alternative to more practical sedans. While the car's engine might have been unimpressive compared with Detroit's units, the M.G. TC offered much higher levels of steering, road holding, and braking, combined with a stiff suspension system. It all made for an exceptional driving experience. The M.G. was a differentiated product that created a market niche and distinctive image. As such, M.G. sales were not hindered by a price that was higher than a U.S.-built mass market sedan's. In 1949 a TC cost \$1,875; a base model Chevrolet was priced at \$1,329.

In the absence of competition M.G. had the luxury of developing its T series sports cars through incremental innovations. The TD (1949-53) and TF (1953-55) offered slightly reworked cockpits, including the essential left-hand drive, reworked body panels, and independent front suspension. All of the models utilized virtually the same chassis, body style, and engine that could be found in prewar designs. While M.G. essentially held a monopoly in the moderate price segment and Jaguar offered upmarket sports cars, the middle price segment was left vacant, a position soon filled in 1953 by the Triumph TR2.

Once again circumstances, rather than strategy, played a large role in this development. Triumph, based in Coventry, had been a successful producer of upmarket sedans and sports cars before the war. The company went into receivership in 1939

and lost its plant to the Nazi blitz, and the Standard Motor Company optimistically purchased the name in 1944. But a succession of Standard-Triumph (ST) models achieved few sales in any overseas market during the late 1940s, and the company's failure in the United States was especially doleful. The situation became critical in 1950, when the government announced that the Korean War rearmament forced it to ration steel and that quotas would be based on higher export sales. In 1952 the Ministry of Supply suggested that ST concentrate upon its recently developed and largely exported farm tractors. The ST chairman, Sir John Black, replied that the firm was developing a new range of car models for export. In fact, Black had ordered the construction of a sports car prototype only one day earlier.

The Triumph sports car was conceived in a period of severe material scarcity, a condition that generally prohibits new model development. At the time of the model's unveiling, a decidedly cool reception from the press

suggested that the model might be stillborn. After six months of further development, the company launched the TR2 sports car. This sleek body rested upon a chassis and suspension borrowed from existing Triumph volume cars, and the high-performance engine was actually a modified version of the unit developed for the previous Vanguard model; it also fitted in the firm's tractors. While no advertisement would reveal the mundane nature of these components, the use of common parts, even if slightly altered, was the key to producing these semi specialist sports cars at moderate cost.

This lesson of common components was then forced upon M.G. The Nuffield Organisation's traditional policy of offering a wide variety of models had been accompanied by a strategy of using an equally wide range of engines, and the company's cost structure combined with the low export profit margins and material scarcities to reduce the firm's profits. By the early 1950s it had become increasingly clear to Lord Nuffield, now in semi-retirement, that his once-imposing empire was too small to achieve increasingly important economies of scale in manufacturing. In 1952 he reluctantly agreed to a merger with his hated rival, Austin Motor Company. M.G. and the other Nuffield badges became part of the British Motor Corporation (BMC), a holding company that fell under the dictates of the Austin managing director, Leonard Lord.

Lord refused to integrate the two companies, insisting that only the three Austin-built engines be used in BMC's wide model range, including sports cars. As a result, through the early 1960s BMC regularly achieved an efficient scale in engine production. The strategy lowered sports car component costs, increased annual output, and facilitated the development of a wider range of models. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s BMC and Triumph enjoyed an effective duopoly that was almost too good to be true, allowing them to compete on the basis of design and image instead of price. (The Japanese Datsun and the Italian Fiat posed little threat.) Periodically the British manufacturers launched new models to maintain a competitive edge, creating a



Above is the office block of the M.G. factory on Cemetery Road. This building still exists, and an effort is underway in Abingdon to establish an M.G. museum in it. The contemporary photo is of Jean Kimber Cook, the daughter of Cecil Kimber, taken in the summer of 1990.

design spiral. M.G. and Austin Healey (introduced in 1952, when Lord agreed to produce the designs of the Healey) were generally the first movers, specializing in bold, almost revolutionary designs. Triumph responded with an evolutionary program, developing its robust designs gradually. Their contest for North American market share (where about 80 percent of output was sold) spawned models priced from entry to upmarket, as they matched levels of engine performance, cargo space, and interior comfort.

