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DAVID & LAUREL LIVELY
2596 RIO BRAVO CIRCLE
SACRAMENTO CA 95826

Z MAGNETTE GROUP NEWSLETTER



WINTER 1996



The Midgette Newsletter

for North American enthusiasts

Officially spring will arrive this week. Here in Chicago, Mother Nature is still holding on to winter. It hasn't been a severe winter however, just too long. We've had several breaks in the cold, and very little snow so that the salt on the roads was held to a minimum. Usually the Midgette hibernates in the garage all winter, but this year we were able to take it out for a drive a few times, which was a treat for us as well as good for the car.

The award winning steel blue ZB of longtime ZMG member Phil Del Campo was featured in MG Magazine - issue # 60. Phil purchased his car from the original owner in 1985. Articles of this type are nice to see as they always generate interest in our cars, and maybe one more will get back on the road as a result of it.

Included in this issue are tech letters from Tom Roach, Bob Mason, Langdon Alford, and a Midgette article by new member Roger Garnett. I always appreciate receiving articles for the newsletter - "Thanks for the help guys!"

"Welcome" to the new members - Tony Hendrix (ZB), Dennis Triska (varitone), Allan Bachelder (2-ZB's), Roger Garnett (ZB), Frank Webb (varitone). Both varitones are of the monotone variety originally, one all light blue and the other one all light grey.

For the first time I have registered names in the listing with no cars. Ed Geissler and Robert George are very enthusiastic about purchasing a Midgette, so if anyone knows of a car for sale or is thinking about selling one of their 'extras', please call or write to them.

I'm pleased to be able to offer the ZMG window stickers to you. They look great on the car, the white color shows up nicely without being too bold. The profit from the stickers will go back into the Group 'hat' for newsletter costs, and for purchasing more regalia. Jim Pesta is working on the embroidery for the polo shirts, the quality of his work is outstanding as he has been doing this for several years. I can't wait to see the finished product. Order forms will be sent out shortly.

Safety Fast!

NEW MEMBERS

- | | | | |
|------|--|------|---|
| #131 | Tony Hendrix
4001 Lisa Court
Kokomo, IN. 46902
(317) 453-5335 | #132 | Dennis Triska
1829 Dogwood Trail
Goshen, Ohio 45122
(513) 722-2738 |
| #133 | Allen Bachelder
Route 1 Box 1896
New Castle, VA. 24127
(540) 544-7333 | #134 | Roger Garnett
39 Ridge Road
Lansing, NY 14882
(607) 533-7735 |
| #135 | Frank Webb
1920 Woodvalley Drive
Columbia, S.C. 29212 | # | Ed Geissler
7162 Grey Oaks Drive
New Orleans, LA. 70126
(504) 241-9015 |
| # | Robert George
327 Swanns Point Circle
Hampton, VA. 23669 | | |

INDY '96 UPDATE



970 MG's are registered for Indy '96 as of March 5th. Cars registered before the 1,000 mark will be allowed to tour the track. The hotels in the area are nearly full. If you have any problems locating a room or have questions about hotel locations, call Sandy Van Osch (Indianapolis MG Car Club member) at (317) 251-5228.

The big day for the ZMG will be Friday at the car show. All Magnettes will be lined up together, this will be a great opportunity for questions/answers/photos. At this time we will also have an "out of the boot" swap meet for Magnette parts only. Please keep the parts for sale on the small side, no doors or fenders, as there may be rules against selling without a vendor license.

In addition to a display of my Z Magnette literature I will be holding a Magnette parts identification contest open to all ZMG members. I already have a very nice prize for the winner of this contest, so study up as it will not be easy!

A couple of short Magnette related Tech Sessions would also round out the day, so if anyone would like to volunteer to do one (about a 1/2 hour talk), please contact me.

I am now starting a list of all ZMG members that will be attending Indy '96, with or without your Magnette. **Please** contact me with your plans as I will be bringing along packets with ZMG and show related info to pass out. If any ZMG member or vendors in the group would like to contribute to the packet, please send me your flyer/business card. As a gift to all Magnettes that arrive, I will supply ZMG plastic coated name tags for your windscreen. Call me at (708) 344-2268 or fax me at (708) 344-4248.

