



Hello, is there anyone out there reading this? I ask because I was anticipating some feedback after the last four page entry in February, following the article by David De Saxe. He wrote concerning what spares and tools were carried in your boot and we thought that this would be contentious. But there was no reaction be it positive or negative, nothing, not one email, letter or phone call. Does that indicate that no one cares or that there are no readers?!

We have a varied selection of articles for you this month. David De Saxe has written concerning carburettor piston springs. A timely warning and advice comes from Brian Osborn on fuel pumps. Alan Moore is looking for some information from you. Bernard has chipped in as usual with his Chairman's comments. Judy Gold has completed her BEE story; John Ford shares his auto chat with us. I hope you find something to interest you. Thanks to all of the contributors, your efforts are appreciated.

So, what have Team Boys been doing since we last reported? Spring is on its way here in Britain and there are clear signs that our countryside is waking up. Our MGB 'The Boneshaker' has been out a few times on the brighter days.

The first trip was to try and find the cause of a strange tinkling noise coming from the front of the car. My first diagnosis was that it was emanating from the disc pads chattering on the pistons. I spent some time cleaning the front discs and reassembled them, carefully putting some copper slip on the backs of the pads. I set out on the test drive, after 10 miles all seemed to be OK. However, on the way home as I came to a stop, the tinkling noise returned, bother! Try fitting some new front brake pads was the advice I received, this seemed to be a positive suggestion and just about within my level of competence. Sadly after I had completed this task the noise was still there. While I was standing scratching my head wondering what to do next my pal Alan came round. "You look a bit flustered," he said so I explained my predicament and to illustrate the point we

what the problem was. Sure enough it was still there but we realised that the noise only occurred when breaking to an actual stop. Desperate to eliminate as many alternatives as possible we tried turning the engine off and breaking to a stop, it was then that we noticed the noise went away, How can that be? It was eventually diagnosed as the starter dog running up

the shaft and just touching the flywheel as the nose of the car went down under breaking, would you believe that,

It was then that I remembered I had had a new starter motor fitted last summer. So I took the car back to Manor Garage in Wantage and explained the situation. Richard gave me a quizzical look but agreed to come out on a test drive. Yes, it did exactly as I had said, so it was back to the workshop and straight up on the ramp, the starter motor was removed and as Richard took out the starter, the 'dog' fell off. When inspected on the bench it was discovered that the starter had not been assembled correctly. A new starter motor was fitted and all was well,

The trip back from Wantage was most enjoyable, the car was repaired, it was a beautiful cold day with a clear blue sky, the route contained sweeping bends and the

stopped on the Wiltshire downs for Paddy the Westie to have a walk and I took the photograph of an interesting Water Tower and the Boneshaker, which I hope will become the cover picture for *Safety Fast!*

That's enough of my prattle enjoy your MG as much as I enjoy mine. ;&

Roger

## CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Writing these comments the day after our AGM I can update you with the changes to the committee. Colin and Doreen Lanning who have been committee members-for many years and worked very hard in a number of areas stood down, as previously reported I am sure we all wish them well in their move to France, Steve and Marie Linsey have volunteered to take over the Regalia role; however, the departure of Colin and Doreen once again leaves the committee under strength but trying to find a positive note the opportunity now exists for new blood to join the committee, so if you would like to be more involved and are prepared to attend four meetings per year held in Abingdon (usually on a Sunday morning) and are prepared to help out organising events, then call me: 01858 43127 or e-mail: [renggerbj@fiscali.co.uk](mailto:renggerbj@fiscali.co.uk) Other changes of note are that Neil Hyett takes over from John Watson as Vice Chairman, John remains as Council rep and as committee member responsible for the website, I am also pleased to report that a new name, Colin Hames-Goodey, has agreed to be our Jubilee/LE co-ordinator, for contact details go to our website under both Contacts and the Jubilee/LE section.

You should be reading these comments early May and therefore MGCC Silverstone is only six weeks off. This event is a major focus for the MGB Register Committee and again offers a great opportunity for members to get involved for a couple of hours or so either helping to run the register car park on the Saturday/Sunday morning or helping out on the Register stand during Friday, Saturday or Sunday. If any of you or your wives/partners are willing to lend a hand we would welcome the help, again, call or e-mail me.

