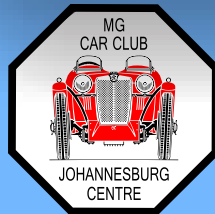


# Thumbs Up!!!



**MG Car Club members take a trip  
down memory lane to wave  
farewell to the Doll House**

**1969**



**2017**

**OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER    MG CAR CLUB    JOHANNESBURG CENTRE**

**September 2017**

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# MG CAR CLUB

## Johannesburg Centre



PO BOX 52336 SAXONWOLD 2132 JOHANNESBURG

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Standard Bank, Rosebank branch 00-43-05: Account Name &# “MG Car Club” 00 203 458 1  
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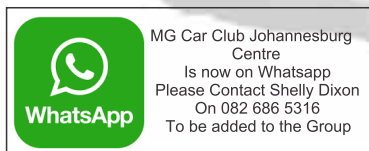
**A Natter and Noggin is normally held on the first Thursday of each month at 8pm**

The Old Edwardian Club, Houghton.

For more details see Motoring Calendar in this issue of “Thumb's Up!

Club Runs are normally held on the second Sunday of each month.

**AFFILIATED TO THE MG CAR CLUB -- ABINGDON-ON-THAMES - ENGLAND**



## **MG WEBSITES**

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### **INDEMNITY**

*All members, their spouses, partners, participating family and friends are required to sign an indemnity form.*

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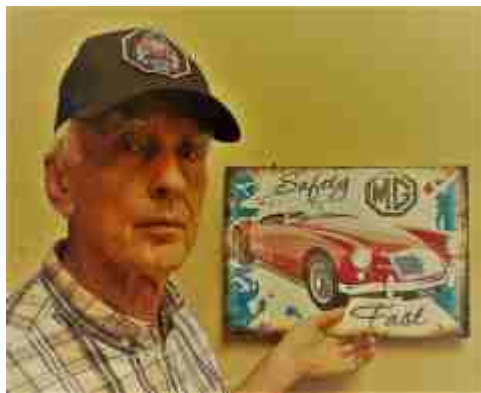
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# From the Chair



Sadly, our classic car community has lost a man who was larger than life, George Shipway. George officiated in our quiz evenings and had an encyclopedic knowledge of old cars. He was a collector of cars, treasurer of SAMCA amongst many other charitable involvements. One of the last interfaces I had with him was at the entrance gate of Angela's Picnic where he collected the donations for Hospice and shortly after the picnic he was in contact with me about joining us on our weekend away to Fouriesburg and Sandstone- in one of those conversations he indicated that he wanted to join the MGCC. George will be remembered for his knowledge, dedication, humour and commitment.

Last month when I wrote about our breakfast at the Irene Dairy Farm (a subdivision of the original farm - Grootkloof) I tried to link the Van Der Byl family who have owned and run the farm for 5 generations to Jan Smuts who owned the adjacent subdivision of the farm. Google showed me that a Van Der Byl did serve on the Smuts cabinet. Out of the blue I received an email from one of our international readers..... in the Netherlands filling in the gaps and joining the dots. I have copied it for your interest. We would not have had the international readership of Thumbs Up had we not made the change to publishing the magazine on line.

*"Hi Bruce,*

*In a recent editorial in Thumbs Up you speculated about whether the Van der Byl in Smuts' Cabinet was of the Irene Dairy Farm Van der Byls.*

*Major Piet van der Byl who was in Smuts' Cabinet was not from Irene, but from the Van der Byl family farm near Napier/Bredasdorp in the Western Cape. He had a distinguished First World War record and was the Member of Parliament for Bredasdorp for many years, but voted out in the 1948 election. He represented the United Party ("Sappe"), my grandfather was an ardent nationalist who worked for the National Party in the election! His son, PK, was a minister in the UDI Cabinet in the then Rhodesia. Both attended Oxford University.*

*The Van der Byl who bought Irene, was, I think, Major Van der Byl's younger brother. Vince van der Byl, the cricketer, is one of the Irene Van der Byls.*

