

THE OCTAGON

Newsletter of the M.G. Owners Club & the Peninsula T Register
The Northern California Centre of the M.G. Car Club



MGOC Octagon
If undeliverable please return to:
7230 Silver Lode Lane
San Jose, CA 95120

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January 2012

About *The Octagon* and MGOC...

The M.G. Owners Club, formed in 1957, is the Northern California Centre of the M.G. Car Club, formed in England in 1930. The Peninsula T Register was formed in 1973 and is now an informal sub-group of the MGOC. We receive a copy of the MGCC's *Safety Fast*, available to members on loan from the corresponding secretary. The Club is also associated with the North American MGB Register, the North American MGA Register, and the New England MG T Register. The MGOC holds a business meeting on the second Thursday of each month at an event known as the "Natter and Noggin" in the style of English clubs. *The Octagon*, our newsletter, is published monthly by the M.G. Owners Club. Opinions expressed in *The Octagon* are not necessarily those of the MGOC, its members, or Board of Directors.

DIRECTORY OF MGOC OFFICERS FOR 2012

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

Vice President: Tim Polidoroff, polidoroff@comcast.net

Treasurer: Mike Jacobsen, 415-333-9699, MikesMuseum@yahoo.com

Secretary:

Registrar: Mike Jacobsen, 415-333-9699, MikesMuseum@yahoo.com

T Register Director: Jim Carlson, 408-224-3992, mgjim@comcast.net

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

Photographer: Jeremy Palgon, 510-378-1821, alistaircookie@gmail.com

CLUB ADVISOR PROGRAM

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

MGB 1962-74: Marty Ray, 831-475-6204, martyray@cruzio.com

MGB 1974-1980: Ed Adams, 510-483-6821

MGB V8 Conversion: Tony Bates, 408-666-6174, Tony@BatesFamily.net

MGC: Kent Leech, 925-253-9757, kent@kentleech.com

MG Midget: Craig Kuenzinger, 925-934-3130, mrcraig@aol.com

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

Z-Magnette Saloon: Eric Baker, 510-531-7032, mgpb36@yahoo.com

T-types: George Steneberg, 510-525-9125, j2george@pacbell.net

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

PA/PB Midget 1934-36: Eric Baker, 510-531-7032, mgpb36@yahoo.com

S.U. Carburettors: Marty Ray, 831-475-6204, martyray@cruzio.com

Club Meeting Natter & Noggin

February 9, 7 pm

The Englander Sports Pub & Restaurant

101 Parrott Street, San Leandro

<http://www.englishpub.com>

(510) 357-3571

The Englander is an enjoyable place where we have our own cozy room.

The food is good so bring your appetites.

Directions to The Englander:

From Northbound I-880, take the Washington Ave. exit within San Leandro and turn right on Washington St. Travel 2.2 miles until you see Parrott St. Turn right on Parrott Street. You will see The Englander on your right.

From Southbound I-880, take Davis St. exit and turn left on Davis. Travel 1.3 miles, then turn right on E. 14th St. Travel 0.3 miles, and then turn right on Parrott Street.



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Parts for Sale:

Five Wire Wheels, painted (gray primer), 48 spokes in good condition. Asking \$500. **Five Disc Wheels** in very good condition with 165 SR 15 steel-belted, Dunlap tires, 8/32 tread. Asking \$500. Contact Harry at 925-934-4973 or TipTot@astound.net.

MGB Parts: Autopower Roll Bar, SCCA Race Approved, 1.75" DOM. Roll bar has diagonal brace, horizontal seat back brace, and small restraint bar behind driver's seat. Asking \$150. **Two Chrome Luggage Racks**, trunk lid mounted. \$50 each. Contact Member David Wright at 510-653-3831.

MG Midget Rolling Chassis Body Shell. No VIN. No Title. No engine, transmission, differential, front bumper, or windscreen. Not crashed but rough. Rubber bumper car. Make Offer. Contact Member Nick Becker at 925-932-9778 or becker2226@astound.net.

Wanted:

Electrical Help: I am new to the world of MG, and am in the process of improving a 1959 MGA Roadster. I have replaced the wiring harness and need the expertise of someone with electrical know how to help me make sure I do not burn anything up when I put a battery to it. I will pay for their time and knowledge. Can you help me? I live in Walnut Creek. Contact Harry at 925-934-4973 or TipTot@astound.net.

Pre-1968 MGB roadster. Long-time MG nut seeking early B roadster. My preference is one that is a preserved original or one redone to original specifications; but I will consider most any steel-dash car, depending on its price and its needs. Contact Member Don Scott at 707-942-0546 or don@napanet.net.



