



NEWSLETTER

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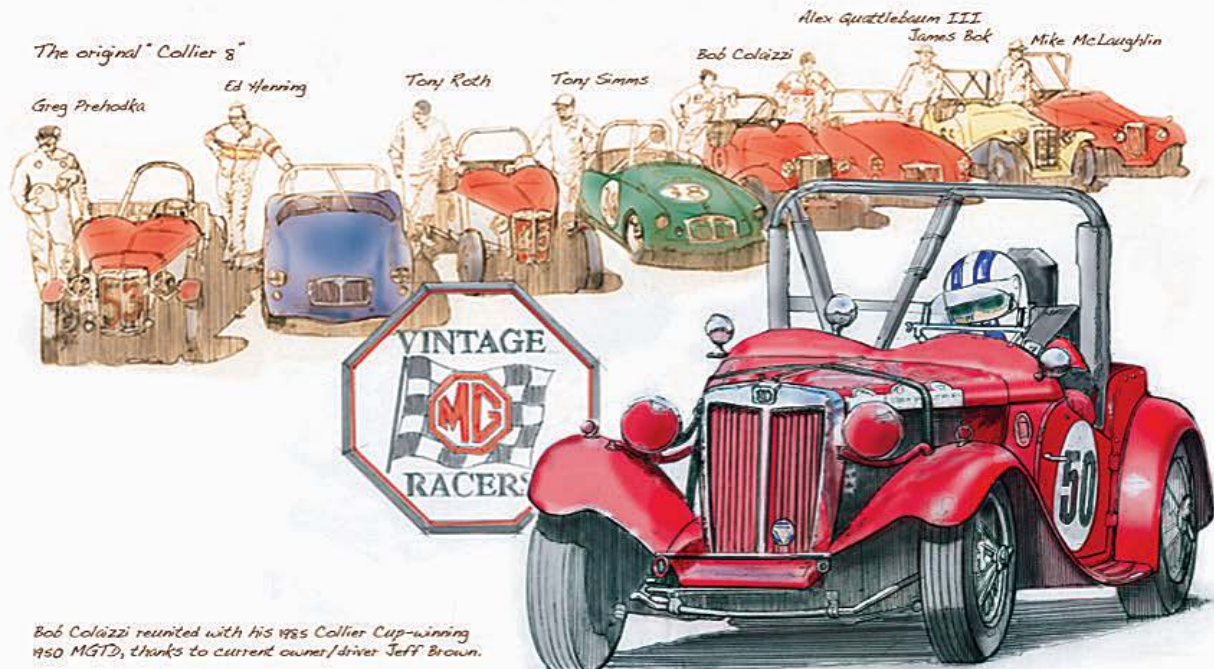
MGVR 40th ANNIVERSARY & COLLIER CUP TROPHY ISSUE



THE TWENTY-FIFTH COLLIER CUP FOR VINTAGE MG'S

2009 winner – the entire 25th Collier Cup 53 MG field

2008 Chris Meyers MGA • 2007 Bill Shields MGB • 2006 Dave Smith MGA • 2005 Dan Leonard MGTD
2004 Dick Powers MGA & Bill Hollingsworth MGTC • 2003 Sid Silverman MGTC • 2002 Mark Palmer MGA • 2001 John Targett MGB
2000 Frank Mount MGTC • 1999 Mark Palmer MGA • 1998 Jack Archibald MGTC • 1997 Bob Schoepfen MGA • 1996 Denver Cornett MGTC
1995 Mark Brandow MGTC • 1994 Greg Prehodka MGTD & Joe Tierno MGA • 1993 Jim Carson MGTC • 1992 John Faulkner MGB
1991 Tim Handy MGB • 1990 Don Funke MGA Twin Cam • 1989 Alex Quattlebaum III MGA • 1988 Joe Tierno MGA
1987 Alex Heckert MGA Twin Cam • 1986 Tony Simms MGA Twin Cam • 1985 Bob Colazzi MGTD



Bob Colazzi reunited with his 1985 Collier Cup-winning 1950 MGTD, thanks to current owner/driver Jeff Brown.

Colazzi copyright October 2009

From The Editor:

Our cover is a fabulous illustration by MGVR racer and member the amazing Bob Colaizzi. WHY is the cover showing the 40th Collier Cup Anniversary from 2004? Because this year is the 40th anniversary of the MGVR and we'll be having a celebration at the Collier Cup.

