

Christmas has passed and you will want to know what the Boneshaker (1964 MGB) received from Santa Claus! Well among Nicky's gifts was a small parcel, which was sent to her by Yvonne McPhillips from PJM Motors (01630 652873) and it turned out to contain a kit designed to cover the cockpit rail! Why you may ask, well during the MGB Focus Day, Yvonne demonstrated how to fit one of these at my request. This was because we had tried to complete this task. We finished with glue all over the place, loads of wrinkles in the leather cloth, and on route to the divorce courts. However, when the professionals completed the same task it was made to look easy, as demonstrated at the MGB Focus Day.

If you missed the Focus Day in November you missed a real treat. The theme could have been trade secrets, as Danny Walters (MGB Technical Expert) demonstrated how to service the rear brakes and replace the wheel bearing without having to remove the back plates and wheel cylinders. Then it was on to replacing the universal joints on the prop shaft. Whilst this unit was off the car he showed the audience how the oil seal could be changed. The whole audience were able to see exactly how this was done because



Big screen at the MGB Focus Day. Photo:- John Watson.

we were able to link up a video camera and project the pictures onto a large screen; the photo clearly shows this in action. The group of 60 enthusiasts attending were split into two parties, enabling one group to learn the secrets of upholstering the seats of a GT along with the famous cockpit rail. Yvonne and Danny gave us so many trade secrets during the day that I am confident that everyone who attended could complete the tasks demonstrated. As it was a practical demonstration there is not a detailed write-up that can be put on to the website.

This month I am grateful to Bernard for his Chairman's Notes as usual. A further contribution, which I am sure will elicit comments, is from David De Saxe on the spares you should have in your boot, just in case. We go racing with Team Slap My Top! - Peter Bramble explains the unusual name. Geoff Hulme tells us about his automatic MGB, what is the cup he is holding, could it be the 2006/7 Premier League Trophy, won by Manchester United? I hope you will find an interesting read. Enjoy your MG.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

In a previous Chairman's Comments I reported a problem of brake judder experienced by Tony Roodhouse. Tony thought he had cured the problem by switching to a different make of brake pads but after a short while the problem re-appeared. When checking the front wheels Tony felt a very slight movement on the spindle, he tried to take up any slack on the castellated nut but the next position left the hub too tight so he had to resort to shims to eliminate any movement, the end result being that the judder has gone and so far has not re-appeared.

The common thread for the rest of these comments is time for change. Our events programme has for many years consisted of the Cotswold Spring Run, followed by the Register weekend, MG Silverstone, the Autumn Midget run and then Focus Day. For 2008 we hope to add some new events, the first being a joint venture with MGs on track. We have joined forces with them to run a session (giving up to 90 minutes of track time) at

Castle Combe on September 8 solely for four-cylinder road going MGBs. The cost will be a very competitive £125 per car, look at our website or the MGs on track website for booking details but as places will be limited to just 12 cars you had better not delay.

Next change of note relates to Regalia, for more years than most of us can remember Colin and Doreen Lanning have run this very efficiently, but now they are moving to France. I would like on behalf of the Committee to thank them for their contribution to the Register over the years.

With immediate effect therefore all orders for items from our **clothing range** should be sent to:-

Roger Cooper
74 Great Bowden Road
Market Harborough
LE16 7DG

The mail order facility for all other items of regalia, badges, pens, mugs, books etc is suspended with immediate effect. These items will for the time being only be

available from the register desk at Silverstone or similar events. As mentioned by Janine Pratt in her December *Safety Fast!* notes she referred to the big discounts currently available on our clothing range. We hope to announce a revised range and a new ordering procedure in the near future.

Finally a personal gripe, sections of the motoring press appears to be full of stories of the **new MGs** to be made in China. Am I **the only person** who deplores the dramatic **drop** in **UK** manufacturing and the seemingly unstoppable rise of 'Made in China' **which will** soon include the once great **British marque** MG? I am sure there are as **many people** out there who disagree with **me as agree** with me. But at least we still **have the** freedom in this country to express **our views**, which cannot be said for many **places in the world**.

I will now close with what is probably a totally **politically** incorrect statement by wishing **you all** great motoring in 2008 in your **good old** British made MGBs.
Bernard **Rengger**

WHAT'S IN YOUR BOOT!



