



*Father & son T-Types - see page 9*



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# THE EDITOR

Welcome to the September issue!

Silverstone International has come and gone. We tend to take it all for granted, but the organisation of the event is mind boggling and I say with some certainty that very few (if any) car clubs could put on a show to match what we serve up. Indeed, I know that some of them have said in the past “How on earth do you do it?” How do we do it? Well, a small and dedicated army of volunteers guided by a Committee which has planned the event for the previous 12 months is the secret to success. This Committee will already have met to review the event and to start planning for 2010.

From a Register point of view we had a successful Silverstone and met friends old and new. It never ceases to amaze me how many visitors from outside the UK take the trouble to come to Silverstone and they must like what they see because some come back year after year.

It would be unfair to single out any of the organisers, but I am going to, all the same! The Midget Register is to be congratulated on the layout in the Club marquee. Being the main focal point, it is important to get it right and they certainly did that! I might have had a moan about the room allocated to us – we never seem to have enough space – but we managed all the same. Special thanks must go to Jeff and Christine Townsend for bringing their very nicely turned out TB to the marquee and for fielding so many questions from interested visitors.

My old favourite, the report into the collapse of MG/Rover is about to be published as you receive this issue of TTT. At a mere £16 million (a ‘drop in the ocean’ compared with the UK’s debt mountain) it.....(cont’d on page 4)

Editorial	Page 3	‘T’ Register news	Page 5
Front cover – father and son T-Types	Page 9	A guide to successful working with traders	Page 10
Take a closer look at your tool kit	Page 13	TD cable repair	Page 17
The history of MG TD registration no. PYA 444	Page 19	What is under your TC gas tank filler cap?	Page 22
Page 10 item cont’d – selling a car	Page 26	Page 10 item cont’d – having work done	Page 28
New parts offers	Page 30	Register regalia offers	Page 31
‘Racing fuel’	Page 33	Spares update	Page 37
Spares for sale and wanted	Page 37	What’s in November’s TTT	Page 37
‘T’ Register Committee	Page 38		

had better be good to justify the fat fees of its production!

When preparing this magazine one needs to be aware of the status of events. One example is the Scottish Borders Tour. When I started this issue, the Borders Tour had not been held; as I progressed half way through, it was being held; when I finished it, the event had been held! Organiser, John Bloomfield, ably assisted by his wife Claudette, has sent me the following:

*Claudette and I would like to thank all members who took part in the recent event and presented us with wine and flowers at the Gala Dinner.*

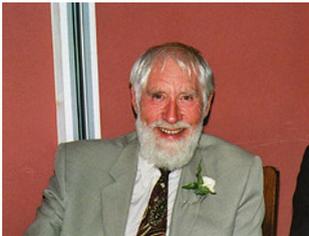
*We were delighted to receive such unexpected gifts, even though Claudette struggled to balance the huge bouquet of flowers on her lap on the way home!*

*In addition, we received a wonderful octagonal plaque, decorated with a model of a TC and the names of all the members from Switzerland. This had been made by Ruedi Spycher with superb craftsmanship.*

*Our wonderful cars performed well and no calls to the emergency numbers were made.*

*We hope that all the visitors to the Borders enjoyed the event as much as we did.*

It is always sad to have to report the death of subscribers to this magazine, even more so when they die in tragic circumstances. Bob Brassington died in hospital on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> August 2009 following a head-on collision on his way back from an Ariel Owners Motor Cycle Club, Cheshire Branch meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> August. Bob was in his MGF. He was hit by a joy rider in a stolen Audi.



Bob was a staunch MG owner over many years with his collection of MGs; NB 2-seater, TD, and more recently an MGF. He was the regional co-ordinator for the Manchester (South) section of the MG Octagon Car Club and a more helpful chap you would be hard pressed to find.

I have sent a letter of condolence to his twin brother, Philip.

The next issue is subscription renewal time. We have had a good year financially speaking and I calculate that we are in surplus to the tune of around £2,000. This has largely come about by a huge number of donations for which I am most grateful. I must also say a 'thank you' to our advertisers for their continuing support.

Please remember that the Register operates on a self-funding basis. We have no overheads and the Committee members are all volunteers.

# **'T' REGISTER NEWS** (Compiled by John James)

## **PAST EVENTS**

### **Silverstone International Weekend 2009 (10/11/12 July)**

The August issue of "Safety Fast!" magazine gave full coverage of the event, including Martin Price's excellent race reports, so I am not going to add anything else, except to say 'thank you' to:

Keith and Maureen Hodder for organising the XPAG Specials display and assisting with the 'natter' drinks

Graham and Sue Brown for assisting with the 'natter' drinks

Bill and Sally Silcock for much of the Silverstone organisation

Various 'T' Register members who gave their time in helping to set up the event on days prior to the event, to pack up when everybody else had long gone home and those who acted as back up to Bill Silcock in the running of the event, including the 'T' Register car park duties.

The XPAG Specials' owners who brought along their cars (some of which were raced) and to the racers who give us the wonderful spectacle of T-Type racing.

If I have forgotten anybody, I do apologise.

### **'T' Party 18<sup>th</sup> July 2009**

The 'T Party' was held on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> July at Shelsley Walsh. Twenty four T-Types attended with 38 members of the 'T' Register present. We were there to watch a number of T-Types and other MGs compete in a round of the Luffield Cars MG Speed Championship. Despite a not so favourable advance weather forecast the day turned out to be fine, dry and mainly sunny.

Members met up at the Hundred House Hotel at Great Witley, about 5 miles from Shelsley Walsh, where Brian and Rosey Rainbow dished out the tickets and collected the money. This was an ideal meeting point, a friendly hotel that laid on coffee/tea and allowed us to use their car park. Brian had arranged with Roger Thomas of MAC to send him 50 tickets on a sale or return basis; this way members who had booked but decided not to attend did not lose their money (£12 a person).

Members enjoyed the day out, as instanced by several e-mails and telephone calls from attendees received by Brian and Rosey, thanking them for organising the meeting, and saying how much they enjoyed the gathering.

It was certainly a lovely venue, with our own reserved enclosure and the idea of supporting a race meeting went down well.

## **SCOTTISH BORDERS TOUR 17/18/19 AUGUST 2009**

The tour is being held as I type these notes. A thank you letter from Tour organiser, John Bloomfield, is included with the editorial on page 4.

## **THE AUTUMN TOUR 11/12/13 September 2009**



I am busy trying to finish this issue of TTT so that I can bring along enough copies of the magazine for our participants (most of whom are TTT subscribers) and save some postage.

We'll see if we can include a report in November's TTT.

## **THE PRACTICAL SKILLS WORKSHOP (PSW) 17<sup>th</sup> October 2009**



Following the cancellation of last year's workshop, we have been able to find a venue that will enable us to offer a

different formula as a trial for this year. The new venue is the Oxford and Cherwell Valley College (Motor Sport Division) Workshop situated on the Telford Industrial Estate on the northern edge of BICESTER, Oxfordshire.

The PSW will be held on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> October and the main difference in the format of the event will be a shift to a more 'hands on' formula with the opportunity to try MIG, TIG and gas welding under college instruction for one half of the day, with the other half of the day spent overhauling the valve gear and cylinder head of an XPAG engine together with routine maintenance and valve settings under the guidance of our member Roger Wilson.

The facilities offer an excellent workshop environment which has been successfully used for similar events by other Registers. Unlike previous Workshops we will not be able to offer lunch, but we can use the catering facilities for making tea and coffee. Participants should bring their own food

or buy at the nearby Tesco. The cost will be £15 per head including VAT. The venue will cater for 40 people to attend, split into 2 groups of 20.

