



Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders MG CLUB

www.MG-Edinburgh.co.uk



May 2021



Credits: Helen, Stuart M, Steve, Bill, Neil Mac, Jim T, Mike & Fiona

MEMBERS' CARS

New member Stuart Muir sent in a picture of his MG ZT -
and one of himself as a youngster with an MGA



MRS GRUMPY'S GRUMBLE



More digital moans - I know I sound like a Luddite - but why was it so much easier with analogue?

You could listen to Radio Forth 1 on MW from Edinburgh to Prestwick - it might have got a bit faint and crackly by Prestwick but it was listenable to. With DAB radio you lose the signal at Leadburn - which is preferable to its other trick which is cutting out and in randomly. This is so annoying, I have to switch the radio off!!

Remember the old days with a video tape? You stuck it in and pressed play - and it started instantly. If you stopped it and came back to it the next day, well it was still at the place you stopped it and you could continue watching without any hassle.

With the Sony Blu-Ray player it is much more trying. Firstly it tells you there isn't a disc/playable title - when you've just fed in a genuine Blu-ray disc. If you open and close the drawer, it will eventually decide there is a playable title and play it.

The trouble starts if you want to stop half way and watch it again the next day. You leave the disc in, in the forlorn hope it'll recognise the disc the next day and ask if you want to continue from where you left off. No such luck - you've to open & close the drawer, then fast forward to where you stopped the night before.

And don't start me on what happens if you pause it to go to the loo. The digibox will pause for as long as you leave it on pause. The Sony? It stops the pause and then switches itself off!!! I wouldn't mind if it stopped the pause but left itself switched on - because it would recognise the disc and hopefully helpfully ask if you want to continue from where you were.

Now, you might be ahead of me here, but because it switches itself off and you have to switch it on again, it doesn't recognise the disc and you've got the pleasure of the open/close drawer dance and fast forwarding to where you left off. I had to do this TWICE while watching 1917 as I took too long going to the toilet and putting the spuds on. I'll obviously have to stop the disc rather than pause it and hope it doesn't switch itself off - or be quicker in the loo!!

So, I'll ask again - just how is digital better?

MANY THANKS

To those who have stepped up to the mark and written articles - I couldn't produce the newsletter without you.

INTERESTING SNIPPET 1

Welcome to the "OILY MG" edition of the newsletter!

INTERESTING SNIPPET 2

Or how to cope with the breakdowns of your Classic - sent in by Neil Mac from the Seagull Trust,

1. I had an accelerator cable break on a Hillman Imp. I screwed the tick-over speed up to an acceptable number of revs and with a bit of clutch control could manage all gears but with a fixed speed in each

2. I remember coming back from a rugby game at East Kilbride with my mate Nigel pulling on long bootlaces tied to a windscreen wiper. The wiper motor had 'died' so we fed the laces through the quarter lights of my ancient Austin Somerset. * His arms were in agony as it 'chucked it down' all the way back to Glenrothes. * Gawd, that shows my age!

And a final one from your Editor.

3. I was driving my first husband's (new) Renault 5 when the accelerator cable broke in the middle of nowhere. My brother-in-law, who was following me luckily, tied a bit of twine to the throttle linkage and ran it through the driver's window (remember Renault 5s had a bonnet that opened from the back) and so let me drive it home. I had to wrap my hand in a cloth as the twine cut into my skin when I pulled on it hard enough to get up to speed and hold it!!

BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO CHANGING THE OIL & FILTER OF YOUR MGB

It is recommended that in arduous driving conditions you change the engine oil and filter every 3,000 miles, but under normal driving conditions then it's every 6,000 miles. When the GT was doing the daily commute, I religiously changed his oil every 6,000 miles (he was doing about 10,000 miles a year at that point) and I changed the V8's oil every autumn before I laid her up for the winter (she was doing 3,000 miles a year) as I don't think it's a good idea to leave the engine sitting over winter with used engine oil in it. The oil will pick up various contaminants and it won't do your bearings etc. much good.

