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THE OCTAGON

Newsletter of the M.G. Owner's Club



MGOC-OCTAGON
If undeliverable please return to:
9 Pomona Ave. El Cerrito, CA 94530
email: felix_wong@alumni.stanford.org
<http://home.pacbell.net/jensten>



Joanna Adler's 1980 MGB LE at the Palo Alto All-British Car Show. Her Car has traveled cross-country several times! (Photo by Felix Wong.)

October 1999

About *The Octagon* and MGOC ...

The M.G. Owner's Club, formed in 1958, is the Northern California center of the M.G. Car Club, formed in England in 1930. We receive two copies of MGCC's *Safety Fast*, available to members on loan from the Corresponding Secretary. The club is also associated with NAMGBR, the North American MGB Register, and NAMGAR, the North American MGA Register. The MGOC holds a business meeting on the second Thursday of each month. We gather socially on the third Thursday of each month, at an event known as the "Natter and Noggin" in the style of English clubs. *The Octagon*, our newsletter, is published monthly by the M.G. Owner's Club. Opinions expressed in *The Octagon* are not necessarily those of the MGOC, its members, or board of directors.

DIRECTORY of MGOC OFFICERS for 1999

President: Patti Brennan 510-526-1867, 510-819-5690 pager,
MG_NUTZ@ix.netcom.com

Vice President: William Nutting, 510-524-3244

Treasurer: Jon Parkinson, 415-491-1678, jonp@prodigy.net

Secretary: Bob Stine, 650-349-5128, RASStine@prodigy.net

Corresponding Secretary: George Steneberg, 510-525-9125,
j2george@pacbell.net

Membership Development: Doug Paris, 650-349-3778; Bob Stine, 650-349-5128, RASStine@prodigy.net

Octagon Editor: Felix Wong, 510-572-4257 work, 510-390-1956 home,
felix_wong@alumni.stanford.org

Octagoat: Eric Baker, 510-531-7032

Commercial Advertising: Jon Parkinson, 415-491-1678, jonp@prodigy.net

CLUB ADVISOR PROGRAM

Feel free to call these members, who have volunteered to help with purchase, repair, and restoration of various M.G. models, etc.

MGB and GT 1962-69: Jay Pearce, 415-382-6639

MGB 1974½-1980: Ed Adams, 510-483-6821

MGB 1969-1974: Felix Wong, 510-572-4257 work, 510-390-1956 home,
felix_wong@alumni.stanford.org

MGC: Kent Leach, 510-254-5748

M.G. Midget: Kingsley Klarer 707-226-1955

MGA/Coupe/Twin Cam 1955-62: George Steneberg 510-525-9125

Z-Magnette Saloon 1953-58: Marty Ray, on vacation for 6 months; email him at marty_and_lora@eudoramail.com in the meantime

M.G. 1100 Sports Sedan 1962-67: Lora Lerner, on vacation for 6 months; email him at marty_and_lora@eudoramail.com in the meantime

T-types: George Steneberg 510-525-9125

Business Meeting—October

October 14, 1999 (Thu) at 8:00pm

at

Bob Stine's house in San Mateo

3215 Llano St.

650-349-5128

Board Meeting at 7:30p. All are welcome!

Natter n' Noggin—October

October 21, 1999 (Thu) at 8:00pm

at

Barclay's Restaurant & Pub

5940 College Ave

Oakland, CA 94618

(510) 654-1650

Directions:

From south of Oakland, take northbound I-880. Take the I-980 exit towards CA-24/Walnut Creek. Take the CA-24 exit on the left towards Berkeley/Walnut Creek. Take the Claremont Ave. exit, and turn left onto Claremont. Drive 0.7 miles and make a sharp right onto College Ave. You should see Barclay's Restaurant almost immediately.

