

Editorial

Wow what a great summer Team Boys has had. It seems as if we were on the go every day the Boneshaker our 1964 B, has taken part in so many wonderful road runs that they begin to blur into each other. We have been to Wales three times, two events in the Cotswolds, down to Devon and on into Cornwall. The vast majority of days were spent with the sun out and with the wind in Nicky's hair and Paddy's fun not a sensation I can experience being very short of hair!

Contributions this month have come from Colin Pratt who provided details of his adventures in Europe, and Keith Allen has completed a write up on his rebuild, photos of which we featured earlier in the year. Both rose to my challenge for articles, thanks go to them both. If you are tempted please aim for around a 1000 word maximum.

One of the photos featured this month was taken at St Ives at the end of the Cornish Riviera run, where we were encouraged to dress in a style appropriate for the age of our car. The prizewinners were on the right Louise Moon who has owned the 1978 Black B for 14 years and her friend Claire Palmer - congratulations.

A few days after this event, Team Boys were staying at a small hotel on Dartmoor and we were standing at the bar when in walked a stranger. "Are you Roger Boys?" Fame at last I thought. It turned out that Barry Franklin was a reader of *Safety Fast!*



How do you get into an MG dressed like this?

and recognised the Boneshaker parked **outside**. Putting these facts together he realised **that we** must be near We spent an enjoyable **evening with** him and his wife Pricilla talking MGs. **What was the** old advert: "You're never alone with an MG".

The second picture features Richard **Guterson** and Annette Murray who are officials of the MGCC in Western Australia. Geoff **Hamiton** (also pictured) arranged for them to join **us on the** Hen Run, during their 6 week holiday in **Europe**. Both managed to find a seat in MGs **for the run** thanks to David Morris and Peter **Venables My** picture shows them practicing their **support for** England in the forthcoming Ashes **CricketTour**

I did do some practical work on the **Boneshaker** this year don't look so surprised, it **was nothing** spectacular. Having read the article edition of *Safety Fast!* about improving **headlights I** decided to replace my sealed beam **units Having** stripped the old units out I realised **that there was**



Australian visitors supporting England!

some rust damage to repair. No problem - when **the lights were replaced** it could not be seen. In **feet I surprised myself** with the quality I achieved. **The parts required** were obtained from SVC **01827-6714** who proved to be most informative, **and helpful because** when I fitted the chrome rims **and did my first test drive** one flew off never to be **seen again**. The lights are much better but were **not good enough** to find the missing rim. One call **and a free replacement** was on its way. Thanks to **the excellent service** provided by Steve Taylor

By the way finish off this month, Richard Gosling has **sent in a website** where you can find some useful **information** about the availability of 165/80 R14 **tyres, worth a look** www.blackcircles.com. Also **Mike Paterson** of Hertfordshire sent me an **amusing email** concerning his desire to find a **course where** a duffer can learn about the **restoration** of classic cars, if you can help please let **me know** **Enjoy your MG** - Roger

How to avoid rain in May

Get into your 1969 MG BGT and head south. We did in May, by heading for the Dover Dunkirk ferry and on to French roads system travelling down past Lille and Arras to Reims. Freedom was gained as we joined the minor picturesque roads to St. Dizier where we paused for the night. We were well on our way to our final destination in Italy to take part in the rally organised by the Italian club 'MG by the Sea'. Being English in holiday mood, we dined out on shark steaks with our red wine that night. The following morning we discovered that the car, which had been parked outside the restaurant, was covered in pollen, which stuck surprisingly well. The following day it was on again and we enjoyed a pleasant sunny drive through the French countryside, pausing for lunch just over the Swiss border at Delle. We had a Swiss motorway vignette so made use of it as we made our way to our friends in Birrwil, where we were able to drop off the MG Y-type body panels and Shorrock supercharger parts that we

were delivering, cheaper for him than **the shipping** charge! The weather had been great **for MG** motoring: hot and sunny. We stayed for **two nights**. socialising, visiting Zug and collecting **more pollen** on the car. On Saturday, our son Nigel **and his wife** Janine in their MGB roadster joined us for **the next** part of our journey to the rally.

