



# 'T' REGISTER NEWS

NO. 6 APRIL 2012



TC LPD 626

THE T REGISTER HONORARY PRESIDENT MIKE LUGG AND CAR

**A Message from the Chairman of the MG Car Club 'T' Register - Geoff Matthews**

Here we are again with Spring definitely in the air and the T Register Committee looking forward to a great year. We had a good response to Rebuild in the circumstances although numbers were slightly down on last year. This may have been due to the unavoidable change in venue but also to the economic climate particularly the cost of petrol, which makes attendance at an event like this increasingly expensive. Please do let us know your thoughts on the events we put on and we are trying hard to please all members of the Club and do need your feedback to ensure the activities are relevant to our membership.

The next event will be MG Live about which much will be heard on the main club website but after that we have the T Party at Loton Park in July where, if I have survived the Werrington Park and Wiscombe Hill climbs in May you can have an interesting day watching your chairman, amongst others, making a fool of himself in his TA, The Black Pig.

Seriously, last year's event was well worth the effort at Thruxton and I am sure Loton will be a good day out. In September we have our Weekend in the Cotswolds and, again, this is well supported. I am a little concerned though that these events might be becoming a little expensive for some of our members and I am conscious that we do want to make sure we offer events that all can actively participate in, your views on this would be most welcome.

Well, I hope you are looking forward to the summer as much as your committee and I wish all of you great days out with your T type and do keep in touch with us!

Geoff Matthews

TRN APRIL 2012

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## **EDITORIAL by John Ward**

It is a sad reflection on life sometimes that when one is put in the seat of editing a magazine like this it brings you much closer to a lot more people only then to occasionally hear of the loss of such new found friends.

Last time in TRN we featured a fitting tribute to the racer Dave Clewely and no sooner than the copy had gone to the printers we heard of the sad parting of some other key members of the T Register fraternity, the unsung heroes, the spouses and long time supporters of the MG faithful, let us not forget that behind every T Type there is a 'T' girl.

Three such ladies who had a long standing association with their men and machines sadly passed away in December and January and the MG world will be all the worse for their parting.

Kay Wray, who with her husband John were on last year's Autumn Tour in their TD - 4593 MG, passed away early in December. They had been regular T Register supporters for many years and living in the Telford area ran one of the Shropshire natters for a long time.

Maureen Hodder, wife and long time supporter of Keith, the originator and mainstay of the T Register Specials Register, died peacefully on Xmas Day. Maureen hosted the Specials Buffet at Silverstone for many years and was well renowned for her smile and famous hugs.

.....and then suddenly in January Gill Butler died, the wife of David Butler who was our Chairman for 9 years and who only relinquished this position last year. She and David developed a love for continental travel in the T and had been on at least four European Events and were always regulars on the T Weekends. But Gill also had another passion; she was a committed champion of the rights of asylum seekers and against the injustices of the asylum system.

She became Chair of the Yarl's Wood Befrienders, a group set up to support the detainees at the Removal Centre there, and a founding member of Medical Justice Network.

In addition to her own two children and granddaughter, she became honorary mother and grandmother to many refugees and always held open house for them. Great company and a tireless believer in human rights, she died in January.

It is now a few years ago that our President's wife sadly passed away and I do remember that he was missing from the Autumn Tour that year (the only one), well his infamous 'ode' was!

We offer our condolences to all these guys and hope to see them again throughout the coming months being involved in matters MG which we are sure their wives would have wished.

A bit lighter now but in a similar vein, having raised the topic of T Register archives over the last few weeks, I have turned to sorting out what material I have personally amassed over the last few decades.

I recently obtained some more editions of the T Register Yearbook which was produced between the years 1987 and 2004 and which incidentally I am still missing copies or information on the years 1989, 1994 and 1995, if anyone can help?

During my browsing I came across the 1992 edition a mere 20 years ago, and I was fascinated by the words of one my erstwhile predecessors David Saunders who was the T Register Editor of The Yearbook from the beginning in 1987.

With apologies to David (I am sure he will not mind) I quote some passages from his Editorial you can draw your own conclusions!

“The 1992 Yearbook has been produced in an economic climate which has made it even more difficult than usual for the T Register committee to agree to its undertaking and as I write I am still waiting commitments from advertisers without which it is difficult to consider this edition a viable proposition”

“The reticence of our advertisers is just one more indication of the downturn of business generally, so please support the advertisers who support us, and make a point of telling them so when responding to their advertisement”

“The present economic situation does have its bright side as well, in as much that a degree of sanity has returned to the classic car market. Such cars are now being bought again by genuine enthusiasts for the right reasons, rather than as an investment with little intention of ever putting much mileage on the clock, I very much doubt whether our cars will ever be cheap again, but it is still reassuring to know that they will be driven in the manner for which they were intended in the first place”

“An interesting spin off is that there are now two breeds of classic sports car owner appearing on the scene. There are those who owned such transport for 25 years ago or more, only to have to relinquish such pleasure in order to buy a house and raise a family, now however, with the children grown up and a feeling of duty to the nation having been done, self indulgence is allowed to manifest itself again behind the wheel of a ‘proper’ car, a crisp exhaust note and the sound of the wind rushing past replacing the four speaker stereo and blast of suspect air from a multitude of fascia vents”

“There are also those who have always wanted to own such a car, regret never taking the opportunity in their younger days, but now, with the rewards of a successful career to fall

back upon, having been finally able to realise their dream”

### **Nothing much changes does it? I leave you with those thoughts.....**

April already and I have been to three events MG so far this year. Firstly the MG International Day at Stoneleigh on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> February. All the usual stands, traders, clubs and an amazing array of pristine cars for sale but at what prices! It can only reflect on the enormous cost to restore our cars and the return expected by restorers and dealers in order to make a living but who is out there to afford such offerings these days?

