

CHANGING GEAR

December 2004 (4)

**MERRY
CHRISTMAS**



Alan Cooke & daughter Julie

the magazine of the NG owners club

THE NG OWNERS CLUB

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Reminder

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Chairman's Letter

At this time of the year it is inevitable that open-top motoring thoughts tend to take second place to warmer activities like fireside chairs with a good book etc. However, sitting in the warm and reflecting on 2004 I am reminded that the Club has had another good year of motoring enjoyment; I suppose the highlight for me was the Anniversary National Rally celebration at Broadway.

The turnout was magnificent and the overall quality of the cars was so high that everyone should feel proud. As mentioned in my last letter Nick Green unfortunately could not be present, but I know that had he seen the display he would have been very pleased and proud. Thank you all for your participation and dedication to the Club.

This is the last issue of the

club magazine before Christmas so I would like to wish all members and their families a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year. I would also like to extend the Compliments of the Season to our friends at Findhorn Cars with thanks for their support throughout 2004.

As usual I would particularly like to thank those members who have organised, managed and helped with all the Area activities up and down the country. It is you guys in addition to the Committee that keep the Club together and so strong - Thank You.

Do not forget that winter is the time to start planning for the next round for 2005 - I knew that fireside chair had a purpose!

Peter Clark

Editorial

Well, this is my final edition of the club's magazine. It is amazing how quickly the last 5 years have passed since I tentatively stepped into Jeff Stretch's very talented footsteps. I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the magazine, particularly Peter Clark, Bob Preece & Nigel Brooks (Findhorn) for their regular 'notes', Bob Morrison for

supplying the address labels and Peter & Margaret Elliott for looking after the distribution - a great team effort.

Having enjoyed the job, I am nevertheless very glad to welcome Chris Humphries to the editor's chair. Chris has very sportingly agreed to take over from the start of 2005 and I wish him every success in the job. Having said that, it

is vital that members support their editor with lots of articles across a range of subjects. Without such input, your poor editor doesn't have a sporting chance of producing a readable magazine.

As I have said before, please don't be put off making a contribution just because use of the written word is not your favourite pastime. Just scribble down your thoughts and send them in. Too much copy is an editor's dream - too little is a nightmare.

As somebody said to me at the 25-year celebration, *"if you could record all the technical conversations taking place over the weekend you would have enough to write a book"*.

The building of a kit car is still an individual endeavour and each car will be different in some way from the next. It is this creativity that is one of the main aspects that separates kit cars from the mainstream and the same criteria apply to their builders. So, please put pen to paper & pass on your ideas and experiences to other club members via your club's magazine.

On the subject of your new editor, I thought that members might appreciate a short introduction to Chris & his superb newly-finished TF. The following text has,

with Chris' permission, been taken from his own website:-

"I have been a teacher since 1975 and am currently Head of Information and Communications Technology and Computer Network Manager at St Albans School in Hertfordshire. I have always been interested in cars and, ever since owning my first car in 1971, I have carried out my own repairs and servicing to keep down the cost of motoring. I am familiar with the mechanics of the early

1970s to which era the MGB donor car belongs and admit to having no particular skill at car building, having never tackled such a project before. Some years ago I saw an advert for NG Cars in Practical Motorist and immediately fell in love with the flowing lines and classic style.



Since then I have harboured a desire to build one. The thought of owning a vehicle so unusual and the satisfaction of having built it myself are the two things which have fuelled my desire. I started visiting NG's web site and, after my work circumstances changed, I began to believe in the possibility of attempting the project. After swapping e-mails with the man who ran NG at the time, John, I dragged my wife off with our caravan at the end of October 2000 to Surrey so that we

could visit the company which was then situated in Epsom. After what must have been the windiest night of the year, we arrived at NG to be shown the demonstrator cars. I fell in love with the TF model all over again as we talked about the practicalities of building one. I had only seen pictures up to this time but now I could see the superb quality and finish in the flesh. The only niggle at the back of my mind was how on earth would I persuade, cajole or otherwise press-gang my beloved into thinking it was a good idea! Then John offered me a ride. I was surprised at the comfortable springing not at all choppy as I had expected. With sporty performance it was tremendous fun (even though it was a little windy) and it was impossible not to grin from ear to ear. Then John offered my wife a ride and she came back with a big smile too. From then on, she presumed I would be building one so I didn't have to convince her after all! I am delighted to announce that my NG TF passed its SVA test on October 15th (2004) at the Yeading Test Station. The car is now registered and I have started fitting the wet weather gear."

Came across an interesting debate the other day on the pros/cons of lightening cast-iron flywheels. I, like most others I suspect, have assumed that lightening a standard flywheel when tuning an engine would result in faster acceleration (& lumpy tick-over) due to

the reduction in inertia. The alternative point of view is that although the rate of acceleration of the engine alone would be increased, compared with the overall weight of the car there would be no noticeable difference in acceleration of the car. Anyone agree or disagree?

I would like to welcome Richard Newton to the club. Richard, and friend Philip, has taken on the challenge of modifying a 90%-completed Marina-based TF to pass the SVA test. With a copy of the SVA manual, & some lateral thinking, I believe that it is perfectly possible to achieve this goal & we look forward to receiving reports of their progress.

If your soft-top is looking a bit tired, it might be worth having a look at a range of products by Renovo (tel. 01444-443277) or visit www.renovointernational.com. Renovo advocate regular treatment to hood materials including using a special cleaner followed by an application of colouring reviver. A special window polish is also available from the same range.

Following on from the report on Peter Sergeant's low-pressure gas fuelled TF in the last issue, I was interested to hear recently of a new fuel that is currently being tested by the large oil companies and some of the major car manufacturers. The new fuel is called GTL (gas-to-liquid). The technology converts natural gas to diesel.

Apparently, GTL fuel in a modern diesel engine would produce approx 40% less particulates, 60% less hydrocarbons & 75% less carbon monoxide than current European fuels. The major advantage is that it can be used in conventional diesel engines without modification, to reduce pollution & noise. One can therefore see a global shift away from petrol/spark-ignition engines to higher-performance and ultra-clean/efficient diesels. With ever-tightening European legislation on emissions, we may yet see diesel-engined kit cars become the norm!!!

Did you hear that the quintessentially British car-maker TVR has been bought by a Russian businessman for £15million? Is nothing sacred? Apparently, the new owner will be using his capital to assist TVR with expanding their overseas markets and the previous owner will now be employed in a consultancy role.

