

Summer is in full swing here in the UK and your MG is, I hope, getting lots of miles under its tyres. The Boneshaker (1964 MGB) has been well used as we have taken part in numerous road runs during the early summer; it's great fun to meet up with all the enthusiasts who organise these events for us and of course those who take part. The Hereford Run has been the star so far this year, despite the weather conditions not being ideally suited for MGs. It rained hard at the start and the spirits were a little down as we set out. There must be a way of stopping an MGB steaming up in the rain when two people and a wet dog are inside. We have failed to find it so far, heater on, heater off, quarter lights open, quarter lights closed, windows open, windows closed all seem to make no difference. Then the rain stopped and we took the roof down, problem solved, as if by magic the condensation disappeared!

While washing the Boneshaker, following the very wet Hereford Run, we had a bit of a shock when it was discovered that a stone had been thrown up by a truck and had acted a bit like one of the Barnes Wallace-inspired bouncing bombs and removed some of the new paint from the bonnet. I have to report that a tear welled in my eyes as Nicky & I surveyed the damage; it had been only 600 miles since the respray. However, all was not lost as a return trip to Jon and some deft use of touch-up paint enabled the damage to blend in until it was possible to return the car for the bonnet to be resprayed. I have now resolved to use the car and not look so closely, as all said and done it's only a car!

We have contributions this month from Eddie Buckley on an excellent day out in Scotland. Bill Wilson from the USA on an adventure caused by a bolt, which fell out. His article was first published in *North American Classic MG Magazine* and Beth Lunney, the Publisher, has kindly given us permission to reprint the article here. You might like to check out the website it's a good one (www.ClassicMGMagazine.com). We also have a challenge for you to grey cells devised by Derek Matthews using a different name. This I have to say beat me, but surely you can succeed? John Watson, our new MGB Register Chairman, provides his first thoughts from the chair. Many thanks to you all.

Roger Cooper the MGB Register's longstanding treasurer sent me a photograph

of our monthly scribe, Jan Pratt, riding her husband's 1930 BSA 496cc Sloper. He tried to encourage me to make derogatory remarks about lady drivers or blond drivers, all of which I have rejected. It is rumoured that Jan, who currently does not have a motorcycle full driving licence, will with a bit of encouragement take her test and then be let loose on our roads. Let's all get behind her and encourage her to set a deadline of passing the test by Christmas. Jan is always up for a challenge! Can anybody add a suitable caption for our picture?

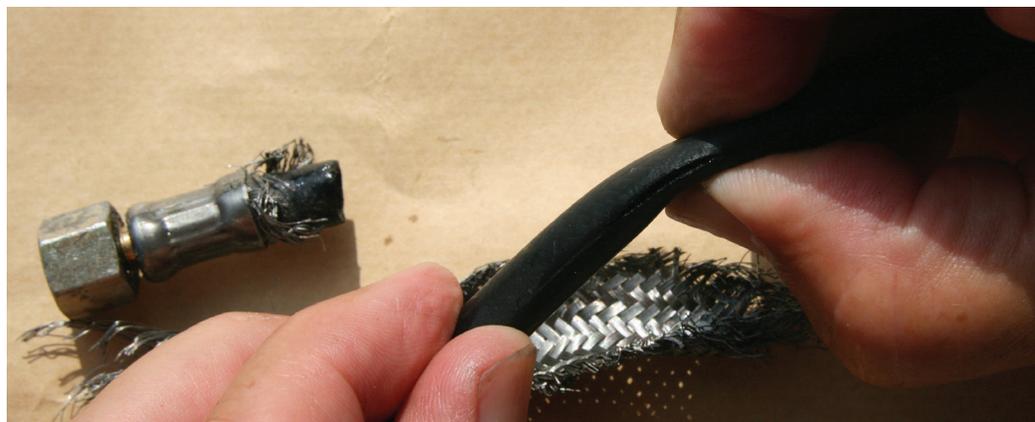


Member Mike Phoenix, a qualified motor engineer, rang me to offer a warning about the poor quality of some of the after market parts being offered for fitting to our cars. The case he drew to my attention concerned the flexible oil pressure pipe, which burst after a couple of months' use. This is the pipe, which connects the oil

