



NEWSLETTER

Vol 38 #7 November 2020



December 1962

**A one week old MGA 1600 MkII Deluxe
Sits lonely and cold during a typical New York winter day**

**The Good News is this car, fully restored, is now
owned by Dan Suter**

From The Editor:

I hope everyone had a good Thanksgiving. Many States had very strict rules on this family holiday, limiting guests to only a few. Of course, the Governors of those States could do what they wanted, rank has its privileges. We can only hope and pray that in less than a month we can celebrate Christmas with our families and start 2021 with some renewed enthusiasm. I'm sure ready.

In This Issue

A story first published in MG Magazine by Dawn Kirtland. We all know the name Morris Garage, but some may not know there was an MG dealer that was also Morris Garage. Gordon Morris was the owner and his small shop in upstate New York was "the" place to go if you wanted to race MG's or just to talk shop with pure enthusiasts.

MG **Bob Schoeplein** tells a quick tale about getting conned into losing a race long ago he calls "you're never too old to learn."

More items For Sale. Those of you who want performance or racing pieces have to contact 6 time National Champ **Kent Prather**. He is retiring from fulltime race prep, and from personal experience, I can say what he offers is the best. **Manley Ford** has more pieces and we still have **Sarah Carr's** parts and those genuine, period correct Minilite wheels.

Finally some interesting letters to the editor, we need more No tales of MG's past and the great times you had, shame on you.

Gordie Morris: MR. MG"

By Dawn Kirtland



"He loved M.G.s so much. His friends and customers used to call him 'Mr. M.G.'" Tavy (Octavia) Morris smiles warmly as she thinks back to those days in the 1950s when her late husband, Gordie Morris, was most active with his M.G. career. "The first M.G. Gordie ever owned was a Green, 1949 TC." Tavy tells this story with a chuckle. "He bought it in Binghamton-he went there and drove that silly thing home and I thought he'd lost his mind!"

Although he got his first M.G. in 1950, Gordie's interest in cars began when he was a child. He would write away to dealers, asking them to send their catalogs, for he liked to flip through the color pages and dream about having a car when he got older. Tavy recalls one of the earliest tales about Gordie: "One day a Duesenberg came up the road from New York City. Gordie got scared-he ran and hid. His mother had to explain to the salesman that her eleven year old son only wanted the pictures, not for the dealer to send someone to try to sell a car."

At the time Gordie got involved with dealing MG', he worked nights for the phone company. He worked days selling M.G.s for a lawyer near Albany, who wanted to get in the business. Between 1953-1955 Gordie sold and serviced M.G.s, when and late in '55 he became a full-fledged dealer, Morris Garage was born! Tavy says, "He became a dealer and left the phone company, which was a great big gamble. It was a hobby that turned into a business."

Gordie kept Morris Garage for over twenty years. It began as a farm with its first office being a red barn. As time went on and more space was needed, the barn was expanded. Gordie would keep anywhere from two to ten or twelve cars on the lot at a time. He didn't keep too many, because he didn't have a showroom. The summer months kept more cars out, for the cars would get buried by the snow in the wintertime. Tavy emphasizes how much Gordie loved cars. "He was the kind of person where if he didn't think you'd appreciate the car, he wouldn't sell it to you."

Tavy illustrates this point by explaining how a man who had a drinking problem wrecked two cars that Gordie sold him. Gordie refused to sell him a third car by saying, "No. You're giving the car a bad reputation."

Clark Morris appreciated his father's dedication to the automobile, agreeing with Tavy that Gordie loved the cars more than the customer. He says, "You can't find that today-anywhere. They will sell you anything they can sell you."

Of course, there were those certain customers that Gordie was fond of. He never sold M.G.s to any celebrities, but he did have an airline pilot for a customer. Tavy remembers that Gordie would say to him, "You always make me feel better when you walk in here. I see you've made another flight and you got back safe!"

