

T•Talk

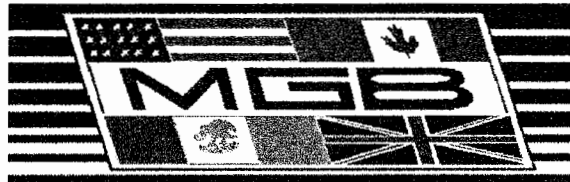


The Delaware Valley Classic MG Chapter

of the



New England MG T Register



North American MGB Register



North American MGA Register

Includes A-Talk and B-Talk

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T-Talk is the newsletter of the Delaware Valley Classic MG Chapter and is published four times a year, in January, April, July, and October. Copy is due to the Editor by the 15th of the month prior to publication. Articles and opinions appearing in T-Talk are solely those of the author, and are not necessarily endorsed by the Officers or staff. Anyone with an interest in MG automobiles is invited to join. Full membership requires affiliation with the appropriate Register: NEMGTR, NAMGAR, or NAMGBR. DVC dues are \$20 per year per family.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Space is always at a premium in T-Talk's January issue, which is, as usual, accompanied by the latest Member Roster. So it seemed like a good time to introduce a new, somewhat condensed newsletter format that makes more efficient use of paper and postage. You'll notice differences in the presentation of many of the usual features, particularly in those that formerly took a lot of space, like event flyers. These have been replaced by an **UPCOMING EVENTS** section. A new **EVENT REPORTS** section will tell us about recent DVC activities...and perhaps some non-DVC events as well. The **A-TALK, B-TALK, BITS & SPARES** and **CLASSIFIED** sections will continue, and there will be more room for tech and other articles...if you submit them. We've cut back on commercial advertising also, limiting it in future to business-card-size ads from DVC member firms only. Of course, all DVC members may continue to submit free non-commercial classified ads. To give credit where it's due, this new format was primarily inspired by the excellent "**MG Crier**" newsletter that DVC Member Don Stewart does for the Greater Pittsburgh MG Club... thanks, Don! Well, here goes... hope you like it...

UPCOMING DVC EVENTS

Saturday, January 25th (Snow date: Jan. 26): DVC "COLD WEATHER-STAY WARM" tour to NORTHLANDZ Great American Railway and Doll Museum, one mile north of the Flemington Circle on the west side of Rte. 202 in Lambertville, NJ. A mile-long tour features some of the finest of America's scenery, with 125 trains wending their

way through mountains, valleys, cities, and villages depicted with amazing detail in an astounding miniature world. Along the way see a doll house with 94 rooms, hear music from a 2000-pipe theatre organ, and visit a gallery of contemporary art. Bring the kids...they'll love it. Plan to arrive by 10:00 AM so we can enjoy the special Club rate of \$12./adult and \$8./child (we must have 20 or more for these rates). No RSVP required, but questions may be directed to your host: Bob Wagner (215)653-7343.

Sunday, February 16th: DVC "Sweetheart" Bowling. Beat the winter doldrums, cabin fever, whatever it is you're suffering from. Bring your "sweetheart" and the "kids" out for an afternoon of bowling! What would be more "romantic" on Valentine's weekend than an afternoon of bowling? What, you say you can't bowl, it doesn't matter, none of us can! Just come out and have fun. Meet at 1:00 PM at the Earl Bowl, on Allentown Road in Earlington, PA...a mile or so north of Route 113. Cost is \$9.75 per person for 3 games and shoe rental. No outside food or drink is allowed in the bowling alley. They do have a snack bar, and Dick, they make their own pizza. Please call your hosts, Tom and Jaimee Rippert (610)287-9325 and let them know you're coming... and to get help with directions, if needed.

Saturday, March 29th: DVC 33rd Anniversary Party and Cabin Fever Rallye. There will be Rallye Prizes: \$25, \$15, \$10, and a Special Mystery Prize for finishing Absolutely Dead Last. Your Hosts, Lee & Liz Niner will meet you in The Clubhouse at The Colony at Skippack at 3:00 pm for a Driver/Navigator meeting, first car off at 3:15 pm. Right after the Rallye, you can start to party! Hot & cold hors d'oeuvres, assorted hoagies, salads, desserts and traditional DVC beverages will be served. The tariff is \$10 per person PLUS at least one piece of MG Crappola

and one Photo of your MG. The Rallye Awards, Passing of "The Book", DVC "O-wards", plus MG Trivia Contest, MG Crapolla Challenge, and DVC Photo of the Year events, will be featured. Due to limited Clubhouse capacity, this event is limited to the First 60 DVC members who reserve, so RESERVE EARLY. Make checks payable to DVC and mail to: Lee & Liz Niner, 1125 Ellen Court-P.O. Box 510, Creamery, PA 19430-0510. Questions and/or Directions? Call Lee & Liz at (610) 831-1531.

