



# NEWSLETTER

Vol 38 #2 June 2020



**The Octagon on the battle line** Lithe, beautiful and bellowing thunder...ten MG 'A' racing cars uncoil from the starter's grid at Lime Rock. Try the MG 'A' at J. S. INSKIP, INC., 304 East 64th Street, New York 21, N.Y. (TEmpleton 8-6100) or at any one of 100 authorized dealers in Conn., N.J., N.Y., or R.I. from \$ 2,455\*). Telephone today for the name of your nearest authorized dealer. 



# From The Editor:

Summer is with us and racing is coming back. Formula 1 returns on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend, Indy car has already raced in Texas and NASCAR has been racing for a few weeks. We celebrate MG racing on our cover. From 1958, a national advertisement for the MGA called The Octagon on the Battle Line.

The photo was taken on the front straight at Lime Rock in Connecticut. Years later that shot was reprised in a remarkable photo on October 6, 2005. It was an MGVR event celebrating 50 years of the MGA. The center car is the very same car in both shots. It is the 1957 #51 MGA with David Ash in the original photo and Mike Eaton in the reenactment.

## ORIGINAL

Charlie Kurtz

David Ash

Sherm Decker

Hank van Dusen     Paul Romano

## REENACTMENT

Dick Powers

Mike Eaton

Andrew Hiller

Unknown

Jim Holody

## INSIDE

In this issue will be a grand tale of finding the only known remaining 1959 factory Sebring twin cam coupe as told by Mike Eaton. A strong lesson in tenacity or being very stubborn. Mike chased people, phone numbers, places and finally found the car.

**LETTERS:** Please feel free to comment, tell us your own stories and more.

**TECHNICAL:** Soon we will bring back Dave Smith who will illustrate and illuminate us on how to and why to and some serious do's and don'ts.

**SOCIAL:** Did your MG chapter have a party (social distancing please and wash your hands)? Send us a story and photos.

**MEMORIES:** We all love hearing about things that happened long ago. Were you stopped on the road and Stirling Moss gave you a ride? We want to know.

## FIRST OF THE FOUR 1959 SEBRING TWIN CAM COUPES FOUND!

1956 and 1957 were very successful years for the MGAs at the grueling 12-hour Sebring race. Both years with teams led by Team Captain David Ash, with the cars entered by MG's North American distributor, Hambro. All three cars finished the races and won the prestigious Manufacturers Team Prize each year. For 1957, the top two cars finished first and second in class beating out a Porsche Carrera! While the cars in 1956 and 1957 were not full factory prepared cars, they were certainly factory backed with some nice racing goodies including EX designated engines. The great performances by the teams, as well as an easing of the factory ban on racing after the terrible 1955 LeMans accident, led the factory to prepare full factory works entries for the Sebring 1959 race.



Indeed for 1959, the factory transferred four of the new MGA Twin Cams to the competitions department. Factory records show that the four cars were initially roadsters, but the roadster shells were swapped with coupe bodies by the competitions department. While running in the production class, the MGAs certainly appeared pretty stock at the race, running with their bumpers on and little to suggest the modifications underneath. Again, the cars were entered by Hambro, but there was no doubt that these were fully factory prepared cars. MG's top brass came over for the first factory showing of the cars at Sebring. No less than John Thornley himself, BMC Competitions manager Marcus Chambers, and Competitions Foreman Doug Watts came over to witness the first factory effort. The cars were assigned race numbers 28, 29, and 30, the fourth car

prepared was a "practice" car and was assigned the number P28. The cars actually finished in numerical order with car 28; driven by MG Sebring veteran Gus Ehrman and Ray Saidel finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> in class, car 29; driven by Californians Jim Parkinson and Jack Dalton finishing 3<sup>rd</sup> in class, and car 30; driven by Californians Jack Flaherty and Ray Pickering, and Watkins Glen hero Sherm Decker finishing 4<sup>th</sup> in class.

While in print the results sound pretty good, in fact, the factory was disappointed with the performance of the cars. The top car completed only one lap more than the top finishing 1500 MGA in the 1957 race! The number 29 car was plagued with a starter problem that cost it an hour in the pits. Finally, although car 30 was listed as a finisher, it had to be pushed around the course due to engine failure and limped over the finish line to even qualify as a finisher.

After the race, the cars were sold off. It was well documented that Geoff Industries in LA purchased the #29 car and OCee Ritch drove it across country after the race. A story about his trek with the car and one of the Sebring Sprites was written up in the July 1959 Sports Cars Illustrated. Leon Mandel of Autoweek fame also purchased one of the cars and drove it back to California. The disposition of the other two cars is still unknown.