Does anyone still have an NG that has been on the road for a number of years but is still 'incorrectly registered' (i.e. the V5, or new V5C replacement states 'MG special' or similar rather than 'NG')? Prior to the start of 2004 you might have managed to re-tax your car without a V5 registration doc describing the car correctly as an NG but this has now been changed and the only way that you will be able to keep such a car on the road appears to be by having the car subjected to an SVA test (that it would almost certainly

fail). According to an article by Nigel Dean in the new Cobra magazine, there is an ex-DVLA man, Paul Jepson, who has set up a consultancy service to help kit-car builders with the mass of paperwork and form-filling needed when applying for an SVA test and subsequent registration of their newly-built kit car. In addition to this, Paul is prepared to help with the aforementioned incorrectly registered kit cars for a fee of £50. There is no guarantee of success but Paul has a track record of appealing to the DVLA in such cases and has managed to have several V5 docs amended. Might be worth a try. You can contact Paul Jepson on 0118 984 2303 (office) or 07748 702987 (mobile).

I should like to end with a heartfelt thank-you to all those members who supported me through the last 5 years, and particularly the kind words that sometimes came my way. As they say, a little bit of appreciation is always welcome! Having worked very long hours this year as a 'wage-slave', the poor old TCV8 project has been dead in the water for many months & I look forward to finding some more time to get back into the garage. I am delighted that the club magazine will be in such good hands for the future & wish Chris every success as the new editor. May I also wish all members a Happy Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

Ed

Secretary's Notes

Only the Christmas Lunch meetings to go until the end of our NGOC year of 2004.

I do have a spare seat or two for the SE lunch, so if you would like to make a late booking please telephone me on 020 8393 4661 by the 5th of December.

I have already made a list of meetings for next year right up to the 20th of November 2005, but there will be a lot more to be fitted in as the year progresses. One date we have not decided on is the National Rally and we would like any suggestions for where we might hold the meeting. It seems that a long weekend is a popular option, so a site with camping facilities with something of interest in or nearby the site, with B&Bs around it, and maybe, a Travel Lodge. Please let me know if you have ideas.

In the last magazine I

listed all the things that were left behind after the 25th Birthday bash. I have listed them again but this is the last reminder:

One pair of dark green mugs with a gold ring around the lip.

2 pairs of knives & forks with flat handles which have a pattern on them similar to flowers and leaves.

1 left-hand red glove. The glove has black re-inforcing material on the palm & thumb, also on the back of the first finger & between the third & fourth fingers.

If you recognise any one of the above and want them returned please give me a ring on 020 8393 4661 and I will send them onto you.

May Amanda and I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and look forward to seeing you in the New Year

Bob Preece



Events Calendar 2004/05

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Organiser</u>
Dec 12	SE Christmas Lunch, Kingswood Arms	Bob Preece
Jan 1	Vintage & Classic cars, Phoenix Pub, nr Hartley Wintney, Hants.	For info
Mar 12/13	Car Craft Show, Stafford	TBD
Apr 2/3	European Kit Car Show, Detling, Kent	Bob Preece
May 1/2	National Kit Car Show, National Agricultural Showground, Stoneleigh	Bob Preece
June 11/12	National Kit & Component Show, Newark, Notts	Dennis Roberts
Aug 13/14	Great Northern Kit Car Show, Harrogate, North Yorks	Dennis Roberts
Sept 3/4	National Kit & Component Show, Donington, Derby	Dennis Roberts
Sept 10/11	Beaulieu International Autojumble	For info
Nov 6	London-to-Brighton Veteran Cars Run	Roy de Boise
Nov 19/20	Great Western Kit Car Show, Exeter, Devon	TBD

Monthly evening pub meet: every 3rd Wednesday, 7.30pm
The Talbot Hotel, Ripley, Surrey (Bob Preece 020 8393 4661).

Monthly lunch-time pub meet: every 2nd Sunday, 12.30pm
Smarden Belle, Smarden, Kent (John Jewsbury 01622 890992).

Essex area: phone Peter St. John-Howe 01787 224576.

New Forest & District monthly lunch-time pub meet: every 1st Sunday, 12 noon (phone Keith Baker 02380 864310 for current venue).

Monthly lunch-time pub meet: date depends upon interest shown, 12 noon at The Six Bells, Warborough, off A423 Oxford/Wallingford (Bob Morrison)

East Anglia area: evening runs in the Bury St Edmunds area - 1st Tuesday monthly from April-Sept (Chris Wilson 01449 672527).

South Wales (Cardiff) pub meet: first Monday monthly starting 1st April (Brian North 02920 341671)



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Members' Letters & Articles

From: Paul Gray

NGs in Brittany (June 2004)

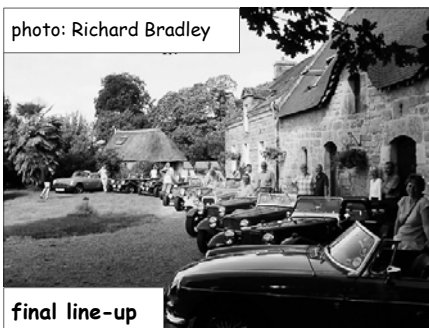
Well almost a full contingent of NGs. We needed eleven couples to fill the Gite and were only able to persuade 9 from the NGOC. However, Richard and Jenny Bradley found two couples from their local MG Owners Club who were more than happy to fill the gap. A total of 9 NGs and 2 MGBs therefore arrived at Portsmouth Docks on the evening of Friday 4th June to catch the overnight ferry departing at 11.00 pm for Cherbourg. We had all booked cabins for the trip with the expectation of getting a reasonable night's sleep. However, the ferry operators had changed their night-passage schedules, disembarking us at 5.30 am French summertime which was 4.30 am BST and hence unsporting early as far as our biological clocks were concerned! None of us slept well for the few hours we were in bed and we were feeling less than 100% as we started our top-down drive in the cool of the early morning. The long drive was not helped by significant areas of thick fog that was very slow to burn off.