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COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING IN THE OCTAGON

Direct all questions about advertising to Mike Jacobsen at 415-333-9699 or MikesMuseum@yahoo.com. 2012 rates are: monthly (yearly): full page \$25 (\$240), half page \$18 (\$175), third page \$12 (\$120), business card \$8 (\$75). All ads expire on January 1, and fees for a partial year will be pro-rated to that date. Deadline for ad materials is the 10th of the preceding month. The MGOC makes no claims as to the reputation or quality of work performed by businesses advertising in *The Octagon*.

MGOC FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Information on the MGOC finances is available upon request from the treasurer.

MAKING CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE OCTAGON

Your stories, photos, tips, questions, and anything MGOC-related are always welcome in *The Octagon*. Please make your contributions by the 20th of the month preceding the issue in which you want them to appear. Please email all contributions to mgowners@gmail.com or send them to: MGOC, 7230 Silver Lode Lane, San Jose, CA 95120.

RECRUITING MEMBERS FOR THE MGOC

Have you helped recruit any new members lately? Bob Stine is in charge of new member recruitment and can send you flyers. The Club roster is available to members from Mike Jacobsen upon request.

MGOC.ORG

Upcoming events, MGOC history, photos, membership forms, *The Octagon*, and helpful links are posted on the Club Web site at <http://mgoc.org>.

Forthcoming Events

MGOC Events in bold

Jan. 27 – **Holiday Pub Night** at On the Road Again, Morgan Hill, Bill Hiland

May 20 – **MGs by the Bay**, The Danville Livery

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From the Editor...

All straight things must bend. – Ben Lee

This will be the last time I address you as editor of *The Octagon*. I've been struggling with what to write in my last column. It's difficult to provide an insightful coda to four and a half years creating this newsletter, and all that that entails. So, as I have so often in this space, I'll draw inspiration from the words of others.

Begin at the beginning and go on till you come to the end: then stop. – Lewis Carroll

I came to this job by happenstance. In 2005, I decided to get my family's 1974 1/2 MGB running again. It had been languishing in our garage for well over a decade. I had the help of a couple savvy friends, but we knew little about British automobiles. So I joined the MG Owners Club.

I came to a number of events, made some friends in the club, and learned everything I could. I got my MG running, and started driving it to events. Things broke along the way, and I learned to fix them. With the help of Marty Ray, Dan Shockey, Brian O'Connor, and Bill Hiland, in two years I replaced: the fuel pump, alternator, brake master cylinder, clutch master and slave cylinders, steering rack boots, emergency brake cable, rear suspension arm, and tires. I also rebuilt the engine head and overhauled the carburetors.

By the time our MG2007 event rolled around, my MG ran great; and I enthusiastically drove it up to Rhonert Park. While on a beautiful tour to the coast, I had a long talk about life and leadership with then-president Bob Stine. Somewhere along the way, I heard that Bob Trencheny was looking for someone to help him with editing *The Octagon*. I was grateful for all the help I'd received from the club, and I wanted to give back. Helping Bob edit sounded like a good, temporary, way to get involved. So I volunteered.

Little did I know that I would be elected editor, without my consent, at the next business meeting. Surprised, and perhaps a little confused, I initially resisted. But the club leadership encouraged me, so I gave it a try. I had no idea what I was in for.

I created one newsletter, then another, and another...and then it just became part of my monthly routine. With the aid of Mike Jacobsen, and the support of Sam Gearhart, I attempted to make incremental improvements to *The Octagon*.

I standardized formatting and layout, edited for grammar, and strove for a consistent style. But my focus was not technical, it was philosophical. I was guided by the question: "If the purpose of

MG
TC-TD-TF-MGA-MGB-C-Midget

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OCT05

1978 MGB Roadster. Maroon with beige interior. Vehicle has less than 43,000 original miles. 1800cc engine with Stromberg carburetor and 4-speed manual with electronic overdrive. Soft-top with two tonneau. AM/FM/CD stereo with removable face, remote control and MP3 interface. Luggage rack, new tires, many extras. Currently registered in California. Asking \$8,200. Contact Member Tom Doyle at 520-220-6228 or at wtdoyle@cox.net.



1961 MGA Coupe. 1600 cc engine, 5 speed gearbox. California car, completely restored by third (and present) owner in 2002, rust free, body straight, no accidents, 7,800 miles since rebuild. Original body panels, new front spoiler below bumper. All good original chrome, new rubber gaskets for body and glass. Painted "Paprika Red" (Jaguar color). Asking \$25,000. Contact Member Viggo Riddersholm at 650-341-9064 or vriddersholm@yahoo.com, or Gordon Craig at lismoregordon@sbcglobal.net.