pressure gauge from the engine block. When Mike removed the pipe he stripped it down and found that the joint to the fitting had failed due, probably, to it being incorrectly manufactured. He also noticed that the inner pipe was not reinforced, which is normally the case when a pipe is expected to contain pressure of approximately 80 pounds per square inch. It was also apparent when the pipe was squeezed that there was a stress failure in the rubber (see the picture). Mike will now be visiting a local hydraulic specialist to have the pipe manufactured. Why is the quality control systems used by the major suppliers of important components to the classic car market not better, perhaps one of the buyers from a major supplier might like to write an article for *Safety Fast!* detailing how these types of items are specified and then tested? Mike is also interested in information on any other failures of this type experienced by other members. If you would like to contribute please email information to me and I will pass it on.

Make a date in your diary for October 24 2009 when the MGB Practical Maintenance Day (previously Focus Day) is due to take place in Bicester again. The Boneshaker has a starring role this year as Nicky has agreed that my Christmas present for 2009 will be a new set of carpets and Yvonne of PJM has agreed to demonstrate the fitting of these at this year's event. There will also be other practical demonstrations taking place on the day, so be there or be square.

I have just heard that the sales of the first book published by the MGB Register and launched at Silverstone, *Barrie's Notes on Maintaining an MGB in the 21st Century*, are flying off the shelf so if you don't want to miss out, place your order via the main Club today.



MGB CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

I took over the role of MGB Register Chairman at the AGM in March, and in the first of my Chairman's Notes I would like to publicly thank Bernard Rengger for being an excellent Chairman of the MGB Register for the last eight years, with thanks also to his wife, Judy, for her support to the Register and Bernard. Many of the Committee members say the same and I look forward to their continuing guidance, support and friendship.

I have owned my Iris Blue 1964 MGB Roadster, EBW 45B, since July 1989 and have been a member of the Committee for 14 years. My previous role was to represent you, MGB owners, at the twice-yearly MGCC Council meeting. This is where we, as a Register, have a voice and vote on future plans and the running of the MG Car Club.

Living in Abingdon, home of MG, I visit Kimber House on a fairly regular basis and find myself assisting when required.

Over the last 20 years my wife, Gill, and I have travelled the length and breadth of the UK including Ireland and also to events

in Europe with 'Iris', as some members call my car.

I am writing this after a very successful MGLive! at Silverstone and it was a pleasure to meet so many of you who visited the Register stand. Our new database of all the MGBs registered was used for the first time and we wish to keep this information up-to-date at all times. If you have any new information, photos, etc, on your cars, please email David Askew on david.prc@sky.com

The Committee always welcomes volunteers at the various events we organise, so please consider helping us on the day or if you have any suggestion for new events or different locations please contact one of us. By the time you read this in August we will have had the summer picnic at the Wilton Windmill in Wiltshire. Our next big meeting will be the September weekend in County Durham. The hotel has been fully booked for some time, but if you wish to join us on the run on Saturday 12th please contact me on john45watson@ntlworld.com or if you

wish to enter the Tyne Tees Centre 'Old Speckled Hen Tour' on Sunday 13th please email Barrie Hope on barrie.hope1@btinternet.com

Our annual MGB Practical Maintenance Day at Bicester Motor Sport Centre is on Saturday October 24, slightly earlier this year, where our technical expert, Danny Waters, ably assisted by David Cato, will be featuring practical maintenance tips from our *Barrie's Notes* book. Yvonne and Sandra, from PJM Motors, will be joining us and they will be retrimming the interior of the MGB Roadster. For future details contact Janine Pratt (Tel: 01264 335080).