**Members who registered for last year's cancelled event will be given first opportunity to register for this one. If you are interested you should get in touch immediately with Graham Brown on 01234-358729 or e-mail [graham\(at\)jisisbedford62.freemove.co.uk](mailto:graham(at)jisisbedford62.freemove.co.uk) who will send you an entry form and request for payment. Any queries on the organisational side should ideally be raised with Register Chairman, David Butler, who has made the practical arrangements on 01234/407351 or e-mail [mgtdtf\(at\)ntlworld.com](mailto:mgtdtf(at)ntlworld.com)**

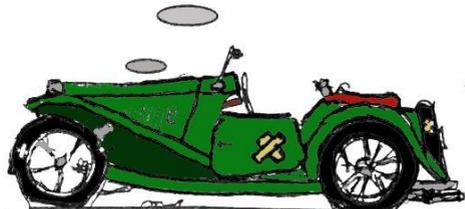
**Ed's Note:** Those of you who are MG Car Club members will already have seen the above in the September issue of "Safety Fast!" which will have dropped on your doormat at least one week earlier than this TTT.

### **'Rebuild' 2010 – Provisional Date 20<sup>th</sup> March**

We have yet to decide on the venue for next year's 'Rebuild'. It should not be automatically assumed that it will be held at St Neots.

The provisional date is Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2010.

The feedback sheets from last year's event will be used to put together a programme for next year.



### **THE AUTUMN TOUR 2010**

The 2010 Tour will be based on The Metropole Hotel, Llandrindod Wells. The hotel website address is: [www.metropole.co.uk](http://www.metropole.co.uk) Tel. No:01597 823700, and e-mail: [info\(at\)metropole.co.uk](mailto:info(at)metropole.co.uk) Being in the heart of Powys the opportunities for day routes that combine superb scenery and Cambrian Mountain passes together with lakes, dams and maybe even a quick look at Cardigan Bay coastal scenery seem overwhelming. Names that some will be familiar with include Elan Valley, Devils Bridge, Tregaron to Abergweswyn, Bwlch y Groes (Hell Fire Pass) and maybe even Tallylyn and the Dyfi Estuary as an optional choice. The Tour organisers are Graham and Sue Brown [graham\(at\)jisisbedford62.freemove.co.uk](mailto:graham(at)jisisbedford62.freemove.co.uk)

You can book the hotel now – I have now booked and I reckon that this tour could prove to be the best supported of all our tours to date – we shall see!

## THE AUTUMN TOUR 2011

The 2011 Tour will be based on Skipton, North Yorkshire. The organisers are Grant and Barbara Humphreys [grant.chumphreys@btinternet.com](mailto:grant.chumphreys@btinternet.com)  
Grant and Barbara have identified a super hotel – more details to follow.

## 75<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE TA

2011 will be the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the TA. It will be upon us sooner than we think!

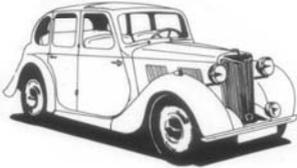
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## Front Cover - Arthur & Clive Manser

The photograph shows a combined age of 264 years !

My father is approaching his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday and still drives his TF locally. In the past he has owned various interesting cars including a BSA 3 wheeler in pre-war years and latterly a 1952 TD and 1934 Alvis Speed 20. The BSA was bought in 1938 and dated from about 1932, it had a BSA V twin engine which my father tells me was not as reliable as the JAP engine; it had a big end roller bearing which used to fail regularly but the the car benefitted from a self starter and 3 speeds with reverse (The Morgan only having 2 speeds and no reverse!)

The TF was purchased from Freddy Yhap on 4<sup>th</sup> January 1994 and was first registered on 17<sup>th</sup> June 1954. The car is capable of good average speed and easily climbs steep hills in top gear, Freddy had rebored the engine to 1350cc, fitted a half race camshaft with a 4.55 diff. It also has 60 spoke wire wheels with an MG'B' anti roll bar and oil cooler. We have a photograph showing the car racing at Spa in Belgium. Steve Baker had pointed us in the direction of the car and arranged for the car to be resprayed in Light BRG to a very high standard. Over the past 15 years various work has been carried out including rewiring, modern oil filter adapter, new hood etc.

My 1948 TC was purchased from Steve Baker as a 'number of parts' in October 1993; assembly and restoration took 3 years and the car was put back on the road in November 1996.

The TC came with a new body tub built by John Beavan, this was found to be very accurate and greatly helped rebuilding. My interest has always been in things mechanical but being the fourth generation of a family of builders and undertakers I naturally embarked on construction (but not undertaking!) as a career. The classic vehicle scene started for me in 1980 when I purchased as a box of bits a 1939 Triumph Speed Twin motorcycle, this was followed in 1984 by a dismantled 1938 Morris Eight 4 seat tourer which my father and I rebuilt between us.

I had just started rebuilding the TC when a chance encounter with Chris Alderson and Tony Roodhouse at Silverstone in July 1994 meant lasting friendships were formed with MG people in Hampshire and Surrey. One regret is that during the various rebuilds I did not have the use of a lathe or mill or the knowledge to use them!! I have now put this right and am on a steep engineering learning curve made even more interesting by attempting the construction of a 1909 2" scale model Fowler traction engine.

**Clive Manser**

# **A Guide to Successful Working with the Motor Trade**

## **Introduction**

Only a few of us have the experience and facilities to look after every aspect of maintaining our cars. Inevitably we will, at some time or other, make use of the services of motor traders (see Note 1



at bottom of the page) – whether it is to have some work done on the car or to sell a car. It is all too easy to enter into an agreement with a trader without fully realising the obligations on, and expectations of each party.

The extent to which you formalise any arrangement will depend on your personal relationship with the trader. You may feel more relaxed with someone who has done work for you for years, while seeking greater reassurance in someone not well known to you. Ideally your relationship with a trader is both friendly and positive, and many of the points made below may seem pedantic. However, if things do go wrong, to have written statements on what was agreed by each party will avoid much bad feeling and make it easier to negotiate a satisfactory settlement. Trying to settle issues based on a casual verbal discussion months after it took place will all too often create friction and confusion.

This Guide provides some common sense guidelines that should be followed to minimise the opportunity for misunderstandings and confusion. It provides a checklist of points to consider when negotiating a contract specific to your needs, rather than a prescriptive set of rules to follow, as every transaction will be different. It is written from the perspective of you, the customer. But, remember, the trader has his own interests to consider – and they will have significant experience of the services they offer. They may, through familiarity, discuss matters assuming you understand what they are saying. Don't be afraid to query anything unclear to you. It is better to make sure at the start than discover misunderstandings later.

The Guide is in four parts:

- *Part 1* General points covering areas common to all types of transaction.
- *Part 2* Specific points to consider when selling a car through a trader
- *Part 3* Specific points to consider when having work carried out
- *Part 4* Some real-life examples of good and bad wording and experience.

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<sup>1</sup> The term Motor Trader (colloquially trader) is used generically to cover those who offer a wide range of services including restoring, repairing, buying & selling, maintaining, and supplying parts for, particularly, older cars.

## **Part 1 - General Points**

It is essential that any arrangement is covered by some form of written agreement. While it is all too easy to agree verbally what is to be covered, the passage of time dulls memory and many disputes arise because the parties did not have a common understanding or recall of what was to be done. While a formal contract is ideal, there should at least be an exchange of signed letters (or emails) setting down what has been agreed. This should cover in writing all those points discussed in this Guide that are relevant to the particular job in hand.

