



NEWSLETTER

Vol 38 #8 December 2020



From The Editor:

The entire editorial, production, advertising and executive workers here at the MGVR headquarters wish everyone the Merriest of Christmases.

There won't be many who will remember 2020 with fondness. So many deaths, so much suffering, so little humanity. I am sure all of us will hope and pray for a much better 2021.

In This Issue

Sarah Carr (she is getting a lot of press lately) gives us a grand story she calls "Looking Back 40 Years". Her story about the spirit of our organization – how she came to race her TD.

Stan Heath adds to this month's racecar stories with his wonderful tale of his twin cam MGA and bringing it back to life from the ground up and finding its history.

The left coast pops in with a photo and comments from **Tony Ferrari** about his twin cam and an "incident" at Laguna Seca.

Alan Costich brings a highly unusual racecar photo from Watkins Glen 2016.

These are the bits and pieces that make our newsletter fun to read and brings to mind "oh dear, I had that happen as well". And that is why YOU need to send me your stories.

Stories from the Track

ALAN COSTICH:

Watkins Glen VRG October 2016.

**On the way to the event, one of the bearings on the trailer froze.
And on Friday, we woke up to a good six inches of snow.**

Alan

MG BGT #68



TONY FERRARI

Well. my favorite photo (taken by Toni Cortes) is of me coming down the corkscrew with a dent in the front of my car and a Sprite turned sideways at the top with a corner worker vigorously waving a yellow flag.

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**Ah, but I was so much older then, I'm younger than that now
A truly happy person is one who can enjoy the scenery on a detour.**



Looking Back 40 Years

by Sarah P. Carr

MGVR founding member

Forty years. Hard to believe that 2021 will be the 40th anniversary of the founding of MG Vintage Racers. I'm sure Greg Prehodka would be the first to say that he had NO IDEA of what he was starting!

I was one of the few who were using our MGs in friendly competition—low-key MG T Register events at Lime Rock and Bryar, some VSCCA weekends, etc.—so of course I signed up for the group. Imagine my amazement on discovering that the only other woman among the founding members was Sue Salsburg—who had attended the same school in Kingston, PA, that I had! Neither one of us knew about the other at the time. While I hung up my helmet long ago, Sue is still hill-climbing, in either a Jag sedan or her apparently indestructible green MGA "the Dinosaur" *(first photo, taken at Giants Despair Hill Climb in 1996).*

I'd purchased an MG-TD in 1973. Even before its restoration was finished, I spectated at some of the MG T Register's early events like the Double 3 at Lime Rock (I gave my photos from those days to Greg P. years ago). Of course I got the urge to participate myself. The TD was only a few years out of restoration, so I trusted it. Register events didn't require anything except appropriate helmet, clothing, and seatbelts. The first event I drove in was a "Safety Fast" day at Bryar, N.H. in 1980. As in the really old days, we drove the car to the track. It's a long way from Pennsylvania in a heavily-loaded TD. We dumped our stuff out in the paddock, put my number 70 on the door, and off I went. Fortunately, the car behaved beautifully the whole weekend, but after we returned home we began to think that driving the car to the races maybe wasn't such a good idea—a feeling reinforced after Hank Giffin rolled his TD at one combined VSCCA and MG T Register weekend at Bryar in 1982.

Eventually I decided to go through the VSCCA school at Lime Rock in 1982. April 1982. It's cold in Connecticut in early April. As I sat in the paddock waiting for our instructor, Fred Willits, to lead us out in his Bugatti, stuff began falling from the sky. At first I thought, "It's noisy under a helmet when it's raining." Then I looked out through the windshield and realized that it wasn't rain—that was *sleet* bouncing off the car's hood! No wonder driver's school has been moved to later in the year.

The whole atmosphere was so much more low-key back in the '80s. No podiums, no trophies, just a bunch of people out having a good time driving their cars a little faster than they could on the road and giving each other a hand whenever one was needed. I attended the first Lime Rock Vintage Festival in 1979 as a spectator, and wish I'd taken more photos—there were more cars in the paddock than in the spectators' area, few closed trailers, and not an 18-wheeler in sight. Even several years later, competitors outnumbered spectators.

