

OTTAWA MG CLUB NEWS LETTER



OCTAGONALLY SPEAKING

I've lost track of the number of people who have looked at my car and said "very nice, but shouldn't it be green?" The correct colour for an MG has become a point of serious discussion amongst club members recently and maybe it's time to put the record straight.

Back in the old days of motor racing before the tobacco manufacturers turned the sport into a rather low class circus, all civilized countries had a national racing colour. Germany was white, France was blue, Italy was red, Britain was green, and so on. The first team to wear the green was Napier in about 1903, and they chose a very dark shade. Bentley, MG, Aston Martin and Jaguar followed later and their cars too, were painted in what has become known as "British Racing Green".

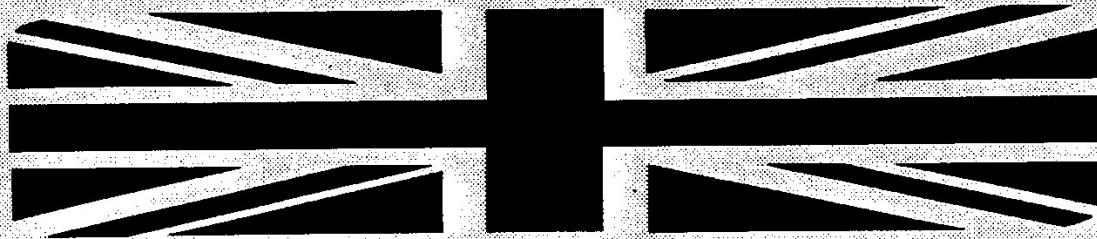
With this historical precedent, MG caused quite a stir in the Sixties by fielding a team of *red* MGB's for major international rallies and races. My allegiance was to other makes of car in those days, and I can remember thinking "What a pity that BMC can't even get the colour right".

Only very recently, I discovered that the works B's were painted red for a very good and valid reason. Drivers in open road events like the Mille Miglia and the Monte Carlo Rally discovered that the operators of Italian level crossings were quick to lower the barrier in front of oncoming race cars and hold them up for trains that were a very long time arriving. If the car was (Italian) red however, there would be no holdup, they would let it go straight on through. So MG painted their cars red too, fooled the level crossing operators and did a lot better in international competition.

End of history lesson - the point (if there is one) being that although BRG is very appropriate, MG's look good in just about any colour. But if you ever want to get over an Italian level crossing in a hurry.....

Hugo Leech.

MINIMAN



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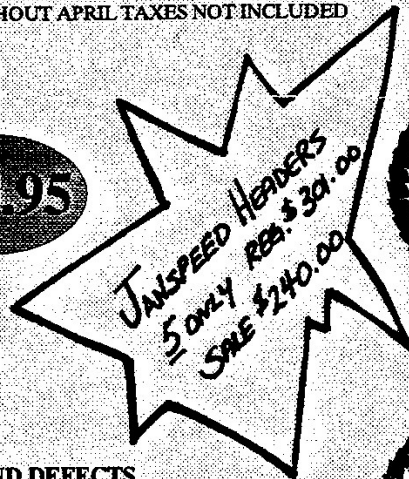
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Our esteemed treasurer has left for a Florida vacation therefore a treasurers report is unavailable at this time.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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Long Range Events

28 June 1992 Car Show in Manotick

8 - 11 July 1992 MG CANADA 92

The MG Car Club of Toronto and the North American MGB Register will be hosting a four day festival and convention in Peterborough, Ontario. For more info contact Len Fortin (613)821-3140

Short Range Events

Ottawa MG Club meetings:

March 17th 7:00pm Terry Dale's Old Car Factory, 24 Bentley Ave, Nepean

April 16th time and location TBA

QUESTION & ANSWER

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Question: Please discuss the pros/cons and care of wire wheels.

Answer: Chromed spoke wheels, sparkling in the sun, always seem to make a MG owner's heart beat faster. Unfortunately a lot of upkeep is needed to make spoke wheels efficient; the spokes need tightening and the wheels need tru-ing up every year or so unlike steel wheels which, apart from rust removal, are almost maintenance free.

The major problem with spoke wheels is the movement of the spokes as the wheel turns. The weight of the car hangs from the top few spokes (i.e. the lower half of the wheel does nothing to support the weight of the car). This movement causes stretch of the spokes and rust to appear, both at the rim and the hub. Grease or rust protection, such as waxoil or oiltrell, would likely prevent this.

Another disadvantage is that, inherently, spoke wheels leak and therefore need tubed tires.

With respect to the matter of handed, it is not so much the wheels that are handed but the spinners or nuts which hold them on. This is to ensure that normal forward motion of the car does not loosen the nuts.

