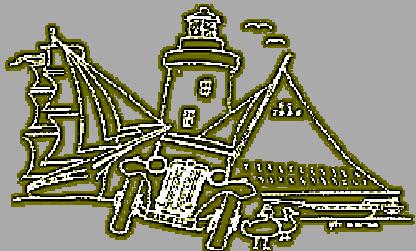


# THE SQUARE RIGGER



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

[www.chesapeakechaptermgclub.com](http://www.chesapeakechaptermgclub.com)

## FEBRUARY 2010

### **Chairman's Comments**

**Believe it or not, it is time for the first issue for 2010 of The Square Rigger.**

As many of you know, the Winter EatOut at Gabriel's Inn had to be canceled due to the weather. The accumulation of snow ranked as #4 for the Washington DC area going back to the late 1800's. Interestingly, 7 out of 10 of the record holders occurred in the month of February. Our annual EatOut is always a lot of fun, and if possible, we are going to reschedule it for a March or later date.



Hopefully, rescheduling it will allow even more members to attend.

There are three other events coming up in the first half of the year that we need to plan around. On April 10 and 11 there will be a 2-day Tech Session, featuring John Twist, and he will be covering just the T-Series. Final arrangements are being made for it to be held in Fairfax County. For those of you who have indicated an interest, a registration form is on its way to you. If you have not been able to get back to Milton Babirak or me, and would like to find out more about the event, contact either of us for more details.

The Tech Session will be followed by the Mini GOF which is being hosted by John and Barbara VanOver in Mathews, Virginia from April 30 through May 2. The Mini GOF is always attended by many members, and we look forward to another good turnout.

Finally, there is The Original British Car Day (TOBCD) at Lilypons Water Gardens in Adamstown, Maryland. This is the 33rd year it is being held, and it is a signature event for our Club. It is also an event that takes considerable effort and planning to make it successful. John Tokar has started on the initial stages and sorely needs volunteers for a variety of duties. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with him and offer your talents.

I'm looking forward to seeing you at any or all of these gatherings.

Safety Fast!

Shaun English

## Club Officers

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## Editor's Corner

02/14/10

### Origins and Purpose

The Chesapeake Chapter of the New England MG-T Register was organized during the summer of 1971 by Register members in the Baltimore-Washington area where local interest in classic MGs was high. Its purpose was and still is to encourage the maintenance, preservation and enjoyment of T-Series and other vintage MGs. We welcome new members who share our interest in these unique cars. Membership in the New England MG-T Register, Ltd. and payment of modest annual dues are the only requirements. Membership application forms can be found on our Chapter's website: [www.chesapeakechaptermgclub.com](http://www.chesapeakechaptermgclub.com)

This Newsletter is circulated electronically on a quarterly basis to Members who possess email capability, and by regular mail to Members who do not. The electronic version contains color photos, whereas the regular-mail version is in black & white. In any event, the full color version is always available for subsequent viewing on and downloading from our website.

We are always on the lookout for stories, technical submissions, anecdotes, jokes, photographs and other contributions of interest to MG fans. In addition, we seek to encourage fullest possible participation by Members in Chapter events, mention of which can be found in further pages of this Newsletter.

### Circulation Reminder

Please remember that in order for electronic circulation of this Newsletter to operate effectively, **IT IS IMPORTANT** that you notify us of any address changes, including especially those pertaining to email. Many of you are taking this advice to heart, for which we thank you.

### Renewals

Membership Chairman Milton Babirak recently sent renewal forms to some of us whose memberships were due to expire soon, setting a deadline of Feb. 20 for responses. He reported last week that he was still receiving completed forms and checks from Members wanting to renew. If you have received a renewal message from Milton, and you have not reacted yet, we trust you will sign up soon.

### Our LBCs

Members probably have noticed that Milton's new Membership Directory includes data on Little British Cars owned by many Chapter Members — e.g. Make, Model, Year, Color, etc. We have the impression that some of this information may no longer be accurate or complete and ought to be updated. Please take a look and, if the information on your car(s) is not current, submit appropriate corrections to Milton at your earliest convenience.

### Months vs. Seasons

It has been our experience in the 20 months we have edited this Newsletter that the awkward practice of dating its issues in accordance with the months in which they are circulated leaves something to be desired in terms of flexibility. Accordingly, we propose to make this issue the last one that bears a monthly date. Future issues will bear seasonal dates — e.g., Summer, Fall, Winter, Spring, etc. Protests against this new wrinkle will receive unsympathetic consideration.

## Membership News

**Milton Babirak**  
Membership Chairman

### **We Welcome:**

Thomas J. Ford  
1 East Ridge Lane  
Luray, VA 22835  
Tel. (540) 272-4264  
[tomowog@comcast.net](mailto:tomowog@comcast.net)

1946 MGTC

## In Memoriam

### Ronald B. Eaton



**February 5, 1940 — December 30, 2009**

Word from Mathews, VA of the untimely death of Ron Eaton, an early member of our club, left a void in the hearts of longtime Chapter members who were close to him and to his wife, Rosemary. They were active in our activities for many years, and they later retained warm ties with many of our senior colleagues. While most newer members among us may not have had occasion to know Ron, the reactions of shock and grief among our older members spoke volumes about the great affection and esteem they had for him.