The only non-Register event I drove in was the Carling Vintage Festival at Shannonville, Ontario, in 1982. There were only 3 of us with TDs there—me, Greg P., and—I think—Bob Mills. We camped at the track with many of the other competitors. Those of us with "slower" post-war cars were asked if we would like to help fill out the pre-war class. Of course I said yes! — *hence the second photo*, of me pulling out of the paddock in the TD, with Anne "Scooter" Elcomb in her Berkeley and Fred Willits in his Bugatti following behind. The guest for the weekend was Stirling Moss, who signed the event poster for me. When we were on the T Register's "Friendship Tour" around lakes Erie and Ontario in 2012, we just had to take a detour to visit Shannonville again (*third photo*).

After only a few events I realized that the TD would need a lot of work to make it a safe competition car, so I bought a derelict MG-TF as a project car. It had started life as a 1500, but was in the process of

being converted to V-8 power(!)—front fenders cut across at the firewall and everything welded together and hinged at the front, so the entire front end tilted forward like an E-type (Dave, I think you can guess who did that conversion...). Before that project was finished, the garage it was in was destroyed in a natural-gas explosion. I bought the wreck, but hadn't done anything with it when I found a 1934 MG-PA basket case for sale. As I really wanted a pre-war car, I bought that and sold the TF. But, as so often happens, other things like elder-care responsibilities got in the way, and I eventually sold the PA as well. I still own the TD (almost 48 years now), but it's just a sunny-day driver.

Like so many of us, I'm now on the far side of 70 and content to be a spectator at the races. But I do have many memories of the "old days," and of friends who aren't with us any more, like Dave Raymond, Jerry Storch, Roy Jacobson.... It was a fun time, and not easily forgotten. We all truly were, and are, a "band of brothers."



STAN HEATH

YD3 2040

If you are reading the MGVR newsletter it means you own an MG or at least have a love for old MG automobiles. I have owned numerous old MGs and there is always a discovery that makes me wonder how that got there. My MGA race car Twin Cam YD3 2040 is one of those mysteries but on a large scale. To solve this mystery, we have to go back to the 1962 President's Cup Race at Virginia International Raceway.

This particular car came into my possession because the previous owner decided he wanted a drivable MGB more than a ratty old race car. He was the second owner and offered the car with a West Virginia title and a copy of the original title in the name of Michael Conley. The deal was struck and I now owned a race car, or at least what had been a race car. I knew that MGA Twin Cam cars were rare I didn't know exactly how rare, especially with a race history.



As with many impulse purchases, it took me a considerable amount of time to figure out a purpose for this diamond in the rough. I got the engine running and took note of the racing modifications. Mods such as no inner fender wells, a roll bar that appeared to be made of tubing of questionable quality and what appeared to be a Chevrolet radiator held in by a steel bar and a rubber strap. There were fiberglass rocker covers between the doors but there appeared to be no box sections residing behind them.

I owned an import parts store at the time I bought this gem and got to talking to one of my good customers, Dale Drinnon. He was like me and had always wanted race but never had the will to commit. The decision was made to bring the Twinkie back to its former glory, although neither of us was sure what that looked like.

The first order of business was to get the body off of the car and see just how bad things were. The questionable rocker boxes were non-existent and the body was a two piece affair when it was removed. Fate was looking out for us because another customer had a body hanging in the rafters of his shop that needed a little work to be usable (actually a lot of work).

We started to notice oddball things about the chassis as we removed all of the parts and started the cleaning and prep work. Some of these items were holes in the front crossmember cut out with a torch instead of the nice smooth factory holes. The rack mounts had been lowered using angled iron brackets, necessary to use the Twin Cam engine. Even the mounting bracket for the starter solenoid was incorrect for a Twin Cam car. I didn't give these oddities anymore thought as the restoration progressed. The decision was made to race with a pushrod engine to save money and time.

The car was rebuilt over a period of about eighteen months and readied for the first outing, the 1990 Walter Mitty Challenge race and driver's school at Road Atlanta. The first outing was a success from the standpoint that nothing major broke and the rookie driver (me)

finished his first race weekend. The car was raced for the next decade without much thought about the modifications found earlier.

While racing at Virginia International Raceway for the first time in 2000, I learned of Nick England's excellent website detailing the history of VIR. I began to think that a race car from West Virginia might have turned a few laps at VIR. Digging through the race entries from the late 50s and early 60s took a while. I did finally find Mike Conley's name on a race entry for the 1962 President's Cup Race. The event was what could be considered a the ultimate SCCA race weekend. In attendance were a few drivers you may have heard of: Skip Barber, Bob Tullius, Roger Penske, Peter Revson, Dick Thompson, Briggs Cunningham, just to name a few. The car is listed as a MGA in EP class which indicates it was a Twin Cam, pushrod cars were in FP. The car was listed as DNF in the results. I would soon learn why.