Fast forward now to 2 or 3 years ago. I am working on the 1957 David Ash Sebring car and still researching its history. Of course, while researching the 1957 car, I became interested in all the years that MGAs ran at Sebring. I thought it interesting that of the factory entries, almost all of the 1960-1962 cars had been accounted for while not a single one of the 1959 cars were known to exist. While checking on information with our former NAMGAR Historian, Bob Vitrikas. I innocently inquired if Bob had ever heard anything of the 1959 cars. Bob recalled receiving a phone call from a fellow in California shortly after his book, "MGA: A History and Restoration Guide", was published. This fellow

said that someone had contacted him looking to sell two MGAs and one of which was a race car and was perhaps thought to be a Sebring coupe. Not having enough to go on to justify a plane ride to California, Bob did not follow up on the tip. However, Bob still had the number of the fellow and he passed it on to me. The number was quite stale, but with the use of a vintage criss-cross directory I found the name of the fellow who had called Bob.

In talking to this gentleman, he indeed recalled the cars and calling Bob, but he was not sure if he still had the seller's name around and he did not know if the seller had indeed found a buyer or if he still had the cars, but he promised to look through his notes. A month or two later he did find the name and address, but they too were long stale. However, thanks to the wonder of the Internet, I was able to find the person attempting to sell the car back in the early 80's. Indeed, he had not sold the cars but put them in storage some 20 years ago. He explained that his interests had changed and that he



would like to sell the cars (one of the cars was a standard production MGA). I asked some telltale questions like is the car RHD? Yes. Does the car have a large fuel tank that fills from the center of the trunk? Yes. Does the car have an oversized racing tachometer? Yes. No deals were made, but it seemed like this could be one of the cars and the owners promised to get down to the storage shed take some pictures and send them on to discuss the matter further. Well after another year and a half or so, I had yet to see a picture. Fortunately, my brother Jim was due to get off his ship in California and he did not mind making the trek up to Sacramento to look at the car.

What my brother was to find is another story, but I will sum it up quickly. The "storage facility" was converted chicken coups on a farmer's land. At some point the unit the owner rented was broken into and the cars were pushed outside and vandalized. The facility owner never bothered to call the owner to tell him this, but he did continue to cash the rent checks! Police were called and it was a mess, but fortunately my brother was able to lay eyes on the car and confirm it was a Sebring car. So, a deal was struck and my brother arranged transportation right then and there. Although it will take a lot of work, it appears that most all of the original factory competitions parts remained with the car. We are excited to restore this car back to its Sebring appearance for my father, former NAMGAR Chapter Coordinator, Ron Eaton. The continuing mystery and possible subject of future article is, for instance, which of the four cars is it? While the factory VIN is YD2-932, there are no records to determine which chassis was assigned which race number as that was done to Sebring without regard for recording that information against the VIN.



When the car arrived at my house in Virginia it was a welcoming party! John Wright who recently found the last 1962 Sebring car, and coupe lover Jonathan Stein came down to view the new find, as well as, Kevin Richards who assisted so much in the restoration of the David Ash Sebring car. When news broke of the find to the general MG community, Tim Coyne asked me for an article and asked, so what's your secret to these great finds? I think my reply was something to the effect of equal parts diligence, patience, and luck!

## PART 2 – THE RESTORATION - WILL BE COMING SOON.

To tease you on next month's story, here is what the car looks like after the restoration. This photo was taken at the Amelia Island Concours in 2012 where it won a blue ribbon.



Compare what it looked like when found.



## SO HOW DID THE MGVR START ANYWAY?

### THIS FROM 2006, THE 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

We have come a long way in 25 years. In 1981, Greg Prehodka founded the newsletter with 38 MG vintage racers, as vintage racing was just beginning to expand. As of December, 2006, we have 272 subscribers from across the globe including Canada, England, Germany, and Australia who race MGs from prewar models and MG T types, to MG Specials, to MGAs of the 50 s and early 60 s, to 60 s and 70 s Midgets, MGBs, MGCs, and MGB GT V-8 s. You can count among us those who have been racing their MGs since before my birth (1960), first-timers seeking to the thrill of driving their MGs at speed on a racing circuit, and our 500 th subscriber, Rachel Prehodka-Spindel, our Founder s daughter! All newcomers to MG vintage racing soon realize that while racing a common marque brings us together, it s the camaraderie and friendship that keeps us together. We truly are a Band of Brothers. Now is an exciting time to be MGVR editor. In early June, 74 MG vintage racers celebrated our 25 th anniversary by throwing a party at Hallett, where many of our band of brothers enjoyed a MG Vintage Racers first: an all MG event! The Focus Event concept is solid and growing stronger every year. Your newsletter is enjoying STRONG subscriber support. Open the pages of most vintage race publications and you will find at least one article reporting on MG vintage racing activities. The future looks bright for MG vintage racing! At Hallett, I was encouraged to see younger faces behind the wheel of their vintage steeds. As editor, I see younger subscribers, many of whom are sharing wrench time and seat time with their parents. As a parent, I see my children showing interest in vintage motor racing and MG vintage racing. Just as I am the current guardian of all that is the MG Vintage Racers Newsletter, we are all caretakers of the race cars, the brotherhood, the concepts that define MG vintage racing.