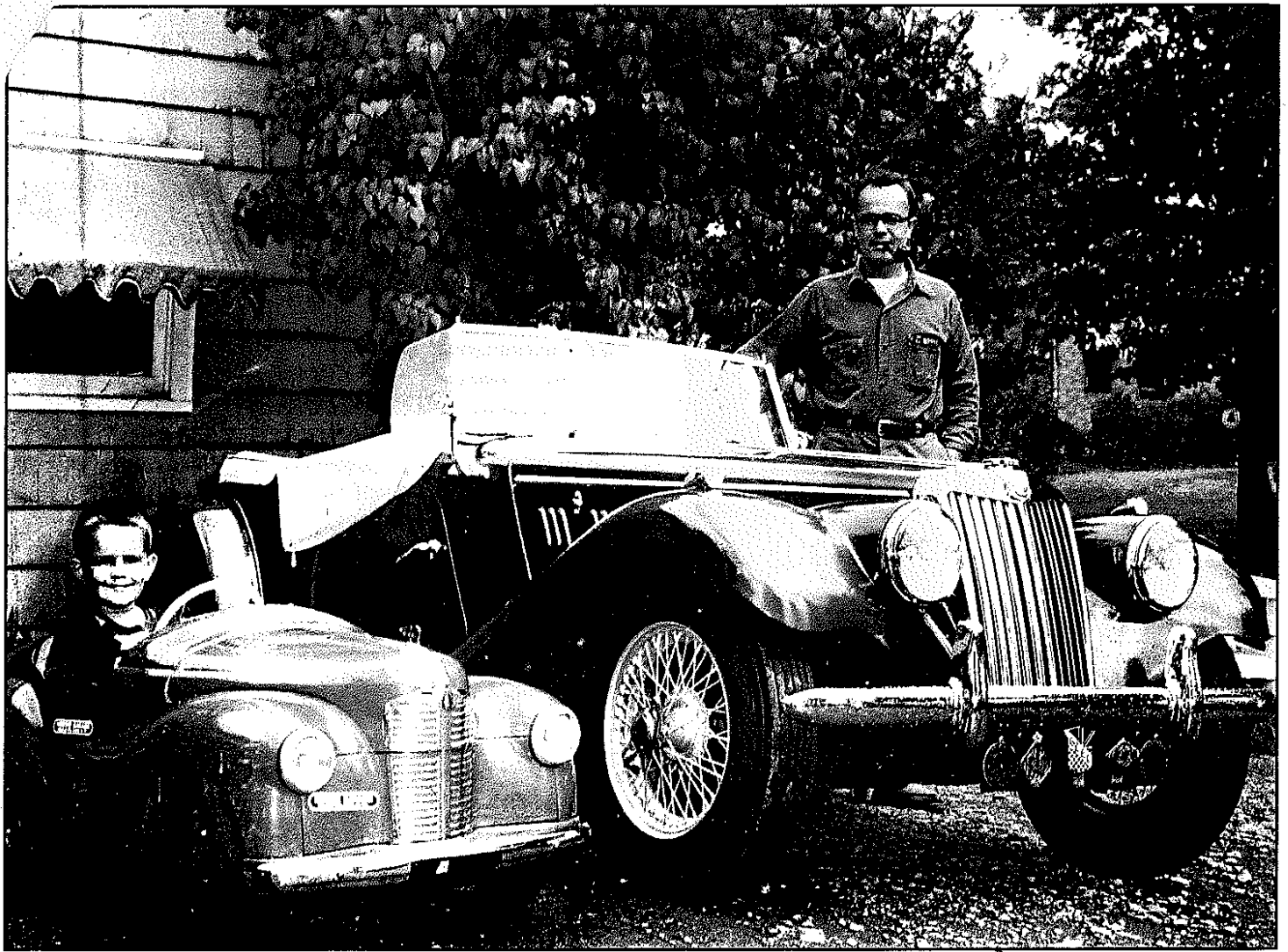
Two of Gordie's best customers were people who worked for Morris Garage. Sherm Decker was one of the original three sales he made, enabling Gordie to become a dealer. Hugh Francis still owns his Twin Cam, a car that was very special to Gordie.

Other customers included Bob Poupard, the man responsible for programming the launch angle for the Saturn Five Missile, and Danny Trimmer, a "big guy" of AT&T.

Gordie sponsored Sherm Decker in racing MGAs. Tavy boasts that Sherm was "...one of the best M.G. drivers out of Watkins Glenn, or anyplace."

Clark adds, "He had great, great success with running an MGA. He would run with the Porsches and place second and third against the Porsche class. Sherm was always first in his class."