Sat./Sun., April 26/27: DVC Spring Tour - "Mauch Chunk with Your Hunk". Pack your saddlebags for an overnighter. Fill your quiver with your favorite firewater. The posse will ride out at sunrise (9:00 am) on Sat. from the Gilbertsville Shoopng Center, Rte. 73/Swamp Pike. Our tribe will ride toward the big mountain. Before entering Mauch Chunk we will test our thermostats by riding the 3-mile hill climb. Fire water gifts to those whose radiators are ready to blow. We'll ride into town and stable our Roadsters at the Broadway Guesthouse (please leave your piece at the front desk). Troops - please call Steve at the Guesthouse and make your room reservations as soon as possible. (570-325-9190, mention DVC MG sportscar club) Eleven Queen Bed Rooms @ \$95. One Queen Bed Room w/fireplace, jacuzzi, and sofabed @ \$140. One King Bed Suite w/fireplace, jacuzzi, and sofabed...2nd room has Queen Bed. Rates include Continental breakfast. Can't overnight? Make it a day trip and join us on the trail. Questions? Call Tribe Leader Larry Kain (610) 933-8189 or e-mail lodkain@cs.com

2003 DVC EVENT SCHEDULE

Jan. 25Northland Railroad - Wagner
 Feb. 15Sweetheart Bowling - Rippert
 March 2933rd Anniv. Party/Rallye - Niner
 Apr. 12Tech Session - Bernert
 Apr. 26/27Spring Tour (Mauch Chunk) - Kain
 May 17Wings & Wheels - Scherbekow
 May 31Ice Cream Tour - Feldgus
 Jun. 21Hornsby Rallye - Nolan
 Jul. 12Family Golf - Phillips
 Jul. 26Pool Party/Rallye - O'Brien
 Aug. 9New Hope Party - Dougherty
 Aug. 22-24Triathlon V Tour - Suffredini
 Sep. 19-21QVR Weekend - Rippert/Suffredini/Fischer
 Oct. 10-12Fall Tour (Watkins Glen) - TBD
 Oct. 25Badda Bing Badda Bob Tour - Tiley
 Nov. 1Guy Fawkes Night - Goelz
 Nov. 16Annual Membership Meeting - Bernert
 Dec. 6 (or 13?)Holiday Banquet - Alicea

EVENT REPORTS

The 2002 DVC Pumpkin Tour Brings Back Memories...
 The Delaware Valley Classic MG Chapter has made quite an impression on towns visited and people met, as evidenced by the warm reception members received at one stop on the DVC Pumpkin Tour, Saturday, October 26th.

Though the day dawned overcast and MG tops were up for the majority of the ride, the group braved the elements to visit a variety of pumpkin patches in search of the elusive

"perfect pumpkin". The tour took them through Bucks County, including a stop at Trauger's Farm Market, where a surprised Mrs. Trauger greeted members. "I remember your group," she exclaimed. "You visited the farm almost twenty years ago with these great old cars, and took a photo over in front of the farmhouse. I can't believe you're back to visit again."

Dick Suffredini confirmed Mrs. Trauger's memory with the old photo of the group some twenty years before. After choosing pumpkins, fresh vegetables and gourds from the farm market, those present for this year's tour posed for a new photo in front of the same stone farmhouse. "The old photo was my inspiration for setting up a harvest tour," Suffredini said. "I'm glad we had the chance to come back to this great spot and enjoy a fall day - complete with good British weather - touring throughout Bucks County."



Photo: Bob Tiley

Trauger's Farm Market was only one of several stops on the tour. The group, comprised of Donna Bristol and Walt King in a Jeep; Sue and Roy Dougherty in an MGB; Barbara and Ernie Feldgus in an MGTD; Gудie and Wolfgang Fischer in an MGBGT; Judy Goelz also in a Jeep; Lisa, Mike, Madison, Connor and Sean Maloney with Valerie Plunkett in a Pontiac Vibe; Liz and Lee Niner in a Mazda Miata; Jaimee and Tom Rippert in an MGB; Sandy and Dick Suffredini in an MGTD; and Terri and Bob Tiley in an MGB, began its day at the Suffredinis' with a wonderful array of harvest-themed breakfast muffins and coffee.

Once on the road, the group visited Carousel Village at Indian Walk in Wrightstown, where the ladies enjoyed a bit of antiquing at the Indian Walk shops while the kids walked through Halloween Village. Then, back on the road, the gang visited a number of other pumpkin patches, corn fields, and the Van Sant Airport, before finishing the driving portion of the tour at Peddler's Village.

At Peddler's, the group visited Gigglesberry Fair, where kids again enjoyed antique carousel rides and other games while the adults walked the brick walkways, admiring the homemade scarecrows and browsing in shop windows. Everyone re-convened at the Spotted Hog for pub grub and British ales, while the kids enjoyed littering the floor with dozens of peanut shells from fresh-roasted peanuts. Despite the weather, all had a good time. And Mrs. Trauger hopes the group returns soon, without waiting another twenty years.