Classic 1973 Jaguar XJ12 Series 1 Sedan. 5.3 V12 engine. All original! The only year of the chrome bumpered XJ12 model. 66,000 original miles. Silver with beautiful original black leather interior. Sunroof and Nardi wood steering wheel. Always a California car from new. No rust! Same owner for the last 35 years. Always garaged. Looks and drives great! \$8,900. Contact Member Ron Simi at 925-765-5807.



Classified Ads

Ads are free to MGOC members and \$6.00 per month for non-members. Please send copy (and check **made payable to MGOC** if a non-member) to MGOC, 7230 Silver Lode Lane, San Jose, CA 95120. Members may also email ads to the editor at mgowners@gmail.com.

Cars for Sale:

1976 MGB with over drive needs a new home. No time to care for properly. This was former member Gary Lukey's car. Maintained by Baroo in Albany. Not currently licensed. Top replaced in 2009, seats as well. Newer metal fuel pump. Asking \$2,000 or best offer. Transmission is worth \$1800. Need the space for my Jag. Photos available. Contact Lanny Clark at 510-410-7572 or lannyclark@aol.com.

1967 MGB with overdrive. Original owner, has all maintenance records, Bay Area car since new. 121K original miles and less than 2K miles since full mechanical rebuild. Excellent condition. Looking for owner that will continue to give it TLC. Asking \$15K OBO. Contact Stephen at 415-722-0556 or sdhom@sbcglobal.net.



1969 MGB GT. Very low original miles. In good condition, with some flaws. The paint has been touched up and has a couple of bubble spots. The dash has small two cracks in it. It has a fresh carpet and the seats are in good shape. The original wood steering wheel looks great. It has electric ignition and 12 volt system. I have over \$4000 worth of work done in the last 8 months: completely refurbished the brake system, overhauled the original SU carbs, new fuel pump, new temp gauge, re-cored radiator. Thoroughly tuned up with all new hoses, belts, cap and rotor, plugs, fluids, and lubricants. All work done in SF at Johns Jaguar service. Contact Scot at scotmontagnino@me.com.

1977 MGB with 54,000 original miles, overdrive transmission, original "Sandglow" paint and autumn leaf interior. Well maintained by third owner. Price \$6,400. Contact Member Ellis at Bovet177@gmail.com.



The Octagon is to announce events and share information, photos, and stories, then how best do I do that?"

Clearly, the most important function of *The Octagon* is the dissemination of upcoming MGOC event information. So putting the event blurbs up front, in chronological order, made sense. Standardizing the format of event listings, with highlighted areas for the location, meeting time, price, and other major details made it easier to locate the most important information at a glance. Hyperlinks to relevant Web pages and directions were the next obvious step. And since the purpose of the event listings isn't merely to inform members about upcoming events, but to encourage them to attend as well, why not try to punch up the text a little?

And what non-MGOC events should I include, if any? Well, what events would the largest number of our members be interested in? And if the secondary function of the newsletter is to share stories, photos, and technical information, what content should I seek out and include (and which pieces should I feature)?

The answers to these questions vary from month to month according to the limitations of space, number of submissions, and context. However my guiding philosophy in selecting content was always the same: ***The Octagon* is your newsletter.**

It seems like such an obvious fact. You're a member of the club, and *The Octagon* is there to serve you. But the idea that *The Octagon* exists to best serve the interests of the members of the club can raise difficult questions.

What content would best serve the members? Perhaps that which would be of interest to the majority of the members. That's a nice utilitarian definition, if not always a helpful one. How do I know what the members are interested in? So I tried to talk to members, in an attempt to glean what their interests were.

Generally the guiding principle that *The Octagon* is your newsletter made decisions easier. What do you do when you have more content than you can accommodate? Prioritize member submitted content. What do you do when you don't have enough content? Ask members about their interests and stories, suggest articles, start a member interview series, or start a content contest.

This thinking extends to the content of submissions. If a member went out of their way to write me something, I tried my best to publish it as they wrote it. Though I would edit for clarity and grammar, I always strove to leave as much of the author's voice and text intact.

The one thing I never wanted to do, though it might have made my job easier, was compose the content myself. I didn't want it to be my newsletter. It should be your newsletter; and it should represent as many of you as possible.

In the course of editing the newsletter, I interacted with a wide swath of our members. I made friends, received help, and was personally thanked more times than I can remember. I learned more than I ever thought I'd know about the vagaries of British fastener thread standards and SU carburetor tuning. Thank you to everyone who has sent in content, helped me with my car, or complimented me on my work. I'm proud and heartened by what we've shared; and now it's time to go.