Gordie Morris with a new TF and his son Clark in an Austin Pedal Car. Morris Garage was all British

Clark goes on to explain that Sherm was not only a fine driver, but he was "...able to prepare the car so well that it was good for the shop. It gave a lot of credibility to the mechanics." Gordie also had his turn racing. His first MG, the TC mentioned earlier, was the car he raced at Callicoon. Tavy explains the terrible conditions of the race. "There were five different surfaces that they raced on. The drop off from one road to the connecting road was about a foot and a half deep. While Gordie was racing, he blew a tire. He got wedged in

A rut and he really wrecked the car-bent it. That was the end of his personal racing days. He never raced again." Fortunately, Gordie was not seriously hurt in the accident. Apparently, a new safety helmet had just come out, one with a safety lip along the bottom edge made of heavy steel. Gordie was wearing it during the race, and it was the thing that saved his life. Tavy says, "The guard rails they had were railroad rails driven into the ground and Gordie landed on one of the points. The doctors said that if it hadn't been for that little extra lip there, the point would have killed him."

This story begins to stir up Clark's memories from his childhood. "I remember that race at Callicoon, and I remember going to the hospital. My dad said it cost him \$100 a minute to be in the race"

Clark has many special memories from growing up around the shop. He would come home from school, and the next instant would be running to the shop. He explains that the shop was a fun place, where the cars were loud, and where the action was. "There was always someone there. I probably used to bug them more than anything. I'd try to look where they were looking-under the dash, where the engine was apart, etc. I'd climb on top of them trying to see what they were looking at."

He happily recalls the test drives: "I was always trying to sneak a ride with one of the mechanics, just to get in the cars. They would go on winding roads and really put them through the paces. It was a big thrill to be able to get a ride in the cars, so I used to bug them long enough, so they'd take me."

Tavy remembers how the garage would get different cars in now and then. "Maybe some exotic cars. Clark would always have more fun riding in them."



K3011 (foreground) Is now owned by Peter Green In England. He Is shown on the banking at Brooklands talking with MGM's Mike Allison in his two tone N Type, while another K Type is in the background. Photo by Ron Cover.

Clark adds, "Real excitement was when a truck would pull up from New York with the new cars on it. I would watch them unload the cars."

Tavy remembers one comical occasion: "We bought from two (distributors): J.S. Inskip-M.G./Rolls Royce out of New York, and (Royston) in Philadelphia for Austin Healeys. Both these distributors were in competition with each other, and they were trying to get us even. One day, both tractor trailers pulled up in our tiny lot with two loads of cars."

The shop was an exciting place for Clark, but it was also a learning experience. "I really wasn't thinking of becoming a mechanic, but I was interested in seeing how they were doing things. It's fascinating to see an engine apart, or to see someone working on brakes, or a transmission. You don't realize you're learning, but you are looking, and seeing things done. Another plus is that I developed lasting relationships with the guys."

Gordie was not only interested in M.G.s, for he also dealt and serviced many other foreign cars. He collected cars as well, mostly Rolls Royce's and Packard's. Tavy says, "He had quite a collection." Gordie was one of the original creators of The Classic Car Club of America. According to Tavy, "When they first started out, they just had Packards, but eventually put a lot of other cars in too." Gordie didn't do much collecting of M.G.s because he dealt in them. The most valuable M.G. he ever owned was a K3 Magnette.

Clark explains, "It was a racing model. A very rare car. It was the wildest M.G. we ever owned. We had it up at the State Fair. It's probably a million dollar now."

The Morris' were happy to learn that K3011, the ex-Straight, ex-Seaman car is now owned by Peter Green, of England. Tavy regretfully states, "We had some beautiful cars that he let go." In addition to the K3011, Gordie owned a TC for a long time, and he also had a TD and a TF. Clark shares that Gordie's favorite M.G.s, were the green Mark II TD, and a black Mark II MGA, which Clark still possesses.

Tavy Morris did her share to help out with her husband's business. She says about herself, "I was chief cook and bottle washer. I would also have to go into the yard and get the cars. Another responsibility of mine was to keep the books." One other task Tavy was responsible for was to teach the wives of the male customers to drive. "A lot of the women couldn't get an M.G. sports car because they couldn't drive stick shift. So, I had to take them out and show them how."