The T Register stand was lively and fairly brisk business was evident in the morning but like all the show it seemed that most of the punters had come to seek out specific items and by 2.00pm the stage went amazingly quiet the crowds thinned out and the busiest places were the tea bars.

I spent an interesting day on behalf of the Register at Club Expo at the Motor Heritage Museum at Gaydon. It was fascinating to note the wide range of companies that are an integral part of the universal interest in classic vehicles and the clubs and people that support them.

Then on to Rebuild 2012 and the AGM on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> March. A full report appears later in this bulletin, our thanks go to Alan Wakefield who organised the whole event ably assisted by Peter Cole and supported by Barry Knight and Keith Doherty.

On the home front my TF now languishes in the garage minus engine, clutch and gearbox. I had forgotten just how difficult it is to remove the major elements of this particular T Type due to the restyling exercise that quickly manifest itself in the TF of 1954-5, the skin on my knuckles should heal in a week or so!



Inspection has revealed leaking core plugs, ominous rusting on plug and head gasket adjacent to pot 4 but no major play or signs of wear on the pistons or rings. The most disturbing find was the condition of the clutch thrust bearing, the graphite core was non-existent, and yet I cannot remember having any difficulty in gear selection.

The plan is to get mobile again by Silverstone but at all costs be ready for the Autumn Tour in September, a slight diversion being that I do have a Mark 1 MGB Roadster and after all it is the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year in September so another MG occasion not to be missed

Some good news on the fuel front, providing of course that the unnecessary dispute with the drivers is resolved, it would appear that there has been no finite decision on the date when E10 petrol will be imposed upon us, well at least until after 2013 and Ron 97 fuel at the pumps is likely to be ethanol free for the foreseeable future but obviously at a cost. There is an excellent piece by Victor Smith about the latest news in connection with this threat to our cars in the April edition of Safety Fast.

Cheers for now, John Ward

## FRONT COVER

### LPD 626

I graduated in August 1959 - moved from home in the Isle of Wight to Scunthorpe as a graduate engineer building steelworks. Transport was essential – saw the TC in a local paper and bought it. A bit of a wreck (they all were in those days) having had 'n' number of owners – broken front spring, no brakes to speak of, smoked excessively - but I loved it. Used as everyday transport including holiday trips back to the Island – 7 hours run

(no motorways), holidays with my girlfriend all over the UK and then on honeymoon to Penzance in 1961.

I remember travelling from the I O W back to Scunthorpe after Christmas 1962 in the great freeze, the journey taking 2 days, overnighing at Banbury. Then moved to SE London in January 1963, still in the great freeze, all in the TC. In 1964 achieved company car status so TC retired to the IOW for just fun motoring on our visits home.

In 1965 the loom burnt out and the car was taken off the road for overhaul. Dilapidation was such that a complete rebuild became necessary. (Note: in those days there was not the same availability of bits for TCs – mostly B&G, Naylor, M C Griffiths, Toulmins and of course- the scrap yard)

Two house moves and 20 years later rebuild completed by me. First major venture was the 1986 London to Inverness and back run commemorating a similar run undertaken by Motor Magazine 40 years earlier in the then new TC as a road test.

We were accompanied by Henry Stone, one of the racing mechanics at MG Abingdon in the glory days of record breaking. I had the honour of Henry as a passenger for part of the run home when he christened me “le pilot fou” (the mad driver). Said he was waiting to hear the familiar sound of the crank breaking! I was very proud of that!

One of the participants on that run was the late Ian Lloyd who subsequently organised Cotswold Runs as a follow on from the Inverness run and which grew in popularity to become the official T Register Autumn Weekends. We participated in all but one of these in LPD 626 (the one exception was when my wife was suffering from terminal cancer, just a few months before she died.)

The car has always been used to the full extent of her designer's intent. She is driven

hard (I habitually drive with the needle approaching 5000) and always responds well, giving great pleasure in return. I try to maintain her in as good and roadworthy condition as is possible but she will not win any concourse; rather she exhibits a pleasing well used patina which is how I like her. She has been a handsome mistress to me over the last 53 years and I hope she will pass on to my grandson when the time comes – but not for many years yet, he's only 4 and I've still got a lot of living to do!

*Michael Lugg*

## NEWS & EVENTS

### MG INTERNATIONAL DAY

#### STONELEIGH

As usual we hosted a stand at **The International Spring MG Show & Spares Day on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2012 at the National Agricultural Centre Stoneleigh Warwickshire CV8 2LG.**

This is the place to be if you are embarking on restoring or maintaining your MG, there are innumerable trade stands and autojumble, club displays and cars for sale in fact just about everything exclusively for the MG enthusiast.

The T Register stand manned by Peter Cole and his team did some early brisk business selling members spares and the regalia stall was equally kept occupied. There is no commission charged for selling off these unwanted parts, something to bear in mind for next year when you have completed your rebuild and discovered that you still have boxes of bits left over!

## REBUILD 2012

**The 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual “T-Rebuild” Seminars** followed by the **T Register AGM** took place on **Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2012** for the first time at the Heritage Motor Centre at Gaydon in Warwickshire which is located very close to Junction 12 of M40.

This was a new venue for us with the added attraction of providing access for delegates to see the many fascinating vehicle exhibits such as the historic “Old Number 1” widely believed to be the original MG and the XPAG-powered EX 135 record breaking MG Special.

The programme commenced at 10.00am but many delegates took advantage of the fine spring weather and arrived early, about a dozen or so in their T Types for probably the first outing of the year, or was it to take advantage of the excellent catering facilities with a cuppa and a bacon roll?



In addition, there was the usual bring and buy spare parts stall run by Barry Knight and regalia sales were managed by David Darrell and Roger Wilson.



### **Programme and Presentation Topics**

This year we arranged 8 speaker presentations, programmed in two Streams of 4 sessions each running in parallel, with no repeat sessions.

