

Welcome to our first effort in 2009. This month we have to say thanks to David Broadhurst for contributing an article on his experience concerning the accuracies of instruments! Heather Charlton has conducted an interview with a Brown MGB. There is a technical tip from Richard Searle; the reliable Bernard has sent his 'Chairman's Comments'. The rest of the space contains a few pictures and some wittering from me.

I know that lots of you are waiting for me to tell you about my Christmas presents. Well, this year, I had to be a little cautious. Nicky asked what I would like for the MG this year, I said that a couple of body panels needed repairing so could I have the Boneshaker ('64 MGB) resprayed. Much to my surprise she said 'yes' without asking how much! This was all I needed, so without delay, in late November, it went over to Jon at Didcot. Basically, it required the lower rear wing sections along with the inner bowls replaced, plus a few other bits and pieces. In early December, in a rather nervous state of mind, I drove over to have a look. Wow, did it look different!



Boneshaker's Christmas present. Photo: Roger Boys.

No doors, no boot, no bonnet, no windscreen, lots of panels missing plus the paint rubbed down. Take a look at the picture. The good news was that Jon did not find any hidden damage, which was remarkable as it is now 44 years old! It will

be completed by the end of January, which gives her the extra month to save up. I did get a small gift to unwrap on Christmas Day; it was an empty can of Jaguar Racing Green spray paint, this being the colour of the Boneshaker. Did Jon send it?

Looking back over the year we have had a wonderful time in the Boneshaker. We covered just over 8,000 miles, going to far flung parts of this country and taking part in a number of local events. The highlights were our trip to Scotland where we joined the Caledonian Centre on their 'run based in Pitlochry. With clear blue skies and lots of people full of fun, we thoroughly enjoyed our visit. The four days we spent in Pembrokeshire were memorable, particularly for the weather conditions. We got absolutely soaked on the way down, in fact my shoes did not dry out until we were on our way home. The actual run was great fun, despite the conditions. The start had to be changed due to the damage that the cars would cause to the grass, but all was well as we assembled in the hotel car park and we were soon able to remove the roof from the B as the rain stopped, enabling us to enjoy the spectacular views. So good was the event that we have decided to return this year and spend a week in the area, let's hope the sun comes with us. We joined the Tyne Tees Centre for the inaugural run of the Speckled Hen Run North. Thirty MGs took part in a very well-organised event. We had a great time during our stay in North Yorkshire, made for us in part as we spent a few days staying with Barbara & Grant

Humphries at their excellent B&B just outside of Leyburn, North Yorkshire. If you are planning a trip to this part of England with your MG, give them a ring (01969 622108) and stay there, you will not be disappointed. Grant will even provide you with MG routes for the area (www.dalesbreaks.co.uk). In fact, we will be returning in 2009 as the MGB Register Weekend in September will be based in Darlington (see www.mgb-register.org for details). There is a plan to incorporate the second Speckled Hen (North) Run, into our event. Nicky & I will then spend a few extra days in the area with Barbara & Grant.

Just before I finish, Bernard, our MGB Register Chairman, is leaving the post after eight years in charge. We all owe a huge vote of thanks to Bernard for the effort he personally has put in on our behalf. He will remain on the Committee where his continued input will be valued.

We are now into 2009 and we are all looking forward to the excitement of the various MG events. There is a lot going on, so make sure you make the most of your car by taking part in the events put on by the Club for you.

Enjoy your MG - Roger.

Boneshaker and TD at the Old Vicarage. Photo: Roger Boys.



ACCURACIES OF INSTRUMENTS!

"The rev counter was showing 2,500 and the speedo showing 118mph."

"That's not right . . . I'll call you back."

"I drove 24-ish miles but the milometer shows 44."

Til call you back."

This was part of a conversation between Dave Hodgson and I earlier this year.

Dave Hodgson rebuilds vehicle instruments, and I first had contact with him on the Sunday morning at Silverstone. I had recently acquired a 1967 Mk I MGB GT in Tartan Red. I know its previous owner, and had watched him have it partly rebuilt, and knew that it had been off the road for a good two years during the six years he had owned it. When my wife suggested that she thought it would be nice for us to have an MGB again (we had owned an MGB GT LE for nine years), I approached Mike and asked if I could have a look. He handed me a box file containing most of the history, including the invoices for replacement engine, clutch, gearbox and overdrive details, the body work replacements, even the original purchase invoice. The interior was original and the seats totally collapsed; my wife, at 5ft, I in peered through the Motolita steering wheel! It was, and is, a delight to drive.

