



NEWSLETTER

Vol 38 #5 September 2020



**OCTOBER 7-8 2005
LIME ROCK PARK**



MGVR WILL CELEBRATE AT LIME ROCK ON OCTOBER 16-17

ALL MG RACE AT 2:20 PM ON SATURDAY THE 17th

From The Editor:

Things regarding the shut-down continue to get better and then get worse. One State is open for business and others are closed. Lots of folks (including me) don't get it. The US is nearly 3,000 miles across and over 1,500 miles north to south. The founding fathers, in their wisdom, called for States to have rights. They did not want the central government to run everything. What we are seeing are difference choices for different places. Montana and the Dakotas are not California or New York. They are different. Let's allow our leaders to make good choices for their areas. If we don't like what they are doing, go and vote them out. This message? Vote.

In This Issue

A story from the past about Frank Mount's 50 years with MG's

MG west coast and how two guys built what might be the best turned out MGA race cars anywhere. Scott Brown & Ed Lamantia

A tribute to the late Canadian MG ace, Ed Leavens

Not much for sale, but a very quick MGA race car and some vintage real magnesium wheels

No letters to the editor, shame on you.

No tales of MG's past and the great times you had, shame on you.

My 50 Year Association with MGs

1958 – 2008

by Frank Mount

The May 2008 VRG Vintage Race at the New Hampshire Motor Speedway was a milestone for me. It marked 50 years to the month since I first raced an MG TC.

My interest in English sports cars started as young teenager reading the early copies of Road and Track and Sports Cars Illustrated. When I turned 16 years old in 1955, I bought my first British car, a 1948 Morris 8 for \$65.00. It was a great little car, but too slow, so a friend and I decided to build aluminum bodied special from the chassis of a 1942 Austin 8. It resembled a Dellow trials car that we had read about in various English publications. I used this special as my daily driver while all of my local friends had graduated to British motorcycles.

My Father was dead set against me having a motorcycle so in the summer of 1957 he loaned me the \$700.00 that I needed to acquire my first TC. It was a well used but tidy, solid car and by the end of that summer I had reworked the engine and repainted it, bringing it up to a condition that I was quite proud of. When I returned to school that fall, I began working at a gas station where the owner and several customers had TCs. These guys were interested in the competition side of the sports car scene and although they didn't compete, they would go to Watkins Glen each fall and spectate and at the local hill climbs and airport races.

For me just seeing these events was not enough - I had to get involved. In the spring of 1958, I began entering the local races at Harewood Acres and Green Acres Raceway. These were both abandoned 2nd world war air training bases. The farmer would round up the sheep on the weekend of a race and for about a \$20.00 entry fee we were racing. Initially the only safety equipment required was a lap belt, helmet, and a Pyrene (the deadly stuff) fire extinguisher. Within a year or so either a roll bar or grab handle on the floor was required. I was one of the first to install a roll bar. I made it myself out of exhaust pipe tubing and since I had no way to bend it, the top was ½ of an octagon.

The fall of 1958 saw me start a 3 year course at Ryerson Tech. in Mechanical Engineering. This was more of a hands-on approach to engineering and involved some machine shop and welding labs which gave me a chance to make more extreme modifications to the race TC. By the fall of 1959 I had built anti wind-up bars for the front axle and fabricated an extractor exhaust manifold to go with the

newly installed factory racing camshaft. Since the manifold was routed outside the steering column it was necessary to cut a large hole in the front fender.

During this period, my enthusiasm for what were already outdated MG rubbed off on some other friends and we formed what we called the “Ontario MG “T” Series Racing Team”. The group consisted of about 8 Toronto area guys, some with highly modified TCs and TDs. My main competition in this group was a TD owned by Bill Lepper, which had an engine built by me to similar specs as mine. This same TD coincidentally is currently owned and raced as the pride and joy of Jeffrey Renshaw (the beautiful BRG TD #951).

The spring of 1961 was a big change for me. I graduated from Ryerson Polytechnical Institute and Mosport International Raceway began operations. A racing friend of mine bought the factory sponsored Austin Healy 3000 from Austin of Canada, which meant that his 1958 Twin Cam was for sale. My Father was so pleased that I had actually graduated with a diploma that when asked for a \$2,000 loan to buy the car he paid for it outright. In the first week of May Austin of Canada were sponsoring a press day at the new, untried Mosport circuit and my friend, the new owner of their Healey 3000 could not get the day off work, so he asked if I could drive them around in his new steed. Fortunately, I had one free week until I started my new job, so I was happy to fill in. This gave me the opportunity to be one of the first to drive a race car on the Mosport track.