The website has dozens of pictures from various races at VIR. One of



those pictures was of a Twin Cam with the nose crushed in and the front wheels splayed out to the sides. The EP class decals are visible along with the number 43 that matches Mike Conley's race entry. This had to be my car!

Now all of the modifications began to make sense. Mr.

Conley must have rebuilt the car using a pushrod chassis and the Twin Cam bits. He didn't just use the engine and transmission but all of the TC bits, brakes, wheels even the oddball TC master cylinder. He even reused a bent left rear axle, that caused all sorts of problems when we started getting the car ready to race.

Wanting to confirm the history of the car I spoke with Cesar Cone and showed the information I had collected. He felt that it was the same

car raced at VIR and that logbooks were not even issued way back then. I tried to contact Michael Conley but he had passed before I learned of the history of the car. I regret he never got to see the old car put back to racing trim.

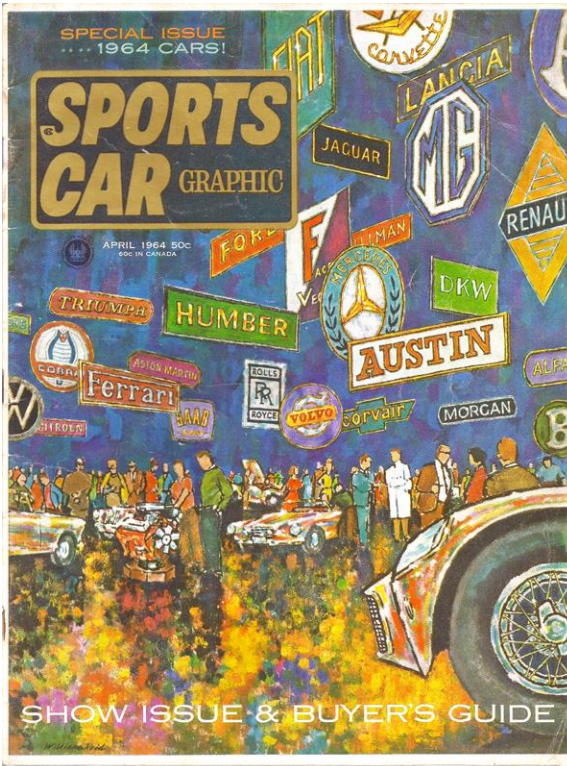
I have been racing this car for three decades and it has been a faithful servant. A lot of our vacation time has been spent at the track, my son Stirling grew up with racers. The racing fraternity has turned out to be a great place for him to grow up around. He started his racing adventure in this car at the ripe old age of 16. I hope I am around to see my grandson Tucker turn a few hot laps in the MGA in 16 years.

Safety Fast, Stan Heath



YD3 2040 today

For Sale



Mark Barnhart

I am selling off some of my old sports car magazines on eBay and thought I would advertise this one to MGVR because of an article on streamlining the MGA.

This is a special issue from 1964 of Sports Car Graphic. My engineering degree is in CFD and I found the article helpful when working on Rowdie Racing's MGA as well as the Bonneville MGA that we set our 243.9 MPH record with.

Asking \$20:00 (free shipping) Mark Barnhart
rowdie92@charter.net

1961 MGA racecar for sale

Werner Scheeren <scheerenlandscape@gmail.com>

Basic Facts. SCCA Log Book # 026-032

Engine # 18V833AEL04039

1800 Built to 170HP 1833 by Peter Marcovicci Engineering

Reason for selling, 1 Race Car too many. Call with any questions. Will consider reasonable offers