Dick & Sandy Suffredini

19th ANNUAL QUEEN VICTORIA RUN... Seventy-three DVC members gathered at the Esplanade Motel in Wildwood, NJ for the 19th Annual QVR weekend, Sep. 19-22, 2002. The weather couldn't have cooperated more with temperatures in the 80's and sunshine every day. Even the ocean temperature was warm at about 73°.

The annual wine and cheese party in the Esplanade's beautiful garden was a great success. This party is a great way to kick off the weekend's planned activities by bringing everyone together to socialize (and of course taste various local wines, cheese and Gudie's delicious bread). In a few hours our dinner and DJ arrived for an evening of dancing, singing and MG socializing.



Photo: Lew Phillips

Saturday morning we were sent off by Rich and Margaret Harron on another of their "creative" rallies. The rallye took us on beautiful Cape May County roads, stopping by a Shop Rite for the price of a certain brand of (difficult to find) artichoke hearts and the Cape May County Zoo in search of clues. DVC'ers were "running" all over the zoo! One of the checkpoints was at Rich and Margaret's beautiful new home, which they are building themselves. (Don't know how they found the time to come up with the rallye), but thank you, it was terrific!

After a few snacks and devouring the leftovers from dinner the night before, it was soon time for "valve cover racing." We had a few new entries this year, a very fine-tuned, "engineered" version "with suspension" from Jim Finne, and Don Short's "Don's Cruiser." Ben and Cyndi Nolan, assisted by Mark and Jan Scherbekow, did a great job presiding over the racing that had a very close and suspenseful ending, which resulted in Barre's Champagne MG coming in first place again!

Then it was on to a Garden Funkana put on by Tom and Dick. They had four games going on simultaneously in the Esplanade's garden; a blindfold obstacle course, a sparkplug relay, a fan belt toss and a wine glass relay. Everyone seemed to enjoy the games, I know there was lots of jocularly going on everywhere!

At 6:30 the pig roast showed up, which is entertaining itself. There's always the "pig groupies" waiting for a piece of skin to chew on. In a little while everyone had their fill of delicious roast pork sandwiches, barbecued chicken, beans, etc. The food was delicious and the pig roast was again a huge success.

PLEASE PAY YOUR DUES TODAY !!!!

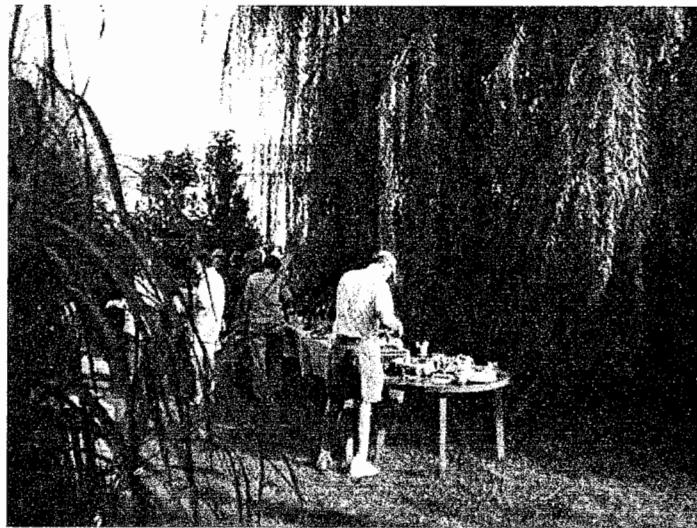


Photo: Lew Phillips

Our "awards ceremony" followed dinner, with the awards being presented as follows: Rallye: 3rd place - Tom Rippert and Dick Suffredini, after a raw egg toss tie-breaker for 2nd place. 2nd place - Don Short and Brian Kern, and 1st place winners this year were Larry Cordeiro, Sr. and Larry Cordeiro, Jr. Valve Cover Racing: 3rd place - John Zemany, 2nd place - Jim Finne and 1st place AGAIN went to Barre Williams. Funkana: 3rd place - Rich and Margaret Harron, 2nd place - Brian Kern and his friend, AJ, and 1st place - Jim and Ruth Bottomley. After the awards were given out, Larry Cordeiro presented the "Queen Victoria Cups" to Dick and Sandy Suffredini. These "coveted" cups will be held by Dick and Sandy for one year and passed on at next year's QVR.

