

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE MGs of BALTIMORE MD

January 2021

www.mgsofbaltimore.org

From El Presidente:

Well, 2020 is finally behind us, hopefully 2021 will be a splendid year, we will get our Covid-19 shots (maybe) and resume the car show season as thought nothing has happened. As most of you know the Annual "After the Holidays" party has been canceled and the Annual "Chilly Run" has also been canceled too. We are hoping to be able to have a get together party of some sort this spring and if things go right the Annual "Get the Dust Off" Rallye on the first Sunday in May or May 1st, 2021. More details will follow on all of these in upcoming issues of the Octagram.

Planning for MG International 2021 Atlantic City is forging ahead, the website is now open for registration at: <u>https://ac2021.regfox.com/mg-international-2021</u> This All-Register event will be held June 14th -17, 2021 at Harrah's Resort & Convention Center in Atlantic City, NJ. There are lots of fun things planned, a car show, winery tours, bus trips to Cape May and Philadelphia and the Simone museum and much, much more. Checkout the website and see for yourself.

I would like to like Anthony Debella for hosting the MGOB Zoom Project Meetings, if you are interested in partaking in these please contact Anthony at mgdriver@comcast.net and he will provide with the information needed to join in.

MGOB Club dues for 2021 are now due. There is a list of members that **don't** owe dues in this newsletter if your name is **not on it you owe dues.** Dues are \$20.00 per year. Please mail your cheque payable to:

MGs of Baltimore, Ltd. Car Club 5237 Glen Arm Road East Glen Arm, MD 21057-9456

Safety Fast!

Richard



Membership Update

Below is the list of people who **DO NOT** currently owe dues. If your name is not on the list below then you owe dues. Dues are \$20/year and cheques should be made payable and sent to MGs of Baltimore; 5237 Glen Arm Road; Glen Arm, MD 21057 or you may pay at the January meeting.

First Name	Last Name
Glenn S. & Barbara	Abbott
R.E. (Bob) & Joey	Bates
Suzie	Boltz
Howard & Susan	Bonds
Gary	Breeback
Jim	Buckmeier
John & Carole	Chizik
Joe	Clark
Clint & Beth	Davis
Anthony & Jackie	DeBella
Johan & Britney	DeVicq
Matthew	Dinnerman
Michael & Vicki	Egliskis
Cliff	Essman
Christopher	Fritz
Rick & Cynthia	George
Ron	Gillis
Dale & Claudia	Glatfelter
George	Gorayeb
Robert	Guienot

First Name	Last Name
Bill & Bonnie	Hallock
Sandy & Mike	Hickman
Randell & Sheila	Kegg
Matthew	Kutz
Steve & Debbie	Lingsch
Richard & Kathy	Liddick
Jack & Liz	Long
Rick & Patsy	MacInnes
Dale & Wallis	Meeks
Barney & Lydia	Michel
Richard & Janet	Moure
Chip	Norman
Alex	Ollerman
Cheryl & Eric	Reitz
William & Pamela	Riley
Marty	Schlining
Rick	Smith
Harry & Mariann	Snow
Wendy & Robb	Stahl
Ed & Gloria	Wenderoth
Sergio & Joy	Zarbin

We would also like to welcome Matthew Kutz to the club. Matthew has a 1962 MGA MKII Deluxe, a 1960 Triumph TR3A and a 1931 Packard 826.

We can't wait to see these cars at some upcoming events.

Yet another of Phil and Joe's early Nigels



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The Best Handling MG? From the *MG Experience* BBS

Courtesy of the Octagon – The Newsletter of The Northern California Centre of the M.G. Car Club

This is an area where I have good experience, having thrashed my MGA to the breaking point in almost weekly autocross (Solo-II) with the SCCA for several years. I suspect I do more twists and turns in competition in one season than most road racers do in a lifetime.

The MGA does indeed have very good road holding suspension, especially for the period when it was built (and allowing for the mass of the live rear axle). Give it some sticky tires, put it down on a smooth surface, properly tweak a few suspension adjustments, and you can make it do damn near anything you like, limited primarily by adhesion of the tires to the pavement. I have a house full of trophies to back it up, and those wins came rather naturally for a 40-year-old car competing against much more modern machinery.