I must have been out of my mind when, for the benefit of readers of these columns, I said I'd tabulate a list of the bits and pieces you might think of carrying in the boot of your B. Why out of my mind? Well, if anything's going to prompt howls of derision (*what on earth would I need that for? or why in Heaven's name didn't he include an X or a roll of Y?*), it's some chap's smug assumption that he knows best about a subject even the least practical B owner would be aware of. But I told Roger I'd do it and so, here are my suggestions.

The objective is to design a kit of those bits and pieces that, in 90% of breakdowns, will get you back on your way without need of recourse to the fourth emergency service. Obviously, neither you nor I can cater for the terminal or near-terminal mishap. I know chaps who keep such things as hub pullers and spare half-shafts in their boot, not to mention a hefty trolley jack. Well, if yours is a Roadster with the removable hood and irons, where's the partner going to put her pretty clothes for the evening, her make-up kit, rollers and all that stuff? Where indeed! This is about what you need to keep you rolling.

So here goes. I'm assuming you have the basics the car came with, like a wire wheel hammer, if appropriate. I've divided my list into five sections:

- Spares (these are largely electrical. *Did you know that the great majority of breakdowns are ignition-related or caused by electrical faults?*)
- Tools
- Dry Consumables
- Liquid Consumables Literature
- Body Care (yours, not the car's)

Spares

Fuel pump (*bench test it periodically using a spare battery*)

Cooling system hoses - full set, including a decent length of heater hose

Length of braided petrol pipe

Fan belt

Distributor cap

Contact set

Condenser

Rotor arm

Sparking plugs (*two will do - it's very rare they all break down at once*)

HT cable (*at least enough to replace the coil lead and the longest plug lead*)

Length of LT cable (*lots of it: I recommend lengths of two different resistances, so you can fix both high and low current carrying circuits*)

Electrical connectors - a small selection

Fuses (*the B's fuse box has spaces for a couple of these, so see these are in place and shove a couple more 35/17amp ones in your kit*)

Bulbs (*full set, with at least two flasher bulbs*)

Flasher unit

Wiper blade

Head gasket set (*keep it under the seat*)

Tools

Tool roll I know you have one, but make sure it's really comprehensive, and don't forget to include a hammer and a hacksaw for emergencies.

Socket set (*really top quality, and possibly a dual one, because you're bound to come across a rounded nut or bolt head that you can get a metric socket onto where the proper imperial size won't touch it*).

Jack (bottle type - works well anywhere and take up less space. Include a short length of hardwood to spread the load where necessary).

Multimeter

Circuit tester (*one of those with an alligator clip at one end and a sharp point at the other, with an integral bulb*).

Battery booster cables (*think about leaving these out, as other cars likely to provide the assist have their battery in the wrong place and the cables won't reach!*).

Length of wood - say 12" x 1" square that you can use for (a) listening for the source of funny engine noises and (b) placing on top of something that needs smacking with a hammer that it would be unwise to wallop directly with any sort of blunt instrument.

Consumables (dry)

Jubilee clip selection

Fixings (a good selection of screws, bolts, nuts and washers. I always keep each bolt ready for use with a plain and spring washer and nut threaded on).

Split pins

S U carburettor seal and washer selection

Roll of strong wire (*for holding things together that can't be mended at the roadside*).

Insulating tape

Duct tape

Emery paper

Consumables (liquid)

A litre of your favourite engine oil

Penetrating oil (*e.g. WD40 or similar*).

Brake fluid

Araldite (*I once stuck most of another bloke's TD together with this stuff*).

Tube of silicone RTV

Literature (*this goes under the other seat!*)

Workshop manual

Parts book

Body Care

Barrier cream - small tub. Or latex gloves

Hand cleanser - small tub.

Loo paper (*you never know*)

And don't forget to stuff some old rags in odd corners. Apart from the obvious use, they stop things rattling. Look, I know what you're saying. Where's the partner going to put? But I promise you the above bits will fit into a couple of biscuit tins plus two or three of those nice tins that presentation whisky bottles come in, and there'll still be room for the flat things, tool kit, socket set and the jack. Don't breakdown please, comments to Roger!

