



# OCTAGRAM

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE MGs of BALTIMORE MD

February 2020

[www.mgsofbaltimore.org](http://www.mgsofbaltimore.org)

From EI Presidente:

A big thank you goes out to Carole & Richard Jefferson for hosting a spectacular MGOB "After the Holidays" Party. Their home works very nicely for this event which had at least 60 members present. The white elephant or secret Santa gift exchange added to the fun with unique items by unknown persons handed out to the participants. There were also the door prize items given out by EI Presidente one of which included a \$100.00 Moss gift certificate donated by Stuart Mitchell of Fifth Generation Customs, not to be overlooked was a \$25.00 gift certificate from TRF (The Roadster Factory) along with other items not collected at last year's MGs on the Rocks.

Coming up on February 9<sup>th</sup> is the **The 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Chilly Run** at Steve & Tina Sharpe's house. **The snow date** of Sunday February 16<sup>th</sup>. Please see page 2 for all the details.

The 31<sup>st</sup> Annual "Get the Dust Off" Rallye is set for Sunday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>. More info will be available in the next issue of the Octagram.

We have agreed to participate in the Monumental Brewing Company's British Invasion Festival on Sunday, May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020 from Noon until 4 p.m. The brewery/pub is located at 1 N. Haven St. Baltimore, MD 21224. There will be a car show with prizes for the top three cars, live British Invasion music. While the pub does not serve food, food is available next door. Checkout their website at <http://www.monumentcitybrewing.com>. I hope to have a promotional poster and additional information soon. By the way, members that bring a British car will receive a wristband for discounted beer.

Finally, MG 2020 the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual North American MGB Register Convention event website is open for registration at <https://mg2020.regfox.com/mg2020-calgary>. Don't miss out on this Mega MG event June 28<sup>th</sup> – July 1<sup>st</sup> – Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Safety Fast!

Richard

## **23nd Annual “Chilly Run”**

**Sunday, February 9<sup>th</sup>**

**2:00 PM**

Hosted by: Steve and Tina Sharpe  
1291 Cambria Rd  
Westminster, MD 21157

Bring along your favorite chili or non-chili to enter for a chance to win one of the numerous fabulous awards and prizes such as the coveted Hunka, Hunka Burning Love Award.

**Please RSVP** by Feb 3<sup>rd</sup> 667-314-3987 or [steveesharpe@gmail.com](mailto:steveesharpe@gmail.com) and let us know what you will be bringing:

- Chili
- Side Dish / Corn bread
- Dessert
- Appetizer

The club will supply beverages.

See you there!



## MEMBERSHIP REMINDER

### 2020 MGOB DUES ARE NOW DUE

Please mail your \$20.00 check payable to:

MGs of Baltimore, Ltd. Car Club  
5237 Glen Arm Road East  
Glen Arm, MD 21057

Or pay at the next meeting.

The following members have paid and **DO NOT** owe:

Glenn S. & Barbara Abbott	Brian & Denise	Kraus
Joe & Barb Auer	Tom	Lalley
Neal & Suzanne Becker	Richard & Kathy	Liddick
Steve & Linda Berry	Richard C.	McShane Jr.
Bill & Cindy Bollinger	Michael & Camille	Medinger
Suzie Boltz	Steve & Sally	Meisel
Howard & Susan Bonds	Barney & Lydia	Michel
Gary Breeback	Bill & Pam	Minor
Jim Buckmeier	Chip	Norman
Chas & Pam Burke	Ken & Sharon	Olszewski
Tom Carroll	Tom	Orisich
Joe Clark	Jim & Jane	Orrell
Jack & Joanna Dagilas	Michael	Perkins
Clint & Beth Davis	Eric & Mary	Salminen
Doug Diem	Marty	Schlining
Matthew Dinnerman	Terry & Cindy	Shenberger
Cliff Essman	Ned & Pattie	Shields
Paul & Alicia Farley	Bert & Sandy	Shirey
Duff & Barbara Fowler	Rick	Smith
Rick & Cynthia George	Wendy & Robb	Stahl
Dale & Claudia Glatfelter	Denise & Robert	Stemler
Robert Guienot	Jack & Sheila	Stern
Bill Henry	Jim	Strickler
Sandy & Mike Hickman	Tom	Sweeney
Chris & Diane Horant	Alan & Carol	Tucker
Richard & Carole Jefferson	Tom & Diana	Wunk
Randell & Sheila Kegg	Sergio & Joy	Zarbin

## **Looking Back on the Midget**

**Article and images provided by Ian Macnab, MG Car Club - Toronto**

**As published in the MG Driver November/December 2019 Issue**

As summer comes, I hope that your Midget was tucked away with new oil in the crankcase, some dryer sheets in the cockpit to keep our mousey friends at bay, and the tyres pumped up to prevent flat spots. Perhaps you completed a list of things to be done before next driving season. As we start driving again, now is also a good time to reflect back on Midget heritage and take pride in owning our great little cars.

In the 1920's, Austin Motors introduced the Austin 7. A tiny, inexpensive car, the Austin 7 sold extremely well. Morris Motors realized that a "baby car", as they were popularly called, was needed to compete. Having taken over Wolseley in 1927, Morris found that it now had a Wolseley designed engine in the 8hp class that it could put to use in a tiny car.

In August 1928, the Morris Minor was announced as competition for the Austin 7. By early September, the MG Car Company in turn announced that it would produce a sports model based on the Morris Minor. To emphasize the tiny size of the new car it was called Midget. Within a fortnight, the M-type Midget was created in time to be introduced to the public at the London Auto Show. Two models were on display, but such was the speed in which the cars were developed, that only one had an engine. The other M-type graced the show display as a stationary model.