Although my new Twin Cam had always been a race car the only modifications that it had were a close ratio box, a sway bar and an extra set of Andrex shocks on the front, mounted on the “A” arm. We raced the Twin Cam at all the local events at Harewood and Green Acres and made one trip to the then new Waterford Hills track and one trip to the Watkins Glen September event (probably 1962). The only improvement I made to the Twin Cam was to fit a set of Iskenderian racing cams. Each spring a new set of street radials would be installed and when they were done, we were done for the season. If we qualified for the 1 hour feature race we would only run if it was raining to save the tires. By the mid 60’s all the hot Twin Cams had been retired leaving just my friend Hugh Stark and myself campaigning in the all MG races at Greenacres. The pushrod MGAs still hadn’t been developed to today’s standards so Hugh and I would finish 1st and 2nd. We were uncompetitive against the Porsche Carreras in the 1600cc class and we were getting bored, so a plan was formulated to build two Chevy V8 powered Twin Cams. Probably one too many beers were consumed while making this commitment. Hugh Stark was a law student and although he was a good driver, the mechanical part was in my hands. His father on the other hand, ran a Studebaker garage and had some low cost connections with G.M. Hugh applied for a \$1,000 student loan and I borrowed \$1,000 from the



bank to buy “furniture” and we were in business. Through the garage we bought new 327 solid lifter Corvette short blocks and 2 Muncie 4 speed close ratio boxes. At that time, I still had enough money left to buy heads from the auto wreckers and other parts required. Hugh’s Dad spotted him new fuel injection heads so as usual his car would have a little more power than mine. The Stark

Studebaker dealership provided two positraction units for the rear axles. They had splines in the diff unit that matched the MGA, so I cut the outer ends of the Twin Cam axle housings off and welded them to the center part of Studebaker Lark rear axle assembly. Doing something like that today would be considered sacrilege. The engine was placed so that it was centered where the old cross member was that the pedals mounted on. This required moving the seat back into the rear deck slightly, lengthening the steering column, and a very short drive shaft. My car weighed 2050 lbs. – 1050 lbs. front, 1000 lbs. rear. To widen the rims, I cut them in half and welded a 1 ½ strip of similar gauge steel in place. A little scary, but the price was right. The next spring they were ready for a test race at the old Harwood airport track. I had no previous experience with Holley carburetors and at the end of the first run down the straight the second two barrels stayed open and caused an exciting ride off the end into a field of cattle corn. Back to the paddock and a linkage change and we were good to go. The car went really fast but was too powerful for the stock MG Twin Cam brakes and suspension. In the first race I started from the second row with a space between George Eaton’s new 427 Cobra and the Gories Chevrolet 427 Corvette. When the flag dropped I shot through the hole and beat them both to the first corner by a good margin, but by the time we got to the end of the first straight, they had got up to speed and simply powered by me in the corner.

The first outing was great fun even if not entirely successful. On the way home on Sunday (no Sunday racing in Canada in those days) we stopped at the Cayuga Drag strip to take part in a day sponsored by the Sports Car Club of Toronto. My

car ran the ¼ mile in 12.4 seconds and Hugh's ran 11.7, a run where he shifted from 1st to 4th accidentally and didn't bother to correct.

The next race for the beasts was at Mosport. The outing proved to me that 150 MPH up the back straight hill was too fast for the rest of the car. With a lot more development of suspension, brakes, wheels etc. it could have been made to work but at that time in my life I was starting a family and about to build a house so I packed it in and sold it for money to pay for building supplies. For about 10 years I had no mechanical toy's and spent most of my time working.



Mock Grid at Mosport

In about 1976 I bought my first off-road motorcycle and then began a 20 year period of competing in cross country motorcycle endures.

In 1994 Connie and I ran into Bob Grunau at a car show. I had built a house for Bob's brother in 1975 and subsequently built the foundation for Bob's large MG shop and garage at his home in Mississauga, Ontario so he knew of my MG connection. He talked us into buying a restored TC that he was selling for a friend and we were back in MGs again. It only took a few MG social events for me to realize that I should get back into racing MGs, only this time in vintage races. It would not be hard to give up riding enduros because at my age recovering from the inevitable injuries took longer and longer. In 1996 Bob and I decided to each build a race car from some of the masses of MG parts that he has collected over his life. I decided to go with a TC rather than a Twin Cam MGA because I always thought that I had more fun racing the TC than I did with the Twin Cam. Perhaps it was just the age I was at.

Our target was to have the cars finished in time for the 50th anniversary of Watkins Glen racetrack and be part of the MGVR Focus Event that September. I had to have two races run prior to the event because my previous experience did not count towards getting my CASC racing license. Even the fact that I had

been a senior driving instructor and run a drivers school in 1964 didn't count. My car was slightly behind schedule and Bob let me drive his TC for one race at Mosport. I then did my second event at Waterford Hills and the car and I were ready for the Glen in September. It was a great event except my valve cover gasket came loose and I ran out of oil and cooked the rod bearings. We took it apart at the track and replaced the rod bearings with a set graciously loaned by Les Gonda. (Our TCs used MGB rod bearings.) The repair lasted the weekend and allowed us to do the old course tour which was the highlight of the first year back racing. When properly overhauling the engine, I found that the new billet crank from Pheonix in England had been overheated and had a deep crack at the edge of one journal. \$2500 later, we were ready for season two the next spring.