There will be a few qualifying remarks. If you hit a seriously bumpy road the heavy rear axle will dance a little, especially with some particular frequency of excitation. The front suspension is better with not so much (excessive) unsprung weight, with the spring pans and shock arms being minimal. - Barney Gaylord

Barney...I don't have anything like your experience in pushing the car to the limit, but I have owned a massive range of cars over the years, often 'performance cars' and the MGA is a delight to drive. It sticks to road like the proverbial on a blanket and my conversion to a 5-speed box last year seems to also have given it a new burst of energy and the ability to put it on precisely when needed. Nonstandard mods have been an anti-sway (roll) bar and wider/lower 195/60R15 tyres fitted on strong 72 spoke 15 by 5 wheels. - Neil Ferguson

To back up Barney's significant empirical testing of the theory that the A is the best handling MG, I saw a comparison of MGs in a magazine last year, and the A came top, even compared to the modern Z series and the MGF/TF. I believe test was a modern-day head-to-head comparison. It lost out on other aspects like fuel consumption, 0-60, cost to run, but blitzed the handling section. - Grant Hudson

Of course, the MGA is a pleasure to drive and, of course, as Barney points out with some "modification" the handling can be made far better. But the fact remains that in standard trim an MGA would be no match for a semi-elliptic Spridget as an example and it would be a long way behind a simple modern saloon car. Don't confuse driving pleasure with handling.

Just as a point I remember racing many years ago at Pembrey a circuit in the UK at a meeting organized by the Jaguar drivers club. Racing that day were some highly modified E Type Jaguars. A competitor turned up in a standard XJ220 complete with CD player, seat belts and a roll cage. It absolutely slaughtered everything, and it is only to be expected from a car designed to modern standards.

By the way we had a similar discussion some time ago about Midgets. Some of their owners believed the cars were so good they compared them to the handling of a Formula 1 Ferrari. - Bob Turbo Midget, England

I don't suppose there is anything magic or superior about either the MGA or Midget model. Both with front engine, rear wheel drive, near 50/50 weight distribution, and similar suspension. In theory the Midget should be quicker through a slalom because it is narrower and can follow a straighter line (but a lot of Midgets have been embarrassed trying to prove it).

Also don't confuse horsepower with handling. If we were all power hungry no one would own an MG with a standard 4-cylinder engine. - Barney Gaylord

I think MGAs in Autocrosses in the USA must be entirely different animals to the ones we have here. In the UK and Europe a Midget defeats the MGA on almost every occasion. (It is far more nimble). Maybe due to our language difference, I think it is time to beg to differ or maybe my MGA has something wrong with it but most modern cars have far better handling. - Bob Turbo Midget England

Similar situation in Oz. We keep getting beaten by Midgets in motorkhanas. Maybe a difference is that there must be a change in direction every 20 metres with our motorkhana rules. – Mike Ellsmore

Never ceases to surprise me that people don't look at the power to weight ratio as being the most important anyway - but - on the subject of autotesting MGAs vs Midgets - all I know is that the MGA made me ache in places I never knew I didn't have muscles - Rachmacb

The Miata is what the MGA was 50 years ago. Nimble and fun with relatively low horsepower. The Miata is so well set up it is in a class of its own. The tighter the course, the better for them. On tight courses, the bigger, high horsepower cars just slide around like pigs on ice.

I must agree with Barney here. As a vintage racer of 2 MGAs for over 10 years, we are qualifying and finishing on the pointy end of the grid each weekend. It has taken us nearly 8 years to fully develop the suspension to get our cars to where they are now with the help of Huffaker Engineering. We still use lever shocks, factory rear leaf springs, and all pickup points are to factory spec. The Porsches and Corvettes that drive away from us at tracks like Laguna Seca and ThunderHill don't stand a chance at more technical tracks like Sears Point. When properly sorted, the corner weights are within 2% giving you amazing balance at the highest of speeds. Our 'vintage' lap times put us in the middle of the grid for a Spec Miata race. For those of you who need HP in your MGA, you can get a reliable 120hp to the wheel with a proper motor. As for 1275cc Midgets... yep, when prepared properly, they will always be quicker than an MGA, on a AutoX or Road Course. - K. Brown



My 1960 Twin Cam Roadster

By Phil Collins

As published in the Kansas City MG Post Volume 39 Issue 11

My interest in British cars date back to the seventies. I had a second cousin that was restoring an MGTD. I remember seeing the complete rolling chassis, all shiny and new. How beautiful it was! My cousin had a best friend that was into Jaguar's...120's, 140's, 150's & E Type's. Between my cousins love of MG's and his friends love of Jaguar's, the British Car Bug Bit Me! My cousin's friend became my friend, as well and he once told me he's probably wrecked more Jaguar's than some folks had restored!!!