In token of their feelings, we attach below a memorial to the life of Ron Eaton that bears witness to his fine qualities as a husband, father and human being. It also testifies to a passion that helped to fill much of his time on this earth: a boundless fascination with the acquisition, restoration, preservation, and enjoyment of MG sports cars, one of automotive history's most enduring legends.

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#### ***Michael Eaton Remembers:***

I know I have spoken to some of you individually, but I thought I'd get the message out to those who may not have heard of the passing of my father and best friend, Ron Eaton. Several of you likely met him and our mother Rosemary over the years at a British Car Day, a T-Series GOF, a North American MGA Register GT, or a North American MGB Association convention.

Ron's love of British cars started in the mid-50's when, as a high school kid earning summer money, he prepped all manner of foreign cars at Autoland in Buffalo, NY. At the time his mother and stepfather were also very active on the SCCA national rally scene. After owning a few TR-3s and later a Mercedes 190SL, Dad settled on MGs. His first MG was a very nice 1948 MGTC, owned to this day by good friend John Wright. After a slew of TDs, MGAs, MGB GTs, and even a MG-powered Elva, he eventually settled on MGA Twin Cams as his MG of choice. He and my brother eventually purchased the well-known racing Twin Cam of racer Bob Olthoff, known as YRX 310. At the time of Dad's passing, he and I were restoring the only known surviving 1959 Twin Cam Sebring coupe, which I had located in California. Just a few short weeks ago, he and I and all three grandsons went to Abacus Racing together to hear the engine on the dyno. He was really looking forward to his first ride in that restored Sebring coupe!

I will treasure all those and other memories, especially our "quality garage time." Godspeed, Dad!

#### ***James Eaton remembers:***

Dad got his "sports car genes" from his parents' days of road-rallying and passed those genes on to his sons and grandsons. Mine awoke in the early 1970s. The folks had sold Mom's 190 SL MB prior to a move to Wisconsin. However, once settled, Dad started scanning the classified ads for another classic sports car. We would spend weekends and evenings going to look at cars. One evening he and I drove to an old dairy farm. Like a movie scene, we were taken to an old barn behind the farmhouse, and

sitting on the wooden floor with hay around it under a canvas tarp was what became our first MG — a 1948 TC. I'll never forget those big fenders and wire wheels in that dusty barn with Dad. And he asking me, "What do you think, JJ?" At age 9, I was sitting on the cracked red leather bench seat with that big steering wheel in my hands, and falling in love with MGs. Thanks, Dad!

Here he is, arm around his grandson, in a photo taken at the Twin Cam 50th anniversary party at GT 33 in 2008. He's standing second from the right, next to John Wright. Son Mike kneels in the foreground.




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#### ***John Wright remembers:***

The shock and disbelief and reality are hard to understand, much less put into words. But I know all who knew Ron are dealing with the same. We have known the Eaton family for quite some time. Always joyful and upbeat, together sharing their many common interests of faith, family and friends.

It happened to be the MGs that brought our families together and allowed us to spend time during the summer months, meeting at the various MG events sponsored by our MG car clubs. My earliest clear memory of Ron was when he offered or, I should say, insisted that I drive his 1948 TC at the little hill climb we staged at one of the early Mini GOFs. It must have been part of a plan, as I still have the '48 TC for which I traded Ron a MkII TD. Both of us were always happy with our "deal."

We'll remember the trip to England in the 1980s, to Sebring, the Glen and our sharing of the condo at GT-33. There are many memories, and we will regret not having the ones yet to be formed. We will all miss Ron's hearty laugh, his love for Rosemary and his family, and the passion he shared with his sons and grandsons. The void left by Ron's passing can only be filled by the memories we are so fortunate to have.

Remember the Hoobie Doobie!



**In his TD MK-II, c.1984**

### **Eleanor Lindsay remembers:**

When all is said and done, it is often the " always" and the "nevers" that we remember about people.

Ron **always** had a wonderful twinkle in his eye while so cleverly coming forth with a real zinger to punctuate the conversation. He **always** had that perfect humor that left us in smiles. Ron was **always** a good guy, **always** ready to have some fun and laugh heartily.

Ron **never** had a bad word to say about anyone and **never** let a friend down. He was **never** without Rosemary, the love of his life, and he **never** missed an opportunity to enjoy the moment and share his enjoyment with everyone around him..

When I think of Ron, I will see his wonderful smile. I will remember his laughter, so jolly and infectious. I will always remember coming away from a conversation with him feeling uplifted and with a smile of my own. What better legacy can there be than that?

Indeed, yes, he will be sorely missed.



**Bringing up Mike the MG Way, 1973**

### **Mike Ash remembers:**

Ron Eaton was a long-time NAMGAR member. He passed away suddenly on 30 December 2009, and will be sadly missed by his wife, Rosemary, his two sons, Jim and Mike, and his three grandchildren. We first met Ron over thirty years ago when he, his family and his MG TC moved to Virginia Beach from Mississippi. Ron was in the U.S. Navy and came to serve aboard the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz.

Ron was the consummate MG fan, and in later years his e-mail address was [mgafan@hotmail.com](mailto:mgafan@hotmail.com)! He joined our local MG club, The Tidewater MG Classics, and participated in many events with his TC. However, he realized that there were certain limitations to a TC, and he surprised us by showing up with a tired-looking MGA for a weekend trip on Skyline Drive. After Ron retired from the Navy, he moved to Northern Virginia and became a member of an MG group that subsequently became the NAMGAR Mid-Atlantic Chapter. We kept in touch and drove together to many events; Ron and Rosemary in an MGA, MGB or TD, and Jennifer and I in a TF or Y-Type. Within NAMGAR's Mid-Atlantic Chapter, Ron was the Chairman of GT-15 in Williamsburg.