Everything brightened considerably, though, when we stopped for coffee, and a warm up, in the pretty town of Gavray. I think the



bar owner was quite taken aback to be confronted with 22 customers all arriving at once. Amazingly enough, we had all managed to stay in one convoy by this time although, inevitably, during the remainder of the day, the group was split up into smaller groups of individual cars. Whilst everybody was together at the coffee stop, Mike Greenland and Donna collected 10 Euros from each couple for the 'Curry Fund'. Donna and Mike then proceeded to the market in Gavray to buy enough fruit and vegetables to feed 22 people on the Sunday evening. Since all our cars were already full it was a case of asking everyone to take a carrier bag each for the remainder of the journey. For the rest of the day people generally headed south with most taking a coffee stop and stroll around the scenic old market town of Dol de Bretagne. For our part, we headed for St Malo and enjoyed a stroll around the ramparts of this beautiful old town with its massive

photo: Richard Bradley



fortifications. The remainder of the journey south was largely uneventful except for one unfortunate incident in Pontivy where we were moving slowly in heavy traffic. A manic moped rider overtook us on the left and immediately cut across our bows turning right. Unfortunately, for them both, a cyclist was overtaking us on the right and the crazy moped rider did not bother to look. The two collided spectacularly about 6 feet in front of us with both riders and their machines turning somersaults. Because we were moving slowly, it was easy to stop and, thankfully, both riders got up again and seemed to be OK so we carried on and left them to work out their differences!

Arriving at the Gite late in the afternoon, we were extremely hot - what a contrast to the early morning cold with hats, coats and gloves being worn. Within a short time we had enjoyed a cup of tea and most of us

ended up in the heated outdoor pool. Our hosts, Joyce and Cedric, served up a wonderful evening meal with generous quantities of wine and 22 tired people retired to their beds after a very long day. Sunday morning nobody was in a hurry to do anything in particular. The weather was delightful and the new 'naked chef' (don't ask) Mike Greenland started preparations for the curry supper. With plenty of help forthcoming from other members of the party, Mike managed to serve up a splendid meal - quite an accomplishment to feed so many people in one go!

Monday saw most people eager to go for a drive and the Quiberon peninsular was a favoured destination. The weather was almost too good with temperatures in the high 70s and wall-to-wall sunshine all day. People soon found how easy it is to get severely sunburned in an open car in such strong sun. Monday evening was quiz night and another excellent evening meal provided by our hosts. Mike and Hils produced the quiz and at one stage during the evening announced that, due to the lateness of the hour, the quiz would be postponed until later in the week. This announcement was met with a chorus of "Oh no it won't" and Mike and Hils bowed to the will of the majority and



carried on with the quiz. The worthy winners, decided on a tie-breaker, were Bob and Lyn, our new friends from the Worcestershire MGOC.

For Tuesday evening, Richard and Jenny Bradley offered to organise a BBQ for all those who might be interested. There were 18 takers and Richard and Jenny went off to the local supermarket for the ingredients and spent most of the day, ably assisted by Norman and Janet Foord and others, in preparing an excellent meal. It made a nice change to be able to invite our hosts, Joyce and Cedric, to share a meal with us and a good time was had by all.

Wednesday was the fancy dress evening and a meal provided by our hosts. As usual, a lot of effort had been extended by everyone in preparing some superb costumes. The theme was 'Trades and Professions'. Considering that everyone had kept their choice a closely guarded secret, it was interesting to see how people had interpreted the 'theme'. Suffice to say that the

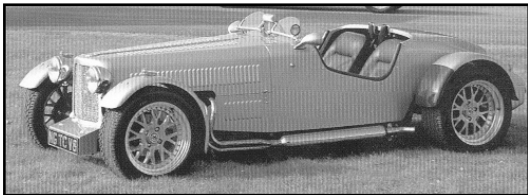


medical profession was well-represented although you would have to have been feeling very ill to accept treatment from any of the assembled 'representatives' of said profession. For example, a surgeon representing 'Hoyle Engineering', had diversified temporarily from making suspension systems to providing a while-you-wait breast implant system, with pre-warmed sachets to minimise discomfort. To bring us all to order a very schoolmasterly Mick Terry dressed as Professor Ben-doon, complete with cane which he was very free with administering to any errant pupils particularly naughty nurses with too-short skirts. The professor even set

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photo: Richard Bradley

us an examination that was marked during the evening complete with dunces cap that went to the lowest scorer.

Thursday morning we awoke to heavy rain - quite a shock after five days of continuous sunshine. Some of us had booked riding at a local equestrian centre and turned up in typical English fashion having reluctantly put the hoods up on our NGs. Unfortunately, we were told on arrival that riding today was "impossible!" presumably due to the slippery conditions underfoot for the horses. A new booking was made for the following day and we headed back into Baud for coffee and some re-provisioning. This was also the day that our French NGOC member, Pierre Sabatier, had planned to visit us. Pierre was planning to drive his NG all the way from Brest, a return journey of some 200 miles, to join us for the evening. Having originally intended to gather together several old cars for the trip, in the event it was just Pierre in his NGTF with David and accompanied by Pierrot & Jacques in a 1952 Citroen Light 15.

Pierre very kindly brought along champagne and wine. The UK contingent put on a superb cold buffet (special thanks to Barbara and Theresa). Twenty six people sat down to enjoy the meal in the evening sunshine. Before dessert, Alan Goodbun offered rides in his TCV8 and both David and Pierre took up his offer. Having spent most of the afternoon giving demo rides, the TC was already warmed up and its exhausts could be heard reverberating round the country lanes long after it had disappeared from sight. Pierre has offered to arrange a joint event with his local classic car club in Brest for another year - will let you know via CG of any developments as they arise.

On Friday the weather was good again and a large contingent visited the car museum, which, according to feedback received, proved to be a worthwhile trip with a very impressive display of cars and other artefacts. Friday evening we enjoyed a BBQ laid on by our hosts. Cedric initially cooked a starter of Clams and Prawns on sticks in a ke-

photo: Richard Bradley



private car park

Meal times were always fun!



photo: Richard Bradley

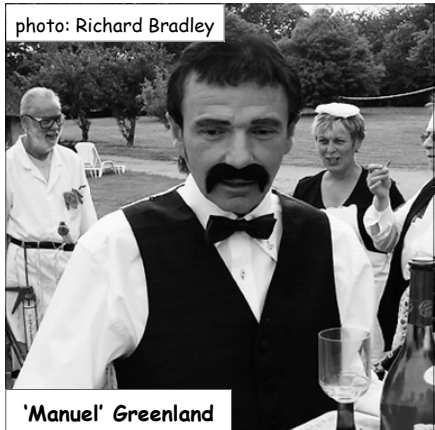
bab style. This was followed by lamb steaks which were also delicious. With a tasty side-salad and copious quantities of local wines, the evening was a great success. Some of us stayed out on the patio all evening, one of these evenings that you want to be never-ending.