In convoy we set off south again to head **for the** Alps and see if any of the passes were **open**. We'd previously enjoyed using the Gotthard **Pass so** thought we'd try the St. Bernard this **time**. En route we changed to the small, but **open Splügen** Pass (6932 feet high), as this looked a **good way** to avoid the traffic jams in Como. **Here we** experienced some snow, this came as a **surprise as** it was the sun we were after! However it **presented** a good opportunity for some photographs of **the** cars at the summit. The conditions **soon cleared to** hot sunshine as we descended into Italy. **The road** was very narrow and very twisty **both up and** down and we were unfortunate **enough to get**

caught behind a nervous German driver who **rather** overdid the braking on each bend. One **notable** hairpin was actually all enclosed in an **unlit tunnel** of some vintage. Our brakes got hot and, **although** didn't noticeably fade, the pedal travel **nr/eased** as the fluid expanded. We later found, **several** miles further on at the Lecco ice cream **stop that** the grease in one front wheel bearing **had melted** out all over the wheel and the retaining **cap had fallen** off, luckily being kept for future use **by the hub cap**. It was obviously posing day as the **town was** jammed with pretty people and their **bikes and cars** at the market set up along the **lakeside**. The traffic was heavy to our Agriturismo **B&B** at Lombardo Cemusco so we rewarded **ourselves** with large pizzas and beer for supper

When the local Alfa-Romeo garage opened on **Monday** morning a helpful mechanic put some replacement grease into the wheel bearing recess **and we** set off travelling further south to Ferrara **before** finishing our journey to Rimini and the MG



MGB using the Splügenpass in snow - no problem



Spectacular views in the Dolomites.

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rally HQ of Gabicce Mare, where there was lots of meeting and greeting with international MG folk. The roads for the day were pretty good except for the lack of dual carriageways or other overtaking opportunities, which meant we were stuck behind slower vehicles.

The first day of the organised rally started with Bertie (our car) spouting petrol over the hotel car park, as the fuel line had disengaged itself from the carburetors. After screwing this back together our convoy of 100+ MGs was escorted by the Polizia Stradale to a semi-local town called Montefiore Gonca for drinks and nibbles before another escorted run to Gradara for more refreshments. The escort was made up of two police cars - one modern, the other an Alfa-Romeo Giulia (as seen in the film "The Italian Job") and 11 motorcyclists, 10 on modern BMWs the other on an old Moto Guzzi. Their job was to get ahead of the convoy and close roundabouts and road junctions to normal traffic so that we could all go through, uninhibited. Also they kept other road users from infiltrating into our convoy, then, when we'd all passed, the last policeman would race up the convoy to relay to the man ahead and so on to the next intersection. We found it exciting, with sirens wailing and flags flying a great sight we felt a bit like royalty. That evening we had to give up our cars and were taken, by bus, to an old wine-making establishment for a musical evening with the inevitable drinking and more food than you could shake a stick at.

During the next four days we were entertained brilliantly, with trips by car being arranged to a variety of places all of which had different themes and included plenty of food and drink and displaying the hospitality of the our host so well. Among the highlights were a trip to Casteldici, we visited a theme park for grown-ups where the dolphins' performance was spectacular everyone enjoyed the Karting evening, a bit like driving our MGs but more disciplined since we had to stick to a track. The Ferrari museum on the outskirts of San Marino included the one and only 250 left in Italy, what would that be worth? During our visit to Urbania for a series of guided tours, Bertie failed to start, when we returned from our three hour lunch - a flat battery due to me not keeping the

fan belt tight. A push start resolved the problem.