I mentioned in my last comments that we were trying to develop new events this year, the MGs on track / MGB Register session at Castle Coombe on September 8 is now almost fully booked but I would encourage you to come along anyhow, you may be able to hitch a ride in the passenger seat of an entrant but just attending will let you see what these track days are all about and will give you a chance to plan your active participation in 2009. Another new event (or more accurately a favourite event from the past re born) is the MGB Register Summer picnic planned to coincide with the Duxford Classic Car and Motor Bike day on August 10, full details of all our events are on our website [www.mgb-register](http://www.mgb-register) or come to our Register stand at Silverstone and we will be happy to tell you more.

I think that's about it for now, members of the committee look forward to meeting you at Silverstone, if you go then do make sure you come to the MGB Register stand in the main marquee and say hello.

Happy MGB motoring.

Bernard Rengger

## SU CARBURETTOR PISTON SPRINGS

I have to admit to the most sketchy knowledge of these items, but I've a nasty feeling they're there for a purpose. Moreover, they're not all the same. In other words, just any old spring in your SU pot isn't good enough.

All I know is I've got one in each of my MGB carburetors. They look identical, and they probably are. Mine aren't coloured though, and what grabbed my attention when leafing through the data section of my workshop manual was that these springs are supposed to be red. (I think it's just the top or bottom coil that's painted).

I also think that colour differentiation has to do with the weight required fully to compress a spring of a given colour marking, implying that controlling the rate (and degree?) of piston rise may be critical.

In my various treatises on jet needle experimentation for MGAs and Bs (one of these articles now appears on the MGB website) I have, in my ignorance, overlooked the spring compression aspect of SU carburettor performance.

What I would dearly like is for some knowledgeable person out there (Danny, are you reading this?) to tell us all about the various springs available and if we should be experimenting with these, too, in our attempt to optimise performance.

David De Saxe

## FUEL PUMPS - A CAUTIONARY TAIL

Over recent years there have been several questions from MG folk about the advisability of moving the fuel pump on an MGB from under the right rear wheel arch to a more accessible and kinder location in the boot. Not sure if anyone came up with a satisfactory answer, but let me recount a little tail from the 60s.

In the early 1960s I worked for a short time at the SU Carburettor Company, in Wood Lane, Birmingham. Whilst there, a report came from Longbridge of a problem with the Austin 1800 saloon (the Land Crab). Apparently two of them were being driven (at different times) along the road when there was a big bang and the boot (trunk) lid was fired backwards several hundred yards. Fortunately there was nobody within firing distance, but obviously this was rather unsatisfactory and the customers weren't very happy either.

Most 1800s had an SU electric fuel pump mounted in the boot, although some might have been fitted with the mechanical pump, (which still has a mounting on the 1800 B series engines as used in MGBs). It could be that they reverted to the mechanical pump whilst the problem was sorted. Anyway, it was found that petrol vapour had escaped from the fuel pump into the boot and then after a while with the fuel pump contact breaker sparking away in a confined space - bang!

The pumps were modified, by adding a vent to the diaphragm and also to the contact breaker cover. These were then piped to the exterior of the boot and - problem solved. For ease of production, all later HP pumps were manufactured to the same design. Hence, all but the earlier MGBs should have had a pump with vents. The contact cover vent was piped into the boot. I am unable to remember where the diaphragm vent went because I moved mine years ago.

Therefore, it should be OK to mount a vented SU HP pump in the boot as long as the vents are piped away. The easiest way is to just use the existing plastic tubes and fittings in reverse, with perhaps something over the outer end to stop it getting blocked by muck. In theory, if you have changed to a solid state SU type pump there shouldn't be any sparks, but vent it anyway. If using a Facet pump, there aren't any vents, but a lot more noise even when on the rubber mounts. At least you can hear if it's working.

While you're at it, insert a switch in the 12v supply to the pump. If this is mounted in a hidden spot under the dash (say), it becomes a useful safety and security device. An MGB will run about 1/4 of a mile on the level on a float chamber(s) of fuel. Not too far to walk if it's nicked.