Saturday morning was pack-up and depart the Gite. After breakfast was finished and bills settled, all the cars were packed into the front garden for a group photo. Apart from being a memento for attendees, our hosts like to use such photos to advertise on their web site and in club magazines. Saturday was spent travelling to our overnight stop in Normandy near the pretty village of Sainte Cecile, positioned almost centrally at the southern end of the Cherbourg peninsular. The distance was approximately 150 miles and most people took the opportunity to do some sight-seeing on the way. For our part, we initially took a small detour into a very large out-of-town shopping mall & enjoyed making comparisons between what would have been on offer in an

equivalent UK version. After a light lunch we headed for the walled town of Fougères. On arrival at our overnight stop we took the opportunity to go for a short walk before all meeting up for aperitifs in Le Manoir's garden. This was followed by a superb evening meal and a very comfortable night's sleep. Including breakfast on the Sunday morning the bill was approx. £70 per couple which was considered excellent value.

On Sunday approx 100 miles to Cherbourg and all day to do it in, there was plenty of scope for more sight-seeing and scenic drives. Some of our party headed for the D-Day beach landings, visiting Bayeux en route. It was quite amazing how many British, American and Canadian flags were on display in the towns and villages as we travelled through Normandy. Pro-British feeling was very apparent and the NG, as always, provoked many good-natured waves and other signs of

photo: Richard Bradley



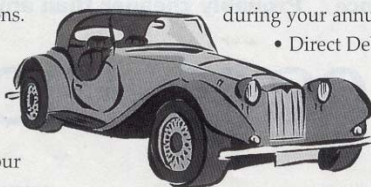
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appreciation. Donna & I decided to visit our old haunts on the eastern side of the Cherbourg peninsular, namely Carantan, St Vaast, and Barfleur. At Barfleur Point we paid 2 Euros each for the doubtful privilege of climbing the 350 steps to the top of the very tall lighthouse. The views made it seem very worthwhile, our NG looking very small when viewed from the top. The coast road from Barfleur to Cherbourg was an absolute delight, taken mostly at 20 - 30 mph with stunning views of Cherbourg harbour on our final approach from the east. We waited just outside the ferry port for most of the others to turn up and then joined the queue together. The ferry left at 7.00 pm, the sea being flat calm and still not a cloud

in the sky. The crossing was uneventful, arriving at Portsmouth at around 10.00 pm. The French/English football match started at 7.00 pm which suited some of our party admirably!

Between 11 cars there were only three minor technical problems during the week, the first one recounted in the last issue by David Quastel, the second one was another split rubber pipe on one of the B's. This time, it was the fuel pipe linking two HIF-type carburettors that split and deposited a rather large quantity of fuel under the car. A spare piece of fuel tubing saved the day, again without needing outside assistance. The only other problem was a minor electrical one that resulted in a 35 amp-hour fuse blowing

when the wipers were switched on. Moral - keep an eye on those rubber pipes & make sure you carry a few lengths of various diameters for temporary repairs.

For anyone interested in a touring holiday in Brittany by motorised caravan, Joyce and Cedric have purchased a superb four berth version and will be offering it for hire next year. Fly from, say, Stanstead to Lorient and Cedric will collect you.

Our thanks again to Mike and Hils for organising this superb holiday.

Paul

From: John Coker

Popham Wings & Wheels Day- Aug29th

This event was rather disappointing after some previous years. Making it into a two-day event seemed to dilute the attendance rather, and the failure of the Basingstoke Classic Car Club to even turn up on the Sunday did nothing to help. The Basingstoke club had been appointed by airfield manager Dick Richardson to organise the vehicle attendance at the rally, but it was felt that their insistence on pre-booking and total lack of effort on the day led to a reduced turn out. In spite of these problems a good number of interesting vehicles did attend, and as usual the NG's were the largest single kitcar club present with 4 cars on Saturday and 7

on Sunday.

The weather was better than forecast, Saturday was good and a fair number of aeroplanes dropped in. Sunday was cool, and rather windy for vintage aeroplanes, but still some made the effort to attend. Unfortunately my flying group's Tiger Moth was still undergoing some re-furbishment and was unable to visit Popham.

I think we may be sure that organisation of the vehicles will be placed in more reliable hands next year, and some consideration may be given as to when to hold the rally as there were many events on during the weekend chosen this year which thins out attendance at any one event.

Thanks to all who came and I hope you had a pleasant day.

John

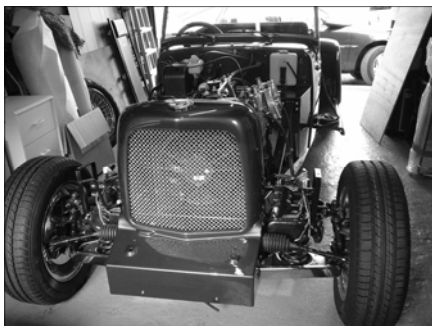
From: Chris Humphreys

TF build - final episode

You may remember my last contribution (two issues ago, May) finished with my unpainted NG TF trundling (sans brakes) along my alleyway. Last issue (August) I failed to submit the next episode as I was occupied setting up a new school computer network - a feeble excuse I know!

I had finally reached the stage where I had fitted almost everything, the holes were all drilled and it was time to have the body

painted. So at the beginning of June I started dismantling. It is frightening how quickly it all comes apart compared to the time taken to build it. In about 3 or 4 days the body was off and everything in pieces, labelled up and in boxes. It helped that I had used ordinary nuts rather than nylocs on the first build up but the nylocs were put aside for the final assembly. My list of things to do with the body removed included filling one or two misplaced holes, rounding off edges and fitting the radiator grill.



July came and the NGOC 25th Anniversary Rally - an event not to be missed! I strongly feel that anyone building an NG ought to be at these rallies as well as owners. I have seen many ideas and gained much valuable advice as well as finding genuine friendship at these occasions. They also serve to encourage the builder to battle on - the reward is enormous!

The following week, I took the body components to be painted. With the body out of the way I ti-



died up the chassis (painting a few battle scars and brackets) and repaired a front lower trunnion seal which had curiously perished and fallen off. Just over a week later, the body was returned. The painter had done a splendid job with two-pack paint in Renault Brooklands Green. Frustratingly, although now in my summer holiday, I still had a week of work to do on my school network.

I also had some more of my jobs to do (including having the speedometer calibrated and some chroming done) but the rebuild soon began in earnest and the pile of boxes transformed into a car once more - a green one this time. Although the holes had been made, it was NOT always a simple matter of bolting things together - some seemed magically moved. Other fixings needed longer bolts or other "adjustment" because seals or piping had been added. Despite these frustrations the rebuild was incredibly satisfying.