When we started vintage racing we were allowed to run the TCs in the Prewar group with the VSCCA and I always enjoyed this group the most. When we got the boot from this class I decided that I needed a Prewar MG. Since I knew all about the XPAG engines and nothing about the earlier overhead cam engines this meant that a 1939 TB was the only Prewar MG that fit my requirement. In 2004 while on a tour in England with the Little British Car Company, we visited Barry Walker's showroom and shop near Stratford. There in the lineup of cars for sale was a TB Special in a color that Connie particularly liked. We took a casual look and some photos and brought a copy of a tech sheet on the car home. By the time we reached home we had decided that if the VSCCA would issue us a Log Book for the car then we would have it sent to Canada. I sure wished that I had looked it over more carefully when we were in England. Now we were buying it as described. When it arrived, I put in some gas and started it up. I took it for a run down the road and found that I couldn't drive it properly because of the strange cramped pedal arrangement. After some welding and modifications, I got it to where I could comfortably drive it. Other than lots of little problems the TB has been a good solid car and gets used at every event that allows Prewar cars.

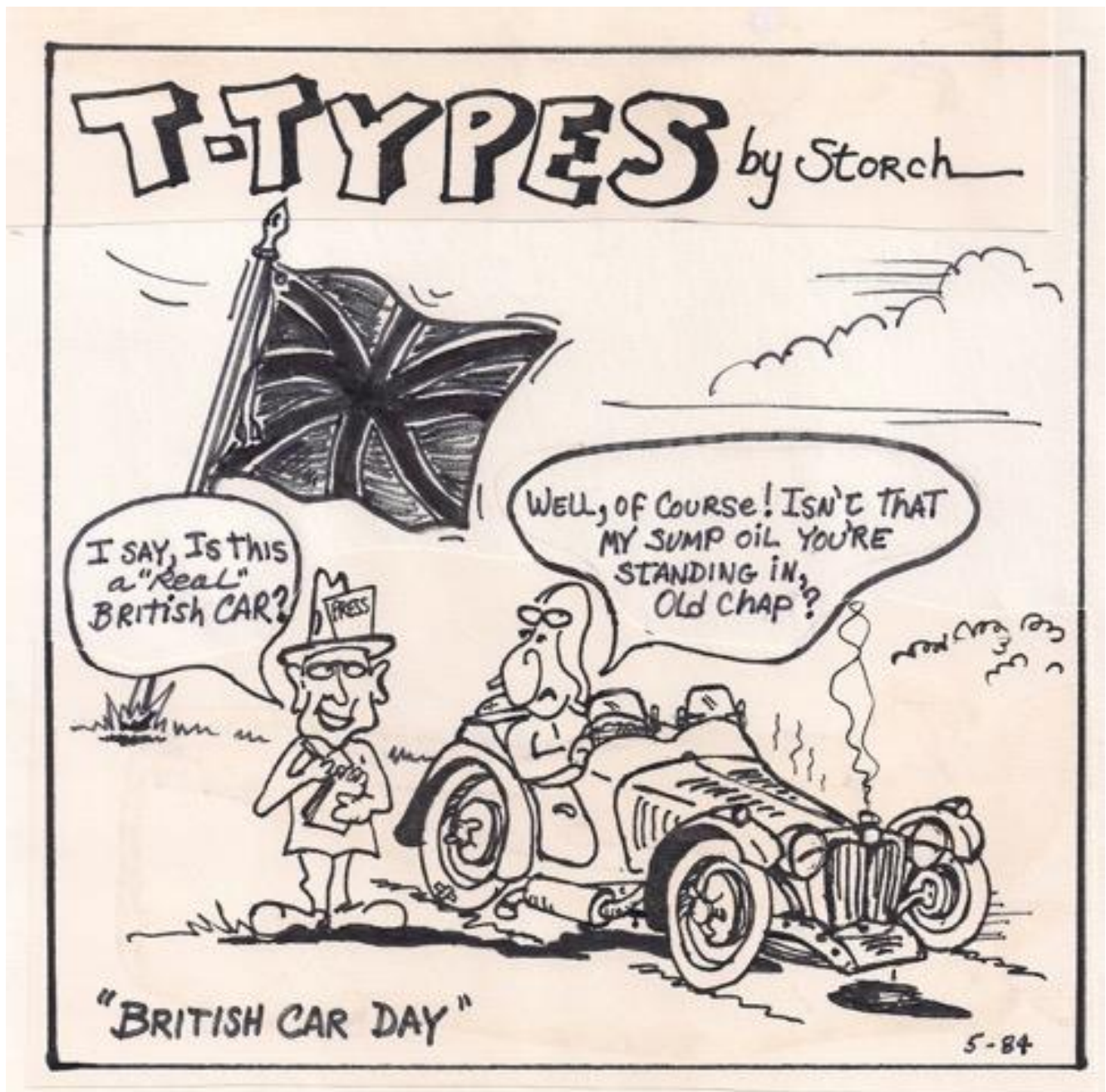
In February of 2007 we shipped "Babe" (named because of the pig on the rad cap) to the South Island of New Zealand to compete in the Southern Festival of Speed, a four race series that runs on consecutive weekends. Although we had a major supercharger failure at the first event, we managed to make all four events, one with borrowed manifold and carbs and the last two with the supercharger miraculously repaired by the machine shop at Auto Restorations in Christchurch.