The new MG "baby car" was an instant hit with the public and The Autocar magazine predicted "The M.G. Midget will make sports car history." The M-type Midget entered production in March of 1929. Produced until mid-1932, a total of 3,235 M-type Midgets were produced. This was a high production number for the times and laid the foundation for the MG Midget sports cars to come (Table 1). Some of these were experimental and racing models, some were production models, but they all contributed to the success of MG. Land speed records were made with cars based upon the Midget with MG becoming the first 750cc car to exceed 100mph and the first to exceed the two miles per minute barrier.

With the end of TF Midget production and the introduction of the MGA in 1955, the name Midget was dropped. However, in 1961 the Midget name was resurrected when the redesign of the Austin-Healey Sprite gave rise to a MG version. Production of the "modern" MG Midget began in March 1961 with the car being publicly launched in June of that year. The car stayed in production until December 7, 1979 when the last Midget rolled off the assembly line at Abingdon. Throughout this 18-plus year production run, the car was steadily improved and modified to meet regulations. Table 2 shows the progression of Midget development through time. In total, 224,817 MG Midgets were produced in the modern era of the car's heritage.

Today it is hard to say just how many "modern" Midgets may still be in service. With the cars being inexpensive and appealing to first time car buyers in an era when cars were

often considered throw-away, many Midgets have sadly gone to the wrecking yard. Perhaps half the cars produced are still with us some forty years after production ended. The good news locally, however, is that the MG Car Club of Toronto is well represented by 24 of these fun little cars. The oldest car is a 1962 and the youngest a 1979. Our club has thirteen chrome bumper cars and eleven of the rubber bumper models. Of the chrome bumper cars, eight are considered in the "facelift" series with one being a Sabrina model (1974). All of them are well loved and deservedly so given the cars long production run and its memorable heritage.

Table 1: The Early Midgets

<i>Midget Model</i>	<i>Engine Size</i>	<i>Production Statistics</i>
M-type	847cc; 20/27 bhp	1929-1932: 3,235 cars
C-type	746cc; varied bhp	1931: 44 cars
D-type	847cc; 27 bhp	1932: 250 cars
J-type (1,2,3,4)	847cc; 36 bhp (J1, J2) 746cc; various bhp (J3, J4)	1932-1933: 2,494 cars (J2 was 2,083 of these)
PA	847cc; 35 bhp	1934 – 1936: 2000 cars
PB	939cc; 43 bhp	1936: 526 cars
Q-type	746cc; various bhp	1934: 8 cars
R-type	746cc; various bhp	1935: 10 cars
TA	1292cc; 52 bhp	1936 – 1939: 3,003 cars
TB	1250cc; 54 bhp	1939: 379 cars (production ceased at start of WWII)
TC	1250cc; 54 bhp	1945 – 1949: 10,000 cars
TD	1250cc; 54/57 bhp	1949 – 1953: 29,664 cars
TF	1250 cc; 57 bhp/1500cc; 63 bhp	1953 – 1955: 6,200 TF1250 / 3,400 TF1500

Table 2: The Modern Midget

Midget Model	Production Dates	Number Produced	Identifying Features (progressive changes noted)
MK I (GAN1)	March 1961 to Sept 1962	16,080	948 cc engine; drum brakes front and rear; quarter-elliptic springs
MK I (GAN2)	Oct. 1962 to Jan 1964	9,601	1098 cc engine; disc front brakes
MK II (GAN3)	Jan 1964 to Sept 1966	26,601	Door handles; wind-up windows; semi-elliptic rear springs
MK III (GAN4)	Oct 1966 to Oct 1969	22,415	1275 cc engine
MK III (GAN5)	Oct 1969 to Sept 1971	29,544	<i>The facelift series:</i> thin front bumper blade and split thin rear bumper; revised folding hood attached to rear deck
MK III (GAN5)	Oct 1971 to Nov 1974	38,357	Round rear wheel arch replaces squared arch
MK III (GAN5)	Dec 1973 to Aug 1974	9,930	Large rubber bumper over-riders ( <i>known as the Sabrina model in reference to a well-endowed starlet</i> )
1500 (GAN6)	Sept 1974 to Dec 1979	72,289	<i>The rubber bumper series:</i> wrap-around energy-absorbing bumpers; 1493 cc Triumph engine; Triumph gearbox; return to square rear wheel arch

The first Midget came into production in March 1929. The last Midget came off the assembly line on December 7, 1979. In the years between, there were fourteen versions of Midget. Many of these had several variations. The last version, the “modern” Midget, had eight variations over its production life of 18 years.



**Dyno Tuning My MGA Coupe**  
**Article and images provided by Tom Berry, Kansas City MG Car Club**  
**As printed in the MG Driver November/December 2019 issue**

In November of 2017, I began a refurbishment of my '60 MGA Coupe which included building an 1800cc MGB 3-main motor for it. I finished it in June of 2018 and have been satisfied with the way the motor ran and with the things I changed on it to enhance performance, but although performance was acceptable, I've always wondered if I might have missed something. When I initially heard about Jesse Prather Motorsports from TR-3 guy, Larry Taylor, I began to plan this adventure.

On Wednesday, November 7, 2018, a year after starting my referb project, my friend, MGB guy, Al Moore and I set out on an adventure to answer my questions. We set out on that cold clear morning at about 8:00 a.m. for Jesse Prather Motorsports in Topeka, KS about 70 miles from here. Jesse has a Chassis Dynamometer that he uses to tune race cars on. Jesse's main focus is Mazda race cars, but being the son of Kent Prather, long time MGA and British car guy, he has vast experience with British cars.

When we arrived, we found a pristinely clean, beautiful shop with a large number of customer racing cars in various stages of build or repair. Jesse greeted us, and we began our conversation about what I wanted and what results I could expect. Jesse listened as I gave him a bit of history of what I had done to the motor during its build. His explanation of what was going to be accomplished was clear and concise. We hit it off right away. The next step was to get my Coupe set up on the Dyno. Jesse directed me as I backed it into position and my photographer, Al, took the pictures.