Consistently the annual leader in sports car sales, M.G. remained in the traditional moderate price segment. Its T Series was replaced in 1955 by the sleek MGA and MGA coupe (1956-62). The MGB (1962-80) proved to be the bestselling British sports car with more than 520,000 units built during its eighteen-year production run. Austin-Healey completed the BMC range by offering the upmarket Austin-Healey 3000 (1952-67) and the introductory Sprite (1958-71), which shared an engine with the Mini to lower costs. The



Triumph Spitfire

"bug-eye" Sprite was restyled in 1961 and launched together with an M.G. clone using the resurrected Midget name. The Triumph company's development strategy reflected a chronic shortage of capital. Incremental innovation—slight modification of the body, better engine performance, improved braking—transformed the TR2 into the TR3 (1955-57), TR3A (1957-61), and TR3B (1961). But the changes weren't substantial enough; Triumph never achieved the popularity of M.G. The company continued its tradition of relatively minor modifications with the restyled TR4 (1961-65), the more powerful and comfortable TR4A (1965) and TR250 (1966-67), and the TR6 (1968-74), which retained the six-cylinder engine and most of the body panels fitted to previous models.

If the TR6 could be traced to the original Triumph sports car, the Spitfire (1963-80) emerged from the Triumph Herald sedan, one of the most versatile designs in British motor history. The Herald's floor pan and engine, the two most costly components, formed the foundation for the sports cars. The sedan and sports cars even shared many major body panels, and the Spitfire and GT6 (1966-77) were identical except for the latter's hardtop, minor trim, and six-cylinder engine shared with the Vitesse, a high-performance version of the Herald.

ST bet everything on the Herald, gambling that the new sedan would capture a significant share of the mass market. Severe quality problems, however, led ST to the brink of



Triumph TR 6

bankruptcy in 1960. The following year the Leyland Motor Corporation, Britain's largest producer of trucks and buses, purchased the firm and immediately abandoned the mass-market strategy, stressing increased utilization of existing capacity and balanced labor and capital inputs. Equally important, Leyland committed capital to develop ST's designs for the Spitfire, GT6, TR4, and an upmarket sedan range.

In 1963 Leyland-Triumph reported a profit and acknowledged the importance of sports cars in the company's continuing turnaround during the mid-1960s. At the time Triumph sports cars had the highest unit profits of the firm's range even though export sales tend to have low margins as a result of higher distribution and financing costs. M.G. and Austin-Healey also returned large unit profits from North American sales, yet BMC annual profits declined steadily. As early as the mid-1960s it was clear that British-built sports and volume cars were on divergent paths. Many economic historians have argued that the rigid social and economic institutions developed in the nineteenth century impeded the implementation of mass-production techniques in Britain. Whether this is true or not, those same institutions were well suited to the production of sports cars and other niche motor products. The sports car makers' success had stemmed from differentiated model design and characteristics, little interference in operations by the corporate staff, the use of common components especially engines—to keep manufacturing costs

down, and traditional British labor-intensive production methods. But by the 1960s, when these production methods had become a burden, the firms were terribly slow to abandon them.

Abingdon, which was BMC's sports car assembly plant, lacked even rudimentary machinery. The car body, produced in another BMC factory, was pushed by two workers to each work station, where engines and other components were fitted with hand (and eventually air powered) tools. This method provided the flexibility needed to assemble six different low-volume models with output controlled by a piecework payment system that was used in all BMC and Leyland plants until the early 1970s. Measured daywork payment required careful management of variable costs, but Abingdon could adjust labor inputs and work speeds to meet changes in demand with little cost penalty. The obvious disadvantage of this assembly method was limited annual output.

Compared with the Dickensian assembly at Abingdon, production at Triumph looked positively modern. It was similar to that used for volume cars, and roughly balanced mechanical and labor inputs allowed Triumph to earn unit profits even though the annual output of a particular model was about twenty to twenty-five thousand units. The Spitfire and GT6 were so similar to the Herald and Vitesse that the cars were assembled on the same track, and this sharing of production costs enabled the Spitfire to be priced between the Midget and MGB. The higher price of the TR series permitted assembly on a dedicated mechanized line.