Beside being the business assistant for Morris Garage, Tavy had her hands full tending to her family. The M.G. racing events were always something the Morris's went to as a family. "M.G.s were *my* husband's life, so if we were going to spend any time with him, we went. We'd pack a picnic and have a fun day." Another event the Morris's enjoyed together were the Hillclimbs up near Lake Placid. The Morris' had a group of friends that Tavy referred to as a hobby/club with whom they would hill climb. She explains, "You race against yourself. One car goes up a hill, and is timed. The best time would win in that class."



Gordie owned K3011 for a period of time. The car went through several owners in this country before being returned to England in the 1980s.

Tavy also recalls the rallies. "Once a month our local M.G. club would have rallies, winter and summer. It used to be done by clues. You'd have to have a navigator read the clues to make sure you made the right turns. Usually we'd have them on Sundays, and whose turn to host it would rotate. We also had midnight rallies where we would have to find our way through the dark."

Tavy also explained that the Long Island Centre of the M.G. Car Club started the 1,000 mile rally, which was held regularly every year. "A bunch of cars would get

together and spend the better part of a week on the M.G.1000 Mile Rally."

Neither Tavy nor Clark can recall approximately how many M.G.s Gordie sold over the twenty years he was in business. Tavy laughs, "Maybe if I saved all those darn books I'd be able to figure it out."

For sure Tavy knew they sold sixty M.G.s in one year, which was unusual for a backyard farm. Nevertheless, after twenty years of business, Gordie's original hobby-turned-business became a hobby once again. He got back into restoring classics, Packards, Rolls Royces, Duesenbergs and as Clark calls them, "The big classics, the road classics." This was Gordie's pastime until he passed away. Clark says, "The cars dad wanted to own as a kid he collected as an adult. Most people do that...get the things you couldn't afford when younger."

Tavy genuinely admits that her experiences and her family's experiences around M.G.s were fun. She remembers fondly those times where she and Gordie would be driving an M.G. and people would wave. They would park someplace and come back to a crowd of people taking pictures around the car. On the highways, people would be driving great big American cars and they'd honk. Gordie and Tavy knew they were fellow enthusiasts with an M.G. back home in the garage. And then there were all the customers. Tavy recalls one especially. "This man bought an M.G. from Gordie at a certain price. Then he wanted this, that, and the other thing added to it. He wanted his M.G. all spilled up. After totaling the cost of all the extras, he said to Gordie, 'Now I know what M.G. really stands for...My God!!'"

WOMEN IN THE MGVR

We told a bit about the two women who were part of the founding of the MGVR and since have come across a few more photos from back in the day.