Now, for obvious reasons, the Coupe had to be securely tied in position. Again, I was impressed with the thought that Jesse had put into the installation of the dynamometer. The tie-downs were attached to heavy steel rings securely imbedded in the concrete floor. The Coupe was not going to move. A high-velocity fan was placed in front of the grille, insuring cooling air through the radiator and an oxygen sensor placed in the exhaust pipe connected to the exhaust gas analyzer. In addition, leads for timing were attached to #1 plug wire and to a battery for power and to keep them out of the way.

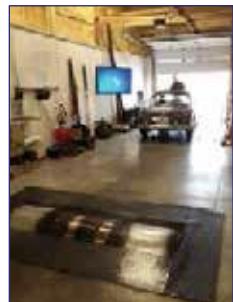
Once we were all set, Jesse did a check of the computer and the dyno read-outs, we (he) was ready to start doing the actual pulls running the car. Prior to doing the first pull, Jesse talked with me about how the car was driven. He wanted to know things like at what RPM did I normally shift, at what RPM did I shift when wanting it to perform, and at what speeds did I drive under different conditions. It was apparent to me that he was about to custom tune the car, so I would be able to get the maximum out of it the way I drove it. He knew that although I wanted good performance out of it, I was not racing the car like most of his customers do.

After the first pull, Jesse explained in detail what we were seeing on the graph displayed on the dyno computer screens. I had no difficulty following him as I have a long history with motors and have observed dyno runs on a number of other types of motors, but his explanation was clear, concise and unhurried. Any novice would have been able to understand. He was also more than happy to answer questions.

As it turned out, despite all of my research on SU needles, manual tuning methods and “reading” spark plugs, the motor was running too rich. Jesse jumped in and, with considerable skill, set out to correct this. This was where I learned some new (to me at least) SU tricks. Things that he readily shared with me and that he had apparently learned from his father, Kent. After a couple more pulls with changes in between each one, he determined that we were not going to get the optimum performance I was looking for without different carburetor needles that neither of us had.

Well, dang! What do we do now? Again, Jesse came up with a solution with directions to his dad’s, Kent’s, shop and the loan of his little shop SUV. Another pleasant adventure. Kent’s shop was not far, easy to find, and he was expecting us. Kent supplied us with a large assortment of SU needles and other parts in a kit that they use for just that purpose.

Upon our return, Jesse did a bit of research from a well-worn manual, changed needles, and did another pull with the dyno. The results were predictable, but still not quite the fuel/ air ratio he was looking for. Again, another change and, oops, a bit too lean. Back to the other needle, but with different height and jet drop. A couple more pulls with minor changes and, WOW!



## Midget Mumblings

By Steve Olson

Published in the Kansas City MG Post Volume 39 Issue 1

My most recent issue with our Midget is the instrument light in the speedometer. It has gone dim and is winking on and off. I guess LEDs don't always last forever. At least the very cheap ones I bought online a few years ago don't. Luckily, I bought spares since they had to come from China via slow boat and took several weeks to arrive. Now all I have to do is replace the failing one. On most of our cars, and especially on Midgets, that is no simple task. That lamp is located at the top rear of the speedo and can only be seen if you somehow cram your body upside down in the driver's floor board with your head up under the steering wheel. And I can barely manage to touch the bulb holder with the very tip of one finger, what with all the other things under the dash. I can't pull the bulb holder out and even if I did, I surely could not get it back in. I know I must have managed this impossible task in the past because that LED didn't get there by itself. I am not quite as agile as I once was, but I haven't grown that much in the last couple years and the car hasn't gotten much smaller. It was looking like I would have to remove the speedo from the dash to gain access to the rear of it. I have done that in order to replace the headlamp switch, but putting the speedo back in, getting those spacers on the long bolts followed by the tiny lock washers and the thumb nuts, is not easy. After dropping the lock washers a few times, I decided I could do without those. And somewhere inside the car there is at least one of those thumb nuts that disappeared never to be seen again. New ones aren't expensive luckily, and they are available. Really dreading this job.

I decided to sleep on the problem and try to recall if there was an easier way. And I woke up remembering a shortcut of sorts that has worked in the past. I can get two fingers on the nut that attaches the speedo cable, so with luck, I can loosen it just a turn. And I can just barely get two fingers on each of the thumb nuts and can loosen each of them slightly. The trip odometer adjuster is easy to see and detach from the dash. Now if all goes well, I can rotate the speedo about a half turn, which will bring the bulb holder around where two fingers can reach it. If I can manage to pull it out of the speedo, I can unscrew the bad bulb and replace it with a new one.

Reassembly is just the reverse of these steps. I think that just might work. I just need a day when the garage is fairly warm, and I have some spare time and there is nobody around to hear me in case I drop one of those small parts again.

EPILOGUE: Shortcut method worked to get the old bulb out and a new one screwed into the bulb holder. But couldn't get the dang thing back in, so still had to pull the speedo out of the dash. And, of course, one of those thumb nuts dropped and disappeared. After a 15-minute search, it showed up under the edge of the carpet and I was able to finally screw it in place. Only an hour and a half total time. Not easy to have this much fun with your clothes on.

## Drum Brakes vs Disc Brakes

**As published in Backroads – the Newsletter of the Texas MG Register  
November 2019**



The ability to stop a car has come a long way in the past 50 years. Computers and some amazing engineering can stop modern day cars almost on a dime. Back in the day, that was far from the case. Most every classic car through the late 60s was fitted with drum brakes. It wasn't until the early 70s that American manufacturers started to use disc brake system on the front wheels. Today, most vehicles are produced with 4-wheel disc brakes, but there are still drum brake systems used on a lot of trucks and cars.

**Drum brakes** get their name from their drum-like shape. The drum is attached to the wheel and spins freely while encasing the shoe brake mechanism. As the brakes are applied, a slave cylinder at the wheel pushes the shoes outward and the friction between the shoes and the inside of the drum bring your wheels to a halt. As you may already know, this enclosed braking system generates a lot of heat from breaking friction. It can be difficult to dissipate that heat which can cause brake fade and other overheating and brake pad issues. This is one of the major cons of having a drum brake system, especially drums on the front wheels. Another con is that it can collect water. Water can get caught inside the drum and decrease your braking ability. In colder climates it can freeze up or become packed with slush.