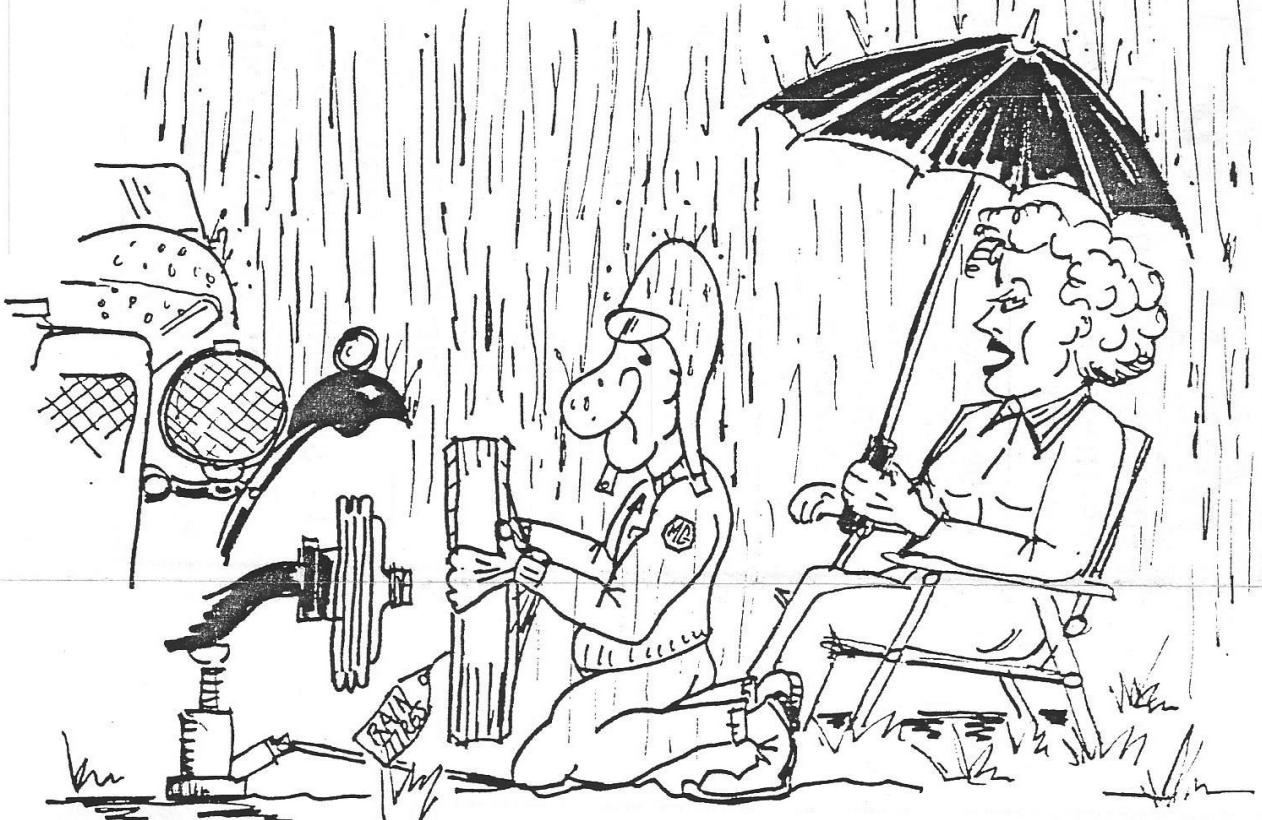
All the best internals with 3 outings since build. All receipts and dyno results available. Fully prepared RHD chassis. Car was restored and converted to race trim 21 years ago. Two Log Book Owner- Builders from initial build to 2020. Kim Graff and Brian Hanaburgh. I bought car from Brian's Estate. Successfully raced at Lime Rock, Watkins Glen, Thompson, Pocono with several wins.

Five Speed HD transmission with close ratio gearing from HyGear. Discs Brakes. Transponder. New Safety Belts. I've got \$18,500 in the car. Bid to \$16,500 on Bring A Trailer but bidder did not realize it was a Race Car only and not streetable.



