

OCTAGRAM

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE MGs of BALTIMORE MD

November 2021

www.mgsofbaltimore.org

Can you believe it? It's November already 2021 is close to being over and that's fine with me. It looks like maybe we can finally put COVID-19 in the rearview mirror and move on. Speaking of moving, we got a number of things taking place in the next few months starting with the nomination of club officers during the November MGOB Meeting with the election being held at the December MGOB Meeting. So, if you are tired of the same old bums, now your chance to throw the bums out and replace them with a new set of bums.

The League of Extraordinary Loafers will be holding our fall get together at McFaul's Iron Horse Tavern, 2260 Cromwell Bridge Rd, Parkville, MD 21234 this Wednesday, November 3rd! The loafing starts at 1:00 p.m. Please let Jim Durr know you will be attending: <u>jim_durr@hotmail.com</u>

The MGs of Baltimore, Ltd. Car Club has agreed to participate in the Annual Hampden Mayor's Parade on Sunday, December 5, 2021 staging at 12 noon at Poly-Western with the parade starting at 1:00 p.m. Poly-Western is located at Falls Road & Cold Spring Lane, 21211. The best way to get there if traveling from the north is to take Falls Road (MD Route 25) south from I-695 or Northern Pkwy. Once you go past the Village of Cross Keys you may encounter police barricades, just tell them you are part of the parade. We normally line up on Fall Rd to start the parade.

Chuck Moreland as agreed to host the Annual MGOB "After the Holidays" Party on Saturday, January 8, 2022, at his home located at 1113 Rayville, Road, Parkton, MD 21120 – RVSP at 410-357-4222 or <u>gtroadsters@comcast.net</u>

Steve and Tina Sharpe have agreed to host the 24th Annual Chilly Run Sunday, February 20th with a snow date of Sunday, February 27th, 2022. The festivities begin at 2:00 p.m. Please bring you favourite chili or non-chili to event into the fierce competition for The "Hunka, Hunka, Burning Love" Award and the other "Special" Awards that are chosen by the hosts. Don't forget to R.S.V.P. Steve & Tina to let them know you are coming and what you will be bringing. Drinks will be supplied by the club.

Steve & Tina Sharpe 1291 Cambria Road Westminster, MD 21157 410-750-2463 E-mail: <u>steveesharpe@gmail.com</u>

Safety Fast! Richard

New Members

Welcome to our following new members:

Michael & Michelle Groves who have an MGB

The Baschat Family – Ahmet, Miriam & Leonie with a 1967 Healey 3000 MK III

David Bickel Jr – with a 1979 MGB and a 1969 BMW 2002

Mark Conley & Shannon Gallagher with a 1965 MGB

ARTICLES IN THIS NEWSLETTER ARE COMPLIMENTS OF:

The Octagon – The Newsletter of the MG Owners Club/The Northern California Centre of the MG Car Club – October 2021

The St. Louis MG Metro Gazette – October 2021

The Kansas City MG Post – October 2021

NAMGBR AGM Summary

The North American MGB Registry held the Annual General Meeting on Saturday, October 23rd in Nashville.

At the AGM, a new chairman was named ending Richard's most recent run. The Chairperson for NAMGBR may only be in office for 4 years (two – two year terms). This was Richard's Second time being the Chairperson for NAMGBR. He has agreed to stay on as Publicity Coordinator for the organization. NAMGBR presented Richard with a special award. I especially like the wording for the second term (LOL).



Prior to the meeting we visited the Lane Museum which was a Car Enthusiast's Dream. A few of the pictures we took are below.









Getting Technical: Check Your Fuses

By David Wright, Minor Classics Restorations LLC

Introduction

Fuses are intended to protect automotive electrical circuits. However, I continue to get Little British Cars (LBCs) in my shop with incorrect fuses installed. Incorrect fuses put your car at risk of fire.