For the balance of the 2007 season we took in the usual U.S. events including a try at Mount Equinox which was one venue that I had always wanted to try. The course was really too rough for "Babe" but we managed a run just under 6

minutes which for 1350cc was quite satisfying. The highlight of the 2007 season was the MG focus event at Mid Ohio.

The 2008 season is shaping up really well with the Focus Event at the new NJMP track. This will give us the new track for 2008. Each year since starting vintage racing in 1998 we have managed to race at one new venue each year. I don't know how many more years I will be lucky enough to race, but I think there are enough tracks that I haven't been at yet to see me through.

Editors Note: Here in 2020 it is pretty clear that when Frank wrote this in 2008, he had a lot more years left. And he's not done yet.



Last month we honored Kent Prather and Dave Smith for being inducted into the Watkins Glen walk of fame. Another MGVR veteran was so honored in 2019 and we tell his story now.

My racing connection with Watkins Glen goes back to 1951 when my Dad took me to my first race there. They were still racing through the streets and yes, the TC and TD MGs had light under them as they flew over the railroad tracks before you head to the Big Bend on the old course.

My first sports car was a very used '57 Healey 100-Six I bought in 1962. I was in college then, so I couldn't afford to go racing, but I did join the Finger Lakes region of SCCA and became a corner worker. This was during the "Golden Years" of racing at the Glen and I worked regionals, nationals, Can Am, Trans Am and many Formula 1 races.

In 1966, I bought an MGB (and still have it) with overdrive and realized how much better it handled than my old Healey. In 1989 Bob Burns, a friend from SCCA, sold me his '62 MGA 1600 MK II. It was a "club racer" and as many did in the 60s, Bob raced it on weekends and drove it on the street during the week. When I got behind the wheel of that MGA, I knew instantly that was the car I'd go racing in.

By this time I was a member of the Western NY MG Car Club. Joe Tierno was also a member and racing the x-Spanky Smith/Bob Bucher "029". I knew the 1994 40th Anniversary of the Collier Cup was coming up and asked Joe what I had to do to get into that event. He gave me good information about car and driver preparation and in 1993 I took a 3 day Track Master school at the Glen and had a roll bar and fuel cell installed in my MGA.



That 40th Anniversary CC event was the first time I was part of the MGVR “band of brothers”. Greg Prehodka and Joe organized that event and we had about 50 MGs racing. That race set the standard for all the other Collier Cup reunions. I met a lot of great MG racers at that event, including some who had raced at the Glen during the “Through The Streets” era.

I raced my A for about 5 years with the same Stage 3 motor Burns had used. I also raced on Dunlop street radials. Vintage racing was much simpler then, but we had great fun and racing on and off the track. At that time, I decided to have Dave Smith build a 1622 engine that as the motor I was using was the original numbers matching one. We still stayed with Stage 3 tune, but with improved rods, cam and crank preparation.

As part of MGVR I was fortunate to work on 2 Collier Cup Anniversaries at the Glen. The 50th in 2004, I worked with Greg, Mark Palmer and Bill Hollingsworth. That was the year we had 143 MGs racing and had to have 2 Collier Cup races. That was also the year that Bill Hollingsworth and I were awarded the Collier Cup. In 2014, I was part of the team that organized the 60th CC Anniversary event and we had about 100 MGs racing. That was also my 20th year racing 222 and time to retire.



There is one race that was The Best Glen on track time I ever had. It was the 2012 Collier Cup race that was run in the worst rainstorm I can remember. 222 and I always did well in the

rain and so I was looking forward to moving up a few places during the event. What I didn't know was that Jim Holody, in his Twin Cam, had the same idea. By the start of lap 2 we had passed every MG except for 2 MGBs. This went on for many laps till I spun going into turn 8. Jim missed hitting me and took the gravel

trap. I restarted and to my surprise, I had another Canadian, David Good in his MGA, on my tail. At the checker, I was ahead by half a front fender and finished 3rd overall and won the Bucher/Decker Cup that year. As you can see, racing at Watkins Glen has been a major part of my life since 1951. Along the way, I've met some great folks that I've had fun with on and off the track. A blessing and much more than I deserved in the MG part of my life!