Ron was a great and fun-loving guy who never met a stranger. Invariably, when a waitress in a restaurant came to the table and introduced herself, Ron would take the time to introduce himself and everyone at the table to the waitress! After Rosemary and his family, Ron's real love was MGs and the events and the socializing that went along with them. For a while, he was into vintage racing with a MK II Sprite and, with that out of his system, he turned his energies to collecting historic Twin Cam MGAs and MGA Sebring cars. This endeavor was even more enthusias-

tically aided and abetted by his son, Mike. With Mike, Ron was an active participant in the Sebring anniversary events, as well as the Twin Cam 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at GT-33 in Seven Springs.

With Ron's passing, NAMGAR has lost a dedicated and enthusiastic member, and Jennifer and I, along with all in the Mid-Atlantic Chapter, have lost a very dear friend.

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### **NAMGAR Historian Bob Vitrikas remembers:**

It was with shock and sadness that I learned of Ron's passing from another old MG friend, Mike Hughes. A flood of memories and emotions rushed through my mind as I recalled how Ron had touched my life over the past 25+ years, and the lives of many others, always with his wonderful smile and unforgettable laugh.

Above all else, Ron was a wonderful husband and father. You never thought of just Ron but always "the Eatons." It was a package deal as they traveled to MG events together. Married to Rosemary for 47 years, no small accomplishment for a career Navy man whose job took him away from family for months at a time, she and sons Michael and Jim were the focus of Ron's life. In recent years, daughter-in-law Lisa and grandsons David, Jonathan and Robert joined them on center stage. Center stage was their retirement home in Mathews, Virginia. A Navy man through and through, naturally their home was on the water where family and friends could gather to make memories that lasted a lifetime. Indeed, some MG friends moved to Mathews just so they could be closer to Ron and Rosemary. That speaks volumes about their friendship.

Ron was a friend to everyone he met. His outgoing personality, warm smile and infectious laugh were impossible to resist. Ron didn't gather friends around him, they gathered themselves around him because they wanted to be on hand to share in the next "excellent adventure" he would come up with. Those adventures included caravanning to GTs and GOFs, helping a fellow enthusiast get his car back on the road, trying his hand at vintage racing, swapping cars with his MG buddies, chasing down rare and historic racing MGAs, and of course social gatherings that involved food and drink! Speaking of adventures, Ron's easygoing nature and natural leadership were put to good effect as he led the NAMGAR Mid-Atlantic Chapter in hosting GT-15 in Williamsburg. Ron made it look easy and inspired confidence in all of us. A member of NAMGAR and the MG-T Register for over 25 years, Ron and Rosemary's extended MG family were legion. The ties they made were strong and deep, as evidenced by the many MG friends that gathered to comfort Rosemary and her family on that cold first weekend in January 2010.

Husband, father, grandfather, friend, patriot, leader, and MG enthusiast, it's been quite a ride, Ron. Our lives are richer for having known you, and you leave this world a better place because of your unselfish contributions to your family, friends, church, and our nation. It's been a wonderful life, Ron. A man can't ask for more than that.



**With Mike, Jim, & Gus Ehrman, Amelia Island, March 2008 □**

## Recent & Upcoming Chapter Events

### EatOut 2010 . . .

. . . was snowed out by Blizzard 2010 on February 7. A shame, since we were looking forward to it, and to the opportunity to bid farewell to the folks at Gabriel's Inn who were closing its doors for good.

Our Chapter Board is reviewing the feasibility of rescheduling this event at a later date and a new venue. We will advise Members of their decision as soon as possible.

### John Twist Weekend Seminar

On Saturday and Sunday, April 10 and 11, we will offer a weekend series of seminars on T-Series MGs conducted by the renowned John Twist, proprietor of the former University Motors at Ada, Michigan. Mr. Twist is a frequent, knowledgeable and entertaining speaker, as well as an authority on all aspects of MG cars — having repaired and restored them for nearly forty years. His seminars will cover a variety of topics including tune-ups, lubrication, electrical systems, and many others. The final seminar will include a Q&A session during which Members can ask John their own questions about their T-Series cars..

An MG TD will be used for demonstration purposes, and we intend to have a lift at hand so that participants can observe all aspects of the subject and the vehicle under discussion.

The Saturday seminars will run from 9:00 a.m. to 5 p.m. An informal dinner will take place at 6:30 p.m., during which John will regale us with stories of his life and work. Sunday's seminars will begin at 10 a.m. and end at 2 p.m. John will have T-Series tools, DVDs and other materials for sale during and after the seminars.

The seminars will be held at a community college or high school yet to be identified in Fairfax County, VA. Registrants will be advised of the exact location as soon as it has been determined. If necessary, the Chapter stands ready to make reservation at a nearby hotel for registrants requiring such accommodations

The registration fee will be \$100.00 per person. Please make your checks payable to the "Chesapeake Chapter, NEMGTR." A registration form can be found on our Chapter's web site, as well annexed after page 11 of this issue of The Square Rigger. Registration forms are also available by email or snail mail from Milton Babirak at [mbabirak@babirakcar.com](mailto:mbabirak@babirakcar.com) or by phone at (703) 501-7924.