Last month talked about the importance and history of the Collier Cup. This issue deals with the fact YOU, our members, are not supporting the MGVR as you did long ago. I want to thank you for a great showing at VIR in the Spring and we need to see that level of participation, or more, at Watkins Glen.

The New England group may complain the Collier Cup is only one week after the Lime Rock Historics, but man up. How often do you get to do two fabulous vintage weekends only a few days apart.

I know a few of our T-Type drivers are entered, and do not forget there is a separate, beautiful trophy for the first T finisher.

- The Jack Archibald cup for first T-Type
- The Bucher-Decker cup for the first MGA.
- The John Target trophy for first MGB
- The William Glanville Cup for first Midget
- The Denver Cornett Cup for first overall

Plus we have arranged for a special MGVR paddock. We'll have roughly 20 reserved slots that are 20x20 and another 6 reserved slots for motor homes with trailers. I'll be sending out the forms to reserve a space – there is no fee and they will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. And we will have a 20x20 tent in the middle of the MGVR paddock. MG's will have 7 sessions during the weekend. Two practice, two qualifying, two group races + the Collier Cup race. SVRA is again hosting the Collier Cup for us.

THAT is a lot of track time on the legendary course. If you aren't going to race, come for the festivities. Plan on it.

DOWNTOWN FESTIVAL RETURNS !

ANOTHER GREAT REASON TO COME TO THE COLLIER CUP

Since 1993, the Grand Prix Festival of Watkins Glen presented by Chemung Canal Trust Company has celebrated our heritage of motor racing. Last year, an estimated 25,000 spectators helped us celebrate. As in previous years, a tribute to the Grand Prix races are featured in a variety of events during this all day festival. Events include the Walk of Fame award ceremony, a historical lecture called [*The Legends Speak*](#), a pre-race *Tech Inspection* at Smalley's Garage, as well as several rolling events and two car shows known as the Stone Bridge Driver Events.



The featured highlight of the Festival is a tribute to the original Grand Prix races using the original 6.6 mile road course. Always a crowd pleaser, the Watkins Glen Grand Prix Tribute is designed to recreate the ambiance of the 1948-52 Watkins Glen street races. The race tribute is open to selected Sportscar Vintage Racing Association (SVRA) cars participating in the Hilliard U.S. Vintage Grand Prix races held at the nearby Watkins Glen



International race course on the same weekend as the festival.

If you own a qualifying automobile and would also like to participate in the festival, you are not alone. Nearly twelve hundred festival attendees will choose to participate in the Festival by registering, as driver/navigator teams, in one of seven [Stone Bridge Driver](#) events. Each of the participants in these events share two things in common: a passion for driving classic sports cars and a desire to relive some of the excitement of driving on the original 6.6 mile circuit during the festival. **Please Note:** Only 650 eligible sports and/or classic cars may register for these events and the slots fill very quickly.

At the Grand Prix Festival of Watkins Glen, presented by Chemung Canal Trust, there is something for everyone! Parked along the main streets of the village you will find over 600 classic sports cars of all ages and marques for your enjoyment. In addition to live music, wine tasting, food courts, and assorted other family activities, a variety of vendors of racing items and related Merchandise are provided for your entertainment and pleasure.

“Roots” – as MGVR Approaches 40!

This article will briefly reflect on the history of “vintage racing” and the *MG Vintage Racers* (MGVR), as we will be celebrating our 40th anniversary in November. Like life, vintage car racing had its beginnings and has constantly been changing ever since. What was considered “vintage” in 1959 is very different than what is considered “*vintage today*”! Many of the “older” cars that use to race back in the early years have all but disappeared from the track today – for a variety of reasons! New sports cars that I once owned (*like a 1970 Datsun 240-Z*) are now viewed as vintage! And all MGs are now vintage by default, because the last one imported here was in 1980! This article reflects on some of those changes over the years and the role MGVR has played in vintage racing.

I have had MGs since 1967 and have been vintage racing my MGTD since 1977 (*yep – I’m vintage too!*). In 1981 I founded the **MG Vintage Racers Newsletter**, and was it editor until 1995. I’ve seen the changes and have so many memories from all those years and events! I’ve raced across the country, the Bahamas, England, and Canada. I could write a book about my adventures! The cars, the events, the organizations, the places, the travels, the drivers! Even my daughter Rachel raced my MGTD for several years! So where did “*Vintage Car Racing*” originate? The answer might surprise you!