We all had great fun taking part in the regularity and driving tests in the Market Square before setting off to lunch and a mediaeval display of drums and flag handling at Novilara, what a wonderful skill this is. The event ended on Sunday with a visit to Santacarangelo. We parked in the town square to do some sightseeing before a long lunch held high up at the Due Tom restaurant for prize giving and thanks all round from the various nationalities present. After dinner to finish an excellent day we walked to the Adnatic beach front to cool our toes in the sea.

The following morning we left Nigel and Jan among others who stayed on in the sunshine for a few days longer as we had planned five days touring on our way home. We headed off northwards along the badly maintained road to Venice. Even HGVs were taking evasive action to avoid the worst of the holes and bumps, it's quite disconcerting to see lorries veering about in front of us and wondering what's going to be the effect on our MG suspension. We got parked close to the waterbus station and rode up with cameras popping to St. Marks Square. Venice is certainly open for retail therapy and we contributed in our modest way, by purchasing some of the vast array of glassware on offer. After just a few hours in Venice we headed east for Portogruaro then on a good cross-country road to Udine before finding the road to Cividale where we enjoyed a meal in a beautiful piazza.

It was then on into Slovenia and a very pretty place it is too. Scenery to die for and clean and tidy along the Julijске Alp ansa. The Predil Pass is a totally unexploited tourist area and well worth the time we spent exploring. It led us back into Italy momentarily before passing into Austria at Arnoldstein (no sign of Schwarzenegger) before Villach. The roads were of exceptionally good quality and the scenery spectacular along the Drau valley. At Spittal we turned north on the equally scenic but now winding road up the local alps route 99, passing as we did Gmünd where there is a Porsche museum and over the Katschberg pass (5384 feet) followed by the Oberlautern pass (5705 feet), a big ski resort. It was only now that we felt the change in

temperatures it really felt quite chilly and was cloudy; we had to close some windows. We reached Salzburg during the early afternoon rush hour. Very touristy of course, especially as Wolfgang Amadeus was having his 250th birthday party. Our journey of discovery took us now into the Czech Republic at Strazny. Things looked drab initially but conditions improved greatly as we neared Prague. Parking near "Konviktska" put us close to the places we wanted to visit. We walked over the 14th century Charles bridge through the old city arch and gawped at all the architecture; all to soon it was time to press on. The motorway north from Prague was good until about 20 miles from Teplice and the German border.

The following day we knew we were on our way home as it started raining, and got worse as the day went on. We continued on westwards to Giessen, then to Koblenz and down the east side of the Moselle valley, crossing to the west side before Cochem. We had to fight a series of road closures in our attempt to cross into Luxembourg for some much needed cheap petrol. This was eventually achieved over a very old and narrow bridge over the river Sauer that was not really meant for other than pedestrians or bikes. On to Bastogne and zigzagging on through Belgium still in the rain, to Givet where we expected to stop for the night. The place was, unexpectedly, packed with some sort of convention and we ploughed on to Mauberge, in France.

The rain was bad next morning and we got quite wet coming out of the supermarket with our wine, beer pate and cheese in Dunkirk where we boarded the ferry for a bumpy crossing to Dover and home soil at last. We had taken 5 days, including a two day stopover at friends in Switzerland to do the 1093 miles to the rally, another 430 miles on the week long rally and a further 1607 miles on the 5-day tour back making 3130 miles in all. We used 91 gallons of fuel making consumption 34.4 m.p.g. and about 5 pints of oil. We had enjoyed a wonderful holiday seeing some magnificent places and meeting some super people on our journey - just what an MG was designed for.

Colin Pratt

My MGB will go to Le Mans.

In September 2004, in addition to three adult offspring, we had an unplanned addition to the household in the form of a 1969 MGB roadster. This old lady had been the property of a family friend but was now surplus to requirements. I had not seen the car before, but as an MG enthusiast, I was asked to advise on its disposal. Our friend had owned the car for many years but used it only rarely, digging it out every year for an MOT at the local garage. After a long discussion it was decided that I should buy the car as having recently retired, it would make an interesting project. The car was driven home and sheeted up in our carport to await my attention. So far so good!

