



Final touches to the Boneshaker. Photo: Roger Boys.



John Watson (left) presenting Bernard Rengger with his Register gillet. Photo: Roger Boys.

Fantastic news, the Boneshaker (1964 MGB) is back in town. My late Christmas present has been delivered, the respray is complete and, wow, it's wonderful! I am so pleased with the quality of work and the attention to detail, well worth the wait. When we went to collect it, Jon, the restorer, was outside his workshop in Didcot 'huffing on the bonnet, then polishing with a lint-free soft cloth, how is this for dedication? We have taken part in two road run events with it so far and it has been much admired by friends, as it sparkles in the early spring sunshine.

This month we hope that the varied content will meet with your approval. Bob Marshall, has contributed a reprint of a survey

published in America some five years after the cars were launched there, some interesting comments are included. Richard Atkinson has provided an article on tyres, detailing his experience. Richard Wiseman tells us about his love life! David Cato has an article on the carburettors. The remaining space has been taken up by me, could have been simple, lots of pictures of the Boneshaker, but too much is happening. Hope to see lots of you at the Wilton Windmill Picnic, details are in the advert.

The AGM for the Register was held in March and, as previously announced, Bernard has stood down from the position as Chairman after eight years. Bernard has

worked tirelessly for the Register, overseeing numerous major changes and the Committee are very appreciative of the efforts that he, supported by his wife Judy, have made. A presentation was made by the Committee to thank him for all the hard work that he has put in over the years. Bernard is not lost to the world of MGB Register, as he has agreed to continue to serve as Secretary. John Watson was elected to the position of Chairman, with the full support of the Committee. John will continue with the tradition of the Chairman's Notes in the next four-page article of *Safety Fast!* due in August – no pressure there then John.

Enjoy your MG – Roger.

Purpose off the SU Carburetter Piston Spring

The reason the spring is fitted is to control the piston lift to maintain the correct air speed over the jet. Before the spring was used, pistons had counter balance weights attached to them. Spring values vary with different carburetion requirements (see charts I/I a below). Early versions were tapered at one end and must be used with a skid washer, although they had a tendency to wind-up, causing a rich mixture. These were changed to the parallel type with no washer. (It is recommended that the colour marking on the spring be positioned into the piston.)

Changing the spring rate will gain no significant improvement to engine performance or fuel economy. Changing needle sizes would be more appropriate. It is interesting to note that when the HS6 carburettors were used for Special Tuning purposes (part no. C-AUD 229) the colour of the piston spring was blue.

Carburettor Spring Loading

Blue	2.5 oz @ 2 5/8 ins (70.75gr @66.7mm)
Red	4.5 oz @ 2 5/8ins (127.55gr @ 66.7mm)
Yellow	8 oz @ 2 3/4 ins (126.8gr @ 69.8mm)
Green	12 oz @3 ins (340.2gr @ 76.2mm)
Green/Black	5 1/4 oz @ 2 1/4 ins (149gr @ 63.5mm)
Brown	14 oz @ 3 ins (396gr @ 76.2mm)
White	18 oz @ 3 9/16 ins (510 gr @ 90.5mm)
Red/Yellow	24 oz @ 4 1 3/16 ins (680.4gr @ 214.8mm)
Red/White	40 1/2 oz @ 3 7/8 ins (1147gr @ 98.4mm)
Red/Green	11 1/4 oz @ 3 7/8 ins (319gr @ 98.4mm)
Red/Black	4 1/2 oz @ 4 13/16 ins (127.55gr @ 124.8mm)
Red/Blue	18 oz @ 3 7/8 ins (510 gr @ 98.4mm)

1 a. Model Application

Model	Carburettor Type	Spring Colour
MGB	HS4	RED
MGB	HIF4	RED
MGB V8	HIF6	YELLOW
MGC	HS6	YELLOW

Source: Carburettor & Tuning Course - Student Technical Notes (1971)

David Cato

MGB Users' Report

In May 1968, *Road & Track* published an owner's survey of the MGB, which had been launched five years previously.

The report found: Reasons for purchase

55% styling

24% handling

21% price

17% reliability

6% parts and service availability

The rest said 'reputation and word of mouth'. Owners of GTs bought comfort.

Nearly 45% of owners put in 10-15,000 miles per year and 4% drove over 25,000 miles per year, and nobody did less than 5,000 miles per year*. How does that compare to current B owners?