Felix Lee will be taking over as editor next month. Though Felix is perhaps best known as the father of star reporter Samantha Lee, he's also gained notoriety in the case of the mysterious disappearing banjo bolt and is a former winner of the Burnt Spark Plug Award. He has a lovely family, a beautiful black TF, and is a dedicated member. I'm sure he'll do a great job. Please give Felix the same support you gave me, and continue to send in your stories. I look forward to reading them.

Jeremy Palgon

Past President's Proposal

A member brought an idea (admittedly borrowed from the MG Car Club Rocky Mountain Centre) to my attention a few months ago. I really liked it, so I now formally propose we institute our own **Annual Driver & Mileage Contest**.

This contest is intended to be nothing more than a simple and informal way to increase your enjoyment of driving your MG, and requires very little effort to participate in. You'll get credit for braving weather, grueling traffic, highway construction, and hopefully club rides. Who knows, at the end of the year you might be recognized as the MGOC's Most Radical Road just for simply doing what you already enjoy: driving your car.

Right now this is in the rough idea stage. I'll need to bring the proposal to the February meeting. But before I do, I'd like to get some indication of member interest. So read on and let me know if you'd like to participate.

The concept is simple: log your MG miles driven, and report them to me at the end of each month. I'll keep a running tally, and perhaps publicize intermediate results. At the end of the year, I'll announce the winner—the member who has driven the most miles in their MG that year.

More detailed guidelines will be explored, but it really is simple. First and foremost, the contest is based entirely on the honor system. I'm not about to come verify or check odometer readings. Just keep track of the miles you've driven in your MG (if you have more than one, each car is a different entrant) and report (via email) those miles to me at the end of each month. Please also identify the car you've driven by year and model. Again, if you have more than one car, please report those separately.

Whether you're driving to work, to the corner store for a loaf of bread, or heading off to a weekend in Tahoe – all miles count. Your MG must be driven, not towed or transported on a trailer, for miles to be counted (again, this is all on the honor system). This contest is purely for fun and is intended to give you another little excuse to enjoy driving your MG as often as possible.

One important note: if your participation in this contest might significantly increase your own miles driven, check your insurance policy as many limit the miles a car can be driven annually. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you're urged to always follow traffic laws and keep your car in good driving condition.

Yes, I'm getting a late start on this so for those who want to participate this year. So just estimate the miles you've driven since January 1, 2012 and report your total to me at the end of the month. Depending on how many members get into the challenge, I may periodically report the "standings" to let everyone know who our real contenders are. I'll let you all know when the 'contest' officially starts, but remember to start logging those miles while I work on getting this approved. Good luck!

Sam Gearhart

New Business

Election of Officers: All officers on the ballot were voted in as follows:

President: George Steneberg
 Vice President: Tim Polidoroff
 Treasurer: Mike Jacobsen
 Secretary: (unfilled)

Awards: Sam is working on awards for the upcoming Annual Awards Brunch in January.

Business Cards: are available to all members to inform others about the MGOC. Please see Mike Jacobsen if you would like some. Our supply is low, so Mike will see about a new design and the cost of printing them. He will bring this information to the February meeting.

MGs by the Bay Poster Contest: All entries for the poster contest must be received by February 1, 2012. We would love to see some creative artwork or photos that will inform the public about our event. Entries can be emailed to mgowners@gmail.com or sent to the MGOC at 7230 Silver Lode Lane, San Jose, CA 95120. The winner will receive complimentary admission to MGs by the Bay and 10 copies of the poster.

Web site: Steve Kellogg is our new webmaster for 2012. He presented and proposed an updated version of the current MGOC website. Steve, as our new webmaster, would like the Web site to include some changing photos, regalia order forms, and an easier format for members to use. He also proposed a members only forum where members could contribute photos, share information, and connect with others about local drives.

After some lively discussion as to whether a new system was necessary, the board decided to go with a new site. A motion was passed to allow up to \$600 for the new design and cover the hosting fee for the first year.

The MGOC will not meet in January. Instead, all members are encouraged to attend the Annual Awards Banquet at Hs Lordship's on January 7 **and** the Annual Planning Meeting at the Shaheen's in Danville on January 14.

Next Meeting and Natter: 7:00 pm on Thursday, February 9, 2012 at The Englander Sports Pub, 100 Parrott Street, San Leandro.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 pm.

Submitted by Kim Kuenzinger.