### Mini GOF 2010

Members will have received our email notice, dated February 5, concerning plans for a Mini GOF excursion to Mathews County, VA on the weekend of April 30-May 2.

Chapter Member Barbara Van Over, who graciously volunteered to organize this event, reports that her projected schedule of activities so far includes:

— A special Early Bird Rallye at 11:00 a.m on Friday, followed by a crab feast and cookout at her home in Mathews, VA starting at 1:00 p.m., and evening strolls among shops, marinas and other sights in Mathews proper.

— A car show from 10:00 a.m. to noon on Saturday morning, an afternoon boat ride to interesting area lighthouses, followed at 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. by cocktails and an Awards Dinner at the Mathews Yacht Club.

— Finally, before departure on Sunday morning, brunch at the American Legion.

Members wishing to learn more about these arrangements are encouraged to get in touch with Barbara via email ([barbara@vanovers.net](mailto:barbara@vanovers.net)) or by phone at (804) 725-5815.

Ed\_note — Our Feb. 5 email notice managed to drop an "n" from the email address of one of the hotels mentioned therein. Corrected, that address should read as follows: [innattabbscreek.com](http://innattabbscreek.com).

### NEMGTR GOF 87 . . .

. . . will be held at Oneonta NY, Wednesday-Monday, May 5-9. For details, please refer to: [www.nemgtr.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=55&Itemid=179](http://www.nemgtr.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=55&Itemid=179)

### The 33rd Original British Car Day

Our traditional flagship event will take place on Sunday, June 6, 2010 at its customary venue: Lilypons Water Gardens, 6800 Lilypons Road, Adamstown, MD 21717. Further information will appear soon on our Chapter's web site: [www.chesapeakechaptermgclub.com](http://www.chesapeakechaptermgclub.com)

### URGENT APPEAL

**Turnout by Chapter members to help with TOBCD has been disappointing in recent years. We need to reverse this trend. It is down-right embarrassing, to say the least, when we must count largely on the generosity of volunteers from other car clubs to help our own signature event become a success. So please let us know we can count on YOU by phoning John Tokar at (410) 775-0500 to find out how YOU can help. □**

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## Events Sponsored by Others

### Atlantic City Classic Car Show

Scheduled for Friday-Saturday, February 26-28.  
[www.acclassiccars.com](http://www.acclassiccars.com)

### Sugarloaf Antique Car & Swap Meet

Will be held Friday-Saturday, March 21-22, 7 am to 4 pm, at Frederick Fair grounds, 797 E. Patrick Street. [www.thegreatfrederickfair.com/](http://www.thegreatfrederickfair.com/) or phone (301) 831-0300 (if the web site declines to cooperate).

### Britain on the Green

Sponsored annually by The Capital Triumph Register, this show will take place on Sunday, April 25 at the Collingwood Museum and Library, Alexandria, VA. An enjoyable annual event in a delightful setting beside the Potomac River. Further details should soon become available on the club's web site ([www.capitaltriumphregister.com](http://www.capitaltriumphregister.com)), which remains considerably out of date at this writing.

### Spring Carlisle Collector Car Exhibition and Swap Meet

To be held at Carlisle, PA, Friday-Tuesday, April 21-25. "Filled with anything and everything." [www.carsatcarlisle.com/ce/events/spring-carlisle](http://www.carsatcarlisle.com/ce/events/spring-carlisle)

### 15th Annual Lewes British Motorcar Show

On Saturday, May 1 at the Lewes Historical Complex in Lewes, DE. Sponsored by the Lewes Chamber of Commerce and the British Car Club of Delaware. "The British Are Coming . . . Again!"  
[www.hccdelaware.com](http://www.hccdelaware.com) or [www.Leweschamber.com](http://www.Leweschamber.com)

## Artistry in Motion

13th annual show for connoisseurs of the automobile as an art form, sponsored by the Lancaster (PA) Museum of Art. Sunday, May 2. [www.artistryinmotion.org/Home.html](http://www.artistryinmotion.org/Home.html)

## Carlisle Import-Kit/Replicar Nationals

This large display of sports and exotic cars, with a host of vendors of parts, accessories, regalia, etc. will take place from Friday, May 21 to Sunday, May 23. [www.carsatcarlisle.com/ce/events/import](http://www.carsatcarlisle.com/ce/events/import)

## British Car Awareness Week

Celebrated nationwide from Saturday, May 29 to Saturday, June 6. For details, see: [www.britishcarweek.org/events.html](http://www.britishcarweek.org/events.html) □

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### Not So Technical Advice

By Milton Babirak (1951 MG TD)

The title of this column was conceived somewhat whimsically as a disclaimer to highlight my utter lack of technical expertise. I have only restored one car (with substantial assistance from several experts), and during the course of that titanic clash of a novice's ignorance with hard steel, Cecil Kimber's mechanical genius, the mischievous SU carburetor, and the nearly mythical vagaries of the Lucas electrical system, I lost many battles in trying to restore even the simplest components. During the painful and sobering course of that humbling struggle, I sustained cuts, bruises, minor burns, skin rashes and a temporarily compromised respiratory system, but I did not acquire anything that you could call technical expertise. I only had the experience. My object in this column to pass on some of that "experience." Perhaps some small part of it may be of interest, or even helpful, to others who are restoring their cars or just trying to improve them a little bit at a time.