Brian Osborn

## IS THERE A HAPPY ENDING!

Over the past couple of months, the committee members have been involved in scanning the hundreds of photographs, which are held as part of the MGB Register of cars. The plan, yet to be completely worked out, is to place them onto a secure Internet site to enable members to browse through them and add to the collection at their leisure. The scanning is quite a big job as there are approximately 2,000 pictures held in large A4 ring binders, but it whiles away some time during the dark afternoons of the winter, and is enjoyable in this way as you get the opportunity to look at members' pride and joy from all over the world.

Some of course appear more interesting than others because there is a story just begging to be told. One such is the car pictured here, as you can see it is being rescued from a ditch or a bam by being dragged unceremoniously out by a tractor. The second picture shows it now happily tied onto a trailer ready to be taken to a new home. It has been rescued and adopted, but what happened to it and where is it now? Having told the start of the story we now all want to know if there is a happy ending. But is there a happy ending or was the car a basket case and therefore destined for the breakers yard? Hopefully we will be able to find out and tell the world of MGB; the final episode in the drama is coming to your magazine, with luck in August.

Roger



Out of the ditch at last!



On the way to a new life!

## MORE AUTO CHAT

Roger, as a follow up to your article on the Automatic MGB, here is my story.

Unlike many contributors to *Safety Fast!* I cannot claim any great pedigree in matters appertaining the MG marque. Back in the mid-60s I did obtain regular exercise push-starting my younger brother in his 1929 'M' type Midget UV 7468 literally up and down the garden path. My own automotive skills did not prosper but the pushing was good training for 25 years spent in the front row of the rugby scrum.

Fast-forward 40 odd years when I decided to purchase an MGB GT, a natural consequence being to become a member of the MG Car Club. An MGB will be a good investment I told my increasingly quizzical lady-friend. It is a good line if not completely original.

So, as far as I was concerned, the search began. I was looking for a good clean MGB

GT, which did not require lots of work. However, nothing is ever that straightforward. Visiting a friend south of Bristol revealed a red MGB roadster parked by the side of the road with a tantalising For Sale sign in the window. At first I steeled myself to walking past but eventually I succumbed to temptation and gave it the now familiar once-over. The bodywork of PGJ 404L appeared in fairly good order with a nearly new hood, walnut dash and Minilites. But a look through the window revealed a revelation. An automatic gearshift! I have seen the occasional automatic GT advertised for sale but never a Roadster. This must be a rare car!

Test drive soon arranged, the car seemed to handle very well, a fairly thick file revealed the very considerable expenditure by the owner and his wife over the last 27 years. "What's your lowest price?" Seemed reasonable to me. Handshake and the car

## BRASH FLASHER

Surely, many of you must have the same problem as me?! No, not that one; the problem is that I can't hear the flasher unit clicking on my MGB. I know you also have this difficulty, because I occasionally see you driving along for ages indicating that you will be turning eventually.

The indicators are, of course, self-cancelling, but if the turning just negotiated is not sharp enough, the self-cancelling device doesn't work. Then, if you are enjoying a typical glorious sunny MG day with the hood down, the sunlight obscures the flasher warning light on the dashboard. Then, if you can't hear the flasher unit because of wind and traffic noise, the indicators carry on working; indefinitely.

This is clearly not advisable and can be downright dangerous, especially when other drivers take your spurious indication at face value, assume that you are about to turn left, and pull out in front of you.

So the question is, where can I get a brash flasher? That is, one which makes much more noise. Does anyone know?

Alan Moore



Alan turned in safely without hearing the indicator. Photo: Roger Boys.

was mine. Until recently I have not been a great fan of automatic transmission in my car, let alone a sports car, since I do not feel in complete control of the vehicle. But there is no doubt that the automatic 'B' is a delightful little car to drive.

One question mark arose quite early on. The gearbox did not seem to change up into third, under normal acceleration, at a speed commensurate with economy. The answer it seems is to lift one's right foot at the appropriate speed when the box will change up. This has a downside in that when approaching a bend one (naturally?) eases off the throttle when the car will change up as it enters the corner. The answer, presumably, is to keep one's foot down! I have not covered a big enough mileage to be concerned as to the MPG figures but would think these differ little from the standard GT. When changing from Drive to Reverse and vice versa there is sometimes a bit of a clunk

from the transmission but no more so than with other automatic cars I have driven or ridden in.