So why would someone want drums? For starters it may be a matter of originality. Are you trying to restore or preserve the car to manufacturer specs? Then four-wheel drum brakes might be the only option.

Believe it or not, there are some distinct advantages to having drum brakes...

- Drum brakes are significantly cheaper than disc brakes.
- Relining the brake pads is relatively inexpensive as well.
- Drum brakes are very simple to work on. There's no need for compressors, nor do you have to open fluid lines or retract pistons when changing shoe pads.
- Drum brakes are usually smaller and lighter than disk brake rotor and caliper system.
- Disc brakes on the rear wheels of the car rarely reach their "self-cleaning temperature". You are much more likely to need to change disc brake pads before drum brakes at the rear.

**Disc brakes** also stop a vehicle by applying friction. This time however, instead of a drum that encases the mechanics, an open spinning rotor is attached to the wheel and a brake caliper uses hydraulic pistons to squeeze brake pads on each side of the rotor to stop the wheel. The main advantage is the ease of heat dissipation. With an open-air spinning rotor, the heat can easily leave the brakes, unlike the drum that traps the heat inside. The cons of disc brakes are polar opposite of the drum advantages. Disc brakes cost more. You may have to sacrifice originality of your classic car and convert it to a disc brake system. This is going to cost even more money.

Disc brake systems may be heavier than comparable drum brake systems, but despite that small setback, disc brake systems outperform drum brakes at every turn... Figuratively and literally.

Here are some other distinct advantages...

- The centrifugal force of the spinning rotor is also far superior at displacing water.
- Much less likely to experience brake fade.
- Easier to inspect without having to remove the wheel.
- Only need disc brakes in the front to make a big difference in stopping power.
- More aesthetically pleasing. Especially with cross-drilled rotors and the right set of wheels.
- Disc brake system are self-adjusting.
- Brake pedal feel is improved compared to drum brake systems.
- Much more common so there are many more performance options and upgrades available.

*Well there you have it. The basic “brake” down of drum vs. disc brakes!*

**Cruise Control for a Triumph**  
**By Roger Elliott**  
**As published in the Kansas City MG Post**  
**Volume 38, Issue 12 & Volume 39, Issue 1**

We are planning on doing some long distance traveling in Pat's TR250, though we have not decided where. So, we thought it would be nice to make a couple of changes to the car to make it more comfortable for long trips.

The first thing we did was install Miata seats. The TR250 has low back seats, with a non-adjustable seat back. The Miata seats are tall, have an adjustable back and they slide easily.

The second thing we did was install a cruise control. I did some research and asked questions of various people and forums/email groups. Three brands of aftermarket cruise controls came up. I heard of at least one other mentioned at the Olpe Chicken Run but did not manage to note the name.

Here are the three I researched, in no particular order.

The first was a reproduction of the Audiovox cruise control. Steve Olson and Rick Mills have Audiovox units installed in their cars. This unit uses vacuum, and some people I talked to indicated that they had to install a vacuum reservoir in order for the unit to control the speed accurately. It can use the coil as the signal to the cruise control for speed. The place that I originally found this no longer sells it, but it does seem to be available on Amazon by searching for Motogroup. The seller provides no assistance in the installation.

The second unit is the Rostra unit (<http://www.rostra.com/universal-aftermarket-cruise-control-by-rostra.php>). This unit has an electric servo motor, so no vacuum reservoir is required. It does require an actual speed signal, so a sensor has to be installed on the driveshaft. This unit has some options for the control switch.



Stalk



Control Pad

The third unit is a LiteOn AP500 unit, which is the one I purchased from Hot Wire Auto <http://www.hotwireauto.com/?page=sales-cruise>. The unit is not advertised on the web site, but they indicated they try to keep one in stock. They concentrate on newer cars that have drive-by-wire systems. This unit also has an electric servo motor with no

vacuum. It can use a signal from the coil to control the speed. This unit has similar options for the control switch as the Rostra unit.

Here is a site with more information about the same unit under a slightly different name:  
<https://www.bridgwater-electronics.co.uk/ap500-cruise-control-unit/p101>

We originally planned on using the stalk control on the right-hand side of the steering column, which would give the car two stalks on each side of the column: turn signal and overdrive on the left; cruise control and lights on the right. But we decided the stalk was just a bit too big and modern looking, so we went with the control pad. Here are the options we had for the unit we installed.



AP500 Stalk



AP500 Control Pad

For the units that use the coil for the signal, the unit will try to maintain the RPM that you set the cruise control at. Using stock road speed to rpms for a TR250: If you set it at 3,000 rpms (62mph) in fourth, then change to fourth overdrive and hit resume, the car will speed up, as it is still trying to maintain the 3,000 rpm (76 mph). If you were to shift to third and hit resume, the car would still maintain the 3,000 rpm (47 mph).

I used the following table from the TR250 owner's manual for the above calculations.

---

Road Speed Data

Engine speed at a road speed of:	O/D	O/D	O/D	Top	Top	3rd	3rd	2nd	2nd	1st
10 m.p.h.	395	482	525	641	794	969	1513			
10 k.p.h.	248	303	330	402	498	608	950			

Road speed at 1,000 r.p.m. 20.74 m.p.h. 33.04 k.p.h.

Road speed at 2,500 ft/min.  
piston speed in top gear 83 m.p.h. 132 k.p.h.

Once I purchased the cruise control kit, I had to figure out how and where I was going to mount it. I came up with a couple of ideas. One place was in the engine compartment on a shelf just in front of the passenger; the second place was in the passenger foot well.