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Conversion is needed due to the method of fixing the wheels onto the axle. Steel wheels on any car fit onto the centre hub and are "bolted" to a plate surrounding the hub both to keep the wheels true and to provide traction. Spoke wheels fit onto a splined shaft and are retained by the spinners (or nuts). The splines provide traction and, if neglected, can cause trouble by breaking and/or rounding off.

In order to convert from steel wheels to spoke wheels, one of three conversions is needed. The most original, most difficult and most expensive is to replace the front hubs and rear half shafts. Next, splined adapters can be bolted into place. This widens the track and tires may rub on the wheel well. The easiest conversion is to bolt on spoke wheels.

Regards Alan Dickinson

TRIP REPORT(S)/EVENT RESULTS

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Jan.16th Ottawa MG Club meeting featured speaker was Mr. John Carr, managing editor of "Sporting Classics". He discussed the origins of the magazine, stressing the importance of research and market studies to generate a business plan. Attracting free lance writers and photographers was an essential step which was facilitated by providing writers guidelines. Circulation of the publication was very important - both Canadian and Air Canada airlines carry "Sporting Classics" in all first class and business class seats. High profile exposure such airlines provides credibility with advertisers. After lots of hard work, the first issue rolled off the press on Dec.21/90. The 6th issue was a landmark issue - it was produced by an entirely electronic process resulting in a great time saving and better quality. What does the future hold for "Sporting Classics" ? For growth and expansion a larger market is needed. The USA enthusiast will be tempted by increased coverage of vintage racing as the border states are integrated with Canadian interests and activities. The Canadian art content will be increased and presentation of the publication will continue with glossy format. Editorial diversification is planned. Entering its second year, "Sporting Classics" will be producing the "Sporting Classics Calendar" which will feature classic sporting cars in Canadian settings. "Sporting Classics" will also be entering a joint venture with travel agents to offer "Sporting Classics Tours", designed as all inclusive excursions to classic sporting car events. Best of luck to John and Evelyn for continued success of "Sporting Classics"!!

Feb.21st Ottawa MG Club meeting featured a discussion of car finishes and methods of scratch, clip, etc repair by Yves Roy, sales representative for 3M Canada Inc. He opened the floor for questions and concerns of the club members. An overwhelming concern voiced by club members was the repair of stone chips, scratches and

MGB

"as new" from Terry Dale's Old Car Factory

Did you miss out on an MGB when they were new?

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At the Old Car Factory we start with a rust and damage free southern U.S. car which we trailer to our Nepean premises. Each car is completely disassembled, the body is stripped to bare metal, then primed and painted in the colour of your choice.

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faded paint. The "3M Perfect - It paint finishing system" was discussed at length. There are 3 basic steps in this process: 1. wet sanding using microfine 1200 to 2000 grit. Do not wet sand with your hand! Use a soft wet sand pad to wrap wet sanding paper around - this will result in a more flat, consistent scratch. Don't forget to soak the wet sand paper in water for a few hours before use. 2. compounding is the next step. This removes the wet sanding scratches. It is very important to keep the compounding pads clean. Use compounding pad assembly on a slow speed approx 2500rpm polisher. 3. Finally machine or hand glazing is used to remove swirls and whirls produced by the compounding pads. A patented foam polishing pad is used for this process which is easy to remove or switch, flexible therefore easy to do contours, easy to maintain and clean, and is lint free. If you are going to use this system, use the entire system. 3M can not guarantee the results if other companies products are substituted. If a longer lasting shine is desired, application of a silicon wax coat over the glaze is beneficial. Two products which were highly recommended by the sales rep and club members were Imperial hand glaze 05990 which is great for the quick shine for show but offers no protection to the surface (contains no abrasives, removes dirt, fill minor imperfections) and Liquid polish 05940 which is a silicon base liquid wax offering longer term finish protection. For further info contact Yves Roy, 3M Canada Inc. (613) 741-2007. He can provide you with a list of local distributors.

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Readers of a normal "Feature Car" article may expect a great number of pertinent specifications , exact dimensions , original codes and special attributes about the selected car. Well this isn't a normal Feature Car article. So I'll simply say that our MG is a '73 model "B" that fits in the garage , is sort of a dark red and has lots of miles under the hood. What I'm going to feature here is a bit of our love affair history with this fun sports car. (Now that I think about it - if any or all of this gets out , I'll never be able to sell the thing but I guess thats OK - I don't intend on ever giving it up anyway.)

Back in 1985 , Debi was working toward a new career by attending Algonquin College. It was difficult with only one family car to serve us so we decided to get a smaller car for Debi. I can't recall why my mind was set on an MG ; but it was and soon we found one in our price range. The chap that sold it to us had done some work on it and there was yet some work to be done. I didn't care - it passed the provincial inspection , it was in the right price range and it was an MG. The criteria were satisfied but the 'fun' was only about to begin. Now since those days back in '85 a lot has happened and to be chronologically correct would tax even the best of memories so I'll just review the love affair events as they come to mind.