The engine seems to require very little choke. On tickover there is little or no creep, indeed the throttle has to be given a little blip to get the thing to move but after that response is perfectly adequate. Indeed

the car accelerates very well. A previous engine rebuild included fitting a Piper 270 camshaft but I have to say that I have no idea what effect this would have on performance.

At the moment (February 2008) the car is on SORN since I have no intention of using it in the wet and I must attend to slight

rust problems around one headlamp as I'm anxious to enter the car in the local Car Club rally next year. It is an unusual little beast and always excites interest even among those only partly in the know. Long live the autos, as they are great fun.

John Ford

## HOW WE PURCHASED A 'BEE' – REVISITED

In July 1996 an article appeared in *Safety Fast!* describing the trip taken by Judy and Jim Gold to the UK from Australia the previous year, which resulted in them purchasing an automatic MGB GT. To recap the story for those of you who were not members in 1996, Jim and Judy were holidaying in Europe for 10 weeks visiting numerous Car and Motorcycle museums on their travels. During one of these visits to the Heritage Centre at Gaydon, Warwickshire there were a couple of MGs parked in the car park when they entered the museum. When eventually they came out of the building, having enjoyed the vast display of British Classic cars, the car park was full. There were over 300 MGs of every type imaginable lined up. Their visit had coincided with a major MG celebration. Jim was in his element as he had always had a soft spot for MGs having owned a couple of examples of the marque previously. As they wandered round admiring the various cars, Jim asked Judy which one she would like, being an automatic fan she selected a white MGB GT, the car belonged to Colin and Doreen Lanning. Colin, having rebuilt a couple of MGs likes nothing more than to talk about them, and Jim proved to be a good listener.

It transpired that Colin had recently seen an advert for a B automatic near to his home in Basingstoke. That evening Colin was on the phone to Jim providing details of the car that was being offered for sale. The pace was building up, it was a holiday, not a car buying trip, but what the heck let's just have a look, it won't do any harm. We all know where this story is going don't we? That quick look became a drive followed by investigation under the bonnet, negotiations soon followed, and after some thinking time a handshake, and the car had a new owner. Lots of organising now had to be done in a very short time frame, as the return trip to Australia for Jim and Judy was almost upon them. The car affectionately call "Our Toy" was delivered to a shipping agent in London to be prepared for the sea trip half way round the world.

Three months later Jim and Judy were to be seen standing on the dock side at Port Botany, Sydney watching as the ship carrying

"Our Toy" made its way into the dock. Importing a classic car into Australia is not as easy as it sounds, three months passed before Jim was able to put the key into the ignition, fortunately after the second turn the engine fired up and the first drive was up the ramp onto the trailer ready to be transported to its new home. The new number plate BGT 196 (January 96, the date it was imported) was purchased during the process of registering the car with the Australian authorities. However, when the car was inspected in greater detail it was discovered that there was a degree of rust and evidence of a collapsed rear suspension, so there would be a couple of months delay before the car could be used. That was as far as the story went when first published.

Last month Judy got in touch with me to bring the story up-to-date. The couple of months anticipated for the rebuild was extended to 11 years, as it was decided to complete a full restoration right down to bear metal. The normal delays caused by a busy life then got in the way; among these were weddings, grandchildren and work. Eventually retirement led to a quieter lifestyle and a move of home from Sydney to the Central Coast afforded more time to be available for work on "Our Toy". It was eventually finished late in 2007 and returned to the road. The first major event undertaken was an ambitious road rally involving a round trip of 2,487 trouble-free miles to Tasmania.

Jim has now been bitten by the restoration bug and has therefore turned his attention to his other car. He has begun to lavish much needed TLC on to the 1938 Morris 12/4, which they have owned for 19 years. They have remained friends with Colin and Doreen Lanning who first found the MGB so many years before, regularly keeping in touch with information on progress. Now it's time to fully enjoy the BEE. They have joined the local MG Car Club in Hunter, New South Wales which is offering them numerous opportunities to make new friends while going out on runs with lots of other MGs.

A great story Judy, many thanks for bringing us up-to-date.  
Roger



Work to be done still! Photo: Judy Gold.



Finished at last. Photo: Judy Gold.