Sharon and I are looking forward to seeing all of you at Indy '96!

A handwritten signature in the bottom right corner, appearing to be 'J&R'.

Magnutt's at University Motors '95



(front row, left to right)

Calvin Barnes, Robin Weatherall, Gene Cooper, Rita & Dave Houser, Ed Sass, Bob Mason, Dave Wittmer.

(second row, left to right)

Jeff Powell, Todd Clarke, Phil Pitts, Jason Klemm, Bob Horzeman, Jerome Rosenberger, Jim Pelletterie, Edna Rosenberger, Keith Holdsworth, Jack Kurkowski, Gerry Goguen, Sue Mason, Jim Pesta, Pat Wittmer.

OBITUARY

Sad to report the passing of Bill Hite, ZMG member and long time MG Enthusiast from St. Paul, Minn.

Bill is shown with his ZB at the Midwest GOF in Galesburg, Il. 1995.



Z MAGNETTE GROUP REGALIA



ZMG WINDOW STICKERS

White printing on a clear background.

Adheres to the inside of the window for durability.

Same size as the ZMG logo on the cover of the newsletter.

Buy one for your Magnette and one for the 'other' family car!
\$3.00 each or 2 for \$5.00
(price includes shipping).

Send your check to Jeff Powell
910 Hirsch, Melrose Park, Illinois. 60160



Coming Soon!

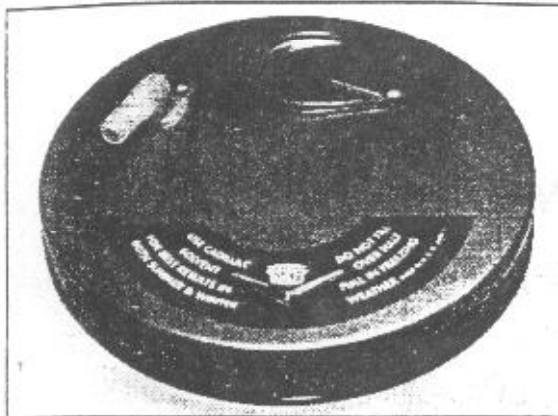
Z Magnette Group Polo Shirts are being made by Jim Pesta of Auto Graphics (ZMG member).

These shirts will be available shortly, and will be ordered directly from Jim.

A flyer and order form will be sent to you.

Show your colors at Indy '96!

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I found this ad in Old Cars Weekly. I called and found that the lids are the same lid as the original Trico bottles used on the Mquette. I'm assuming that the thread is the same. To be safe, when ordering, ask about their return policy. The original lid on our Mquette has a Trico decal on the filler hole lid.

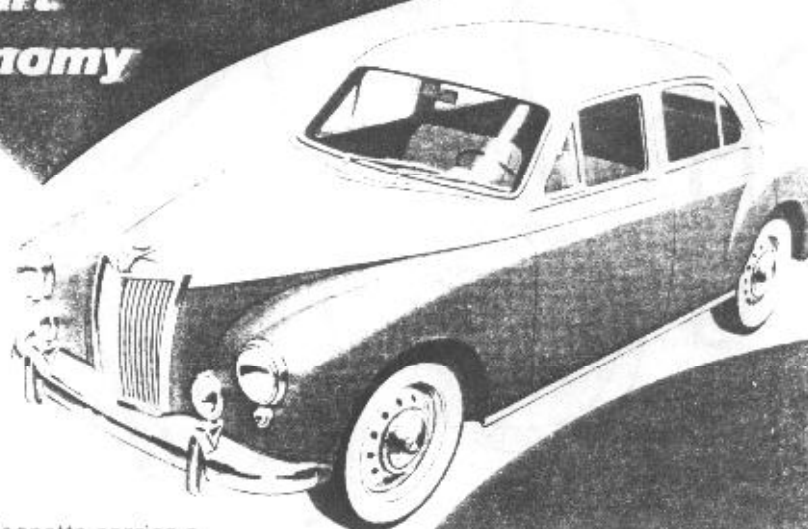
John

Sports-car performance
Family-car comfort
Small-car economy



MAGNETTE

4-DOOR SPORTS SEDAN



Style and luxury combined with the ultimate in reliability. That's what made the Mquette an international favorite.