Nearly 50% used their Bs for competition but only one owner raced his car. The bulk of the then owners (53%) drove their cars hard and some drove *very hard*. *R&T* found a correlation between driving style and repair; moderate drivers had a 16% chance of needing major mechanical work by 50,000 miles whereas those who *really* drove their cars had a 50% chance of significant repairs. Synchromesh failure was the most common complaint at mileages as low as 24,000.

65% of owners followed the book regarding maintenance and 12% couldn't be bothered. Many owners changed oils sooner than recommended.

Only 39% rated their dealers as good, while 27% rated their dealers as poor although, using VW as a base line, the dealers rated as good rose to 62%. (*Maybe we were all conned into a VW myth.*)

Tyre Trouble

"With the state of the roads around here you're better off getting the tracking checked once a year." I suspect this wasn't the first time the tyre fitter had told a customer this. Good advice, I thought, given the state of my nearside front tyre, which was badly worn on the outside edge. However, it seemed to happen overnight. Might be a good idea to check the tread depth more regularly I thought as I contemplated the cost of replacing two 'good' tyres.

The front tyres were Firestone 380s fitted just a couple of years ago, and the rears Dunlop SP7s, fitted when I first got the

58% of owners thought that handling was the Bs best feature; fuel economy 25%, performance 23% and durability were rated by 25% of owners as the best feature. (*Perhaps Abingdon quality was better than we thought*)

The gearbox was the most disliked feature, sighting no synchromesh on first gear (*to change on later models*). Ventilation was a sore point and 9% complained about the heater.

Instruments were the most unreliable feature of the car; 22% of owners had had one or more failures. One owner during 1967 had six electric tachometers fitted. The next biggest gripe was the exhaust system - the rubber mounts failed in 22% of cases. (*They still do.*)

Cooling caused problems for 22% of owners; some was overheating but the hoses seemed to be good for only 30,000 miles.

There were numerous complaints regarding fuel pumps, brake problems and starter failure, and, when the mileage got past 40,000, electric failures increased significantly. (*Congratulations to Lucas.*)

Tyres lasted about 30,000 miles (less on the GT) and disc pads needed replacing before the rear brake shoes. (*Is that still true?*)

Gearbox overhauls were not uncommon after 45,000 miles and clutches failed at about the same mileage.

The survey found that the standard engine was good for 70,000 miles before overhaul, although one owner had done 83,000 without touching the engine. *R&T* commented that *overheating* complaints might come from drivers' reading 200°F as too hot. *R&T* were also critical of the quality

of the instruments and was critical of the wisdom of the economics that did not require better ones being fitted in the first place.

R&T concluded that the MGB was simple, durable, fuel economical, fun-to-drive, short on weatherproofing and had a spotty reliability record. Its owners are a fairly happy group and, in the long run, this counted for a lot.

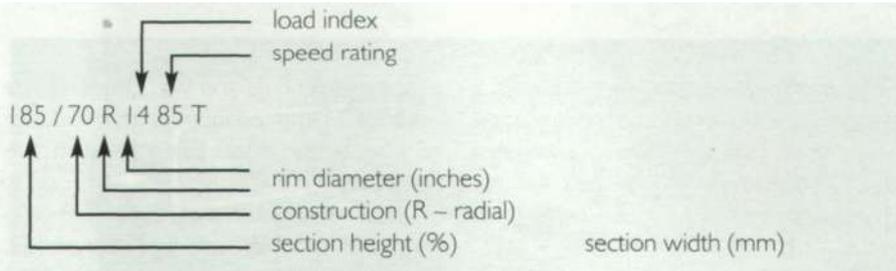
R&T was then owned and edited by Mr & Mrs John Bond from California who were great Europhiles and Mrs Bond had a TC, so perhaps they were slightly biased. For many years *R&T* was probably the best motoring magazine although from the US although *Car and Driver* came close.

R&T carried full Grand Prix reports and detailed analysis of US and European cars; it published details of *sports car country* - routes where you could extend your MG or Ferrari across Pennsylvania, California, Kansas et al. The road tests were catholic and, apart from the obvious cars (Ferrari, Maserati, BMW Pontiac GTO, Shelby Cobra as well as the ubiquitous MGB), it road tested mechanical elephants and the Sir Nigel Gresley locomotive. It found the locomotive had poor acceleration but excellent road (*like running on rails*) and masses of unsurpassable low down torque pulling several hundred tons from a standing start in top gear - the only gear!