Now a bit of a race was on. Would the car be ready for the SVA

test before the end of my summer holiday? My long-suffering wife and I had foregone our normal summer break but it soon became apparent that it was no good saving that "ha'pworth of tar". The interior trim and carpet just would not be rushed so I had to begin my Autumn term and be patient.

I wanted to test the car before taking it to the SVA centre but where could I legally do this? Fortunately my school owns a farm with a private road so I hired a trailer and had a little test drive there followed by an MOT. With the MOT passed (just a couple of adjustments) my confidence was boosted.



Everyone seems to have different things to warn about when it comes to SVA! I had listened to lots of these suggestions and decided to make what I considered a reasonable effort without going overboard. In any case, the SVA centre had told me that, at the first test with kit cars, it is normal to be given a list of things to put right and

then return at a later date.

It was now the end of September and my SVA was finally arranged for the morning of 15th October - I just hoped the weather would hold out as I had not yet fitted the hood. My son came with me (for moral support or the ride?) and it did rain a little but not enough to dampen our spirits - especially when we learnt it had passed! Within a week the car was registered with an age related plate.



So my attention has now turned to the wet weather gear. The hood hoops & hinges, hood bag and tonneau cover have now been fitted although the tonneau's steering wheel "glove" had to be re-sewn in a new position.

I have not yet tuned the carburettors nor finished the hood but I am delighted with the way the NG drives and the thrill it gives every time I go out in it. If you are building an NG, be assured that it IS worth it in the end! Roll on next summer when I shall not have to worry so much about the weather

forecast!

If you would like to see further details of my NG TF build, please visit my web site at www.ngkitcar.co.uk

Chris

From: Ann & Mark Homfray-
Stephens

Midlands Group Shelsley Walsh Event 17th Aug 2003

We had our best turnout of the year so far; Tony & Barbara Wood in their TA, Richard & Jenny Bradley in their TF plus Ken & Annabell Wright in their part-time tin top or should that be part-time convertible depending on the weather? John Simmonds also attended in his VW.

Ann & I attended in Ann's Rickman Ranger as Mushy Pea was still poorly. A minor illness but these are the ones with the extended waiting lists. But we were rapidly approaching our deadline i.e. The Welsh Weekend so Mushy Pea would have to be re-categorised as an urgent minor illness, be moved to the top of the waiting list, and day surgery commenced.

The event consisted of historic racing cars ascending the hill, not as exciting as a full-race event but very interesting. The souls that attack the hill in these vehicles are either very brave or totally insane. The drivers of the cars from the pre-war era sit on the car not in it

and have no seat belts but still achieved speeds in excess of 70 mph. An appreciation of the size of these vehicles can be gauged from their names: Gnat, Wasp, Spider etc. The oldest vehicle up the hill was an Edwardian-era Mercer that achieved a top speed of 40 mph.

This is always a very interesting event for car enthusiasts as you are allowed to wonder around the pits and inspect the vehicles. A number of the owners place information boards by their vehicles explaining the history of their vehicle, modifications and important race results. Also, they serve a filling breakfast at the canteen and there is a bar, all this in the pits area - a very civilised event.

We spent the whole morning session around the pit area and adjacent trade stands before we all met up in the car park for a picnic lunch. After a leisurely lunch we climbed the hill to watch the afternoon session from the spectators' area on the 'S' bend, the most exciting part of the track. Unfortunately the afternoon session was affected by a rain shower, which slowed the participants. These old cars were a hand-full in the dry, many of the drivers power-sliding through the corners but in the wet they had no option but to ease off.

This was only the second event that took place last year, the first was a Sunday lunch in July which was attended by Richard &

Jenny and us. This was a glorious Sunday; we had an excellent lunch while sat outside followed by a drive to Claverley village where the village flower show was in progress. We spent the afternoon wondering round the village on foot admiring the open gardens and floral displays with regular trips into the hostelrys for liquid refreshment.

So this was our NG year to date, not very thrilling by the previous year's standards but enjoyable nonetheless. And we still had the Welsh Weekend to come, hopefully in Mushy Pea.

Ann & Mark



early decision therefore, was that the front seat would need to be removed and Julie would sit on the back seat. This would allow her dress to be spread around the area where the front seat should be. As it turned out on the day, it also gave her a good view of proceedings and the windscreen did not obscure her face on photos - unlike for the groom and me!

Because of the seating plan, we knew that however inclement the weather, we would not be able to put the hood up. We had a contingency to deal with this though - the use of a very large golf umbrella and a very slow driving speed!

Sunday 6th June was the commemoration of D-Day and if any of you can remember, the weather was incredibly hot and still - in fact perfect for what we had planned.

My NG is almost post-box red and, decked with white ribbons, it made me feel really pleased when I delivered my daughter to the church. I had spent many days polishing it and bringing it up to standard. The 12th century church where

From: Alan Cooke

Enough 'NG' to get her to the church on time!

From building my NG in 1990, my daughter Julie had always said that on the day of her wedding she wanted to use the 'red kit car' to get her to the church. Nearly one and a half decades have gone by since those words were uttered - but finally, she took the plunge on June 6th this year and got married.

As they say, a wedding really **is** the bride's day and she **will** have what she wants. The first thing that was bought was her dress. Although of slim build, she chose a dress that had quite a full skirt. As you know, there's not much space in the footwell of the NG. Quite an



they got married was in the grounds of the Jacobean Hall in which they held their reception. Although much younger than its surroundings, the NG really did fit in well.

I was very proud of Julie on her wedding day and she looked splendid. Many people had suggested that the two bridesmaids, my beautiful granddaughters Georgia and Grace, would steal the show. However, the NG came somewhere close, it was the centre of attention once we reached the courtyard of the hall. What was even better was that the NG felt like a member of the family. All of us had played a part in building her and it seemed particularly fitting that the NG was central to celebrations!

Alan

From: Peter Elliott

Sticking Gear Lever

Hard work changing gear - or is it me? These were my thoughts on the way back from visiting our daughter in Winklebury. Faced with the prospect of

removing the gearbox from the car, I carried on for the next few days thinking to myself that maybe it was me or perhaps the gearbox hadn't been warmed up enough! However, I finally had to accept that something was amiss - what did I do wrong when re-building the gearbox? So now what to do? Should I split the engine from the gearbox or remove the whole lot? I decided on the latter which meant removing the radiator together with the cowl and the headlamps.