Fuse Types

Many types of fuses are used in cars, Figure 1. Modern vehicles typically have the blade-type or ceramic-type fuses. This article focuses on the ¼-inch diameter glass-type fuse (commonly called buss fuses) used in our LBCs, and does not apply to other types of fuses.

Buss fuses are made to various specifications. For our LBCs we are interested in AGC and SFE buss fuses. AGC fuses are 1¹/₄ inch long for all ratings. SFE fuses vary in length according to their rating, the smaller the rating the shorter the fuse. As it turns out however, an SFE 20 fuse is 1¹/₄ inch long – the same as an AGC fuse. Their 1¹/₄ inch length is important because that is the distance between the prongs of an LBC's fuse box. AGC buss fuses sometimes are designated 3AG, depending on the manufacturer.

How a Fuse Works – the Physics

Amperes (amps for short) are a measure of the amount of electrical current flowing through a circuit. As amps pass through a wire, the metal of the wire heats up. For a given wire, more amps mean more heat causing the wire's temperature to increase. When the amps are too great, the wire gets hot enough to melt the insulation and, if the current is large enough, causing a fire.

Fuses take advantage of the heated wire phenomena to protect circuits. The soft metal filament in a fuse is designed to melt at a specific current flow, blowing the fuse and protecting the circuit from excessive amps. The filament material and size are carefully selected to achieve a desired fuse rating.

The Scenario

A fuse blows in your little British car. According to the paper label inside the glass, it is a 35 amp Lucas fuse. So, you jump into your alternate transportation and make a trip to the local auto parts store for a new fuse. You get assistance from the friendly clerk who discovers that the store has no 35 amp glass fuses but does have 30 amp ones. These 30 amp fuses have a lower rating, so it seems, and they are not Lucas. So the clerk proclaims these fuses should better protect your car's circuits than the 35 amp ones. You agree, purchase the package, and then rush home to install them after you correct the original problem that blew the fuse. Now your LBC's circuits are protected again and off you go for a top-down ride on a beautiful day. Everything's wonderful, right? . . . wrong!

(cont. on page 12)

Getting Technical: Check Your Fuses

The Problem

The reason everything is not wonderful is that standards for buss fuses were changed in 1980, even though the physics of how they work is still the same. Many of the LBCs we drive were built, or at least designed, before 1980 and their manufacturers conformed to the earlier standard.

Before the 1980 change, a fuse was rated by the amount of electrical current that would cause it to blow within 1 second. So, the Lucas fuse was rated to blow at 35 amps of current. Some Lucas 35 amp fuses also say "17 amp continuous" on that slip of paper. This means that the fuse would blow within 1 second if 35 amps or more flowed through it, but it could carry 17 amps forever (theoretically) without blowing.

The 1980 standard changed things so the rating indicates continuous current that a fuse can carry. So the modern 30 amp fuse can carry 30 amps continuously *without* blowing. Nothing on the fuse or the package indicates at what current the fuse would blow within 1 second. To determine that number we must look at the fuse manufacturer's "Time-Current" charts. See Figures 2 and 3. These graphs show test data generated by measuring how long it takes to blow a fuse subjected to a given amount of current. The fuses are then rated by the current that they can carry continuously. Fuses do degrade in performance over time so the rating is the degraded continuous current.

The Solution

Our LBCs typically use "35 amp" and "50 amp" Lucas fuses – other ratings may also be found. To find the proper modern replacement fuse, "Time-Current" rating charts must be consulted. These charts can be found at websites from fuse manufacturers such as Cooper-Bussmann.

Referring to Figure 2, read up from the bottom "Current" axis at 35 amp until you reach the 1second line crossing from the left "Time" axis. Then find the fuse rating curve that is closest to that point. For an AGC fuse this intersection matches the 15 amp fuse (AGC15). So an AGC15 fuse can carry 15 amps continuously, and will blow at about 34 amps. This is nearly the same as the blown Lucas 35 amp fuse. An AGC15 fuse is the right modern fuse for your Lucas 35 amp protected circuits. To find the modern replacement for a 50 amp fuse, use the same procedure with Figure 3, but read the 50 amp line from the bottom label. So, an SFE20 fuse is the right modern fuse for 50 amp protected circuits. AGC20 fuses are also acceptable, if you can find them, for a 50 amp circuit. I know the labels are hard to read on the included charts, but they are clearer on the websites.