When I was inducted into the Watkins Glen Walk of Fame in 2019, it was a complete surprise! I was nominated by someone I met in SCCA back in the 1960s, Gary Morgan. Gary raced everything including specials, a Healey, Daimler SP-250, a Corvette and, in Trans Am, one of the first 20 special GM built Camaros. He and Bill Green, Historian for the IMRRC, did the presentation. A truly great honor for me I do not deserve, but my stone is there on Franklin Street, so it must have really happened.



For Sale



FIVE GENUINE, ACTUAL 1960's MINILITE MAGNESIUM WHEELS.

Centred 185R15 metric radial tires are mounted on 4 of them.

No cracks, little damage other than 40+ years of life. Used by Vern Harvey on his MGA race car and later on the road. Lug nuts and spacers included. You cannot buy magnesium wheels like these. Clean like new or keep original. Not aluminum replicas but the real, period correct wheels.



\$500 for two or \$900 for all four, shipping not included
Dave Nicholas davnik6@gmail.com

1960 MGA RACE CAR – VERY FAST



Race Ready
Stored and maintained by Tivvy Shenton
VSCCA Log Book
Prather Stage 4 1622cc Motor 144 hp
Billet Crankshaft – 7500 rpm redline
Lowered Suspension
Nice Instrument Package
EGT Gauges
Accusump Oil Pressure System
Roll Bar – Intrusion Cage
Custom Windscreen
Front Disks
MGB Rear Brake Adjusters
Fire Suppression System
Custom Tilton Brake Pedal Assembly &
Balance Bar
Custom Wiring Harness
Close Ratio Straight Cut Gearbox
Welded 4.3:1 Diff prepared by Kent Prather

Spare 4.1:1 Differential
MGB Front End Trunions
Battery moved to rear
Corner Weights
Adjustable Rear Springs
Shifter Lock Out
72 Spoke Wheels
Aluminum Radiator/Heat Exchanger
Prather Designed Cooling System
Lightweight Racing Seats
Tow Hooks
Fuel Cell Bladder never used
72 Spoke Dayton Wire Wheels

Car was prepped by Kent Prather 8 time SCCA National Champion in his Kansas Shop – Prather drove it and tuned the car himself at speed in a SVRA event. Call him about the car.

CONTACT JAY NADELSON nadelson@alum.mit.edu
917-952-4664

MGVR “Official” Regalia

Dan & Jane Leonard

Email: ddl@leonardpaper.com telephone 410-343-0365

Outer Banks Polo, tan with dark accent
stitched logo, sizes Small thru XL \$30.00

Long Sleeve Blue Denim \$25.00
stitched logo, sizes Small thru XL **NEW LOWER PRICE**

Sweatshirt, Gray Heavy Weight (perfect for the fall) \$20.00
stitched logo, sizes Small thru XXL **NEW LOWER PRICE**

Gray T-Shirt, MG collage; sizes Small thru XL \$12.00

Tan hat, embroidered logo, one size fits all \$10.00

Ladies Pink Hat with embroidered logo \$10.00

Ladies White Polo \$25.00

MGVR Bumper Sticker \$3.00

Embroidered Patch \$4.00

New Item MGVR Trailer Stickers Octagon 11-1/4” \$10.00*

Small MGVR stickers Octagon 5 1/2” \$2.50*

MGVR Challenge Coin ‘don’t leave home without it’ \$10.00

Twill Button Down Shirt, Blue, or Putty \$32.00

Ed Leavens (1932 – 2020)

Canadian sports car race driver and businessman Ed Leavens passed away on Thursday, August 13th. Ed was known as “Canada’s Best Driver” and in 1959, 1960 and 1961 he raced MGAs and Austin Healey Sprites at Sebring for the BMC Factory team. He gave up his racing career to start his automotive dealership in London, Ontario selling MGs, Triumphs, Jaguars and Austins.



In 1957, he co-drove a 1956 MGA with Alan Miller at the 12 Hour Endurance race in Sebring, Florida. This Canadian entry was managed by Jim Fergusson and that year the team award was won by the MGAs and this car won 1st in Class. The car was later found in a barn outside of Toronto, Ontario by John Burgess who restored it back to its original form and is now owned/raced at Canadian and American events by Lino Baggio.

Ed was picked up by the BMC Factory team and was invited to go to the Bonneville Salt Flats in 1959 with the team to attempt new land speed records with two experimental cars. EX181 was a streamlined, supercharged MGA that was driven by Stirling Moss and Phil Hill. Ed drove X219, a streamlined, supercharged Austin Healey Sprite with Tommy Wisdom and Gus Ehrman. Both cars were very successful and set new world records for their class.

For the 1960 Sebring race, BMC entered 3 MGA Twin Cam roadsters with removable hard tops.

Twin Cam #38 was the British entry, driven by Colin Escort and Ted Lund. This car did not finish due to a broken valve.

Twin Cam #39 was the Canadian entry, driven by Ed Leavens and Fred Hayes. This car finished 3rd in Class behind two Porsches.

Twin Cam #40 was the American entry, driven by Dan Flaherty and Jim Parkinson. This car finished 4th in Class.