Since they've both become playthings after I bought the MG3, I've made it a rule to change the oil and filter every year, irrespective of mileage - although pre-lockdown they were doing 3,000 miles each. If you can do the job yourself, why wouldn't you? It'll cost you an hour of your time, £25-30 for a good quality oil, a fiver or so for the filter (can be ordered from MGOC spares and possibly Halfords), a few pence for the sump plug copper washer and a trip to the council dump every so often to get rid of the old oil. Think how many £40 you can get through before you get to the cost of an engine rebuild!



The oil should be a classic 20w50 (this refers to the viscosity) and various ones are available - Castrol (available at most shows), Penrite (available from the Scottish rep), Dynolite (available from Chic Doig) and the Halfords one. An MGB uses just under a gallon of oil and the V8 just over a gallon and if you've got one of each, that's two gallons!

You will need a container for the old oil - you can buy a special container for draining the oil and it'll hold about 3 oil changes. Or you can just use an old plastic bucket and pour the old oil into an empty oil can. This is the messy option though.



You will also need to order the copper washer for the sump plug as you can't keep re-using it - although you might get away with re-using it once. They are only pennies and I buy half a dozen at a time from MGOC spares. MGB ones are a different size to V8 ones.

You will also need a strap wrench or a chain wrench to remove the old oil filter - see pics on next page. A last resort is a plain screwdriver stuck into the oil filter - but that is also a messy option.

The above refers to the later oil filter, If your MGB has the earlier element in a canister filter - please read Steve's article.

It is also recommended that you have your engine warmed up before you change the oil - warm oil will be runnier and flow out more easily than cold oil.

The other important thing is to identify the sump plug and not confuse it with the gearbox drain plug - it's not a good idea to drain the gearbox and then put a gallon of oil into your engine, on top of the gallon you didn't drain!!!!



The more observant will have noticed that the later oil filter in an MGB is upside down - so removing it will result in its contents running out. Therefore it is advisable to have some old rags or paper towel under the filter to catch any spillage.

It's sensible to wear nitrile gloves as used engine oil does contain various nasties. If you're only changing oil once a year, they shouldn't be too serious for you - but who wants to be covered in dirty oil?

You also want to remove the oil filler cap (that lets the oil run out easier) and the book says remove the dipstick too - though I always forget.

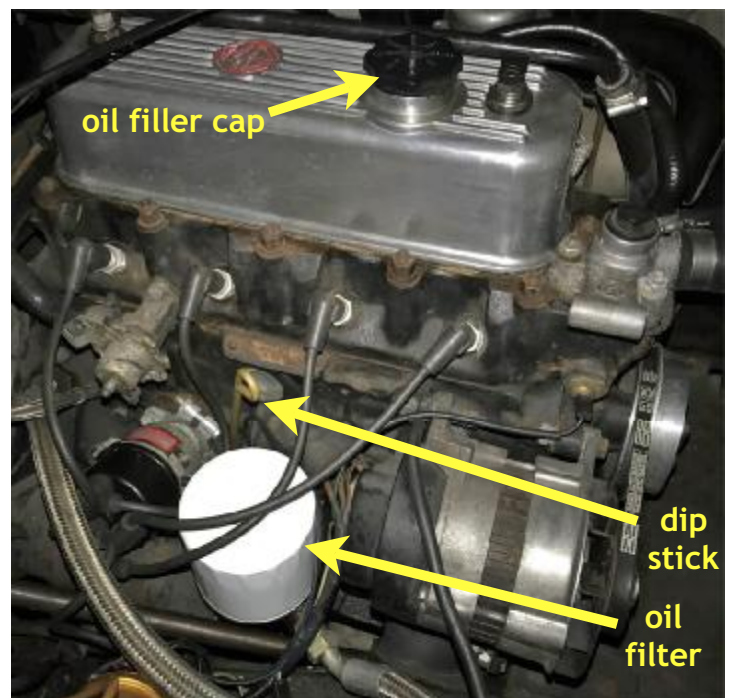
To remove the oil filter, use the chain wrench to get it started, then use your hand to unscrew it and turn it the right way up toot sweet.

