

Autumn is here and that means that summer has passed. Summer in the UK was a bit of a disappointment. However, poor weather did not stop loads of us hardy souls getting the MGB out and having fun. In fact I have just come in from a 50 mile road run in the Boneshaker using the excuse that Paddy our westie needed a walk. Did we need to go so far for a walk? In truth no, but it was fun.

This month I have to thank our contributors, Richard Gosling for his amusing story about his MGBGT in scruffy and shiny mode, convincing me that it's loved as much as the pristine examples so often featured; Colin Lanning in conjunction with Bernard Rengger investigated the history of The Automatic Choice; Bernard in his role as Chairman has asked for your opinion in his regular column, please respond. Graham Gilmore took time out from preparing his MGB for rallying, to contact me with a short piece on a cure for the Erratic Speedo. Many thanks to you all.

I have the results of the Naff Hat photo competition; I expect you can't wait to know who won. I have to start off by thanking all those who took part. We had fun sorting through the entries, here I am compelled to be honest, there were only



Stoke Club members joining in the Fun



four, perhaps you don't think your hat looks naff. How did we reach a winner? Well it was tough, we thought about using a phone-in but lots of organisations here in the UK have had trouble with this format! So we went for an expert, my Nicky, whose hat featured in the magazine back in May, agreed to adjudicate. It took ages for her to make up her mind, but Paul Bullock with the parrot on his hat got the nod, was this influenced by the fact that Paddy got into the picture? I think so. A special mention must go to the members from Stoke on Trent, great entry but as there was only one MGB Register hat available as the prize, we simply could not disappoint the majority of the people in the picture!

As Christmas is not that far away we have a fun car oriented challenge for you all to attempt.

Enjoy.

CURE FOR ERRATIC SPEEDO

Since acquiring our 1967 BGT three years ago the speedo has always been rather erratic, wavering quite violently at times and this made maintaining a fixed speed on regularity rallies a real problem. Many attempts were made to make sure that the cable was not kinked and that the inner cable did not have any 'flying strands' but despite these efforts we failed to stabilise it.

However, while trying to locate a replacement cable pinion bearing for the overdrive I found a statement on the web indicating that there should be a copper washer, the larger of the two washers on the clutch master cylinder banjo, part no. 3H550, fitted within the retaining nut at the gearbox end. Since fitting this washer our speedo has been far more stable and we have even been able to re-calibrate it and put KPH markings on it using a GPS.

A further piece of advice that I was given is that, at the speedo — head end the inner cable protrusion should be less than 1/2" and of course the end of the cable should be square and not just flattened!

Hopefully this will improve our regularity results but I am not holding my breath!

Graham Gilmore.

MGB THE AUTOMATIC CHOICE

Questions regarding the MGB Automatics are often raised asking, when and where they were made, how many were manufactured and did the majority go overseas, particularly to the USA. As a result of specific queries raised by a member of the Register we did a bit of research and this short article is the result.

An automatic option was offered on the Mark 2 MGBs from late 1967 until August 1973, although no automatics were actually produced until 1968. The gearbox tunnel on the Mark 2s had been widened and a berg-gamer type 35 three speed automatic gearbox could be accommodated. The MGB auto had a rod operated gear shift, unlike early MGC automatics, and was pre fixed 27EA, the

actual gear selector was a very neat unit and had positions for P (park), R (reverse), N (neutral), D (drive), L2 (low gear hold in second) and L1 (low gear hold in first), a detent on the gear selector lever had to be lifted to select R or P as with all automatics an inhibitor switch prevented the car being started whilst in gear. The drive was via a torque converter with a ratio that varied between 2.2:1 and 1:1 different final drive ratios were fitted during the model's life and therefore overall ratios were as follows:

FINAL DRIVE RATIO			
Gear Box Ratio	1968 (18GD engine)	1969 to 1973	
First	2.29 : 1	9.34 : 1	8.84 : 1
Second	1.45 : 1	5.67 : 1	5.36 : 1
Top	1 : 1	3.91 : 1	3.71 : 1
Reverse	2.09 : 1	8.17 : 1	7.33 : 1

Apart from the selector and a small selector illumination lamp fitted to 1968 - 1970 cars, the inside of the car was the same as the manual versions apart from the absence of a clutch pedal and an oversize brake pedal.

During the model life a number of different engines were fitted, all based on their manual equivalent.