Request Electronic Delivery of *The Octagon*

Get *The Octagon* faster and in color,
 while saving trees and club funds.

Email Mike Jacobsen at MikesMuseum@yahoo.com to switch.

MGOC Business Meeting Minutes December 8, 2011

President George Steneberg called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm. Also attending were Marcia Crawford, Mike Jacobsen, Steve Kellogg, Kim & Craig Kuenzinger, Jeremy Palgon, Bob and Edie Shaheen, and David Wright.

The November minutes were approved as printed in *The Octagon*.

Treasurer's Report: The total bank balance has increased because of a credit from the Sheraton in Petaluma. The credit was for unused services during the Fall Festival.

Registrar's Report: The MGOC has 188 regular, 55 auxiliary, 12 corresponding, and 2 associate members for a total of 257 members.

Secretary's Report: We still need a secretary for 2012.

Corresponding Secretary's Report: Nothing significant to report.

Regalia: David Wright has a larger club jacket in his regalia collection. Please contact him if you would like it. He will bring it to the Annual Awards Brunch.

The Octagon: The outgoing editor, Jeremy Palgon, is working with the new editor, Felix Lee, for a smooth transition.

Web Site: Steve Kellogg, our new webmaster, has some ideas for updating our website. See more in New Business.

Past Events

Mike Jacobsen's Tech Session: Mike investigated and discovered the vendor had received a batch of incorrect rack boots, and they have since corrected the problem.

Upcoming Events

Annual Holiday Tea: Marcia Crawford and George Steneberg are hosting this event at Marcia's home in Kensington. Details are in *The Octagon*. Please remember to bring your favorite tea or beverage, some light snacks and an unwrapped toy for the Toys for Tots campaign.

Annual Awards Brunch: Hs Lordship's in the Berkeley Marina on January 7.

Annual Planning Meeting: Bob and Edie Shaheen will be hosting this meeting on Saturday, January 14. Directions to their home in Danville are in the December *Octagon*. We hope to see many members there with ideas for drives and fun activities for the upcoming year!

MGs by the Bay: Hold the date of May 20, 2012 for this annual event.

Old Business

Nothing to report.

On the Road Again Classics British Auto Restorations

Invites you to our next

Pub Night

With a Special Presentation on Valuing Your Car
Friday, January 27, 6 pm – 9 pm



Please join us in our 4,000 square foot showroom for a free evening of darts, air hockey, music, and vintage racing movies!

Munchie bits will be provided as well as mixers and ice.

Please bring your own beverage of choice.

Significant others are encouraged to attend, but please leave the young ones at home.

Please RSVP to Bill Hiland at 408-782-1100 or
bhiland@ontheroadagainclassics.com.

16840 Joleen Way, #G4, Morgan Hill, 95037

Ongoing News Flash

MGs by the Bay Poster Contest

By M.G. Mowog

The MG Owners Club is announcing a contest to create the next MGs by the Bay poster. This is our first poster contest, and it might be our last.

This is your chance to design an advertising handbill that will be seen in thousands of places around the Bay Area. Well, maybe not thousands. Perhaps hundreds. Certainly dozens.

We'll post the MGs by the Bay poster in local British auto repair shops, here in *The Octagon*, on the Club Web site, and wherever members choose to post them round town. So the visibility of the poster depends on you. But never mind the quantity, your poster design will exist in print for posterity – a monument to your creative prowess.

Previous MGs by the Bay posters have used drawings, paintings, photos, and even collages. Any and all ideas that capture the spirit of MG, and will fit on a standard 11" x 17" poster, will be considered.

And what might you win if your design is selected for this year's MGs by the Bay poster?

No, you won't receive a fully restored TC (although that would be nice).

So what will you win?

Well, I can't say exactly. It's a secret.

But I can tell you that you will likely receive a number of free MGs by the Bay posters, free entry to the car show, and the thanks of a grateful club. (But, as of this moment, I can only guarantee the gratitude of the club.)

The MGOC board is confident that you have an abundance of hidden creative talent. You wouldn't want to disappoint them, would you?

So start dreaming up the 2012 MGs by the Bay poster. Glory awaits you.

All submissions must leave space for 30 square inches of sponsor logos and should include, or leave adequate space for, the following text:

The MG Owners Club presents the 19th annual
MGs by the Bay
Sunday, May 20, 2012
The Danville Livery

Please submit your poster design to mgowners@gmail.com or:

MGOC
7230 Silver Lode Lane
San Jose CA 95120

The deadline is February 1, 2012.

