T REGISTER

Totally T-Type

ISSUE 11 SEPTEMBER 2005

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THE EDITOR

I'm starting this issue later than usual due to organising responsibilities for the T Register Shropshire Weekend and the TC 60th Anniversary Run. As mentioned in the July's TTT, this issue will probably be up to a week later coming out than normal due in part to organising/attending these events and also because I would like to give you an independent assessment of the Directors' proposed scheme for Kimber House. This is reproduced on page 31.

At the time of writing I have only glanced through the Directors' Report, but it seems to me that we have at least a £1m scheme, far more questions than answers and serious doubts about affordability. There are infinitely better brains than mine examining the scheme and I say "Thank God" because I firmly believe that the future of the Club is at stake.

I'll not say any more about the scheme, except to venture the opinion, which I know is shared by lots of T Register members, that improvements to membership services would be far more welcome than a "trophy building" which could well put the Club in a precarious financial position with no headroom for improvements to these services.

With improvements to membership services in mind, the Register will be proposing four Motions to the MGCC Council meeting on 15th October. These call for an exclusive discount to MGCC members for MG International Silverstone advance bookings, at least one article every month in "Safety Fast!" from a professional motoring journalist, an improved website and proposals for a photo archive to be brought before the March 2006 Council meeting. There is also a Motion from the Register going before the AGM for an individual ballot of members to have the final say on whatever scheme Council recommends for Kimber House. As your Council voting member with David Butler in support, we are going to be busy!

As the MOT on the TC was due to expire on 11th September (the second day of the Shropshire Run) I thought that I had better book the car in early in August as I did not want any nasty surprises. I always take my cars to Harvey's Garage, a garage in a delightful setting in the picturesque village of Compton Dando, a couple of miles from my house. Les Harvey, the owner, treats my MGs with reverence (which is most appropriate for 'The Vicar's Car'!) and clearly enjoys giving them the 'once over'. As I was reversing and manoeuvring around several parked cars awaiting repair, he noticed that my brake lights were not working, so sent me away to "fiddle about with them". "Fiddling about" took longer than expected, but the problem was diagnosed as a faulty brake light switch. When I finally got it off, courtesy of the hacksaw, it was obvious why the poor old switch had finally 'given up the ghost' after nearly 60 years of absorbing all manner of crud from the road below. Fortunately, I had a new switch in the spares box and this went on a lot faster than the other came off. I also took the opportunity to renew the spring as the old one looked to be 'on its last legs.' The car passed the MOT.

My latest 'bout of fiddling' has been to cure an oil leak from the tappet cover. I had previously thought that the oil leak was coming from the rocker cover (and some of it was), but having brilliantly cured that (by using EvoStik to glue the gasket to the rocker cover, to prevent the gasket moving about when the cover was offered back to the surface of the cylinder head), it was obvious where the leak was coming from. On undoing the sleeve nuts to remove the tappet cover I was curious to know why the middle one required the next size spanner to loosen it. The answer was found to be that some idiot had sheared the original 'nut' on the middle sleeve nut and had brazed a 5/16' BSF nut on instead. The resultant fix (bodge) was not brazed on square and blobs of braze were left on the back of the nut so that the seal against the tappet cover was useless. The bodger had tried to compensate for this by using 5 fibre washers – what a mess!

Still, at least one can fiddle (and usually fix) our cars. Recently, my son-in-law's MG ZR developed a misfire so father-in-law said "I'll tell you what that is". On lifting the bonnet it didn't seem to have any plugs and in wondrous amazement at what lay beneath, I promptly said "job for the garage, I'm afraid, mate!" But apparently, not any old garage as it needs to go on the diagnostic machine, so a main dealer job. So two days later (because they couldn't do it straight away) and £260 lighter, the misfire was cured. The diagnosis was that one of the coil packs was faulty – "quite a lot of them go when the cars are just outside warranty" confided the mechanic. Says me to myself "I'm bloody glad that I've got a VW Polo and a TC that I can fix myself and doesn't cost me £260 to fix a misfire……..touch wood!

T REGISTER NEWS (BY JOHN JAMES)

'T' REGISTER T-PARTY AT SHUTTLEWORTH

The event was hailed as a resounding success with 52 T-Types attending. The September edition of "Safety Fast!" has a full report, with photos, courtesy of Graham Brown. We need an organiser for next year's event (date not yet fixed) – please, please, consider whether you are able to help. Graham Brown (contact details on page 38) will be pleased to tell you what's involved – it's not unduly onerous.

SILVERSTONE INTERNATIONAL WEEKEND

As planned, the hard copies of July's TTT were taken to Silverstone and around 80 subscribers picked up their copy. We also signed up 27 new subscribers to TTT. The Regalia stand did brisk business and the profits made will go towards running the Register.

The Register's Friday 'natter' was well attended and seems to be gaining in popularity year on year. The display of XPAG Specials was as mouth watering as ever and three supercharged T-Types added significantly to the interest. Thanks must go to Keith Hodder and Tony Smith for organising these displays, to the owners for making their fine cars available, and to the Club for providing the tented area.

The first XPAG/XPEG over the line in the Kimber Trophy Race was the Lester of George Edney. George was presented with a bottle of champagne, courtesy of the Register, by Paddy Willmer. The first XPAG/XPEG on handicap was driven by Tim Patchett.

REGISTER AUTUMN TOUR IN SHROPSHIRE 9/10/11 SEPTEMBER 2005

The Roadbooks have been sent out to all the participants and the Rally Plates are with John and Kay Wray in Telford, Shropshire, so everything is ready to roll. There will be a full report of the Tour with photos in the January 2006 edition of "Safety Fast!"

As mentioned in the September issue of "Safety Fast!" we do not yet have an organiser for next year's Tour of Yorkshire (probably North Yorkshire). We desperately need someone to come forward soon as a hotel will need to be booked, so if you can help, please get in touch.

17th SEPTEMBER 2005 – 60th ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST PRODUCTION TC AT ABINGDON

After a slow take up it looks as though we will have 19 cars for this event. We will be assembling in the Market Place in the centre of Abingdon from 10.00am and setting off for 7 miles along the former Factory Test Route and then on a round trip through glorious Oxfordshire and Berkshire countryside, returning to The Black Horse at Gozzards Ford for lunch.

PRACTICAL SKILLS WORKSHOP - 9th OCTOBER

At the time of writing it looks as though this Workshop is fully booked. There will be a report with photographs in the January issue of "Safety Fast!".

'REBUILD' 2006

Doesn't the year go quickly! Next year's 'Rebuild' event will be held in March at St Neots – exact date to be confirmed. If you have any subjects you particularly want included do let one of the Committee members know.

A REMINDER TO ALL TA OWNERS!

Every year we hold a get together, where we concentrate on the practical aspects of running TAs. You may have been at 'Rebuild '05' earlier this year and heard Brian Rainbow's excellent talk on 'Preserving the MPJG Engine'. Brian's extensive knowledge and the collective knowledge of us 'TA enthusiasts' will be available at **The Great Malvern Vintage and Classic Show, Three Counties Show Ground, MALVERN, Worcestershire on SATURDAY 1st OCTOBER, 2005.**

The morning is taken up with arrival and touring the Show exhibits. After lunch we assemble in a pavilion for a good old 'natter'. There is plenty of advice on problems and finding parts from those of us who have owned TAs for 10, 20, and 30 years. New TA owners are especially welcome.

Malvern is not far from me, but if you live further afield and are coming in a modern car, perhaps you could offer a lift to others. Please give me a ring for entry tickets and to find out if it is possible to car share. **Dave Heath Tel: 01934 625242**

Dave Heath, 20 Spring Hill, WESTON-SUPER-MARE BS22 9AP

It Happened on the Way to the 'Natter'……..

Both the TF and the MGB had passed their MOT in mid May, relieving me, or should I say my Credit Card, of a suitable donation to the Exchequer. Because of other pressing family matters, MGs had taken a back seat. Six weeks elapsed and it was agreed that I would pick up a friend and fellow MG member, John Neville, to go to our 'natter' at Broom.

Hood down, side screens out, us Septuagenarians have to be careful, the draughts can cause havoc with an ageing back. The TF started first pull and the 5 mile run to John's was a dream. In fact I had difficulty keeping under 70 on the by-pass.

On arrival I was pleased to see in John's drive a gleaming white TC - a new member Jim Mozeley, who also lives nearby in Maulden, was making his first visit to the 'natter' and wished to follow us. That proved to be fortuitous - more later.