By the latter half of the 1960s many of the production difficulties that bedeviled the British mass producers

Jaguar and M.G.



were evident at Triumph as well. Productivity was reduced by overstaffing, old machinery, poor methods and supervision, and increasing labor unrest as the unions challenged paternalistic management. The problems resulted in and were exacerbated by frequent component shortages at Triumph and M.G. Other weaknesses were becoming apparent: neither BMC nor Triumph had been able to construct viable distribution structures in overseas markets despite their early entry into the U.S. market. Sales and service facilities were weak. A reluctance to invest in direct distribution meant the firms relied on their independent distributors and dealers, who frequently pursued their own interests rather than those of the manufacturers. Low sales of British volume cars, recurrent shortages of sports cars and spare parts, and inadequate marketing and servicing assistance from Britain compounded the problem. Seasonal sports car turnover forced many dealers to acquire an additional non-British franchise to survive the competition.

Until 1963 the British monopoly in the moderately price semi-specialist sports car segment camouflaged its inherent weaknesses. While a cross-elasticity of demand with other imports (such as the Volkswagen "Beetle") had always existed, the tremendous success of the Ford Mustang (1964) made it clear that the British had not fully exploited the sales potential of this niche. However, bad American management decisions gave the British a second chance. The sales threat from the Mustang and its "muscle car" imitators—most significantly, the Camaro—receded as Detroit attempted to increase sales by developing the size and comfort of the models.

Nissan's Datsun Z series presented a more serious danger. The 1969 Datsun 240-Z offered a greater level of innovative mechanical and design characteristics, including a high product reliability—which had perpetually eluded the British—at a price slightly higher than that of the established competition (1970 prices: Datsun \$3,647, TR6 \$3,375, MGB \$2,875, Spitfire \$2,395, Midget \$2,279).

Two years after its debut Datsun became the bestselling sports car in the United States and a year after that it was outselling M.G. and Triumph combined.

Over the next decade Nissan maintained its market share through rapid development and efficient distribution of the Z series. The Japanese, however, weren't able to drive the British from the market altogether. Instead, by offering more power, amenities, and passenger comfort in successive Z models, Datsun moved its sports cars upmarket in price and image (1975 prices: Datsun 280-Z \$6,284, MGB \$4,350). Coincidentally, Datsun's misguided provision for and the Europeans' slow reaction to U.S. legislation banning convertible cars (never actually enacted) resulted in a British and Italian duopoly in a shrinking open-car market segment.

The merger of Leyland-Triumph and BMC in 1968 to form the British Leyland Motor Corporation (BL) appeared to strengthen the British position. BL, however, faced enormous problems: aging and overlapping models, declining market share, outdated and scattered production facilities, a discontented and overmanned work force, inadequate distribution structures, and limited investment capital.

Furthermore, that same year the United States introduced rigid standards for car exhaust emissions and car safety. The legislation had a profound effect on British sports car manufacturers, who had to either suspend U.S. sales or abruptly modify their cars. That caused the market share to droop even further. BL's CEO, Donald Stokes, believed that the firm's weaknesses could be overcome by establishing a multi-divisional structure. The sports car line companies and their parent firms had a tradition of entrepreneurial and personal management and were used to working with a large degree of operational freedom. That legacy, however, had prevented the development of the middle management skills necessary to supervise and coordinate the activities of a multi-divisional firm. Partly in response to this deficiency and partly because of his nature, Stokes often

intervened in trivial operational matters.

There was plenty of opportunity for confusion. In BL's sports car division, seven models were assembled in two plants supplied by dozens of manufacturing facilities. M.G. and Triumph were placed in two different divisions, while the component producers and sales staffs were situated in yet two others. As day-to-day minutiae overtook strategic concerns, inertia and confusion overwhelmed the firm.

In a desperate, misguided move Stokes initiated an ambiguous rationalization plan. New sports models built in brand-new plants with modern capital-intensive methods would gradually replace the existing models manufactured with labor-intensive techniques. Employment would not have to be reduced despite increased mechanization and decreased model offerings, since the new models would be produced in high volume, and the successful sales of each model would finance the next, overcoming the capital constraints.