### **Selecting a Trader**

The best way to select a trader suitable for the work you require is through personal recommendation. But don't be afraid to ask for references and follow them up. Look on the web to see if there are any references (good or bad) about a trader you are considering using. Visit them, look around their premises and talk to them. Watch their staff at work and get a feel for how dedicated they are to that company. In the end you should choose someone in whom you have confidence. However, there is no simple way of guaranteeing that a particular trader will meet your requirements. Trade Directories (such as the MG Car Club Trade Directory) list traders and popular magazines include trader advertisements but such entries should not necessarily be taken at face value.

### **Standard Contracts**

Some traders will have a standard form of contract. You should check it against this Guide to make sure you are satisfied it covers those aspects relevant to you.

### **Written Work Description**

There should be a description of what is to be delivered by the trader. The level of detail will depend on what is to be undertaken and will be very different for a car sale and work on a car. More detail is given in the relevant sections below.

### **Price**

Does it include or exclude VAT? The motor trade can sometimes be very forgetful about VAT.

Is the price an estimate or a fixed price? (very rare!).

Do you have a clear idea of how the price relates to the work description?

### **Timescales**

What commitments have been made to timescales for the sale of your car or completion of the work?

### **Payment Schedules**

How are payments to be scheduled? – this is covered in more detail later.

## **Change Control**

Is there an agreed process for advising you of and getting your agreement to changes to the description of work and how this affects the price and timescale? Any such changes should be agreed in writing.

## **Insurance**

Whose insurance covers the car and/or parts while with the trader. Are all types of loss covered?

## **Guarantees**

What guarantees, if any, will be given on work done? This can also cover work done by, or commitments made to a customer by, a trader selling your car on your behalf.

## **Inspections**

Make sure you have the right to visit and inspect the work whenever you want to. Request regular update reports where the job will take significant time. Ask for regular dated photographic evidence of progress – many traders offer this automatically.

## **Sub-contracting**

Will the trader do all work in-house, or will part of the work be sub-contracted to other organisations? If so, is there clear understanding of what is sub-contracted, who is responsible for managing that sub-contracted work and how sub-contracting costs (including VAT) are presented as part of the overall price?

## **When it Goes Wrong**

If you do find yourself in dispute with the trader your first course of action must be to discuss the issues with him/her and try to reach an amicable agreement.

If you cannot agree, your first point of recourse is to a body (like a Trade Association or a Car Club) that lists the trader or to which they belong and that has some form of arbitration scheme. Effectively they will act as an intermediary, seeking to get the parties to reach agreement. If this fails, or the trader is not part of any such scheme then you have commercial remedies such as the Small Claims Court (but this has financial limits), or you can take legal advice.

However you seek to resolve a dispute, the more precise the statement of work between you, the easier such discussions will be. This is particularly true where you seek third party help. Arbitration will be difficult where the only record is verbal recall.

**Ed's Note:** Well that's the introduction and Part 1 (General Points) covered. There is plenty to chew over in the three pages so far. Let's take a break and take a look at the specifics towards the end of this issue.

## TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT YOUR TOOL KIT

The complete “tool equipment” for the TC is illustrated on page seven of the Instruction Manual without further description or explanation. Details of the complete set of equipment are listed in the Table below. The Factory stated that “the tools supplied could vary or be omitted from time to time as a result of the supply situation” which explains the origins of the often differing views on content and originality.



**The TC Toolkit**

No	Description	Details	Remarks/ Supplier
1	Tyre pump	Vertical, hand operated with foot rests, flexible hose & connector.	Suttee/Shelley
2	Jack	Vertical screw jack	Shelley/ Lake & Elliott
3	Jack handle	2 piece square section folding shaft and wooden tee handle	
4	Wheel hammer	Copper/hide faces for centre lock wheels	Thor or equal
5	Starting handle	Fitted with brass grip - mounted on rear of front seat	

6	Oil gun	Enots pattern 1D* or Tecalemit Plastigun Type 1A	* Manufactured by Stone
7	Tyre lever	2 Nr length 10" with one chisel & one rolled end	Dunlop
8	Tyre valve tool	Brass knurled rod with slotted end for valve core removal	
9	Screw driver	9 1/2" long x 3/8" wide blade, tapered handle with wood inserts	Shaft embossed "Shelley British made"
10	Adjustable spanner	7" long x 1 3/4" adjustment	
11	Hammer	3/4 lb ball pein hammer with 9" long ash shaft.	
12	Pliers	6" engineers combination with pipe grip & side cutter	Embossed "forged steel"
13	Set of spanners	Double open ended flat steel 3/16" - 1/4" x 4 1/2" long, 5/16" - 3/8" x 6 1/4" long, 7/16" - 1/2" x 8 3/4" long	Sizes embossed (see later explanation below).
14	Set of box spanners & tommy bar	4 No tubular box, cross drilled for 5/16" diameter tommy bar. Bar 6" long with 1/2" diameter raised head one end. 3/16" - 1/4" x 4 1/4" long, 5/16" - 3/8" x 4 3/4" long, 7/16" - 1/2" x 8" long 7/16" x 4 3/4" long	Sizes embossed (see later explanation below. Manufacturer Shelley.  (14mm plug spanner)
15	Spanner for cylinder head nuts	Drop forged single ended ring 5 3/4" long.	Embossed "cylinder head"
16	Tappet Spanner	Single ended ring flat steel 5 3/4" long"	Embossed "SK11187"
17	Tappet feeler gauge	19 thou (0.019 inches).	Original item not examined.

18	Lockheed bleeder spanners & tube	Equal double ended cranked ring spanners 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ " long $\frac{3}{8}$ " & $\frac{1}{2}$ " A/F	A/F – across flats; hydraulic brakes introduced with the MG TA.
19	Distributor screwdriver & gauge	2 $\frac{1}{4}$ " long key shaped points screwdriver & 0.012" feeler gauge 1" long.	Embossed "LUCAS".

The embossed spanner size is the nominal Whitworth bolt diameter, the equivalent British Standard Fine (BSF) size is  $\frac{1}{16}$ " larger. ( $\frac{3}{16}$ " dia. W =  $\frac{1}{4}$ " dia. BSF) the table below shows the relation between spanner designation, BSF bolt diameter, bolt head dimension across flats (A/F) and spanner dimension across the jaws (open ended type), A/F (for box type) allowing nominal clearance.

Tool kit designation	BSF Bolt diameter	Bolt head A/F	Spanner dimension
$\frac{3}{16}$ "	$\frac{1}{4}$ "	$\frac{7}{16}$ "	$\frac{1}{2}$ "
$\frac{1}{4}$ "	$\frac{5}{16}$ "	$\frac{17}{32}$ "	$\frac{9}{16}$ "
$\frac{5}{16}$ "	$\frac{3}{8}$ "	$\frac{19}{32}$ "	$\frac{5}{8}$ "
$\frac{3}{8}$ "	$\frac{7}{16}$ "	$\frac{45}{64}$ "	$\frac{3}{4}$ "
$\frac{7}{16}$ "	$\frac{1}{2}$ "	$\frac{13}{16}$ "	$\frac{7}{8}$ "
$\frac{1}{2}$ "	$\frac{9}{16}$ "	$\frac{59}{64}$ "	$\frac{15}{16}$ "
14 mm plug spanner	N/A	$\frac{13}{16}$ "	$\frac{7}{8}$ "

Tool kit items 7 to 19 were all contained in a tool roll manufactured from brown canvas approximately 20" long and 5" wide with return flaps and a central  $\frac{1}{4}$ " strap; 14 tool positions were provided by a  $\frac{1}{2}$ " strap threaded through the centre strap (see illustration). Later tool rolls were black canvas with sewn in pockets as shown in *TCs Forever!*

The tools supplied for the TC by the MG Factory had changed little since the introduction of the T-Series and their content and scope tells us a great deal about motoring from the thirties to the fifties, the problems that regularly confronted drivers and the routine tasks they expected to undertake. In the thirties a large number of minor roads were still unsealed and had loose surfaces. Stones became trapped in the tyre treads and caused frequent punctures requiring tyre levers, valve tool and pump to carry out repair having first removed the wheel with jack and wheel hammer.