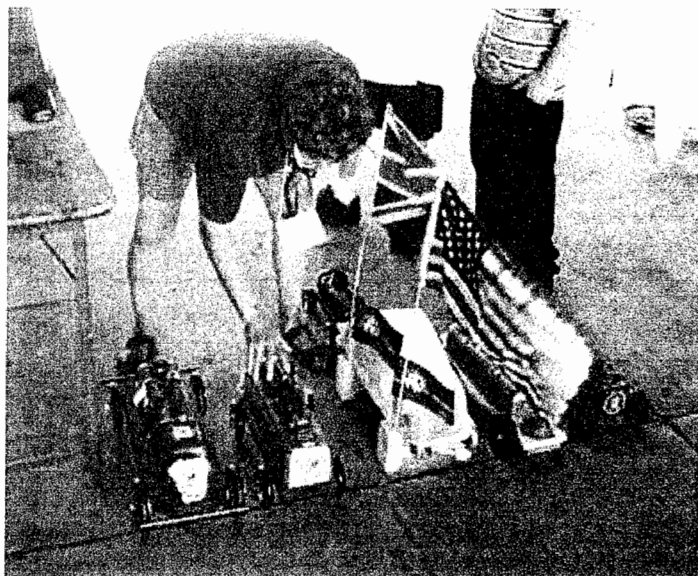


Photo: Lew Phillips

Sunday morning it was the annual class picture taken by John Zemany and then farewells until next year. We'd like to thank everyone for helping out again this year, and we'd particularly like to thank Wolfgang and Gudie for having us at their beautiful motel. Everyone "pitching in" sure makes it easier and more enjoyable for all. Hope everyone had a good time and see you next year!

Jaimee Rippert & Sandy Suffredini

GUY FAWKES DAY PARTY, NOV. 2, 2002. This year the pre-Guy Fawkes Day Party renovation projects were not as hectic as previous years. We installed some wall cabinets in the laundry room, and repaired some structural deficiencies in the staircase to the second floor. We are now ready for new carpeting, which is expected in the late winter time frame. But be forewarned: *Guy Fawkes Day* might be a two-day event next year -- One day for the party, and the following day to help us clean the carpets! It was a beautiful day for the 5th annual GFD Road Tour, albeit somewhat chilly. The tour took our guests through seven townships in Montgomery County, on roads that most of us would ordinarily pass by in our daily travels. There were plenty of narrow, twisty, hilly roads suitable for MG driving through the woods, into the prison (well, almost), past the Perkiomen Valley Airport (one of MY favorite places!) and back to the party. As the MGs returned from their workout, the bonfire was blazing to help take the chill off the drivers and navigators. And Dar finished setting up and began his first set of both cover and original folk music. Judy and I were quite concerned about the bonfire situation during the week before the party. The weather forecast predicted cold weather, and in spite of recent rain, the burn ban was still in effect. We wondered how we were going to keep 50+ people warm (and entertained!) without the traditional bonfire. So we rented a couple of propane heaters for the deck and hoped they would provide enough heat to keep folks comfortable out there. Ahh, but just in a nick of time, the township lifted the burn ban on Friday morning! So we didn't need to make a "*Guy-Mini-Me*" to burn in effigy...we used a full sized one, with the usual content of pyrotechnic devices. Michael Price was not available this year to deliver his eloquent dissertation on the true meaning of *Guy Fawkes Day*, so Mike Maloney & I delivered our not so eloquent "In 1605 blah, blah, blah Parliament blah, blah, blah" speech. The result of that, of course, was loud cries of "Burn The Bastard", followed by burning the bastard! OK, time for food. Judy & "the kitchen crew" (!) served the many main dishes (too numerous to describe individually) that our guests brought. Dar started into his second set and that seemed to draw some folks into the family room... And the music was enjoyed outside as well by the crowd gathered around the bonfire. Our resident pyromaniacs had the night off, due to the absence of a cornfield behind our house. Unfortunately, there is a whole new neighborhood of people and houses where fireworks are supposed to be launched. Those who made the event so enjoyable this year were: Don Stewart (MGB), Lee & Liz Niner (MGB), Bob & Terri Tiley (MGB), Dick & Sandy Suffredini (TD), Tom & Jaimee Rippert (TD, Top Down!), Roy & Sue Dougherty (MGA), Louise Story (MGB), Lee Keller & Louise Grillo, Mike & Lisa Maloney +3, Donna Bristol & Walt King, Carl Finne & Joanne Shaver, Jeff & Robin Rose & Maddie(ZB), Bob & Joanne Tiley +3, Pat & Carmita Alzamora, Larry & Carol Kain +1, Carl Jost, Earl Wanklin, Lew & Kris Phillips (MGB), George Bulwinkle (MGB), Chuck & Judy Goelz (MGA), Dave & Gloria Schwab (TD), Jeff Goelz & Cindy Myers (Judy's MGB), and my apologies to anyone I may have inadvertently missed. Thanks to: Tommy, The Dickman & George for their work before the tour to prepare the bonfire; Dar Frantz for sharing his exceptional singer/songwriter talents; Don Stewart for building yet another *amazing, exploding GUY*; the Lower Salford Police and Fire Departments for having someplace better to be that night; and all of those DVCers who attended for making it so enjoyable. Chuck Goelz

2002 DVC ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY... We would like to thank everyone who attended this year's Holiday Party at Arthur's Catering on Dec. 7th. Thankfully the snow cleared away in time to still continue with our party. There were many winners of great prizes that were donated by all. From pins and beef platters to Fleece MG blankets and clothing.