Only a few weeks after we got it , little things started to crop up. For example: when driving in the late afternoon or early evening , as soon as the headlights were turned on the engine would conk out. And when the horn was pressed , the usual sharp blast turned into a long low growl. Needless to say it was time to get out the wiring diagram and the voltage tester. After a series of readings and reconnections of all kinds of wires I figured these haunting problems were defeated.

This sort of thing sparked my interest so I continued to fiddle and diddle with the wiring for several weekends after the incident. And perhaps 'sparked' is the best word to use here because one day as I was returning home from a brief grocery trip with my young daughter , the steering column started to smoke. It was late November with snow and slush on the ground and we were only 500 meters from the house. Pulling to the side of the road I warned Andrea to be ready to jump out. Her eyes were as big as saucers - my heart was zooming - the car was on fire. It wasn't as serious as it could have been but the signal switch had melted to the steering column cowl cover and the wires inside were cooked. About \$150 and a lot of heat shrink connections later we were road-worthy again. (As a matter of fact I only replaced the steering column cover last season - maybe because I was lazy - or maybe I was looking for just the right one.

Being somewhat of a novice to 'Brit' cars (I had worked on Chevys and Pontiacs during my teenage years) I garnered the help of Dave Booth and his staff at the Top Valu Gasmart next to my office on Industrial Avenue. Dave knew a lot about cars and made me an offer that I could not refuse.....what he didn't know he would learn on the fly as he worked on the "B" and only charge me half the price. This arrangement worked for both of us. It especially came in handy when I brought him the "B" one day with the shifter in the trunk and a pair of vice-grips on the shifter stub.....it had broken off about 1" out of the transmission. Dave used all his welding skills to repair the stick and , to his credit , it's still in fine shape today. I'm not sure about Dave though , the station closed down a few years ago.

Dave Booth was the one who told me about the 3/4 cam shaft that was "obviously" in the engine. I didn't know about it till then but when the accelerator pedal stuck , one fine day on Highway 31 , I was quick to find out what it was all about. In the middle of a shift from 2nd to 3rd , the needle got buried in the red. I dont think it was there very long but I froze. It was Debi who coolly suggested to turn off the key. After coasting to the side of the road , some temporary repairs led to new cables and fittings for the accelerator.

The first experience with a real "Brit" car repair place was brought on by another event. Driving along the Hunt Club Road one Saturday afternoon , we were suprized to come grinding to a halt just under the Airport Parkway Bridge. I didn't know for sure but it sounded like the transmission had given up the ghost and the car would not move in any gear.....except neutral of course , and only then if you pushed it. The only place listed in the phone book that offered service for British cars on Saturday was Mostly British. The folks at Mostly British confirmed my transmission theory and for a fee would replace the broken one with a rebuilt , used one. A few more days , a bunch more money and another story for the love affair.

Now to this point if you're thinking we had nothing but bad times , you're quite mistaken. I've left out all the good times - driving on bright summer days with the top down. Zipping around town with the kids , Andrea and Andrew , in the back secured with seat bekts that I installed. Debi using the "B" to get to and from college (remember thats why we got the car in the first place) The problem is , every time I recall a good time , a whiff of trouble shows up. Like Debi loosing the muffler in the middle of St. Laurent Boulevard - and as I recall she did the same thing with our Monte Carlo the same week. (Speedy Muffler made a few bucks that week and I lost a few) Like the little gas leak that led to a full replacement of the gas tank and all the associated fittings. Like the drive to Camp Borden to visit some friends who work on the military base. This time the car performed very well ; it was the weather that did not co-operate. A thunderstorm in the middle of the afternoon found us racing to the next nearest underpast to get to shelter to get the roof up. And on the way home the cold evening air chilled us so bad that we had to put up the top and turn on the heater. But enough about the good times.....on to more love affair features and events.

After a few years of spending all kinds of money on this investment it came time to do some serious body work. I was not at all skilled at this kind of work so I got someone else to do it for me. Now what we wanted was a plum coloured car to match a certain ladies leather jacket. But if you looked closely , the car had been several different colours in various previous lives - first orange , then blue and , as we bought it , 2 tone green. Many dollars later and about 2 weeks behind schedule , the "B" was re-born ; not exactly the right colour we were hoping for but close enough. Oh yes , there was a couple of related events that happened during this make-over. The seats had been put back in after the floors were fixed , but were installed about 2" too far back. This made it tougher for Debi to drive. And the seat installation had knicked the gas line slightly , so fuel would spit out all over the place as we drove along. It didn't smell great and the gas mileage was terrible. The fuel line problem was easy to fix. The seat issue was tougher. I made an executive decision to not relocate the seats and I would take over the routine driving of the "B". I'd let Debi have the family car. (I don't think she has ever forgiven me for that decision)

A move from the city to the village of Greely a few years ago and the closing of Dave Booth's Top Valu Gasmart made it necessary to find another service location for the "B". One conversation led to another and we ended up at Wayne Swales' 31 ESSO near Metcalfe. I think Wayne's first 'biggy' with the "B" was the day the batteries fell out. The two 6 volt cells used to be stored under the back seat. That is until the rust riddled compartment gave way. Wayne and his people rigged up a single 12 volt battery in front of the radiator and now Wayne gets all my business when it comes to serious "B" work. Dare I mention here that the battery is a Ford brand model and seems to be doing fine to date?