As the saying goes “*The first car race probably began when the second car was built*”. Yes, soon after cars were built races and trials soon followed! With time car cultures and car clubs evolved. Then at some point, certain folks wanted to use their older “vintage cars” with events just for them. The *Vintage Sports Car Club of England* (VSCC) was established in 1934 to promote the sport and pastime of motoring for cars built years earlier. They formed their club in October 1934, to keep machinery of the past active by only accepting cars that were five years

old - or older. Rule two of the newly formed club stated that ***“The object of the Club shall be to provide competitive events for cars five years old, or older, and have social events for its members”*** They are still an active organization in England, conducting vintage car races. (www.vscce.co.uk) Now to the states! By 1959 sports car racing in the US had become more competitive, and not everyone wanted to be that competitive, or wanted to buy the latest, hottest sports cars. So in 1959 a group of *“vintage car enthusiast”* founded the ***Vintage Sports Car Club of America*** (VSCCA) creating a club in which they could drive their older cars in spirited events, while sharing in the love of their wonderful steeds. Its president Bill O'Donnell laid out the club's philosophy: ***“The primary purpose of the VSCCA, as set forth by its founders in the by-laws, ... is to encourage the acquisition, preservation, and restoration of vintage sports cars. Clearly, the emphasis is on the cars – not on the competition, and not on the drivers. We give no trophies to the winners...”*** It was more of a “club” than a “racing organization”. To join you needed two letters of recommendation from its *members* (to insure you had the right “attitude”), and only ***“approved cars”*** were allowed to compete. In their early events, many of the participating vintage cars were ***“driven to and from the events”***! No tractor-trailers! No race crews! They were the only vintage racing game in town for several years. Their events were very low key, with minimum rules. Club socials complimented many racing events. It was ***“gentleman's racing”***. Often their race events had only two race groups – if any: ***Fast cars, and not so fast cars*** – regardless of the car types - which made for some most interesting fields on the track! And sometimes an ***“all comers handicap race”*** at the end of the day for those still having gas left! Plus they often included ***“handicapped races”***, which we don't see anymore. I recall having great races back then at Lime Rock Park, in my MGTD against Fred Willits' Bugatti! A turnout of 25 to 40 cars was normal – not like the hundreds we often see today! The people who worked the flagging stations around the track usually were ***“volunteers”*** from the racer's crews – sometimes with little or no flagging experience! It was a different time! I participated in some of their events back then and even served as their event chairman for a few races.

Growth of Vintage Racing: Then in the late 70's - and 80's in particular - the sport of vintage car racing began to blossom as other vintage racing clubs and organizations sprang up. SVRA, VSCDA, VARAC, HSR, CVAR, VARA, etc - as well as special vintage racing events like the Lime Rock Historics, the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix, and the Monterey Historic Races.

Now back to the 1970's for a moment. The MGTD was NOT even an eligible race car with the VSCCA back then! So when the New England MG 'T' register announced their own MG 'T' races at Lime Rock Park for 1977, I enter my MGTD in it. I had never raced before! A simpler time! Requirements: only a seat belt, a helmet, and \$35! It was a six hour endurance race! I took my stock MGTD and modified it to a vintage race car of 1953 with cycle fenders in front. It got me hooked, and I have been vintage racing that same MG ever since in well over 100 racing events, but with many modifications over the years!

MG Vintage Racers Newsletter Founded

In my first few years of vintage racing there were few MGs racing, and I met different MG racers at different events around the country. So as a way to connect us to gether, I proposed a

“MG Vintage Racers Newsletter” in 1981 to all the MG racers I could locate in the US and Canada. Response was very positive! I composed the first MGVR Newsletter and mailed it out to 40 MG racers that December (*almost 40 years ago!*). Its purpose and philosophy was simple, - and it continues to today. ***A grass roots newsletter, independent of any racing organization and without advertising.*** In that first issue I laid out my philosophy: ***“There is a need for a tie between MG vintage racers that existing club do not fulfill. I hope that this newsletter will serve that purpose. This newsletter’s format is low keyed and hopefully it will create a close camaraderie between its members. ... We are a small group and everyone will be expected to contribute at one time or another.”*** That first MGVR newsletter included a feature article by Tony Roth on SVRA’s “Atlanta Vintage Grand Prix”. It featured the ***“MG Safety Fast Championship Races”*** where 24 MGs – mostly MG ‘T’ types (*including mine*) – competed. The newsletter’s initial goal was just to make it to “Issue # 2”! Ha! No long term plan! Would it even survive? In 1981 no-one foresaw the future growth and changes ahead for vintage racing. It took root and began to grow and influence vintage racing. “Strength in numbers” to some extent I guess. The newsletter tied MG racers together and fostered MG racing camaraderie.