Ensuring that Jim kept within reasonable visual contact, we gradually cranked up the speed and kept within the 60 mph limit, law abiding citizens that we are. The old girl was running like a bird, approaching the Shefford roundabout junction with the A600 change down to third **** crack, bang, splutter, misfires galore.

Rolled into the roundabout thinking aloud that a plug lead had become detached. On exiting, hard acceleration was not on but gentle persuasion allowed us to make the next roundabout about half a mile up the A600. Turning off onto the B658 we pulled into a lay-by, bonnet up, nothing untoward there, tried all the plug leads, checked the distributor cap was on securely. Still ticking over OK, so we decided to head for the Pub and with the aid of a pint consider the problem in more depth. Jim remarked that my brake light seemed to be stuck on. Another problem approaching, we will have to wait and see.

Being very cautious and not accelerating too hard, we had covered about a mile or more and turned off right to the Broom road and within walking distance of the Cock Inn when she died, dead as a dodo, nothing! Bonnet up and decide to have a plug out, no spark there. Distributor Cap off, surprise, surprise, spark at the points !!

This is where past experienced kicked in - John and Jim were mystified - I was not. Some five or six years ago I was meeting that intrepid racing man of Lester MG fame - Stewart Penfound - for a Pub Lunch when he was in our area. We had a similar occurrence, which Stewart quickly diagnosed. The memory cells for important things had quickly kicked in and my insurance was tucked in the tool box - a brand new rotor arm. Once fitted,

sparks restored to the plugs, bonnet down and off for the well earned pint.

On arrival, much ribbing on being late, so that everyone else had charged glasses. But I asked “How many of you carry a spare rotor arm? - not one! I wonder if they do now? I had ensured that another new one was in the spares kit before the end of the week.

Jim’s observation (the sticking brake light) was checked out and the fault seemed intermittent, but it was a wake up call which caused a lot of hassle and will feature in another article for John when I can work out how to re-size the pictures by way of ' Paint Shop Pro’, I think John said it was.

The TF has had runs to the Shuttleworth T Party Weekend and Silverstone and has now had a 3000 mile service in preparation for the Autumn Tour. A good clean and polish and pack up will see us on our way for a relaxing weekend in Shropshire. However, we have to leave for home on Sunday evening since early Monday morning 12th September I take the TF to its new home in the New Forest, returning by train to assist my wife with the final run down to moving home from Ampthill on Wednesday. Never a dull life and the MGs want to be in on the act, the ' B ' is already safely tucked up in its new abode.

The Saga of the Brake lights will follow when time permits, there are however one or two pressing MGCC and Committee matters that need attention first.

Happy motoring and don't neglect your MG, they have a way of saying “Hey’ what about a bit of attention to me!”

Dennis Barker

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First find the problem!

The day started well. We filled up with petrol, and then took a delightful run across middle England from the Cotswolds to the annual 'jamboree' at Silverstone. The TF was running well on relatively un-crowded minor roads. The problems started on arrival at the circuit, where, for some unaccountable reason, the gate staff found it necessary to send our slow moving lane on a crawl around the perimeter road in order to reach the inner circuit Register parking.

During this seemingly unnecessary detour, the engine started to misfire and the temperature gauge needle crept above its customary mid point. Fuel vaporisation came immediately to mind, but I was not unduly concerned as I was confident that the problem would disappear when the engine and fuel lines had the time to cool down. However, when the time came to go home, it soon became clear that the problem had not gone away. It felt like fuel starvation, but I know from experience that a breakdown in the electrics can produce similar symptoms. Investigation showed petrol reaching the carbs, the points opening and closing OK and all the plug H.T. leads and L.T. wire sitting securely in the right places. The carbs were however, taking it in turns to flood, so a leaking float and/or the wrong fuel level was suspected. At this point help arrived in the shape of our hardworking Editor and his brother and with their assistance it was noticed that there was only a weak spark when the points were flicked open with the ignition on. I could also see tiny bubbles appearing at the top of the centre cylinder head stud on the carburettor side. A problem with the coil, condenser, or even a failing head gasket perhaps, but no loss of coolant was apparent. At this point, after an hour of tinkering with several conflicting clues as to what the problem might be, the engine refused to run at all – time to call the RAC and prepare for a ride home on the flat bed truck!

Next morning in the comfort of the garage at home, with more tools and replacement parts to hand, the investigation recommenced. The car still refused to start and the carbs were continuing to flood, although the float levels had been carefully checked and the needle housing cleaned. The levers and pivot pins looked slightly worn so new needles, levers and pins were purchased and after placing extra washers under the new Grose-jets, these cured the flooding. This provided the opportunity to confirm that petrol was reaching the carburettors in sufficient volume. The car restarted, but the misfiring returned as soon as the throttle was opened beyond fast tick over speed.

Fuel was reaching both float chambers and there were no obvious air leaks, so I now turned my attention to the electrics as these, more often than not, are the cause of XPAG engine problems. I progressively replaced plugs, points, rotor arm, condenser, coil, but there was no improvement. With frustration setting in it was time to rethink, consult the manuals and phone a friend. Barrie Jones, the Register's TD/TF Technical Adviser, was most helpful. Even though petrol

was reaching the carbs in seemingly copious quantities, he suggested many different things to check, one of which was the filter in the pump. Boxed in by the rear chassis and the pump bracket, this filter is a 'pig' to get at on the TF and therefore tends to get neglected. I managed to loosen the filter plug, which allowed petrol to wash through the filter into a container, so the plug was retightened. Time to do another check on the fuel supply to the carbs, but this time, instead of allowing the disconnected fuel line to pump into an old plastic bottle, I used and open topped stainless steel container that I normally use for cleaning parts. Now for the first time I could clearly see that the petrol had an excessive amount of gritty dirt in the bottom of the container. Could this be the cause of the problem? The Workshop Manual B12 "Sources of Carburettor Trouble" provided the inspiration I had been looking for when all else had failed. It suggests that when dirt in the carburettor is suspected, start the engine, open the throttle, block the air inlet momentarily and keeping the throttle open until the engine starts to race. This procedure brought about an immediate improvement, so was repeated on both carbs until I felt confident to take the car out for a road test, when performance appeared to be back to normal.

The Manual says that fuel blockage in the S.U. carburettor rarely arises, owing to the size of the jet and fuel ways. This is borne out by my own experience of owning S.U. equipped cars for many years as I have never experienced a jet blockage - in the float needle/seating, yes, but not in the carburettor itself. Bearing in mind that the petrol has to pass through no less than three filters and the carbs were totally rebuilt about 2,500 miles ago, I can only surmise that the front carb, where the blockage seemed to have been, may have sucked in a foreign body through the air filter and combined with dirt in the fuel taken on that morning had conspired to cause a fuel starvation. On reflection, a number of things add up. Tank filled up that morning, both carbs flooding due to dirt lodging under the float chamber needles and/or a blockage in the jet and a prolonged period of small throttle openings whilst crawling along in slow moving traffic. When the possible obstruction around the pump filter was disturbed and the blockage in the jet of the front carb cleared, the engine could then run normally.

The moral of this story is to conduct the fault diagnosis in a more systematic manner and take nothing for granted as there is a first time for everything!

All that remains now is to drain the fuel system to remove any impurities and keep an eye on those tiny bubbles appearing at the centre of the cylinder head stud. Oil or coolant, or a combination of both? I have rechecked the torque readings for the cylinder head nuts and these are 'spot on', so I am not sure what this will lead to. Watch this space!

Roy Miller

PS After a few days I checked the plastic bottle containing the litre of fuel that I had pumped off whilst trying to find the problem. At the bottom were five or so globules of toffee coloured liquid (water?) which seemingly had settled to the bottom of the bottle. Another good reason for cleaning the fuel system.

XPAG overbores

Further to Roger Wilson's article in the May issue of TTT, Barrie Jones, TD/TF Technical Adviser, has contributed the following. Perhaps it explains why the XPAG overbores go 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60 and then jump to 100, 110, 120, 130, 140.

The XPAG block can safely be bored to +.060" oversize, after which there is still enough metal to take a final rebore so that liners can be installed to return the block to standard. Most blocks will accept +.100" or even +.120" but cannot then be sleeved. Anything larger invariably breaks up.