*I am not a member of the club, and am presently working in The Netherlands. However, I will buy a B when I am back, and join up!*

*Regards Andre Stemmet*

*The Hague, Legal Counsellor, DIRCO"*

Our August Sunday run to Miss Grace in Eikenhoff south of Johannesburg kicked off at Old Eds and proceeded to the Doll House for a photo opportunity. Last month we posted a newspaper clipping and report that it is about to be demolished and fortuitously the Sunday Times that day had an article on it. Louis Botha Avenue has changed dramatically over the years. Our younger generation would not know that it was once the main arterial to Pretoria and the north- right now a rapid transit bus system- Ria Via- is being established. Sadly, progress also involves change and a developer is about to demolish this little landmark. Our Face Book page and the WhatsApp group have extensive cover of this. We have also received a number of 'likes' from local and international readers. The lunch was well attended and the proprietor of the venue went out of her way to look after us.

We had invited the Ekurhuleni Fire Chief to speak at our August Natter and Noggin on fire but for some reason he just didn't pitch! Fortunately I had collected some material and photos of recent fires to support his talk, so we ad-libbed and managed without him. Our houses and cars are a constant fire risk and I believe the members were made aware of these dangers and the precautions that can be taken to reduce the risks. Various suggestions that were made by our members are worth listing here, inter alia:

- Have all your important documents in one file so there is no delay if you have to get out of your house in a hurry- there is no time for making decisions and searching in the dark.
- There is no time for packing. Shoes and a blanket are essential - the rest is covered by insurance- get out. One of the amusing stories illustrating this, was from Jeanne who when they had to be evacuated from a hotel asked what she should wear!
- Most likely causes of house fires are- electric heaters, irons and leaving food on the stove unattended. A kitchen should have a fire extinguisher, smoke alarm and a fire blanket. The only truly safe electrical appliance is one that is unplugged. A lightning surge can jump the small gap in the on off switch.
- Remember that the electricity trips and the water in the pipes boils when a house is on fire. Your hose pipe will only blow steam! Smoke inhalation is the killer, if you are in bed roll over onto the floor and stay below the smoke. Have keys in the doors or thumb turns so you don't have to look for keys by feel in the smoke- security gates can be disastrous.
- Gas appliances, heaters, cookers etc. need periodic inspection and maintenance. We have discussed the dangers of car fires in previous editions - advice is that a car not used daily should have a battery cut- off switch.
- Don't drive into smoke, the car in front of you may have stopped. Flames are sucked through the radiator and the solder melts. Cars consume lots of air with its oxygen content supporting combustion and your car is likely to stall in dense smoke devoid of oxygen.
- Have a COMPLIANT fire extinguisher in every car (classic or modern) which is accessible. It can be used to break a window if, as in the case of a Kuga, the electrics fail in a fire.
- Take a walk in the road outside your house and locate the fire hydrant connection. This could save valuable time if you can point it out to the fire crew when they arrive. It is usually near an intersection/stop sign and there should be a cats-eye in the road adjacent to the connection but these are often long gone.

Take care.  
Bruce

# TECHNICAL

*Submitted by Bruce*

## AUTO DETECTIVE

Progress requires change! We have recently moved to fibre. How quickly we have gone from Dial Up to 3G, 4G, ADSL and now to Fibre. Fibre has enabled me to download and stream movies and series -FREE! We recently watched a remake of Conan Doyle's Sherlock. Like Inspector Clouseau his observations and deductions are fantastic. This brought me to think about the clues that are available to the mechanic and indeed, many which you should be aware of as drivers.

We recently had a tyre expert talk at a Noggin and he took us through the tyre wear patterns that indicate under and over inflation, alignment and overloading. A soft or underinflated tyre is easy to spot. Truckers in their 18 wheelers are trained to stop periodically (two hours recommended) and to walk around the vehicle (also keeps them awake!) hitting each tyre with an iron bar or pipe to hear if there is a flat or soft tyre. This is rather like the Tapper, with his long handled ball peen hammer on the trains checking for a cracked wheel. Truck tyres are expensive and difficult to change on the side if the road and worth finding a soft one before it runs flat.