We bought it, of course, and opened the Pandora's box that any old car is going to be. New seats in red leather from MGB Hive, new wire wheels and spinners, new seat belts, new tyres, a speedo cable and a thorough service and complete check through, more bits and pieces, some test runs up and down the A30 past Camborne and Redruth and we were ready for the 300-mile drive to Silverstone. The speedo was very optimistic and the rev counter all over the shop so we checked our speed with the GPS from our boat. We worked out that at just under 100mph on the speedo we had an indicated speed of 60 on the GPS. Keep to that sort of region, the engine is not sounding stressed and we are not going to get caught for speeding on the M5 or M4.

The exhaust split in two on the M4 just short of Lea Delamere services. It took no more than half an hour for GEM to get a recovery truck to us. They took us to their base in a village just off the motorway and welded the exhaust whilst we drank coffee and watched TV. I was very impressed with the service we received at 8.30pm on a Friday evening in the middle of somewhere

in Wiltshire that I would have difficulty finding again. Add a new exhaust to the shopping list for Silverstone.

It was good to meet up with old MG friends at Silverstone and also friends in the village where we had lived for 15 years. Dinner in the pub was excellent, and everyone seemingly standing at the same places at the bar where we had last seen them before we moved to Cornwall. It's good that some things don't change too quickly. On the Sunday morning we thoroughly enjoyed driving around the International circuit and then I went to find Dave Hodgson, the instrument man.

It turns out that you cannot, unlike buying a new stainless steel 4-part exhaust, just walk up to an instrument stand and buy a new/replacement speedo and rev counter. Oh no, there is a number on the speedo dial that corresponds to the number of turns per mile that the speedo cable will do. This depends on which MGB you have got. Mine, predictably, had the wrong speedo. I had a 1040 unit. This is fine for a 3 synchro non-overdrive car but mine has overdrive, I need a 1020 unit. The car was probably supplied without overdrive and someone had it fitted later. So, when I get home to Cornwall, I am to take out both speedo and rev counter and send them to Dave for sorting out. Rev counters, being electronic, apparently go erratic as they age. Sounds like someone I know!

Having got home without further mishap in pouring rain we had the new exhaust fitted and did what any normal people do who have an MGB in summer in Cornwall, we sent it to the body shop and had it resprayed. (It took about a month longer than estimated, but looks wonderful.) So it was almost September before I extracted the instruments and sent them to Dave Hodgson. A fortnight or so later a refurbished rev counter and a 1020 speedo turned up, both looking like new. Highly impressed, I put them in (a contortionist must have assembled the car as it's such a fiddly job) and drove out onto the A30 to test them. The rev counter behaved impeccably, we later checked it with a dwell meter; spot on. The speedo showed exactly the same margin of error as the old one had. This caused more than a little head scratching. The local MG specialist, Tim Kelly at St. Agnes, checked the back axle, correct type and ratios all tally, it's the correct gearbox, a 3 synchro, and the overdrive unit seems OK. Puzzlement all round.



Doing 40mph standing still!
Photo: David Broadhurst.

I then let things drift for the rest of the autumn and into winter. The weather was as foul as it so often is in Cornwall in winter and the MG was snug and dry in the garage. The Landrover does the everyday driving and so it was not until late January that I started to think about the speedo problem. I spoke to Dave Hodgson and he said that he needed some measurements. I was to disconnect the speedo drive from the speedo head and put a bit of Blu-Tack on with a match. Then we were to rotate the back wheels six times whilst counting the number of turns made by the match. This was done and checked. Six rotations of the back wheel equal four and seven-eighths at the speedo head. Then he wanted the horizontal diameter of the rear wheel and the vertical radius to the floor. Twenty-four inches and eleven and five-eighths. This information and the speedo were sent to him with the request that we have it all back before the end of February as we would like to use the MGB to go to our goddaughter's wedding and we are taking the daffodils.

This is where I started this article. I was aghast at the numbers the speedo was showing. It was indicating 30mph at walking pace. At 3,000rpm the needle was on the high beam light at the bottom of the dial! Dave rang me after 7pm and said, "I've put another speedo in the post to you, it should be there tomorrow. Put it in, try it, and tell me what it does."

It turned up before lunch. One week to the wedding. The number on it is 1280, that is 1280 turns per mile; this is not what would normally be seen in an Mk I MGB. Dog walking and extensive retail therapy by my wife that required my attendance took care of the first part of the afternoon, but at 3pm I was on my back in the footwell, torch in mouth, contorting my hands into places I could barely reach. I swapped the speedos in 20 minutes flat, getting good at this, and took the MG out.