### Steering Wheel Restoration

I have a steering wheel on my TD that I really like, but it is not a proper TD wheel. It has a marbled look, with light and dark browns swirled together. It looks great against the burled walnut of the dashboard. (Oops, fascia). Someone told me it was a period correct aftermarket wheel. One expert called it a Bluemels banjo type wheel. One sees many T-Series cars with the popular black plastic Brooklands-type steering wheel, but this is not correct for a TD or TF. (If you are interested in a new Brooklands wheel purportedly made to original specs, try John Kimble in the UK at [john@johnkimble.co.uk](mailto:john@johnkimble.co.uk).) The Brooklands wheel was installed as original equipment on earlier T-Series cars: the TA, TB and TC. The proper steering wheel for a TD is a wheel that is a non-marbled cream or light tan color. One restoration expert advised me that the Moss version of the TD wheel, offered in their catalogue as Part No. 454-230 (\$299.95), is about as close as you can come to the proper wheel. It does not include the hub assembly, Part No. 262-340, which Moss offers separately (\$79.95).

While I want to keep my car as original as possible, I like my existing, non-proper, marbled wheel so much I wanted to keep it. The problem is that the wheel has some cracks in it, particularly where the spokes meet the wheel itself. If the spokes were to separate from the wheel during aggressive driving, it could be disastrous. So, I thought, the thing to do would be to restore the wheel since I could not find a vendor selling anything like it. I remembered from the MG BBS that Eastwood offers a steering wheel restoration kit, Parts Nos. 52196Z and 52194Z, and a book, Part No. 52017. But these kits appear to be for solid-colored wheels, not marbled wheels like mine.

My next thought was to look for a steering wheel restorer. Besides, the more I thought about restoring my beloved steering wheel myself, the less I liked the idea. It is clearly one of those jobs that comes out much better the second, third or tenth time one does it. I was only doing it one time, and I really didn't want to mess up my wheel.

I went to the MG T-Series BBS ([www.british-cars.co.uk](http://www.british-cars.co.uk)) and looked in the archives. I didn't find anything, so I started a thread on the topic. Sure enough, I received a response identifying a guy who restores wheels, but his website didn't work. I tracked him down; his name is Gary, and he lives in Carlisle, PA. He's been doing this sort of work for quite a while ([www.garyssteeringwheel.com](http://www.garyssteeringwheel.com)). While talking with other vendors, I also found another firm that does this work: PearlCraft Steering Wheels in Australia ([www.pearlcraft.com.au](http://www.pearlcraft.com.au)). Both these vendors have well-developed web sites, each with numerous photos of their work. Their steering wheel restorations do not come cheap, being more expensive than buying a proper wheel from Moss. But their workmanship looks very good judging from the photos.

### Nickel Plating, Again

In my last article, I wrote about the several parts of a T-Series MG that were nickel plated, including the grip of the hand crank (in some cases), ID plates near the tool box, and the oil fill cap on top of the valve cover. I have not seen many cars with these parts properly nickel coated. As I mentioned in the last issue, the hand crank grip is generally displayed as polished brass or painted black. The ID plates are sold by Moss as brass plates, and the oil fill cap is commonly painted silver to match the valve cover.

Wishing to nickel plate these parts on my car, I solicited and received a quote from a company offering this service. The price was astronomical. Actually, it was more than astronomical; it was cosmic. It was totally . . . Well, you get the idea. I had assumed that since the parts were relatively small and since it was nickel and not chrome, the vendor's quoted fee would be less than the cost of re-chroming. My assumption was very wrong.

My intuition and my experience with re-chromers told me that it probably was not going to do much good to solicit estimates from other vendors, so I started to look for other solutions. For some time, I have been satisfactorily and very economically zinc plating various hardware bits from my car in my own garage using the Eastwood kit. I thought if I could do it with zinc, why couldn't I do it with nickel? There shouldn't be much difference in the chemistry and, after all, this is the sort of stuff you did in high school chemistry class. (They do it in grade school now.) So I decided to find a vendor who sells a nickel plating kit for home use. I looked in several catalogues of well known suppliers, and I searched online, but I found nothing. In addition, I found nothing on eBay and Amazon. Out of frustration and uncharacteristically, I tried YouTube. I thought it was crazy to think I would find anything on electroplating there, let alone nickel electroplating. I was pretty sure I would find music videos, whacky videos, videos that your poker buddies would send you as a joke, stuff for kids, etc. But finding something on You Tube about nickel plating just did not seem likely. Sure enough though, there were not one but several helpful videos on You Tube on how to nickel plate. Actually, it is even more surprising. I found a mini-series describing nickel plating on You Tube. The author of this mini-series is styled "JimmyV2009," and I found his videos to be the most helpful. Two of his videos are entitled *Nickel Plating Made Easy (Part 1 and Part 2)*. Each part is about six minutes in length, covering the basics of the equipment, the chemicals and the process. He also has videos entitled *How to Make Nickel Acetate Solution for Use in Electroplating* (2 hours:32 minutes) and *Nickel Plating Power Supply* (0:28 minutes). These videos are not going to win Oscars, but they clearly and forcefully demonstrate that nickel electroplating in your own garage is possible, very economical and safe. (Nickel acetate is very toxic.) So, I am going to order some nickel acetate, find a nickel welding rod and try it. I will report the results in the next issue. □

## Advertisements

**Note:** Chapter Members are encouraged to submit classified ads free of charge to the Editor via email or snail mail at one of his addresses shown on page 2. Photographs are accepted. Also, **please remember** to let us know the result(s) of your ad and/or whether you want it to appear again in the next issue of the Newsletter.