Road & Track was a sophisticated, authoritative but amusing magazine written by people of maturity but not aged.

Robert Marshall





Section height is expressed as a percentage of the section width (e.g. $0.7 \times 185 = 129.25\text{mm}$)
 The LOAD INDEX (85) is a numerical code associated with the maximum load a tyre can carry at the speed indicated by its SPEED SYMBOL (T = 18mph) under service conditions specified by the tyre manufacturer.

There is a lot of other helpful information on the side wall including, crucially, the date of manufacture! Both the Firestone and Dunlops gave the following: 165 R14; a section width of 165mm, radial, 14-inch diameter rims - the standard for an MGB GT with wire wheels. I think the section width wasn't shown on the tyre wall as they follow the standard percentage of 80% (82% many years ago apparently). So, I had the info I needed to search the Internet and talk to local tyre shops to find some new tyres.

There were, however, further complications. Should I stick with the standard tyre size or look for an alternative size? Wire wheels have a rim width of 4.5 inches (why are some dimensions in inches and others in mm?) and manufactures make a range of sizes (combinations of section widths and heights) to fit different wheel widths and rim diameters. For example, 165/80 R14s have the same rolling

circumference (roughly) as 185/70 R14s and a 4.5-inch wheel width will take the wider tyre. So, one can get wider tyres with the same circumference as the originals. This is important since changing the rolling circumference affects the reading on the speedometer. A 175/75 R14 tyre will have a slightly smaller rolling circumference and the speedometer will read above the true speed. Wider tyres also affect the handling and steering and provide more contact with the road and more grip. A quick search on the ever helpful MG Cars Enthusiasts' Club MGB technical bulletin board highlighted the pros and cons of different tyre sizes. In the end I decided to stick with the standard tyre size.

The next question was which make should I go for? This was an easier choice than I anticipated, simply because the choice was pretty poor (for 165/80 R14s). Another reason to go for alternative tyre size

perhaps? Among the premium brands, only Michelin and Uniroyal made tyres in this size, whereas a number of so-called 'medium budget' manufacturers supplied 165 R14s: companies such as Toyo, Riken, Falken or Kumho (which I am told are now fitted to new VW cars). Michelin tyres are renowned for their long life but I didn't think the cost was worth it. Although my B gets well used, the annual mileage is not especially high so Michelins would most likely need replacing through old age rather than tyre wear. Recent tragic news has highlighted the importance of making sure not only that there is plenty of tread in a tyre but also that there is no deterioration (through age) in the rubber, especially in the side wall. After all the tyres are the only bit of the car in contact with the road - a sobering thought if you ever have to break hard in the wet! There's a good website on tyre safety that's worth a look (www.tyresafe.org). It includes a PDF with advice on tyre pressures and maintenance as well as a full description of side wall markings and load and speed indicator tables.

In the end, I went for Falken Sincera SN-807 (165/80R14 85T) - why, well they were reasonably priced (£35 a corner) and I had received good reports from a number of respected tyre specialists. I guess I'll soon find out if it was a good decision. Now, where's that tread depth gauge?

Richard Atkinson

MGB REGISTER SPRING RUN

How did I get involved in organising the route for this our first run of the year, was it simply that I lived in Newbury near to the start, or was it that my fellow Committee members thought I would do a great job? That's a question for others to answer, Nicky & I had lots of fun planning and trying out various routes to get the group from Chieveley Services into the New Forest and each time we took the opportunity to picnic in the New Forest and give Paddy, our West Highland Terrier, a great walk.

Once the route was completed there were two other things that were needed, firstly the entries. Roger Cooper and Bernard Rengger took charge and efficiently handled these. The second was some reasonable weather. Some of you will recall last year the snow that greeted us in the Cotswolds! Well this year we had 70 entries, slightly down on last year and boy were we lucky with our second wish. After a chilly start as the cars



Chilly start for the Spring Run. Photo: Roger Boys.

were marshalled into the services by Neil Hyatt it was practically wall to wall sunshine for the rest of the day.

This year's run was approximately 73 miles from Newbury to Breamore House and Countryside Museum in Hampshire. We set off on the Newbury by-pass, which gave

the opportunity to blow away a few of the cobwebs, as the dual carriageway allowed some foot down motoring for the first five miles. The route then took us through some of the wonderful villages and fine houses that are to be found in North Hampshire. Our route then followed the famous trout-fishing



Animals and cars assemble at Breamore House. Photo: Roger Boys.