The standard XPAG piston is 66.5mm. The standard MG VA piston is 69mm which is often used to take an XPAG out to approximately +.100" giving 1350cc. This was once a popular modification, but it got a reputation as an `oil burner' because these pistons do cause the engine to smoke a bit.

The standard XPAG overbore sizes were from +.10" through to +.060" in increments of .010".

The standard VA overbore sizes were from +. 010" through to +.040", so effectively there are another set of XPAG overbores going from +.100" to +.140".

The later XPAG blocks had thicker walls than earlier ones, and the XPAW block from the Wolseley 4/44 had the thickest of all. However, it is a matter of luck whether the bore ends up so thin that it becomes porous or even breaks up.

George Edney in the UK is the expert in all this. He inserts liners into XPAG blocks using special ceramic sealing material, so that an XPAG can be taken out to 72mm and effectively becomes a TF1500 block. You end up with a mixture of wet and dry liners, but it works.

DISCLAIMER

Articles published in *Totally T-Type* are published in good faith, but the MGCC 'T' Register cannot be held responsible for their content. Always seek advice from a competent person before doing anything that could affect the safety of your car.

Continuing with the subject of cylinder blocks, I asked Roger Wilson to identify a spare block which is sitting in one of my sheds. Here's one of the photos I sent and Roger's comments follow:

I have received the photos of the engine block, and can see that it was last supplied as a BMC replacement/reconditioned engine, number C 77463. The block almost certainly started life in a postwar 1140cc XPJW Wolseley engine, as indicated by the 24144 casting number and the W logo. These early 1140cc blocks had quite thick cylinder walls, so boring them out from 63.5mm to 66.5mm (giving 1250cc) is not a problem; this is what BMC would have done in the early sixties to provide a reconditioned 1250cc engine. However, the blocks will only bore out another .020" at most, so be careful. When MG developed the block into the XPAG 1250cc engine, they actually moved out the cylinder walls, so XPAG engines can go to 1350cc, and sometimes more. An interesting point about the block in the photos is that it has the larger plinth for holding the later filter clamp, which is secured with three bolts. As the plinth only has two tapped holes, we might deduce that the block was cast when the change was planned, but was drilled and tapped to use up some old stock of two bolt clamps. This would have been just before July 1950. When the same type of block was used in a Morris engine the casting code was still 24144, but the engine type became XPJM.

MG TF GEARBOX CONVERSION TO 5 SPEED

The MG TF is a super car and I love driving my 1954 1250cc example as much as possible. We have done a number of competitive rallies in the car and have won a 'Claret and Classics' and the 'Norman Conquest' in her.

I have always been concerned that at 60 mph the little XPAG is doing 4000 rpm and I had thoughts of upgrading the rear axle, but the plan was changed when my brother, who also has a TF, phoned me just before Silverstone 2002 to say that he could not do the event, where he was entered for the California Cup, as his gearbox was making a funny noise. Following a test run in the car, it was obvious that the problem was 'dental' i.e. broken teeth on one or more of the gears.

Upon inspection of the gearbox, it was found to be a bit 'past it' generally, so the decision was taken to fit a 5-speed conversion, using a Ford Sierra gearbox. Having known Peter Gamble for some time, an order was duly despatched to him for one of his kits, including a reconditioned Sierra gearbox. The following notes are not intended to be a comprehensive guide to fitting (this is provided with the kit) but are offered to demonstrate that the fitting is well within the capabilities of the amateur mechanic – I am, after all, a Men's Outfitter by trade!

It is best to remove the engine and gearbox from the car to do the work. It is also necessary to remove some bits from the original gearbox mounts and a small piece from the front mounting plate at the front of the engine. Peter's instructions are very clear on these alterations, which do not preclude refitting an original gearbox.

The kit provides a new bellhousing, an altered front engine mount, new fan spacer, a new front tie bar, an exhaust mount, a Sierra clutch plate, a Ford rear mount, a special gearbox mount to chassis, propshaft, tunnel, floor board mount, engine stabiliser bracket, plus all the nuts and bolts required. The whole kit is beautifully engineered and everything fits. In my opinion, the worst job was removing and replacing the bellhousing shaft, which operates the clutch, but with a little thought and care, it all went together well. The Sierra 'box needs a small amount of metal removing from a casting on a web, quite easy as it is alloy.

The engine and gearbox can be mated on the garage floor and it's advisable to fill the gearbox with Ford's recommended oil first as the plug is difficult to access when in the car. However, you need an original Ford propshaft spider, otherwise all the oil will spill out the back of the 'box when tilted to refit the "lump". The new front engine mount and the and the rear mounts need lining up, carefully following Peter's instructions, and it is a

good idea to fit the engine stabiliser at this point. The new bracket supplied needed a small amount of filing as it runs very close to the fan pulley. It is also wise to trial fit the wing tie bar – I preferred to use my original straight one and re-drill the mounting holes on the plates bolted to the wings.

The next job is to fit the propshaft, making sure that it is all in line and then refit the toe board and floorboards, which will need slight alteration to clear the gearbox. The propshaft tunnel will need shortening, but do this after fitting the new gearbox tunnel cover. The holes in this are marked and need drilling out ¼" .This will all fit to the toe board, I preferred to use wood screws to secure to the wooden floorboard. Your original carpet will fit the new tunnel, but you do need to remove the gear lever gaiter and make a bigger one – have it sewn up like an icing bag (ask the wife!) and I found it better to glue it to the tunnel. I found that using an early MGB oval chrome ring meant a nice neat finish to the carpet. If you do not modify the gaiter, the carpet lifts in reverse and bottom gear.

The final tasks are to reassemble the engine bay, but you may need to have the front exhaust pipe tweaked as it may foul the gearbox and not line up with the new bracket. Having done three of these conversions, two were OK and my own needed tweaking. The engine moves forward with the conversion about ½" and it is imperative that the gearbox does not touch the main cross tube at the back – you should have 1/8" to 3/16" daylight at this point.

The new speedo cable needs fitting and this can be fiddly. Fortunately, mine fell into place. The speedo will need to be to be recalibrated as it will otherwise read slow.

You should now be ready to test drive. The first thing you will notice is that you will find the car a lot quieter. 60 mph is now about 3300 rpm, meaning a useful cruising speed of at least 65 + mph in fifth gear. I have now done 5000 miles since converting and can do autotests without the worry of doing damage to an original 'box. A Sierra 'box can usually be picked up for £30 to £50 at a scrapyard and it is very durable. The original 'bpx is in the garage and could easily be refitted. All the bits cut off have been retained and could be welded back together.

This is a super conversion and, if you use an original gear knob, it is unnoticeable to most observers. No wonder it is so popular!

JOHN VENABLES

Post script: I mentioned at the start of the article that my brother was unable to take part in the California Cup in his TF, due to the gearbox problem. As I was already entered in my MGB, I lent him my TF so that he could participate after all. I did not mind lending him my car, but I was a bit 'miffed' when he beat me ……what gratitude!

A NEW MG TF FOR 'UNDER £1400!

Well, it feels like it. I attended the excellent meeting at St Neots to learn about TD/TF gearboxes. Afterwards I just knew that I could rebuild the TF box and could hear the bearings singing along with me on the journey home. Off with the front wings etc. and out with the engine/gearbox onto the bench. After working out the number of spares required I got on the phone. Wow! I had no idea how much they were to be. Even if I had outlined the correct parts, which we were told was not that easy unless chipped gears were evident. A rethink was needed!

My next call was to the advertiser Hi-Gear Engineering in Derby. For about the same cost I bought Peter Gamble's kit to install a type 9 Sierra five speed box. Three days work and then the road test. Wow! . Near silence, slick gear changes, and, in 5th, such low revs - both my ears and the engine will last longer.

The 'kit' came complete. I mean complete, unlike those aeroplane kits of childhood days when one still needed to go out to get the glue, or batteries to complete - that from Hi-Gear needed nothing extra. Ease of installation? Bit of a fiddle getting the gearbox under the bulkhead and over the rear mounting tube. It would have been much easier if I had someone to give a little assistance, but alone it just took longer. In all the kit was 'Just as their advertisement states'

It is so good that I am now about to buy another kit and install in my TD. And then, for less than £2800, I'll have two 'new MG T-Types'.

David Pughe

Ed's note: As will be gleaned from David's reference to St Neots (it was 'Rebuild' 2004) I've had this contribution for some time, so prices may have risen slightly. It's a useful 'add-on' to John Venables' article. I have no connection with Hi-Gear Engineering Limited.