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Classified Ads

Ads are free to MGOC members and \$6.00 per month for non-members. Please send copy (and check if a non-member) to *The Octagon* editor (Felix Wong, 38947 Bluebell Dr., Newark, CA 94560). Ads run for ONE month, after which they will be deleted unless you call. Your ad can be extended easily, but you **MUST** call *The Octagon* editor to renew! Any ad that appeared in the past can be re-run by calling the editor; new copy is not required.

FREE . . . Five painted wire wheels that look almost new and seven Dunlop and Pirelli tires. I switched to chrome some time back, so come and get them. Contact rjallen@worldnet.att.net

'70 MGB Roadster, Glacier White. \$10,000 in upgrades over the past 1.5 yrs: Andy Schank paint/restoration; Doug Jackson rebuild of engine/trans/o.d./clutch/brakes, etc.; new Stayfast type top. Records. Dependable daily driver. Beautiful! **\$7,500/offer**. Ron Middlebrook, 415-546-4900 weekdays, 415-957-9967 nites, 707-935-9212 weekends.

One Last MG Pic



A cheery, cherry-red MGA. [Photo source unknown.]

Pre-war Midgets-Magnas- Magnettes: George Steneberg, 510-525-9125

PA/PB Midget 1934-36: Eric Baker, 510-531-7032

Lucas electrics: Marty Ray - on vacation, see previous page.

S.U. Carburettors: Westley Johnson, 415-826-2396

Bodywork: Bill Weissberg, 510-658-4335

COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING IN *THE OCTAGON*

Direct all questions about advertising to Jon Parkinson at 415-491-1678 or jonp@prodigy.net. 1999 rates are: monthly (yearly): full pg. \$25 (\$240), half page \$18 (\$175), third page \$12 (\$120), business card \$8 (\$75). All ads expire on Jan. 1st, and fees for a partial year will be pro-rated to that date. Deadline for ad materials is the 10th of the preceding month. The MGOC makes no claims as to the reputation or quality of work performed by businesses advertising in *The Octagon*.

MAKING CONTRIBUTIONS TO *THE OCTAGON*

Your stories, photos, tips, questions, and anything MGOC-related are always welcome in *The Octagon*! Please make your contributions by the 10th of the month preceding the issue in which you want them to appear. The editor's address is: Felix Wong, 38947 Bluebell Dr., Newark, CA 94560. Or, you may email contributions to felix_wong@alumni.stanford.org. Preferred electronic text formats include ASCII text or any version of Microsoft Word; preferred image formats include TIFF, GIF, JPEG, PICT, and BMP.

RECRUITING MEMBERS FOR THE MGOC

Have you helped recruit any new members lately? Bob Stine (650-349-5128) is in charge of new member recruitment and can send you flyers.

You can cut out this coupon and give it to prospective members

YOU'RE INVITED TO JOIN THE MG OWNERS CLUB!!

For a sample copy of our monthly magazine, *The Octagon*, and a membership application, please call or write our membership secretary:

George Steneberg

9 Pomona Ave.

E1 Cerrito, CA 94530

510-525-9125

j2george@pacbell.net

Membership

New members enrolled since September 1st will be listed in the November issue. We are looking to seeing you at future meetings and events of the MGOC and having your stories, photos, and tips printed in *The Octagon*!

Calendar of Events

MGOC (which is us!) events are in **bold** type. Abbreviations (if used): CSRG – Classic Sports Racing Group, SSTS – Sorry Safari Touring Society, HMSA – Historic Motor Sports Association, ESCA – Empire Sports Car Association

General British Car Events

Nov 13, 1999 (Sat)—MGOC Progressive Dinner. Begins in George Steneberg's Pub. See Page 10.

Apr 11-12, 2000 (Sat-Sun)—Arizona MG Get-Together in Phoenix, AZ.
Email: gbmg@aol.com; voicemail: 602-439-1142.

CSRG Vintage Race Schedule for 1999

Oct. 16-17, 1999 (Sat-Sun)—Thunderhill with invitational NASCAR.