It was a glorious afternoon, not a cloud

in the sky. I went to Hayle for some fuel at the Shell Garage. Coming back up the A30, I watched the instruments very carefully. As I drove past the Gatso on Roseworthy Hill, my speed was the same as the traffic around me. It had all slowed perceptively. My speedo showed 59mph and my rev counter 2,500 rpm. I drove home and put the MG to bed just as the drizzle started and rang Dave Hodgson.

"In overdrive top an MGB does 23mph per 1,000 revs. So 2,500rpm equates to 57.6mph," he said. "The answer was in the distances travelled. The speedo showed 44

miles but you knew that you had driven about 24 miles. You have a later model overdrive unit. Also, it is worth noting that to get an accurate measure from rotating the rear wheels you must push the car six revolutions rather than jacking it up and turning the wheels."

The theory of the speedo problem was solved at that point. What none of us had appreciated was that the overdrive unit fitted to the car was a late model one. Everything else was correct being an early MGB Mk I; therefore it was always going to read fast. By fitting a speedo geared for the

late model overdrive an accurate reading against the rev counter and the known distance travelled was achieved. So we now have a late model speedo installed, driven by a late model overdrive and everything works beautifully

I'm glad that's solved, even though I feel a certain sense of anti-climax. Now, how do I fit one wife, wedding clothes, suitcase for other stuff and 750 daffodils into an MGB?

My thanks to Dave Hodgson, MG Spares Specialist, in Marlow, Bucks. Tel: 01628 898441 or see him at Silverstone 2009.

David Broadhurst.

A BROWN MGB'S STORY

Dictated to Heather Charlton

A brown MGB, a brown MGB, who wants a brown MGB? That is what I thought standing in the garage at Crowthorne, Barnsley, year after year with no For Sale sign on me. I was told that the price of classic cars was rising and that I would make the garage a packet in a few years, but all I felt was rejection after seeing all but two of my mates that came from Abingdon at the same time as me being sold!

My manufacture was completed on July 31 1978, but it was not until 1983 when I learnt that the price of the classic car market was dropping along with house prices, and there was an economic recession that at last I got an identity - A622LYG - and I had a For Sale sign on my window. Perhaps there was someone outside of this garage waiting to buy me and take me out onto the open road?

Over the next five years I covered just 6,700 miles before returning to the same garage to be sold again. However, this time in August 1988 a John Hargreaves, who had seen and apparently wanted to buy me when I was only a few months old, but was told I was an investment and not for sale, now bought me. Perhaps because I had been underused, I needed some TLC. John went to great lengths to have me cleaned up and waxoyled on my underside, I had a stainless-steel fuel tank fitted, plus I had a new cylinder head fitted allowing me to run on unleaded fuel and new Chrome Wire Wheels. Also, at this time, I had to have a new speedometer. I now looked as good as new and I felt on top of the world. Despite this, John seldom drove me, covering only on average 1,500 miles every year, bringing my total mileage up to 18,500 miles at the age of 17 years, when one day he drove me



Waiting for the road to clear in the Alps.
Photo: Bill Charlton.

down to Bournemouth to Roger Taylors and again put me up for sale.

In August 1995, Roger Taylor had an open day inviting MG enthusiasts from around the area to see a number of MGs. In the collection there were several interesting and lovely MGs, so who would want a brown MGB? During the day, a couple arrived that took a particular interest in me and finally decided that my excellent appearance and low mileage were too good to miss.

I now moved to the home of Heather & Bill Charlton and started a brand new life fit for an MGB sports car. In the first year I travelled extensively around the UK and covered 5,500 miles, (in later years I averaged about 7/8,000 miles per year), this was the life. The following year I was taken totally by surprise, one day I was taken to Dover and put on a boat, where I learnt you had to drive on the wrong side of the road. Could this be true? I need not have worried, Bill seemed to enjoy this kind of motoring and I was to learn what it really was like to enjoy long distance driving in a hot climate.

Over three years, I had new minilite

wheels fitted and my worn deck-chair seats replaced. Also, early in 1998, I had a roll bar fitted and my engine balanced. Apparently, I was entered for a Rally in France. In 1996 I had gone over the Alps, but this was different. The Rally was the Prix Des Alpes and during the next 10 years I travelled extensively in the Alps, we went over many roads that had not changed much since the 1960s, which was when the original Rallies in the Alps took place and our event was based on these.

It was great fun being driven with spirit up the mountains. The only trouble was on that first year I became overheated, so Bill decided to change the rubber bumpers for chrome bumpers, thus because of the larger radiator the engine received more air. This cured the overheating problem, although during the winter months I run a little cold, but this seems to be well offset by my performance in the mountains. At the same time I had two petrol pumps fitted in parallel with a switch so that either pump could be used at any time, thus eliminating one of the more difficult problems that can develop when on a long trip.