Stream A – “Maintaining & Updating” – was mainly on Fuel Issues and Electrical Component topics; Stream B – “Rebuilding & Improving” – mainly case history sessions from members relating their own Rebuild project experiences. In all cases (bar one) the presentations were accompanied by high quality computer graphics and pictures, video projected. All the speakers (again bar one) were “amateur” Club members, as opposed to “trade professionals”. Many thanks indeed to all the members/presenters who went to great lengths to produce high quality presentations in Powerpoint to accompany their talks.

We are attempting to upload most of these to the T-Register web site, but some files are very large. We have chosen on line access to the presentation material (with the agreements of the authors) in order to minimise cost and the effort of copying and the cost of paper for hand out documents.

From the feedback forms completed by delegates (almost 50 were returned!), Stream A attracted the majority of attendees, with the Mike Harvey session on Distributors being given the highest approval and attendance ratings but all the speakers were given deservedly favourable comments on the content and delivery of their sessions.

We were fortunate that HMC Gaydon allowed us access to the venue late on the preceding Friday afternoon which enabled us to pre-set signage, and test some of the computer presentations etc.

HMC Gaydon had prepared and set up external directions signage, T-Register dedicated car parking area, internal signage and provided all appropriate paperwork, brochures and lunch tickets for handout at Registration. We provided additional copies of Programme/Timetable, feedback forms and speakers profile information. Sally Silcock and Annie Matthews provided an excellent registration service for arriving delegates and provided name badges for all attendees.

All room set ups, including provision of extra tables for the bring and buy and regalia stalls and AV support services in the “Common Room” area for the AGM, were carried out by Gaydon staff, who were also on hand throughout the day to assist where required, an excellent service from the Gaydon staff. Thanks also to those members/committee who provided laptop/notebook computer support for running various presentations. Links to and the operation of HMC in-house AV/projection services was straightforward and worked well.

Thoughts for future Rebuild events. Given that we received positive approval and encouragement from delegates, it is proposed that Gaydon should be used again as the venue for Rebuild 2013 and delegates were also firmly in favour of Rebuild continuing on an annual basis.

Thanks to fellow committee for active support of the event; any additional comments or feedback always welcomed.

### **Report by Alan Wakefield**

#### **Rebuild Organiser**

For your information the topics and speakers presented on the day were as follows, delegates were welcome to switch between streams and sessions during the day.

### Stream A

#### Maintaining & Updating

- **Fixing regulators, dynamos & starter motors by Peter Cole**
- **Distributors, repair, rebuilding & modifying advance curves by Mike Harvey**
- **Rewiring your T-Type and similar age MG's by Keith Bush**
- **Modern Fuels and Ethanol E10, an update from Paul Ireland**

### Stream B

#### Rebuilding & Improving

- **How we (should have) rebuilt our TA's, by Stewart Penfound & Ian Linton**
- **Things I wish I knew before starting my TD rebuild, by Ian Ailes**
- **TD Disc brakes & servos – strictly not for “purists”! - Ron Drake**
- **5-Speed Ford gearbox in my TC – a DIY case history - David Moir**

For those who took along their T Types to Rebuild there are some excellent photos available which were taken of your cars by the Heritage Motor Centre photographer Eddy Bellini on the day. You can access these and maybe download them, go to [ebellini@heritage-motor-centre.co.uk](mailto:ebellini@heritage-motor-centre.co.uk)

## **SPRING TOUR TO BOLLEZEELE**

**24 to 27 APRIL 2012**

This tour is based at Bollezeele in the Nord district of France adjacent to Flanders and the Belgian border; Gillian Smith and Peter Cole have organised a re-run of a successful event last year.

**Editor's note;** I am promised a few pictures and some well chosen words about this trip which will hopefully be included in the July issue.

## **THE 2012 RACING & COMPETITION SCENE**

### **Jonathan Harmer Competition Secretary**

A reminder to all you racers that we are approaching the close of entries for MG Race Day at Brands Hatch and the Iconic 50's race. This will be on **Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> May** so plenty of time to plan to get there. Can as many of you as possible make the effort to enter as it would be good to get a flying start to the series – also remind anybody else who you think might be interested. Any last minute queries you can contact Jonathan on 07831 429 461 and do not forget that for those who enter all three races there is a 5% discount – every bit helps!

### **Luffield Speed Championship**

### **MG T Type Report 2012**

#### **Round 02, Curborough, 01 April**

A cold start at 05.45 scraping ice off the windows of the tow car before the sun is up, showing minus 2 degrees C as the outside temperature on the car display. It was well worth it as the day at Curborough turned out to be beautiful and sunny without getting too hot.



We had only a moderate turnout with 64 entries, the majority of which were Luffield competitors. Our 'Pre '54 ' class of nine entries including the T types of David Butler, Martin Price and myself along with Jack Taylors Lotus 6 which competes as a T register Special by virtue of its XPAG engine. I was lucky because at 6.00am I was able to fill up the tow car with diesel and put 5 litres of unleaded in the TA at a Shell station in Milton Keynes. The day before my local petrol station was out of all fuel due to the panic buying generated by the government and the tanker drivers threatened strike. The journey up to Curborough was easy on the M1/M6 with very little traffic, in stark contrast to the return which involved 50 miles of stop-start driving on the M1.

This year the event reverted to the 2 lap format much favoured over last years' 1<sup>The</sup> lapper by all the competitors I spoke with. The braking and turn in to the second lap is where much time is won or lost. There was a fair bit of locked tyre smoke at this point for most of the day.

The pre 1954 class winning car was a lovely Wolseley Hornet Special single seat race car fitted with the later Wolseley 6 cylinder cross flow 1604cc engine with chain driven camshaft and a great big belt drive supercharger. Unlike the earlier Wolseley engine, this type was never fitted to an MG, more the pity as it showed the rest of us at Curborough, a very clean pair of heels.