The V8 has its oil filter the right way up on the inner wing so spillage isn't a problem, but losing your knuckles due to the lack of space is - especially if you've got a nice fat alloy rad!

If you have access to a ramp, that makes life a bit easier with draining the oil - but you can do it with the car sitting on the garage floor or up on axle stands if you want more room, but keep the car level or not all the oil will drain out.

You are now ready to drain the oil and to do that, you have to remove the sump plug. Clean round the sump plug with a rag or paper towel, slacken it off with a socket, get the drain can in position and then undo plug by hand, holding onto it firmly when the oil starts to run out - it's not a good result for it to fall into the drain can!

You will of course get your hand covered in dirty engine oil, so you'll appreciate the nitrile gloves.



The sump plug on an MGB is on the angle of the sump and the oil drains out in a nice arc - so remember that when siting the drain can. In a V8, the sump plug is on the bottom of the sump and the oil comes out in a rapid gush that goes straight down, hits the drain can at a rate of knots and kersplashes over the sides!!

Some suggest it's a wise move is to drain the oil cooler as well, but I never have as removing the oil cooler on a RB car comes firmly into the 'bar steward' category. Once the oil has drained out, clean the sump plug, fit a new copper washer and refit the plug - do not get distracted and forget!

Empty the filter into the drain can and keep it to be disposed of at the council dump. While you are cleaning the drain can, do have a look at the draining surface - it should just have dirty oil on it. Small bits of metal will be a worry as something is breaking up inside the engine. The time it happened to the GT, it was his cam followers that were in a bit of a state.

You are now ready to fit the new filter. Smear a bit of clean engine oil onto the rubber sealing ring and if you've got a V8, fill the filter with clean oil before fitting it. In an MGB, you can't do that of course - so clean the filter housing, checking for the dastardly small bits of metal. Then screw on the filter - be careful screwing it on, again you don't want to cross thread it. Once on, run it up by hand and when it tightens up, just turn it another quarter turn - by hand. Don't over-tighten it.

You're now ready to fill it up - you did put the sump plug back in didn't you? I can assure you that oil is like blood - a little spill looks like a massacre. I can remember changing the GT's oil (in Viewforth on Brian's immaculate workshop floor) and I trapped the very thin wire for the electronic ignition between the filter and its housing, so it didn't seal. When I started the GT, there was a dip in the oil pressure - not just the fractional dip as the filter fills up - but a tad longer, so I switched it off straight away. And opened the door to see a large spreading puddle of oil on the immaculate floor!! I wasn't flavour of the month.

Anyway, assuming the sump plug is tightened up and the filter fitted properly, you can start to fill the engine with the new oil. A funnel will prevent too much running down the outside of the engine or if you're skilled using the plastic pouring tube, then you can dispense with the funnel. Pour in about three quarters of the can and check the level on the dipstick - it'll be more accurate if you give the oil time to run through the engine and into the sump. At this point, I use a pint container and put the last quarter into the engine a pint at a time. Keep checking the dip stick as you don't want to overfill it. However, with the MGB, there is the empty filter that holds about half a pint, so you've got a little leeway.

Once it looks to be at the Max on the dipstick, refit the oil filler cap (and the dipstick if you've removed it - it's amazing how much oil can splatter out of the dipstick hole!) and start the engine. There will be a momentary dip in the oil pressure as the filter fills up and then it should hold steady. Switch off and give it 5 minutes then check the dipstick again - you may have to add half a pint to replace the oil that has filled the filter - or not, depending how accurate you were in the first place.

Check underneath for leaks and if all's well, then it's job done.

Remember to dispose of your old oil and filter safely - NOT down a drain. The best bet is to take it to your council dump where there is a large dirty, oily container for you to put your old oil.

Mrs Grumpy

PS Even the most obliging car can chuck a nasty at you. I remember changing the GT's oil as part of a tech day and the filter did not want to undo. Craig applied some muscle and got it free. No sign of any leaks after the oil change, so I headed home but called into Sainsbury on the way - and noticed a trail of oil following me into the parking place. Opened the bonnet to see a tsunami of oil running down the engine block, below the filter. Checked the level (low), filled it up and limped home for a closer inspection. The filter was fine, but the rubber seal between the filter housing and the engine block had given up the ghost - it dated from 1980, had gone hard and brittle and I think the struggle to remove the filter had been the last straw so it broke into three pieces, allowing oil to leak out.