Here is a list of the original members from 1981

- Lawrie Alexander - TD Special, CA.
- Ben Bragg - TF, CT.
- Keith Brown TF, MI.
- Oliver Clubine - Lotus 6 (XPAG), Ont.
- Kevin Cox - TA, MA.
- Blair Engle - TD, FL.
- John Gardner - TD, FL.
- Rich Germano - TC, GA.
- Gary Hatch - TD, NY
- Roy Jacobson, TD, MA
- Richard Knudson, TD, NY
- Jerry Morici, TC, NJ- Al Moss, TC, CA.
- Bill Parish, TC, TN.
- Alex Quattlebaum, Cooper MG, SC
- Tony Roth, TD, FL.
- Bob Satava, TD, OH.
- George Smith, TC, CT.
- Jerry Storch, TC, NJ
- Will Bowden - TD, FL.
- Mark Brandow - TC, MN.
- Sarah Carr - TD, PA.
- Bob Coleman - TD, TN.
- Jim Denning - TD, GA.
- Beau Gable - TC, FL.
- Paul Gaynor, CT.
- Billy Gillis - TC, GA.
- Don Hoeft - TD, TX.
- Rich Kellogg, TD, GA.
- Gary McGovern, TC, GA.
- George Pardee, TF, FL.
- Greg Prehodka, TD, NJ
- Dave Raymond, N Type MG racer, CT.
- Sue Salsburg, MGA, NJ
- Tom Scott, TF, OH.
- Rick Smith, TD, MA.
- Lou Zuger, TC, CT.

**In this MG Vintage Racers Newsletter let us travel back in time to 1981 and peek at the headlines that defined the era in the year MGVR was born**

IBM introduces the PC

The first DeLorean DMC-12 rolls off the production line in Dunmurry, Northern Ireland

Ronald Reagan is inaugurated

Air traffic controllers go on strike (they get canned for their efforts)

Egyptian president Anwar Sadat is assassinated

Iran releases 52 American hostages, who had been held for 444 days

The introduction of Frequent Flyer Miles, AAdvantage introduced by American Airlines

Oscars Best Picture: Ordinary People

Raiders of The Lost Ark debuts

Grammy Award Best Album: Christopher Cross

MTV goes 24-7-first video: Video Killed the Radio

Star Rock n Roller Bill Haley dies

Star, Socialite, and, er, uh,..Paris Hilton is born

Justin Timberlake is born

Lady Diana marries Prince Charles

HIV is discovered - Scientists identify The Aids Virus

The Oakland Raiders defeat the Philadelphia Eagles 27-10 at Super Bowl XV

Nelson Piquet wins the F1 Drivers' Championship, claiming the first of his three

Williams won the Constructors' Championship for the second consecutive year.

Bobby Unser wins his third Indy

Muhammad Ali finally retires with career record of 55 wins and 5 defeats

The first London Marathon

Major League Baseball goes on strike

Major League Baseball resumes from the strike with the All-Star Game

The Los Angeles Dodgers defeat the New York Yankees, 4 games to 2,

The term INTERNET first mentioned, years away from A. Gore taking credit

First release of Donkey Kong and first debut of Nintendo's Mario

Pac Man Mania sweeps the nation

World Population reaches 1 Billion (today over 6 billion)

Average cost of a new house; \$78,200

Gallon of gas averages \$1.32

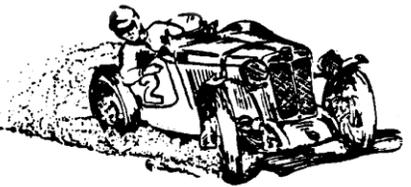
The year-end close of the Dow Jones Industrial Average is 875

The first space shuttle Columbia goes into space

*and most important*

**MG Vintage Racer Greg Prehodka founds MG Vintage Racers Newsletter**

# Competition



## MGVR FOCUS RACE FOR 2020 IS CONFIRMED AT LIME ROCK PARK

The original race date in April at Road Atlanta was cancelled, as was most of the world, due to the Covid-19 virus. We can now confirm the world is coming out from hibernation and the rescheduled Lime Rock event will happen. This also is the SVRA MG Marque event meaning any MG that registers to race has very inexpensive \$100 entry fee. Better yet, if you take the green flag for the feature race Saturday afternoon you will get your \$100 returned meaning you race for FREE. Remember, no racing on Sunday at Lime Rock. We're working on something "special" for that Sunday. Wish us luck.