HMSA General Racing Schedule for 1999

October 22-24, 1999—Vintage Racing at Coronado.

Minutes

MGOC Business Meeting, Thursday, September 9, 1999

Submitted by Bob Stine

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 p.m. at the home of George Steneberg in El Cerrito. Attending were Patti Brennan, George Steneberg, Mike Jacobsen, Bob Stine, Earl Pierce, David Wright, Dave McCann, Gerald Martin, Nina Barton and Jean de Boer. The previous membership meeting's minutes were approved as published in *The Octagon*. (Hey, there were no previous meeting, as the meeting was canceled!)

Treasurer's Report:

❖ MGOC Regalia ❖

Description	Qty	Each	Total
MG Owners Club Regalia			
Pennant – Red “MG Owners Club”, cream canvas, 9½" high by 17" long		\$10.00	
Grille Badge – MGOC logo, 4" high, mounts with one stud through grille		\$30.00	
Patch – 3" diameter, embroidered black MGOC logo on white		\$6.00	
MG Car Club of England Regalia			
MG Car Club Grille Badge – 3" dia., mounts with studs through grille		\$45.00	
MG Car Club Grille Badge – 3" dia., mounts with bracket to badge bar		\$45.00	
Key Fob – Black leather fob with cloisonne MG Car Club logo		\$10.00	
Lapel Pin – ¾" by 1" enamelled metal MGOC badge		\$6.50	
Outside Window Decal – 5" by 5½" brown & cream MGCC logo		\$1.00	
Inside Window Decal – 2½" by 3" brown & cream logo; reads “Member”		\$1.00	
Inside Window Decal – 2½" by 3" brown & cream logo; reads “Member” and “Marque of Friendship”		\$1.00	
Round Mug – British Racing Green with gold MGCC logo and rim		\$10.00	
Octagonal Mug – Octagonal green mug, cream interior, gold MGCC logo and rim		\$12.00	
MGs at Jack London Square from Posters & Plaques			
Dash Plaque – 1999, black on gold, MG TC		\$2.00	
Dash Plaque – 1998, blue on gold, MGB/GT		\$2.00	
Dash Plaque – 1997, red on gold, MGOC logo w/ “Britain Meets the Bay”		\$2.00	
Dash Plaque – 1996, green on gold, MGA with Jack London		\$2.00	
Dash Plaque – 1995, white on black, MGOC logo and Tribune Tower		\$2.00	
Poster – 1999, features a blue MGB roadster and the JLS History Walk		\$5.00	
Poster – 1998, features a yellow MGB/GT with the yacht Potomac		\$5.00	
Poster – 1997, features a red MG TF with “Britain Meets the Bay”		\$5.00	
Poster – 1996, features a green MGA with Jack London		\$5.00	
Poster – 1995, features a red MGB, a Union Jack, and Amtrak bridge		\$5.00	
Total Amount Enclosed			

❖ “Ship To” label – please print!

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
 Phone number in case we have a question about your order _____

❖ Ordering Information

- ♦ All prices include tax, and shipping is FREE! Some items are stocked from England and may have a long lead time; we will notify you if the delay will be more than three weeks.
- ♦ Make checks payable to “MGOC” – sorry, but we cannot accept credit cards or cash.
- ♦ Send orders to: **MGOC Regalia, 5518 Thomas Ave., Oakland, CA 94618-1752.**

MGOC Regalia!

As reported in the February Minutes of *The Octagon*, David Wright has found more regalia that is available for purchase by all! Below is a sampling of available regalia; more items are listed on the order form on Page 17. Please contact David at 510-653-3831 for more information.



Key Fob — \$10; Pin — \$6.50



Octagonal Mug — \$12

Round Mug — \$10



Pennant — \$10

None. Jon Parkinson was absent.

Secretary's Report

Printed elsewhere in *The Octagon*.

The Octagon

No report. Felix Wong and Eric Baker were absent.

Past Club Events

See the Secretary's Report elsewhere in this issue.