ALL THE OIL CHANGES ON THE MGB

I guess a routine engine oil and filter change is one of the basic jobs we have to perform on our classics at any time and no excuse during this lock down period. While I was on the case I decided to add an oil cooler as well as change the gearbox and rear axle/diff oil at the same time. Seemed straightforward but as always there are pitfalls to avoid which I hadn't predicted.

Draining the sump was straightforward, however the upright Tecalemit filter managed to leak all over the place once I loosened it off. Whilst it was off I decided to respray it in gloss black to match the engine which is unfortunately not MGB red as yet. You may notice the nice new top plate shown in the rebuild pictures as it seems I managed to dispose of the original as it was probably stuck to the top of the old filter - first mistake. Or it never had one in the first place who knows ?

Anyway new filter with washers and seals purchased and nice shiny cover bolted down to correct torque. Looking good.



Now to fit the oil cooler, not really sure if it was absolutely necessary, but I like the look of it if nothing else. One thing that troubled me was the thought of bolting a delicate aluminium rad directly to the front body work. As a former sidecar racer we rubber mounted everything as things were guaranteed shake themselves to bits and old habits die hard. So for peace of mind I cut down a rubber bush to make 4 thick rubber washers, seemed to work OK.

Oil hoses attached, time to fill up with Castrol Classic 20W/50 and start her up. To my surprise no oil leaks at all from the oil cooler or hoses but oil was pouring out of the oil filter top and bottom. Some extra fibre washers and tighten down past the recommended torque seemed to fix it.

Finished job looking good - see pic on next page. (Ed: you can see how easily accessible the oil cooler is on a CB car - this is not the situation in a RB vehicle)



Now to the gearbox and overdrive unit. Drained easily enough but as there had been a leak from the O/D it was time to replace the gasket and filter. Having removed the 6 bolts the cover prised off easily enough and sure enough the old filter was pretty grotty with fine metal particles on the filter and magnets. So filter / gasket replaced and I took the opportunity to polish the cover before replacing and tightening up to specified torque.

Filling up the gearbox with oil was the challenging part with me shredding my hands on the edges of the access hole just to access the dipstick. Still with a short piece of tubing and a jug I managed to refill OK -

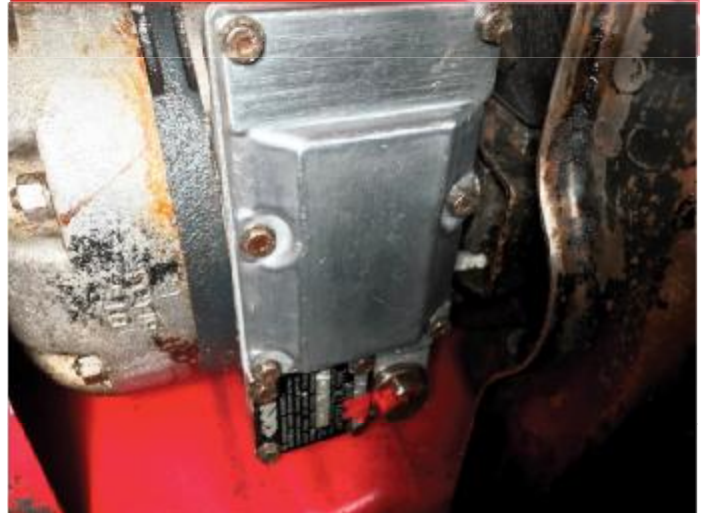


and no leaks. (Ed: On later cars, there isn't a gearbox dipstick - you fill it up until the oil runs out of the filler aperture on the side of the box)

Final job was oil change in rear axle which was fairly straightforward once I managed to find a square socket to fit the drain and filler plugs. Of course I didn't buy EP90 in a squeeze bottle so had to cobble together a plastic drinks bottle with a rubber tube in order to refill.