However , of all the wild , wonderful and weird events , I think I'll never top this one.....the out of gas situation. Less than a couple of years ago we took off from the house in Greely to do a run but we needed gas. We didn't make it to the station. Just up on Reginal Road 8 , the "B" conked out about 200 meters from Highway 31. The walk home to retrieve the gas can was an embarrassment and I was the brunt of jokes in the neighbourhood for a long while 'after. Now only last summer , with the 'history repeats itself' law in effect , I did it again. Same "nice day" , same "go for a drive" , same "low on fuel" , same "didn't make it to the gas station" and stalled and stopped in exactly the same place , 200 meters from Highway 31 on Reginal Road 8. One little grace did come my way this time though. A neighbour drove by and saw the situation. The walk home wasn't necessary as the neighbour offered help but the embarrassment was double as she chuckled all the way to the gas can and back to the car. Thanks anyway , Marie.

So why do we still have the "B"? Because the love affair continues. Some fine friends have been found at the club and the bad past is really overshadowed by the good times. There is still lots of things wrong with this car but a special neighbour and friend of mine likes to help where he can.(mostly 'cause he's smart enough to not work on his own station wagon - he'd rather help screw up someone else's vehicle - thanks , Bob)

Each year we look forward to the summer months more and more , now that the car is more reliable. During the winter , as the "B" sleeps in the garage , I dream of all kinds of improvements I want to do. Now that the kids are too big for the back seat , Debi and I find the "B" a fine and fun escape from routine. It really has been and is a fun sports car and a real adventure.

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CLASSIFIED ADDS
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FOR SALE: 1961 MGA BOAT TAIL featuring custom aluminum body, wire wheels. Excellent condition. Appraised at \$30,000.00. Contact Alec Angel (613)226-4176

FOR SALE: HARD TOP needing some work. Terms negotiable! Contact Hugo Leech (613)235-5073

FOR SALE: MG REAR SHOCK CONVERSION KIT. Replace your worn /obsolete lever shocks with tube shocks. This bolt on kit allows conversion to tube shocks, no cutting or welding necessary. Kit includes all hardware for both sides of car and detailed instructions - you add shocks of your choice. Fits all MGB models. Price \$60.00 Contact Bob Tytaneck (613)830-6980

FOR SALE: 2.0 litre MGB ENGINE featuring new pistons, bearings, oil pump, double timing chain/gears, roeuer shaft, water pump. Rebuilt mechanical advance distributor, 9.4:1 compression; ported polished and CC'd cylinder head. Fully balanced including flywheel. 45 DCOE Weber carb with manifold, stainless steel long centre branch exhaust header, alloy valve cover. Brand new and not cheap! Contact Terry Dale, The Old Car Factory, 24 Bentley Ave, Nepean. Phone/FAX (613)224-6913.

FOR SALE: 1980 MGB LIMITED EDITION featuring hard and soft tops, roll bar, overdrive, good interior, mag wheels, good exhaust, good tires. Alberta car, - no rust on body. Contact Mr.Kelsey Belleville 966-7132 Asking \$6,000.00 or B.O.

FOR SALE: Liquidating 20 year collection of MGB parts and cars. Show quality restored to restoration projects.

- restored roadsters \$9,000 to \$14,500, years 68', 69', 71', and 74'.
- restoration projects \$500 to \$3,500, years 64' and 66' running/certifiable. Seven other restoration projects.
- Parts, almost anything for chrome bumper MGBs.

Call Anthony Henderson at 1-545-0134

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The Motor Sport Club of Ottawa is holding it's annual Racing School again this year on May 2 & 3 at Sanair International Raceway on the road circuit. This is a comprehensive session combining classroom sessions with lots of track time. There are a maximum of 18 students with 5 instructors. The chief instructor is Terry Dale. The course is designed to improve driving skills to an extremely high level appropriate to the individual. While structured to the student's use of his own everyday driver (rollbars required in open cars), this course results in his receiving a basic competition racing licence from the Canadian Auto Sports Clubs. Cost is a low \$300.00 per student plus membership in the Motorsport Club of Ottawa. For more information contact Terry Dale (613)224-6913