The pre 1954 class results, in order, were:

Tim Greenhill / Wolseley Hornet / 69.12 secs  
David Butler / MG TD Special / 75.77 secs  
Tony Smith / MG TA Special / 78.15 secs  
Jack Taylor / Lotus 6 XPAG / 80.09 secs  
Martin Price / MG TA XPAG / 82.62 secs  
Les Procter / MG Q / 83.63 secs  
Howard Harman / MG PA / 83.73 secs      Co  
Frank Ashley / MG M / 89.47 secs      To

Although I lost second place to David Butler, who did manage to match his previous best for Curborough, I did improve on my 2010 best by two seconds. I think the next time David and I are at the same event is Gurston Down in June, and because of its several very tight turns it is going to be difficult to take revenge.

However, I have just heard from my wheel man to say that my spare wheels are built and about to be shipped, so all being well, I should have the Dunlop Racing tyres on the car in time for Gurston. The Dunlop R5's (5.50x16) are DOT marked and road legal, so I will let you know how they perform both on-road and on-track. Just hope they are better than the current Blockleys at getting the power down without all the current slipping and sliding.

Picture this month is a paparazzi style shot of David Butler (right) and Martin Price in the paddock, Martin was the entry secretary for the event on behalf of the MGCC Midland Centre.



**Contact Tony Smith for any information or advice you might need to get started in sprint and hill climbing at [itm.smith@btinternet.com](mailto:itm.smith@btinternet.com)**

# BROWN & GAMMONS

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We haven't stopped here though. We currently have many projects on the go so watch out for more parts coming soon.

We are currently very excited about our biggest and most ambitious project to date - an XPEG block which we hope to have finished in April. For more details and up-to-date prices and availability please do not hesitate to phone our spares department. We can also offer a full fitting service in our award winning workshop.

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**John Burton in his TF ascending Butcombe Hill on the 2012 Kimber Trial**

Photo by Bob Marshall

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

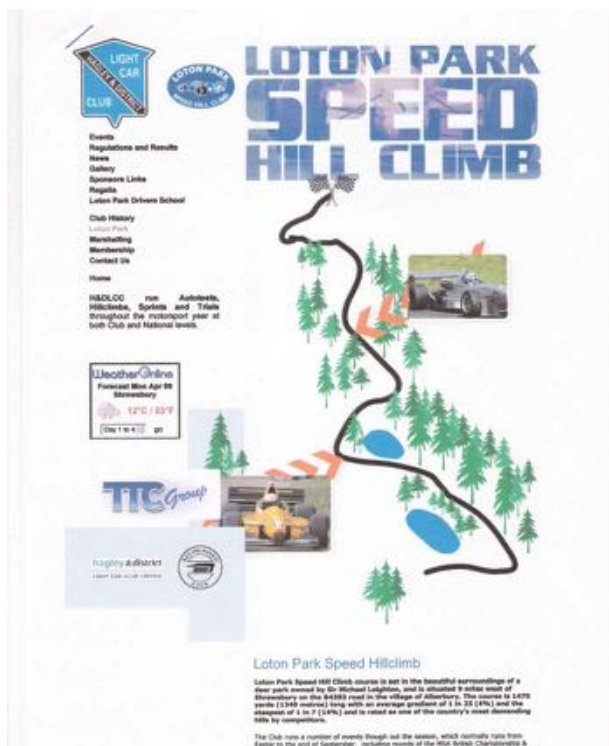
### MG SILVERSTONE *Live* 2012

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> and Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2012**

A slight change this year in that due to the seemingly unending economic restraints being imposed these days, the **Silverstone MG Live** programme has been cut back to a 2 day event as it used to be a number of years ago. This means that the ever popular Friday evening T Register Natter amidst the T Specials has had to be moved to Saturday evening at about 5.00pm to allow the racing fraternity to complete their races but before the MGCC Saturday Night Dinner which is being held in the nearby hospitality suite at 7.00 pm. Do get along and bring the T Type I will make sure you are all parked in rows together again, a splendid sight last year.

## THE 2012 'T' PARTY

This year it is proposed that we have the T Party at the Loton Park Speed Hill Climb which is held on a course set in the beautiful surroundings of a deer park about 9 miles west of Shrewsbury on the B4393 road in the village of Alberbury.



The date is **Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2012** and the event will be a hillclimb round of the Luffield Championship. Once again we can take advantage of a block booking as a group on a pay in advance basis at a much reduced cost of £6.00 per head (£12.50 on the day), interested parties should apply to Graham Brown and enclose a cheque in payment, he will obtain the tickets and issue final instructions nearer the date.

The event will start about 10.00a.m. with allocated group parking in a good position to enable you to see all the action. The address to which you should make application and send your cheque (**made out to Graham Brown**) is to: 12, Isis Road. Bedford, Beds, MK41 7BP.

## PRE WAR PRESCOTT

Last year the MGCC T Register succeeded in getting invited to the prestigious Pre-war Prescott Hill Climb Meeting and you may be pleased to hear that we have been again invited to attend this years' event which will take place on **Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2012**. Details of the event and the venue can be found on their website <http://www.prewarprescott.com>

We were invited last year on the occasion of it being the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the TA which of course was pre-war and 7 TA's were present to more than adequately represent the MGCC T Register. This year we can accommodate not only the pre war cars but post war T Types will be most welcome to come along and park in the adjoining orchard. So if you want a good day out, get along to Prescott, our thanks for coordinating this go to Brian Rainbow who is the man to contact on [brian@brianrainbow.free-online.co.uk](mailto:brian@brianrainbow.free-online.co.uk)

## The 2012 Autumn Tour

Friday 7<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2012 to the North West Cotswolds based at Broadway Worcestershire WR12 7LF, with a total entry to date of 60 we are fully booked but email [graham.sue358@btinternet.com](mailto:graham.sue358@btinternet.com) to check on any cancellations.

The detailed route planning is well under way, Saturday will be the longest run with several interesting pit stops, pleasant scenery and places of interest to rest awhile.