Here is the provisional schedule; Races with MG's in **blue**

### Thursday, October 15

8:00am – 5:00pm Registration  
9:00am - 2:00pm/6:00pm – 7:00pm Load-in

### Friday, October 16

7:00am – 5:00pm Registration  
7:30am – 5:00pm Tech Inspection  
8:15am Mandatory Drivers Meeting-  
(base of control tower, A paddock)  
**9:05am Groups 1, 2, 3, 4 Practice**  
9:30am Groups 8, 12a, 12b Practice  
9:55am Groups 6, 10 Practice  
10:20am Groups 5, 7, 9 Practice  
10:45am IGT Qualifying 1  
11:10am TA/XGT/SGT/GT Testing 40min  
11:50am TA2 Testing 40min  
12:30pm - 1:30pm LUNCH BREAK  
**1:30pm Groups 1, 2, 3, 4 Qualifying**  
1:55pm Groups 8, 12a, 12b Qualifying  
2:20pm Groups 6, 10 Qualifying  
2:45pm Groups 5, 7, 9 Qualifying  
3:10pm TA/XGT/SGT/GT Practice 30min  
3:40pm TA2 Practice 30min  
4:10pm-5:25pm ENDURO-closed wheel only  
75 minutes, 1 pit stop  
(Groups 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, IGT)

### Saturday, October 17

8:00am—12 noon Registration  
9:05am TA/XGT/SGT/GT Qualifying 40min  
**9:45am Groups 1, 2, 3, 4 Feature Race 1**  
10:10am Groups 8, 12a, 12b Feature Race 1  
10:35am Groups 5, 7, 9 Feature Race 1  
11:00am Groups 6, 10 Feature Race 1  
11:25am IGT Feature Race 2  
1150am TA2 Qualifying 20 min  
  
1:10pm TA/XGT/SGT/GT Feature Race 65min  
**2:20pm MG Reunion Feature Race**  
2:40pm Groups 5, 7, 9 Feature Race 2  
3:00pm Groups 6, 10 Feature Race 2  
**3:20pm Groups 1, 2, 3, 4 Feature Race 2**  
3:40pm Groups 8, 12a, 12b Feature Race 2  
4:00pm IGT Feature Race 3  
4:20pm TA2 Feature Race 65min  
5:30pm End of on track activities



## SVRA 2020 Lime Rock Festival

Lime Rock Park - Lakeville, CT

October 16 - 17, 2020

Register online at [www.svra.com](http://www.svra.com)

### Driver Information

- All Drivers must hold a valid competition license with SVRA (excluding Driving School participants), another Vintage Motorsports Council club or a recognized sanctioning body such as SCCA, FIA, etc. with a current medical date. Certain groups of cars require an SVRA-approved super license.
- Non-SVRA drivers: include copy of current competition license & medical with entry. Entrants who do not hold a vintage racing license or who have not competed in a vintage event are required to participate in the SVRA Driver Orientation Program. (see DOP information on the SVRA website)
- A "Head and Neck" Restraint System (HANS) that meets the SF138.1 Standard is MANDATORY for all SVRA events. (Pre-War is exempt)

Driver: \_\_\_\_\_ Racing License Organization \_\_\_\_\_ License # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. \_\_\_\_\_

Co-Driver: \_\_\_\_\_ Racing License Organization \_\_\_\_\_ License # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Can you send/receive text messages at the race track? YES / NO (circle)

### Vehicle Information

Race Car Compliance Form, Engine Certification Form and (2) car photos must be submitted for 2020 (if not submitted in 2019). **ENTRIES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT THIS DOCUMENTATION AND INFORMATION BELOW.**

Year \_\_\_\_\_ Make \_\_\_\_\_ Model \_\_\_\_\_ Color(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Engine Disp. \_\_\_\_\_ Turbo: YES / NO - Front Brakes: DISC / DRUM - Rear Brakes: DISC / DRUM (circle)

Tires Make \_\_\_\_\_ Model \_\_\_\_\_ Size Front \_\_\_\_\_ Size Rear \_\_\_\_\_ Slicks: YES / NO