After disconnecting the prop-shaft I removed the bonnet, exhaust together with manifold, starter motor and dynamo to reduce the weight. With the help of my son, David, and his engine hoist, we removed the engine and gearbox. With the unit on the garage floor, we removed the remote gear-change casing from the gearbox, only to find that the grease that I had applied to the shaft connecting the gear-lever to the g/box had dried up to a hard mass. A quick wash with WD40 and it was completely free - relief!

Due to the fact that it is not possible to get at the shaft whilst in the car, I decided to put a $\frac{1}{4}$ " hole through the casing each side of the shaft, just forward of the gear lever, accessible by removing the gear lever gaiter. If it happens again I can lubricate it with WD40.

With David's help we replaced the engine and gearbox. The last concern was replacing the radia-

tor grill so that it would line up properly with the bonnet; however, it proved to be fairly straightforward needing only a slight tweak to get it right. I think that, being a TD, I would go about it the same way, i.e. remove the whole lot, if fitting a new clutch or similar.

Pete

From: Mike Goodbun

Le Mans Classic

I'll come clean: this story doesn't involve an NG. Well not directly anyway. Even at the grand old age of 25 (NG, not me, yet) our favourite sports car designs didn't quite fit the requirements for Classic Cars magazine's transport to the Le Mans Classic weekend. In my day 'job' as news editor on Classic Cars, something more obviously classic was needed.

For a moment it looked like a Daimler hearse would be our 'interesting but wholly inappropriate' choice for driving to France in. That or a charming but slow Ford Prefect. As it happened, a 1985 Ford RS200, the 200th of Ford's mid-engined, Group B rally homologation specials, was in the right place at the right time, thanks to Ford of Britain's fantastic Heritage collection. With 1.8 litres, 250 bhp, an industrial hairdryer-sized turbo and four-wheel-drive, it's a very different way of travelling every bit as quickly as the last car I drove to Le Mans:

the 4.6-litre, 270bhp, TC V8 my dad owns. Both are glass fibre-bodied I suppose!

With luggage space restricted to a tiny lockable hatch behind the radiator and the ledge behind the bucket seats, I'll never complain about the lack of space in a TC V8 ever again. Four days' worth of essentials duly crammed inside, editor-in-chief Martyn Moore and I set off for Portsmouth.

Driving to the ferry port in a left-hand drive car, with huge blind spots, pelvis-pinning seats and little ventilation, on a hot summer's day, I'd willingly switch to the Prefect, or much rather be in the TC. Oh, and as it's a barely disguised rally car, it won't move off from rest with less than 3500 rpm on the tachometer. And the clutch is either engaged or not, like a very stiff light switch. When the next 45 minutes are spent queuing in stop-start traffic to check-in for the ferry, Moore and I are all but ready to turn round and go home.

Mercifully, the ferry is delayed, and the car behind us is Nick Brimblecombe's MGC roadster - the Grand Touring Club's Le Mans Classic tour organizer. We're the last two cars on the ferry. Le Mans here we come.

This is only the second Le Mans Classic ever held but the event already seems like an essential part of the classic car calendar. It features six grids of cars representing

the most popular eras of Le Mans 24-hours racing. Each grid of cars races three times in 24 hours, including a night race - the action never stops.

Included in the Twenties and Thirties category are such greats as Alfa Romeo 8Cs, 4.5-litre Bentleys, various Bugattis, and six Aston Martins including two Ulsters - the inspiration for the TC's boat-tailed styling. Hubert Fabri and Adrian Stoop pilot one, Jim Campbell goes solo in the other. Thomas Feierabend and Michel Franssen in a BMW 328 are the class of the field, closely followed by a very quick Talbot 105.

Next are Jaguar C-types, AC Aces, Allards and numerous Ferraris. A horrendous sounding accident at more than 130 mph on the Mulsanne straight wipes out Neil Hadfield's C-type, in which he's lucky to survive.

Nick Linney and Jac Nellemann's Lister Jaguar gets consistently good finishes against Jaguar D-types and Peter Hardman's Aston Martin DBR1, but Moore and I are cheering for Classic Cars' resident racing ace Tony Dron, in a Ferrari Dino 246S. Two wins out of three races is a great result that has us drafting 'Classic Cars wins Le Mans' headlines in our fanciful minds. It should have been three out of three, but for a pit lane/safety car mix-up that left leader Dron held in the pits, only to be released into third

place and a race finishing behind the safety car. Never mind!

Seven Ford GT40s make a spectacular sight in the Sixties field, dicing with Lola T70s, Chevrons, and a stunning ex-Mark Donohue Sunoco Penske Ferrari 512M. McLaren Formula One car designer Adrian Newey shares his recently bought GT40 with Paul Osborn, the latter spinning sensationally across the chicane before the famous Dunlop Bridge, in the dark. After five or six complete rotations, he fires it up and crabs across the gravel trap to rapturous applause from the handful of spectators braving the midnight air.

Mistakes tend to get most of the crowd's appreciation, much more so than the winners. Part of that must be down to the commentary making it impossible to work out what's going on, at least the under-informed English radio commentary anyway.

Massive club displays on the circuit's infield, trade stands and liberal access to the paddocks mean there's always something to look at when you want a break from the racing. There are fields of Porsche 911s as you'd expect, but also rows of curious French specials based on Simca and Renault running gear, Morgans, Triumph TRs and an astonishing Iso presence, featuring Rivoltas, Grifos, and Leles.

Whenever the RS200's clamshell front and rear sections

are raised, a trail of onlookers appears out of nowhere in the dusty car park, each eager for a look at what's inside. When you think there's no-one looking, there's always someone that'll appear. It would be rude not to open it again wouldn't it?

It seems the effect is the same when you're in a curious English car abroad. Lift the bonnet and you guarantee yourself a captive audience.

Back to the racing, the final grid of cars is a colourful riot of wings, spoilers and turbos from the Seventies. Porsche 911 RSRs, many suspiciously quick, dominate the bulk of the field. It takes a whole minute for all of the cars to pass through the pit straight, making a mesmerizing noise and a distorted scream recording on my phone.

For the final race of the weekend, it's a battle between Porsche and Alpine. It's like 1978 all over again. When Jean-Pierre Jausaud's Alpine A443 skates across the Tertre Rouge gravel in the final race of the weekend, he surrenders the lead to 1977 24-hours winner Jurgen Barth, in a Porsche 936. A shrug of disappointment from French spectators spreads round the circuit, like a muted Mexican wave.