### FOR SALE: 1953 MGTD

The Ludtke TD is now offered for sale initially to Chesapeake Chapter members and friends. Most of us know this great yellow TD quite well, and it is available at a very fair price. Please do not approach the family regarding this car or its companion, the Volvo P1800. Instead, contact John Wright at [mogfrog1@aol.com](mailto:mogfrog1@aol.com) or phone him at (610) 248-8295 or (610) 982-0140.P1800.



### FOR SALE: TD/TF Parts

TD engine #12362 — complete starters — generator — brake shoes — front end “kingpins” with drums — exhaust pipe — sump oil pan (large capacity) — brake master cylinders — wheel brake cylinders (rebuildable) — miscellaneous other parts. All to be sold locally, nothing to be shipped.

Contact Richard Embick, Tel.: (703) 971-21

Dear Sir,

My name is Bunker Hill. I am a member of the TC Motoring Guild and looking for a luggage rack for my TC, new or used. Would you post an ad for me ?

I can be reached at [bunkerh@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bunkerh@sbcglobal.net)

Regards,

Bunker A. Hill

(Received from Webmaster Chris Kintner, c.02/10/10) □

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**Next two pages:** Continuing our series of ancestral Midget and T-Series Road Tests from *The Autocar*, we feature the lovely, but unlucky 1939 Midget TB. Fitted with a new engine (XPAG) and 19" wheels, it was put into production only five months before Great Britain went to war against Hitler and Nazi Germany in September 1939. The Abingdon assembly line soon began turning out military vehicles for the duration. A new model, the TC, would be introduced after World War II ended in 1945.

In contrast to the 3,000 TA models produced in 1936-39, total production of the TB model amounted to only 379 cars. Talk about collectors' items!

# Still a

by

H. S. LINFIELD



It took the mind back over several years, flicking the dust off a certain chromium-plated radiator surmounted by an octagonal cap. The car it belonged to was due to go back to its birthplace the next morning. I remember doing the same thing, and checking over the oil level, topping up the radiator, and having a last look round many of its predecessors on similar occasions, and then often starting back to the factory with them early on a summer morning just such as we have had during this sadly troubled June.

Still, I start at the wrong end of the story. The car, of course, was an M.G., one of the last of the current series TB Midgets to come out of the factory before car production had to dry up, for the present, in favour of more urgent calls upon the resources.

Unless you are lucky enough to find one in stock somewhere you cannot now just order an M.G., but there is interest from the road-behaviour angle, and some day these representatives of the British sports car will be in production once again on the old or even bigger scale.

There is something about the modern M.G. that "gets you," just as perhaps years ago, as in my own case, the earlier models "got" you. An open body always helps, for it is more than a die-hard attitude of mind to consider that open-car motoring has that something in its "fresh-airness" and maximum visibility that no closed body can provide — no, not even a closed M.G. (There is a drophead coupé Midget model.) One must always qualify this opinion with the proviso — in the right sort of weather.

I will be honest and say I was unusually fortunate with the weather on this recent test run. The petrol position being what it is, there is now none of the opportunity of other days of piling large mileages into a short time, so I took the Midget over for quite a spell, and motored as I could, running it in from practically brand new. It was a fortnight before I had to put up the hood, and as the car was on the road on every day of the fortnight, if sometimes only covering eight or ten miles, it was exceptionally lucky for this country.

But there is more than the appeal of the open car. An unroadworthy M.G. has never been put out — they have always built into these cars an inherent stability, accuracy of steering, and power of stopping which make them safe to drive fast. The familiar slogan has more point than most of its kind.

The Series T Midget instituted a new type of Midget, it will be remembered, back in 1936, and the smallest M.G. then became a 10 h.p.-rated machine instead of an 8 h.p. The latest of all, the TB, has a slightly *smaller* engine capacity than the first of the Ts — strictly the type TA. The bore was increased from 63.5 to 66.5 mm., and the stroke shortened from 102 to 90 (1,250 c.c. against 1,292 previously), giving a more nearly "square" engine, and, in conjunction with a slightly lower final-drive ratio, correspondingly more zip for low-speed acceleration.

## Keeping to 3000 r.p.m.

Owing to the running-in process I kept the engine speed on this occasion within 3,000 r.p.m. until the speedometer showed between 800 and 900 miles total. This allowed rather less than 45 m.p.h. in top gear and thirtyish in third. Yet it was not irksome driving, largely because the car handled well and allowed the corners to be taken without slackening appreciably below the self-imposed limit. Again, the clearer roads help, for if, as is now possible on even main-road routes, 40 to 50 m.p.h. can be maintained steadily it seems a respectable pace and gets you over the ground.

Once, without exceeding 43 m.p.h., I covered 36 miles in an hour, yet it seemed — and was — leisurely motoring, and because of the rev limit adopted in all gears there was no question of gaining anything by rapid bursts of acceleration or fast climbing.

With the mileage eventually approaching the 1,000 mark, I began to give the engine some throttle. It was pleasant to go briefly up to the 60 mark and to use second and third more as they are intended to be used. The engine never felt really stiff from the first, but there was that slightly hot smell of new paint after a run, and its freedom after 1,000 miles or so was distinctly noticeable in contrast with the earlier stages.