I once drove into an auto electrical workshop to sort out a dodgy alternator and the technician could tell what was wrong before I spoke to him. Sounds are important to the mechanic. Engine noises and rattles can indicate broken rings, piston slap, bearing knocks-small ends, big ends and mains.

Misfires and back fires can indicate ignition problems. I have frequently had calls from members (and non-members) asking for advice on how to start their cars. My first question is what have you done? More often than not they have removed the distributor and got it back wrong.

Temperature tells the detective lots. A hot wheel hub can be a failed wheel bearing or binding brake (you can smell that too!). Engine temperature can be many things, failed thermostat; a mechanic may hold the top hose to compare the temperature with the temperature of the radiator, too far retarded ignition timing, too lean a fuel air mix.

While we still had petrol with lead in it the colour of the exhaust pipe gave the detective all sorts of information. Light dove grey was the ideal colour indicating correct fuel mixture and ignition timing, a black sooty colour could indicate worn piston rings, over retarded ignition dirty air cleaner. Today's lead free petrol is a bit misleading.

Electric wires are coloured - the MG Lucas colour code helps the mechanic trace circuits. White wires for the ignition circuit which are fused and heavy brown wires that are unfused for the charging circuit, amp meter and hooter etc, a discolored or stiff wire can indicate the over loading of the circuit and possible the incorrect fuse rating with the fuse not protecting the wire. Remember Red is positive and Black is negative. On the MGs with alternators (Bs and later models and those earlier models converted from Generator to Alternator) the negative pole on the battery is connected to the body.

A milky white oil in the sump or oil in the radiator water tell of a cylinder head problem. Truck and earthmoving operators send oil samples to a laboratory for analysis rather like your physician sending blood samples to the laboratory. The analysis can pick up many things before they require expensive overhauls and down time.

This all brings me to exposing you to what can be read from the spark plugs. Again, Google provided some excellent images which are found below. Please remember to keep your plugs in order when you remove them. Each plug tells the condition of its particular cylinder. The next time you see your mechanic remove a plug just watch him studying it. This is the real forensic work! You may like to Google these for clearer images.

## Spark Plugs for petrol engines.



**Normal** - Grey brown deposits. Lightly coated core nose. Plug freely seated in engine, and engine in good condition.



**Oil Fouling** - Wet, oily deposits. Fault: worn valve/seal rings or valve guides; sometimes occurs (temporarily) during running in period.



**Heavy Deposits** - A build up of crusty deposits, light grey sandy colour in appearance. Fault: often caused by worn valve guides, excessive use of upper cylinder lubricant, or using too long periods.



**Overheating** - Electrodes have glazed appearance, core nose very white - fine pockmarks. Fault: plug overheating. Check plug heat range, ignition timing, fuel mixture (not weak).



**Lean Mixture** - Plug insulator firing tip appears yellow to green/yellow and shiny in appearance. Fault: often caused by incorrect carburettion, excessive idling followed by short acceleration. Also check ignition timing.



**Electrode Damage** - Electrodes turned away; core nose has turned grey/black. Fault: pre-ignition. Check for correct heat range and air/fuel (enriching).



**Carbon Fouling** - Grey black, waxy deposits. Fault: over-rich fuel mixture. Check carburettor mixture settings, fuel level, choke operation, or filter.



**Spilt Core Nose** - Dike, appears initially as a crack. Fault: degradation or wrong gas-sealing technique. Check: ignition timing, timing system, fuel mixture (not weak).

## Common spark plug conditions



### NORMAL

**Symptoms:** Shown in grey/white metal and slight pockmarks area. Correct heat range for engine and operating conditions.  
**Recommendation:** When new spark plugs are installed, replace with plugs of the same heat range.



### NONE

**Symptoms:** Sparked electrode with no visible deposits or pockmarks. No visible signs of wear. No visible signs of wear. No visible signs of wear.



### CARBON DEPOSITS

**Symptoms:** Dry, dark, flaking deposits on the electrode and insulator. No visible signs of wear. No visible signs of wear.