Full details of our Register contacts and events are on www.mgb-register.org. We are also looking for a webmaster to assist with the upkeep of our site; do we have any MGB-owner volunteers?

John Watson,
Chairman

CAR QUIZ

FIND 18 CAR CLUES imbedded in the text. It's not easy so take your time and concentrate. Jan will publish the answer next month. If you cannot wait that long an email to me will get you the answers. Go for it. Roger

As an enthusiast of general motorsport, I felt obliged to join an Amoco operation, which sponsors the annual Amoco Brabham hill-climb. Since I hadn't marshalled at Sunday's event I was placed last on the start. Despite dismal visibility I applied full revs to avoid my normal failing of stalling on the line, the steep hill managed to slow my progress, but I approached the hairpin with too much speed, and either in panic or saving my own skin I survived the bend without turning the car over, but hit the tyre wall with a force seldom greater than anyone had seen before. My accident featured on the TV report, but meant I was late for dinner at the pub, and all that remained was kitchen surprise, onion soup or cheese pie.

Bob McDonald

A LESSON LEARNED IT'S SO EASY TO OVERLOOK THE SIMPLE THINGS IN LIFE...

By Bill Wilson, Appalachian British Car Society, Kingsport, Tennessee

It was on a Saturday afternoon late in May, it was hot and the sky was clear. It was a perfect day to take a spin in a lovely British car with the top down. Debbie & I drove our little red '72 MGB to a beautiful park a few miles away to a cookout. It was a graduation party for my niece, Lauren, who I am proud to say, graduated with high honors. The drive over was great. The 'B' ran smoothly, purring along on the crooked back roads to the mountain park.

We arrived at the shelter and pulled the car right up front to show off. Everyone expressed their admiration of the 'B'; its shiny paint job and wheels. After unloading

the food and chairs, my younger brother came up to me and asked if I would take him to the food market to get more meat for the burgers. Naturally I said yes and we were off to fetch meat. Again the car ran perfectly and we arrived at the store.

When we came out and tried to start the 'B' it would not hit a lick! The motor would turn over, but the engine would not fire. Now, I have had a few bouts with a fuel pump that had sticky points. So I raised the boot, got out the trusty hammer and pecked the fuel pump. No luck! We raised the hood and began to look for the problem. I pulled the fuel line off the carbs

and fuel squirted everywhere. Well, we were getting fuel. We decided to push the car away from the front of the store to a place where we would have plenty of room to check for the problem. Pushing the car backwards, I tried to roll start it. It sputtered, but would not fire. Again, we started looking and I happened to touch the coil with my hand. It was hot! I began to think maybe the coil was breaking down, which would mean no fire to the plugs.

I called back to the party to have someone come get my brother and the meat, because I wasn't going anywhere with the 'B'. I got my older brother to come



A lovely British car – belonging to Bill Wilson

get me. We went to my house and got another coil and some tools. After changing the coil, no fire! We checked and cleaned each plug. Still no fire! Disgusted, hot and stranded, it was time to throw in the towel. We went to borrow a trailer from my cousin to haul in the 'B'. My cousin had loaned the trailer to another friend who had returned it with a bad bearing on one wheel. We all stood there looking at the trailer with only three wheels. It was decided that it would still haul in the 'B' because the car did not weigh that much.