Early in January 2005 I pushed the car into the garage to remove the engine and gearbox in order to fit the reconditioned overdrive box I had acquired. This is where my troubles began! Our friend, being neither expert nor enthusiast had relied on the local garage for both advice and service, but unfortunately, unknown to her a great deal of bodging had been done and cleverly disguised. The car was rusty and needed a rebuild. I had two options, either sell the car for spares or rebuild it myself. Already being in possession of a beautiful MGC I neither wanted or could afford another 'toy'. So what do I do? If I disposed of the car not only would I lose money but I would feel I had let our friend down. The decision was made; if I could sell the C the proceeds would be used for a total restoration of the B. Sadly, in August the C went to its new home.

Now I had an incentive as I had no MG to use. and in 2006 I intended to go to Silverstone in June and the biannual Le Mans Historic meeting in July. The only option was to totally dismantle the car, sand blast the shell and assess the extent of repairs required.

In the event the shell required full floors both sides, inner and outer sills and castle section on one side, boot floor front wing, both doors, rear wings and rear inner wheel arches plus repairs to the top of one front inner wing, otherwise it was perfect!! Oh and for luck I opted to replace the main cross member. My skills with a mig welder probably match an elephant's flying ability, so I left these replacements to an expert at the same time paying to have the repaired shell painted, as for durability I wanted it painted in two pack rather than the more traditional cellulose paint. Had I attempted this at home without the correct breathing apparatus I would probably have poisoned myself and half the population of the village.

From the start I intended the car to be modified to go and handle well enough to cope with



Will it be worth it?

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modern traffic like the MGC. I also thought that with the right stage of tune and a better than standard power to weight ratio, the car should perform nearly as well as the C I had previously owned but with a more favourable fuel consumption but alas with less torque. To this avail I set about the rebuild.

First for attention were the front cross member suspension and brakes. Everything was stripped, cleaned and renewed as required. The front springs being replaced with shorter stiffer units, these, in conjunction with a heavier anti roll bar increased front camber poly bushes and 5.5J wheels should enable the car to handle and steer better and hopefully be more durable. At the rear because the axle was quiet and reasonably clonk free I decided to leave well alone apart from cleaning and painting, replacing all seals, gaskets and overhauling the brakes. This would eventually be refitted using new lowered springs on poly bushes with new rear shock absorbers. Next came the engine. Although the car admitted to having done eighty seven thousand miles, the engine ran well, albeit with slightly low oil pressure, but because I wanted better performance this was to be rebuilt. I had the block over bored to give 1892cc, the

crank ground, the flywheel lightened and along with a heavy duty clutch the lot was balanced. I then reassembled it with a better camshaft and followers, new timing gears, oil pump and topped with a big valve gas flowed head. This would then run on SU carbs but with a tubular exhaust manifold.

In October the finished body shell was delivered but with doors, bonnet, boot lid and front valance removed but painted. These panels had to be removed after the trial fit to enable everything to be painted inside and out. My task now started in earnest as I reasoned that to go to Silverstone in June followed by Le Mans in July, the car would have to be running by May in order to get an MOT. be run in and still have time to rectify any faults I might build in!

The first jobs were to fit new a new wiring harness, make the brake pipes, fit the lights, plus all the tiny fittings that hold the lot together each part being either reconditioned or renewed and fitted using new fasteners. As the car was to have one 12v battery and a Facet fuel pump, I mounted the battery in the left hand battery box and the pump and pressure regulator in the right hand box with modified wiring and fuel pipe to suit I made a small additional wiring loom for the overdrive, plus another for a brake fluid level indicator that I required. The dash was stripped and repainted; this took several attempts to get the desired finish. The starter heater and wiper motors were stripped the commutators refitted. brushes checked, repainted where necessary and reassembled. The pedal box and pedals were refurbished, and so the jobs went on. The windscreen was in good order so I decided to leave well alone. Having recovered the top of the dash and refitted the dash and crash roll it was time to refit the screen to the car

I now came to my favourite part of the job, refitting the engine and gearbox, now rebuilt and freshly painted along with overhauled prop shaft, clutch hydraulics, fresh carburettors, new cooling system, and a decent exhaust system. Suddenly the car started to take shape.