Every new Mquette carries a
TWELVE MONTHS' WARRANTY on parts

Car Jeff,

As you remember, my Magnette has a 'B' engine and a temperature gauge for a 'A' engine. The gauge would not work. O'Connor Classic Autos at 2569 Scott Blvd., Santa Clara, Calif. 95050 (408/727-0430) reworked and calibrated my gauge for \$150.00. Now it operates properly.

Landon Alford

Dear Jeff,

I found a shock that is within 1/8th inch of the Magnette shock at both full extension and full compression and with the lower 'eye' of the correct width and with the rubber bushing of the proper size to take the Magnette's 5/8 inch lower mounting pin. This shock drops right in to the lower spring pan holes to mount the shock and appears to be a perfect fit. It does not have the dust/dirt cover, but should be no big thing. The shock is a BOGE #1-0391-27-758-8 as stamped on the tube. Supposedly these BOGE shocks are for the Volvo 140 series. I have two extra shocks for \$25.00 each plus freight if anyone is interested.

Bob Mason

Also from Bob -

Dear Jeff,

I finally have the answer to the original type hard brake lines and fittings as applicable to the Magnette. I called Eric Wilhelm at Moss Motors, figuring as he also has a Magnette that perhaps he had had a similar problem with his car, and sure enough, he had found the answer for me.

Eric went through the warehouse for me, as he did for himself years ago, and found the correct 20 TPI fittings that screw into the various fittings/flex brake hoses - the ends are the same as for the TD/TF - both types were coming down the assembly line at the same time, and they just didn't change the Magnette when they did change the lines for the MGA.

For the front brake lines, the left hand hard pipe should be as the same length as the right hand pipe - Moss # 181-050, which is 23" in length.

Bob Mason

Engine Modifications and Tune-up Tips by Tom Roach

- 1) Replace points ignition with full electronic ignition kit.
(IPG is one supplier.)
Result: Much smoother engine, "instant" starting, higher revs, 2-3 MPG improvement.
- 2) Replace camshaft with MGA/MGB type (both are the same).
Result: Considerable increase in BHP, slightly rougher idle, need to change distributor.
- 3) Replace distributor with MGA/3 bearing MGB type and tune it to fit the camshaft (more on this later if you want).
Result: Yet more power, much improved acceleration and when combined with (1) a smoother engine.
- 4) Replace intake manifold with pancake type air filters. Replace carb needles with MGA type.
Result: About 5BHP increase in power. An increase in noise levels. Some increase in fuel consumption.

Your engine now develops more power than a 1500cc MGA.

- 5) Rebuild cylinder head: convert to unleaded gas type valves, guides, and seats, modify the shape of the combustion chamber to free the valves (I can provide details), enlarge ports, shave head by one-eighth of an inch (to bring the compression up to 9.5 to 1), grind-out a hollow on top of the block so the exhaust valves do not foul the head, use a thin gasket, open the water passage holes in the head and the block to improve water circulation. Carefully balance the pistons and piston rods, have the crankshaft dynamically balanced.

Result: This will cost you \$300 - \$450 if you can do some of the porting and combustion chamber modification yourself. You will get a really noticeable increase in power and you can use the car with unleaded gas. You will have to re-tune the distributor but the carbs will only need adjusting at the nuts. In hot weather you will tend to overheat when stuck in traffic unless you do the following:

- 6) Replace the metal fan with a plastic one from an Austin Marina and get a new exhaust system built using 2" OD pipe attached to the standard manifold.

Result: Cooler running engine and the larger exhaust really has a noticeable effect on available torque on hills. You will have to richen the carbs by two nutflats, but gas mileage will improve! Engine is actually quieter!

Now you have a choice. If you leave the standard diff in place, you will reap the benefit of your modifications in improved acceleration but you cannot go any faster through extended cruising is quieter. If you install a diff from a MGA, however, your acceleration will be lower, but still more than acceptable, and your top speed will increase.

The total cost of the above depends on what else you are doing to the engine. If you do the above in conjunction with an engine rebuild, the increase is negligible because you are replacing most of the parts anyway. The new exhaust system with a larger pipe will cost you more but, frankly, the larger pipe so improved performance on my car that I have concluded the standard pipe is too small anyway. An MGA diff can be obtained from a wrecker and, despite what people say, checking and adjusting a diff is not hard.