A new element to deal with on the MGB Register's Spring Run 2008. Photo: Bill Charlton.

As well as the yearly trips to Europe - last year I was away for a whole month - I have travelled extensively in the UK having

been taken round Castle Combe race track, up Goodwood and Preston Hills; done many Autotests, mainly on the Prix Des Alpes; crazy really, I spent all day being thrown around the mountain roads only to have to finish the day going round cones on an Autotest! I also love the many local runs with my many friends around the Wimborne area, the Abingdon Centre runs and MGB Register runs, the Regency Run and I visit Silverstone every year to join thousands of MGs of all types and ages; this year I was even driven in the Gymkhana.

I have now completed over 10,000

miles in all weathers; rain, snow, fog - one year on the Prix Des Alpes I couldn't see more than 10 feet in front of me - and in a heat wave when the temperature rose to 40°C, and I still feel as fit as a fiddle and I look forward to 2009 with enthusiasm. Who knows what is in store, whatever it is I am sure I shall continue to be used 12 months of the year and see many new sights and make many new friends.

I know I'm not a concours car, I know I could never win a Pride of Ownership award, but I do know I'm loved, so I'm proud to be a brown MGB.

TECHNICAL TIP - SEAT TOOL

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Richard Searle sent me this picture of a very simple tool that he made to help him refit the diaphragm to the seat frame during an exercise to recover his MGB seats. This was very easy to make, consisting of a bent nail with the tip altered, then fitted to a piece of doweling or a twig!

Richard made a fantastic job of the seat rebuild inspired by the MGB Focus Day of 2007 in which Yvonne Macphillips of PJM demonstrated the various techniques required. Look out for Richard's excellent article in next month's *Safety Fast!*

We are always keen to have tips similar to this as they often help others complete a job that you consider to be simple. Please email your tip to Neil Hyett (neilhyett@fsmail.net). Let's inundate Neil with tips as a New Year resolution that you can keep.



Saves the fingers. Photo: Richard Searle.

MGB REGISTER CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Sitting at the PC writing these Chairman's Comments on a very cold day, I am just beginning to thaw out having spent most of the day in the garage giving the MGB GT its annual service and oil change. My MGB being a Mk1 has the oil filter with the separate insert, which entails lying on the floor under the car undoing the bolt that holds the oil filter on, which is difficult to see and even more difficult to get at alongside the chassis member. Once undone, the oil filter can be removed which always results in warm oil running down and then finding its way up the sleeve of my overalls. Having changed the filter element all you have to do is to insert the rubber ring under the oil filter housing (working blind) and then thread back the bolt under spring tension through the oil cooler pick-up back into the oil filter housing. It's times like this that I am tempted to update my Mk1 MGB GT to a spin-on cartridge oil filter but, once again, the desire to maintain originality has overcome the urge.

Still, enough of my problems, this time of year is traditionally a time to look back over the year and given the lack of a summer in 2008, look forward to better

things to come in 2009. The 2008 event year for the MGB Register started with a snow-affected Spring Run; however, those who did make the start had a great run through a snow-covered Cotswolds to Broughton Castle where we were made very welcome by Lord Saye and Sele. The weather was better for the Register's next event, the weekend in Devon, based in Barnstable, two great runs, good company, good hotel and excellent food - what more could you ask for? Silverstone came and went and then we had our Summer Picnic at Duxford, 40-plus MGs and a very enjoyable day. Finally, our Focus Day, held at the Bicester Performance Engineering College, saw Danny Waters strip and rebuild MGB doors and then everybody had a go at various types of welding under the instruction of one of the college lecturers. For 2009 we have a similar format starting with the Spring Run on April 5 (note the date change from my previous Chairman's Comments), this year's Run takes us from Newbury through the New Forest, finishing at Breamore House, near Fordingbridge. Our Summer Picnic this year is on July 26 and we are joining the Wilton

Windmill Society for their fund-raising event. This should be an interesting day as the Windmill is only a short distance away from another attraction, namely the Crofton Beam Engine. Our Register weekend moves to September for 2009 and is centred around West Auckland in County Durham, we are promised quiet roads and great scenery. There may still be a few places left if you hurry, contact John Watson on 01235 522122 for details.

Finally, we will be holding another Focus Day in November, not sure what the topics will be but certain to be interesting and informative. For full details of all our events look at our website (mgb-register.org) or read our column in *Safety Fast!* This is my last Chairman's Comments as I aim to stand down as Chairman at the AGM in March, after eight years and 32 Chairman's Comments it's probably time for a new person with new ideas. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Committee members for their support and feel confident that, under the new Chairman's leadership, the Register will continue to gain in strength.

Happy MGB motoring - *Bernard Rengger.*