In 1982 I met Stirling Moss at the VARAC races in Ontario, Canada. Later I sent him a copy of the MGVR newsletter. He graciously replied in a letter to me: ***“Thanks very much ... for your MGVR newsletter. I congratulate the club on having such a good newsletter ... It is true to say that the fastest I have ever been on four wheels was thanks to an MG at Utah when I achieved something 240 mph. When I was sixteen, my dad purchased a 1940 MGTB coupe. ... I was able to use it for some of my “important dates”. I do hope that MG enthusiasts will continue to “Maintain the Breed ...”***

Through the newsletter MG racers shared their thoughts, technical information, sources, race articles, upcoming events, etc. - and even philosophy of their sport, - like when David Kuhn tragically died racing his MGTD at the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix in 1993 in a freak accident. We all grieved over it and reflected on our sport with each other through the newsletter. It was a sad time. Was our hobby worth the risk? Because of this accident, some MG racers would never return to the track again. But time heals. Life has risks!

MGVR Grows and Gets Involved

As the newsletter grew it coordinated with various vintage racing organizations to encourage them to include ***“All MG Races”*** at their events, and was quite successful in its efforts. In the early 80’s, SVRA had their ***“MG Safety Fast Championship”*** at Road Atlanta, Georgia. In 1985, with the support and input of MGVR and the Collier family, SVRA revived the spirit of the Collier brothers at Watkins Glen, with the creation of the ***“Vintage Collier Cup”*** race for only MGs. At my suggestion, it became a ***“spirit award”*** - and not the race winner’s award. In 1994 sixty MGs came to race in it. For that event Victory Lane Magazine awarded Joe Tierno and myself their ***“Spirit of Vintage Racing”*** award for our work in supporting it. 72 MGs raced in it in 1998. And this race continues today, over 40+ years later! More vintage race organizations were forming with time all over the US and Canada. MGVR also worked to get all MG races included in events like the Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix, and with the VSCCA at Lime Rock Park. In 1995 the MGVR Newsletter was awarded first place in the Moss Motors ***“Journalism Award”*** as an outstanding club newsletter. MGVR - and MG racers - were earning

the respect of the vintage racing community! In 1996, MGVR's editor Mark Palmer started MGVR's first "***Focus Event***" at Waterford Hills, Michigan. MGVR did not sanction races. But it started selecting "one vintage race event every year" as its "***Focus Event***" and worked with the race sanctioning body to get all MG races included. MGVR would then encourage all MG racers to attend that event, and would compliment it with their own dinner, special guests, their own awards, and other fun MG stuff at it. This really helped bond the MG racers and their crews! We were competitors on the track – and MG buddies in the paddock! The idea took hold and grew! This helped produced record fields of MG's racing at places like: Pittsburgh, Lime Rock, Watkins Glen, Waterford Hills, Mid-Ohio, NHIS, Road Atlanta, Mosport, VIR, and Road America to name a few. MG was back in the racing spotlight! MGVR started its own annual award – the "***MGVR Spirit Award***" to be awarded by a vote of the MG racers at the Focus Event, to one MG racer who best embodied the "***Spirit of MG Vintage Racing***". In 1998 the Vintage Racing Automobile Association of Canada (VARAC) established an annual "All MG" race for the "***Simms Cup***" in 1998. With time MGVR added several other awards to their list, including the "***Bill Parish Memorial Award***", presented to the MG racer at their annual Focus Event who was "***Having the most fun – without any concern for winning***"! Supported by both Ford Heacock and MGVR, it honored the memory of MGTC racer Bill Parish who was all about having fun at vintage races! Other awards have also evolved.