When I tried positioning the unit, I realized one of the drawbacks of universal-fit cruise controls. The wires and the actuator cable are long enough to go clear around the engine. I thought about cutting the cable off to a more suitable length for the TR250 but was advised against it as I would not be able to match the quality of factory end. When I looked at how I would have to route the cable, or where I would have to place the actuator to have it not look horrible, I decided I did not like the idea of mounting the unit in the engine compartment.

The instructions recommend putting the actuator motor in the engine compartment. As far as I could tell, the main reason for that was due to the noise that the motor makes. I did not see that as being a problem in the TR250. (In the driving we have done with it installed, we have not noticed noise coming from the unit).

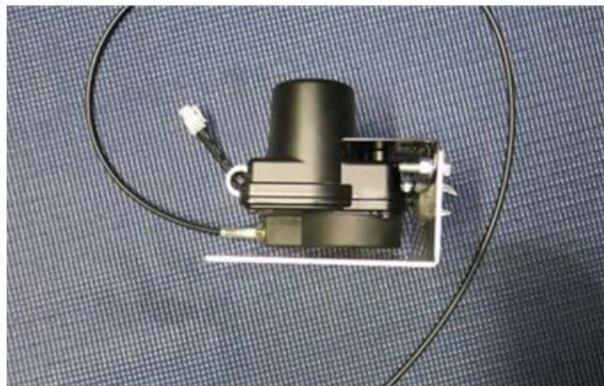
So, I went with installing the unit in the passenger foot well. In the TR250, we don't even notice it is there when riding in the car.

There are two bolts on the shelf in the engine compartment in front of the passenger, and I have wondered what they were for. Steve Peak informed me that the bolts were to hold an accessory speaker kit when the cars were new. Turns out, the holes were in the perfect position for my purpose.

I received the picture below of a unit installed in a TR6 on top of the shelf in the engine bay from a Team.net cohort. He has replaced the throttle linkage with a cable so he could route the actuator cable differently than I could. The only way I could see hooking the actuator cable up to the linkage in the 250 in this location, involved wrapping the cable around the actuator a couple of times. I did not like how that would look.



So, I opted to install the unit inside the car. I had a bracket made of aluminum (the L shaped piece) to mount the actuator to the car.



Here are the units installed in the passenger foot well (pictured below). I still had to loop the cable around more than I wanted, but it is hidden. Bends in the cable are supposed to be limited to 300 mm (11.8-inch diameter). I am not sure I succeeded in doing that, but hopefully it is close.

The unit on the left is the actuator. It is held in place by the two bolts that originally held the accessory speaker. The small box on the right is the electronic module and is held in place by heavy duty two-sided mounting tape.



The kit comes with several pieces that can be used for making an attachment to the throttle. Two things to consider are: the actuator cable should only be able to pull through about 80% of the carb linkage range – you don't want the actuator to be straining to pull past the linkage range; the actuator cable needs to be pulling within 20 degrees of the direction the linkage moves.

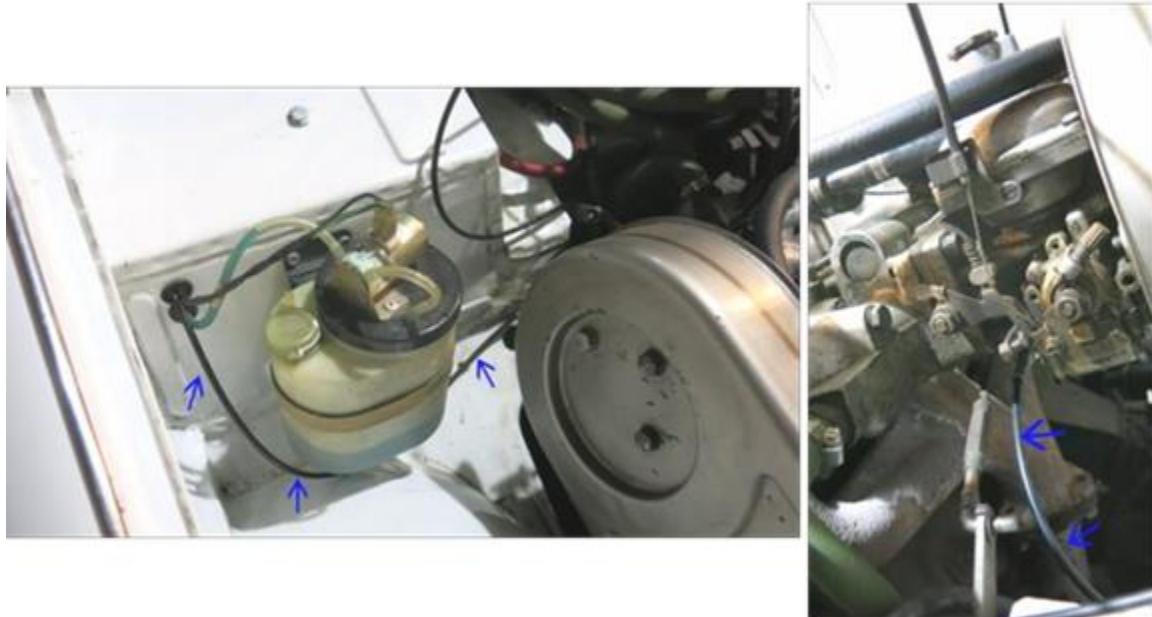
Here are the pieces I modified on the TR250 linkage:



Here it is installed on the car. The actuator able is not connected yet.



I looped the actuator cable around and ran it out the hole next to the windshield washer bottle and looped it around to the linkage.



The unit has a function to prevent over-revving the engine, so a clutch switch may not be necessary, but I feel better having one in the car. I bent a piece of metal to hold the brake switch I purchased from NAPA. Here is the bracket I made and how I installed it in the car.



We opted for the dash control instead of the stalk control. I bent a piece of metal to wrap around the crash pad on the bottom of the dash just to the right of the steering wheel to hold the unit.



Hooking the electrical connections up were straight forward for the most part.