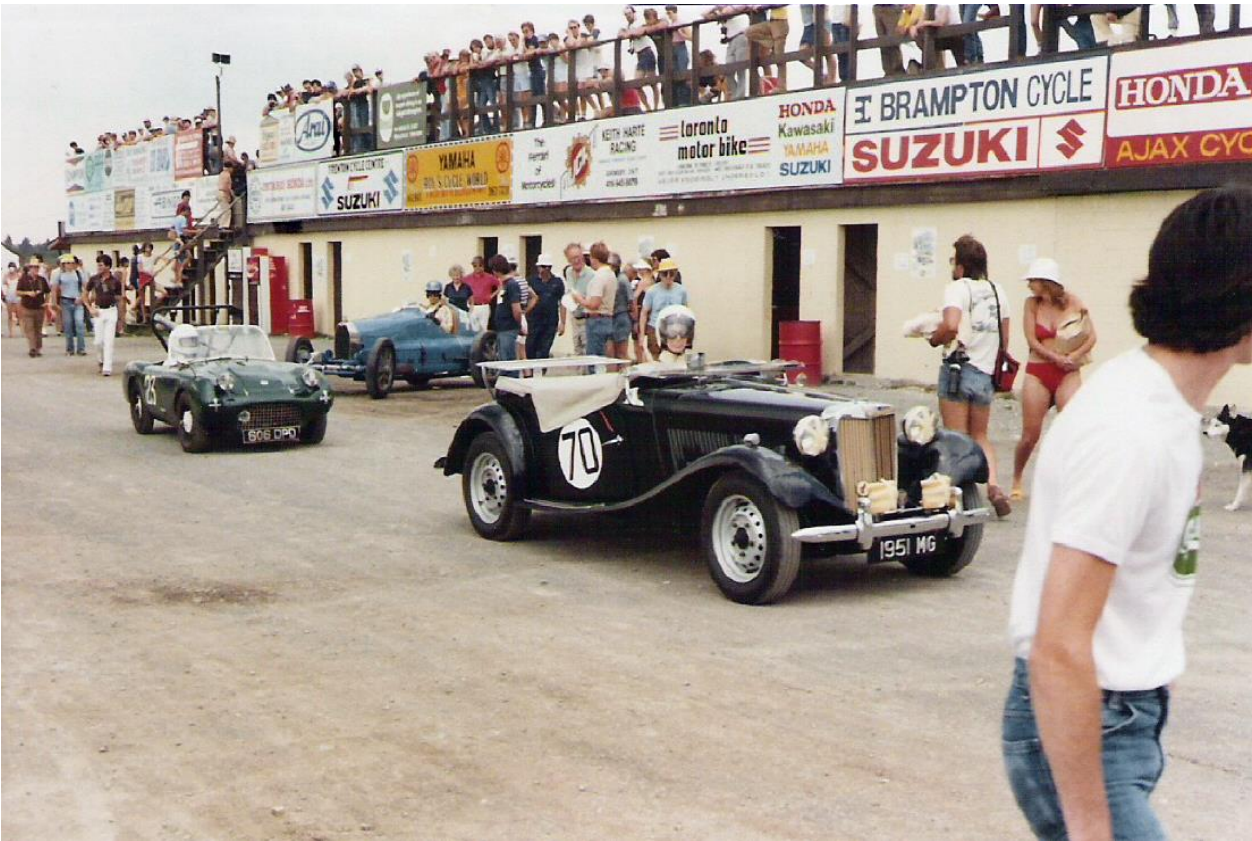
SUE SALZBURG:

A founding member of MGVR in 1981



Sue at the Giant's Despair Hillclimb

SARAH CARR A founding member of MGVR in 1981



Shannonville, Canada 1982



Shannonville, Canada 2012

Sarah and her faithful TD still rolling 20 years apart

T-TYPES by Storch



"My MG is just like one of the family. It's Aggravating, Noisy, Gives me No Respect and it keeps me continually broke."

For Sale



After 27 years of racing and 8 National Championships, Kent Prather is retiring from his racecar preparation shop. Kent is offering an extensive inventory of parts for sale.

www.pratherracing.com 785-836-2265 kprather@ksbroadband.net

Engine: 1622 blocks, cranks, cylinder heads, valves, guides, spring sets camshafts, oil pumps huge selection of all the smaller parts/pieces necessary

Drive Gear: clutch; twin disc and standard pressure plates; competition and standard clutch master and slave cylinder standard ratio 4 speed, close ratio 4 speed

Brakes: Rotors, drums Dual master cylinders, rear brake cylinders, calipers

Misc: Engine bearings; Vandervell and others. Distributors, Mallory race and Lucas. Also 3 main rear seal kits



From Manley Ford: manley776@yahoo.com

734 502-2435



I have 2 (two) Complete sets of billet MGB 5-main main-bearing caps. Center caps measure 1.161" at the thrust surface and overall are 1.278" thick. The 1-2-4-5 caps measure .860" thick. See photo to left.

I figure these are worth at least \$200 per set.



I also have 11 (eleven!) Billet MGB center/thrust) main caps. Thickness of the thrust surface varies from 1.159 to 1.165". See photo to the left.

Will sell all or singles for reasonable offers.

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 genuine magnesium wheels like these. Clean to look like new or keep as original. Not aluminum replicas but the real, period correct wheels.