MGVR sends out a newsletter; has its web site of MGVR.org; and has a group chat site for exchanging thoughts and information. They also published their "***Tech Tips***" on MG race car preparation of vintage MG's, - which is a collection of tech article from their past newsletter. In 1990 and 2000 they did a comprehensive survey of MG racers about their cars. After seeing the 1990 census, Victory Lane editor Dan Davis commented: "*One of the best members surveys is the recent Census of the MG Vintage Racers – a real grassroots view of the sport.*" Editorship (and thus leadership) of MGVR was turned over by Greg Prehodka to Mark Palmer in 1995, and then to Chris Meyers in 2006, and to Dave Nicholas in 2020. With their leadership, the group has grown from 40 MG racers in 1981 to over 250, - all with the common bond of "racing MG's".

In 1998 at Watkins Glen, 72 MGs showed up to race. In 2001 MGVR celebrated its 20th Anniversary at their "Focus Events" at Road America with VSCDA's vintage race festival. With that race as a backdrop, they produced a 20th anniversary video about themselves. MGVR's "Focus Event 2004" was held in conjunction with SVRA's "***Zippo Vintage Grand Prix***" at Watkins Glen, where the 50th Anniversary of the "***Collier Brothers Memorial Trophy MG Race of 1954***" was celebrated. With MGVR's support, a record breaking **143 MGs**, of all vintages, showed up to race! Even the Collier's famous Leonidis MG (*that raced at Le Mans in 1939*) and their historic K-3 MG joined us! In 2006, to celebrate MGVR's 25th anniversary they staged an "***All MG Race Weekend***" at the Hallet, Oklahoma racetrack. MGVR has continued to support its members, MG vintage racing, working with vintage race organizations, and will continue to do so. In several of the past years they even expanded to having both East Coast and West Coast "Focus Events".

MGVR is about racing MGs, and welcomes anyone who shares in that interest. Its slogan is: *“we few, we happy few, we band of brothers ...”* Vintage racing has changed so much over the years, but has it peaked? Good question! Is the next generation of vintage racers in the wings? What is its future? Only time will tell! One thing is for sure - the days of only needing a seatbelt, a helmet and \$35 to race is a faint memory! MGVR is the oldest single marque vintage race support group in North America. It is non-profit, staffed by volunteers, and focused on its members and MG vintage racing. And it is looking forward to celebrating its **40th anniversary** this coming November!

For more information go to their web site: MGVR.org

Greg Prehodka
MGVR Founder, 1981
Editor, 1981-1995
Mgracer53@aol.com



For Sale



Bare cylinder head for sale, 1965 MGB casting 12H432, Cleaned, crack and pressure tested with documentation from machine shop. Good high HP head for 1622 motor. \$400 plus shipping.

Mark Barnhart rowdie92@charter.net

1949 MG TC Boat tail



This 1949 MG TC features a custom aluminum body built in the style of an 1930's MG Q-type racing car. Body was handmade as part of a refurbishment that also involved the XPAG inline-four being rebuilt and fitted with an MG "Safety Fast"-style supercharger, installation of a Ford T9 five-speed manual transmission, MG K3-style racing seats, a machine-turned dashboard, and dual windscreens. Exterior features include a boat-tail rear and lowered sills in lieu of doors, as well as K3-type Lucas headlights and a front fog light with mesh rock guards, a side-mounted spare wheel, EXU

rear turn signals, and dual quick-release fuel-filler caps. 16" wire wheels with three-eared knock-off hubs are wrapped in 5.5"-wide Blockley bias-ply tires. Drum brakes are fitted at all four corners. Equipped with an aftermarket steering box and Andrex shock absorbers. The interior features MG K3-style racing seats with maroon upholstery, which extends throughout the cabin. Fold-down windscreens are provided for both the passenger and driver. A banjo-style steering wheel fronts a machine-turned dashboard with Smiths instruments rebuilt by Nissonger Instruments of Mamaroneck, New York. Gauges include a 105-mph speedometer, a 6,500-rpm tachometer, and a Judson supercharger gauge. The five-digit odometer displays 7 miles; true mileage is unknown. The 1,250cc XPAG inline-four is equipped with an Eaton-style supercharger and features a period MG Arnolt aluminum valve cover... Power is sent to the rear wheels via a Ford T9 five-speed manual gearbox adapted for the T-series application. Price is \$85,000.00 US