1. Connect the orange wire to a switched terminal on the ignition switch.
2. Connect the yellow wire to the negative side of the coil for the input signal.
3. Connect the green wire to a ground.
4. The brown and brown/white wires have been connected to the brake switch. If you have LED tail lights, another step must be taken; more on that later.
5. Connect the purple wire to the brake switch that was installed on the clutch.
6. Tape off or remove the blue and black wires as they are not used when the coil is used for the input signal. I opted to remove them from the harness.
7. Connect the plugs for the control module.
8. Connect the plugs for the actuator module.

There is a set-up procedure to follow to prepare the unit for use once it is installed. It is described fully in the installation manual, so I will not repeat them here. They were easy to follow.

I am happy with the way the installation went. It took me awhile to figure it all out, but I only drilled four holes to complete the installation. Two holes were in the throttle linkage and two were in the metal lip under the dash to hold the control unit in place.

On our trip to Colorado, the cruise control worked flawlessly – as long as the lights were not on. When the tail lights were on, the unit thought that the brakes were being applied. After doing some research, I decided the problem was related to having LEDs installed for the brake/tail lights.

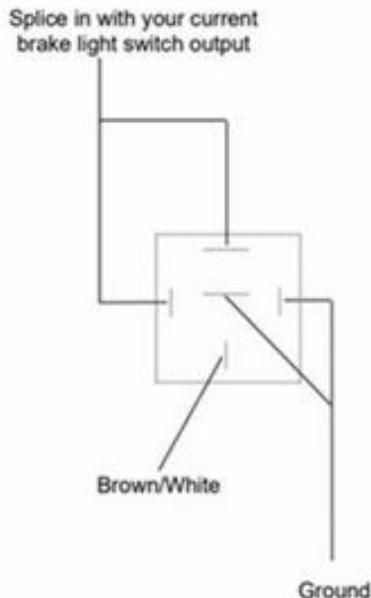
Many of the suggestions on line were to put resistors in the line so that the resistance was similar to regular incandescent taillights. I did not like that idea, as that would put hot spots where the resistors are. Plus, one reason for using the LEDs is lowered current usage – the others are brighter lights (not a given with LEDs, but I have verified that ours are) and faster response as the filaments don't have to heat up. I don't know how much difference the faster response makes, but I definitely like the brighter lights.

I found a couple of references to putting a relay in the brake light circuit, but the references that I found on line seemed to be for cruise controls that are wired a bit differently than the one I installed. I contacted Hotwire where I purchased the unit. Chris told me that some of the other units (newer drive-by wire units) mention the problem of LED taillights and there was a relay that could be added. He found one but said it did not look like it would work for the unit I had and that he would draw one up and email it to me.

I put the relay in (as diagrammed right) and it took care of the problem.

**Cruise Brake Light Switch Relay Diagram**  
(For use with LED Tail Lights)

Brown/White:	Hook to #30 on the relay
Ground:	Hook to #87A on the relay
Ground:	Hook to #86 on the relay
Brake Switch Output:	Hook to #85 on the relay
Brake Switch Output:	Hook to #87 on the relay



## I'd Do It All Over Again (part 1)

By: Doug McCoach

### Chapter 1 The Event

First off, let me just say, I'd do it all over again in a hot second. The opportunity to celebrate my nephews wedding with a road trip to Lake Placid, NY; and feature the MGA in a wedding pic cameo was not to be missed.

Some would say, doubters mostly, that this was not such a great idea. 1100 miles over a 4-day weekend in a 64-year-old car; with expected rain, ice, and snow in the Adirondack mountains. The logistics would be daunting, Spare parts, Dresses, Winter gear, and gifts to pack. We spent the 3 preceding months with shakedown cruises and tuning, giving the gremlins a chance to surface and be addressed. Mark Raspi did a great job getting the car dialed in.

Finally, the departure day arrived, top down and with my co-pilot we headed north, jumping onto Rt 14 to cut through central PA.; stopping at Skaneateles, NY for lunch overlooking the lake; and arriving without event in Lake Placid – 15 hours later; in time for a brisk last call around the fire pit.



The wedding was fabulous, the bride beautiful, the setting majestic and the weather perfect throughout the event. (images 1,2) By coincidence Hemmings was sponsoring a classic car rally through the region that weekend following the route of historic rallies from the mid-fifties. Wherever we went, we encountered friends in a great collection of awesome vehicles. Circumstances for us however would take a turn for the worse after the newlyweds were sent off.



We woke to torrential rain and ice the morning of our return trip. As readers will understand, in an MGA roadster, weather tightness is at best a concept and never an absolute. It's always good to have functional door seals, a well fitted top and a spool of wool felt to stuff in random cracks. Hint: Scotch brand adhesive backed clear plastic cabinet bumpers do a great job of discreetly reducing side curtain chatter. The first 5 hours of our return were challenging, but gradually as we descended from the High Peaks region, the weather improved, and by the time we were in central New York we were cruising. Oil pressure as always at 60# and

temperature rock steady at 185 degrees.

Until, 23 hours and 850 miles into the trip, or 250 miles from home; pulling away from a traffic signal north of Elmira, a mysterious Bang and then a steady drop in oil pressure. What the....Stop the car, check the oil. Bone dry. The next 7 hours were a haze of: Refill the oil, watch the oil pressure recover, drive cautiously as the pressure gradually drops, repeat. After 5 stops and the addition of 3 gallons of oil we finally rolled into the garage. Safe, but with some real questions about what had happened and how to proceed.

## Chapter 2 Discovery & Diagnosis

On the Saturday after Thanksgiving the forensics began. Here's what we knew. Temperature and Oil levels had been stable prior to the event, with of course, a little oil under the parked car and an occasional whiff from the exhaust. As we limped home there was ample white smoke from the tailpipe, my sweep car was coated with oil mist, and now everything in the engine bay had a coating of oil.