Routine servicing could be undertaken, steering, transmission, water pump and rev counter reduction box greased, brakes adjusted and bled, sparking

plugs removed, tappets and distributor points adjusted and the cylinder head removed for the annual de-coke when a build up of residual carbon was a fact of life before the advent of modern fuels. The box spanners can be used in combination to remove bolts where access is limited. Surprisingly perhaps there was no valve spring compressor, and the inspection lamp, though allowed for on the dash panel, was sold as an accessory.

So before you reach for your socket set try the tool kit – it caters for most tasks and reminds us of how period maintenance used to be undertaken.

When I purchased my TC as a non-runner in 1969 I recovered it from a lean-to garage with an earth floor at the back of rented student accommodation. Scattered around the garage were miscellaneous rusty tools which in my enthusiasm to recover the car were largely ignored. I picked them up and dumped them in the tool box. Later on closer inspection I found I had the remnants of the car's original tool kit. Over the years I have collected almost the complete set from auto jumbles, garage clear outs, farm dispersal sales and even a leather washer for the tyre pump from a rural market stall in Ghana. Rather more exciting than ordering them on the web, where they now cost more than the price I paid for the car!

**Chris Tordoff**

Thanks to David Saunders for the loan of his well used tool kit.

# Fishers Garage

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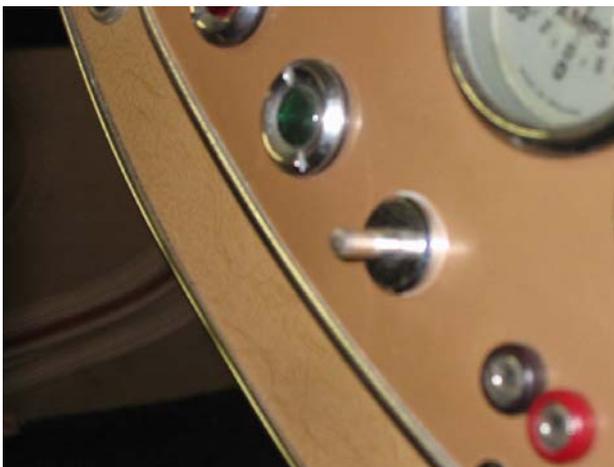
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# TD CABLE REPAIR

*This article by Mike Bond was originally printed in the August 2009 issue of "mgTalk", the monthly Newsletter of the South Eastern MG T Register (SEMGTR). It has been reproduced with the permission of Don Harmer, the Editor of "mgTalk". Don has been particularly helpful in supplying the Registrars with details of T-Types owned by members of the SEMGTR for which we are extremely grateful.*

A week ago I found myself ten miles from home with the TD. After stopping for a fill-up, I yanked on the starter knob which promptly came off clean from its cable (see photo of bare cable end). This is a common problem with these newly fabricated control cables; in fact, every new one I've



bought in the past 12 years has failed in one way or another after very little use. You can call the supplier and complain to get a replacement, hopefully on an exchange basis, gratis. However, these usually fail a month or two after they are installed and you will still shell out for shipping costs and the time to remove the broken item and install the exchange unit. And guess what? the replacement will probably break in about a month or two!

Another option toward a longer term fix is to repair the one you've got using a steel roll pin to keep the knob on the cable, for good. You can complete the job, with the cable remaining in the car, in a couple of hours



for much less money than the cost of shipping the part back. Materials and tools needed per my photo (*page 17*):

5/64" diameter x 1/2" long steel roll pin

5/64" drill bit (splurge on a new one to make the job easier)

One small tube of Super glue (cyanoacrylate)

Small drill motor

Pair of small pliers

Small piece of fine emery cloth

Now, lightly sand that end of the cable end protruding from the dash surface. You will notice a small groove machined into the cable which engages with the knob. Next, pre-drill a 5/64" diameter hole right through the knob, about half way from the end, making sure the drill bit is perpendicular to the hole for the cable. Open the tube of glue and put a couple drops on the free end of the cable. Quickly push the knob on, all the way, taking care to line-up the knob with the groove we discussed. The cable coupling at the starter switch is now loosened so that you can pull the dash end of the cable out from the dash an additional 1" or so; this will allow enough room for the drill motor. Next, drill upward through the knob into the metal cable end, using the pre-drilled hole. Grab the roll pin with your pliers and push it into the drilled hole, about 1/8" into the knob. Now

squeeze the pin, radially, right through the body of the knob.

The knob is now mechanically locked onto the cable end. Put a drop or two of engine oil at the point where the cable slides out of the dash to reduce friction. All that remains is to re-connect the coupling at the starter switch and your starter cable is now probably better than new!

See you on the road soon,



**Mike Bond      Macon, Georgia.**

#### **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.

## MG-TD for Sale: Several Previous Owners

An unexpected pleasure of acquiring an old car has been tracing the previous owners.

When I purchased my TD in 1994 I did not pay particular attention to the log book or the registration number, I was only concerned with the condition of the car. The continuation log book that came with the car showed all the previous owners to have lived in South Wales. On arriving home (I live in Blagdon, North Somerset) my former neighbour said "that's a nice car you have, welcome back to Somerset". He then explained that the number, PYA 444 was a Somerset registration.

After the initial excitement of owning the TD and some work on the car I started to think about its history and its previous owners. A chance meeting at a classic car show with a Department of Transport Representative led me to make enquiries at Somerset County Council's Records Office. For a small fee they searched the archives and sent me a photocopy of the original entry and a letter giving the relevant details.

The car was first registered to a Mr Bouchier at a Bridgwater, Somerset, address. Fortunately, there were only two Bouchiers in the 'phone book and I was able to establish that Mr Bouchier was a Chemist but sadly, now deceased.

The continuation log book's first owner entry was a Mr Whitcombe of Ebbw Vale, who registered the car in 1962. The next entry was a Miss Martin of Cross Ash, 1963, followed by Mr Whitcombe again, 1964, then again by Mr Whitcombe but this time of Cross Ash, 1966. A Mr Preece of Crosskeys was the next owner, 1970, followed by Mr Butts of Newbridge, 1980, from whom I purchased the car in 1994.

The Mr Whitcombe and Miss Martin ownership intrigued me. Cross Ash is a small village and one address was 'The Garage'. I could not find a garage in Cross Ash via the internet etc. so next time I was over in South Wales I drove into the village in my modern car to see if I could locate where the previous owners lived. On entering the village I saw an old garage, with rusty petrol pumps; it was now a rural coach business. I had the log book with me and photographs of the TD; I rang the bell and put the photos on the desk. After a few minutes a lady of an age compatible with owning the car in the 1960s came in and without me saying a word said, 'Oh the TD, it's lovely; is it outside?'. I said, 'you must be Gillian, (Miss Martin's first name). She replied, "no she is my sister, wait here and I will go and fetch her". Gillian arrived and after telling her about my part of the TD's story she took me around to her cottage and in pride of place above the fire hearth in the parlour was a photograph of PYA 444, by the petrol pumps, with Gillian standing along side (*see photo at top of page 20*).



Gillian then told me her part of the TD story. Mr Whitcombe, (Ronald), had bought the TD from a garage in Abergavenny in 1962; however, he was called up for National Service and whilst he was away she ran the car; when he finished his National Service they got married and he moved to Cross Ash.