Comment by Peter Gamble of Hi-Gear Engineering Ltd

"The foregoing articles by John Venables and David Pughe are typical of our enthusiastic T-Type customers. We make great efforts to produce a comprehensive, high quality, 5 speed installation kit and are gratified to have such positive feedback. Sales of 300 T-Type kits to date show that the 5 speed route is a beneficial option to gearbox rebuild or axle ratio change for customers who wish to use their cars seriously. We are pleased to help put extra pleasure into T-Type motoring."

Current prices: TF Kit £865, Gearbox £375, Total £1240 + VAT

THE STORIES BEHIND TWO FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPHS

It was rather remiss of me not to include a brief write up on Peter Stratton's TD, which graced the front cover of July's TTT. I'll now put this right (with Peter's help) and also include a write up of John and Ann Ward's TF, which is starring on the front cover of this issue.

Peter's TD was brought back from the USA in 1990 and by 1997 it was fully restored. Steve Hall of Halls Garage, Morton, near Bourne in Lincolnshire did most of the work. The car is 95% original apart from steering conversion to RHD and associated parts. The body was in good condition so no woodwork has been replaced. Steve kept it for his own personal use for a couple of years but did not use it very often so Peter talked him into parting with it and it's been the love of his life for the past five years. Apart from replacing a broken crankshaft, Peter has only had to attend to minor finishing details. The photo which appeared on the July front cover of TTT was taken at last year's Boston Car Club show where the car took first prize for the best 1950s example. Peter doesn't normally go in for concours type events but the Boston Show organisers present awards as a matter of course! The farthest the car has travelled in Peter's ownership is the Jersey motoring festival in 2004 - a very good time was had by all.

Peter has tried to get some history of the TD's life in the USA and has sent e-mails to various T Registers but has never had one reply. Not surprisingly, he has lost a bit of enthusiasm for detective work, but is hoping that the worldwide circulation of TTT just might produce something for him. The chassis number of the car is TD26410.

John Ward has provided the following fascinating account of his ownership of TF6137:

“Following a discussion in the office in Bristol in October 1968 as to dream car etc, I recounted the story of cycling to school in the late fifties and going past a local garage, I noticed an apparition in the window, an MG TF in green and got off my bike to ogle. I never forgot the beautiful lines of the car and its presence in the showroom window. Cars were beyond my budget in the early days of work and I succumbed to motor bikes, the last one being a Norton ES2 which I still regret selling to this day, but notwithstanding I did pass my car driving test but never owned a car.

I was fortunate then to be in a business that provided company cars and so had still not purchased a car myself by 1968. Suffice to say during this conversation on cars, my colleague in the office said his wife's boss was trying to sell an MG and he rang her up. You’ve guessed …. it was an MG TF in BRG! Within 6 hours the car was seen, purchased and delivered to our rented cottage north of Bath and the deposit money for a house had been spent!

That was October 1968, we had no garage and although we eventually bought a house in that area we still had nowhere to park the MG. It languished in various barns, pub yards, friends’ back gardens etc but was regularly used, abused, bent, but kept coming back for more. At this time we had joined the MG Car Club and the Register and got the bug and started to go to natters and meetings.

The then company decided to move me from Bristol back to London in 1979. By this time we had 2 children and a third on the way, the two eldest had full harness type seat belts in the back whilst the baby in a carry cot got wedged under the scuttle when the MG was used as the school bus. The youngest son Tom is a car and MG nut and I firmly believe it was due to his formative early months spent under the scuttle of the TF with its noise and engine aroma that has caused this malaise.

Within months it was apparent that Ann could not manage this growing family using the TF, so a 1957 MG Magnette ZA was purchased, which acted as the family saloon and the TF was put in the garage to be refurbished in the near future.

The years went by and the funds were never available to restore her and it was not until 1994 (15 years later) that I realised that I was 50 and the car was 40 in the same week in July. We set to get the old girl up and running, it was a sorry sight but I used to describe it as lovingly un-restored. We had great times for 3 years but eventually my friendly MOT man could not turn a

blind eye to certain anomalies, particularly lack of wood and steel meeting on the chassis and the engine arteries were needing a by-pass.

Off the road again but more determined this time and having tasted the good life again, began to strip down the car in 1998. We moved to Essex later that year and the "remains" were delivered to Gerry Revens, the Anglia chairman who completely refurbished the chassis, running gear, paintwork etc, the car being finally fitted out and finished by Spring 1999. It now has a double garage and goes out at every opportunity and is deservedly pampered.

I have met one previous owner, who still had the sale details when he bought it from University Motors in London and who was delighted to see the car again and fully restored and running and I know it was first registered in Hampshire in July 1954.

Needless to say we never had any regrets in spending the house deposit and have listened to many tales of woe from people over the years who wished they had never sold their cars when the children came along etc... ours was never going to be for sale and we are fortunate that also there is a heir to the apparition.

Sorry to ramble on but 37 years is a long story to pack into a few lines".

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An Inspiration – at last!

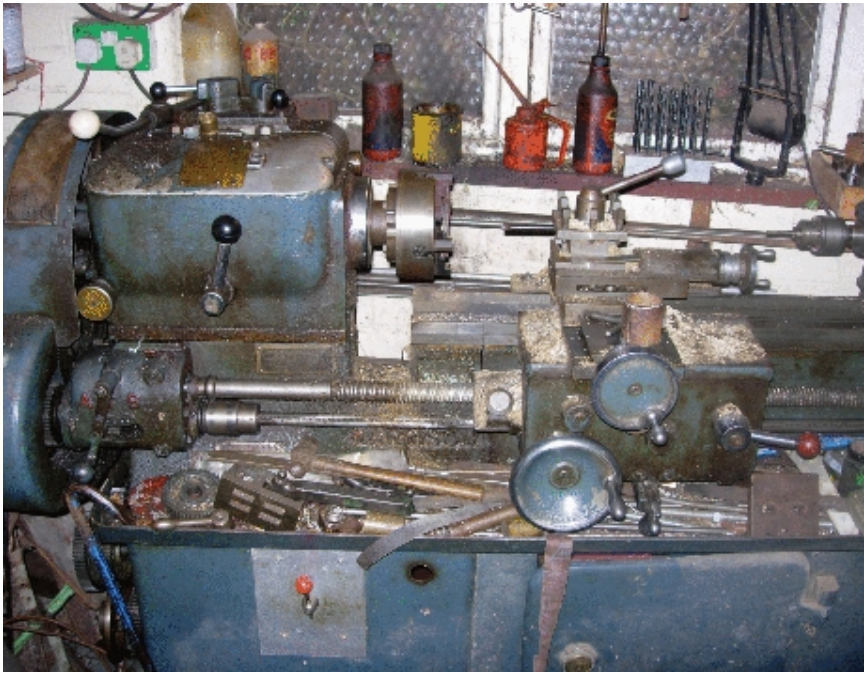
I am so glad that I have managed to inspire someone; (thank you Eric Hayes). For about twenty five years I was a school teacher when I tried hard to inspire people daily. I've retired from that and now I find I can do it with just a couple of articles!

I heartily agree with Eric; how can many of the T-Type owners keep the thing going without a decent workshop? I no longer have a milling machine, having sold it some years ago, but my lathe, power hacksaw and drilling machines I would not be without. I also own a good bandsaw and gas welding equipment.

Eric also mentions taps and dies. BSF threads abound on the T-Type with a few BSW (Whitworth) thrown in, but the engine has some extraordinary threads. These are a mixture of Metric Fine and standard ISO Metric threads. To complicate matters further, there is more than one fine thread for many diameters, and if that was not enough, the nuts and bolts have BSF heads!

I recently replaced the bell housing bolts after some fun with the clutch. I bought 2½ inch long 5/16th BSF bolts and cut the threads off. Then the correct thread (8x1mm) was cut onto the shank. Fiddly, but gets the job done. Cylinder head nuts have a standard M10 thread (10x1.5), but 10mm threads also come in 10x1.25 and 10x1! The side plate studs have a standard thread, M6, but they have long hollow nuts. I bought some steel and brass hexagonal bar in Whitworth sizes from Noggin Ends in Stoke. From this I can make nuts with either metric or BSF threads. A real bonus.