The plan quickly collapsed. The new mass-market cars, hastily designed and poorly built, did not sell, and BL was forced to return to old models to preserve domestic and export market share. Sports cars became even more vital as steady U. S. sales provided badly needed income.

British Leyland's next misstep, the introduction of the Triumph TR7 (1975-81), vividly revealed the problems that eventually ruined the company. Amazingly, the model was intended to replace the entire sports car range. The project inevitably ignited a rivalry between M.G. and Triumph divisions since the firm refused to merge the two design teams. Perhaps more serious, BL failed to recruit and retain engineers. In the past sports cars had been designed by "practical men" who had learned their trade through experience. But these practical men did not have the expertise to meet the challenge of making cars that were safer, more fuel-efficient, more reliable, and less polluting than the standard models. The scarcity of engineers in Britain, combined with a historic suspicion of university graduates, left



Perhaps the TR7 wouldn't have been the mistake it became if the executives had followed this path. This official photo shows that at least someone was thinking that the new sports car should be an M.G. Look carefully at the logos on the car! Was this the MGD?

BL with few engineering resources at a critical time.

As a result, BL abandoned its innovative design when it was most needed. The TR7 was a poor attempt at imitating Datsun's Z series. The controversial styling and the undistinguished attributes, along with horrendous product quality, provoked tremendous sales resistance despite a price that was considerably lower than the Datsun's (\$5,100 against \$6,359). After producing 32,743 units during the first full year of TR7 production, only 22,939 units were built in 1976, compared with 28,681 MGB units.

Only the company's projected high annual sales of the TR7 (more than any British model had ever achieved) justified the use of dedicated capital-intensive production techniques and unique components. Failure to meet sales targets caused low capacity utilization and productivity rates and, consequently, the disastrous combination of high variable and fixed costs. Moreover, the poor build method and haphazard supervision that resulted from the firm's engineering crisis further raised the cost structure. Management's attempt in late 1976 to reduce variable costs by bringing the labor force in line with output resulted in a strike. It lasted a full year, but in effect

the dispute simply reduced the output of a virtually unsalable car. The car's poor image condemned the more innovative convertible and high-performance versions, which were launched in 1979.

At that point the design, production, and degree of market competition of the TR7 and BL's struggling volume cars were virtually the same. It follows that the sales, output, and unit profit results were also similar. Clearly BL could not adapt to capital-intensive manufacturing methods and a sophisticated corporate structure. In fact, there was an increase in productivity and capacity utilization rates when TR7 production was moved to smaller, more flexible, less mechanized plants in 1977 and in 1979.

Such rigidities affected the fate of Austin-Healey, M.G., and the Triumph Spitfire as well. The Sprite was one of the few models eliminated in BL's rationalization plan. The planned phaseout of the other models and the acute shortage of capital led to expedient modifications, such as the MGB's massive and singularly unattractive bumpers, to meet the 1975 U.S. collision and exhaust regulations. The Spitfire and the MG range were already outdated compared with the new Mazda RX-7 and several volume cars, but desperate alterations further

reduced their appeal.

Only low sales of the TR7 and convertible tops kept the older models in production. Although M.G. sold a postwar record of 34,794 units in the United States in 1977, time and circumstance were catching up. Reduced sales—caused by the U.S. recession of 1979-80, the appreciating value of sterling against the dollar, and BL's mysterious decision to retain unique engines after the cancellation of its sedan counterparts—raised costs considerably.

Closed out of Europe by its underdeveloped distribution structure and unwilling to raise prices to the level of the fledgling TR7, BL canceled the older models in the midst of the 1979 corporate consolidation plan, and production dwindled to a halt the next year. Depressingly low sales in the wake of the MGB and Spitfire withdrawal left the TR7 expendable. In 1981, during yet another corporate rescue plan, the sports car of the future became history. The British finally surrendered the niche they had created.