John & Trish VenaWes arriving at Breamore House.



Fabulous house. Boneshaker looking great.

River Test, numerous glimpses of this beautiful river and its tributaries were seen. Then on into the delightful small town of Stockbridge. here some stopped for coffee and took the opportunity to watch the trout from bridges in the main street - amazing.

Our route then continue*] into the New Forest one of the true wonders of England. This area features acres of common land with gorse and heather, majestic trees in thick woodland and sudden sensational views. There was plenty of wildlife to spot, lots of shaggy New Forest ponies grazing by the roadside, occasionally donkeys and, if you were lucky, majestic deer with huge sets of

antlers. We noticed a small herd of the rare Belted Galloway cattle; these were seen towards the end of the route.

We finished at Breamore House where Henry Cole and David Askew took charge and welcomed the cars after the journey. Breamore House is an Elizabethan Manor House situated on the edge of the New Forest; The Manor House was completed in 1583 and houses a fine collection of works of art and furniture. Breamore is a largely unspoilt seventeenth-century village with many thatched cottages and the Countryside Museum boasts one of the finest collections of steam powered farm machinery, tractors,

barn machinery, historical tools and one of the world's oldest clocks. Lots of people took the opportunity to go on the timed conducted tours of the house.

There were numerous opportunities to 'kick tyres' and talk with friends old and new, lots of these conversations took place outside the coffee shop sitting in the sunshine. To judge by the numerous comments received, it was a great day out and thanks must be given to all of those who took part in organising and all the participants because, without you, it would not have been such a success.

Report and photos Roger & Nicky Boys.

HAPPY 40th BIRTHDAY

In February 1969, my wife (not at the time) sailed into Southampton on board the Fairstar from Australia for a two-year working holiday. She then travelled up the A34 towards London, no doubt driving past Abingdon. It was the same month that my MGB was being driven off the production line. Maybe they passed each other on route.

I bought the B in 1995 from a car dealer in Taree on the mid-north coast of New South Wales, Australia. He drove it down to try and get a quick sale, having had the vehicle traded in. Spending the last six months looking at a variety of MGBs all over Sydney, this one stood out for overall appearance and performance. I paid \$14,500 and thought it represented good value at the time. However, things got off to a bad start the first weekend, when my 13-year-old son decided to check all the dials and knobs and turned off the kill switch. I was not aware that the vehicle had one, and the car dealer also confirmed he was unaware of its existence. The next day the B started for about a minute and then died. I couldn't understand it, nor could the NRMA. The real problem was then to tow the vehicle out of the curved garage entrance, which normally required three attempts to get it in when the vehicle was mobile. The whole exercise

proved very expensive and my son's admission after the event, when he said, 'I wondered what that switch was for', did not help the situation.

From 1995 through to 2007, the vehicle was garaged at St Ives (Sydney) where we have lived for 26 years and was used on most sunny days for a drive down Mona Vale Road to the beach. This is a trip that the B could do on its own.

Although a member of the MG Car Club, the vehicle has not been taken on long drives, although I have every confidence that it would make it. Even when we moved to Berry in 2007, I took it down on a car trailer a week before we settled on the property. Unfortunately, I misjudged the size of the driveway and could only get the vehicle off the trailer by driving through the owner's beautiful, manicured garden, thinking at one stage the owner would cancel the sale as she stormed off into the house. The then owner came back out a few minutes, saying it didn't matter any more as 'it is your garden now'.

Since retiring from Shell after 40 years and moving to Berry, the B gets used nearly every day. We live about 3ks out of town on a sealed road and the B loves this drive, as well as the drive up the Princes Highway to Gerrington; the road has an extremely



Richard and his pride and joy. Photo: Richard Wiseman.

smooth surface with numerous sweeping bends making for a very pleasant drive. I am able to take it to golf at Nowra; there is just enough space to carry the bag and buggy on the passenger seat and rear section.

To celebrate the B's birthday, Sally & I are taking it out for lunch this month and, in addition, I have purchased a Heritage Certificate from the Heritage Motor Museum in the UK. This certificate has all the details of the vehicle during its production at Abingdon and cost around \$ 100. The web page is www.heritage-motor-centre.co.uk and is worth a look.

People ask me if I will ever sell the B... I say only when I can no longer change gears and I hope that is a long way off.

Richard Wiseman