On Sunday, not too early we hope following the Gala Dinner of the night before, we set off for a run which will see us arrive at Eastnor Castle now scheduled for the Sunday lunch stop followed by a run and then a visit to the National Trust Property at Croome Park.



This is a magnificently landscaped country park with a classical style mansion house and 18<sup>th</sup> century pleasure gardens and of course the grounds were the work of the famous landscape architect Capability Brown.



View of the classical Palladian-style house from across the lake

For those who have chosen not to stay over for the Sunday night at the hotel it will be au revoir and see you next year!..... the rest beat a retreat back to the hotel for no doubt another splendid evening and dinner and still more talking about MG's.

**2013 and all that .....**

**Long before we even embark on the 2012 Autumn Tour some important considerations for you for 2013.**

Not only is 2013 the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the formation of the T Register but the MG European Event of the Year is being hosted for the first time in the UK in Scotland based at Aviemore.

We have decided to have two tours in 2013: one in the south at the normal time and one in the Scottish Borders just prior to the European Event of the Year in the Scottish Highlands.

This would provide a staging post for those T-Typers joining the EEotY, with a one day journey on to Aviemore. The dates of this borders tour will probably be 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> August and the EEotY is from Friday 16<sup>th</sup> to Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> August.

In order to start to make arrangements we quickly need to know what interest there is so if you want to register for this trip of a lifetime please contact:

Bill or Sally Silcock on 01525 750468 or email [treg.sec@virginmedia.com](mailto:treg.sec@virginmedia.com) or [bill.silcock1@ntlworld.com](mailto:bill.silcock1@ntlworld.com)

For those south of the border and who do not wish to venture so far up the Great North Road, although in the very early stages of planning, the Autumn Tour is scheduled to take place over the weekend of **13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> of September 2013**. A provisional booking for around 40 cars has been made at the Highbullen Hotel Golf and Country Club between Dartmoor and Exmoor and within easy reach of Exeter. More details later, see TRN or log onto the website at [tregister.org](http://tregister.org)

## THE HIGBULLEN HOTEL EXMOOR



### HOME About Highbullen

Set in a 200 acre haven in the rolling north Devon hills Highbullen represents all that is great about the English country house. Couple cottages and a warm welcome with the opportunity to play a championship golf course or have a swim; and we hope you will not be able to resist.



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There is a huge range of things to do here at Highbullen besides golf including tennis (indoor and outdoor tennis) and grass, bowls, snooker, fishing, shooting, walking, enjoy the very well appointed games room, or gym, or... do as little as you please. Our team is on hand to smooth the way for a relaxing stay designed around what pleases you.

Whether you are looking for a relaxing weekend, a venue for a corporate event, a tranquil retreat, an action packed, fun-filled family holiday or somewhere special for a Big Day, Highbullen is the perfect destination.

It's easy to find us at the very heart of north Devon. From Bristol and Taunton directions follow the M5 at junction 27 and from Exeter follow the A377 towards Barnstaple.

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# XPAG

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## The XPAG engine and the use of a Lucas 25D4 distributor with vacuum advance

### Introduction

The Lucas 25D4 distributor is freely available and economical both new and used and is easily repairable with a good spares supply.

The centrifugal advance/retard characteristic is adjustable with the necessary bob weight control springs which are available with a wide variety of spring strengths (Hooke's Law constants, i.e. extension per unit load in lb/inch, g/mm, or N/mm).

A range of vacuum capsules is available to provide more economical part-throttle running (higher miles per gallon).

The resultant increased ignition advance at mid-throttle power settings (1500 to 3500 rpm) also gives improved motor flexibility and higher torque.

The octane demand of the modified engine is at least no worse than a standard XPAG motor and no additional stress loads are imposed.

See Fig. 1 for a general arrangement of the 25D4 distributor.

### Difficulties

Small modifications must be made to the 25D4 distributor to make it fit the XPAG motor dimensions and configuration. These include: penetration of the body into the crankcase, conflict with the vacuum capsule position and the dynamo rear face and a tappet cover bolt, conflict between the distributor low tension

terminal and the engine breather pipe on the tappet cover, modifications required to the advance/retard adjustment screw on the capsule, provision of a sensing point on the engine inlet manifold, and a small modification to the distributor drive shaft pinion fixing method.

Care is needed to determine and select the appropriate centrifugal advance control springs and the operating ranges of the centrifugal advance mechanism and the vacuum capsule.

### Details

In order to make the distributor fit the following modifications are necessary. Note that there may be small dimensional differences between my TC, TD and TF variants but the installation is, I think, practicable for all types.

- (1) The penetration length of the 25D4 distributor into the XPAG block is too short. About 3/16 inch must be cut from the base of the distributor body flange, see Fig. 2. Ideally this should be done in a lathe but I achieved an acceptable result with a fine hack-saw and careful use of files. I have used a standard TC pattern clamp to fix the distributor body into the block. The TD and TF may dictate a different arrangement.
- (2) The vacuum capsule positioning on the distributor allows very little margin in its circumferential orientation to fit between the tappet cover centre bolt on one side and the dynamo rear face on the other. The arrangement shown in Fig. 3 should work but the clearances are very tight. I do not have a tachometer drive gearbox on my TC but it should be possible to arrange clearance (just) between it and the vacuum capsule.

The spring behind the vacuum capsule head is designed to place the contact breaker moving plate in such a position that the points can be made to open at or just before top dead centre. Without this spring the distributor cannot be turned enough clockwise to achieve this condition owing to interference between the capsule rim and the tappet cover centre bolt.

With the capsule arranged thus the existing advance/retard adjustment screw is unable to engage with the threaded rod on the capsule body. A screwed sleeve is therefore required with a longer threaded portion to fit the rod, see Fig. 5.