I started looking into MG's after ruling out Healeys and Jags. My first MG was a very early '63 MGB Roadster with a tired body, but a sound engine...just needed a rebuild. Picked up a '65 MGB roadster in great shape, but a blown motor. Rebuilt the motor out of the '63 & put it in the '65 (I know...a 3-main motor in a 5-main car). The 3-main motor rebuild was scattered all over my parent's garage. They were patient, thank goodness! But my first attempt at rebuilding things didn't go as planned. Got discouraged, sold it all, and took a break.

When the bug bit me again some short years later, I decided to look for something unique. I remember once seeing a cut-away drawing of a Twin Cam motor. I thought that was the coolest thing I'd ever seen. Learned that this motor was in an MGA. The MGAs were being re-discovered in the '70s, so I started my search for an MGA Twin Cam. My first Twin Cam was a rare '59 Coupe that I bought with a Bill of Sale from Leo Long. The Twin Cam motor that came with the car was rebuilt by Joe Egle. I started tearing the car apart and almost immediately I said, "Wait a dang minute! I know nothing about how this thing goes back together", so I started my search for a second Twin Cam car. Had to have

something to pattern after, right? I found one that I still own today...43 years and counting! A 1960 MGA 1600 Twin Cam Roadster. Still has the original drive train...motor, gearbox, and rear axle. Upon doing a little research, I discovered that my '60 Twin Cam Roadster is the last left-hand-drive and the 4th from the last one built! It's a keeper! Ended up owning a total of three MGA Twin Cams over the years...two Coupes and the Roadster. As the years went by, the Coupes found other homes.



The MGA Twin Cam was announced in 1958 and was the product of a lengthy and involved development. But disappointingly, it returned one of the shortest production runs that Abingdon had ever seen. Only 2,111 cars were produced between September 1958 and June 1960. Most of them were Roadsters and just a handful were the rare Coupes. Not as forgiving a motor as the pushrod motor MGAs; the Twin Cam tended to overrev in the lower gears,

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causing service problems and complaints. By the time all the issues were resolved, it was too late. Its fate was sealed.

Its 1588 CC motor developed 108 BHP at 6700 RPMs. Currently, my motor is developing 104 BHP at 5500 RPMs, with about 94 lbs. torque. Its speed was advertised as 2 mile/minute (120 MPH). I've had it up to 90 MPH, but no faster. With the help of Kent Prather over the years, most, if not all, of the issues that caused all of the service problems and complaints with the motor have been corrected. Lower compression modern pistons and valve seals to stop the oil consumption are probably the two biggest improvements. Dunlop disc brakes were fitted front and rear together with Dunlop Centre Lock Disc Wheels. These wheels looked very similar to the wheels on a D-Type Jaguar.

The Dunlop brake system had its own master cylinder along with a separate clutch master cylinder, whereas the standard MGA shares a single dual clutch/brake master cylinder.

Other things that are unique to the Twin Cam is the cast aluminum cross flow cylinder head and the overhead intake and exhaust cam shafts. It looks massive when its bolted to the block.

Valves are adjusted by removing the cam shafts and pulling the inverted buckets fitted over the valve stems and replacing the shim inside the bucket. Similar setup is on a Jaguar motor. It also has a deep sump oil pan that is cast aluminum and finned to help some with the cooling. When it's time to change the oil and filter, it takes 9 quarts! I added an oil cooler, since it didn't come with one. The tachometer redlines at 7,000 RPMs.

The chassis had changes made to it so the motor would fit. The steering rack is mounted further forward to clear the massive cast aluminum timing chain cover that goes from top to bottom of the front of the motor (the timing chain is 4½ feet long!). There are holes in the engine cross member so you can get to the front bolts of the oil pan.

The radiator is larger capacity to help with the cooling. There is no filler neck/cap on the radiator. There is a reservoir tank mounted on the left side of the motor that is at a higher level than the radiator, so the coolant level is high enough to cool the cylinder head properly. The

thermostat has its own separate housing and it's mounted between the radiator and the reservoir tank. The only change to the body is that there are removable louvered panels that are part of the inner front wheel wells. The right side needs to be removed when doing an oil change, so you can get to the oil filter canister.



Since my Twin Cam was one of the last ones to be pushed out the door, they didn't bother with a heater. There is no plumbing on the motor. There is no heater core in the heater box on the firewall shelf; no heater hoses. They called it a "Fresh Air Ventilation Kit". I have everything that makes it look and operate like it has a heater, but it doesn't. A heater was an option, but anyone who drives an MGA knows you don't need a heater anyway. Right? Also, the heater box is a mirror image of a standard MGA heater box. The air tube runs down the driver's side, not the passenger side.