During the last two days before the final scene with which this account opens, I discovered something of what the Midget could do, though never in these times does one feel justified in holding full throttle for any appreciable distance when 45 or 50 will do just as well. There was, however, a rather joyous mile or two of by-pass, a perfect surface, clear of traffic, and with a beautifully radiused right-hand bend that you can take

# Midget

*M, 12, P, PB, T, and Now TB—M.G.'s  
Have Run Through the Alphabet! : The  
Latest Model on the Road in Wartime*

hard over to the right-hand kerb since it is a twin-track road. For that short time and one other brief section the M.G. came to life for the first time in its career, which I hope will be a satisfactory one, and never allow it to be said that this was a car that was "beaten" when it was young! My con-science is clear.

There is no sideways "give" when cornering fast, and the steering, though light, is nicely accurate and firm, but the springing is a great improvement for comfort over the less good, but never real shock.

## Praise for the Hydraulic Brakes

I liked the Lockheed hydraulic brakes a lot. All through the run the linings must have been bedding down from the new condition, but the brakes did not become soft and always had a reserve. In the last fifty miles a quick stop was necessary at traffic lights on a de-restricted road that I had not been watching closely enough, and the M.G. pulled up right on the line, dead straight. The handbrake is still the fly-off pattern, that you pull on to release without touching the knob, always the best kind when starting on a gradient. The synchromesh gives really nice "slicing" changes up and down, and covers the useful second gear. The steering wheel is telescopically adjustable over a useful range.

The car came to me first of all with the side screens in position but the hood down, and although I think I have never previously driven an open car for more than an hour or two in this rig I found it a good one — and one's wife appreciates it! It stops nearly all draught. These particular screens are metal-framed, with a big clear area, and if securely clamped on to their clips do not rattle.

There is a flap in the right-hand one for signalling, but its use I found a little irksome. As a matter of fact, I got into the habit of watching the useful external mirror more even than usually and gave up signalling except on the most obviously important occasions! I do not necessarily advocate the plan and never felt really easy about it, but it brings home to you how much of the signal-flapping and hand-waving is strictly superfluous. The hood is an easy enough one-man affair and is neat when down, besides allowing plenty of head-room when up. There is handy luggage space beneath the "tonneau" cover, of leather material rubberised on the inside, which conceals it.

The "Thirtelite" that M.G.s have had for a long while proved a blessing. Consisting of a small green lamp in front of the driver, it was set to light up at 20 m.p.h. and go out at 30. Thus, when driving slowly at night, striving for a level 20, you know that if there is no green tell-tale you are O.K., and that in 30 m.p.h. stretches if there is a green light you are below 30 m.p.h. Altogether an excellent thing, now doubly useful, though for driving on really dark nights I should experiment with a view to somewhat reducing the brightness of the green illumination.

In the practical M.G. style a rev counter is fitted, and the red line on its dial is placed at 4,800 r.p.m. In the later stages of the run I found that this gave 72 or 73 by speedometer, but that it could be exceeded without apparent distress. Limit recommended revs mean a comfortable 50 in third, but 60 can be seen by winding things up.

When you come to driving it fast you realize what a reserve the car possesses, and it can obviously hold 55 or thereabouts all day on a suitable road without fussing itself. Shades of the past and hopes for the future!

## Highly Satisfactory M.P.G. Figures

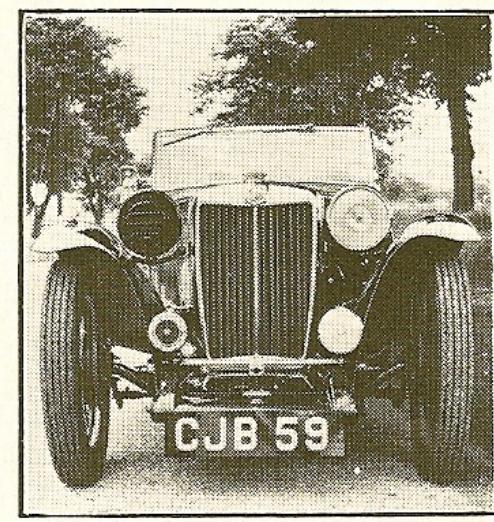
A 13½-gallon tank is a grand feature of the Midget — if you can legitimately get it filled these days. For driving in the wartime manner, but by no means crawling about, a full tank means a mileage approaching 500. I made a number of successive tests by quart tank [sic] over different routes and the average of six checks worked out at 37.6 m.p.g. The conditions included 20 and 30 m.p.h. driving in town areas, steady 30 m.p.h. runs for a specific purpose, and 50 to 60 m.p.h. work with fair use of the gear, *but* always taking advantage of coasting possibilities without letting the speed come down so much as seriously to slow the general rate of progress.

I should regard the all-round average as being 36 m.p.g. in normal conditions. At 30 m.p.h. steadily held the figure was 39.6 m.p.g. I devoted one quart of petrol to a test in the full-throttle style of driving that has been forgotten for the moment — pedal hard down wherever possible, second and third gear used at roundabouts on a by-pass and for accelerating away from them, and generally reverting to pre-war style when in a hurry. Even then the Midget gave 30.4 m.p.g., which is remarkable. All this was done as part of necessary journeys, not as special test runs.