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Getting Technical: Check Your Fuses

Conclusion

If you have an incorrect fuse in your LBC and high current occurs, your wires will melt and "let the smoke out." If you are lucky the problem will stop there and simply strand you on the side of the road. If you are unlucky your entire LBC may go up in the smoke and really ruin that beautiful day.

It is true that a circuit will work with a higher rated fuse in place, but that circuit is certainly not protected. DO NOT use higher rated modern fuses like AGC30 or AGC50 fuses in your LBC. Check your fuses and replace them with the proper ones. Fuses are cheap insurance if they are properly selected. Some suppliers (e.g. Moss) still offer fuses rated by the older standard. Their cost may be a bit more than the fuses at local auto parts stores, but if originality is important to you purchase and install the "Lucas" fuses.

Recap

AGC15 or 3AG15 is the correct modern fuse for Lucas 35 amp fuses.

A new AGC15 amp fuse will carry about 20 amps continuously without blowing, but degrades 25-30% over time to about 15 amps continuously. It will blow at about 34 amps in one second.

SFE20 or AGC20 is the correct modern fuse for Lucas 50 amp circuits.

A new SFE20 amp fuse will carry about 30 amps continuously without blowing, but degrades 25-30% over time to about 20 amps continuously. It will blow at about 45 amps in one second.

David Wright, Minor Classics Restorations www.minorclassicsrestorations.com minorclassics@aol.com



Figure 1. Types of Automotive Fuses



Figure 2. Time Current Curves for AGC Fuses

(cont. on page 16)



Figure 3. Time Current Curves for SFE Fuses

How to Power the Coil – Let Us Count the Ways

By Mike Jacobsen

One day my GT's engine shut off on its own. No sputtering, so it wasn't out of gas, and no loud noises, so there was probably nothing broken. It was as if I'd turned it off with the key.

After coasting over to the side of the road, the first thing I tried was to restart it. Do the easiest thing first, right? The motor would start, but then stop as soon as the key moved from the Start to the Run position.

A little testing revealed that there was no power to the coil when the key was in the Run position, but there was power in the Start position. I didn't know why that would be, but a jumper to the coil from a switched 12V terminal made the car run so I could get back home, 120 miles away.

Back home, I started looking for what went wrong. This type of failure made no sense to me. The coil is powered when the ignition switch is in the Run or Start positions, right? It turned out that was right, but beginning sometime in 1974 the way the coil is powered changed.

Early cars sent power to the coil over the same wire when the ignition switch was in either Start or Run positions. Here's an example from the late sixties (I've removed some wiring to make the diagram simpler):



My $74\frac{1}{2}$ GT has an ignition system that uses an unballasted coil. This type of coil requires less than 12V. There's a resistor in the circuit to the coil, and it drops the voltage to something like 8V. Power for that circuit comes from the ignition switch when the key is in the Run position.

However, when starting, the coil gets a full 12V from the battery. The brief overload isn't harmful and the extra voltage to the coil results in higher voltage to the plugs, making the car easier to start. The power for that circuit comes from the starter solenoid when the key is in the Start position.

So there are two circuits feeding the coil: one for running and one for starting. When running, the coil gets a lower voltage from the ignition circuit with the key in the Run position. This circuit includes a ballast resistor inside the harness. But when starting, the coil gets a full 12V from the starter solenoid, which is only powered when the key is in the Start position. The lower voltage circuit for normal running isn't powered when the key is in the Start position. I modified a section of a wiring diagram to try and show this:



I don't know when MG began using this system. My $74\frac{1}{2}$ has it, but it doesn't show up in the wiring diagrams until 1975.