Members that attended included: Bob and Terri Tiley, Earl Wanklin, Mark and Janet Scherbekow, Dick and Sandy Suffredini, Tim and Mary McCarthy, Lew Phillips and his daughter, Tom and Jaimee Rippert, Don Short, John Short, Dave and Kathy Misner, Roy and Sue Dougherty, Mike and Lisa Maloney, Ernie and Barb Feldgus, Ben and Cyndi Nolan, Lee and Liz Niner, Robert and Margie Wagner, Judy Goelz, Charles Jost, and Wolfgang and Gудie Fischer.

Hope to see everyone that could not make the event at next year's Holiday Party. Mark it on your calendars for December 6th or 13th, 2003. Thanks again to everyone.

Luis and Marie Alicea

T-Register GOF Mk 73 in Nova Scotia, July 2 - 6, 2002

The only Gathering of the Faithful in 2002 was a huge success with over 70 MG's and well over 100 people attending. Jim Finne and Maryanne McGarity were one of the brave ones who drove their TD. He had engine problems and had to return home on 3 cylinders. Art and Cherie Smith started out in their TC, but turned around 30 minutes out when their car started having troubles. They finished the trip in their daily driver. Ed and Dee Flax and Tom and Anita Shannahan also were in attendance from the DVC.

The Tuesday night buffet started the week off with people assigned to table seating with their teammates for the "T" Athalon competition the next day. This created a warm, friendly atmosphere as many were meeting each other for the first time.

"T"-Athalon Events: Wednesday morning the first "T"-Athalon event was a Funkana. The navigator had to keep a tennis ball from rolling off the racket which he/she held outside the car while the driver weaved in and out of pythons. It was lots of fun and noisy as team members were rooting for each other. The rest of the morning saw the cars taking to the road through some beautiful country on a Crossword Rally. The end of the rally was a picnic at Blomidon Provincial Park where the teams put their heads together and tried to fit the clues they found along the way as answers to a crossword puzzle (very challenging). The final event of the day was a Hillclimb. That evening we all were treated to a delightful play, "Charlie's Aunt", at the Atlantic Theater Festival in Wolfville.

Thursday the group boarded buses for an hour trip to Halifax where we spent a great day shopping, touring and eating. That night we enjoyed a spectacular Nova Scotia International Tattoo in the Metro Center. What a way to celebrate the 4th of July, especially when they brought out a HUGE American flag which when turned over was the Canadian Flag and later when opened out, both flags together.

Friday was the Car Display and then some optional tours in the afternoon. That night it was very festive at the banquet with a bagpiper playing during cocktails. Several of the men looked very dashing in their dress kilts while the ladies wearing their plaids or sashes complimented them.

Saturday saw many people starting out to see the rest of the Maritimes, Cape Breton and Prince Edward Island. The Canadians did a bang up job of planning this GOF and everyone applauded their efforts. See you next year.

Tom and Anita Shannahan

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A-TALK...Lee & Liz Niner

It was a clear and crisp Sunday with the temperatures hovering in the mid thirties. The roadways had been washed clear of last week's covering of salt by a day's worth of heavy rain. As we entered the garage, the combinations of various familiar smells emanating from our MG's immediately became part of our total immersion into "the MG room". Sort of a combination of 20/50 Castrol coupled with faint portions of old leather, antifreeze and electrical components with just a hint of mildew. As the garage door opener engaged, the sunlight was allowed to enter and fall upon our now silent companions of so many previous driving experiences. We

try to get our MG's out at least once or twice a month for a minimum thirty-minute ride at speed in the wintertime. Today, it's the A's turn and we're combining our ride with a weekend run of errands into the village of Skippack. In colder times of the year, it's always an adrenaline rush when that long stroke BMC B series motor of our A catches on the second or third pull of the starter control.

Navigator: "Wow, it started. The battery really sounded weak. Do you think you need a new one? I mean it really seemed low." Driver: "Hmm, now you're an expert on car batteries. Listen, the car started. It's a beautiful day. Lets get going." Navigator: "Hold it. My door isn't closed all the way. That was another winter project you were going to do. Have you started any of those projects that are posted on the list held onto the refrigerator with MG magnets?" Driver: "I fully intend to get all those projects done. I'm just sorting the order of things out in my mind. You know, assigning priorities." Navigator: "Like you said, it's a beautiful day, let's get going!"