### KIM DEPOSITS

**Symptoms:** High temperature deposits on the electrode and insulator. No visible signs of wear. No visible signs of wear.



### OIL DEPOSITS

**Symptoms:** Dry, dark, flaking deposits on the electrode and insulator. No visible signs of wear. No visible signs of wear.



### GAP EROSION

**Symptoms:** The electrode is eroded. The gap is increased. The gap is increased. The gap is increased.



### TOO HOT

**Symptoms:** Shown in grey/white metal and slight pockmarks area. Correct heat range for engine and operating conditions.  
**Recommendation:** When new spark plugs are installed, replace with plugs of the same heat range.



### PRE-IGNITION

**Symptoms:** Sparked electrode with no visible deposits or pockmarks. No visible signs of wear. No visible signs of wear.



### HIGH SPEED GLAZING

**Symptoms:** High temperature deposits on the electrode and insulator. No visible signs of wear. No visible signs of wear.



### OVERHEATING

**Symptoms:** Sparked electrode with no visible deposits or pockmarks. No visible signs of wear. No visible signs of wear.



### MECHANICAL DAMAGE

**Symptoms:** The electrode is eroded. The gap is increased. The gap is increased. The gap is increased.



# Autonomous and electric powered cars

I'm fascinated by the fast-changing world of technology, especially in the field of motoring.

What inspired me to write this article was a motoring programme shown this week about how a Tesla and a Mercedes E Class, both kitted out with autonomous driving technology, drove themselves around a thirty mile mixed route in the San Francisco Bay area with only 10% driver involvement for the odd minor adjustments.

The show ended one step further with a visit the Ford testing grounds, where the journalist seated in the rear gave a verbal request and destination.

The Ford Fusion figured out its own route and did the job without any input by the accompanying test engineer.

This was done on private roads since no legislation exists – YET.

The exponential curve of technological advancement will mean that there will be autonomous electric vehicles on the road overseas by 2020 - maybe sooner.

From a quote by author Udo Gollub in Berlin, autonomous cars will reduce lives lost in motor accidents significantly from one accident every 100 000kms to one accident every 10 million km.

He also states that insurance companies will experience a massive loss of business due to these results.

So, I would be terrified if I chose a career in the taxi driving business. Imagine the lives saved in taxi related accidents in South Africa alone.



Now, don't get me wrong, I'm an avid motoring enthusiast and I'll be first in line to hear a car with a V8 motor start up or hear the screaming cry of a Ferrari using flat plane crank technology to achieve those high revs, but let's face it, it is all so complex – spare a thought for the poor mechanic when a six year old Audi R8 V10 arrives on his forecourt, suffering from an intermittent overheating gremlin! Where does he start?

Christmas 2014, I found myself dutifully following my wife around an American shopping mall – all much the same as in SA I can assure you ... just the names are different.

I really did not expect to find a Tesla motor showroom on the second floor between a Lindt Chocolate shop and a Swarovski Diamond showroom.

On display? A black Tesla Model S. Absolutely beautiful.



Fantastic performance and 420km range for the 85kWh motor. I've never seen such a huge info-screen on any car since.

I believe a much more affordable Model 3 will be on the floor by the end of 2017.

Notwithstanding that release date, over 350 000 reservations have been placed.

What really caught my eye was the display of an aluminium chassis, with the wheels, brakes, suspension and steering system and the *piece de resistance*: the rear mounted electric drive motor in a cradle with two cable attached!

As simple as that.

No complex radiators and water pipes, no air cleaner, oil filter, twin turbos, no maze of pipes and cables.

Simplicity itself.

There is a dual motor all-wheel drive available too.

Roll on the future!