So, even though I'm down to my beloved 1960 Twin Cam Roadster, I still enjoy going to the local club meetings and a national event, when I can. I have 43 years of fond memories of caravan trips with my extended MG family and other adventures too numerous to mention.

SAFETY FAST!





From The Editor's Garage by John Derkins

Have you ever gotten the feeling 'what's wrong with this picture'? I was getting ready to install the crankshaft in the V8 for the last time and start on the piston/rod assemblies when that feeling overcame me. So I started mocking up the rest of the engine just to make sure I was ready for the next steps.

I got out the timing cover that also incorporates the oil pump and it hit me like a ton of bricks. The 215 V8, Buick, Rover or Oldsmobile versions, all share a nearly identical short block. The oiling system is considered the weakest link in an otherwise great engine. The fix is to use the 1980-up Buick V6 oil pickup (GM 25505644 or Mellings S20IS) along with opening up the oil passages in the block to 1/2" and using a tapered bit to match the block to the Buick oil pickup along with modifications to the timing cover that I will detail as I get ready to install it. I had the Buick oil pickup, but I hadn't drilled out the oil passages.

All of which means I get to strip the block down one more time and carefully mask off everything I don't want to fill with aluminum swarf and get to work!



This picture shows where the oil pickup bolts to the block. It will be drilled to 1/2", then the tapered bit will be used to open up the hole to match the inscribed ring from the gasket for the Buick V6 oil pickup. You can also see in this picture that I have installed the core plugs using a 21mm deep wall socket and deadblow hammer with a light coating of Permatex #1 on both the block and the core plug. **Note:** Core Plugs are not 'Freeze Plugs'. They are installed to cover the holes left from the casting cores when the block is manufactured. There is no such thing as a 'Freeze Plug' it's a misnomer that has bothered me for ages. (The other one that really bugs me is people who pronounce Willys as 'willies', instead of 'willis'!)



This picture shows the front of the block upside down. The hole at the top of the picture is the passage that connects to the oil pickup as the input to the oil pump. The hole at the bottom is the output from the oil pump to pressurize the bearings in the engine.

The oil pickup and galley to the pump measured 7/16", the output to the engine measured 1/2" from the factory, so I really only had to do the oil pickup side.

I've spent hours and dollars getting the block to this point and I'm pretty proud of what I've done so far. I will admit it took some intestinal fortitude to attack the block with a hand held drill and potentially render the block useless. Here are the tools I used to perform this bit of block modification.



The really long drill bit is a 12" long, 1/2" aircraft drill bit. The tapered reamer is called a 5/8" alignment reamer - they are normally used to ream out misaligned joints in structural steel in building construction, but it worked great to make a tapered hole for my oil pickup.

I told my wife I would be invoking the 'Perkins Tool Rule' when I spent \$60 to buy these two bits. The Perkins Tool Rule states that any tool that makes a job easier, more cost effective, more professional and might see future use is worth buying. I would add that she also invokes the Tool Rule whenever she needs a new tool for her quilting.

I spent about 4 hours first using the 1/2' drill with plenty of WD40 as a lubricant to open up the short galley from the pickup to the long galley, then opening up the long galley. The tapered reamer finished its function in about 10 minutes. Here are the results.



The oil pickup galley tapers smoothly from 5/8" to 1/2" where it meets the long

galley to the oil pump. I used a flash light in the front of the block to light up the passage. Here's what the long galley looks like.



The long galley isn't as pretty as the oil pickup galley, but going from 7/16" to 1/2" is a 29% increase in cross sectional area which really helps the flow of oil from the pan to the pump.

I still need to get a long enough brush to completely clean the new passages and make sure the gasket surfaces for the holes are perfectly flat, but I'm happy with the result and I am looking forward to finally getting this engine together!

Here's a picture of one of the heads for this engine. I'm getting excited to start working on the crank fired ignition and sequential fuel injection.



Tools Available for Club Members Contact Randy Kegg to Borrow

- 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

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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.

CALENDAR

JANUARY 5th Club Meeting

FEBRUARY 2nd Club Meeting

MARCH 2nd Club Meeting



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.





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

North American MGB Register

PO BOX 876 · Downers Grove, IL 60515-0876 Toll-free phone: 800-NAMGBR-1 www.namgbr.org

MGs of Baltimore Affiliations

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

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Submit any changes to: Kathy Liddick 5237 Glen Arm Road Glen Arm, MD 21057 themgbabe@comcast.net