The winter's a perfect time to work on all those assorted minor projects that accumulate over a season of driving. We keep a log in each car and note down items as they occur during the season. You know, not major show stoppers, but rather minor irritant type items. Squeaks, rattles, door alignments, rubber replacements, etc. It's also the perfect time to verify all the spares that you have and where you have them stored in your MG. Lets see, we run with a single twelve volt battery so that frees up a plastic battery box that contains the following spares: water pump, a fuel pump, rubber hoses, voltage regulator, distributor with cap, coil, gas lines, oil line, spark plugs. In the boot we have these spares: generator, light bulbs, fuses, radiator cap, fan belt, and two inner tubes. It's also a good time to verify the A's tool box contents. Driver: "Once the A gets warmed up, the warm air from the heater plus the heat off the bulkhead and drive tunnel really feels good." Navigator: "That reminds me, you promised to replace the carpeting and to also put an insulation pad in under the carpet. We nearly died of heat prostration last year on the way to the GT". Driver: "Yes dear, it's on my list to do." Navigator: "But I've been asking for seven years now! As you get older, it seems that the only project you complete each year is to redo your 'To Do' list and reattach it to the refrigerator." Driver: "Your recent unending comments about my list have inspired me to think of a new use for duct tape, but then you'd starve to death and I'd have to cook and cleanup!" Navigator: "What about that vibration at 55mph, also that squeak when you brake, and how about that clunk whenever you start off in first?". Driver: "Yes dear. Is it me or is it getting hotter in here? Why, it must be the sound waves being continually agitated that is warming up the air above the cockpit." Navigator: "Slow down Einstein, I want to stop into this dress shop and pick up something to wear to our MG club's anniversary party".

HEADS UP!

August 22 - 24: Triathlon V. The DVC will again try to secure the Teapot Trophy by sending the most Teams to compete in the Triathlon. Maybe you're already registered, or maybe you need information: either way, please call the DVC Triathlon Coordinator, Dick Suffredini (215) 355-3053 or e-mail Dick - d.suff@juno.com . CALL NOW!

B-TALK...Larry & Connie Cordiero

The cover of October/November 2002 *MG World Magazine* reads, Happy Birthday MGB, 40 years on, the "World's Favorite Sports Car." As we move forward into the 21st century eternal youth seems to sum up the car that was unveiled on the 20th of September 1962. After being well received by the both the British, and U.S. auto-press the new MGB had a promising future although here in the states the MGB didn't really hit the streets until the spring of 1963 after the New York Auto Show. Popularity and demand quickly grew, and output for the first full model year of production equaled the MGA's best ever in 1959, and that was a good sign for the folks at Abingdon.

Road & Track reported, "that this was the best engineered, best put together MG they had ever seen. Civilization had come to Abingdon-on-Thames". And *Car and Driver* wrote, "compared to its predecessor the MGB is faster, and certainly safer. A safer sports car would be hard to imagine, and concluded the MGB holds great promise as a world market success." Great promise indeed.

Abingdon had a winner on its hands, but throughout its 18-year production life the MGB along with its notable successes would have to endure setbacks, and colossal indifference from its parent companies. Production of the Mark I, as it is now called continued with minor changes until 1965 when "Austin Driven" BMC finally allowed Abingdon to build the MGB/GT, and sales continued to climb. A *Road & Track* Owner Report published in 1968 covering Mark I ownership stated: "That's the MGB then; simple and durable, economical on fuel, fun to drive, short on weatherproofing and spotty reliability so far as some components are concerned. Its owners are a fairly happy group, however, and in the long run this counts for a lot."

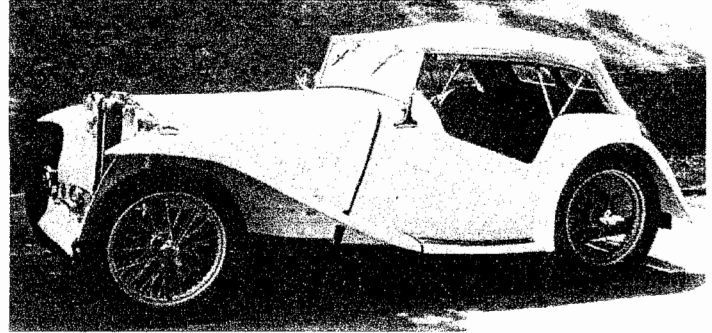
1968 brought along the Mark II more improvements and a second change in stewardship for the MGB. "Triumph Driven" British Leyland took over just in time to usher in the U.S. safety, and emissions era. While the minimum was done to the MGB for safety and emissions through 1974 British Leyland began spending millions developing the TR-7. This meant that through the end of production in October 1980 monies were carefully rationed to Abingdon for such things as 'Rubber Bumpers', converters and the like to keep the corporation's best selling sports car in production and nothing more.

This in itself should have spelled the end of the MGB, but somehow it continues with us into the 21st century...still a viable car for everyday use even today? Consider all the good things *Road & Track* published about the MGB back in the 1968 owner's report, and ask if they still hold true today? It has also been said that no other 'classic car' has the parts availability and reasonable cost of the MGB today. Or maybe as we celebrate the MGB's birthday, we should note one other intangible that even British Leyland couldn't keep the workers of Abingdon building into ever MGB, "Charisma". Happy Birthday MGB, and many more!

Safety First!

"MOST HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT POST-WWII CAR" is what Howard & Dianne Leeser's 1945 TC was awarded at the Concours D'Elegance at Hilton Head Island last November, in competition with "plenty of million dollar

cars. But to our amazement the crowd loved the small one of relatively minor value!", according to a note received from the Leesers by the editor. Howard & Dianne are off to Montana for the winter, and hope to see us in the Spring.