- (3) With the orientation dictated by the vacuum capsule the distributor low tension terminal is very close to the tappet cover vent pipe so there is a risk of an electrical short circuit. I have modified the terminal nylon carrier by removing the terminal completely and drilling the carrier to accept a longer cable between the 12 volt supply point and the contact breaker, see Fig. 4, inset to Fig. 3.
- (4) Following experiments on the road I have arranged the distributor mechanical advance to be a maximum of 28 crankshaft degrees. With a static advance of 4 degrees this gives a total of 32 degrees which is the standard TC maximum setting. This has been achieved by placing a brass sleeve (6.2 mm outside diameter) over the advance stop pin and using a 16 cam degrees advance cam rotor from an MGB 40897 distributor, see Fig. 6.
- (5) The centrifugal advance curve I have aimed for is shown in Fig. 7. This characteristic required two springs of tension 617 g/mm (34.5 lb/inch) taken from an MGB distributor number 41491, used on engine nos. 18V672Z and 673Z (1972-1974 EEC specs). Note that the standard maximum centrifugal advance on the 41491 distributor is 19 degrees camshaft. Cam rotors with a maximum of 14 degrees or below are also available.

The spring dimensions are:

Wire diameter      30 thou inch  
No load length (inside coil ends) 18 mm  
Coil OD              5 mm  
Number of coils     6  
Both coils ends are circular loops, not oval.

- (6) The engine intake vacuum is transmitted to the vacuum capsule by a copper capillary running from a fitting on the centre of the intake manifold. Conventionally, on most

vehicles with vacuum advance, the pick up point is on a carburettor body and is masked by the throttle plate when closed. This is designed to avoid the full engine vacuum being applied on starting to give full vacuum advance. The motoring technical press asserts that this is done to avoid engine back-fires on start up, but in practice I have found no difficulty with starting. By contrast the engine always seems eager to go when I pull the starter and will settle down to a smooth tick-over when warm of about 900 rpm.

The vacuum capsule I use is that for the standard chrome bumper MGB (distributor 40897) stamped "5 - 13 - 10" which translates as:

5 ins mercury vacuum, ignition advance is at minimum (zero), i.e. large throttle opening.

13 ins mercury vacuum, ignition advance is at a maximum, i.e. small throttle opening.

10 degrees camshaft (20 degrees crankshaft), maximum advance.

With these values the car is flexible and economical, particularly at mid-range throttle settings 1500 to 3500 rpm, but will still rev well when above these figures.

- (7) A distributor helical gear was purchased to replace the standard drive dog of the 25D4 distributor. The drive shaft is the same diameter as the XPAG standard device. The fixing pin holes are smaller (1/8 in) than the pin port in the distributor shaft (3/16 in). It would be best to drill out the gear holes to match but I used a roll pin and a sleeve to take up the clearance, see the inset in Fig. 2. Note that the standard 25D4 drive dog pin is parallel sided not tapered.
- (8) With the 5-13-10 capsule used there is substantial ignition total advance at low and mid-range engine speeds, 1200 to 2500 rpm, of 45 to 50 degrees crankshaft with a 20 degree maximum vacuum advance, see Fig. 7. In spite of this, with a

compression ratio of 8.8 to 1, the engine cannot be made to pink on 94 octane petrol. In a car with a lower ratio a higher static advance than the 4 degrees I use could be applied with confidence if desired.

- (9) Fig. 8 illustrates a comparison of my advance characteristic with that for an MGB (high compression 8.8 to 1, engine type 18G or 18GA, distributor 40897) and a Triumph Spitfire 1500 of 1979).

My car runs very well with a static of 6 degrees crank advance up to about 4000 rpm but then becomes harsher running above that. I suspect I could be better off with a couple of degrees less on the centrifugal advance, say 26 degrees, but with a static of 6 degrees to retain the standard TC maximum of 32 degrees total. I have yet to try this. On a car with a lower compression ratio the harshness would probably not occur even with a 6 degree static and 28 degree maximum centrifugal advance.

#### Discussion

The figures given above are based on my experience over the past few years. The Lucas distributor is not a precision instrument so a different operator's findings could differ. In particular the advance curve shown in Fig. 7 is from calculations of the mechanical dynamics of the distributor springs, bob weight masses and moments of inertia, and rotation centres, not from a commercial tester device for example.

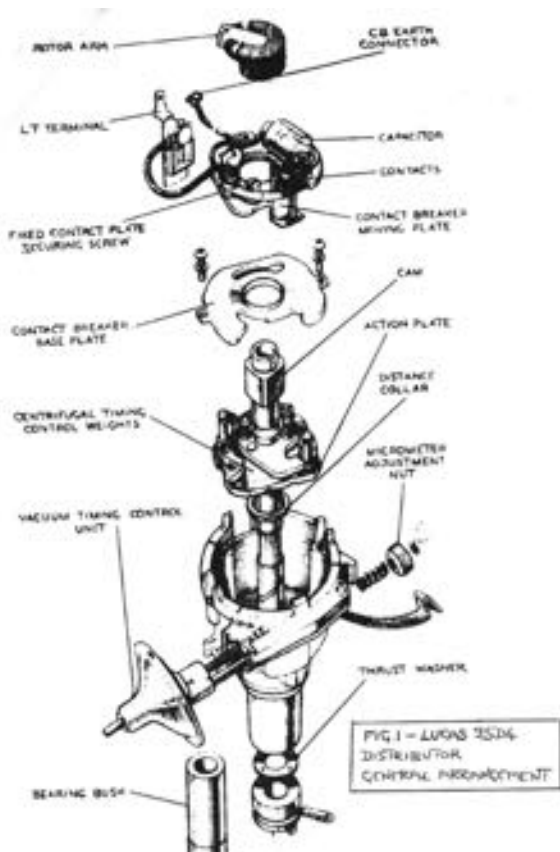
To establish the success or otherwise of changes, I use the usual subjective impression, backed up by observation of the tachometer (electronic in my case) and the speedometer (ditto) and confirmed by a careful check of the fuel consumption over runs in excess of 70 miles. I have a tank calibrated in litres and I buy fuel in multiples of 5 or 10 litres so I can derive a reliable mpg figure after each run over my standard test course.