1948 MG TC Tan/Tan



Custom tan two-toned paint scheme with tan K3 type racing seats. Tan cloth top and tonneau cover. Fitted with period Judson supercharger with a supercharger gauge installed. Alfin aluminum brake drums. Koni tubular shocks (a period option) on the front. A modern steering box has been installed. It sits on 16" custom chrome racing wheels with 5 Blockley tires from the UK. Engine rebuilt by AMS Racing of Louisiana. Fitted with a EXU

steering wheel, EXU period rear bumper, and EXU turn signals. Custom foldable luggage rack, a quick release radiator cap, and custom louvers in bonnet. Fitted with period racing Lucas headlamps with flip rock guards restored by Vintage Restorations in the UK. A period spotlight is also fitted with a custom rock guard that sits by a custom badge bar. Also fitted with a radiator badge bar. Beautiful wood dash instruments restored by Nissonger of New York. Brand new body tub sourced from Ultra. Price is \$55,000.00 US

1948 MG TC Boat tail Body Specially Built



This TC has a navy blue and cream exterior with a navy-blue leather interior and K3 type seats. It sports an alloy body specially built in the UK. Alfin aluminum brake drums. Fitted with Koni tubular shocks on the front (a period option). Turned stainless steel dash. Fitted with a Mirage Garage supercharger from the UK and a supercharger gauge. Period finned aluminum valve and tappet cover and a modern steering box installed. It sits on 16" custom chrome race wheels fitted with five Blockley tires. Engine rebuilt by AMS Racing of Louisiana. Period Lucas racing headlamps with flip up rock guards. Restored by Vintage Headlamps in the UK. EXU turn signals. Fitted with Brookland's racing windshields and a Brookland's Bluemels period steering wheel. Period racing radiator cap and a new 5-speed transmission. Instruments restored by Nissonger of New York. Price is \$87,000.00 US

1952 MG TD MKII RHD



Painted in MG Dove Gray with red leather interior. Fitted with pre-war MG bucket seats to give more leg room for taller drivers. Equipped with two fuel pumps, Andrex shocks rebuilt by Apple Hydraulics. Rare right-hand drive originally a UK car. Period finned valve and Tappet aluminum covers fitted with a rare period option Two Glass Holley carbs with MG logo. Aluminum manifold. Comes with a set of SU carbs. Aluminum Alfin brake drums. Custom made grill badge bar, Marshall period headlights, Louvered bonnet. Tan cloth top and tonneau cover. MK2 badge and proper reflectors on rear bumper. Instruments restored by Nissonger of New York. Chrome wire wheels and rare Dunlop Road speed tires (no longer available). New wire harness (notice grab handle under left side of – most missing on the MK2). This MG TD was restored from front to back. The MK2 was sold as a competition variant. Many were driven daily and raced on weekends. Price is \$55,000.00 US

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From Eric Russell:

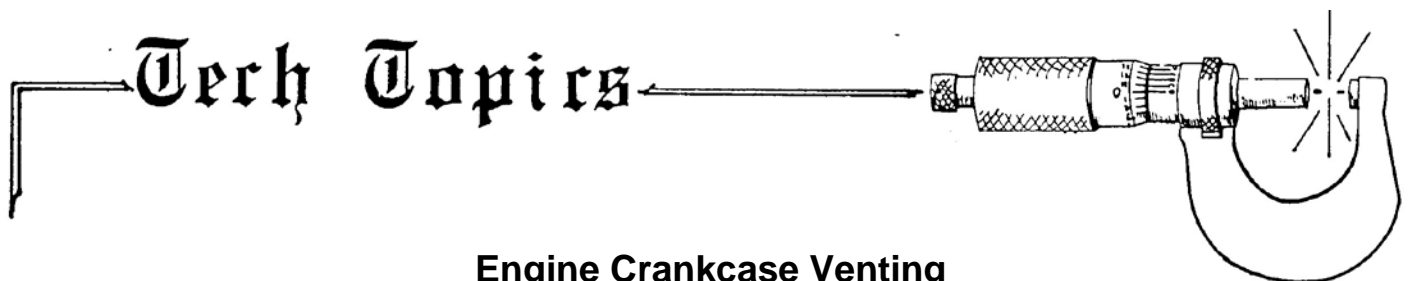
I am planning to have some Stainless Steel Core Plugs made (modified) to fit the MG A & B series blocks. These have an allen head screw & locking tab to secure them in place. Eliminate the possibility of losing a core plug. (Yes, I know how to properly install core plugs...)