*Mike Gilchrist.*

*January 2017*

*The Triumph Club.*



# Nrman Talks!

## THANK YOU ALL

*I would like to express my sincere thanks to all those who visited me, sent cards and phoned, I really was thrilled by it all!*

*I was indeed humbled when the first person to march into the ward was Robin Clarke, knowing just what he went through in hospital only months earlier- closely followed by Stewart Cunninghame who towering above me demanded- "what the hell is the matter with you" Pretty daunting from someone 20 years your senior. John Mac as always- like Stokes was on the scrounge for something to eat and when he told me that Barry "sideways" Sidery Smith had died left me shattered. But thankfully I am home with the world's best nurse and will recover  
Thank you*

## THE LAST SILVERSTONE

The trip to the UK for my sister Sandra's birthday was MaGical. On boarding our flight, we were moved 40 rows closer to the front and greeted with a glass of champagne and a row to ourselves with massive legroom. The gentleman across the aisle was from Mbabane and a friend of John Hayter- small world! The Gammons had given us a glorious silver TF with 15-inch wheels, and as it was still to be cleaned we were whisked home in a GS for a lie down before a very specially laid on dinner with the 8 most influential people in the MG Car Club. Seated opposite President John Day I noticed that he had a Harrier Jump Jet on his tie. I asked him if the tie had any special significance - "well I designed the intakes" he replied. Talk about humbling! A glorious evening with special people, and I met the new chairman Ian Quarrington- a rugby nut- just great!

Early next morning it was off to Scotland via Jedburgh on a road Ron insisted we use and it was fantastic. We arrived at Sandra's a year early - as she was at pains to repeat -she was 74 and not 75. Did I tell you I failed maths in matric? The week after was spent up and down the Clyde to Rosyth, Dunoon by ferries down to Trump's Turnberry and Calzean Castle- then to Rest and Be Thankful-Dumbarton and Holylock. Then it was time to say farewell and for Pat to do a grand navigation job south to Sports and Vintage for the balance of my J2 bits.

Son Jamie Dowley told me his father had followed my lead and "gone cruising"- then it was off south to Melbourne and Rugby- where the game began- before Silverstone. In spite of the incredible job Ron does organizing the racing, without the huge entry of "radicals" they cannot hope to come out in the black. We had been given a ticket to park in the paddock- and as we arrived a chap ran over and beckoned me to follow which I did. Reversed in as instructed and when I hopped out said "okay Barry?" then "Oh you're not Barry!" Just then an identical silver TF pulled into the space in front of me and out popped Barry Siddery - Smith." Hello Norman- over again I see." We shook hands chatted about Spa- and parted. Later that day- once the Gammons had cleared the paperwork we met at their Mini Winni- set the table outside and had a glorious meal- our two days of meeting and greeting friends from the USA, Canada, Aussie and New Zealand and of course Bernard & Andre, Walter & Brigitte, Roy Lawcock, Anabel & Gerry, Brown and Rus Swift were over.

All that remained was a glorious drive home in the dusk behind the Mini Winni and the following day a flight for Pat and me in the Leopard Moth with Pat spotting elephants over Woburn and then R101 hanger and the NEW airship. After lunch the next day Ron and Val took us in another MG GS to Heathrow and it was all over, Ron and Val have been such special friends since 1980 and they really made this trip so very special. We could not thank them enough.



Lunch at

# Miss Grace

*An enclave to good food & peaceful dining - very different in appearance to the rest of Eikenhof*



*Madame Muck*



*de Castro Jnr; Renzo & Taryn depart for Australia during September & we wish them the best of success*



*Welcome to Miss Grace (side entrance via the farm stall)*



*Paul & Peter in deep thought*



*The Trollope and Burt families*

*Good to see Anneke & Rudi before they head off on Roger's forthcoming tour*



*Bruce sorting out the attendance register*



*Young & future custodians of the MG brand; James Kelly & Daniel de Castro with their mums Wendy and Taryn*





# THE ADVENTURES OF MG TC2456

England – South Africa – England

By Roger Bateman

Part two of the adventure

Continued from the August edition:

*Roger Bateman has made a special plea for anyone who can fill in other details of this car prior to 1967 to let him know. [Rogerbateman@rocketmail.com](mailto:Rogerbateman@rocketmail.com). The car was originally registered TP 188-354 before the new numbering system changed it to DND 787T This would help me work back to 1947!*

## THE QUEST CONTINUES - SOUTH AFRICA

To make any progress at all, I had to find some way to trace the history in South Africa - but how? I knew nothing of the country and certainly didn't know anyone who lived there. I tried to find out information from the UK Customs and the South African Registration authorities, but neither could help.