David De Saxe

Racing with TEAM SLAP MY TOP



Best driven with eyes closed!

TEAM SLAP MY TOP! is named after the unofficial website of the BBC Radio Two early morning DJ, Alex Lester. As I work some silly shifts in the early hours of the morning, I have listened to him on a regular basis, so I began to send him all my race reports, which he then broadcasts to the world (or the three people who are awake at that time in the morning). Does that include you?

My race car is a 1966 MGB Roadster in which I try to compete in the Cockshoot Cup. This car evolved from several cars. It started as a standard MGB GT, which in 1999 competed in a few rallies and then it was prepared to compete in the MGCC Speed Championship with varying success, eventually finishing third in class. That winter the GT was prepared for racing by Entune 2000 (08700 278378). During this first year we did not compete very well, as the car was uncompetitive, but it gave me valuable experience of the race tracks.

The following year I was offered a Roadster body shell, which along with numerous secondhand parts, this stash was used to build a second race car, incorporating this time as many lightweight parts as I could lay hands on. The original GT became a road car once again for a short while until it met an unmoveable object.

The completed roadster came out to play in 2001 with a standard engine, which

meets the Cockshoot Cup regulations at Oulton Park. It proved much faster than the GT but still lacked pace compared to other competitors. For this reason, we competed for the year in the Total Butler race series, where it was much more suited. I was enjoying these races until in very hot weather conditions at Silverstone my luck ran out. At the time I did not realise that my car was in trouble, because I was very close to the car in front and I thought the smoke entering my cockpit was his. It was only when he began to pull rapidly away from me that I realised that I was in trouble. Number four piston had melted and put parts of itself into the head. The engine was rebuilt to finish the season, more expense!

More success came the following year when I was able to finish third in class, despite having to survive a spectacular crash at Brands Hatch, where I hit two other cars at Paddock Hill bend. More expense this time for body work repairs. Despite this set back and experiencing some problems with reliability, we did manage to gain considerable experience. At the end of the season we had our usual debrief and it was decided to move back to the Cockshoot Cup and run in class B, which is road going modified class.

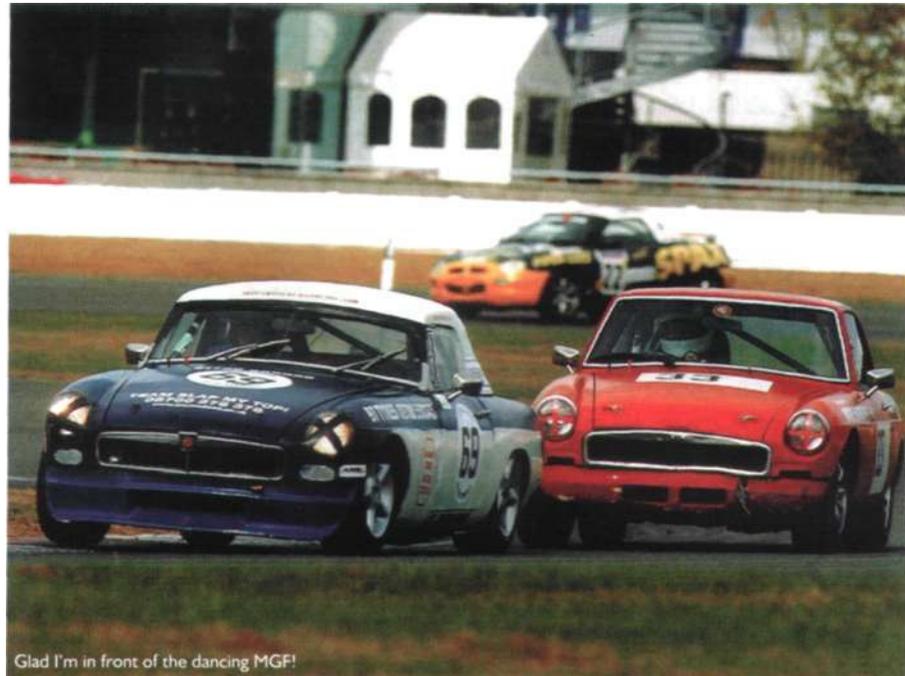
We are now in 2007 and the Cookshoot Cup is my target. It has been an enjoyable year with plenty of ups and a few downs. Before I tell you about these,