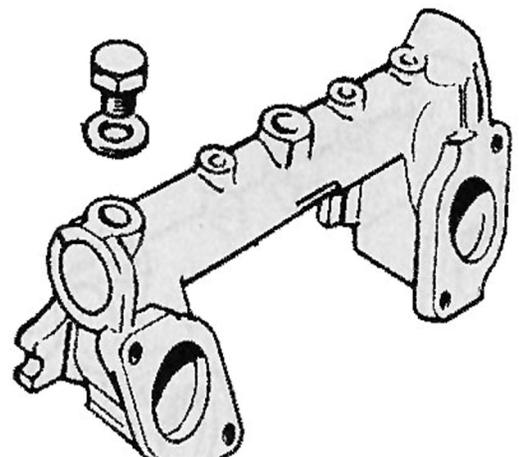
Arriving back at the car, we forced it onto the trailer, tied it down and limped back home. Hot, disgusted and embarrassed, it was a sad sight to see the 'B' brought in on a trailer. We just pushed it in the garage and left it. Everybody wanted to work on it, but I figured another day when I was cool and calm would be better to check it out.

Now, the very next day, my wife, Debbie, & I had to go to town for something or other. So I asked her to take me to the local auto parts store. There I

picked up a set of new plugs to try in the car. Later that evening, I gapped the plugs and put them in the engine. As I was walking around the front of the car, I just happened to look over at the engine again. That's when I saw the problem! I could not believe it! So simple! Yet, we had overlooked it several times in the parking lot and on the side of the road. The plug in the end of the intake manifold was gone. It had popped out when the engine was turned off. I now understood why it would only sputter a little, but not fire. The engine had lost vacuum and could not pull the fuel into the head. I took another plug from an extra manifold and put in the manifold on the car. The 'B' fired right up and ran perfectly. Later that evening, I talked Debbie into going back to the store to see if we might find the old plug. It should have been lying on the pavement right where I turned off the engine in the parking lot. We drove back, searched the exact spot where I had parked, but there was no plug to be found. After widening our search, we still came up empty. Giving up we decided to leave.

Driving off I was still looking at the ground and there it lay about one hundred feet from the parking spot.

If I had only seen the hole, I could have put a piece of duct tape over it and driven home! It is so easy to overlook the simple things in life. Yes, it was 'a lesson learned'.



The offending item



Bill Wilson's MGB looking sad on the transporter

Below is an email recently sent to me by a pal Eddie Buckley

I wonder if any of your readers have been watching Richard Wilson recently on the television with his series of Britain's Best Drives of the 1950s. It gave me the idea that some MG owners might like to contribute their own ideas of enjoyable day trips that others could follow up.

In the enclosed article I cover my trip to the Scottish islands by MGB and train. I also wanted to illustrate how much we got into one 12-hour day without feeling absolutely 'cream cracked'.

Eddie

This sounds like a great day out, many thanks Eddie for taking the time to share it with us all. It prompted me to get a map out and follow the route. Even on paper it looks to be challenging and enjoyable – MGB driving, steam trains, photography and eating – is there a better way to spend a day?

If any other of you MGB drivers have enjoyed a day out please put pen to paper, we would all love to share your adventure.

BRITAIN'S BEST MGB DRIVES 2009

During a week in Scotland this year I was determined to achieve a long-term goal and take a trip on the spectacular Fort William to Mallaig rail line. The 'Jacobite' excursion is a steam-hauled special, which runs this route once a day from about May until October. Fares for the steam trip are about £30 return and have to be booked in advance on the web (visit: www.westcoastrailways.co.uk then click on 'jacobite'). You cannot book at Fort William Station! The steam special takes about two hours having stopped for 20 minutes at Glenfinnan to allow views of the awesome viaduct (as featured in the *Harry Potter...* movies ... I'm told) The rail journey is 46 miles each way. The alternative to steam is the Scot Rail Diesel, which takes 1 hour 20 mins. The return fare is only £11.20, so for the two of us it was just over £19 with me using my senior rail card; exceptional value in my view given the time and distance... even without the scenery. All we needed was a good clear day; hence we decided to go on the Scot Rail option which allowed us to make a late decision depending on the weather. I am pleased to say we struck lucky!