Upcoming Club Events

The Progressive (pot luck) Dinner will be held on Saturday, November 13th, starting at George Steneberg's newly-remodeled (and beautifully, I might add) "pub." Attendees will enjoy various courses of the dinner at venues in El Cerrito, Oakland and Berkeley. This will be another great chance to meet members you may not yet know, enjoy some excellent food (some of which you will provide) and see what some of our members call Home. Call Earl Pierce to RSVP and find out what you should bring!

Earl Pierce will host a pot luck dinner in December at which we will discuss and plan events for 2000! Take advantage of this opportunity to provide input of what you want to do next year! The date will be announced next month.

Patti Brennan will coordinate and plan for the Annual Dinner to be held in January. A tentative location is Café del Sol in Berkeley.

Old Business

Mike Jacobsen reported that our new insurance for events will be through the National MGB and National MGA Registers.

New Business

There was a discussion of how the spelling of the club name should appear. The consensus was that it should be "MG Owners Club". (The debate centered over whether or not an apostrophe should be included.)

President Patti Brennan appointed Mike Jacobsen, David Wright and Bob Stine to the nominating committee for the December election of Club Officers. Here is your chance to participate more fully in the club. Volunteer for office or nominate someone you think would do a good job for you. Positions include President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. To nominate yourself or someone else, contact any of the members of the nominating committee or write to the Corresponding Secretary. (See page 2 for contact information.)

Nominees will be presented at the November meeting and in the newsletter. This shall in no way limit or prevent nominations from the floor. Absentee ballots will be sent to all members, including auxiliary members, at least two (2) weeks prior to the December meeting. Voting will be held at the December business meeting and will be by secret ballot.

Next Meeting and Natter

The next meeting will be held Thursday, October 14th at Bob Stine's house in San Mateo.

The next Natter will be held at Barclay's in Oakland on October 21st.

The meeting adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Secretary's Report

by Bob Stine

I received numerous comments about the fun members had at the annual picnic in San Mateo County Memorial Park. Consensus was that it was a good idea to move it to the Peninsula this year and make it easier for members on the west side of the Bay to attend. We had several members who haven't attended any club events previously.

I received an email from a member suggesting that we try placing the graphic for the Jack London Square Show on the back of the T-shirts, with the MGOC logo on the front. Thanks for the input. If anyone else would like to comment on this idea please contact me. My phone number and email address appear on page 2 of The Octagon. Also feel free to contact me if you have any ideas for Natters or other club events.

George Steneberg emailed me to point out that our club letterhead incorrectly referred to our club as "The Northern California Centre of the MG Owner's Club". The legal name of our club is MG Owners Club, Inc. Consequently, I will develop a new letterhead.

President Patti Brennan has changed her email address. She can now be emailed at Patti_Brennan@mindspring.com.

Mike Jacobsen has acquired a copy of our membership list so he can prepare our new membership cards. Members should soon be receiving them with their issue of The Octagon.

Reminder: If you don't have any MGOC flyers for prospective members (read "MG Owners you run across") let me know and I'll send you some. We should constantly be looking for the opportunity to encourage new membership!



Nina Barton and her British Racing Green MGB GT at the MGOC Annual Picnic in the San Mateo County Memorial Park.



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The MGOc Annual Picnic

August 21, 1999 (Sat)

Photos by Dan Shockey



A beautiful red MGA among the other MG's.



More roadsters!

CSRG Race Weekend at Sears Point

September 11-12, 1999

by David Wright

Enclosed are two photos taken at the recent CSRG Race Weekend at Sears Point on September 11-12, 1999.

The theme for the photos is the 1964 and 1965 MGB's which were raced at Sebring and LeMans by the MG Competition Department. The works cars were painted red with white factory hardtops and plastic "Sebring" cowlings over the headlights.