They kept the car until 1970 then sold it to Mr Preece. Gillian let me borrow the photo to take a copy and I said I would return it and bring the TD for her to see. I saw Ronald later and he showed me a photo of Gillian and him in the TD taken in 1969 (*see photo below*).



I returned a couple of months later and parked the TD outside her cottage. Gillian came out, looked round the car, sat in the passenger seat and burst into tears. I asked her if she would like to drive it, she declined, so I took her for a drive. On our return an elderly gentleman came out of a cottage

from across the square, he looked very carefully at the car, rubbed his hand along the radiator cowl and said, "Yes, it's the right one". I looked puzzled, he said, "Didn't she tell you, she put it under a snow plough, I was the panel beater at the Garage and straightened it out for her but I couldn't get the ripple out of the radiator cowl!". He ran my hand down the side of the cowl to show me the defect!

Mr Preece, the owner from 1970 to 1980, had moved from the address in the log book and I have not been able to trace him. I understand from the next owner, John Butts that the car was off the road for most of this time and was in a poor shape when he purchased it in 1980.

John Butts, who sold the car to me had a fine collection of Jaguars that he had restored. He had also owned a dark red Aston Martin DB4. In his garage was a photo of the Aston alongside the TD, John had painted both cars in Aston Martin Peony, a colour that I have kept on the TD. John had seen another Aston and wanted cash urgently to secure the purchase. We agreed a price and I returned the car to Somerset. But how did it get to South Wales?

I had now traced the owners from 1962 to date and the first owner, but the period between 1954 to 1962 was blank and it was a few years later that the final parts of the jigsaw fell into place.

An unexpected call from fellow T-Type owner, Bruce Morgan, owner of TF reg. TKK 444, provided the answer. A Mr David Shopland, who was canvassing for the local Council elections had called on Bruce and on seeing Bruce's TF parked on the drive he remarked, "Nice car, I had one like that but it was PYA 444 not TKK 444". Bruce told him where his old car now resided, and shortly after I took the TD over to show it to him. He lived in Clevedon, Somerset, only 10 or 12 miles away. David Shopland owns a large saw mill, but only a small part is used for woodwork, the rest houses his extensive collection of World War 2 military vehicles. He told me he had purchased the car from Mr Bouchier late 1954/early 1955 and had exchanged it for another vehicle in 1959 at a garage in Weston super Mare. He also showed me the 'garage' his father had insisted he should erect to house the TD; it was a Luton Box Van Body off the back of a lorry, now housing a WW2 Jeep!

A Mr Mike Geoghegan, who was a manager at the Weston-Super-Mare garage (referred to above) had bought the car from David Shopland and took it with him when he moved to Abergavenny, South Wales.

My efforts to trace Mr Geoghegan revealed that he had moved from Abergavenny, and there was no forwarding address. However I discovered that he also owned an Alvis Speed 20 which led me to consult the Vintage Sports Car Club (VSCC) membership list and there was a Mr Geoghegan with a Speed 20 living in the South of France. I made contact and he confirmed that he owned the car from 1959 to 1962. He also invited me to take the car down there and stay with him; maybe sometime I will!

This completed the picture as far as I wished to go. Throughout the search I found everybody most helpful and meeting the previous owners was a pleasure and a privilege; and at times it was emotional for them and for me.

**John Burton**

14 May 2009

**Ed's Note:** Well that's some jigsaw you've managed to piece together, John!

# What is under your MG TC Gas Tank Filler Cap?

Each TC car owner is familiar with their gas cap and its features, or are you? I have recently discovered that there are 3 distinct groups of filler necks and caps throughout the TC production run. I will characterise these groups as Early-brass, Mid-brass, & Late-steel.

The first group of production tanks, Early-brass, were supplied to the factory as a complete assembly. This meant that they were complete to include the filler cap. The entire assembly was listed in the service parts list as one item so there is very little detail on specific components. However, a study of the early tanks shows a number of distinct features. First, the filler neck was brass and the cap was held in place by a split-pin (cotter pin). The cap was opened by a trigger (this was a holdover from the TB) and had the word "PRESS" on it. The trigger was held in place by a brass 6BA countersunk machine screw.



**These parts are from TC0273 belonging to Tom Wilson**



This countersunk machine screw also held the trigger spring which was a U-shaped "flat" type spring to hold the trigger in the "up" position. Most triggers were oriented at the 6 o'clock position. However, there was also a variation in the very early cars with the trigger positioned anywhere from 5 to 10 o'clock. This is an unknown phenomenon and is speculated as to being caused by lack of standards in early production and not a conscious design feature.

The second group of tanks, Mid-brass, began to appear in 1948. This timeframe coincides with many other productions changes within 1948 from TC4412 thru TC7502. Overall the gas tank remained the same with the exception of 2 items: the trigger and the trigger spring. The word "PRESS" was now



changed to the infamous “MG” logo. The second change was the flat U-shaped trigger spring was replaced by a coiled spring. It was also discovered that these 2 changes did not occur on the same day. There is evidence of overlap. TC 4926 had a PRESS trigger and a coil trigger spring. Then TC 6756 had an MG trigger and a flat trigger spring. So as discussed many times over, the existing supplies were used until depleted and then the transition to the new item.



The final group, Late-steel, made its debut in early (Feb-Mar) 1949. This is confirmed by factory specs detailing the “Westwood filler cap” assembly. It stated that the filler neck (steel) was welded to tank. So the brass filler base was changed to steel. Another change was that the split pin to hold the cap to the neck AND the 6BA brass screw holding the trigger were replaced by 2 rivets. Also, there was the addition of a cork gasket to sit in the perimeter of the filler neck. Overall this seemed very similar to the TD filler neck. In fact, the TD gas tank factory specs matched the Late-steel TC “Westwood” filler cap. Both use the same part number. Therefore, the late TC change was held over and was used as the follow-on TD filler cap assembly.

So, if you are a Concours judge, take notes as there are actually 3 variations to the TC filler cap. It may be interesting to look under the cap of all the TCs at the next car show or outing you attend to see the differences yourself.

As always there may be exceptions or other unknown sightings. I would be particularly interested in hearing from more owners of 1948 and 1949 TCs in order to determine with more accuracy when the transitions occurred. I would also like to know what the late-steel group fillers caps and their rivets looked like. And of course general comments are always welcome to [doug@fromtheframeup.com](mailto:doug@fromtheframeup.com). What is under your filler cap?

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**“Two ‘girls’ from University Motors; Barry Knight’s very well restored TC and Ken Wheeler’s very original TD, which I think he has owned all its life apart from 2 years!” Photos and caption courtesy of Ian Ailes cars ‘snapped’ at Brooklands April 2009 MG Era.**



## **(Continued from page 12) Part 2 - Selling a Car**

There are, as we are all aware, several ways in which to sell a car. You can, for example, sell privately, sell the car outright to a trader or sell through a trader on commission. Think about the advantages and disadvantages for you, the costs, the time scales, the personal effort required, the risks and net results of any sale process before committing to it. Before selling a car via a trader on commission ensure that this is the best method for you. Do not let advertised prices raise your hopes. Realise that traders are in the business to make a living – commission is what pays for the bread on their table!

This part focuses on selling a car through a trader on commission.

Many people sell their car through a trader on a commission basis – the trader takes a cut (usually 10-15% or more and often with a minimum amount) of the sale price on completion of the sale. Normally the trader takes full responsibility for negotiating the sale, arranging payment from and delivery of the car to the purchaser.