In addition to the distributor modifications I have made alterations to the carburettors; weighted pistons of 175 g (6.2 oz) total, no

piston springs or dampers, and FU needles. Together with these settings I have a high ratio axle (18.3 mph/100 rpm) and can obtain 45 to 50 mpg over a run using cruising speeds of 45 to 55 mph and bursts up to 60+ mph.

Without these carburettor and gear change ratio changes I would expect a T-type still to benefit from the distributor modifications alone; 35 to 40 mpg at least should still be attainable.

John Saunders 18 January 2012



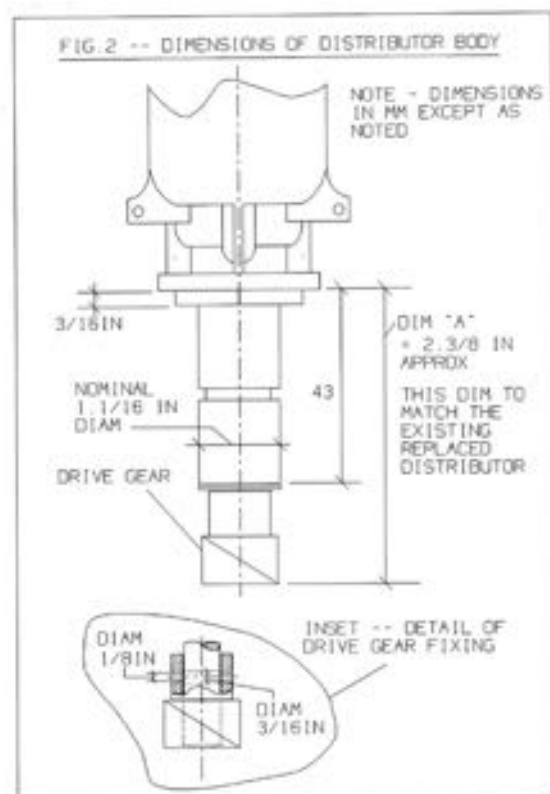
The following references could be useful for more information:

Marcel Chichak, "Tuning the Lucas, Distributor", [www.telusplanet.net/~chichm/lucas.pdf](http://www.telusplanet.net/~chichm/lucas.pdf) (I used in 2002)

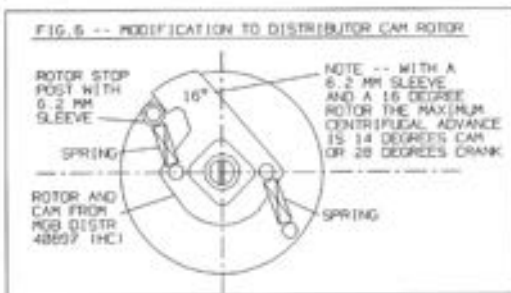
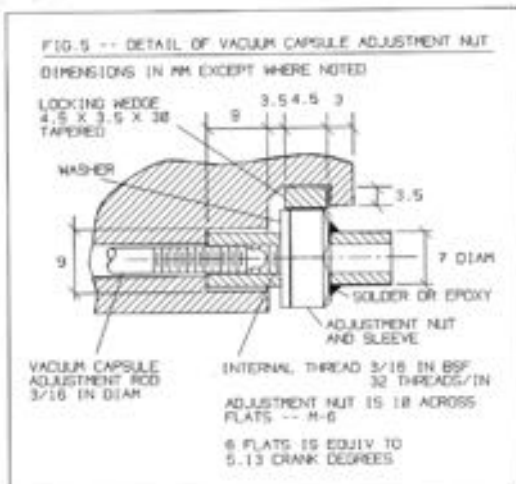
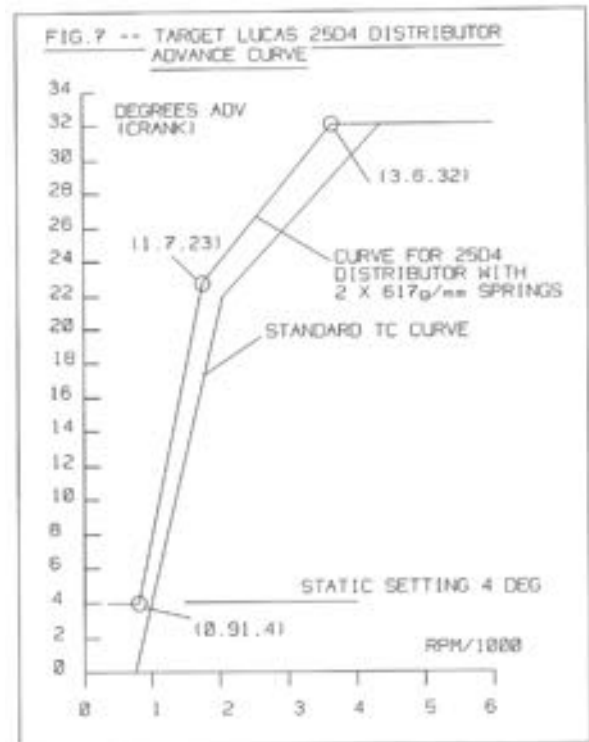
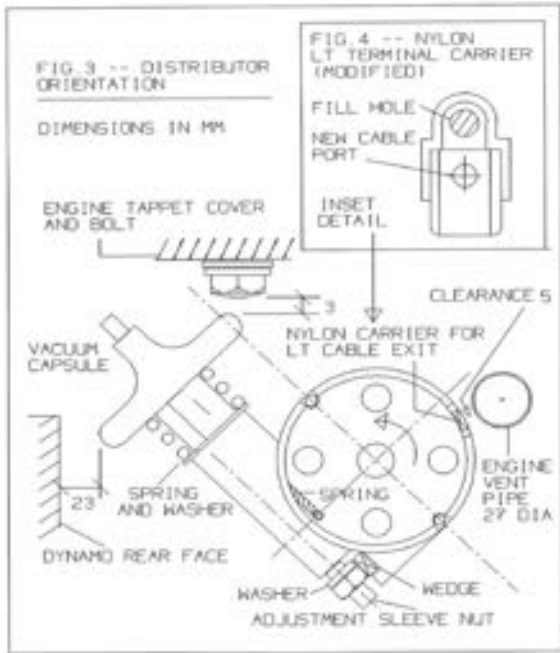
Hammill Des, "How to build and power tune distributor type ignition systems", Veloce Publishing, Dorchester, (1997)