My car is blue but the other two are the correct factory red. In fact, the right hand drive car (on the left of the group) is a genuine works car. It was built for the 1964 Sebring 12-hour race, but did not run there and was subsequently sold to a private racer. The other two cars are, of course, replicas!

The proud owners are from left to right—Lloyd Faust, myself, and Rod Schweiger. Lloyd lives in Los Angeles and expressed interest in joining the MGOc (I gave him a copy of the September *Octagon*.) Rod is a member of the Sorry Safari.

The theme for the race weekend was Yankee Doodle Dandy, lots of patriotic songs, American food, etc. The red, white, and blue group of cars in the photos were very much with the theme.



*MGB's at the recent CSRG Race Weekend at Sears Point.
[Photo submitted by David Wright.]*

"The 1950's English Sedan Lives! Well... Maybe... Sort Of

by Daniel Shockey

Harry (nickname for Hariharan) was startled by the MG Midget picture I have on my cubicle partition. It reminded him of a car made and very common in his native India. He assured me that they were still in production and that he thought they were a Morris car, maybe a Minor.

This really interested me. We can buy wire wheels from India; how about a whole 1950's era automobile? Harry said that the Indian industry is not very sales oriented. They have no sales literature, little advertising and a very-definite, take-it-or-leave-it attitude. He said they are rebuilt over and over and appear in all the Indian movies. He offered to rent a couple for us to view at work one evening.

The evening came. The New Delhi Times was a fairly good movie about politicians influence over journalists. The hero drives a white car like Harry was describing. In one scene they are run off the road, beaten and robbed by bad guys in a black one. In Naram Garam, something of a slap-stick comedy, there is a great scene (well, an interesting scene) showing a repair yard crowded with these English design cars, all identical 4-door sedans, and shows the mechanic squatted on the fender Indian-style.

I could see that they weren't Morris Minors but something larger, about the size of the Midget. So my interest was peaked to do a little research. There isn't much available on Morris cars in the public library but I found some pictures and even some photos and descriptions of the India cars.

The cars are the Morris Oxford Series III, dating from the early 50's, identical down to the hood ornament and merely rebadged as the

The Palo Alto All-British Car Meet

September 12, 1999 (Sun)

Photos by Felix Wong



As always, there were more MG's than any other marque at the show.



Felix Wong's 1969 MGB, dubbed "Goldie", with his custom aluminum bicycle rack and Cannondale racing bike.

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space. In many cases there is no time to read these and much confusion results. Few other drivers are willing to be patient to allow you to slow down to see where to go next.

Sep 18'99 (Sat)

Yesterday I visited the factory of Morgan Motor Company in Malvern Link, Worcestershire, where the Morgan cars are made, and in fact have been made for a long long time. The company seems to be doing great when the rest of the British motor industry has gone away. The cars are built by hand in a completely traditional way. The motors are bought in from Ford and Land Rover, and probably the rear ends, gearboxes, and what not, but the rest is basically made up from scratch. It is a miracle of hand labor, and it takes 24 days to build each car under the new streamlined production scheme, this is down from 40 days previously. The bodies are ash framed, skinned in aluminum, mild steel for the scuttle and front cowl, and a bit of stainless steel sheet in some areas like the inner fenders (wings) and scuttle (or bulkhead, or firewall)- but owners of T types and older will know the term "scuttle". The chassis is drilled, fitted, and assembled by hand, and the body wood is all made on site. A lot of chassis related machine work is done there, as is paint, trim, upholstery, wiring, and the rest. When you see what they are doing, and you see how happy the people are to be working there for a company that obviously values people over pure profit, it is really an inspiration, and I think I might have to start searching for a Morgan, although certainly the new ones are way out of my price range and a lot of the old ones are too! But you guys will get to see the roll of film I took there, and I can tell more about it when I get back. If you do come to England I really cannot say too strongly that Morgan is a must see visit, it is definitely the best thing I have done so far. The Morgan Motor Company proves that the world really does not have to change and get all gross and high tech after all, these changes are nothing more than fashion! I think the world would be a better place if a lot more companies were like Morgan!