My lathe *(a photograph of Steve's lathe is on page 20)* is not as pristine as Eric's, being a more industrial machine. It is a pre-war (about 1930) Harrison 9 inch swing. (4½ diameter over the cross slide) with a gap-bed. (A six-inch section of the bed is removable to turn larger items such as brake drums. The maximum diameter is 17 inches, just too small for the steering wheel!) Originally the top speed was 450 rpm, much too slow for modern use. I replaced the pulleys from the motor to the input shaft and now have a range of 8 speeds from about 50 rpm to 1200 rpm. At the same time I fitted a beefier motor with a reversing switch. The Harrison also has a clutch so the machine can be stopped and started without switching the motor on or off. Modern machines have screw-cutting gearboxes. Mine doesn't. The large brass plate on the left of the machine gives all the information of which gear wheels to fit where to give the necessary feeds for screw cutting. There are about a dozen assorted gears for this purpose, as well as three-jaw and four-jaw chucks, face-plates, centres, tail-stock chucks and the like.



The machine is in constant use. When the picture was taken I was machining a flange for the exhaust system of my wife's car. (How can modern manufacturers justify the extortionate prices for their spares?)

I tend not to use the screw cutting facility if I have the relevant tap or die, as it is so fiddly to set up.

The last screw cutting job was the spare wheel carrier spinner. Using a new knock-on picked up at an auto-jumble for a 'tenner' *(£10 for the benefit of our overseas readers)*, a piece of suitable heavy wall pipe was

screw cut to fit the carrier. Another piece of steel was screw cut to fit the knock-on and the two welded together. The centre of the knock-on was drilled to accept the badge assembly and the threads cleaned. After fluxing, the knock on was screwed tightly onto the new thread and the two were soft soldered together. The low temperature of the soft solder would not damage the chrome, but the large area of contact ensures a strong enough joint. The badge assembly rescued from the old unit was fitted and I have a serviceable replacement for £10 and a few hours of work!

© Stephen Rigby.

****

News from Tim Patchett's "Cottage Industry"

T-Racer, Tim Patchett, has sent me the following update on the parts he makes **(Ed)**:

"Racing a T-Type puts lots of strain on many original parts, especially stub axles, which, regardless of regular crack testing, could fail without warning. This also applies to any T-Type. A few years ago, due to the lack of availability of new or good second hand ones, I decided to have a batch of 5 sets remanufactured (from original drawings) using modern machining techniques and modern material, namely EN24T.

All 5 sets were sold, one to myself of course!!! 2 sets to fellow racers, one of whom had a failure (on the original stub axles) whilst racing at Silverstone, which fortunately did not cause too much damage, but proved the point that breakages can and do happen .The other pairs were sold to other T-Type owners who were in need of some.

Our editor, John James, who incidentally was one of the purchasers, has indicated to me that there may be renewed interest to supply some more

stub axles and I am willing to make some more, subject to demand and one or two conditions. There are a few people who say they will purchase some when they are available. I am not interested in these people because they do not really want them. A large amount of money is put down to make these parts as most people know and my proposal is that non returnable deposit of £150 is sent with the order--------returned if I do not get orders for a minimum of say 5 sets within 2 months of order date .Current delivery time is approx 6 weeks. There is a lot of machining, (as you can imagine), so the sooner the orders are received, the sooner the delivery. Early Christmas presents for T Types!

The bad news is that due to extreme rises in steel prices, they will be £600/ set, plus carriage at cost.

I produce the parts on a 'cottage industry' basis and if this was my living I would be bankrupt by now! Also the parts do fit, unlike some that are available on the market today.

I also list some of the other bits I make.

One-piece oil pump shaft and gear, high spec to suit TC-TF XPAG/EG Wolseley 4/44 YA/B etc @ £35

TB-TF distributor drive gears @ £25

TB-TC gearbox speedometer cable drive pinion @ £40

Rose jointed steering bars (drag link and tie rod) for TA-TC .Direct replacement for original items. No drilling required, easily fitted, more positive steering and stronger. Bright zinc plate finish supplied with socket setscrews and nyloc nuts @ £120.

Alfin Brake Drums for both TA/C and TD/TF at £380/pair.

Editor's Note:

I have still not fitted the stub axles and rose jointed steering bars, which I bought from Tim at Silverstone 2004. Something else always seems to get in the way (like typing "Totally T-Type!") However, it's down as a job for this Winter as part of a complete overhaul of the front end. As mentioned in a previous TTT (or might have been "Safety Fast!"), this should provide a few articles to share with you.

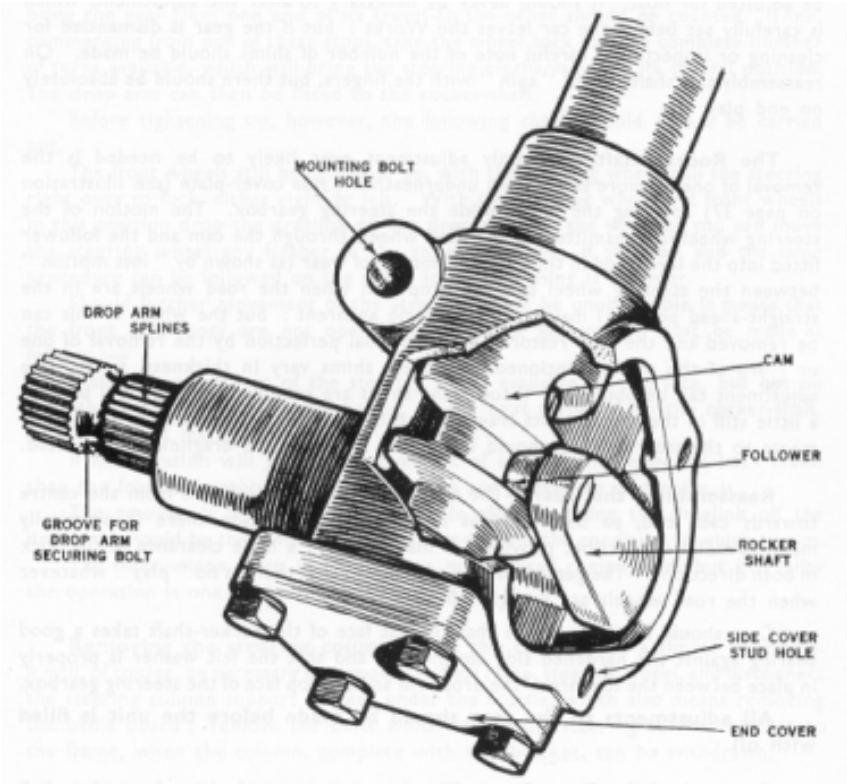
The stub axles were featured in Peter Cole's article on fitting kingpins in the May Issue of TTT (pages 12 and 13) and the rose jointed steering bars were shown on page 19 of the November, 2004 Issue.

Of course, new stub axles are not the only solution to the problem of 60 year old parts (nearly 70 years old for the TA) and I hope to also cover the fitting of new 'pins' in a forthcoming issue.

Adjustment of the TC Steering box

Fools rush in where angels fear to tread. Bearing that in mind, may I offer a fool's attempt to rectify the sloppiness of a TC steering box? Like all steering boxes, the Bishop Cam steering box fitted to the TC is essentially a simple machine to convert the rotary motion of the steering column into the linear motion of the drag link. (In fact the drop arm moves with an oscillatory motion, but let's not split hairs!) The most common way of doing this nowadays is by using a rack and pinion, and the TD and TF use such a system.

The steering system is for making the car change direction. The ability of the car to travel in a straight line is to do with the set-up of the chassis, suspension and axles. We all know of the 'wandering TC syndrome' which is not the fault of the Bishop Cam steering box.

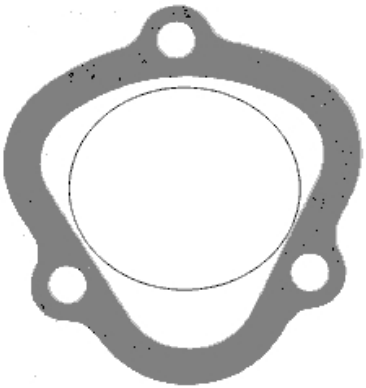


The diagram (taken from the handbook) shows how this simple machine works. Rotating the steering wheel turns the spiral cam and the follower moves up or down, the spiral thus turning the rocker shaft. The follower and rocker arm are held in place by the cover plate. The follower is conical so that as the groove in the cam wears, any play can be taken up by removing shims between the cover plate and casing, pushing the follower further into the groove thus maintaining its 'original perfection.'