Now for the MGB driving

Our base was at my Aunt's house some five miles east of Stirling and which is approximately 102 miles from Fort William. The whole route has only about one mile of dual carriage way. We left at about 8.30 and travelled via Bridge of Allan, Doune, The Trossachs, and Callander. Our route then took us up the twisty road alongside Loch Lubnag, Strathyre, Rob Roy Country, and Lochearnhead. Here our steady progress in light traffic was slightly delayed by a convoy

system to get past some roadworks. The route up the east side of Glen Ogle follows closely the route of Julia Bradbury in her TV series of walking along disused railway tracks. At this point the A85/A82 changes to a traffic-free fast route with tremendous landscapes of lochs and mountains. We made various stops *en route* for photo opportunities and a nature break at Tyndrum, where the tourist shop has a wide variety of good quality stock. Then on

over Rannoch Moor, which is a wild desolate place with very little traffic (no speed cameras of course) no trees and very few dwellings; I think we passed about three cottages and the Kings House Hotel in about 15 miles. We then enter the menacing area of Glencoe, normally shrouded in mist and low cloud and reflecting the chill of the Glencoe massacre. Being a Donaldson this has special significance to my wife, Isobel.

The weather on our day was dry and clear, again offering excellent photo opportunities. Crossing the mouth of Loch Leven these days is accomplished via the Ballachulish Bridge, which replaced the ferry in the early '80s. We then have the final run up the side of Loch Linnie to 'The Fort'. Our journey had taken about 2 hours 30 minutes, punctuated by a number of stops. We had time for an excellent sandwich platter, two pots of tea and a sticky bun for me in Morrison's supermarket located beside the railway station for just over £6. The train leaves at 12.47 so we had plenty of time to get the train. At this point I remember not having purchased a parking ticket half an hour earlier! I trot off to see the damage... none done and buy a ticket; £1.50 for 12 hours, amazing value.

Our train was quite busy, being about 80% full; we found seats by the windows, the only drawback was that the windows don't open for cameras to poke out. After three miles or so the train slows at Banavie to cross the canal swing bridge at 5mph and we get an excellent view of the ladder of locks on the Caladonian Canal up towards Loch Lochy and Loch Ness beyond. We stop at Corpach on Loch Eil, which brought back memories for me as I used to do business in the, now defunct, Paper Mill many years ago. All of the stops after that, including the Outward Bound School, are request stops, where you ask the guard to stop the train, or if you're on the platform you stick out your hand. Although the train is only four carriages long you need to be in the middle of the train to get off, as the platforms are so short. The views are not disappointing and include the Silver Sands at Morar and views of islands of Skye, Rhum and Eigg.

The steam train pulls out of Mallaig on its return journey a few minutes after we arrive so there was me rushing about to take my pictures. The 'Black Five' steam unit does not disappoint, even if it is tender first for the trip back to Fort William. The steam special is full, every seat taken. Mallaig is the jumping off place for many ferries to the islands, but it is not a large place and 30 minutes wandering about the harbour is sufficient for pictures of the boats and a seal that conveniently sticks its head above the water close to the harbour entrance. Surprisingly, we then needed a bit of shade and decided to retreat to the local hotel for some refreshment. We planned to catch



A82 looking south from Rannoch Moor. Photo: Eddie Buckley

the 16.05 train having spent an hour and a half in Mallaig.

Back with the car we retrace our steps home, this time stopping off at the Kings House Hotel on Rannoch Moor. This is a climbers/walkers hostelry and very hospitable. It somehow doesn't seem odd that the landlord asks a couple, "Are you walking or driving?" A Salmon and Ribeye steak respectively for 'her indoors' and me offer more than enough sustenance to get us home.

Our trip has covered just over 200 miles by car and nearly 100 by train over some of the best roads and scenery in the UK. Neither of us is tired, probably because of the lack of traffic, so it's a day trip that is eminently 'do-able' and not too costly if you're in Central Scotland.

Another day we head east to St Andrews and the fishing villages of the East Neuk of Fife... but that's another road for another day...



The harbour at Mallaig. Photo: Eddie Buckley