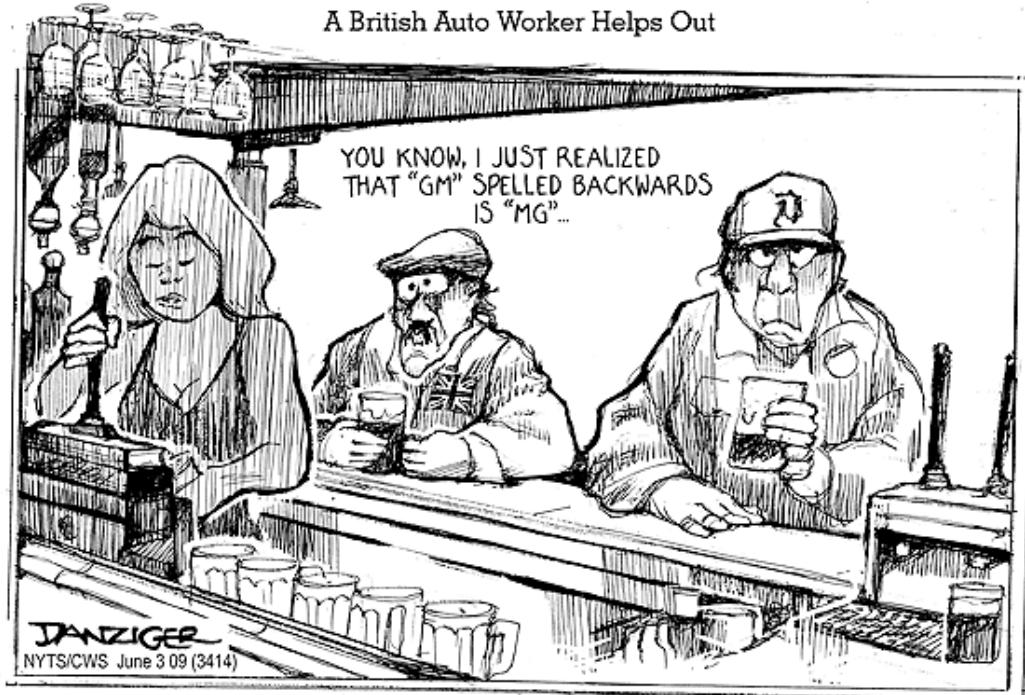
It would be difficult to find a car of similar liveliness and all-round performance — interesting performance — that would be as economical, and this was with a barely run-in engine that had not had any special settings. I came to agree with the makers' policy on the Midget of fitting a reserve petrol tap, but not a gauge. There is the big tank to start with, and the reserve system traps the exceptional quantity of three gallons. The control tap is on the instrument board, right in front of the driver. You can go a long way — several days of running around — without having to think about petrol, and then when the S.U. pump begins to "tick" you turn over to the reserve and have 90-110 miles in hand.

Especially on a car that has as good a consumption as the Midget's I would personally sooner have the reserve supply and no gauge, than a gauge and no reserve. I found one other thing about this arrangement, that it avoided the plaguey gauge-watching habit one has got into since a gallon of petrol came to mean so much — a practice which does no good in any case, and is irritating, yet almost impossible to avoid nowadays.

This engine proved to be another example of the fairly high compression sports type that takes no violent exception to the present-day petrol. A certain amount of pinking occurred when accelerating, but never excessively. I think that the alleged evils of Pool [?—ed.] were overrated at first, though probably it is desirable to decarbonise more frequently than in the past.

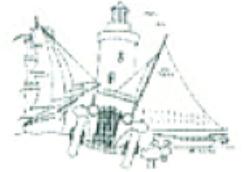


## A British Auto Worker Helps Out



(Courtesy of Barbara Van Over)



**TWIST SEMINAR REGISTRATION, APRIL 10 and 11, 2010**

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

If you are not a registered member of this Chapter, please include your address and email address:

**SCHEDULE**

**Saturday, April 10, 2010 – 9 AM to 5 PM:** Full day seminar on all aspects of a complete tune- up of a T Series car. The tune up will be demonstrated on a TD.

**Saturday, April 10, 2010 – 6:30:** Informal dinner with presentation, films and DVDs by John Twist.

**Sunday, April 11, 2010 – 9 AM to 2 PM:** Seminars on electrical system, lubrication, other selected topics. There will be a special section where John will answer any questions from the audience on T-Series cars. If there are no questions, John will discuss his plans for eliminating the Federal Government deficit, whether *pi* really is an irrational number and the meaning of life. So, please be prepared with questions for John about your T-Series car.

**Meals:** The arrangements for lunch on Saturday and Sunday and dinner Saturday night will be made at a later date and a notice will be emailed to all registrants.

**Hotel:** Please check the **Yes** below if you will need hotel accommodations. The Chapter will make arrangements with a nearby hotel for those registrants. A notice will be emailed to all registrants.

YES.

**LOCATION**

The seminars will be held at a community college or high school in Fairfax County.

**REGISTRATION FEE**

***Please make your check in the amount of \$100.00 payable to "Chesapeake Chapter NEMGTR."***

***Please mail this to: Chesapeake Chapter NEMGTR, c/o Milton Babirak, 47539 Coldspring Place, Sterling, VA 20165-7446***

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Milton Babirak at [mbabirak@babirakcarr.com](mailto:mbabirak@babirakcarr.com) or (703) 501-7924.