Austin-Healey, M.G., and Triumph achieved their great successes when they were part of small, simply structured firms that permitted a large degree of operational freedom. It's true that by 1968 the world motor industry had long bypassed the Victorian methods of Abingdon and the semi-mechanized techniques of Triumph, but BL's greatest failure was not its attempts to implement new processes but the rapidity with which it abandoned everything it had been doing right. Big is not always better, especially when a firm lacks adequate expansion resources and concentrates upon its weaknesses to the detriment of its strengths. Detroit might take note—and indeed, may already have begun to.

Timothy R. Whisler earned his Ph.D. in economic history and is an assistant professor of history at St. Francis College in Loretto, PA. He recently sold his 1971 M.G. Midget and is looking for an MGB at present. Reprinted By Permission of AMERICAN HERITAGE Magazine, a division of Forbes Inc., ©1993

Finding Out When Your MG-T Was Built (Re-Run, once more, in case you missed!)

With Thanks to Rocky Van Dullen (Williamsburg MG-T Club)

By going to the website below, I discovered that my MGTC (Chassis Number TC 9276) came off the production line on 16 July 1949, with original engine number XPAG 9851. All you need to get your build completion date is go to the web site, and enter your Chassis Number.

This is the (UK) M.G. Car Club's T-Register website, which has a feature showing production records, what little there are:

http://www.tregister.org/recall_page.php?req_page=records_home

This information comes from a bound, handwritten ledger book now in the Club's keeping. Rocky Van Dullen told me that he saw/held the original when at their HQ in Abingdon in 1994. The only data captured was Chassis number, Engine number and Build date. Nothing on paint, upholstery or destination. How things have changed with data bases! Rocky and Catherine Van Dullen have been the proud owners of TC2482 for 38 years!

Extracts from the Brochure for the New MG6

Go to this Web Site to Download Your Own Copy!

<http://mg.co.uk/news/2011/05/20/full-mg6-gt-brochure-available-to-download/>





MG6 GT. Experience more

The new MG6 GT is the car you've been waiting for. Almost 90 years in the making, this award-winning fastback has sporting prowess in every curve. Designed and engineered at our famous home, Longbridge in Birmingham, it effortlessly embodies the iconic MG badge with superior British engineering, cutting-edge innovation, statement style and, naturally, unparalleled sports performance. So why wait a moment longer? Awaken your inner racing champion with the MG6 GT.

WHITCART

MG2U

Safe, sound and secure

A car this desirable needs top-notch security. But being MG, we didn't stop at best-in-class. We made the MG6 so secure that it won the Car's Best Security Award 2012 with its drive-away locking system, Thatcham category 1 alarm, immobiliser and perimeter detection, along with fortified body security and enhanced window markings. With all these defences, your MG6 GT is safe, secure

and benefits from the lowest insurance group in its class (UK to 14G)

Total cost of ownership
With an Euro NCAP safety rating 3 years (or 60,000 miles) manufacturer-backed mechanical warranty, 6 years bodywork warranty and our 3-year comprehensive roadside assistance package, in standard MG gives you absolute confidence to simply enjoy the drive.

Captivate! Drive the MG6 GT today

Feel pure exhilaration for yourself, put the GT through its paces today. If you're busy or your nearest MG centre simply isn't near enough, we'll bring a new MG6 GT to your driveway or work car park with MG2U. Simply visit MG.CO.UK/MG2U, enter your postcode in the first box at the top and your nearest showroom and MG2U delivery option will be displayed. Then we'll contact you for an easy delivery of your test car. Book your test drive at MG.CO.UK.

MG6

Sport is more than skin deep ...it's in our blood

Our racing heritage is imprinted in our hearts, our heads, and even on the skin of the MG6 GT. Choose the responsive petrol or the powerful diesel and get used to second-gear at low speeds. Modern sporting style combines with superb handling and pure presence on the road. The growing crosshatch grille, sporty alloy wheels, McPherson strut suspension, sports chassis and enhanced traction control all as standard mean the MG6 GT not only hugs every curve of the road for an unforgettable driving experience, it looks the part too.



MG6 GT

Black shown is MG6 GT Union Blue (metallic). *SE models only. **TSE models only.