Year	Engine Number
1968	18GD-Rc-H101-240
1969 - 71	18GG-Rc-H101-955
1972 - 73 Home	18V583-F-H101-870
1972-73 Export	18V583-Y-H101-870

It is sometimes stated that most of the Automatic MGBs went to the USA, this is not true as according to Anders Clausager's book Original MGB only two cars were

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

In my last Chairman's comments I berated the membership for not responding to requests for help, both in the form of new committee members and in general help in running Register events. I am delighted to report that I have received a number of offers of help, and writing this report at the end of September I am looking forward to welcoming four new committee members at our next meeting which is scheduled for late October.

One of the first tasks of the committee will be to agree an events programme for next year. Over the past few years we have developed a format of a Spring Run, this is already in the planning stage for 2008 with a start in Abingdon and a finish at Broughton Castle near Banbury. Get your entry in quickly as we are definitely limited to 100 cars this year. The popular Register Weekend is in the final stages of planning, it is travelling to Devon this year and bookings are being taken by Colin Lanning on e-mail c.e.lanning@homecall.co.uk We will again be participating in the MGCC Silverstone event, joining our friends in the Midget Register for their Autumn Run and finally in November promoting our popular MGB Focus Day. I would be interested in receiving your thoughts about our planned programme for 2008. Does it meet your needs, what would like to see changed and in particular are there any events that you would like to see included and would you be prepared to get involved in organising?

Please remember that this years Focus Day event will take place in three weeks time on the November 24 2007 and if you have not already booked your place it may be worth contacting Janine Pratt, e-mail Janine.Pratt@btinternet.com to check if any spaces are available, refer to our advert on page 87 in October's *Safety Fast!* for details.

On a wider stage the MGB Register committee has for many years been heavily involved in aspects of the main MGCC event at Silverstone and our involvement has led us to question a number of aspects of the event such as parking by Register. The fact that, after parking your car, everybody disperses to the far corners of Silverstone to either watch or take part in such events as Racing, Autotests or the Sprint event, with not much happening in the center apart from the club marquee, wouldn't it be good to have a central display area, I have observed that this appears to be a successful format. During the summer I have been to a number of County Shows including the Founders Day, run by the Vintage Motor Cycle Club. A feature of all these events was the central parade ring, where a variety of displays took place and was also used, for what can only be described as fun events, designed to entertain. I believe this format added value and made for a more entertaining event, as well as providing something for the family to watch or participate in. I would be interested to hear your views by letter or

e-mail please to renggerbj@tiscali.co.uk I cannot guarantee to respond to all the comments I receive, or necessarily agree with them, but I will promise to summarize them all and pass on to Kimber House.

Tony Roodhouse, 1971 MGB, has reported that he recently fitted new Lockheed pads and discs to his car but within 100 miles a severe squeal developed followed later by a severe judder, he removed the pads chamfered the edges, put more copper slip on the backs and reassembled, squeal and judder had gone but returned after about 100 miles and got progressively worse. Returning from a trip to Europe Tony fitted new pads from a different supplier but left the discs in place, squeal and judder gone and have not returned. Tony would like to know has anybody else had any similar problems? Contact through me please.

Finally, as you will be reading these comments in early November, many of you will be thinking of giving the car a final wash, servicing the car, pumping up the tyres and giving a good squirt of Waxoyl in the chassis members, so let me pay tribute to those hardy souls who use their car throughout the winter. Winter is the time to get round to writing that piece for the MGB Register newsletter about your experiences or at least taking a photo of your car and sending it to Roger Boys. I know you can do it!

Happy MGB motoring
Bernard Rengger

ever sent to the USA, an MGBGT chassis number G-HD5 - UB 222653 - G in 1970 and a Roadster chassis number G-HN5 UB238235 - G in February 1971.

Actual production figures for Auto's are hard to come by but generally quoted figures are

1968 with the 18GD engine	
Roadsters	GTs
12 home	24 home
Two export RHD	10 export RHD
Two export LHD	Two export LHD
36 CKD - Australia	
1969 - 71 with the 18GG engine	
90 home	475 home
10 export RHD	40 export RHD
Seven export LHD	30 export LHD
192 CKD - Australia	
1972 - 73 with the 18V -583 engine	
92 home	603 home
Three export RHD	29 export RHD
Six export LHD	22 export LHD

Very few road tests were carried out but one example exists, in April 1970 when Auto Car reported that performance, including fuel consumption, was very similar to the manual non-overdrive car. When the auto box was first offered as an option the price quoted was £104.

So how many of these cars have survived? Well according to the MGB Register we have the following cars listed:

39 Roadsters of which two have also been converted to have hand controls, two autos have been converted to manual and three are V8 conversions (assume fitted with an auto box from a Rover 3500), 121 GTs of which four have been converted to manual and one converted from manual to automatic. When one considers that we have almost 16,000 cars on the Register you will realise the MGB automatics at around 1 % of the cars on the Register are quite rare.