Attention!!

Have your MG painted by a fellow sports car lover with 11 years experience. High quality rubbed out polyurethane finish at reasonable cost. I do bodywork, rust repair and welding. Fast turn around time. References and examples of my work available. Call for an appointment for a free estimate. Andy Schank 510-236-5232

Ambassador. Besides the 1489 cc standard engine, the cars were available in the mid-80's with an optional 1800 cc and a diesel engine. They had 4-speed transmissions, non-synchro in first, and a 4.875 ratio rear axle. Dry weight was 2456 pounds (the same size as the Midget).

New Old English Sedan

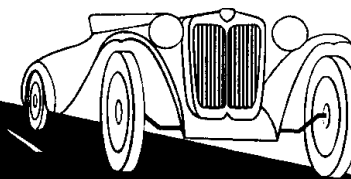
I have not been able to find whether the car is still manufactured. The manufacturer, Hindustan Motors, Ltd., still does build a "Contessa" with the 1800 cc motor that looks like an over-bodied English sedan of the early 70's. The last report I saw had their sales down 80% in the face of new competition. Harry says the Ambassador was still being built (he thinks they will be forever) when he left India in 1986. The last record I could find for the Mk. 4 model was in a 1985 directory. It had not changed in appearance. An interesting extension of the line was the Trekker, an open, jeep-like vehicle using Ambassador mechanicals. (There's one for your collection!) Jeeps remain very popular in India, mostly of the Willys brand, so apparently rebuilt to last forever, also. The fuel quality is very poor so the Jeep is ideal and the Ambassador does pretty well with its low compression and state of tune (I presume).

If Hindustan had instead purchased tooling for the Z Midget, I think they might have a good export business, cars and parts, to MG collectors. The later Morris Oxford was badge-engineered to give us the MG Midget Mk III and Mk. IV. I wonder if the 1489 cc engine is still in production in India? Could I buy a brand new long block? Harry says India assembly quality is notoriously poor.

Is the 1950's Morris still available brand new in India? Could you have one gray-marketed here? I haven't found out yet and frankly am not in any rush to. But it is intriguing to think that the 1950's English sedan still roars along the dusty roads of the old Empire, still in daily use and likely to stay so for many years to come.

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By Marty Ray and Lora Lerner

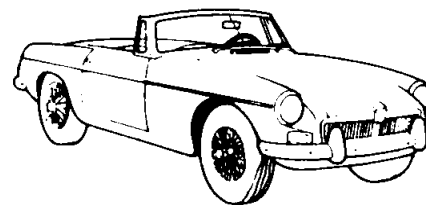
[Editor's Note: Marty Ray, our former Editor of The Octagon, and Lora Lerner are currently wrapping up a around-the-world vacation begun in February '99, and will finally be back with us around the 12th of October! They have been sending their thoughts via email, and can be reached at marty_and_lora@eudoramail.com.]

Sep 15'99 (Wed)

I am in Oxford, where I just saw where MG and Morris got their start. I have been doing an amazing amount of industrial and automotive tourism. Today began with a visit to the plant where BMH makes the bodyshells for MGB, TR-6 and others, as well as finishing and stocking a wide variety of replacement panels and parts. I'll have a big report on all this when I get back.

I'm starting to feel a lot more comfortable with driving on the left again, after making the switch a couple of times already. Drivers here in the UK can be aggressive, but are not as bad as the New Zealand ones! There are a lot of really narrow roads, some barely wide enough for one car but still carrying two directions. There are also some very nice motorways (freeways) about which the only complain might be that the exit ramps are strangely short for the speeds they allow (70). Many people regularly go way over the limit. It must be great if you are a street line painter here in the UK, there is so much paint down on the road that these guys must enjoy great continuing employment. It gets rather confusing, along with the excessive number of signs and warnings etc. crammed into such a small

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