With so many classes and categories, there isn't really an outright winner. The closest is the Team Prize. It goes to team 25,

which we're delighted to find out, includes a certain Mr Dron. Classic Cars wins Le Mans!

The Le Mans Classic is a laid-back event, with far fewer crowds and little of the Brits abroad on a booze trip mentality of the modern 24-hours, which you'll either love or loathe. The next Le Mans Classic (www.lemansclassic.com) is scheduled for 2006, but if you can't wait that long to see action at the Circuit de la Sarthe, try the modern 24-hour race next June as there will be a Le Mans Legend race for Thirties to Fifties race cars before the main event (www.lemans.org).

Mike

From: Ian Pearse

My Kit car build - part 3

Attached is part 3 of my NG build saga (*the previous 2 were published some time ago, Ed*).

At the end of the last instalment, I had got to the point where the chassis was largely ready to go, and the body was needed to continue with the build. We sold our motorhome, for reasons too complex to go into here, and I got the money needed to start doing some serious spending. The body kit was ordered, as were numerous packages of components to put it all together. The windscreen was included too and I started looking at wheel packages.

Disaster struck a short



while later - the NG company was sold to Imex International, based in the New Forest, who had all sorts of grand plans for building up the business, doing some changes to the design, re-working the manual and all sorts.

In the meantime I was assembling the body. The plan was to fit the body and all the major components, to get all the mounting holes drilled, then take it all apart again and get it painted, and some of the metalwork chromed. The body comprises a GRP body tub, front and rear wings, headlight bowls, rear valence and nose cowl, and aluminium bonnet top and side panels. This all took a lot of complicated measuring and positioning to get everything aligned properly before going anywhere near it with a drill bit. It did look good, though, as it all started to come together.

Then, another disaster. Imex International collapsed. It looks like they tried to take on too much too quickly. I'd just taken delivery of a set of 5 wire wheels and tyres, and ordered the dashboard

when the news came.

Now what? There were no immediate takers for the assets of the company, and the winding up and settling of creditors' money was taking ages. In the meantime, I scratched around to find out who was supplying the components, and managed to identify the steering-wheel suppliers and suppliers of the seats and interiors. I approached both companies and managed to order the various bits, including a strip of leather from the interior to go on the wheel. The seats are beautiful in magnolia leather, with a blue piping to match the bodywork colour. They incorporate the upper seat belt anchorage too, a big chrome loop, and look really smart when in place. Matching leather side panels and small rear seat, and a deep blue carpet should look really good when they finally get installed.

Eventually, another company stepped forward to take on the NG name, Findhorn Cars. I contacted them shortly after the news broke, to discover that, in amongst the assets they'd taken from the previous company, they had a dashboard with my name on it! Someone, somewhere, must have been smiling on me.

More purchases followed - the bank balance was taking a hell of a beating. This was for replacement instruments, the switch gear, loom and other electrical bits, lights, hood frame and stuff like seat belts and so on. I now had a garage full of

loads of bits of car, but progress on the car was a little slow. The reason it was slow was two-fold - I was still hunting for someone to do the paint job, and I was getting a bit nervous about some of the stuff to come, like electrics and so on. This does tend to make you slow down a bit, so you keep telling yourself there's always something else to be doing - does anyone else get that, or is it just me? Finally, I found a painter - Automania, who do the work on the British Airways Classic Cars Association's vans. They gave me a good price, collected the bits and did a superb job - after a bit of a false start. I'd given Vine in the paint shop a picture of the demo vehicle as a starting point for the colour I wanted, and told him I'd been told it was Jaguar Midnight Blue pearlescent. He sprayed a couple of panels then 'phoned me to say it didn't look the same. He got a sample to me of what it looked like, and he was right, it didn't look like the picture at all, even allowing for a bit of colour distortion from the printing process. He also sent me a colour swatch to choose a better colour. I picked the Jaguar Pacific Blue instead, also a pearlescent finish with little bits of mica in it. He re-did the spray, then arranged for the delivery of the bits. They looked fabulous! Even without the final polish, which he said he'll give it once I complete the build.

While the body was away



for spraying, I finished a few bits on the chassis. The main item was the fuel pipe. The original was copper, bent as needed to fit along the chassis from offside rear by the pump to nearside front to get to the filter. On the way, however, I'd kinked it to get it through a chassis member, and I didn't think it was going to work that way - which meant taking it all out and replacing it. Then I heard that NG had used Aeroquip-type hose for one of their demo cars and it had passed the SVA test - it seemed the ideal solution. I ordered the pipe and P-clips and so on and had loads of back-bending, arm-twisting fun removing the old stuff and putting the new hose in. It looks good and is a dream to install - hope it works OK. I also fitted the main electrical supply cable from the battery location (at the rear) to the starter location (at the front) and the supplies to a kill-switch located behind the drivers seat. Once the body was red, in had to start re-fitting all the bits again and then adding the stuff I didn't get to. Lights started to go on, and I

took a deep breath and started putting in the rear loom. It seemed to go OK, apart from having to change quite a few of the connectors, as the connector on the end of the loom didn't match the connection on the light (bound to happen, wasn't it?). There are a couple of wires I haven't managed to fathom out yet, but I'll get there.

The front end has been put together, complete with chromed bonnet hinge, and the headlights are fitted. The next big step at that end is to start fitting the front loom and wiring in of all the ancillaries, e. g. coil, heater, fan, and all the other gubbins under the bonnet. With a bit of help from my father-in-law the front hubs have finally been assembled properly so the wheels have gone back on. I still need to work out a way of mounting the horns, and modifying the spotlight mountings to fit. The pedals are in, but the brake pedal needs to come out again and be bent a little for better clearance. The gear-lever also needs bending rearwards a little to ensure adequate clearance from the dash. The clutch pipe needs to be fitted, and then the throttle cable routed and connected. Heater to be fitted and sealed, and then the pipes added. The interior hasn't been done yet, apart from fitting the battery at the rear, and the kill switch. I've added the studs for the Lift-the-Dot fasteners all around the cockpit opening, which caused a couple of

headaches as a few of them sheared as they were being fitted, and had to be drilled out and re-done. I have had the dashboard out on the kitchen table and the instruments test-fitted and the loom wired in, but that's been removed again while I go about measuring and fitting the dash itself and the formers for the cockpit trim. Once I've got the last few wires inside sorted out I can fit the carpets and start seriously on the inside - seats, belts and so on. There's a lot of gubbins under the scuttle too - washers, wipers and so on - that need to be located and fitted, and the mod to the indicator stalk to do. The big worry looming now is the SVA test - have I done enough of the work to make edges, protrusions and so on safe enough to pass muster? In the meantime, she's looking like a real car, and attracts quite a crowd outside the garage as I roll her out to do a bit more work. Finish date? I don't set targets any more, just take it as it comes. Hopefully before winter sets in, though, as I don't fancy cycling through another set of winter storms.