More info here: <https://www.mgexp.com/forum/mgb-and-gt-forum.1/freeze-plug-replacement-now-i-have-hemi.2436110.4365379/page-6#msg-4365379>

Unfortunately, they ain't cheap. The more the merrier (lower unit cost) but I estimate approx \$25 each. If you're interested, please let me know. I am not asking for money upfront - just want to know if I should have a few made or more than a few.



Eric Russell - ejrussell61@gmail.com



At a MG Chassis Dyno Session, I watched the engine numbers during the pull. The torque numbers at WOT (wide open throttle) were quite uneven. The dyno operator was quite experienced and told the MG owner that the uneven numbers suggested that

his engine did not have sufficient crankcase venting to relieve vapor pressure. This engine only had the Factory crankcase vent system.

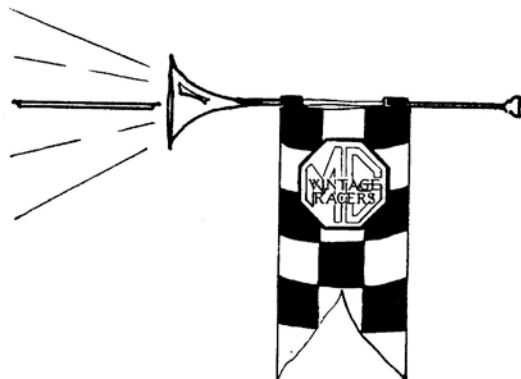
The factory vent on the 1500 thru 1622 B series engine had a single J pipe Attached to the front side plate covering the cam followers. The back side plate was a blanking plate over the cam followers. The J pipe design was a crude means of keeping engine oil over the cam followers, and allowing crankcase vapors to escape.

The 1800 B series engine early engines used a PVC valve. Later engines used a plastic Y connection connected to the SU Carburetors. None of these three designs have adequate venting capacity for even a mildly modified engine to release crankcase vapors.

Race engines need a minimum flow capacity provided by a larger diameter vent. In addition, this vent must flow into a catch system which does not impede the flow of crankcase vapors. The vent can be attached to an early blanking side cover and then feed into your catch tank system. Be aware that the bottom half of the side cover can be immersed in engine oil. Your vent design needs to keep this oil returning to the cam followers. Check with your engine builder if you wish to improve your current venting capacity.

If your engine does use one or two of the factory side covers, there is an additional concern. The design of the side cover includes a wire mesh flame arrestor. The mesh is sandwiched inside the metal cover and over time the top half of the arrestor will become blocked by carbon deposits. If you use the factory plate for your venting system, inspect the mesh. If the top half is blocked with deposits then engine oil will be pushed thru your vent system and the system will not allow full flow of crankcase vapors. Both characteristics are a serious problem. The only good news is the situation is a diagnostic opportunity. If you are finding liquid oil in your catch can, you can remedy the problem by inspecting your factory side covers, or redesigning your own custom venting system.

Letters To The Editor



Ok, Now we know the plans-
40th anniversary party at the
Glen!

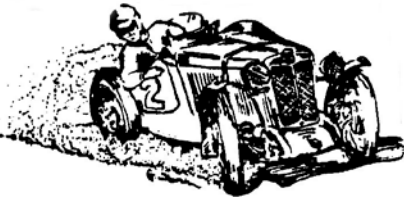
My room is booked, my TC is
track worthy- same car I had at
the beginning- the conception
of MGVR in 1981. That year I
went to Sebring in the winter,
kept running at Road Atlanta for

the Safety Fast competition in the '80s sponsored by SVRA. I hope some of the other Founding Members of the MGVR come back for another run!

I will see you all for the Collier Cup in September!

Mark Brandow

Competition



Vision and Racing

By Ron Watson

Racing requires increased driver vigilance and search habits such as localization or identification of objects in cluttered visual scenes. We must react to visual input such as positions of other cars on the track, flag signals displayed by marshals, the glistening of oil or water on the track, dirt, sand, rubber marbles or stray car parts on the track surface which may require, depending on their location, the driver to change position on the track or alter his line in the corner.

These decisions will often demand half second response times. It is obvious that acute vision is paramount to insure quick reaction times. Driving decisions are based on what you see. What you see can be classified as interaction of the six basic visual attributes which are: visual acuity, depth perception, eye coordination, field of vision, night vision and colour vision.