For further information on any of these issues, feel free to call me with questions.

MG- It's not just a car, it's an adventure.

Roger Garnett

Hang around any old car buff long enough, and you're sure to hear a range of tales about how or where this car or that part was aquired, and the trip home. It's part of what makes this hobby interesting. I've been through this a few times already, like when I caught a ride to the national Triumph convention in Kentucky a couple of years back, so I could make a side trip to pick up a 64 MGB and drive it back after spending a couple days sorting it out in the middle of hundreds of Triumph die-hards. Or, the sub-freezing October night spent in the trailer to pick up my Bugeye at the race track. One common thread of these stories is that they usually involve the buyer, and maybe another car nut dragged along for the ride, while family members remain safely at home.

Well, Tilly and I have enjoyed our British cars for a long time now, but we only used to need to fit the 2 of us into the available seats, along with cramming luggage in where possible for longer trips. Even when Kim was born, we could all fit in MGB GT, with a kid seat lashed in the small rear seat. But, once there were 2 kids, we could no longer fit everyone in any of 2 seaters. The family Honda had become the choice, sometimes even for club events, along with one of the roadsters. If we still wanted to obequitate in something British, it was time to think about a proper saloon.

So anyhow, we've been poking about for such a beast for the last couple years. The older Jags are nice, but good ones are pricey. An XJ isn't what we wanted either. We considered a Sunbeam Imp- 4 seats, yes, but no thanks. We saw a fairly nice '59 Ford Anglia that might have served the purpose, but kept looking. Another car we considered, being MG fans after all, is the 50's ZA/ZB Magnette. It's roomy, with 4 doors, classic styling, beautiful woodwork, powered by the same 1500cc B-series engine as the MGA. After seeing another MG'er's very clean original car a year back, we decided that one of those would do fine. The problem was, that even tho twice as many were produced as MG TF's, and many were imported, most have long since been sent to the scrap yard, as they were "just old cars" at the time. They are now quite scarce, especially here in the East. As our cars are for go, not show, it need not be perfect, and even one with a dead engine would be fine, as fitting the taller rear end gearing and larger 1800cc engine from an MGB (from our stock) would make a much better modern road car. Even with the purchase of a race car last year, which is still in the process of depleting our funds, we've still been looking around.

Last year, a nationally known Triumph afficinado, and past president of the Vintage Triumph Register picked up a '58 MG ZB, of all things. It was already fitted with an older MGB engine. I told him to let me know when he was ready to sell it. Well, I don't know just how much grief he's gotten from other Triumph owners, but this Spring he decided to sell the MG, and pursue a family sized Triumph instead. That, combined with a moderate income tax refund, was all we needed. When we first talked about it, the snow was still too deep to find the car, much less get it running. But, the snow finally did melt, and Bill got the chance to replace a missing exhaust section, and get rid of some murky petrol. It was time. So, early on a sunny Sunday at the end of April, I packed my tools, a set of points, and the family (!), into the Honda and set off to New Jersey, in hopes of returning with the MG.

Our route took us through Scranton Pennsylvania, known for steep hills that go on for many miles. I pondered these hills, as we sat eating breakfast, gazing down at the valley below. Would the old car be up for the return trip, in the midst of the brisk, modern traffic? We arrived in New Jersey around noon, with a 2 and 5 year old who had decided not to nap on this day. Bill was tinkering with the MG, which wasn't running right. We installed a new fuel filter, got gas, and went for a ride. Just down the road, it started to sputter and backfire. We crept back in low gear. The brakes were pulling heavily to one side. This didn't look good. We continued to tinker for the next three hours. New points helped some. Adjusting the carbs helped some. Pulled the brake

drums, and corrected some assembly errors. By 4:00, it seemed possibly roadable, and the kids were driving Tilly bonkers. We decided to give it a try. After all of about 5 minutes to talk about each others cars, we said our farewells, and hit the road, with one functioning tail light.