After some thought, I decided to contact the MG Car Club of South Africa. From the import documents I knew the old South African registration number was DND 787T, and hoped someone might recognise it. From various sources I found the names of a couple of people in regional MG clubs, but they were unable to produce any results beyond telling me that the number plate was a Transvaal registration.

Then a thought occurred to me: if any family remain of the previous owners South Africa, they may well not be MG enthusiasts, let alone car enthusiasts, and therefore would not be active in the MG scene today. This led on to the bright idea that I should write to the Johannesburg Star, one of the Transvaal (now Gauteng) mainstream newspapers.

They published my letter and, in due course, I was excited to receive an email from Kevin Loader whose wife had seen the paper. They are members of the MG Car Club Johannesburg Centre. He kindly said he'd see what he could do to help. This resulted in TC2456's picture appearing on the cover of the January 2016 issue of their club magazine, Thumbs Up!, plus an article outlining my quest inside.

Despite very high hopes that this would crack the problem, nothing came of it.

Then, after a while, I suddenly remembered that in my last job working for a vintage Bentley restorer, we had a customer who specialised in researching vehicle histories. I got in touch with him, not realising that he had originated from the Eastern Cape of South Africa himself. He was enthusiastic and gave me a wealth of suggestions how to go about it, including such contacts as Dr Joan Parker who maintains a register of MGs in South Africa.

Dr Parker replied saying she only kept details of TDs but suggested I contact the Secretary of the Johannesburg MG Car Club (who had, of course, already unsuccessfully published my plea in their Thumbs Up! magazine). Of course, I did so, and their club chairman, Bruce Dixon, got in touch to say he would try to find out the ownership history of DND 787T.

Well - what Bruce did, and how he did it, I have no idea. I probably shouldn't know either, but I am extraordinarily grateful to him! Within a couple of weeks he sent me a laconic message informing me that the name of the last registered owner was J. Kat.

Bingo!

Bruce had also discovered his ID Number which indicated that he was 85 years old in 2016. But, unfortunately, no contact details were available through the normal channels.

But now I had a name to toy with, a real person who had owned TC2456, and something to get my teeth into. However, considering his age, I had to realistically consider that he might no longer be alive. After much Googling, attacking the problem from different angles, I discovered that there was a firm of quantity surveyors in Pretoria called J Kat and Associates. This being such an unusual name, there had to be some connection. There was a string of phone numbers for this firm in the yellow pages - none of which worked except one, but that went unanswered.

Then tackling it from the quantity surveyor angle, I found that J Kat and Associates were listed as members of the Association of South African Quantity Surveyors. Their helpful secretary confirmed that the firm's proprietor, Mr Jacob Kat, was indeed a still member but now retired (at 85, so I should hope!). She wouldn't pass me his contact details for confidentiality reasons, but agreed to ask him if he would speak with me. In due course I was told that if he had indeed owned the car, he would be pleased to do so. Would I please send details and a photo to pass on to him? This I did with alacrity and waited for a response.

But the response was stony silence. By now it was mid-December 2016 and I didn't realise that South Africa virtually shuts down for a month at Christmas. I bided my time impatiently until January 12, and then followed up with the Association. I was told that Mr Kat's memory is not as sharp as it used to be and he couldn't recall the car, so they were regretfully unable to do any more to help me.

So, what next? I felt I had hit a brick wall again.

I decided to try the unanswered phone number for J Kat & Associates periodically at different times of the day, and eventually the phone was picked up by a courteous gentleman who replied, yes, he was indeed Mr Kat. He was intrigued by my quest, but was very apologetic that he couldn't remember this MG. However, he told me that cars were his passion, particularly MGs and Jaguars.