Vizard David, "Tuning the A-series engine" Haynes Publ. (1999)

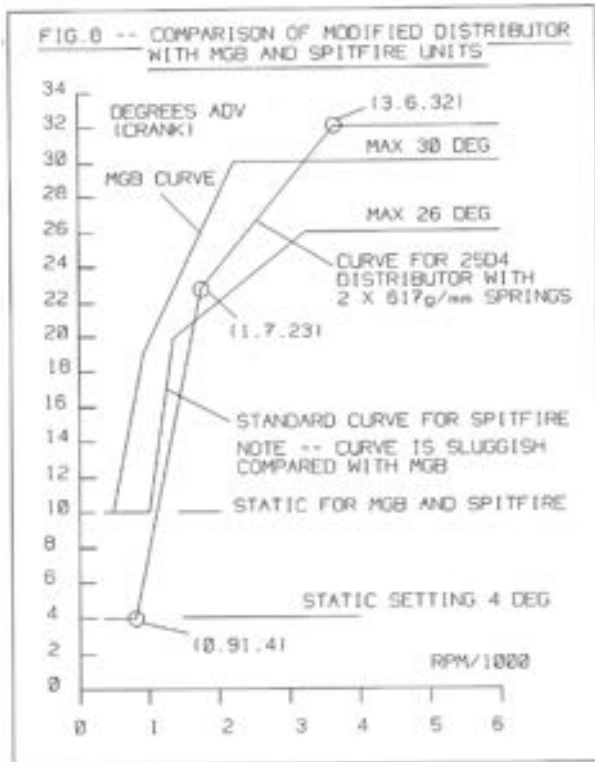
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## THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT WD-40



This is a superbly researched and detailed article by John and he promises more on the results of his trials on carburetors and mpg later - Editor

I am indebted to Don Harmer who is the Editor of “mgTalk”, the monthly newsletter of the Southeastern MG T Register which is a local chapter of the New England T Register, for sending me a copy of his scribblings each month.

From time to time interesting bits of information are featured and one such snippet was in the April issue which I pass on to you which I am sure he won't mind.

Here is a story about only one use of many for WD-40.

“I had a neighbour who had bought a new pick-up. I got up very early one Sunday morning and saw that someone had spray painted red all around the sides of his beige truck for some unknown reason.

I went over and woke him up and told him the bad news. He was very upset and was trying to figure out what to do, probably nothing until Monday morning since nothing was open.

Another neighbour came out and told him to get his WD-40 and clean it off. It removed the unwanted paint beautifully and did not harm his paint job that was on the truck. I'm impressed! WD-40, who knew?”

‘Water Displacement #40’, the product began from a search for a rust preventative solvent and degreaser to protect missile parts. WD-40 was created in 1953 by three technicians at the San Diego Rocket Chemical Company. Its name comes from the project that was to find a ‘water displacement’ compound.

They were successful with the fortieth formulation, thus WD-40. The Convair Company bought it in bulk to protect their missile parts.

Ken East (one of the original founders) says there is nothing in WD-40 that would hurt you.

When you read the 'shower door' part, try it...it's the first thing that has ever cleaned that spotty shower door. If yours is plastic, it works just as well as glass. It's a miracle!

Then try it on your stove top....and voila! it's now shinier than it's ever been... You'll be amazed!

**and here are just a few more uses.....**

Protects silver from tarnishing

Removes road tar and grime from cars

Cleans and lubricates guitar strings?

Gives floors that just waxed sheen without making them slippery

Keeps flies off cow?

Restores and cleans chalkboards

Removes lipstick stains

Loosens stubborn zippers

Untangles jewelry chains

Removes stains from 'stainless' steel sinks

Removes dirt and grime from the BBQ grille

Keeps ceramic/terra cotta garden pots from oxidizing

Removes tomato stains from clothing

Camouflages scratches in ceramic and marble floors

Keeps scissors working smoothly

Lubricates noisy door hinges

Removes black scuff marks from the kitchen floor

Removes bug guts from the paintwork on your car

Gives the kids playground slide a shine for a faster slide

Lubricates the gear shift and the lower deck lever on the ride on mower

Rids rocking chairs and swings of squeaky noises

**There you have it, better get a larger can if the lady of the house reads this! .....Ed**



## 'NOTICE BOARD'

### TC Spares

Last time I told you about some spares that might be available in Cornwall, well here is the list, if you are interested call Dudley on 01726 883744

2 valve chest covers both rusty  
2 timing chain covers with a some rusty contents !!!  
Camshaft which I think is a standard one  
2 conrods with pistons  
thermostat housing  
Rocker shaft complete with rockers etc and some cam followers  
assorted valves etc  
1 set of high compression pistons old but unused and as new.  
2 YA front suspension corners with brakes kin pins and shock absorbers.  
All the above came from a TC which at one time was a successful hillclimb car  
Sadly they have been lying around for the last 20 years.

**Where is it now?** Last time John Kick asked us if we could enquire through these pages of the whereabouts or existence of a TD he owned many moons ago and it turns out that it still resides in Kent not a million miles away from where he lives.

He has arranged to visit and will tell us all about it in a later edition.

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