Not only was Ed a factory driver for BMC, he also was a factory driver for Gorrie Chevrolet (Corvette) in Toronto where he did extremely well at tracks in Canada and the US, such as Harewood , Green Acres and Watkins Glen.

In 1999, the North American MGA Register hosted a Regional Get Together in Grand Bend, Ontario. Ed was the guest speaker at the banquet and reviewed with the over 100 attendees his BMC racing career complete with a slide show of his personal pictures. Also, featured were two of the MGAs that raced at Sebring in 1960, cars #39 and #40, as well as a factory prepared Sebring specification MGA race car that was shipped to Canada for a private race driver. Ed said, “the last time he saw #39 was when he slammed the door after the Sebring race” in 1960. Ed reacquainted himself with #39 as he sat behind the wheel and drove it in the rallye that had been organized for the attendees.

Ed was inducted into the Canadian Motorsport Hall of Fame in 1997. He leaves behind his wife Pat, daughter Kelly Hodgins, sons Paul and Chris, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.





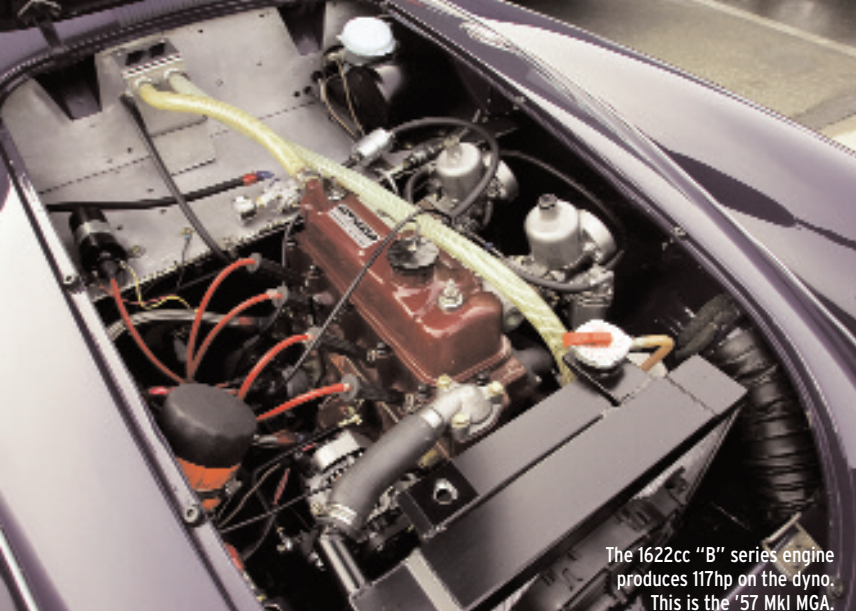
Two cars, two friends, one passion. VM heads to Infineon Raceway to sample not one but two beautifully-prepared MGA vintage race cars.

BY D. RANDY RIGGS.
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KYLE BURT.

TRACK DRIVE



Scott Brown (No. 41) and Ed Lamantia are usually locked in battle with their near identical MGAs, here heading through Infineon Raceway's Turn 6.



The 1622cc "B" series engine produces 117hp on the dyno. This is the '57 Mki MGA.

There was a time in postwar America when the words "sports car" were mentioned that the first image coming to mind was that of an MG. Sports cars were all about fun and freedom, and for the majority of enthusiasts in the early 1950s, a sports car meant an MG—period. Sure, there were others—Jags and Triumphs and Healeys—but the most popular and affordable two-seater carried the octagon-shaped badge of Morris Garages.

An MG was the antithesis of the family sedan, small and maneuverable—its agile handling encouraging drivers to up the fun factor by entering into competitions—rallies, hillclimbs or road races. Dropping the top, folding the windshield, taping the headlights and painting numbers on the doors with shoe polish could add up to a very fun weekend, as owners of MGs—and other sports cars—soon found out.



Are we having fun yet? Ed (left) and Scott have a ball every time they roll their MGAs on track.

Spring forward 50 years, and racers who own MGs with numbers on the doors are still finding that fun weekends are in store whenever they line up their cars on a starting grid at a vintage race. Two such men on the West Coast are Ed Lamentia II and Scott Brown, each driving near-identical MGAs, a popular model introduced in 1955 and in production until 1962.

Ed and Scott met some 25 years ago and have been pals ever since. They raced together back in the late '80s in Datsuns (Ed ran F.A.R. Performance) but hung up their driving gloves for several years, until the itch once again needed scratching.

At the time, Ed's father had recently passed away, and Ed had photos of cars that his dad raced back in the '50s and '60s in Northern California, one of them a '57 MGA with a faired-in headrest. Smitten by what they saw, a search for an MG took them to Chicago where a svelte little "A" was waiting.