Adjustment by shims is fiddly and only allows for fixed intervals of alteration. A system that uses a screw thread to vary the gap between the rocker arm and the cover plate is simpler to use and gives infinite adjustment. At this point I should state that my experience of the Tomkins Modification is solely through the articles in TTT and the Octagon Bulletin, but it appears to apply force via a thrust bearing directly onto the rocker shaft. This in turn is causing an additional bending force on the rocker arm, which is giving cause for concern and has led, I understand, to failure in at least one case.

Faced with the same problem, and knowing nothing of the Tomkins Modification, I wanted to apply even pressure to the rocker arm using a screw thread in order to maintain the correct position of the follower in the cam groove. A pressure pad, covering most of the swept area of the rocker arm was my solution.

A brass disc was turned from ¼" thick plate so that it would just sit inside one of the shims as shown. A new cover plate was cut



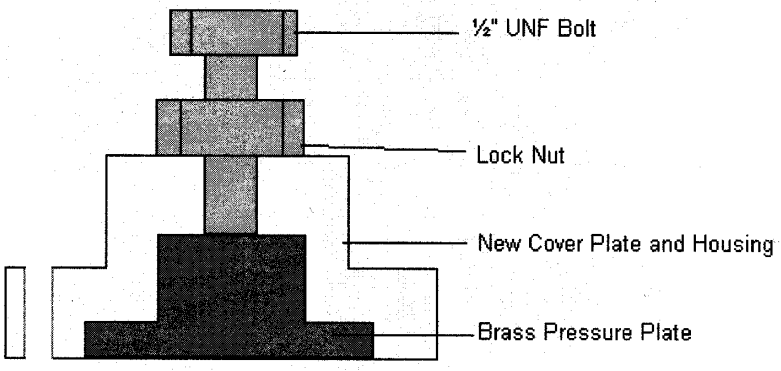
A new cover plate was cut

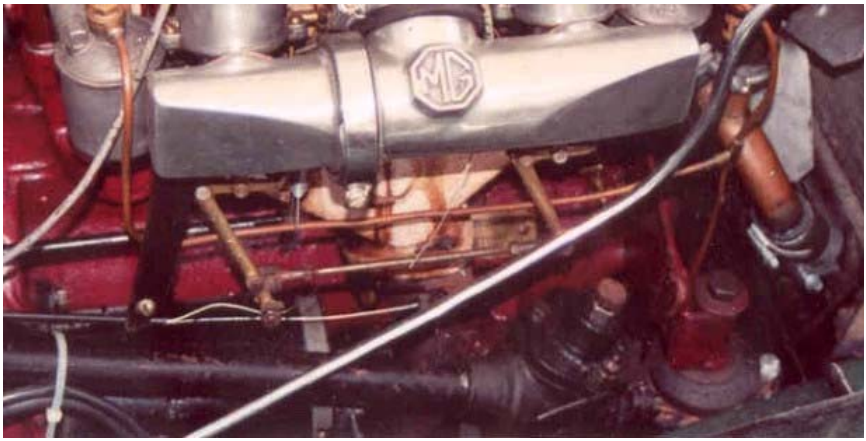
from 3/8th steel plate. (Easier said than done!) The new cover plate was set in a four-jaw chuck and adjusted until the shim and brass disc turned concentrically. After drilling a pilot hole the clearance hole for

the disc was turned.

The brass disc was reinforced with a 1" diameter shoulder piece located and soft soldered to it. Soft solder is strong enough for this application and the low temperature ensures no distortion. A housing for the reinforcement and the adjusting screw was made from 1½" diameter steel bar and welded into place. After cooling the new cover plate and housing was re-faced in case of any distortion during welding. A ½" UNF bolt was used as it has a finer thread than ½" BSF. (20 tpi as opposed to 13 tpi. Thus one complete turn is equivalent to 50 thou., so about 7° spanner movement adjusts the pressure plate by one thousandths of an inch.) A lock nut and paper gasket completed the job.

Diagram showing cross section of 'Rigby's Modification'





Modification in situ.

So far, the modification seems to have produced the sought-after result: the steering box is readily and reliably adjustable. Once the correct adjustment is obtained there should be no need for further adjustment until the cam or follower wear. Should there be a need to return to the original shim system, this is easily achieved as the modification simply replaced the original cover plate.

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Control Unit Heart Transplant

Since the dynamo's output voltage varies with its running speed this must be regulated to obtain a suitable constant voltage for charging the battery. The TC uses a two brush dynamo and a combined regulator and cut-out, Type RF91 on earlier cars and Type RF95/2 on later cars. My 1946 TC had been fitted with the later type.

Probably due to dirt between the contacts, the regulator stopped working correctly and burnt out the points. Removal of the points from the unit showed them to be beyond repair, as shown in the photograph. The RF95/2 unit was commonly used in the late 1940's but is very difficult to find today. (Unless you want to fork out the thick end of £100 for a new one!) The early TDs were fitted with this unit but later ones had the Type RB106/1 unit and separate fuse box. This unit and its successor RB106/2 (spade connectors rather than screws) are still relatively plentiful and easily found at your local scrap yard for as little as a fiver. New ones only cost about £15.

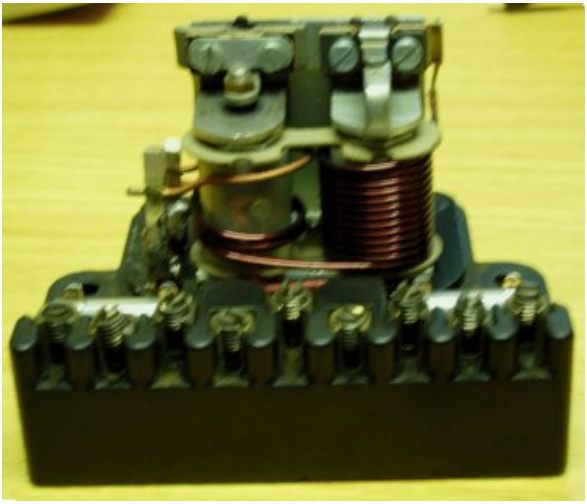
The dynamo output is controlled by varying the current in the field windings. The voltage regulator has a pair of contacts through which the current flows to the field windings. The contacts are opened by an electromagnet connected in parallel with the dynamo output. When the output reaches 16 volts, the contacts open and the current flows through a resistor connected across the contacts. This causes a reduction of field strength and hence the output falls and the contacts close. In practice, this happens up to 50 times a second, maintaining the dynamo output at about 16 volts. The cut-out works in the same way, diverting current to charge the battery when output reaches about 13 volts. When the engine is idling or switched off, the cut-out contacts open to prevent the battery discharging through the dynamo field windings. All compensated voltage control units work in this basic way, so one is very like another.

The decision was made to replace the works of the original RF95 with the works of a more modern RB106. The internal wiring is slightly different but easily converted. The original internals are somewhat more heavily built

than the more modern equivalent and the position of the regulator contact is different but they are essentially very similar.

The main yoke is held in place by a single 2BA screw. The connections to the Earth terminal (two light wires from the bobbins) also need to be de-soldered from underneath the unit. The heavy wires from the electromagnets (bobbins) were soldered in place originally, but the RB106 bobbins are crimped and welded in place. The terminal posts from the 106 were cut off so as to leave sufficient to solder them to the posts of the 95 base, as shown in the picture. Likewise, the connection to the regulator contact, near the base on the 95 and at the top on the 106, was also soldered in. The securing bolt of the regulator bobbin on the 106 is too long and will touch the strip wiring to the regulator contact. It was cut off level with the nut. The yoke and bobbins were then installed with an additional piece of insulation under the regulator bobbin nut. The necessary connections were soldered in place.

The resistor on the 95 was an old carbon type so was replaced with the newer wire wound type of similar resistance from the 106. A couple of alterations to the strips underneath were necessary in order to fit the new resistor in. The completed job fits neatly under the original cover and works well after adjustment. Only by removing the cover is any difference discernible, and then only to the trained eye, so there should not be too many worries from the 'Originality Police'!