Where a commission sale is used the following points should be considered as part of a written agreement. Note that some traders have a standard form of contract for commission sales – you should not accept this at face value but make sure it covers all those points of concern to you:

### **Contract**

Is the contract exclusive to this trader – if so, for how long? When can you withdraw the car if it is not sold? Is there a minimum time the trader will hold the car before you can withdraw it? If you sell the car privately either before or after the agreement with the trader expires, is the trader still due commission on the sale?

### **Commission**

There needs to be clarity on the level of commission and on what it is due. Is it the sale price less costs incurred by the trader or the full amount paid by the purchaser, for example? Is the commission due inclusive or exclusive of VAT? What costs does the commission charge cover? – it should, for example, include all sale costs such as advertising, etc. Are you liable for any such costs if the car is not sold or you choose to withdraw it from sale?

### **Price**

There should be agreement as to the price for which the car is to be sold and for any discretion the trader has in varying that price to close a sale. Under what circumstances should the trader consult you before accepting an offer or deciding to change the sticker price? What costs can the trader recover from the sale price before paying you the net amount?

## **Publicity**

What commitments does the trader make on how the car will be displayed and/or advertised?

## **Title**

The trader should ask for confirmation that you have legitimate title to the car (usually through possession of the V5C). However, you need to agree with the trader who will hold the V5C while the car is in their possession and who is responsible for completing the relevant parts and notifying the DVLA on completion of the sale. Failure to do this can lead to your being prosecuted.

## **Road Tax/SORN/MOT**

If the Road Tax/SORN/MOT expires while the car is in the possession of the trader, whose responsibility is it to renew this, and at whose expense?

## **Payment**

Is the trader obliged to pay you immediately on clearance of funds from the purchaser or at some other post sale time?

## **Insurance**

The trader's insurance needs to cover demonstrations to prospective purchasers, etc as well as other forms of loss or damage, so ensure it is in place.

## **Preparatory Work prior to Sale by the Trader**

You need to be clear as to just what work the trader will carry out prior to putting the car up for sale. A trader will often expect to carry out a full service on the car prior to sale, and may also renew the MOT, recovering the costs from the sale price. They may also want to identify and rectify any defects they deem exist. You should ensure that the trader gets your prior agreement to any work they carry out on the car while in their possession. Costs recovered from the sale price for work done by the trader should not be a surprise.

Normally you will be liable for all such costs should the car not be sold.

## **Warranty**

Does the trader offer a warranty and, if so, who is responsible for paying for any rectification work? Does the trader hold back a percentage of the sale price to cover potential warranty claims – and do you accept this?

**Ed's Note:** Reading through these two pages, I can readily understand how disputes can occur. I cannot stress too highly the final sentence of the first paragraph to the introduction to this Guide on page 12; i.e. "It is all too easy to enter into an agreement with a trader without fully realising the obligations on and expectations of each party".

## **Part 3 - Having Work Done**

This Guide focuses on restoration work carried out by a trader although the principles are just as applicable to routine maintenance.

If you run an old MG sooner or later you will need to call on the services of a trader providing restoration services. There are traders out there who can provide a total restoration service, or just handle specific areas such as woodwork, bodywork, mechanical components, chassis components and so on.

It is essential that, before you give work to a trader, you get an estimate linked to a breakdown of the work to be done and then create a budget for the job. Recognize that experienced professionals can give a close estimate of the final restoration cost with a good description of what might be found that could change the cost. Discuss these variables in detail. Look again at your budget, negotiating changes to the work to be done if necessary. Some traders will spend a lot of time examining the car and preparing an estimate and they may charge a fee for this (a good investment). Understand that changes to the initial work are almost inevitable once work starts and allow a contingency for this in your budget. Note that some traders have a standard form of contract for restoration work – you should not accept this at face value but make sure it covers all those points of concern to you.

There will be differences in detail between descriptions of work on bodywork and associated areas and on mechanical components, but the basic principles listed below apply to both.

### **Description of Work**

This needs to be as comprehensive as necessary. It should be in sufficient detail to enable you to be able to relate the price quoted to the work done, to track progress and to enable any changes to be agreed.

### **Quality of the Work**

While you will want a sound job done, there is a significant difference between creating a Concours car that could win at Pebble Beach and one that is a sound driver's car. Agree with the trader on the standard of finish you expect.

### **Originality**

Again, agree to what extent you want the work to maintain originality. Should the trader, for example, try and repair/re-use all panels where possible or just use pattern parts. Should they seek out exactly the right period fittings (possibly refurbishing them), or use modern replicas or components similar in appearance or effect to the originals. With

mechanical components, agree the extent to which they can be modified from original specification.

Make sure the trader knows exactly what parts you want to retain, even if they are replaced.

## **Price**

Does the price separate parts, materials and labour (with an hourly rate quoted), and do so in a way that enables you to relate costs to detail tasks within the overall work? Do not forget to check whether the costs include VAT.

Is there a payment schedule? – traders may require part payment up front, stage payments during the work and a final payment on completion of the work. This needs to be agreed in writing. Where changes to the work schedule are agreed this may affect the payment schedule and such changes recorded in writing.

## **Timescale**

There should be an agreed timescale linked to a schedule of work based on the work description. A relatively accurate estimate should be given by the trader upon visual inspection. Completion times will vary depending on the condition of the car, type of restoration desired and availability of parts. It will also depend on your situation – have you deadlines understood by the trader or are you content that the trader does the work as and when they can fit it in, for example?

## **Change Control**

Inevitably there will be problems found during any major restoration work. All changes to the work description and/or costs should be agreed with you before being implemented by the trader and recorded in a revised work description, schedule of work and/or price as appropriate.

## **Progress Reports/Inspections**

The trader should agree to provide regular progress reports, preferably accompanied by dated photographs (particularly where bodywork is being worked on). This can be done via email but you should visit from time to time to observe progress – especially where there is some major change from the original estimate.

**Ed's Note:** Well, that's the Introduction and Parts 1 to 3 'done and dusted'. Part 4 contains some real life examples of good and bad wording and experiences. I'm looking to publish these in November's TTT as I think they can stand alone as a separate entity. Thanks should go to Chris Sundt for spending a lot of time on this very thorough Guide. I do hope that it will be of use to readers.

## XPAG/XPEG HEAT SHIELDS AND BISHOP'S CAM OIL POTS

Visitors to the Register stand at Silverstone will have noticed the XPAG/XPEG heat shields. Barrie Jones had a small batch of these, laser cut and the ten which were brought to the event sold very quickly. The good news is that Barrie has organised another batch and as a result of feedback from the first batch he has had the mounting holes made slightly larger.



Barrie has provided me with a small stock to fulfil future orders so if you would like one of these laser cut stainless steel heat shields at the very reasonable price of £12.50, please send a cheque for £12.50 plus postage of £2.50 (UK); £3.50 (EU); £6.00 (Rest of World). Payment by PayPal can be accepted by e-mailing John James

at [jj\(at\)octagon.fsbusiness.co.uk](mailto:jj(at)octagon.fsbusiness.co.uk) (substitute @ for at) and he will send you a PayPal invoice. PayPal payments will attract a surcharge of £1.00 to cover fees incurred by us. Please make cheques payable to John James and he will settle up with Barrie after deducting the cost of the postage.

**Note:** Barrie has pointed out that the heat shields are designed to fit the TF, but with slight alterations they will fit a TD or a TC. Even on a TF, they usually need slight modification to clear the throttle return spring.

### Bishop's Cam Oil Pots



Eight of these oil pots were collected at Silverstone and a further two have been sent out since the event. The Editor has a small stock supplied by Eric Worpe, who has spent some of his valuable time modifying them for use on the BC steering box. The oil pots are offered for sale at the bargain price of £10 – a small price to pay for the

reassurance that you have oil in your steering box! Payment arrangements are the same as for the heat shields and UK postage is £2.