The soon-to-be No. 31—a 1962 MGA MkII (one of 8719 built)—had been raced all over the Midwest for many years. After a freshening up, the two buddies co-drove it, Ed in Group 4 (small bore production) and Scott in Group 2 (large bore production). After two race seasons, the decision was made to do a cosmetic and mechanical restoration, with engine, gearbox and full suspension updates by MG guru Bob Yarwood. Jack Perkins did the British Racing Green paint and bodywork, re-creating the look of the MG factory's EX182 '55 Le Mans racer. The end result is spectacular.

By the end of their third racing season the decision was made to find another MGA. Two drivers in one car were hard on the mechanicals, although race results were excellent, so much so that the two drivers often heard talk from the competition—"they must be cheating."

"Well, if 'cheating' means racing for 25 years, training, running karts to stay sharp and in shape and paying attention continuously to set-up and mechanicals, then I guess it's cheating," says Scott.

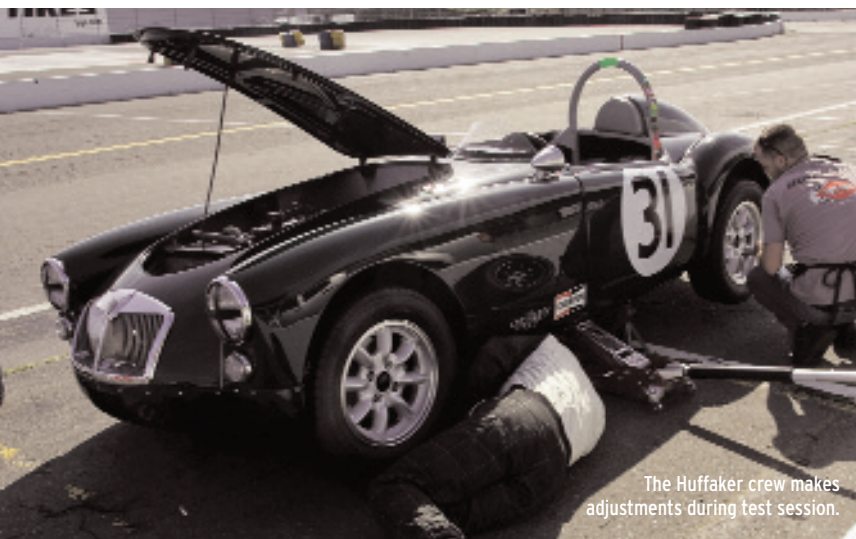
Eventually a second MGA was located, now Scott's No. 41 D-Type blue '57 MGA MkI roadster that was once a street car built into a race car in the mid-'70s. Three log books later and 10 years of storage meant that it was very tired when discovered, but the two friends vowed to restore it.



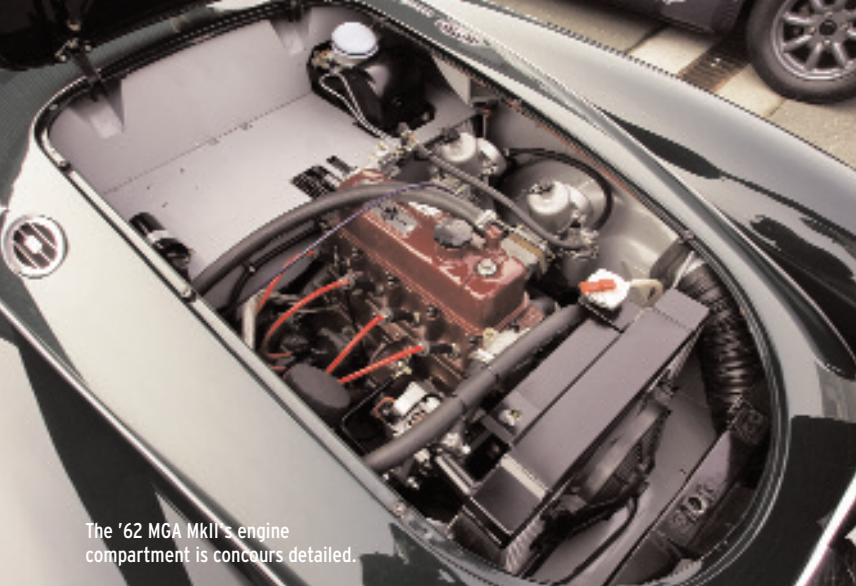
It is hoped that the "oil slick" warning light will never come on.



Panasport wheels work great with grippy Hoosiers.



The Huffaker crew makes adjustments during test session.



The '62 MGA MkII's engine compartment is concours detailed.



Attention to detail helps make both cars successful on the track.



Both MGs run a 4:55 rear axle ratio for both Laguna and Infineon.



Cockpit offers up the perfect driving position.

When it showed up on a race grid before it was returned to its present condition, a fellow racer asked, "Why would you drive that pile?" Well, the name stuck and the No. 41 is now known as "The Pile." Impeccably restored in the winter of 2004-'05 by Jack Perkins, the No. 41 is usually locked in battle with Ed's No. 31 and other than color and number, is as identical as they could make the two cars. Each is built to 1967 SCCA F-Production regulations, powered by 1622cc 4-cylinder engines. On the dyno they produce 117-119 horsepower. The cars weigh about 1800 lb.