Aviators Cloth Flight Cap, HED1791, \$19.50

This aviator cap is made from the USN deck hood. Flaps and bill have been removed to reveal an old-fashioned pilots aviator snoopy cap. Styles and shades may vary a little. Khaki color, cotton, wool-lined, flight cap. Used in good condition, with some tears, stains, and markings.

http://www.omahas.com/product_info.php?products_id=1834

Tool Roll, Small #82820 BAG1547, \$5.95

Cotton canvas small accessories and tools roll. padded with snap fasteners. New Original GI Surplus. 12 1/2" x 9 1/2' open. 12 1/2" x 4" closed

http://www.omahas.com/product_info.php?products_id=1580

Barnstormer Leather Flying Cap, #0064184, \$33.95

Lined with soft sheep's wool for extra warmth and comfort, this brown flying cap is made in the USA of genuine goatskin leather.

http://www.historicaviation.com/product_info.po?ID=22777&product=Apparel&category=ww&subcategory=WWI

Premium Leather Aviator Cap, \$24.99

Fully adjustable and soft suede lining. adjustable straps, lamb-suede lining, soft lambskin top grain leather.

<http://www.jaminleather.com/Leather-Aviator-Helmetcap-P515.aspx>

USN 50s-era Deck Hat, \$14.97

A genuine 50s-era U.S. Navy lid protection as seen on swabbies of the high seas. Adjustable chin strap, warm wool lining, extended brim, neck protection.

<http://www.sportsmansguide.com/net/cb/used-usn-50s-era-deck-hat-dark-khaki.aspx?a=884880>



Photo by Nancy Shane

Flying Caps for MG Drivers

By Dan Shockey

My thinning hair - my wife would say it has done thinned as much as it can - and my propensity to sinus drainage drives me to keep an eye open for good caps to wear while driving my MG. The aviator style caps are warm and stay in place well for the cooler months, or for summer in San Francisco, or for along the coast.

The flying caps, "Snoopy" caps, or as my dad calls them, "Lindy" caps, are popular at present. You can find such caps in stores. Leather is nice, as the material seems to fit with our older MGs. Many of the regular-store caps are the style with fold-down ear flaps and front flaps, not quite like the WWI and WWII caps, but warm and useful. I have one in leather that is very useful and attractive. At least one company in England still makes their WWII flying caps. I have one, purchased for me as a gift, with a small MG logo. It is my pride and joy but one I tend to save for good weather; and I don't like to leave in the MG.

Recently I saw that a surplus catalog company is selling US Navy "deck caps" for a low price, and purchased one. These are cotton canvas in a dark green color with a wool liner and date to the 1950s. They have a bill to shade your eyes and a nice flap in back (with "USN" printed on back) to keep the rain and cold off your neck. I like it well and it seems to fit the post-war MGs. Another surplus company is selling these with the front and back bill flaps removed. It looks like the traditional Snoopy flight cap that way and is still under \$20. You could cut them off yourself, or just remove one flap or the other.

Many of the surplus companies have gotten into remanufacturing of popular war surplus items. One such company is selling a reproduction of the leather flying cap worn by German pilots in WWII. These have good neck covering too, and are available at about \$30. I presume they are made in China. These look very good and are more true to flying caps with ear bulges. A leather company is selling an aviator cap now on sale for \$25 (regularly \$40). It looks very good, too. I don't know where this cap is made.

There are some leather flying-style caps still made in the US of A. These are typically targeted at motorcycle enthusiasts who have a similar need to head protection and style. I have one that I bought from JC Whitney some years ago. Another company is selling a USA made goatskin cap for \$35.

I walk my dog every day and the temperature can be below-zero (Fahrenheit) on some mornings; so these caps find winter use as well.

I shouldn't need to note that I have no financial interest in much of anything. Some of these surplus companies also sell surplus military bags that are useful for packing tools and supplies in the MG. They are a great source for long underwear, leather gloves, and great coats too. It is a way to buy goods of American or European manufacture, albeit from perhaps 50 years ago.

MG is Back in the Americas Report of MG Car Club Meeting October 15, 2011

By Dan Shockey

Nancy and I visited Abingdon on the day of the Annual General Meeting for the MG Car Club. The folks were very welcoming and even fed us lunch. Overseas Director Paul Plummer took good care of us. There were many topics of interest. Though I was only in the presentations for an hour or so, I will pass along a couple things.

The MG Car Company, by whatever name they are incorporated in the various countries, is beginning to have more of a global presence. They are selling cars in Panama, Peru, and Chile. They have a goal to sell 2000 M6 sedans this year in the UK. It is not a very competitive or economical car at present, so that may be difficult. They plan to introduce a diesel engine for the car next year, along with an exciting new small car, the M3.