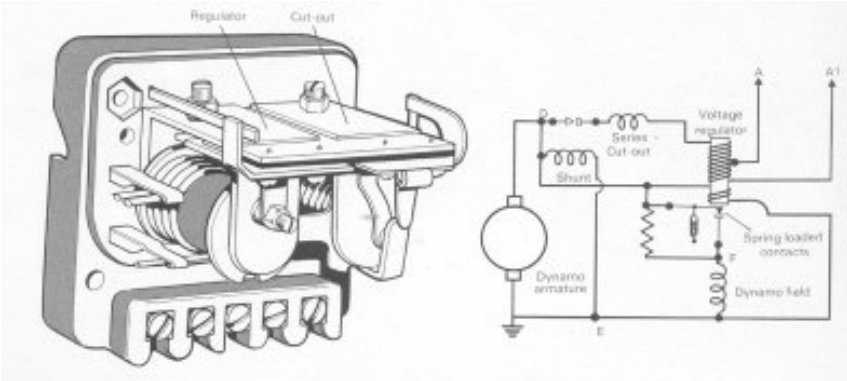
The adjustment of the regulator and cut-out is by varying the pressure on the operating springs. Two screws with springs on the back of the yoke control the spring pressures. Great care must be taken as very small changes can result in huge variations in output voltage. The 'Blower' manual gives details on how this can be done on the car.

My first attempt a setting-up the unit was carried out on the car using Mr. Blower's instructions. The regulator worked well but the cut-out stuck from time to time. (Ignition light on after the car was switched off.) After a relatively long run, (50+ miles) I also noted the ignition light glowing whilst running. The regulator coil had overheated burning the cardboard at the top and melting the plastic around the bobbin. I decided to splash out on a new regulator and hang the expense. Automotive Electrical Suppliers advertised a RF95 9 post regulator for £75 plus VAT and delivery in exchange for the old one. The thick end of £100 previously mentioned. The order placed, I later received a phone call from AES to tell me that not only were they currently out of stock, but further supplies were uncertain. It appears that their former supplier was replacing the works of the old RF95 with the more modern RB106! The supplier had now retired and they were having difficulty finding another. They did tell me that they set up their regulators using a laboratory low voltage unit and digital voltmeter, but the caller did not know exactly how. That was left to me.

To set the regulator up on the bench requires a variable DC voltage supply between about 10V and 17V, a digital voltmeter, and a 2.5V torch bulb connected to a 1.5V battery (cell) and wander leads.

The low voltage unit is connected to the 'D' (-ve) and 'E' (+ve) terminals of the regulator. Both the regulator and cut-out are energised through these terminals. I set the cut-out first. The digital voltmeter is also connected to the 'D' and 'E' terminals. By gently increasing the voltage from about 10V a point will be reached when the cut-out contacts close. This can be adjusted by the spring tensioner screw until the contacts close at about 13.5V.

(These can clearly be seen in the diagram below. They are on the back of the yoke near the base of the unit.) There will be a little delay when the voltage is reduced, but they should open again at about 12.5V. The cut-out is to prevent the battery discharging itself through the dynamo when the engine is not running so the contacts must re-open at more than 12V.



The regulator is a little more complex. The contact points must be clean and correctly set. The main spring must be in contact with the tensioning screw when the points are closed. (There is also a spring steel connection between the armature and the main body of the unit that acts as a pivot for the armature. This will move the armature away from the bobbin even though the main spring is no longer in contact with the tensioner screw.) When the contacts open the current is diverted through the resistor. By connecting the torch bulb and 1.5V battery across the contacts the bulb will glow when the contacts are closed but will go out when the contacts open. At room temperature (about 20°C) the contacts should open at between 15.8V and 16.4V. By gradually increasing the voltage from the variable supply and adjusting the spring tensioner screw it is possible to get the contacts to open at 15.8V, (bulb goes out) but the full movement of the armature onto the electromagnet is completed at above 16V. This is very fiddly and is why it is best not carried out on the car. The operating voltage of the regulator also varies with temperature. As temperature increases the voltage decreases. Heavy currents flowing through the regulator from the dynamo will increase its temperature rapidly making accurate setting almost impossible. The low voltage unit uses small currents so the heating effect is greatly reduced giving you much longer to get it right.

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KIMBER HOUSE PROPOSALS

Where do I start? Well let me get something off my chest! I have been proud to have been part of a group of individuals who have sought independent professional advice about the Directors' scheme, commonly referred to as "Kimber Palace". Without this advice and the subsequent Appraisal Report, MGCC Council Voting Members would not have been fully informed about the Directors' proposals. Now they are able to view these in a different light and when you read the reports which follow, I am confident that you will agree that there are danger signals ahead. Indeed, there is a rumour surfacing from the "mole network" that at least one Director is not certain that the Directors' New Club Office scheme is viable.

Whilst I have not been named personally, I know that I am included in (to quote the Chief Executive) "a small group of individuals within the Club" (who) "continue to circulate misleading information and offensive e-mails that are at odds with the outcomes of the discussions at the Council meeting." In reply, all I have to say is that I stand or fall by the Appraisal Report and as for "misleading information" – well, I could write a book…….!

Before I publish the Summary of the Appraisal Report (I can't publish the full report due to space limitations – but it is available on the Independent New Club Office website www.newcluboffice.net) it is worth highlighting some of the issues. These, taken from www.newcluboffice.net are as follows:

What is the justification for the size of the scheme? Originally it was simply to put as much space on the existing Kimber House site as possible! But a few months ago a severe pruning exercise was necessary - the space came down from over 10,000 sq ft to 6,750 sq ft a reduction of 40% to house 8 members of staff. Large chunks of specification were cut back - out went the air-conditioning and flexible flooring and in came more basic and less costly alternatives.

What is a realistic estimate of the total project cost? After claiming the "build cost" would be no greater than £850,000 for the last 9 months, we now see the contractor's price is £802,372 but the total project cost is effectively a £1,000,000! Independent advice from a leading firm of quantity surveyors says almost 30% of the works are subject to provisional sums (including the M&E content) so there can be no certainty as to price until that is firmed up. The form of construction contract has recently switched from a design & build to a conventional lump sum and the QS indicates concerns over cost overrun risks. Our assessment of the project costs suggests the scheme is under-costed too.

How will it be financed? Loans of £300,000 will be needed with £200,000 of member and corporate donations and very nearly all the Club's cash resources will be ploughed into the scheme - yes £450,000! Our costings suggest the loans will be greater at nearer £375,000.

So can we afford this scheme? The answer is a resounding **"No"** - an analysis of the Club's financial projections for 2005-2009 by a former finance director demonstrates the New Club Office project is not affordable and is likely to lead the Club to financial difficulties by 2009.

CRB funds would be on call for Main Club needs for the duration of any project loans. Whilst the Directors have noted the reluctance of Centres, Register and Branches to have their funds raided by the Club Treasurer as part funding for the New Club Office project, the rearrangement he has made to the funding means that should the Club cash balances run low or be exhausted in the future, as indicated by our analysis, then the CRB funds and assets would be called upon to pay creditors. Our analysis indicates that risk is high.

What is the way forward? It is to halt the Directors' extravagant New Club Office scheme and for a working party of Council members to make a thorough review of the Club's office needs and of all available alternatives. There are much less costly alternatives which can provide sufficient upgraded office space which will be better value for money and leave funds for other investment in much needed developments to the Club website and member services.

Summary of the appraisal of the Directors' proposals for a New Club Office scheme for the MG Car Club

This summary of the key areas of concern and conclusions from a detailed review of the Directors' proposals for a New Club Office scheme is based on independent professional advice on the proposals, the construction costs and the Club's financial projections.

The Board of the MG Car Club has recommended to Club members that the present Kimber House be demolished and the site redeveloped with a new Club Office at an overall cost approaching £1million. The Directors' proposals are set out in their Report dated 23 August 2005 issued to Council members. Copies are available from the Club's website at www.mgcc.co.uk where you can download copies of the Directors' Report and the supporting appendices. A summary of their case is provided in the September 2005 issue of ***Safety Fast!*** We have examined the detailed case to assess whether it is appropriate for the Club at this time, whether it is affordable, and whether the Club can raise the necessary funding and

finance to ensure the total project costs can be fully covered.

Main conclusions
Our conclusion is that the case has not been satisfactorily made, indeed that:

*** Inadequate research has been conducted** into the future needs of the Club.

*** Proposed rebuild is the most expensive**, and hence the most risky, of the many alternatives available, which should have been more fully explored. Nearly 30% of the contractor's price is subject to provisional sums and allowances so there remains uncertainty over the final cost until that work, mainly the mechanical and electrical content, is firmed up and settled. There is also uncertainty over the cost overruns risks with the Directors' proposal.