The following instructions are sent with each pot:

*The flip-lid oil pot replaces the 5/16" BSF bolt with the extended head and grease nipple, which helps secure the top plate of the Bishop's Cam steering box.*

*The supplied socket-cap bolt with a small bleed hole drilled through it, clamps the oil pot assembly to the top plate. The surface of the top plate in contact with the oil pot's base needs to be smoothed and cleaned before being coated with a thread-locking type adhesive or strong gasket-sealing compound.*

*Use the supplied spring washer directly under the head of the socket-cap bolt and tighten firmly with a 7/32" hex. key.*

*Periodically check the tightness of all the bolts securing the top plate.*

*Maintain the oil level above the socket-cap bolt using 140 EP oil; this should assure adequate lubrication of the sector shaft's top bearing.*

*Excessive oil loss through the sector shaft's housing can be rectified by fitting a modern oil seal. However, this will entail counter-boring the end of the housing and may initiate restoration of the whole box if wear of the sector shaft's bearings is detected.*

*Low oil level is a significant cause of premature wear in the sector shaft's top bush bearing, and this modification should allow easy inspection and topping up. However, if the bush is badly scored, wear tends to accelerate and keeping up oil levels will not reverse any damage.*

*As the condition of the steering box is outside our control, no liability can be accepted in respect of loss or damage arising from this modification.*

## **XPAG T-Shirts and Totally T-Type CD**

Also on sale at Silverstone were XPAG T-Shirts (to mark the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the XPAG). One is modelled here by Steve James, designer of the [www.mgauctionwatch.com](http://www.mgauctionwatch.com) website and producer of the "Totally T-Type" CD of Issues 1-33.

The T-Shirts are offered for £7.50 each plus postage and packing of £2.50 (UK), £3.00 (EU) and £4.00 (Rest of World). They come in sizes Medium (M), Large (L) and Extra Large (XL) and are available in beige (as shown) in all three sizes and additionally, in light blue in the Medium (M) and Large (L) sizes. They are a reasonably generous fitting and the writer (John James) normally wears an 'XL', but could almost get away with an 'L'. Payment by PayPal can be accepted by e-mailing



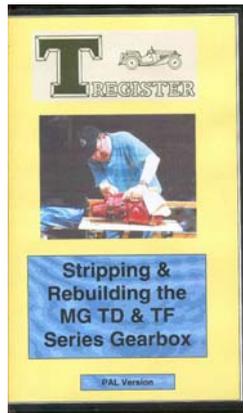
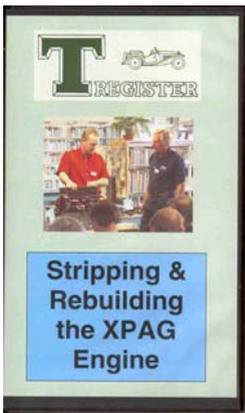
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The "Totally T-Type" CD sold well at Silverstone and has continued to sell well worldwide. Every issue from Issue 1 (January 2004) to Issue 33 (May 2009) is reproduced in full and there is also a fully searchable index by pressing the key word search button. An additional useful feature is a separate listing of all the technical articles grouped under main headings (e.g. chassis, engine, body) compiled by TA/B/C Registrar, Stewart Penfound.

A recent example of the usefulness of the search function was illustrated by your editor's search for the reference to Bishop's Cam steering box bushes. Rather than thumb through endless TTT copies, all the references came up in a flash by using the key word search function and this enabled your editor to refresh his memory about the price he was charging for a set of two bushes in order to fulfil an order. For information, the price is £6.50 each, plus £2 postage within the UK, so £15 in total. I now have only one set left.

The TTT CD of Issues 1-33 sells for £6.00 plus postage of 50p (UK), £1.25 (EU), £2.25 (Rest of World). Payment arrangements are the same as for the XPAG T-Shirts.

## XPAG ENGINE & TD/TF GEARBOX VIDEOS



When the DVD versions of these two videos were made available the videos became virtually redundant. Fortunately, anticipating the arrival of the DVD versions the Register ran the video stocks right down. However, we still have a small stock of each video, which we would now like to clear. We cannot afford to give them away but if anybody would like a copy we are selling them for a

nominal price of £5 each (they used to retail at £15). UK postage is an additional £2. They can be obtained from John James (payment arrangements are the same as for the XPAG T-Shirts).

## “Racing Fuel” by Paul Ireland.

Motivated by Mike Hawke’s response to my kerosene article, I filled the TC from the petrol station in the paddock, before leaving **MG Live** assuming this was the racing fuel Mike referred to. I have since learned this is a new fuel (BP Ultimate 102) which is not yet widely available.

The drive home followed the same 120 miles route as the outward journey on a variety of roads; mainly fast ‘A’ roads between Silverstone and Stanstead, some motorway, a slow section of ‘A’ road and the last 15 miles on dual carriageway. Typical driving speeds were 45 to 60 mph on the ‘A’ roads and 60mph cruising on the dual carriageways and motorways. With my 5 speed gearbox these speeds translate to between 2500 and 3200 rpm. On the drive to Silverstone, I used Shell V Power and 10:1 kerosene ratio, intending to arrive with an empty tank. However, kerosene improves MPG, upsetting my estimate, so I had about 3 gallons (about 13.5 litres) left in the tank. At Silverstone, I added 6.6 gallons (30 litres) of BP Ultimate 102, giving a 70% BP Ultimate 102 / V Power with 3% kerosene mix for my return journey.

With the exception of winds, the ambient temperature and driving conditions were very similar on both journeys. On sections of the ‘A’ roads, gusting side winds forced me to slow down and head or tail winds would have affected perceived performance.

On the outward journey, the car ran very smoothly revving to 4000rpm with no hesitation. Average running temperature was 74-76°C rising to 80-85°C when cruising. This was an improvement with my previous experiences with “pure” petrol. With the same timing and mixture settings the car started to run rough in excess of 3000rpm when using “pure” petrol and did not rev happily beyond 3400rpm. Running temperatures were similar however; cruising caused the temperature to slowly increase to 85-90°C.

So what of the “racing fuel”? I felt the car had possibly more power in the 2000 – 3000 rpm range. Engine performance revving above 3000 rpm was better than petrol but noticeably rougher than running on the kerosene mix.

I felt the main difference was in the reduced heat production. While average running temperatures were the same; 74-76°C and the temperature did increase while cruising, it fluctuated between 80°C on the flat / downhill and 85°C on uphill stretches rather than staying at 85°C as with kerosene. Furthermore, I did not experience vaporisation problems. On “normal” petrol, drive hard for 20 miles; stop for 10 minutes and it would be very difficult to get the car started again. Kerosene helps significantly but I have still noticed some cases of mild vaporisation. In contrast, the “racing fuel” started without a single hiccup. The final test for the “racing

fuel” was a 65–70 mph “thrash” for the last 15 miles. With petrol and even a kerosene mix, trying to restart the engine after a 5-10 minutes stop would have been difficult. With the racing fuel, there was some coughing and sputtering but the engine started and ran OK.

What about the spark plugs? Due to an error on my part in not checking my recently purchased spark plugs, I found I had 3 hotter NGK BP6HS plugs and one short nose plug. David Heath and I inspected one of the hotter plugs at Silverstone (after the 120 mile kerosene mix run), what was particularly noticeable was the insulation on the central electrode was as new, with a very minor brown colouration around the central electrode. Had I used a cheaper brand of fuel on a similar run I would have definitely seen more colouration on the central electrode.