The MG Car Club has been successful in building a good relationship with the SAIC group in China that owns MG. There is a MGCC China Centre now, with a web site that looks very much like the UK club site. The MGCC is gradually educating the Chinese company about MG and its history. SAIC was at an auto show recently with an old Austin on display. There is still plenty to learn, but the Chinese have been eager students.

The MG Car Club had a successful membership drive last year and has been stable this year. The worldwide recession has hurt membership of most clubs. The MGCC raised the cost of membership. There's some competition from the for-profit MG Owners Club. [Editor's note: We, the Bay Area MG Owners Club, are affiliated with the MGCC in England, and not with the other MGOC.]

The Club provides a nice magazine and their grill badge is very desirable. The magazine is somewhat focused on events and people in the United Kingdom, but there is something for us Americans too.

The City of Abingdon expects to open a new museum in June that will feature MG, both as a permanent display and with temporary rotating displays. The MG Car Club is working with them to help provide information, former employees, and cars. They will likely begin with a display celebrating 50 years of the MGB. The Club is also hosting a big 50th birthday party for the MGB at Blenheim Palace next September 23.

The club's Kimber House continues to be developed. The next addition is an MG Garden. The MG Car Club is unique in owning a house located at the factory site.

The Other MG

Article and photos by Marty Ray

Many of you may not be aware that there is another MG out there, with another world of enthusiasts, and even another MGOC. Moto Guzzi is famous in the world of motorcycling. I am a fan of these motorcycles, and you may have seen me appear on one at some of our MG car events. I found Moto Guzzi via an MGOC member who is still a good friend, Westley Johnson. Through knowing Wes, I got my first Guzzi. Gradually my enthusiasm grew from there, and now I have six of them!

There are striking parallels between the MG Car Company and Moto Guzzi. Both companies had a single visionary designer, a long history of racing success, and close ties to their country and towns of origin. Both produced classic designs that persisted and subtly evolved over many years. And they both have devoted enthusiasts all over the world.

Moto Guzzi was founded by three friends who met in the Italian forces during World War I. One was the engineer and builder, one was the money guy, and one was supposed to be the test rider (but unfortunately he died right at the end of the war, and leaves us only with the famous eagle logo chosen in his memory). But really, like Cecil Kimber and MGs, the motorcycles were the brainchild of one person, Carlo Guzzi.

The first motorcycle was built in 1921. The factory was started soon thereafter in Mandello del Lario, a small town on the shores of Lake Como in Lombardia, Italy. The factory is still there today, and 2011 was the 90th anniversary of the company.

Early on the company became successful in racing, and developed a reputation for building ruggedly reliable machines. This led to the use of Moto Guzzis by the Italian police and military, at that time run by Mussolini's Fascisti. Moto Guzzi has been supplying government motorcycles ever since; and you can still see police on their Guzzis in nearly any Italian town today. In a sense Moto Guzzi in Italy occupies something of a similar position to Harley-Davidson in this country.

During their early period Guzzi built mostly one-cylinder motorcycles, with a few exceptions (especially in racing machines). They built their rugged, reliable singles right up into the 1960s.

As with MG, Guzzi's racing success was famous. They were associated with famous racers, like Omobono Tenni, and raced on well known race tracks, like Monza. One of the pinnacles was the production, during 1957 and '58, of the famous V-8 (Otto Cilindre) racing machines that were so fast they were nearly unridable. They featured a large encompassing "dustbin" style fairing that increased speed but made the bike more difficult to control. Eventually such fairings were banned. This fabulously complex machine is one of the most famous icons of all motorcycling.

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Everywhere in the town you could feel the enthusiasm. There was a big party with music on a stage, and a huge tent camping area nearby. The whole town was filled with motorcycles lining the roadways, parked in all imaginable spots. Tours were put on, the local Guzzi dealer Agostini (who has been a dealer in Mandello since around the 1950s) had an open house, and so much more.



I think my favorite thing that happened was just a small thing, but it meant a lot. I decided to go to the cemetery to see where Carlo Guzzi was buried. I asked people where to find his grave, and at first I got wrong directions, (but this led to finding a number of interesting graves of other motorcycle personalities). Finally a woman showed me where Guzzi's grave actually was. Grateful, I thanked her in Italian and she replied (in Italian), "Thanks for being a Guzzi person."

One of the most well known Guzzi machines is the 3x3 military crawler, produced in the 50s. I had seen the one in the museum (twice now), and I had seen them in picture books as well. As we were leaving the area to head back to France, we passed through Lecco, and what should come driving down the highway but a real 3x3 machine! I was completely surprised and pleased, but of course it happened so fast that I could not take a picture.