It was now April and time seemed to be running out, and although I had run the engine and checked that the gearbox and overdrive worked while the car was still on its stands. I still had to fit the doors, windows and locks etc, fit the bonnet and boot lids, front valance and the interior plus fill the thing with copious quantities of wax oil. All went well until I tried to fit the valance. This is a fireglass replica of a works item, but before the trial fit and painting, I had modified it by removing the outer flanges of the brake ducts to give a smoother



Yes it was.

appearance, plus the inner trunking to prevent the thing from fouling the underneath of the car. With this done it seemed to fit quite well, but now resplendent in a nice coat of paint it wouldn't fit anywhere. After much struggling I came to the conclusion that it was too wide for the car so I cut it in half, took a piece out of the middle and bonded it back together. Then it was back to the painters for take two!! Finally, with Give's help, I managed to end up with a reasonable fit. Also with Give's help the interior was fitted. The original interior was black but to compliment the new green exterior, I had the seats recovered in green leather with matching panels and contrasting green carpet. To finish the job off I acquired a very

nice works hard top in white, which I fitted after a little attention to one side window frame that had become detached from the shell.

It seems that these projects are never quite finished but I now had a car that was complete enough to present for an MOT test, after close scrutiny by the tester all was well and a crisp new certificate was issued. Whew!

Now I could run the car and start to enjoy myself. Of course there were a number of teething problems each of which proved to be a challenge but with patience each was eventually overcome. The target had been achieved we would be able to make Silverstone and go to Le Mans
Keith Allen

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Chairmans Comments

It's mid September and I have just received my copy of *Safety Fast!* and MGE somewhat late but worth waiting for. I note that the club is launching a membership drive and lists all the perceived benefits for the £36 annual fee. I have heard from some non-members and some lapsed members the statement "Why join the club and spend the money when I can get almost all the benefits of membership without joining?". I think this totally misses the point as without members and preferably active members, there would be no club and no register. When you look at all the club offers and realise that it costs just 70p per week or to put it another way the cost of driving just 5 miles in your MGB, it really is good value for money. There are currently around 3500 MGB owners who are members of the MGCC, so if just 10% of you can recruit a new member we really can make a difference.

One of the benefits not listed is *free* membership of the register. I have been told on more than one occasion that the register is only really interested in cars that are restored to original condition, but nothing could be further from the truth. The register exists to maintain a record of all known MGBs in the UK and to promote their use. I personally don't care if your car is restored to concours condition, has been fitted with a Jag V12 engine, sprayed in several shades of purple or had new special upholstery fitted. We on the register committee exist to support you and to encourage you to drive your car in any way or in any event that meets your personal needs. As an example of this, you will note that this year's Focus Day is devoted to tweaking your car for fast road use, from track days, to light competition. One reason for the misunderstanding of the aims of the register may be that most of the articles and photos we get for inclusion in *Safety*

Fast! tend to relate to either restorations or touring. If you have done anything of interest either to or in your MGB then send the info to Roger Boys or John Venables, with pictures and we will probably use them. Remember it's your register.

Finally on the subject of use of MGBs, the Don Bishop trophy for the highest placed MGBs in the California Cup was won both in 2005 and 2006 by a team from the Lincolnshire Centre but due to a failure in communication or to put it another way a right c— up, the trophy was not presented to them and remained locked up at Kimber House. We even failed to acknowledge their success in our notes and I apologise to the team of Nigel Pack, Sheila Lawrence, John Payne and Shane Terry and hope to put things right before next year's event.

Happy MGB Motoring
Bernard Rengger