Four parking sensors



18" 5-spoke sports alloy



Sporty LED rear light clusters



*Four parking sensors and reversing camera



Lowering front light and sports crosshatch grille



Body-colored auto-fold electric wing



Build strong MG badge



Body-colored auto-fold electric wing



17" best alloy (D15E models)



MG6 GT



British style for the British lifestyle, and more space to boot

British engineering and sleek British styling means the MG6 GT packs in more of the things a British lifestyle demands – heated leather sports seats* to warm you up and dry you out after the rain, front and rear electric windows, air conditioning for those rare sunny days, not to mention a huge 498 litre boot space (expanding to 1,372 litres with the rear seats down) to swallow all your children – so huge in fact, it makes others in this price range feel a little inferior.

The biggest in its class – what could you do with it!
In the old cliché – size matters. But when you're adventuring in the great British outdoors, walking the dog or going hunting (in a supermarket for the week's shop), being sporty and spacious makes a big difference! The MG6 GT may only be a little larger than other medium fastbacks, but it has a boot that gives you 50% more space and a roomy back seat that's perfectly made for three fit adults, up to two bachelors and a passenger without the usual squatter!

*TSE models only. MG6 GT interior shown. Leather as standard on TSE models. See car available on MG6 models as an optional extra. See car mounted like each supplied by retailer.



We're proud to say this British-engineered sports saloon truly has it all

Classically elegant and refined, the MG6 Magnette also has a fantastically feisty side which never ceases to thrill. In fact it possesses all the qualities of a classic MG.

Inspired by almost 90 years of sporting heritage and clever innovations by our engineers at our Longbridge headquarters, the MG6 Magnette is British design, British engineering, British beauty at its very best. Your new sports saloon promises phenomenal performance, spacious comfort, more luxuries as standard, timeless good looks and a sensational drive, all for surprisingly less than counterparts in its class.

MG6 Magnette. Get all the luxury you deserve, don't compromise

SAFE SOUND AND SECURE
 As far as the invisible security risks go, we've got you covered. We give the MG6 Magnette award-winning security with its 4-door laser locking system Thatcham Category 1 alarm, immobiliser and perimeter detection along with fortified body security and advanced vehicle tracking. With all these features your MG6 Magnette is safe, secure and the lowest insurance group in its class (14E to 15E).

TOTAL CONFIDENCE
 With 4* Euro NCAP safety rating, 3 years (or 60,000 miles) manufacturer-backed mechanical warranty, 3 year bodywork warranty and up to 3 years comprehensive roadside assistance package as standard, MG6 gives you absolute confidence to enjoy every drive.

MG001
FINI-OUT WHAT LUXURY FEELS LIKE
 Experience the luxury of a MG6 Magnette today. It's difficult to find time for your weekend MG centre simply not near enough, we'll bring the MG6 Magnette to your driveway or work car park with MG2U.

Visit MG.CO.UK/MG2U enter your postcode in the text bar at the top and your nearest showrooms and MG2U delivery options will be displayed. Then we'll contact you to arrange delivery of your test car.

Book your test drive at MG.CO.UK/MG2U

Engineered to turn heads

With the unmistakable style of MG, the slick lines of a sports saloon and more luxuries as standard than any other car of this class, the MG6 Magnette has a habit of turning heads, about town and making co-workers rather envious.



MG6 Magnette

Image featured in MG6 Magnette Granite Grey (metallic)

- Electric sunroof
- Front parking sensors
- Remote open boot
- All round electric windows and chrome detailing
- 18" 5-spoke sport alloy
- Integrated reversing camera and rear parking sensors
- Designed and engineered in Britain
- Body coloured halo-LED electric wing mirrors with integral indicators



MG6 Magnette



Comfort is never an after thought

Comfortable, cosy, feeling at home... these aren't the usual words you'd find in a glossy car brochure. But at MG, we're proud to say that the MG6 Magnette is the pure pleasure you've always promised yourself, one day.

Press the one-touch start, melt into your heated leather sports seats, set the dual zone climate control, stay connected with the Bluetooth connection and built-in microphone, select 'traffic avoidance' on your integrated sat nav and let cruise control effortlessly get you there.

Room for comfort, not compromise
 The MG6 Magnette is a new breed of sports car. The sports saloon gives you the complete package of comfort, space and performance. Its sleek profile hides away a huge 472 litre boot space - room enough for your golf clubs, several bagging suitcases or briefcases, or just your overnight bag for a weekend away.