He then suggested that I talk with his daughter, Ingrid, who might be able to help. He gave me her mobile number, which I rang, only to discover to my astonishment that she lives in London UK. Even more remarkable, at that very moment she was packing to fly to South Africa to visit her father, and she agreed to see what she could find out about TC2456.

A day or two later and I would have missed her!

Ingrid was incredibly helpful, despite being very busy with family matters while she was in South Africa. She was there for 2 or 3 weeks and emailed me periodically with information she had discovered. First came a series of photos taken in the 1980s of her father with the MG.



*Jacob Kat and canine assistant working on TC2456 in August 1980*

There can be no doubt that it is the same car as there are some features that are still present on the car today, including the one-off indicator lights that are unique.

*Note the unique indicator lamps, made in Pinetown, South Africa, which are still on the car today. The horn and fog lamp were fitted in these positions on export cars but reversed for the UK.*



Then, to my astonishment, a photo of a TC wooden dashboard arrived in my inbox with the message that it belonged to TC2456 and had been found displayed over Jacob's fireplace.



*The photo from Ingrid of the wooden dashboard that had been displayed over Jacob Kat's fireplace for three decades. This style was fitted to all TCs until replaced with a Rexine covered panel at about TC5000.*

Ingrid promised bring the dashboard back as hand luggage along with some documents she had found! She was as good as her word and I went to visit her in London to collect them. No way was I going to entrust them to couriers! The documents were remarkable in that they were the key to unlocking the history of the car from 1967 right up to when it was shipped to the UK in 1986, helping to reveal the following fascinating story.....

To be continued

# Here is my 27 years with the MGA

Copyright 1999 Bob Wing

(Bob passed away in March of 2002. We'll miss him a lot at Electrifying Times... Do read *PASSING OF A PIONEER* by Don McGrath. R.I.P. Bob.)

## ***CONVERSION OF A MGA TO A ZERO POLLUTION ELECTRIC CAR***

I now look back on the great gas shortage of 1973, with its long lines at service stations and rising fuel costs, as a positive influence. It motivated me to act on a long-standing desire to have a battery powered electric car for local travel. My job in Menlo Park, California was 1/2 mile from home and offered an ideal situation for electric vehicle application. But I did not want just any electric vehicle, I wanted a rag top --- something that did not look like other small sport cars on the road. Then I stumbled across a promising listing in a trade paper: \$100 for a '59 MGA roadster, or what was left of it after two inoperative MGAs were rebuilt into one operational gas car. Since an internal combustion engine was not required and the body was straight, it was just the right car for my conversion plan.

Now that I had made my electric vehicle commitment it was time to obtain some expert opinion. I'd been thinking about joining the Electric Auto Association for some months and now it was time to take action. At monthly chapter meetings and rallies I was able to get enough information and helpful suggestions to proceed. Many ideas were of course contradictory but one could see operating EVs with different controls, battery count and motors.

Armed with my newly acquired knowledge I started my conversion project. I cleared the engine compartment, rebuilt the brake system, replaced the worn differential, removed the spare tyre (since battery space was limited), gas tank, heater and other parts not needed. As this is a British car the Lucas wiring had deteriorated and needed replacement. I saved the gas tank in case a hybrid engine or heater later was needed later.

I knew that on occasion I was bound to find myself on the road with dead batteries. MGAs are notoriously hard to find any part of the frame for towing support. However it was possible to make a false front axle of 1 1/2 inch galvanized pipe with caps at each end and attached it with "U" bolts to the front bumper supports. This false axle made a secure connection for a VW tow bar. I've towed the MGA over 3000 miles N and S Interstate 5.

Next, I collected all the mechanical and electrical parts required for the conversion except for the batteries. I purchased them last so they would be fresh. (Always insist that all the batteries are from the same batch on the same manufacturing date.) Now was the time to plan for the location of the wiring, motor mounts, controller, on-board battery charger and batteries. Batteries should be mounted outside the passenger compartment for the safety of the occupants.