Although the owners do their own maintenance, Huffaker Engineering (huffakerengineering.com) oversees major service work and set-ups. Between everyone involved, an incredible amount of time, effort and energy (money, too) has been invested in both cars, hundreds of little details that make for a successful on-track effort.

On Track

Not having driven an MGA since high school, I was excited about sharing seat time with the owners and 1984 Formula Atlantic Champion and former IMSA driver Dan Marvin, who was here to help dial-in the MGs' suspension settings and spring rates.

Slinking down into the upholstered Vintage 31 seat, I find it the perfect fit; tach, gauges, fire bottle handle and switches all tightly clustered smack dab in front of your face. Pedal placement is just right for heel/toeing and it's as if the cockpit was made for me.

Expecting the usual sharp bark of the exhaust at fire-up, the sound is more mellow, thanks to Hushpower mufflers. I slip the 4-speed into first and roll No. 41 out of Infineon Raceway's pit lane, with Dan Marvin in the No. 31 right behind. I need to get some heat into the bias-ply Hoosier 5:50x15s and get comfortable with the car's handling.

On the second lap I wave by a faster formula car and tuck in behind just as we head for the uphill blind crest of Infineon's Turn 3A. That's when the formula car does a snap spin right there—a near miss that had me veering left off the pavement briefly to avoid a collision, Marvin squeaking by over on the right.

Drama over, I ramp up the speed and am impressed by how balanced the car is. With just over 115hp on tap, it's a momentum car for sure, but you can really carry speed into a corner, tap the brakes and drop into the apex without understeer. It goes right where you point it, and I now know why both these cars give the drum-braked Corvettes fits, because they can carry speed into and through the corners where the Corvettes cannot. In 10 minutes time I had complete trust in the car.

Following Marvin, I watch a maestro at work, and really have to drive my butt off to keep him in sight. He makes it all seem effortless, but part of this is how well both of these cars are dialed-in, as beautiful to drive at the edge of the envelope as they are to look at. It's no surprise that the cars have won awards for both performance and appearance.

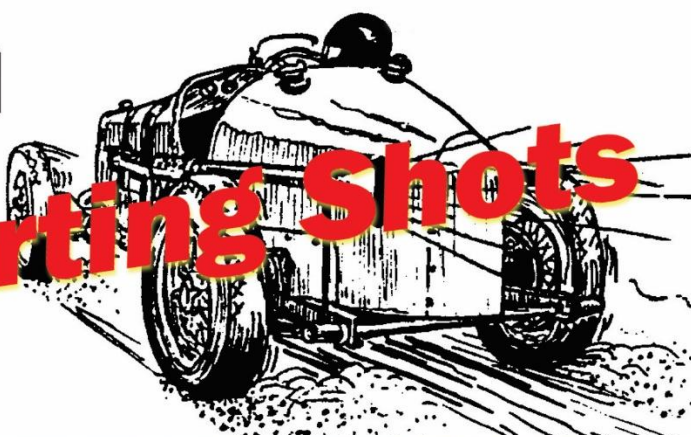
Back in pit lane, Marvin and I swap cars to sample the tiny differences in personality between the 31 and 41. They are each fun, friendly machines that make a driver's eyes light up. No wonder they run nose-to-tail at nearly every event.

Ed and Scott say, "We hope our cars inspire fond memories for vintage enthusiasts everywhere."

They do, indeed! 



Parting Shots



This MGA Roadster (*The Pile*) started its long racing career after being built by a father and son team in Southern California. Twenty of those years were spent filling three log books until it was put in storage. Discovered sitting and forgotten by Scott Brown and Ed Lamantia, they vowed to restore it to its original condition. "Why would you drive that pile?" a fellow racer asked at the time. Needless to say, the name stuck and would forever be known as "The Pile" driven by Scott Brown. Restored in the winter of 04/05, the #41 MGA races anywhere from Portland to Monterey usually locked in battle with another famous MGA, Vintage 31's namesake, Fast Eddie Lamantia's #31. General Racing's Steve Earle awarded Scott for "Best Presentation and Performance" at the 2007 Wine Country Classic and at the 2008 Rolex Monterey Historic Race. "The Pile" is dedicated to my father who shared his passion of racing with me at a very young age. Vintage 31 is dedicated to the integrity and sportsmanship of vintage racing, building camaraderie with every turn. *We hope our cars inspire fond memories for vintage enthusiasts everywhere.*



Sears Point - 2010
First race with new graphics in memory
of my Scottish father.



General Racing's
Wine Country Classic - 2007
Best Presentation & Performance Award



Having more fun than I can express
waving to the crowd at the famous
Laguna Seca Corkscrew.



General Racing's
Rolex Monterey Historic Race - 2008
Best Presentation & Performance Award