Image featured in the MG6 Magnette TC-TSDI. A special gear box available on GTE/TSDI models

From the Pen of Dave Barry ☺

A Letter to My Daughter as She Becomes Eligible for a Florida Learner's Permit

Dear Sophie —

So you're about to start driving! How exciting! I'm going to kill myself.

I apologize if you think I'm overreacting. But just because the State of Florida thinks you can drive a car, that doesn't mean you actually can drive a car. As far as I can tell, after three decades on the roads of Florida, there isn't anybody that the Florida Department of Motor Vehicles *doesn't* think can drive a car. I cannot imagine what you would have to do to fail the driving test here.

DMV OFFICER: OK, make a left turn here.

TEST TAKER: Whoops.

DMV OFFICER: (*Writes something on clipboard.*)

TEST TAKER: Does that mean I fail the test?

DMV OFFICER: Nah, she's getting back up. You just clipped her.

You may think I'm exaggerating the badness of the drivers down here, Sophie, but that's because you haven't been at the wheel of a car on the Palmetto Expressway going 60 miles per hour, traveling forward — which, as you will learn, is considered to be the traditional direction for vehicular traffic on expressways — only to encounter a vehicle, undoubtedly operated by a licensed Florida driver, going *backward*. And not on the shoulder, either. *In your lane*. This has happened to me more than once; it's how some Miami drivers handle the baffling problem of what to do when you miss an exit. When ESPN shows a NASCAR highlight in which drivers collide at 150 miles per hour and a dozen cars spin out in a whirling mass of flaming wreckage, my reaction is: "Big deal. They were all going the same direction. Let's see them attempt to drive on the Palmetto Expressway."

The State of Florida also does not seem to have a problem issuing licenses to drivers who are very elderly. I once had an eye exam during which the ophthalmologist was telling me about some of his older patients, who according to him were basically blind. He said: "I ask them, 'How did you get here?' And they tell me they drove. And I tell them, 'You can't drive. You can't *see*.' And they say, 'How else am I supposed to get here?' And I say, 'I don't know, but you

can't *drive*, because you can't *see*.' And then they drive home."

I believe him. I once had a short but terrifying ride on the streets of South Florida in the backseat of a car driven by an elderly man. He was a perfectly nice person, but he had basically the same level of visual acuity as a corn dog. So he out-sourced the actual *seeing* part of driving to his wife, who sat in the passenger seat and did her best to keep him posted on what was going on out there in the mysterious region beyond the windshield.

"You have a green arrow," she'd say. "Go. Go. I said GO! No! Wait! Stop! STOP!!!"

So to summarize, Sophie: Many people who lack the judgment and/or physical skills needed to safely microwave a burrito are deemed qualified by the State of Florida to operate a motor vehicle. Also, there's a big difference between how the *Florida Driver's Handbook* says you should drive and how actual humans drive in Florida, especially South Florida. So to help you understand the mind-set you will encounter on the roads here, I've prepared this:

REALITY-BASED FLORIDA DRIVER'S Q&A

Q. I have noticed that some roads have more than one lane. What is the purpose of the extra lanes?

A. To provide a place for you to swerve into while texting.

Q. How is the turn signal used in Florida?

A. It is used to indicate to other motorists that you do not realize your turn signal is blinking.

Q. Could it also be used to signal your intention to turn or change lanes?

A. Interesting! Nobody has ever tried that.

Q. What is the best kind of food to eat while driving?

A. Any food that can be eaten one-handed, so you still have a hand free for texting.

Q. What if an emergency situation arises that might require me to operate the steering wheel?

A. Use your forehead to honk the horn until the emergency has passed.

Q. My car's engine seems to have stopped and I hear a "burbling" noise. What could be causing this?

A. Are you a senior citizen?

Q. Yes.

A. You have driven into a swimming pool.

Q. I am a young male idiot who prefers to drive at a high rate of speed in densely populated areas while texting. How loud should my sound system be?