If you are thinking of either buying an automatic or possibly restoring one, then give our automatics co-ordinator, Colin Lanning a call, telephone number and email address is on our website mgb-register.org and he will be delighted to talk to you about these rare cars. On the other hand if you own or drive an MGB Automatic then why not write a piece for *Safety Fast!* (for more information contact Roger Boys) telling us about why you came to purchase an automatic and how you find driving the car. Finally I must acknowledge the invaluable help and information gleaned from Anders Clausager's book, which remains the definitive bible on everything MGB.



Auto bits on the bench

Interior of Auto

QUIZ WITHOUT A PRIZE

Have a go at this simple quiz it will get you in the mood for Christmas, which is just around the corner! The blanks in the story below represent either a make or model of a car (past or present). There are a number of alternative correct answers, which I am confident you will be able to find given sufficient time. For this reason there is not a prize. Jan will publish the answers we have next month, however if you can't wait that long an e-mail to me will get the solution for you. Enjoy Roger.

It was a day as the playboy with an international reputation drove along the between Cheltenham and He was heading for London with his for the reception and concert.

As he held her hand, he felt the engagement ring he had given her. He recalled some of the conquests that had made him a in his own lifetime. As a school he had been comprising position in Jamaica's Bay with the wife of an American politician. The Republican from in Texas had greeted him with an "..... partner" but had gone for his 45 when he found our hero trying to get his wife into the position.

As he drove towards the concert hall he knew that his attitude to life was over. No longer would he play the wild and make a all the girls he met.

He left her at the stage door. "I am so worried about this performance," she said. "I played so badly at rehearsal this afternoon". "Don't worry. be alright on the night" he replied. "..... and park the car and don't forget to pay the the pay booth" she said.

It was a glittering occasion with a celebrity audience. He had already spotted Alexandra with her daughter Anna and Johnny. His fiancée gave a faultless performance. In fact it was a and was met with universal

In his fiancée's flat, getting supper ready, our hero sensed that there was something wrong. As she took a pie from the the feeling of moving through life together with one seemed to have gone. "It is no good darling" she cried "I could never marry you. Our relationship is a you are too small for me, in fact you are practically a". He walked around the room in a daze, collecting his balls, his copy of James Clavells and his favourite records - Abraxas by and y Espana. Sadly he kissed her goodbye, stepped down into the street and walked into the distant

SCRUFFY AND SHINY

With so many beautifully restored, shiny cars featured in the magazine, I felt a little balance might be beneficial - an article from the "scruffier" end of MG ownership! Not that I don't admire (and am occasionally jealous of) those shiny examples, but for me, restraints of time (being a father of three children between one and seven) and cash tend to focus me more on roadworthiness and reliability, rather than the depth of shine on my distributor housing.

This is the tale of the revival of a 1973 Black Tulip BGT from an 11-year hibernation, from acquisition to first MOT - but first, a little reminiscing, if I may.

10 years ago, my wife (then girlfriend) had recently moved in with me. We therefore needed another car and decided we deserved something nice despite our limited means - the result, a £1900 1973 Black Tulip BGT, our first "old" car. Two days later, without doing any checking-out (foolhardy in retrospect!) we set off on holiday from Norfolk to Dorset - the car repaid our optimistic faith and behaved impeccably!

She was named Sammy (Samantha the Purple Panther) and over the next year-and-a-bit she was our reliable daily transport, my wife and I fighting (amiably of course) over who would get to drive her to work. She took us on several holidays, including our honeymoon in Cornwall. Even our wedding cake was modelled in her image! Then, one sad day, an inattentive pizza delivery driver drove straight into the back of her. The front of his Corsa van was demolished, while the obvious damage to Sammy consisted of... a broken tail light lens. However, a small buckle in the wheel arch told a sadder tale of structural damage and all professional opinion was that Sammy was "beyond economic repair" - and that was the end of her.



Fast-forward to five years ago, with one child and a second on the way, we move to Scotland, just north of Aberdeen. I'm driving Daffy, a yellow Spitfire that replaced Sammy, still as a daily driver. In the driveway close to our house we notice... a rather scruffy-looking Black Tulip BGT apparently identical to Sammy. With Black Tulip only used for one year (1973) this is an unusual coincidence. It gives me occasional nostalgic thoughts when I glance at it over the next few years, but I don't think much about it. In the meantime, Daffy the Spitfire succumbs to the sea air and Grampian climate and is declared rusty beyond hope of repair - I finally admit defeat and buy a "modern" car as my daily runabout (if a 16-year-old Audi can be called "modern").