The plug colours for the return journey were very similar. However, it is interesting to note the differences between the 3 hotter and 1 standard plug. It is not what I would have expected. The standard plug had a lighter coloured outer electrode and no colouration on the central insulation suggesting it was running hotter. The only explanation I can offer is that the fuel in the cylinder is poorly mixed and the extra 2mm length of the hotter plugs is moving the electrode to an area with a richer mixture.

**ADDENDUM:** With around 20 litres of the “racing fuel” left in the tank, I added 2 litres of kerosene before going on a 50 mile trip to a local event this weekend. The engine ran very sweetly, so much so a number of people commented on it. As for running temperatures – even though the ambient temperature was over 25°C, the temperature gauge did not exceed 80°C despite some high speed cruising and enthusiastic driving.

This trial shows that my TC runs very differently on different brands of petrol (incidentally, as does my modern turbo charged, direct fuel injection Audi). My son worked in a petrol station during his summer break from college and what surprised me was the source and mix of the petrol changed week on week. Given the very noticeable difference between cheaper brands and BP Ultimate 102 in the same car at the same level of tune, it is not surprising that people’s experiences are equally varied. Perhaps I would be better filling up at Baldock than Ipswich. Despite this, for all the different brands of fuel I have tried, kerosene improves the way my engine runs.

I believe I have reached the limit of what can be done by an amateur. What I have found is:

1. Modern petrol’s properties are significantly different from those of petrol 30 years ago.
2. A number of people have reported running problems mostly related to excessive heat being deposited in the cylinder head, valves and exhaust

manifold. Evidence suggests these problems are more obvious on lower compression engines.

3. There appears to be a large variation in modern petrol depending on when, where and what brand you buy and these variations make the problems more or less obvious.

4. Plug colour is a very crude measure of how well the engine is running, emphasised by the differences between the long-nose and standard plugs and poor colouration of the central electrode.

5. Given the variability of the fuel and without any simple means of accurately assessing the effectiveness of different approaches, it is virtually impossible to provide meaningful measures or recommend practical solutions.

6. The variability of modern petrol means that tuning individual cars on a rolling road will not provide answers for everybody.

7. As far as I am aware, my rolling road tests with different fuel mixtures that demonstrated the benefits of kerosene are the only scientific tests that have been performed and this test was far from complete.

What next? After speaking to Barrie Jones on the addition of Ethanol, I think matters are set to get worse. Without a proper understanding of the effects modern petrol is having on our cars, there is nothing we can do to mitigate potential damage. I believe we should be lobbying the MG Car Club to sponsor a scientific research programme aimed at improving our understanding and finding some answers before our cars become nothing more than garage pieces due to a lack of suitable fuel.

**Editor's Comments:** I have used the term "racing fuel" in parenthesis wherever it appears; it is in this context, BP Ultimate 102. This fuel is currently only available at nine sites in the UK and at Silverstone (all are south of Milton Keynes with the exception of Queensferry, West Lothian – EH30 postcode area) If you would like to read more about this brand, which is currently being trialled to establish demand go to the website below:

<http://www.bp.com/genericsection.do?categoryId=6621&contentId=7017179>

Thanks should go to David Heath for finding this website.

The racing fuel to which Mike Hawke referred to in the May TTT costs around 230p a litre (a "bargain" at just over ten 'quid' a gallon!!!!) and is only available inside the paddock at Silverstone. It is therefore presumably not available to "Joe Public" but I'm guessing that Mike as an ex-racer would have found his way in?

I am on record as saying that I would not use kerosene; that's still my view. Would you use it in a Rolls Royce? I doubt it! All my cars (except for the 'Eurobox') are a 'Rolls Royce' to me! This is not to criticise those who use kerosene; clearly Paul has experienced good results with the addition of

kerosene and as he states above, “my rolling road tests with different fuel mixtures that demonstrated the benefits of kerosene are the only scientific tests that have been performed and this test was far from complete”.

On the other hand, I know of one owner who has tried mixing kerosene with petrol and he has not experienced the same results.

The whole subject of modern petrol is an absolute minefield and the last thing I would want to do is to fall foul of any of the petrol companies. I don't think that anything we have published could be construed to come into this category – that has never been the intention. I should perhaps point out that any recommendation to use a certain brand of petrol is purely a recommendation by an individual who perceives that his car goes better on this brand and it is NOT a recommendation from this magazine.

Paul points to the need for further research and he's quite right. The appropriate body to commission some research is the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs (FBHVC) and we are fortunate in having Chris Hunt-Cooke, Vice Chairman of the MG Car Club as Chairman of the FBHVC. The FBHVC will no doubt be lobbied by other car clubs and, according to Paul, some Riley owners are beginning to suffer from head gasket failure.

Finally, if you are thinking of adding kerosene to your petrol you need permission. Paul has sent me the following details:

"If you live in the UK and plan to mix kerosene with your petrol remember, to do this legally, you will need to apply to HM Customs and Excise for a Concession. Write to:

Mr John Loughney  
Excise, Stamps and Money Businesses  
HM Revenue & Customs  
3rd Floor West  
Ralli Quays  
3 Stanley Street  
SALFORD

requesting a “General Licence to mix hydrocarbon oils under Regulation 43 of the Hydrocarbon Oil Regulations 1973 (SI 1973/1311)” giving your name, address, model and dates of production of the model of your vehicle. People who have already done so have told me they were surprised how easy this was.”

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**SPARES UPDATES** The potentially useful lead regarding the TD/TF brake drums has run into the sand. It was thought that a drum from the same era, which is still in production abroad, could be used, but the drums, whilst similar, are not the same. A quote has been sought for 20 cast and fully machined rear drums.

Better news with the TA/B/C front spring pins. A small batch has been ordered and these will go quickly as they are the same for Triple-M cars. They are made from EN34 case hardened and ground. The price is exactly what they cost me (£12) plus a donation to the Register of £1 per pin.

Front and rear shackle pins for the TC, made from EN19T are also on order and these cost £4.80 and £4.00 respectively with a donation to the Register of 50p for each pin.

### **SPARES FOR SALE AND WANTED**

TA wiper motor (not TC) good condition £65; TA water pump for MPJG £100; TA radiator matrix £50; TA distributor DK4A 11 tooth, good condition £75; TC distributor DKY4 good condition £65. Tel: 01953 688259.

9" oil filled air filter (as fitted to competition TDs), very good condition and all complete £75; XPAG tappet side plate, very good condition £25; 12 volt windscreen wiper motor, complete and in good working order £60; Y-type dynamo with extension drive adapter to fit a TD with tacho, good clean charging order £80; 2 tank straps for TD, painted red £10 each; TC flywheel with good starter ring £100; more small parts, all MG. TD chrome number plate tail lamp (Lucas) £20; 12 volt windtone horn, TD or Y-type £25. All plus post and packing. Tel: 01429 838683.

**Wanted:** for a TF being restored in Kenya; spare wheel carrier; hood frame and fittings. If you can help please contact John James (contact details overleaf).

**Wanted:** 15" x 4" (between the inner edges) centre laced wire wheels. Ron Ward 01422 823649

### **IN NOVEMBER'S TTT**

- basic electrics - Peter Cole's presentation at this year's 'Rebuild'
- the welcome return of John Steedman's "Notes from a Rebuild"
- XPAG water circulation – a useful tip from Eric Worpe
- 'Living with a TF' – Bob Marshall's ownership of SKR 647
- some 'blasts from the past' (taking you back in time when our cars were changing hands for what now seems ridiculously cheap prices)
- a selection of answers to questions asked of TD/TF Technical Specialist, Barrie Jones

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