\$500 for two or \$900 for all five, shipping not included

Dave Nicholas davnik6@gmail.com

MG PARTS DEAL

SARAH CARR (570) 240-5331 britfan1@epix.net

MGA 1500 all from a car that was being junked

Radiator – \$75 – some bent fins, and a dent in the bottom

Steering rack – \$50

Engine (block & head) - \$500 – condition unknown

Gearbox – \$200 – condition unknown

Gearbox layshaft, new – \$30 [JD]

Drive shaft - \$50

Pedal assembly set (clutch/brake/gas) – \$50

Generators – two ID'd as MGA, one MGA & TR2-3A - \$25 each

Make an offer for any/all of the following:

fan – license plate holder – 2 boot lids (one ex-Twin Cam)—skins good, steel framework rusty, box of misc. parts

OR buy all MGA parts for \$800 or best offer

Spridget Parts

Differential (carrier housing type "D" – as in Moss catalog) – 8/39 (4.22:1) ratio, unavailable from usual suppliers. Some light surface rust, but no damaged teeth and everything moves freely – asking \$350

SARAH CARR (570) 240-5331 britfan1@epix.net

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 stitched logo, sizes Small thru XL NEW LOWER PRICE	\$25.00
Sweatshirt, Gray Heavy Weight (perfect for the fall) stitched logo, sizes Small thru XXL NEW LOWER PRICE	\$20.00
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
<u>New Item</u> MGVR Trailer Stickers Octagon 11-1/4"	\$10.00*
Small MGVR stickers Octagon 5 1/2"	\$2.50*
<i>MGVR Challenge Coin</i> 'don't leave home without it'	\$10.00
Twill Button Down Shirt, Blue, or Putty	\$32.00

NEVER TOO OLD TO LEARN

MG Bob Schoeplein



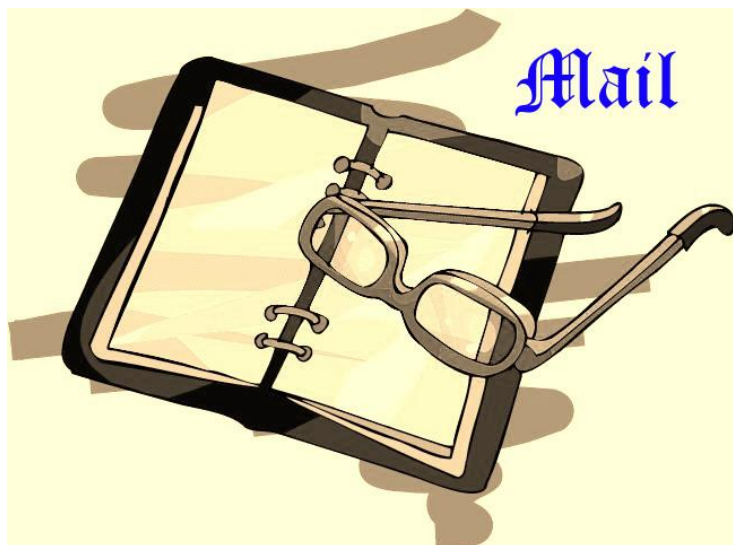
The scene of this crime is the Collier Cup Race at Watkins Glen, likely 2004. That was the year we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the first awarding of the original “Collier Cup”; the Collier Brothers Memorial Trophy. That year we had over 140 vintage MG race cars registered at the Glen !! The year 2004 also marked my fourteenth year campaigning Honeybee in vintage racing. I was no rookie. Hardly.

With so many cars, we must have had heats. Whatever, the grids were packed. At the start I think we were given an extra lap to settle down. That’s when I spotted Jack Woehrle driving an MG 1100. That car, for those of you who have never seen one, is like a Morris Mini on steroids. In fact, BMC advertised it as “The Bigger, Better Mini”. Somehow there is Jack racing an MG 1100 with a tricked up 1275 Cooper engine. We really had fun racing together. Jack had the advantage on braking and tight turns. I had him on the straights and loping turns. Away we go.

Last lap. Jack is ahead by two car lengths going into the left-handler turn 9. But I keep my foot down going in and through 9, ending up virtually on Jack’s tailpipe. I have the momentum and the torque as we go through the last turn, #10 to the checkered flag. I am swinging left to slip by Jack without touching him as I power by. Suddenly JACK’S BRAKE LIGHTS COME ON !!! My instant reaction is to lift up on the accelerator. Good for Interstates; bad for racing. In that second I lost my advantage. Immediately I put my pedal to the metal and began to make up ground. Honeybee was really accelerating, and we now were door-by-door.

Somebody won by a nose. Was it Woehrle or me? It wasn’t me.

I related the story to a close MGVR buddy of mine. The same Jack Woehrle “brake light” incident happened to him !!! I said I thought Jack had taken his left foot and pushed the brake pedal to flick on his brake lights. My confidant said he thought Woehrle had a switch. Whatever, on reflection we heard this story before. But we’re never too old to learn.