Ian

From: John Butler

Shelsley Walsh Update

(courtesy of 'Automobile' magazine)

The Midlands Automobile Club (MAC) has a 3-year deal with H & H Classic Auctions to sponsor the MAC's meetings at

Shelsley Walsh. As a further aid to the MAC's quest to buy a 99-year lease for the hill climb venue, H & H is waiving commission on vehicles auctioned on behalf of the Shelsley Trust. This agreement is timely as next year will see the Shelsley Centenary in July.

John



From: Paul Gray

London/Brighton Run 7th Nov

The run this year saw over 450 cars taking part, starting from Hyde Park in pairs from 0730. With their typical cruising speed of about 20 mph, we were able to make a leisurely start in order to view them after they passed the half-way point at Crawley.

We awoke Sunday morning to a typical grey November day with the low-lying mist and a continuous light rain falling. After several "we must be mad to use the NG" thoughts, the decision was made to take the NG but with the roof on and side-screens off. Donna & I headed straight for the destination



pub on the A23 whereas the main NG group met up at Epsom Downs at 0800 and made their way along the veteran cars' route to add a bit of 'atmosphere' to the trip. Having followed this course in previous years, we have been amazed by the number of car clubs and other enthusiasts groups that had arrived early and set up their gazebos and bar-b-q's on favourite bits of grass verge or lay-bys. The atmosphere is superb. The other aspect that makes this such a special day is that it seems that just about every classic or vintage car in the country has been dusted down and brought out for a run in the country.

We had a wet but pleasant enough trip to the pub rendezvous and found that at least 6 other NG's had already arrived and parked behind the pub. With copious supplies of hot coffee on tap in the pub from early morning, the centrally-heated pub lounge was a welcome opportunity to regain some body heat.

The first cars soon started to pass the pub having already



driven from London to Crawley where they had stopped for a coffee break in Market Square thus enabling spectators to view the cars at close quarters. Some of the overtaking manoeuvres that we witnessed were nothing short of suicidal bearing in mind that most of the veteran cars only had simple friction brakes against the back (solid) tyres

which also happened to be wet on the day.

Luckily, the rain held off for the next few hours and, suitably fortified with a bacon sandwich or two, we were able to watch most of the veteran cars in relative comfort. Those less inclined to watch the cars were happy to sit in the cosy pub and a very pleasant atmosphere prevailed.

The rain held off until our return journey which turned out to be as wet as our earlier run. However, this really does make an excellent day out and I commend anybody to join us for next year's event. Just pencil in your diary the first Sunday in November 2005 - see you there!

Paul

New Members - Welcome

MR DAVE TOMLINSON (1308) ()
WRINGTON, BRISTOL

MR DAVID WEBB (1309) (TC)
PENIEL, CARMARTHEN

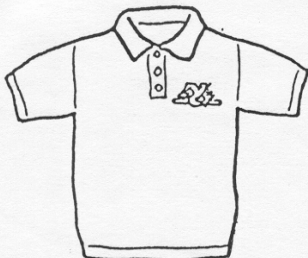
MR RICHARD NEWTON (1310) (TF)
SOUTH CROYDON SURREY

MR CHRIS OLIVER (1311) (TF)
WATERLOOVILLE HANTS

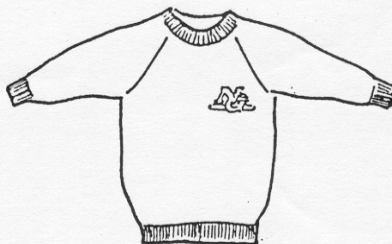
MR STEPHEN SKINNER (1312) (TC)
EAST PRESTON W SUSSEX

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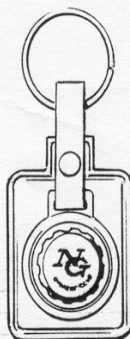


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Club Literature - available from Paul Gray

Prices include P&P unless otherwise stated (cheques payable to NG Owners Club)

MGB/NG Electrics - £1.50 (B.C. Baggerly)

Spraying your own car - £1.50 (P. Fellows)

Compilation of Hints & Tips for Marina-based NGs (63 pages) - £5.00

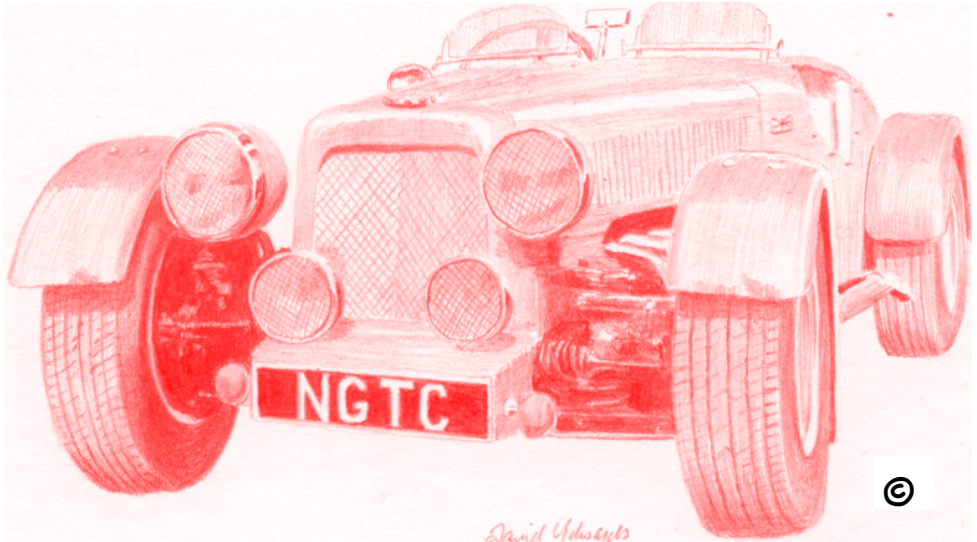
Fitting Doors to TD/TF models - £1.50 (Mel Clark & John Coker)

Lockable Boot for TD/TF models - £1.50 (Brian McCarthy & Chris Wilson)

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CHANGING GEAR



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