As nearly as I could tell, the ballast resistor (or ballast wire) failed in my car. Since rewiring the car is a future project and the new harness is on the shelf, I've left the coil at a constant 12V for now. I know that's not good and could overheat the coil, but it's been fine so far.

This happened awhile ago. What prompted this article was that a friend's 1971 MGB ignition switch failed and was replaced with a new switch a second friend had. After the switch was installed, the car wouldn't "catch" in the Start position but would in Run. The problem turned out to be the switch – it was meant for a newer MGB, one with two circuits to the coil. The fix was to run a wire from the starter relay's switched terminal (the one between the relay & the solenoid, C2 in the diagram above) to the coil's supply terminal. Then the car would start normally. A better fix would have been to install the correct ignition switch, but one wasn't available.

And don't ask how they run the fuel pump in the Start position...



Friends don't let friends drive with the wrong ignition switch.

Dan Shockey working at left.

At right, John Hunt headed for the hills to test the new switch.

Hunt photos





QUICK FIX FOR A LEAKY PROBLEM BY JOHN PERKINS

I like the look of a cast aluminum valve cover on my B-Series Engines. The problem is that the port on the valve cover I have to connect the crankcase breathing hose is a piece of 1/2" aluminum tubing that is pressed in with what appears to be a little JB Weld. It has



come loose over time and I didn't want to use more epoxy, I wanted a permanent fix.



My solution is to add a 1/2" hosebarb with 1/4" NPT threads to replace the glued in aluminum pipe.



With the valve cover clamped to my work bench, I ran the 1/4" NPT tap until about 3/8" of the tap was exposed. NPT taps are tapered, so you don't want to run it all the way in. That way the threads on the hose barb can tighten in the cover well. This is a picture of my son's valve cover being done after I did mine.



As it happens, a 12 point 1/2" socket fits the tap perfectly and furniture clamps hold the cover securely to my workbench.

As you can see in the next pictures, with a little ARP Thread sealer the hose barb fits very nicely on the cover outside and inside.



I bought a package of 5 hose barbs from Fastenal for \$11. If you don't like the look of brass, I did see a stainless steel version of this hose barb on the internet.

Even though the correct tap drill for 1/4" NPT is 7/16", the tap still works well in the 1/2" hole and the fix took about 15 minutes to complete.

It occurs to me that you could also use this idea to add a ventilation hose to a valve cover that doesn't have one. Just be sure to use the correct tap drill and position the hose barb toward the top of the valve cover between cylinders to avoid any interference. On my valve cover the barb is between cylinders 3 and 4, Bob's was dead center between 2 and 3.



TIMING IS EVERYTHING! BY JOHN PERKINS

I could probably take the next couple of newsletters entirely to discuss the different distributors used in our MGs. But for the sake of brevity, I'll suffice it to say that there are two basic configurations: First, distributors whose vacuum advance is designed to be connected to a ported vacuum port on a carburetor and Second, those designed to connected to manifold vacuum, this second type are normally associated with emissions control.

There are also racing distributors with no vacuum advance, but they are not typically used on street driven cars.

On my ZA Magnette, I use a Lucas CEI Ignition, which is a GM HEI in disguise. The distributor was designed for manifold vacuum. The carburetors are from an MGC, which has ported vacuum for the distributor and the 3 main 1800 was originally designed for ported vacuum.

Because I added a crossflow head, high compression pistons, longer duration camshaft and an exhaust header, I decided that I should stick with the earlier method of using ported vacuum.

The engine ran well, but always had a bit of a stumble from idle that I attributed to improper needles in the $1 \ 3/4$ " SUs until I started reading about the effects of ignition timing on performance. It seems that most performance issues are generally mis-diagnosed as carburetor problems when they are really cam timing or ignition timing issues.

Since I spent a lot of time with the Cam Card, dial indicator and degree wheel, I am confident the camshaft is installed correctly, so I focused on ignition.