Didn't get a half mile before it started misfiring again. Pulled into a parking lot and tinkered, it's get a tad better, then worse again- I finally decided to play with the timing, and ended up advancing it quite a bit. It picked up, gained power, and ran mostly better. So, once again, we hit the road.

Still had some misfiring, stopped at just about every rest stop to tweak timing & carbs- ended up with even more advance, and it finally settled down to running better, just as we started up the hill to Scranton. We were cruising along comfortably with the traffic, the speedo reading about 60-65, and I began to relax a bit. Wrong! We got about half way up before it overheated... Luckily, Bill had supplied me with a full jug of water. Got it refilled, plus a quart of oil, and the temperature gauge started reading closer to the middle, once the engine and oil cooled off. We had probably started out a little low, and one of the radiator hoses turned out to be a bit loose.

After that, it continued to run fairly well. When we stopped again, well past Scranton, Tilly asked if I could slow down a bit, "70-75 is a little faster than I care to drive". "Huh?" At first I said nah, no way, but after I thought about it, I realized it must already have a 3.9 MGB rear end rather than the stock ZB (4.55:1). This would yield a 14% change- A little math shows that my speedo reading of 65 mph would yield a road speed of 74! Yes, I can vouch that a Magnette (which only weighs about 2400 pounds) with MGB drive line does indeed yield a fine car to drive in modern traffic.

We hit sprinkles about sundown (Do these dash lights work? hmm...), just as it was time to stop for petrol. Only got a little wet, and with intermittent wipers, started out again. Three cars worth of Police gathered in the next town gave me a good look over, but must have been too busy to bother. (Remember that tail light out? Whew.) After more showers, and flakey wipers, and a non-functioning high beam switch, we finally we made it home an hour after dark, in the middle of thunderstorms & a couple heavy downpours, which proved that the old, dried window seals did very little, as the water ran down the inside of the windscreen... Tilly reported that the kids had finally dropped off to sleep, all of a half hour before home.

Maggie needs lots of care- every bit of the electrical system has been messed with, the rubber is ancient, it burned 2 1/2 quarts of oil on the trip, and body needs some help eventually. The Burl veneer dash needs refinishing, but is salvageable, and the rest of interior needs work as well. Even in this state, her classic styling shows through, and typical of any proper MG, she got me home. She's there now, making new her friends at the Wayward Sports Car Centre.

Stay tuned for part 2, where we swap the engine for one that has good compression on all 4 cylinders!

Roger Garnett (rwg1@cornell.edu)



The Wayward Sports Car Centre

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Clarke Spares & Restorations is pleased to announce a complete and accurate engine ID plate replacement service.

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We will duplicate your worn or missing A, B, or C engine series ID plate using the correct thickness and shape aluminum blank. Just send us your original or use the information included on the sheet to advise us of all particulars. Please fill out the order form. \$22 each (US funds) includes return shipping anywhere.

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numbers were never meant to be used to identify cars and trucks for legal purposes as all British vehicles carried a VIN stamped or embossed on a separate plate.

CSR also can stamp reproduction VIN plates—original or proof of ownership must accompany your work order. Ask for details. CSR does not produce VIN plates; we just stamp them. Note the following:

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How to order using this flyer: please provide us with the following (please print)

1. year, type, and model of vehicle _____
2. size of engine _____
3. Plate style (see illustrations on back)
circle the appropriate number RS12-01...RS12-02...RS12-03...RS12-04...RS12-04V...RS12-05
(if you are sending us an original, there is no need to complete this)
4. Write number and letter figures in appropriate blank—include dashes and diagonals, stamped notations, etc.
5. Name and mailing address _____

6. Method of payment: check ☐
visa/mc ☐ exp. date _____ acct # _____

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PLATE BLANK REFERENCE NUMBERS—use these illustrations to give us the details about your plate(s). Be sure to note all figures and sizes. If you are sending us your original, there is no need to fill in the information on the blanks. All figure sizes are measured from front.

Ref. No. RS12-01



Typical size plate used on engines fitted to MGA (all), Midgette ZA, ZB, Mk III/IV models, early Mini, Metropolitans, etc. 3/16" high letter and number figures—dashes and diagonals used. In some cases, stamped notations are made... "H"... "DA" etc. They range in size from 1/8"-5/16".