I feel that Moto Guzzi today has many of the qualities that we wish that MG still had. It is still alive and homegrown, not foreign owned. The original factory is still right there where it has been since 1921. And the country is immensely proud of it. (I suppose it could be argued that I might do better making a comparison between Guzzi and Morgan, who are still there where they always were and still have a worldwide following.)

Many people level criticisms at the Italians, but life there seems to continue regardless and somehow they seem to be able to maintain things their way. Life really is wonderful there and you can feel it. I don't know how they do it, but they are definitely doing something right. Do they have more true passion and enthusiasm? Is that their secret?

Moto Guzzi supplied military machines during World War II. After the war there was a great boom in two wheeled vehicles due to shortages, and Guzzi expanded greatly. As Italy's economy improved in the early 60s, the entire motorcycle industry went into a terrible slump - and Guzzi went down with it. But as an important government supplier, Moto Guzzi was not allowed to collapse. As with the British government and MG, the Italian government would go on to save Moto Guzzi a few times over the years.

Moto Guzzi has been responsible for many motorcycle "firsts". They were the first motorcycle manufacturer to have a wind tunnel. They created the first production: rear swingarm suspension, automatic transmission, four cam V-8 engine, cartridge fork, integrated braking, big wheel scooter, truck motorcycle hybrid, and were the first manufacturer to use Absorbed Glass Matt batteries. (My '01 V-11 Sport still has its original battery!)

During the mid-sixties, in response to a need for more powerful police motorcycles, Moto Guzzi won a government competition by producing an entirely new style of machine. This is the Guzzi that most people know about today: the air cooled 90 degree V-twin mounted transversely with a car style clutch, car style gearbox, drive shaft and bevel drive rear end. This well thought out drive train forms the basis of all modern Moto Guzzis. It was designed with reliability and ease of maintenance in mind, and it does just what it was intended to do.

A lot of Guzzis were sold in America from 1968 to 1975. Unfortunately, few have been sold here since. As a result, most Guzzi enthusiasts in the USA are older, or relate more to older models, and many do not seem to realize that Moto Guzzis are still being produced new.

There are Guzzi enthusiasts all over the world, with many different clubs (including the factory club), meets, and gatherings. As with any other group of enthusiasts or devotees, in the Italian language the people who like Guzzi are the Guzzisti.

The Moto Guzzi motorcycles I own range from 1972 to 2008, but they are all of the modern V-2 form. I'm interested in having an even older one too, like a Falcone single. I frequently notice that even the most modern of Guzzis still has a special feel to it. It is an evolved machine, not one that is disconnected from the past. The Italians are in firm touch with their heritage, and my two modern Guzzis have a little badge that says "Una Storia Italiana 1921". I think that for me personally, having a strong connection between the present and the past is an important sentiment.

This past September I had the opportunity to make my second pilgrimage to Mandello del Lario to attend the celebration events for the 90th anniversary of Moto Guzzi. This event was known as the Giornate Mondiale Guzzi (World Guzzi Days) or GMG. We were on vacation in France and decided to drive over to attend the GMG, and I'm so glad we did. To see 20,000 motorcyclists show up in this tiny lakeside town of 10,000 people is quite something. The passionate enthusiasm was fabulous!



Shop windows in the town were decorated with Guzzi regalia. The center of town was closed off and people were parading around on Guzzi machines of various kinds, old and new. All sorts of enthusiasts showed up, even some very sharply dressed and obviously high ranking members of the Carabinieri, the national military police force present all over Italy.



People from all over Europe were there, and I was able to get some practice speaking German. Guzzis have a big following in Germany (the Berlin police recently bought 35 Guzzi touring bikes for their force). I met lots of great people and it was a wonderful time. There were factory and museum tours, a shop with all sorts of regalia, and bikes everywhere.



A big event took place in the main piazza of Mandello: the town government and the Anima Guzzista (Soul Guzzisti) club unveiled a statue of Carlo Guzzi. The statue is life-sized and permanently mounted in the main piazza of the town right by the town hall. It's a nice combination of a traditional statue with a more modern wall on which is drawn an image of the famous V-8 racing machine. Inscribed on the ground nearby are the words "to Carlo Guzzi, and the motorcyclists of the world".



I had heard that the museum had been remodeled since the last time I was there (in 1999), and I was scared they had ruined it. I was pleasantly surprised and relieved to discover the new museum was the same, only better. It still has that old school feel, but is now larger and with many more displays. A wonderful improvement without losing touch with the past!