Jeff Schlemmer of Advanced Distributors recurved my distributor to match the performance characteristics of my modified engine. He also gave me the spec for the initial advance.

When I originally installed the engine, I set the timing with the vacuum line disconnected, then connected it and set the carburetors. Above 2000 rpm, the car ran fine, and it idled well around 900 rpm.

Between idle and 2000 rpm under load is where I had the issue.

I finally decided to connect the distributor to the intake manifold the way it was originally designed. The problem was that the sheetmetal intake on my car didn't have a manifold vacuum port. So the intake would have to come off of the car to add a vacuum port.

I'm including a picture of the intake manifold before I installed it so you can see what I'm working with.



The hose barbs for distributor vacuum ports on and MG intake manifold have 5/16-24 threads and use a copper washer for sealing.

Before disassembling anything, I determined I wanted to add the port at the high point in the balance tube between the carbs and I marked it with a center punch. Then I removed the manifold and drilled a hole 17/64" and tapped the hole for 5/16.24 threads. I used a short 5/16.24 bolt to hold the appropriate nut in place on the manifold and took it to a friend with a TIG welder to weld the nut in place. After welding, a light touch with a fine file made sure the sealing surface was good.



After reinstalling the manifold and connecting the distributor, I needed to reset the idle speed on the carbs. My MG now pulls cleanly from idle through the entire RPM range.

Some may argue that it doesn't matter where you connect your vacuum advance, but in my case it has made a huge difference. I believe it works because my modified engine appears to like more advance at low rpm, so using engine vacuum to advance the timing at low rpm and let the mechanical advance provide the advance at high rpm when vacuum is lower seems to be working well.

My recommendation overall is that if you are having any drive-ability issues, you should verify the tune-up by first checking the valves and compression. Then checking the ignition system and how your distributor should function. You should look at the fuel system only after the mechanical and ignition components have been verified and setup correctly.



TOOL REVIEW BY JOHN PERKINS

Rust Elimination

Rust is enemy number 1 of any work on any car. Our MGs have innumerable places for rust to develop. Where ever there is steel, there will be rust. In this note, I'm not going to discuss bodywork, but instead focus on the elimination from rust in mechanisms on the car.

My Magnette has an interesting mechanism to operate the bonnet release. There is a long rod under the dashboard on the left side that connects to a bell crank that is attached to the radiator support. The bellcrank has a second rod that connects to the bonnet latch. When the rod under the dash is pulled, the bellcrank changes the direction of the force from front-torear to side-to-side, thus operating the latch and allowing the bonnet to be opened.

The pivot of the short rod to the bellcrank is supposed to be a rivet, but mine was worn out long ago and replaced with an ill fitting screw and a couple of nuts.

A friend in the Z-Magnette Group sent me a radiator to use for a pattern that was still attached to the radiator support. Much to my surprise, the bellcrank, short rod and latch were still attached to the radiator support.

I was able to remove the bellcrank/short rod assembly from the support but it was rusted to the point that the pivot no longer operated. To fix it, I first cleaned a lot of the rust off of the assembly using a rotary wire brush wheel chucked into my drill press. It worked a treat at removing the heavy rust. But the pivot between the rod and bellcrank was still very tight. So I got out my EvapoRust. I bought this gallon of rust remover about 5 years ago and have been using it and re-using it ever since. I poured about a pint of the solution in a yogurt container and placed the bell crank/rod assembly in it with the pivot at the lowest point and came back about once an hour to flex the joint to work the fluid in. I repeated this flexing about five times through the afternoon and evening, then let the bellcrank assembly soak over night in the EvapoRust.

In the morning, the joint was working freely and I was able to rinse off the EvapoRust, dry the bellcrank assembly with an air hose followed with lubrication using white lithium grease. It works as good as new. I just wish I would have taken pictures, the change between rusty and the way it looks now. It's pretty amazing.

EvapoRust is under \$25 for a gallon at Home Depot, Walmart, and other stores and I recommend it for soaking small parts, linkages, etc.

It's a liquid tool for rust removal.