Two years ago, I was glancing at the Classic Cars section of our local free ads paper and I spot an advert for a 1973 Black Tulip BGT - Wow, I think, just like Sammy! Then I notice the phone number, it's local: it has to be that one in the road behind us. It was too much fate to resist, so I go and take a look. It turns out the guy bought it a few years previously, planning to do it up for his wife, but



he never got around to it. It'd clearly been off the road much longer - the tax disk read 1994. One sill was destroyed by rust, but the rest of the bodywork showed no more than occasional surface rust. The engine would not turn over fast enough to start, even with jump leads. However, fortunately the seller never even started the restoration, so the car was complete and all in one piece.

I knew that I, quite certainly, had neither time nor money even to maintain an old car, let alone bring one like this back from the dead. But I told myself that, if I kept her safe and dry in my workshop, she'd get no worse, I could tinker occasionally and some time in the future I'd get her back on the road. I was counting on my wife to talk some sense into me, but she too was touched by nostalgia for Sammy and failed completely to talk me out of it. Given the condition and unknown state of the mechanicals, I persuaded my neighbour to sell her to me for next to nothing and she was trailered back to my workshop.

Of course, I couldn't resist tinkering with her whenever I got the chance. I hit some luck - a new pair of batteries proved that the only engine problem was no power to turn her over, with some new spark plugs the engine fired right up on the first turn of the key. Good oil pressure, good compression on all cylinders - I'd got me a good engine! Later tests proved that the gearbox, O/D and diff were all sound, so I was saved of any major mechanical rebuilds.

The one thing I can't do myself is bodywork, so I got a local shop I'd used before to replace the bad sill and paint up a second-hand wing I acquired off Ebay. Ebay supplied several other parts cheaper than any suppliers price-list, as well as a little extra funds: I sold the fitted (period, but not original) non-working radio and the original steering wheel - I prefer a slightly smaller wheel and still had the Mountney that I'd originally fitted to Sammy lurking in my big box o' bits.

The target was to get her to running, reliable, MOT-worthy standard, but with particular attention paid to the brakes - however tight the budget you don't skimp on brakes! So she got new disks, pads, master cylinder, servo, rear cylinders and adjusters, rebuilt callipers and new braided hoses. One thing I discovered which is not in anything I've ever read - if you get air in the servo, it's impossible to bleed it out. The fitting instructions for the new servo gave the clue why - the instructions (not MGB-specific) stated that it should be mounted with the air valve at the bottom, and pointing up at 25-45°. In the MGB it is mounted horizontally, with the air

valve at the top. Air gets trapped in the hydraulic passage to this air valve and so can't bleed out. The solution - dismount the servo while leaving the brake lines connected, carefully (so you don't damage the lines) rotate it so the air valve is at the bottom, bleed, then turn back again and re-mount. Finally, a problem that had been eluding me for months of occasional tinkering, resolved!

Apart from renewing the brakes and the aforementioned bodywork, there was little to challenge me. A few electrical glitches were sorted by replacing failed bullet connectors and fixing some previous-owner bodes, a new flexible hose to the oil pressure gauge and a new rocker cover gasket sorted the oil leaks, a re-conditioned shock absorber was needed on one corner, with the rest of the car just needing a thorough service. Although some service items weren't as easy as they should be - I expended a lot of time and many swear words trying to remove a stubborn diff oil filler plug!

As I fully expected, she failed her MOT at the first attempt. What was more surprising was that the only failure point was the screen wash pump, which was a bit feeble - £10 for a new pump and she sailed through, albeit with comments about fogginess around the edge of the windscreen, which must be starting to delaminate...

So, what to call our new beauty? I favoured Nancy - a convoluted reason: Black Tulip is a shade of deep purple, and the band Deep Purple had a song "Strange Kind of Woman", about a woman called Nancy. However my wife favoured Sammy II, and since it is important she remains enthusiastic about the whole project, her wishes prevailed and Sammy II it is!

She has been regularly (not daily, but at least weekly) driven ever since and remains, compared to many MGs, a scruffy car. The paintwork is covered in chips and micro-scratches, although T-Gut (and a LOT of elbow grease) has transformed it from the faded, matt appearance she had to start with. The interior has had a good clean and a Hoover, but will always retain some stains and a part-worn appearance. The black paint on the dash is chipped and the switches look faded. There are occasional bubbles of rust under areas of the paintwork. The chrome bumpers are pitted and rusty. The engine bay is black with dirty grease - which I will leave there, as it acts as a rustproof! But I keep her running and reliable. Since I do now have an alternative car to drive, she is saved from the worst of the Grampian seaside climate, but she is *driven* any day that the weather forecast is favourable!

Richard Gosling