let's have a look at the race car in detail. At the start of the season the specification of the car is as follows. The wings front and rear are fibreglass, with the rear ones having just been fitted after a crash at this year's Silverstone International. The doors are cut down with homemade alloy outer skins, the bonnet is alloy from an old GT the boot lid is fibreglass with an ST spoiler fitted, and there is also a ST front valence. As we don't run with a cooling fan at all, there is some fancy ducting at the front of the car to direct cold air to the radiator. The engine has been rebuilt with lots of expensive shiny bits and a custom head from Chris Grooves, this I'm not allowed to touch. We use a 48 Weber carburettor which has its own trunking to funnel cold air to it. The gearbox is a standard four syncro with a competition overdrive. The back axle is a banjo type fitted with a 4.1 differential. The front brakes are V8 discs and callipers with Blackhawk pads, which do seem to stop the car very well. The rear brakes are standard with smaller wheel cylinders. The suspension consists of lowered springs all around with a panhard rod on the rear axle. The hardtop is fibreglass with the signatures of Kilsby MGCC club members on it.

A number of incidences occurred during this season which, when I reflect on them, is why I enjoy racing so much. On one occasion we were travelling to Silverstone from Manchester the night before a race, when on the M40 we managed to lose two wheels from the trailer. We realised this when a shower of sparks shot from the trailer, scattering the following traffic. I managed to find one wheel and started to refit it. Whilst I did that I sent Jeannette down the motorway to look for the other wheel. Being a gentleman I gave her the torch and a yellow jacket. It was then that we discovered that we weren't covered by the RAC; hence we had to pay to be recovered to Silverstone, eventually arriving at 3:00 am. We were up at 7:00 am and after signing on we set off to Northampton to find a scrapyard to purchase two wheels and brake drums for the trailer. A friend put the car through scrutining for me. We arrived back with just time to get changed and get ready for

qualifying. I didn't do well in qualifying and was near the rear of the grid. However, afterwards we had to spend time rebuilding the trailer. I forgot to refuel the car, remembering only when I was on the grid waiting to start. I had a terrible start, but after the first couple of corners I started to overtake people in my class and was soon in third place. On the penultimate lap I caught the second place car up, and as we entered Luffield, there was a MGF that we were both about to lap. The MGF moved over to let us pass but only I managed the manoeuvre as its position blocked the other driver. I was through to second in class. I eventually crossed the finish line on fumes. In the *pare ferme* the car has to be weighed and we were disqualified for being two kilograms underweight. That would have been the fuel that should have gone in the tank. Just a perfect day!

A second example of the enjoyment was this year at Silverstone International. We went out for *free* practice on Friday and after one red flag incident in the same practice I was hit in the rear by a V8. It was put back on the road with some help from my friends wielding big hammers. I was entered for the single driver race on the Saturday and the car went well, I qualified second in my class. I made a good start and was going well, until after a yellow flag, the rest of the class caught up with me and I was involved with another car and my wheel arch was damaged, fouling the tyre. End of the race for me! That was another night spent with hammers, eventually we were able to get to the beer tent to dance the night away. Sunday was my Cockshoot championship race and it was wet. The MG Metros shared this practice session, all went well until lap four, when, while going down the main straight, the car aquaplaned and went off at an angle of 45 degrees towards the concrete wall. I know this wall well, I've hit it before, but last time was backwards. Fortunately I bounced off the wall and managed to nurse the car round and complete the lap. At the time I didn't know if I'd completed the three laps I needed to qualify. The nearside wheel was at a strange angle, as we were short of time, and as there was no visible damage we simply adjusted the tracking and hoped for the best. A friend went to collect the times and I was in pole position for our



championship and seventh overall behind the Metros. The warm-up lap started and one of the Metros spun off at the Ireland corner, rejoining us before Abbey. When the red lights went off and we were away, that is except for one of the Metros, which stalled, I was blocked in, allowing Ian Witt to speed past me. As I approached Copse there were Metros spinning everywhere; one of them had taken out Ian, how I missed everybody I simply don't know. This incident put me back in front, but there was a slight problem; the nearside rear tyre was fouling the wheel arch on right hand bends, the smoke and fumes were entering the cockpit. Somehow I managed to hold on to the lead and nurse it to the finish in a shortened race.