We invite you to join the largest club in the area dedicated to British car enthusiast.

Your membership benefits include:

- You get invited to all club events. Including these three great parties:
 - The after Christmas celebration
 - The "Chilly Run"
 - The summer pool party
- You get the club's newsletter
- You get access to the club's extensive tool chest
- Our monthly meeting is held at very nice restaurant and each meeting includes a tech session. Johnny Dees Lounge 1705 Amuskai Rd Loch Raven, MD (First Tuesday of the month)
- We also host an annual tech session Saturday hosted by the club's tech guru.
- MGOB sponsors the annual "Get the Dust-Off Rallye" the first Sunday in May.
- You can join us at MG's on the Rocks. This is the oldest continuously running British car show in the world! Celebrating our 42 year in 2021!

All this for \$20 per year!

Visit us on the web: MGsofBaltimore.org or Find us on Facebook

Please complete the form on the next page and mail it with a cheque made payable to MGOB to:

Kathy Liddick 5237 Glen Arm Road Glen Arm, MD 21057







Please fill out the registration form. You'll want to enjoy all the benefits of membership as listed on the previous page!

Your Name (MGing is a family activity, Please include those of family members)	
Address	
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MG's or Other British Cars	
Owned	
Areas of interest: Technical,	
Rallyes, Social, Restoration	

Dues for MGOB are a blazing \$20 Bucks a year. (January through December)

Mail your check made out to: MG's of Baltimore Ltd.

To: Kathy Liddick: 5237 Glen Arm Road, Glen Arm, MD 21057







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

OFFICERS AND CHAIRPERSONS

President	Richard Liddick	410-817-6862	rgl2mgbgt@aol.com
1 st Vice President	Eric Reitz	410-207-7548	reitz1@aol.com
2 nd Vice President	Ken Olszewski	443-299-6591	kenmgob@comcast.net
Treasurer	Randy Kegg	410-592-3733	randell_kegg@msn.com
Secretary	Tracy Trobridge	410-489-7444	tracy21794@yahoo.com
Newsletter	Kathy Liddick	410-817-6862	themgbabe@comcast.net
Membership	Kathy Liddick	410-817-6862	themgbabe@comcast.net
Rallye Master	Eric Salminen	443-463-3071	mgobrallymaster@gmail.com
MGs on the Rocks	Richard Liddick Eric Reitz	410-817-6862	rgl2mgbgt@aol.com
Tool Meister	Randy Kegg	410-592-3733	randell_kegg@msn.com
Web Master	Richard Liddick	410-817-6862	rgl2mgbgt@aol.com
Regalia	Cheryl Reitz	410-336-2584	<u>creitz@dap.com</u>

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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.

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

NOVEMBER

- 2nd Club Meeting (Nomination of Officers)
- 3rd League of Extraordinary Loafers McFaul's Iron Horse

DECEMBER

- 5th Hampden Mayor's Parade
- 7th Club Meeting (Election of Officers)

JANUARY

- 4th Club Meeting
- 8th After the Holidays Party Home of Chuck Moreland

FEBRUARY

- 1st Club Meeting
- 20th Chili Run Home of Steve & Tina Sharpe

MGs of Baltimore Affiliations

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



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)
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North American MGB Register

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MGs of Baltimore - Octagram





D uring the summer of 1992, hundreds of MGs converged on scenic Peterborough, in the Kawartha Lakes region of Ontario, for the inaugural convention of the North American MGB Register. Thirty years later, we are going back to where it all began. Come join us June 19th to 23rd to honour our history and celebrate the future. We will have a slew of activities for enthusiasts of all ages including a car show, tech sessions, lift lock tours, funkhana, local rally, self-directed drives, a parking lot party and an awards banquet with a very special guest speaker. We look forward to seeing you in Peterborough at THE MG event of 2022!

JUAE 19 - 23, 2022





North American MGB Register Including MGC, MG Midget, 1100/1300 MG, and Modern MG