MECH & TECH

STUNG TWICE BY THE BUMBLE BEE... Ever since I was a kid I've loved MG's and Triumphs. My uncle and cousin used to own them and I was always trying to bum a ride with them. It didn't matter if the top was up or down, or if I had to cram into the back behind the seats. It was just great to drive around in them.

Last year I got my first MG-B (a red '63). It is in great shape and I opted to go the 'antique' route. The nice part is that I don't have to worry about inspection and the insurance is low. The bad part is that my son isn't permitted to drive it and my daughter/navigator won't be able to when she gets her license. So this past July I got a good deal on an '80 and decided to pick it up. It is bright yellow with black 'MG' stripes. It looks like a bumble bee and hence has been christened the 'Bumble'. I decided to go the 'normal' route on this one - regular plates, regular insurance, and the beloved state inspection. Now my biggest problem is wrestling it away from my son!

Right after I got it, I took it in for inspection. Not figuring it would pass emissions I was ready to go for the 5000 mile/year waiver (like most later B's it has had the smog pump removed). The owner of the garage suggested that we try anyway since even with the waiver he still had to get a reading. It passed emissions! Unfortunately, it didn't pass the regular inspection. So many horrible problems - the windshield washer pump didn't squirt, the battery hold down clamp was missing, and the left rear emergency brake hinge needed lubrication. It ran great, so I took advantage of the 30 day grace period and spent most of the month tooling around while doing the repairs. I put on a couple of hundred miles without problem.

I drafted my old buddy Roger into giving me a hand. He is excellent at GM products and got a kick out of working on the B - especially informing me that everything was mounted either upside down or backwards (I had to remind him that MG is GM backwards!). We got together one Saturday and fixed the brakes then put in the hold down on the battery. The next day I drove it to work. On the way home, the Bumble left me stranded on the turnpike! It just suddenly went dead. No backfire, no surging, no warning, nothing, it just died. I coasted to the side of the highway. When I tried to start it up, all it would do is crank. It wouldn't turn over at all, not even a single pop. It had only gone about 40 miles since we did the repairs before conking out.

Back in the garage, the coil tested good to marginal but there was no spark at any of the plugs. The rotor and cap looked really good with virtually no signs of wear. All indications were that it was the Pertronix ignition (after all, it died in classic electronic form – suddenly and totally). We put in a new one (and a new coil just to be safe) and it still didn't work. While we were doing some resistance and conductance testing, we noticed an intermittent high (500 MegOhm) resistance between the center rotor tower and the block. We got out the timing light. With all of the plug wires out and a timing light connected to the coil output we got a flash when cranking when the output was held in mid air, but when connected to the rotor there was no flash (just to rule out the cap, we removed the cap and touched just the center of the rotor). I got a new rotor and it flashed when connected. We put the wires back on and it started! The rotor was bad. Just to be safe (and since I already replaced half the stuff and had new plugs) I replaced the cap, plugs, and wires. A whole new ignition system. I even replaced the magnetic trigger and spacer for the Pertronix and added the 1.5 ohm ballast resistor like they recommend. With all the new stuff on (and the timing checked) it started right up and I took a ride around the block. Success!

Now comes the weird part... I took it for a ride that weekend to run some errands. About 40 miles into the trip (again, on a nice highway doing 55), it DIED AGAIN! Back at the garage I went straight to the rotor test. Flash in mid-air, no flash when touching the rotor! Another new rotor in place and the car started! I could accept a rotor going bad, but this was two different manufactured rotors. And they both failed after the same amount of driving after the 'repair'. Too much of a coincidence to just shrug off. Thinking back to our Saturday 'tech session', we had worked on the brakes (but they are on the other end of the car and have no electrical contact at all – rule that out), and we disconnected, rerouted, and reconnected the battery when putting on the hold down clamp (a possibility – MG's love grounding problems). The only other thing that we had done was to peek inside the distributor cap, but we didn't disturb anything.

I could see myself getting 30 miles per gallon and 45 miles per rotor. So we started to investigate and also grasped at some straws. I got a lot of information and suggestions (by the way, thanks everyone!). Some of the ideas didn't fit what I was seeing and some ("it just happens") just didn't give me a feeling of confidence. Learning from a skilled mechanic that there is a big Austin out there that goes through rotors on a regular basis made me no longer feel alone, but really didn't give me a warm fuzzy feeling. After checking out all of the possibilities that were uncovered, I finally decided "Eh, it must have been a fluke". But just to be safe (and give myself some piece of mind) I also adopted one of Roger's grasped straws... We all know that British cars have ground problems. We also know that electricity takes the path of least resistance. The B's battery ground is connected directly to the chassis at the battery box behind the passenger seat. Looking at the engine, I couldn't find any grounding straps between the chassis and the block or head. I was told there should be one at the one engine mount, but I sure can't find evidence of it. In contrast, Roger's '68 Corvair has 5 straps in various places! The theory is that maybe the rotor shaft has a slightly better ability to disperse the spark than the engine head (meter readings don't prove it out, and it could change with temperature or vibration). If this is true, then

a portion of the spark may be finding a small leak through the rotor insulation to the shaft instead of jumping the gaps between the rotor and the tower and across the plug. Once it finds this path through the rotor and gets a good jump, it carbonizes making a nicer path that it always decides to take instead of the one that we want. Since it won't hurt anything, I put two ground straps from major chassis bolts to the engine block. I don't know if this is the 'fix', but so far I've put over 500 miles on it without any more rotor problems (knock on wood!).