I learned a lot and it will be easier next time. Next job to bleed the brakes, that could be interesting!

Steve Hastwell



LED HEADLAMP CONVERSION U-TURN

MGOC sends me a news email now and then - I must have ticked a box somewhere. This one came two weeks before the April magazine came out.

LED HEADLAMP CONVERSION U-TURN

In the April issue we report upon the changes to the MOT Test where the new rules dictate that any headlamp converted from Halogen to LED was to attract an automatic fail. This then brought the test rules into line with the automatic failure of HID conversions that had applied since May 2018.

The nature of the changes raised some questions as we discuss and anticipate there would have to be clarification and that clarification arrived two days after the April magazine had gone to print. The clarification has now made the issue of LED and HID headlamp conversions crystal clear.

In something of a surprise, the Government has announced an effective U Turn and has now aligned the MOT rules with existing UK legislation. The Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations 1989 gives various dates from which any light has to be approved and carry an approval mark and we mention many. Not mentioned is that the requirement for headlamp bulbs to carry an approval mark commenced for vehicles first used from 1st April 1986 and that means cars first used before that date do not have to use approved bulbs.

The amended MOT rules effective from 22nd March 2021 now permits the conversion of any headlamp from an original filament type bulb to either HID or LED conversion AS LONG AS ALL THE OTHER MOT REQUIREMENTS IN RESPECT OF BEAM PATTERN AND CONTROL ARE MET. Please see: [MOT special notice 01-21: headlamp conversions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/mot-special-notice-01-21-headlamp-conversions)

This ruling also finally gives definitive clarity to the vexed question of the legality of the wide range of HID and LED headlamp conversions and puts in place the sensible situation that if the converted lamp doesn't dazzle and complies with all MOT testing requirements it is acceptable to use on these older cars that are the most restricted in their standard headlamp performance.

To clarify that 'first used' description simply means that any MG (or other car) that is first registered before 1st April 1986 can benefit from the use of a quality LED headlamp conversion such as the excellent Stella Lux conversion offered by MGOC Spares, meaning many more MG owners can benefit from better headlamp performance and improved safety as a result.

When my copy of "Enjoying MG" arrived, pages 17 & 19 were perused and, sure enough, the email and article said two completely different things. The danger in the future though, is that the magazine article is likely to be taken for the "truth" when in fact the email tells the correct story.

I fitted the Stella Lux conversion to my 1970 MGB and the difference is night to day! In MGBs and older cars you do need to be seen in both light and dark conditions, so drive with your bright head lamps on.

I did experiment with LED rear, brake and indicators but, though the nearside worked, the offside would not. I have now looked at the "Better Car Lighting" (BCL) website and it explains that filament lights are quite crude and the wiring and switches have "leaking eddies" of electricity that do not affect them. LEDs pick up these "eddies" as they are more sensitive and that is why sometimes they don't work. BCL have the answer with their "Residual Current drain kit".

Bill Niven



APRIL'S ZOOM MEETING

Jim Tierney sent in a photo of us waiting for Gerry's talk on his travels in South America



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Please feel free to contact the committee if you have any queries.

Monthly meetings still cancelled due to Covid.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

All provisional

May **Individual Run**

June **Individual Run**

July **Individual Run**

Cancellations in May:
Stirling & District Classic Car Show

Cancellations in June:
Thirlestane Castle, Tayside Classic show at Errol, MG Live and Moffat Shows

Cancellations in July:
SVVC show at Glamis Castle

Other cancellations: Bo'ness Revival show is cancelled too, with the hillclimb taking place at Forrestburn with no spectators.

August **Gymkhana hopefully**

August 15 **Northumberland Classic Show at Corbridge.**

August 22 **FAVVO show at Ladybank**

September **Wheels & Wings Show,**

September 26 **Gathering of the Clans at Doune**

May be of interest and may happen:

August 1 **Aberdeen MGOC show at Drum Castle**

August 8 **A reduced Harrogate MG show**

August 15 **Conifox Classic Car Show**

August 22 **Cumbria Classic at Dalemain House and MG & Triumph Spares Day at Telford Centre**