The rest of this season progressed well with the Team finishing second in all the races, resulting with an exciting situation for the final race at Silverstone; I was one of five drivers who could win the championship. This meeting did not start well because I filled the car with diesel on the Friday night before the race. We usually use Shell Optimax but I had to use a BP garage and there I discovered that there is a diesel version of Ultimate. This I did not discover until practice. The car surprisingly did actually run to scrutining and back and completed almost one lap of practice. At first we thought it was an electrical problem and we changed everything we

could. However, on checking the fuel flow, Paul Tainton, one of my crew, said "this smells funny" and tried to burn it. Then we discovered it was diesel, a major panic to clean the fuel lines, filters and tank. Eventually, thankfully, we were ready to race, the effort of all involved was worth it. Well after I'd seen the clerk of the course and he had stopped laughing, I had to start at the back of the grid, but was determined to do my best for the team. I had a good start; some cruel people said too good. I managed to fight my way through the field and after a good tussle with Alan Bates I finished second. This result, second in class, meant that we had achieved third overall in the Cockshoot Championship for the season. The car had proved to be reliable, we were all elated and the hard work had paid off.

As driver, my role is simply to point the car in the right direction, but there is no doubt that we would not have had any success without the tremendous support of my loyal sponsors to whom I am so grateful; Entune 2000, (08700 278378), Revolution Driver Recruitment of Rugby (01788 575350), BT Tyres of Rugby (01788 550045) and also the natter members at Kilsby who have listened to all my stories and provide loads of encouragement.

Peter Bramble

MGB

MGB AUTOMATICS

Following the most interesting article in "*Safety Fast!*" concerning the Automatic MGB here is my story; I have a 1973 Automatic Roadster in Mallard Green, which I have owned for eight years.

In 1953, when I was a young man, I started work at Cockshoots in Manchester, who were distributors for Rolls Royce, Bentley, Morris and MG. By the time the MGA was announced, I was Trade Sales Manager for their Southern Area. I drove the first MGA in Manchester, a red one with the registration SNC 4. It created enormous interest and had a very hard life, as everyone who took it for a test drive tried to see the magic 100mph. Did it survive I wonder? In 1957 I was tempted into industry but when the MGB was introduced to replace the MGA, I bought in 1966, a new one; MG was in the blood.

By 1970, I was having trouble with my left knee and hip, so accepted a company car, a Jaguar automatic and have always had automatics since then. I retired in 1987 and my wife died in 1997. A friend persuaded me to join the local club for classic cars, although I did not have a suitable car. I thought it would be very hard to find a classic automatic, but when I was given the name of a Derbyshire



MG dealer I amazingly found he had been asked to try to sell an automatic MGB. It had been restored regardless of cost including a Heritage body. After a short test run, I grabbed the car, knowing that the chances of finding another in such beautiful condition were remote.

My two girls paid for me to join the MGCC and I went to the local meeting where I was made most welcome. My car is well used for club runs and is shown in local charity events, where it has won numerous prizes and always attracts great interest. It is a joy to drive, as the strong low-down torque of the "B" engine is perfectly suited to the auto gearbox (unlike some modern cars!). In traffic, it trickles along effortlessly, but has tremendous response when the road is clear. As my regular cars have always been performance

cars I have a good base for comparison.

The car has given very little trouble during the time I have owned it. It's important to remember that the battery must always be 100%, as automatics cannot be push-started. One snag is that the switch, which operates the reversing light in all MGBs, is also used as the inhibitor switch for the auto box to prevent starting in gear. This switch is fitted in the side of the gearbox in a very inaccessible position and is tricky to adjust. I found that my reversing lights were staying on all the time and sometimes the starter would not operate in "Park", but getting to the switch was almost impossible. Also, I never use the "kick-down", as I think it is a terrible strain to change gear with the throttle wide open. It is perfectly easy to use the box like a manual and to change down on a long descent or when on twisty roads to hold the very usable middle ratio. Fuel economy seems to be very similar to the manual version, but the car does seem to run better on the higher octane Shell petrol.

I have had numerous offers from people wanting to buy the car, but love it too much; therefore it will stay with me.

Geoff Hulme