Here's what we needed to understand. Most fundamentally, besides out the tailpipe, where did those 3 gallons of oil go? All evidence pointed to the head gasket. But once we were in there, what collateral issues might need to be addressed; head warping, block integrity? What other refurbishment would make sense with the car up on blocks; Water Pump, Fan-belt, Main Bearings? And how much of this stuff was actually within my capacity to perform in my garage with my limited experience.

And this is where the real value of an organization like MGOB comes forth. With an email to Richard L., a few calls and emails later, Randy Kegg was kind enough to volunteer his time and tools to assist a club member in need. Recognizing this as a learning opportunity, he proposed a special Saturday morning tech session; I just needed to provide coffee and donuts. (image 3)



What we would find was not pretty. We popped the valve cover and pulled the plugs. This provided us the opportunity to pressure check each cylinder. It also provided a lot of time for random musings.

Cylinder 1 – 145 psi. I had bought this car 10 years ago and put 10,000 miles on the car, ALWAYS driving hard.

Cylinder 2 – 80 psi. I understood prior owners had refurbished the motor, including replacing the cam shaft and porting and polishing the manifold.

Cylinder 3 – 130psi. This car has always been well received at the Rocks show. It's beautiful and needs to stay on the road.

Cylinder 4 – 150psi. What kind of resources is it going to take to get this thing fixed?



Ok, now we are confronted with known unknowns (Thanks, Secretary Rumsfeld). Something is going on with Cylinder 2 and 3; what was it? Randy set up his arthroscopic camera to get a visual of each piston head.

Cylinder 1 – bit of carbon,

Cylinder 2 – also some carbon, but also some interesting chipping on the piston head rim

Cylinder 3 – yes, carbon, and also another chipped piston (image 4)

Cylinder 4 – equally carbonized but otherwise sound.

Armed with this working knowledge, if not a definitive answer, the path forward was clear. Pull the head, inspect the gasket and pistons. And determine the course of treatment. Further exploration confirms the gasket blew out between cylinder 2/3 directly under the exhaust manifold. (image 5) As far as our other questions. Yes, the water pump bearing was shot and needed replacement. No, the head didn't appear to be warped. We know that we need to replace Pistons 2/3. It seems like we should do them all. We see some scoring on the cylinder wall of #2. So, we probably are re-boring the cylinders and replacing the rings. And that's the bright red line. I don't have these tools, so this is going to have to go out.

Stay tuned.....

The MGs of Baltimore, Ltd. Car club was established in 1977. The club represents over 150 members in the Metro Baltimore area. As the name implies, the club centers its activities around the preservation and enjoyment of the cars that bear the classic MG marque. The club is affiliated with the following national organizations: The North American MGA Register, The North American MGB Register, and The American MGB association. Internationally, the club is affiliated with the MG Car Club and The MG Owners Club. The club's activities include sponsorship of the nationally known "MGs on the Rocks" car show, a series of challenging (and FUN) historic car rallies, as well as numerous fun gatherings all through the year.

## Tools Available for Club Members to Borrow Contact Randy Kegg

- Engine Stand (2)
- Engine lift with tilt device (2)
- Whitworth wrenches & sockets
- Whitworth thread file
- MGB Kingpin Reamer
- Sandblaster (Suction from a bucket type)
- Rostyle Wheel Paint Mask (MGB)
- Midget King pin reamer
- SU Carb throttle shaft reamer for MG T, A, B carbs
- SU Carb throttle shaft reamer
- Midget carbs
- Torque Wrench Click Type 0-150 ft lbs
- Standard 12" socket set
- Hub Puller
- Compression tester
- Harmonic balancer puller
- Camshaft Degree Wheel with TDC finder.
- Timing light
- Dwell/Tach Meter
- Differential flange removal tool
- Brake line bender - tubing cutter, bubble type flaring tools
- Slide hammer for bushings, bearing caps and axle extraction tool
- Lift-A-Dot Upholstery Punch tool
- SU Carb Synchronizer
- Pickle Fork for Tie Rod Ends
- Mob Clutch Alignment tool
- Front Suspension Toe-In adj tool
- Rear Hub Sockets for MGA and early and late MGB.
- Cylinder Leak Down tester

# CALENDAR

## FEBRUARY

- 4<sup>th</sup> MGOB monthly meeting**
- 9<sup>th</sup> Chili Run at the Sharpes**

## MARCH

- 3<sup>rd</sup> MGOB monthly meeting**

## APRIL

- 7<sup>th</sup> MGOB monthly meeting**
- 18<sup>th</sup> Williamsburg British & European Car Show**  
Williamsburg, VA [www.wmbrbrit.com](http://www.wmbrbrit.com)
- 26<sup>th</sup> Britain on the Green, Gunston Hall, Lorton, VA**  
[www.britainonthegreen.com](http://www.britainonthegreen.com)

## MAY

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Get the Dust of Rallye – more information to follow**
- 5<sup>th</sup> MGOB monthly meeting**

The club membership meets at 7:30 PM the first Tuesday of every month at Johnny Dee's Lounge. Johnny Dee's is located at 1705 Amuskai Rd; Baltimore, Md, just off of Loch Raven Blvd at Joan Ave. From I-695 Take the Loch Raven Blvd. Exit south. Go about 1 mile, turn left onto Joan Ave. Park in the upper lot. For more info go to their website at [www.JohnnyDeesLounge.com](http://www.JohnnyDeesLounge.com) Come early and have dinner. We start arriving between 5:30 and 6:00 p.m. The meetings are about sharing experiences, taking care of club business and normally include a monthly tech session provided by our MG "technical guru" Randy Kegg. More than just MGs. Many members of MGOB are owners of the other classic British marques and all are welcomed to join the club.

**21st Annual 2020 Williamsburg British & European Car Show**  
**Saturday, April 18, 2020**  
**10:00 AM to 3:00 PM**

Open the 2020 car show season by visiting beautiful Colonial Williamsburg Virginia for the 21th Annual British and European Car Show sponsored by the Williamsburg British Car Club at The Shops of High Street on 4/18/20.