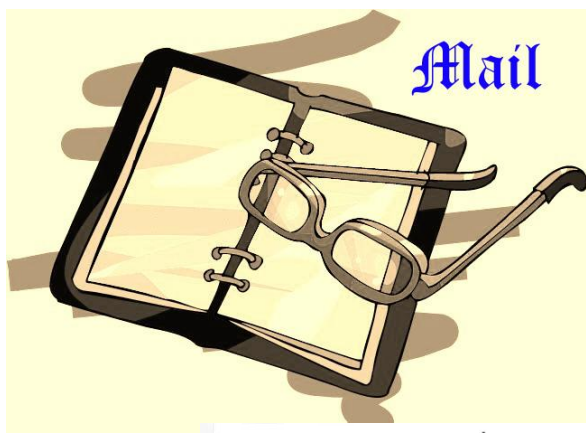


T-TYPES by Storch



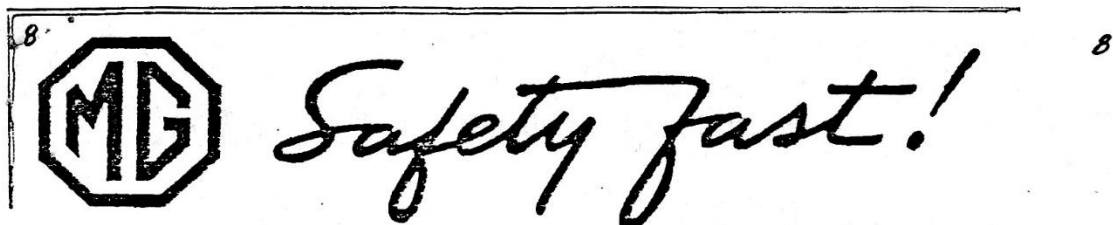
"I HAVEN'T HAD SO MUCH FUN SINCE I CLEANED
the oven."

LIME ROCK FALL VINTAGE FESTIVAL '88



We have none. So Lonely !
Not even a Christmas Card.

But always looking at the glass
Half full, [here are letters from May of 1989](#).
This should embarrass all of you to write
something for next month.



As you no doubt know, SVRA is requiring dual brake systems this year. I have been working on a system using a master cylinder I picked up at my NAPA store. I have an extra bare chassis and I am doing the mockup work on it, so my street-race car won't be down longer than necessary.

My plans are to locate the M/C behind the gearbox crossmember. I plan to make everything "Bolt on" so that the car can be returned to original without a lot of work.

My plans are to write an article for the newsletter after my set up has been road tested.

Blair Engle
Tallahassee, Fl.

Please send me a copy of "TECH TIPS" quick. Lord knows I need it! I'm still of the school that thinks what makes the car go is the ignition key. HELP!

Racing has been great so far with the McLaughlin car. Worst that has happened to me was when a haybale jumped out in front of me in Schenely Park. I yelled at it but it was too late.....

Andy McSwigan
Pittsburgh, Pa.

.....My MGA project is coming along. The front suspension and chassis are all reworked. My next step may be a fuel cell. Then its off to the high school body shop as a class project car.

My present stock drivetrain is very solid, so I just may run on the stock engine next year. Everyone is encouraging me to go to driver's school and get track time while I'm fiddling with the car because it will take me a few seasons to get track experience. Sounds reasonable.....

Bob Schoepfle
Bethesda, Md.

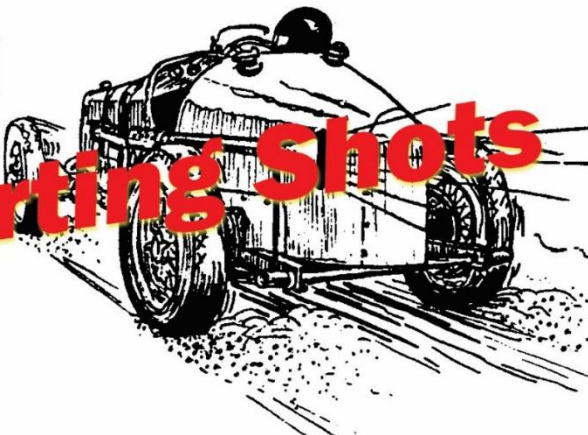
Thanks a lot for "TECH TIPS". I devoured it over the weekend and was very pleased with the wealth of information you guys compiled. Congratulations on a great job.

We had a great day at our MG club da Brasil III Speed Trials - over 120 cars participated. I won all three events in my class. The enclosed color newspaper clipping was of a 1 Lap w/chicane (7 of them) against the clock - 1 car at a time - the Allard started before my TD but I had just past him going into a turn before chicane in the photo - he never got past me again. B&W photo is of the race later in the afternoon. i.e.....standing start, starting positions by numbers out of a hat, 5 (long) laps, each lap 5 min. - lots of fun! Had a blast.

Richard Flynn
Sao Paulo, Brasil



Parting Shots



SUE SALSBURG



DAVE ARRON

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John Turst/Caroline Robinson
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Grand Rapids, Mi. 49503



**MEMBERSHIP
RENEWAL
INSIDE**

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