Hello MGVR

Out of pure coincidence I found out about the Collier Cup you organize in the USA and thought I would make contact. Coincidentally I race an MG ZR 190 in the UK.

I've restored a few MGB an MGA 1500 and supported the BCV8 championship with Malcom and Syd Beer from Beer of Houghton MG and been associated with the MG brand for many years with my family owning a number of MG cars

I wondered if it was possible to race in the Collier Cup. Although not a typical classic MG, my car was one of 3 bodysells on the production line at Longbridge and the only LHD. It was rescued when the factory shut, I had it built by Ex MG sport and racing works engineer Dan Surridge and it's only ever been a racing car. It was class B Champion 2016 and is the only FWD class B car to get outright Pole position. In 2018 it was Class C Champion and Cockshoot cup champion, it also holds lap record at Silverstone so it has quite a history with the MGCC

The Collier connection was not lost on me as my middle son is also called Myles

Here is a link to our championship and I've attached a photo of my car from Oulton park at the weekend where I took pole position and the race win in terrible wet conditions

<https://www.mgcc.co.uk/cockshoot-cup/>

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Kindest regards
Ray Collier



MORE LETTERS FROM OUR READERS:

Hi MGVR

I have just purchased A 1949 MG TC - TC 9149. I believe it was Bill Hilt and later Bill Cowans car. As I bought it it has a supercharger, 5 speed gear box and Alfin brakes. I am trying to establish its history. It came to the UK in 2016.

Best wishes

David Foster daviddentsplus@yahoo.co.uk

0044 7827 949490

I am looking for a billet crank and rods for my 1949 MGY that has a T series engine. If anyone knows, or has availability please contact me.

Don Martine

8313733388

don@martineinn.com

255 Ocean View Blvd

Pacific Grove, CA 93950

Hi Dave,

First, as a newsletter editor myself, I appreciate the effort you take to put out each month. My wife and I have been editing the Vintage MG Club newsletter for forty years. I also raced the NE for about twenty three years....almost exclusively on the west coast. We did bring it east for a couple of fall series....Watkins Glen, Lime Rock and Elkhart Lake. But what I really wanted to comment on is the Sebring Twin Cam article by Mike Eaton.

He mentioned Gus Ehrman, Gough Industries and Hambro. I did not realize that Gus had driven at Sebring as well. He not only won one of the initial Watkins Glen races in a TD, he played a part in the history of the NE. His Gough Industries owned it in the 1960s and it was passed on to Hambro when Kjell Qvale acquired Gough. I had the privilege of meeting him at Watkins Glen in 2004 and took him for the tour of the old course...photos attached.

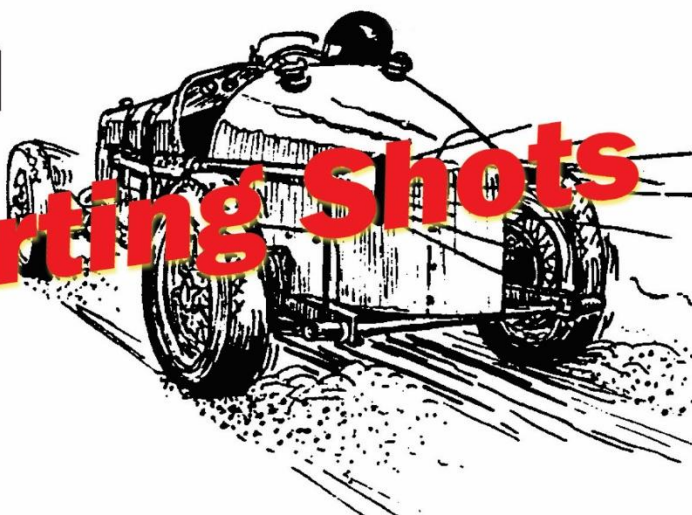
The MG CT Motoring Guild had a tour out to Lompoc several years ago where we visited John Wright's collection, including one of the Sebring Coupes.

All very interesting.

Pete Thelander



Parting Shots



Watkins Glen 1964.

**Pencil Jim Weissenborn leads a pack of MGA's
through the old chicane in his 1960 Sebring factory MGA twincam**