To share some of what we found out, here are some of the suggestions.

- Rotor cracked? – Neither one showed any cracks, even when hit with freeze spray and checked under a magnifying glass.
- Brass conductor loose? – Both were tight.
- The cap or rotor are contaminated and arcing (possibly an oil haze)? – Everything was replaced.
- Cap cracked? – No signs there either, and it grounded out without a cap on.
- The shaft is slightly wobbly and causing the rotor to hit and crack? – The shaft is stable and there are no tell-tale signs of contact (no chipped edges).
- The rotor edge or cap turrets are worn, burnt, or chipped? – All are clean and crisp.
- The coil is too strong? – The new one may be, but the old one was weak. Also, there is no evidence of the customary burn on the end of the rotor.
- The Pertronix ignition system by it's design creates a cleaner, more powerful spark and could cause a jump through the rotor to the top of the shaft? – That one does sound possible.
- The points are bad; the condenser is bad; the condenser has a ground problem? – The symptoms would be the same, but the Bumble has electronic ignition and luckily I was able to prove out that it was the rotor.
- The rotors they make now are crappy? It is easy to get bad ones. – Yep, I'll buy that one. (By the way, Bosch rotors were recommended most.)
- The timing may be such that it is firing between turrets and blowing through to the shaft? – The car had been running, so the timing was OK.
- It needs/doesn't need a ballast resistor? I just went with the manufacturer's recommendations.
- It's an MG!! Besides leaking oil, you periodically have to appease the rotor god with a sacrifice? – I'll buy that one too!

Lew Phillips

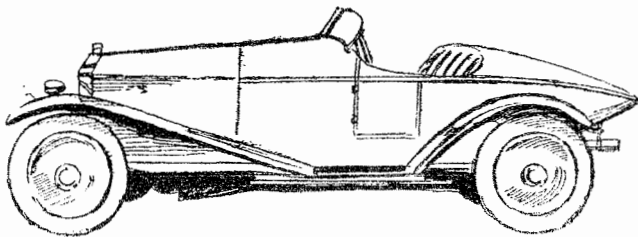


THOSE "OTHER" BRITISH SPORTSCARS

With thanks to Gregor Grant, whose 1947 book "British Sports Cars" is quite a treasure-trove of information on the cars, from ABC to Wolseley, and was published by Floyd Clymer in the USA.

This new column will appear periodically, attempting to describe the origins and early history of those "other british" sportscars we sometimes see at shows or mentioned in some obscure text. Of course, we of the MG persuasion know there is only one REAL British sportscar....ed.

A.B.C.... The initials stood for "All British Co. Ltd." which started out making motorcycles and started making a light two-cyl. air-cooled car just after WWI. In 1924-26, around the time Cecil Kimber was starting to put Old No. 1 together, A.B.C. produced a boat-tailed, "supersports" 1320 cc car that was way ahead of its time, supposedly developed more than 40 HP and could accelerate very aggressively to 70 mph, quite a lot at the time. Unfortunately, they also developed a reputation for being unreliable, and their days were numbered.



1926 TYPE SUPER-SPORTS A.B.C.

A.C.... More initials, these representing "Auto-Carriers, Ltd." which made the "Sociable", a popular pre-WWI three-wheeler. After the war, A.C. was noted for its 1.5 litre, the first light (under 1500cc) car to cover over 100 miles in one hour, in 1921 at Brooklands with J.A. Joyce up. In 1939, A.C. produced a very powerful 2-litre six-cylinder open sports car that looked very similar to MG's TA/TB. The A.C. continued until, and after, WWII as one of England's most popular and prestigious marques.

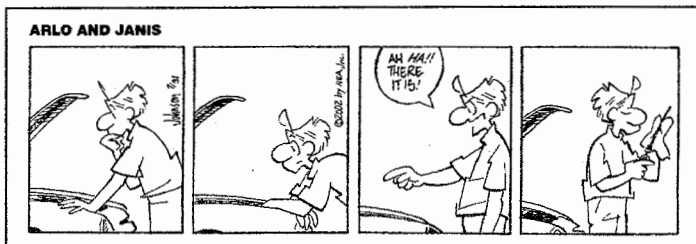
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 Carl Finne & Joanne Shaver of Maplewood, NJ MGB
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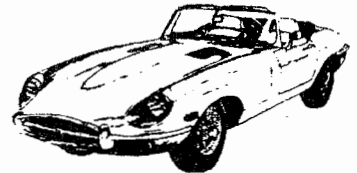
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