**Location:**

Revolution Golf & Grille at The Shops at High St  
1430 High St.  
Williamsburg, VA 23185

**Registration:** Register on WBCC Website for the show <http://www.wmbgbrit.com/>  
\$25 pre-registration due by April 11, 2020; \$30 after April 11, 2020; Spectators Free

For more information contact Roy Gavilan at [WBCCcarshow@gmail.com](mailto:WBCCcarshow@gmail.com) or call  
757-637-5902

=====

**23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Britain on the Green**  
**April 26, 2020**  
**9:30 AM to 3:00 PM**

The Capital Triumph Register is proud to announce that the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual Britain on the Green (BOG) will be held at historic Gunston Hall, the colonial home of patriot George Mason, in Lorton, VA, on April 26, 2020. BOG, which welcomes all British cars and motorcycles. is well-established as one of the premier all-British shows in the metropolitan DC area.

Cars pre-registered by April 15 will receive the collectable 23<sup>rd</sup> anniversary show poster by famed artist Joseph Craig English. All for \$25, a savings of \$10 from day-of registration. Registration after April 15, 2020: \$35 per car. Mail in registration: \$35 per car

Further information on Britain on the Green can be found at:  
<http://www.capitaltriumphregister.com/bog/>

**Location:**

Gunston Hall  
10709 Gunston Road  
Lorton, VA 22079  
<http://www.gunstonhall.org/>

**BOG Spectator Admission Prices:**

Adults: \$10; Children 6-18: \$5; Children under 6: free

# 2020 Convention Information

## GOF WEST

JUNE 29<sup>th</sup> - JULY 3<sup>rd</sup>

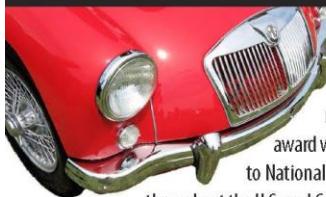
<https://gofwest.org/gof-west-2020>

## NAMGAR GT-45

JUNE 1<sup>st</sup> to JUNE 5<sup>th</sup>

<https://gt45.co/>

## Register Your MGA With NAMGAR!



Join over 2,000 enthusiastic owners in the restoration, preservation, and sheer enjoyment of driving an MGA, Magnette, or variant of this noble breed. You'll receive six bi-monthly issues of *MGA!*, our full-color, award winning magazine, invitations to National and Regional Get-Togethers throughout the U.S. and Canada, plus a knowledge base and support group second to none. All this for just \$37.50 per year (North America), or \$52.50 (International). **Get more information at <http://www.namgar.com>, or contact [registrar@namgar.com](mailto:registrar@namgar.com).**



## NAMGBR 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention

JUNE 28<sup>th</sup> - JULY 1<sup>st</sup>

<https://mg2020.regfox.com/mg2020-calgary>



North American MGB Register

The only MEMBER-RUN organization for MGB, MGC, Midget, 1100/1300 and Post Abingdon Car owners.

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP \$30 (\$45 overseas)**

- Dash plaque • Membership card • Window decal
  - Six bi-monthly issues of *The MG Driver*, a 68-page informative magazine.
  - Annual national convention – a four-day MG party!

## North American MGB Register

PO BOX 876 • Downers Grove, IL 60515-0876

Toll-free phone: 800-NAMGBR-1

[www.namgbr.org](http://www.namgbr.org)

# OFFICERS AND CHAIRPERSONS

President	Richard Liddick	410-817-6862	<a href="mailto:rgl2mgbgt@aol.com">rgl2mgbgt@aol.com</a>
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President	Ken Olszewski	410-893-1661	<a href="mailto:kenmgob@comcast.net">kenmgob@comcast.net</a>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President	Mike Lutz	410-592-8610	<a href="mailto:mglutz@comcast.net">mglutz@comcast.net</a>
Treasurer	Randy Kegg	410-592-3733	<a href="mailto:randell_kegg@msn.com">randell_kegg@msn.com</a>
Secretary	Tracy Trobridge	410-489-7444	<a href="mailto:tracy21794@yahoo.com">tracy21794@yahoo.com</a>
Newsletter	Kathy Liddick	410-817-6862	<a href="mailto:themgbabe@comcast.net">themgbabe@comcast.net</a>
Membership	Kathy Liddick	410-817-6862	<a href="mailto:themgbabe@comcast.net">themgbabe@comcast.net</a>
Rallye Master	Eric Salminen	443-463-3071	<a href="mailto:mgobrallymaster@gmail.com">mgobrallymaster@gmail.com</a>
MGs on the Rocks	Richard Liddick	410-817-6862	<a href="mailto:rgl2mgbgt@aol.com">rgl2mgbgt@aol.com</a>
Tool Meister	Randy Kegg	410-592-3733	<a href="mailto:randell_kegg@msn.com">randell_kegg@msn.com</a>
Web Master	Richard Liddick	410-817-6862	<a href="mailto:rgl2mgbgt@aol.com">rgl2mgbgt@aol.com</a>
Regalia	Cheryl Reitz	410-336-2584	<a href="mailto:creitz@dap.com">creitz@dap.com</a>

## MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Submit any changes to:

Kathy Liddick  
5237 Glen Arm Road  
Glen Arm, MD 21057  
[themgbabe@comcast.net](mailto:themgbabe@comcast.net)

## MGs of Baltimore Affiliations

North American MGB Register  
North American MGA Register  
American MGB Association  
MG Car Club UK

## DISCLAIMER

The OCTAGRAM is published monthly by the MGs of Baltimore car club. Opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Club, Club officers, or the newsletter staff. Technical information is believed to be accurate. However, any repairs or mechanical advice is attempted at the readers own risk. The Club, officers, or staff will not be responsible for any misinterpreted or incorrect technical information.

Articles appearing herein may be used by other car clubs or organization in their own newsletters, providing appropriate credit and recognition of the source is given.