*** Proposal is <u>not affordable</u> and is likely to exhaust all of the Club's finances in 2009** and heavily constrain alternative future investment. At worst, it could cause to Club to become insolvent.

Financial situation today
The Club appears to be in good health. It has cash reserves in excess of £450,000, has made surpluses in each of the preceding eight years and its income is growing. It is doubtless this situation which has encouraged the Board to consider ways of improving its accommodation and providing long-term suitable premises. However, there are some danger signs:

* Staff numbers have been static for a few years and will no longer meet with all the demands to be made upon them.

* Event income has been rising rapidly, but associated costs have been rising even faster, so that the surplus from this source has been static.

* Over the last two years, the Club has enjoyed high income from its organisation of motor sport for MG Sports & Racing, but this has been heavily derived from support from MG Rover, which has recently ceased.

* Annual Club subscription income is inadequate to cover the fixed costs of the club plus the losses on the magazine.

* Membership has been gradually declining, and this can be expected to accelerate with the demise of MG Rover and the loss of volume MG car production.

Financial situation in the future
The Board have forecast that the Club will continue to make surpluses in the future, albeit gradually falling. However, their forecast depends on a number of key assumptions, which are open to judgement. Further analysis has shown that their assumptions might well be optimistic and it is likely that surpluses will decline faster than predicted unless remedial action is taken. It is well within the bounds of credibility that the Club could be in loss within 5 years. If the substantial financial burden of rebuilding Kimber House to the proposed design is added to this situation, the Club will at best exhaust all of its available funds and at worst will become unable to service the further debt necessary to fund the project and would face insolvency.

The detailed investigation that comes to these conclusions is provided in the detailed Appraisal Report and appendices. Members are urged to read it. The New Club Office building does nothing itself to provide the Club with any protection against this situation. It does not help secure future income or reduce future costs and provides only the opportunity to earn rental income, itself at the expense of giving up part of the newly acquired space.

The Club's future space needs
The Board's proposals provide only headline future space requirements, mainly confined to resolving the problems of the existing premises and staying within Abingdon. No analysis is given of future staff numbers, or of other space needs such as archives. More attention is given to car parking requirements than to long-term office accommodation. Worse, the brief given to the architects preparing the New Kimber House design appears to give no budget either for the area required or the funds available. The final design includes provision for facilities not included in the original brief (eg display areas) but not for facilities that the membership might have expected to be included (eg archives/storage and a suitable sized meeting room).

In short, the project has not been preceded by:

*** Strategic analysis** of the future direction of the Club in terms of a clear focus on key strategic aims and likely or desired changes from the present situation.

*** List of priorities for investment** in facilities or improved member services that would result from such an analysis.

*** Schedule of the projected numbers of staff members** to be housed,

storage needs, meeting facilities and other space requirements, and a calculation of the total minimum space required as a result – in effect addressing the basic question "what do we need?"

*** Assessment of the size and specification of Club premises** to meet the needs identified by such an analysis and an options appraisal of all available alternative Club Office accommodation schemes.

*** Financial assessment of the Club** that would establish what funds could be available for improvements to the existing Kimber House or other alternative Club Office accommodation schemes after making cautious projections of future net operating surpluses and cashflow, and what would be affordable with other likely calls on Club finances.

*** No initial project appraisal and fundamental affordability test** appears to have been done and no details have been released.

It may be that the Board have in fact conducted this research. If so, they have provided no evidence of it in their Directors' Report or in the appendices.

Alternatives

The Board have considered and rejected alternative ways of resolving the present inadequacies of Kimber House that were proposed by three Registers and a Centre in February 2005. These alternatives have been recosted by the Board to correct what they feel are underestimates. Despite these corrections, the alternatives remain substantially less costly than the New Club Office scheme they have proposed. There is no evidence that the Board members have considered any alternative designs to the one they now propose, or that they briefed their architects to do so. It may well be that had they done so, or had they given the same time and resource to considering the alternatives proposed to them as they gave to their favoured proposal, that a less expensive alternative scheme could have resulted. Had the design they now propose for a new Kimber House been within the Club's means, this might have been understandable, but they have known for many months that their proposed design would involve large borrowings and donations as well as exhausting existing Club cash reserves. **So members of Centres and Registers should note that the whole of their funds and assets are at risk at any time until all project related debt is repaid should Main Club suffer financial difficulties.** This might have been expected to encourage the examination of less expensive options.

Detailed Analysis

A report on the detailed examination and assessment of the Directors' New Club Office proposals is set out in the Appraisal Report. Copies of

that report are available from an independent website at www.newcluboffice.net together with supporting detailed appendices which, whilst part of the Report are not attached, are available on the website.

Conclusion

The authors of this report urge the Council Voting Members to reject the Board's proposals at the Council meeting due to be held on the 15th October 2005. It is their view that no further time or money should be expended on the Kimber House Project until there has been a:

*** Full strategic analysis** of the future of the MG Car Club producing a credible business plan.

*** Schedule prepared of priorities for future investment**, for example, into the Club website, or into archiving, or into providing a modest MG museum of the automobilia owned by the Club, and other worthy areas of improved services for Club members. Such a list should be compiled with the full participation of the membership through open consultation.

*** Cautious budget** prepared, that does not risk bringing the Club into insolvency, or of shedding necessary resource, or of preventing other needed investment, or requiring donations from members or third parties, or requiring Centres, Registers or Branches to underwrite the scheme with their cash reserves they have each earned from various activities unrelated to Main Club.

*** Full re-examination of all available Club Office options** that fit these requirements.

Such an investigation would, we believe, be best conducted by a working party to be set up by Council. That working party should represent all parts of the Club, including the Board, and should consult widely within the Club and invite members' views of all types including critical comment so there can be a thoroughly open and participative consideration of the way forward for developing the Club and member services and providing suitable office accommodation for the Club and its administrative team.

This summary is from an Appraisal Report prepared by a group of Club members including Victor Smith, John Dutton, Alan Paine and Ron Gammons. They have had independent professional support and advice from Cyril Sweet (quantity surveyors) and Michael Cole (chartered accountant) and the active support of several Club members. The wider group of members have supported the work of this group and are in broad agreement with the analysis and conclusions within this summary.

SPARES FOR SALE AND WANTED

Pair of Lucas Windtone horns £60 plus postage Ian Radburn Tel: 01395 514622

Three (3) XPAG con rods (with pistons) £10 each, quantity of (new) 6208 rear wheel bearings for TA/B/C £7.50 each, 8/37 (4.625:1) high ratio crown wheel and pinion set for TA/TB/TC (new) £250, new bronze wheel cylinder (front) for TA/TC (also fits YA rear) £65. John James Tel: 0117 986 4224 e-mail jj@octagon.fsbusiness.co.uk

Wanted: TC oil filter to engine block clamp. Also Gearbox dipstick. Ian Radburn 01395 514622.

Note: The TA/B/C brake drums are still not ready – getting anything made to time these days seems impossible. The manufacturer is currently on holiday but will be "read the riot act" when he returns and I will insist that I have at least one set to show at the Practical Skills Workshop on 9th October.

****

NEW POSTAL ADDRESS FOR ROY MILLER, HISTORIAN & DVLA REPRESENTATIVE

Roy has (sensibly) moved to Gloucestershire. His telephone number and e-mail address were changed in the Committee details last month. His new postal address is as follows:

Badgers Bank
Pound Lane
Little Rissington
Gloucestershire
GL54 2NB

Telephone 01451 824223

e-mail roymill@waitrose.com

And finally…….. I apologise for the fact that much of this Issue has been taken up with the Kimber House proposals. Hopefully, this will be the end of the matter and the Directors' unwise scheme will not see the light of day after the MGCC Council meeting on 15th October. As I said in my editorial, I firmly believe that the future of the Club is at stake. I am aware that a number of T Register members will leave the MGCC if the scheme were to go ahead (some have already done so). I urge members not to take precipitate action. There is everything to fight for and as your Council Voting Member at the Council meeting on 15th October, I will ensure that the voice of the Register, as expressed at the Annual General Meeting and through many letters received in opposition to the scheme, is heard loud and clear. The MGCC needs to change – let's hope this will be the start of the change process!

T REGISTER COMMITTEE

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Treasurer	John Steedman 01962 760328 JohnHWSteedman@aol.com
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Regalia, ***Safety Fast!*** & ***Totally T-Type***	John James 0117 986 6287 jj@octagon.fsbusiness.co.uk
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