Log Book # and Org. \_\_\_\_\_ AMB Transponder # \_\_\_\_\_

Car Number Request: \_\_\_\_\_ (Above information must be completed in full)

### Crew Information - Entry Includes 3 Crew Members (Co-driver is one crew space)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

### Entry Fees - Entry Includes 4 Race Credentials

v200812

Event Activities (Please check all applicable boxes) Refunds are not available. Credit to be used for future events.

|  | Non-member | Member            |         |
|--|------------|-------------------|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> SVRA Sprint Series - 2-Day Race Weekend (no Sunday races)   | 650.00     | 595.00            | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MG Featured Marque - SVRA Sprint Series - MGs select this option for Sprint Series - \$100 Deposit Required - credit issued on green flag | 100.00     | 100.00            | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Track Damage Protection Program - Coverage up to \$2000   | 49.00      | 49.00             | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Insurance Coverage - Provided by Heacock Insurance - AD&D: \$50,000 Total & Excess Medical: \$100,000 Total                    | 39.00      | 39.00             | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Golf Cart Insurance - For Rental Carts - Provided by Heacock Insurance. Required.   Quantity: _____                                       | 65.00      | 65.00             | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Golf Cart Insurance - For Privately-Owned Carts - Provided by Heacock Insurance. Required.   Quantity: _____                              | 65.00      | 65.00             | _____   |
| Registration late after: May 4, 2020   | 150.00     | 150.00            | 150.00  |
|  |            | Minus Credit Used | (_____) |
|  |            | Total Enclosed    | _____   |

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Expires \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ CID Code \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete separate Entry Form for additional cars. Submission of Entry should not be considered acceptance of Entry

### Payment Information

Make checks payable to SVRA and mail to:  
1312 Regency Court, Southlake, TX 76092  
Phone: (888) 965-7872 Email: [kathy@svra.com](mailto:kathy@svra.com)

AMB Transponders are Mandatory. To purchase an AMB Transponder, please contact Neil Harmon at [Neilus@aol.com](mailto:Neilus@aol.com), to rent a transponder, please contact Janet Harhay at [timingscoring@svra.com](mailto:timingscoring@svra.com). The Transponder Purchase and Rental forms can be found on the SVRA website under "Forms."

As a condition of entry, entrant has read the SVRA General & Supplemental Rules and Regulations and consents to their application and interpretation by SVRA officials in their discretion and acknowledges that motor sports are dangerous and assumes all risks of participation. The applicant (including crew, driver and car owner) agrees to conform to the rules, procedures and policies of SVRA and waives any right to claim against, and covenants not to sue SVRA, its officers, directors, employees, agents or any drivers' committee with respect to the interpretation or application of any rules, procedures or policies.

**For Sale**



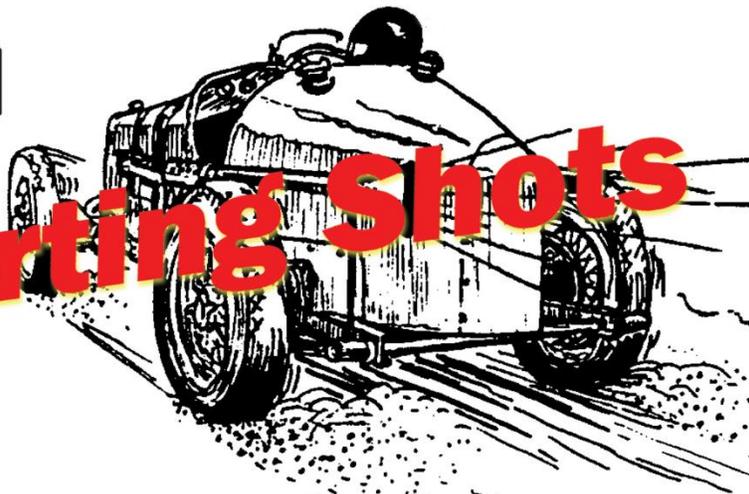
**AS YOU CAN SEE, THERE IS NOTHING IN THIS ISSUE FOR SALE  
AND THERE NEEDS TO BE**

Do you have a fender laying around? An old 6 volt generator? Wire wheels? A pair of TD headlights? Maybe a faithful car that needs a new home?

We can announce that Dan and Jane Leonard will have an MGVR merchandise listing next month. Shirts, pins, hats, bumper stickers, patches. The Leonard's will sort out what is in stock and you can see it and buy it here.



**Parting Shots**



From Thompson Speedway 1954. Two TC's ready to race