A. It should emit individual bass notes capable of killing a dog at 50 yards.

Q. I've had a few drinks. How can I tell if I should drive?

A. Take this simple test: Are you wearing your underpants on your head?

Q. Not MY underpants, no.

A. Then you are good to go.

Q. What is all that shouting?

A. Are you a senior citizen?

Q. Yes.

A. You have struck a pedestrian.

Spring in Washington, DC --- Here, at Last!



Membership Registration Form

1. The form on the following page can be used to send your information to the Chesapeake Chapter of the New England MG-T Register for Membership Registration or other information requests.
2. Please note that we will never supply your information to a third party, will never use your information for telemarketing, and will use your information solely for membership application/registration purposes.
3. You must print, fill-out and mail the form to the address specified below. You may do this by clicking [here](#) or by clicking on the form below (*this requires the free [Acrobat Reader](#)*).
4. Our organization is a local chapter of the New England MG "T" Register, so we must require that all Chapter Members also be members in the "Register." If you do not belong to the "Register," please request information and application forms by contacting the "Register's" specific website: <http://www.nemgtr.org/join.htm>

Additional Notes:

1. Note that you do not need to own an MG T-type --- all that is required for membership is an interest in MG T-type and other classic automobiles!
2. Please include all letters and numbers shown in the car and engine number boxed on the "maker's" plate.
3. TD owners please note that there are three boxes on your "maker's" plate; include the information from all three.
4. If the engine is a replacement, list the number of the engine actually in the car.
5. This information is needed for the chapter's records and to correct and update the Register's files.
6. Incomplete forms will be returned to you via your provided address, for needed corrections.
7. If you have additional MGs, please attach additional forms as required.

Please make check payable to: Chesapeake Chapter NEMGTR ---

Send check to: **Chesapeake Chapter NEMGTR c/o Milton Babirak, 47539 Coldspring Place,
Sterling, VA 21065-7446**



The NEW ENGLAND  'T' REGISTER, LTD.



THE CHESAPEAKE CHAPTER
MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION FORM

Renewal

New Member

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Date: _____

Full Name: _____ Spouse or other: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: () _____ - _____ Cell or Business Phone: () _____ - _____

E-mail: _____

MG INFORMATION

(1) MG Model/Type: _____ Year: _____ Color: _____

(2) MG Model/Type: _____ Year: _____ Color: _____

*New England MG 'T' Register Number(s) Assigned to this Car (s): _____

If you have three or more MGs, please put that information on a second page.

GET INVOLVED!! Check the Activities Below in Which You Have an Interest

Tours/Rallye; Tech Sessions/ Tech Help; Car Shows; Membership; Event Hosting;
 Newsletter/Articles; Advertising/Regalia; Other _____.

By completing this application, you hereby agree to hold this Chesapeake Chapter and the NEMGTR harmless from all actions and claims arising from any participation by you or persons accompanying you in any Chapter event or activity.

DUES*: \$12.00 per year or \$30.00 for three years

Please make your check payable to: Chesapeake Chapter NEMGTR. Please mail this form, any additional pages, and a check for your dues to:

**Chesapeake Chapter NEMGTR
c/o Milton B abirak
47539 Coldspring Place
Sterling, VA 20165-7446**

* The Chesapeake Chapter is a local chapter of the New England MG 'T' Register, so we must require that all Chapter Members also be members in the "Register." If you do not belong to the "Register," please request information and application forms from the "Register's" website: <http://www.nemgtr.org/join.htm>.

Revised: April 25, 2013

TSR Advertisements

Editor's Note: Members of the Chesapeake Chapter of the NEMGTR are encouraged to submit classified ads free of charge to the Editor via e-mail or snail mail at one of the addresses shown on page 2. Photographs are also accepted -- digital pictures are the easiest to deal with, however! Please let us know the results of your ad (did you make the sale, or find what you were looking for?). Also, let the Editor know whether you want it to appear just once, or in follow-on issues of our TSR Newsletter.

Car For Sale: 1956 TR-3A (small mouth grille) (Serial Nr TS11827L0) --- see picture below --- the car is in good running condition --- just purchased new tires --- thinking @ price in mid-twenties --- if you are interested, please contact Ruth Renkenberger at 410-822-6061 or renk@atlanticbb.net



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