Visual Acuity: refers to the ability to recognize detail. We are all familiar with the designation 20/20 (or 6/6 for those who are metrically inclined). 20/20 vision means you can see a 5 inch letter from a distance of 280 feet. 20/40 means you can see that same letter at 140 feet. Thus if you have 20/40 vision you must be twice as close to see this letter. Many people have 20/15 acuity which is better than 20/20. These individuals can see this 5 inch letter at 372 feet.

A number of factors affect visual acuity. The first thing that concerns us as racing drivers is that visual acuity decreases as the speed we travel increases. The visual acuity previously mentioned is referred to as static acuity--i.e.the acuity measured when you are standing still. When you are in a moving vehicle we then refer to dynamic acuity. Dynamic visual acuity decreases the faster you drive. For example, a sign you can read at 400 feet standing still will not be seen until 260 feet when

traveling at 70 miles per hour. This change results from the change in size of the retinal image and its movement across the retina.

Visual acuity is decreased by refractive errors such as myopia (nearsightedness), hyperopia (farsightedness) or astigmatism. These can usually be corrected by wearing glasses, contact lenses, or by refractive surgery such as lasik. Our vision also changes with age. As we mature our focusing ability decreases and it becomes more difficult to change focus from distance to near objects. Pupil size decreases and we require more light to see well. Changes occur in the clarity of the lens of the eye causing light to scatter, making it more difficult to see at night. This is more a concern driving home from the track since we as vintage racers do not as a rule race in the dark.

Depth Perception: In basic terms this refers to distance judgment. Whether passing, stopping or avoiding a spinning car you rely on your ability to accurately judge the distance between objects or the distance between you and an object. To judge distances accurately a driver should have as close as possible to balanced vision in both eyes(ideally 20/20 or better in each eye). Depth perception is also dependent on good eye coordination.

Eye coordination or binocularity: refers to the way the twelve muscles that move the eyes are coordinated. The eyes must be properly aligned so that you can see clearly and without eyestrain. A problem with binocular vision such as over or under convergence can result in fatigue, blurring or doubling of vision.

Field of Vision: refers to the ability to perceive objects to the side, above and below without moving your eyes or turning your head. A wide field of vision enables you to be aware of the big picture and our position in it. The normal horizontal field of vision is about 180 degrees. As with visual acuity, this field of vision is reduced by speed. At 70 mph you are able to use only 25% of your normal side vision due to the blurring of stationary objects close to the side of the car. We are further restricted by the fact we wear helmets which limits our peripheral vision. Thus, it is very important to keep our eyes constantly moving and scanning, and to use our mirrors. These mirrors must be adjusted so as to provide for the maximum lateral vision. It is critical that this mirror adjustment be checked each time before going onto the track, since vibrations of the car, and people walking by in the pits and bumping the mirrors can cause misalignment.

Night Vision: As mentioned earlier this is not a primary concern for those of us that race only during daylight conditions. However it is important to realize that being outdoors all day in the bright light without sunglasses will require a longer time to dark adapt once the sun has set. We will adapt to night conditions quicker if we have been wearing sunglasses during the bright hours. This prevents the bleaching out of the photopigments in the retina which are necessary for night vision. It is important to be sure sunglasses are not worn once the sun sets.

Colour Vision: or for our American friends, color vision. The recognition of colours is a complex visual task. About 8% of men and 0.4% of women suffer from defective colour vision and hence perceive colours differently from the majority. Of real concern are those classified as protanopes (1.2% of the male population), whose visual perception is insensitive to very deep red colour. These individuals tend to confuse reds, yellow and greens. These drivers derive some benefit from our highway and city traffic signals due to their brightness and colour saturation as well as by convention that the red is placed at the top of the red yellow and green signals (other than in Quebec, where many traffic signals are orientated in a horizontal position). Colour defectives require about twice as much time as a normal driver to act upon coloured signals, and the incidence of errors in the recognition of the colour is much higher.

On the track the flag colours do not differ in brightness, and they are more difficult to see due to the fact that they may be waved, and the background is usually that of a bright day, which lowers the contrast between the flag and the background. Colour defective race drivers must be extremely vigilant when interpreting race course flags.

As you can see, we as vintage racers must realize that with age and increased speed our visual acuity decreases, our field of vision decreases, our depth perception decreases, our colour discrimination decreases, and our reaction times decrease.

My advice would be for all MG drivers to SLOW DOWN on the track so that Watson in his '61 Midget #63 has a chance to keep up. I hate wondering where everyone went.

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