My first traction motor was a surplus aircraft starter-generator and 200 amp contactors (relays) from wing-flap controllers, with a 24/48 volt series/parallel battery pack. Speed control and were not satisfactory on my electric MGA. But four motors and three controllers later I found the optimum system I wanted: 14 Trojan 6-volt golf cart batteries with a range of 24 miles between charges. The traction motor was mounted on an adaptor plate on the clutch bell housing with the flywheel mounted on the electric motor shaft. The 5-speed gear box was kept for a safety mechanical disconnect and to reverse without the use of another relay as contactors are troublesome. Most of my forward driving is done in 2d and 3rd gear, 1st being used for steep hills.



My MGA can reach 25 mph in 2nd, 45 in 3rd and 63 in 4th on the level ground. I don't use the clutch when starting or stopping, only when shifting. If the entire battery pack is connected directly across the motor without a current limiting device something is going to break and it is usually one or both drive axles due to the high starting torque of an electric motor.

Before I found my optimum system I went through three motor-generators. The first two were very cheap and had been used in a mechanical experiment as I found out later. The drive shafts had been twisted off and the seller had welded on a new ones. When power was applied under load the motor sounded like a police siren as the armature rubbed the stator. I had to coast any time a police car came into view. The third used starter-generator had very noisy brushes and the most efficient speed was 7000 rpm, which was beyond the red-line on the MGA. Finally, I installed a solid state controller and a new 20 hp Prestolite motor designed for EV application. It I had installed it initially many hours and dollars would have been saved. The result of my research and effort is now a valuable second car, useful for errands. Occasionally I have to borrow a cup of electricity to get home but I have never had to grind the valves, install a timing belt, change the oil, install a new starter or alternator.

Moving to Oregon in 1979 with California plates made it difficult to meet any one outside of business contacts. But I was invited to show the MGA at the Seattle 1979 Environmental Faire for six days and appeared on a 1/2 hour TV interview which included a video of the car being driven to the Faire. The Bonneville Power Administration had an ElectraVan there also. About 260 people left their names and addresses indicating interest in joining an electric vehicle club. But it was impractical for me to be active in a new group as I lived 170 miles south. The Seattle Electric

Vehicle Association was being formed so I gave the organizers my list and this group is still functioning today and is affiliated with the EAA. I still try to get the the annual Seattle EV rally as there are always new EV ideas and and old friends to see.

My MGA has been shown at various shopping centers and on the Oregon PBS TV stations. Nearer my home I organized a Salem Chapter of the EAA with monthly meetings and a quarterly workshop on Saturday mornings in my garage. I found a '73 Subaru coupe with a blown engine and with volunteer help from the EAA members we completed the conversion. In time I founded additional EAA chapters in Portland, Albany-Corvallis and Medford.

in 1982 we moved to Inverness north of San Francisco and towed three EVs, one at a time, 600+ miles south. My electric cars had 14 6-Volt batteries with maximum range at 75 degrees F of 25 miles on a charge. An ambient temperature of 40 degrees F cuts the range about in half if there is any hill climbing unless the recharging is done just prior to use to warm the batteries. The MGA gets two miles per kilowatt-hour and at our present rate that is 7.9 cents per mile. With only one moving part in the motor, maintenance is minimal but water must be added to the batteries or at least checked monthly. It is really a pleasure to go to the gas station only to get air for the tires.

I usually use the MGA each day to pick up the mail at the Post Office or for other errands.

There are lots of day visitors in the area since we are surrounded by Point Reyes National Seashore and the Tomales Bay State Park. Some people stop to shop in Inverness and immediately notice the quiet operation of the MGA. At least one person a week says "Is that a '59, I had one just like that." I have to respond "no, not just like mine." They insist and then I open the hood.

The electric vehicle cost \$4500 to complete over a five year period, in today's market it could be \$8,000, less you find a used EV for parts. There were no finance charges as the monthly payments consisted of buying parts.

The traction batteries have lasted 7 to 9 years but the replacement can be a major expense. But one always hopes for a now light-weight battery which will permit twice the mileage at half the weight. The MGA with gasoline engine weighed 1,995 pounds while the electric version weighed in at 2,950.

For those of you who have solar, hydraulic or wind power the EV can be can be used as the supplementary battery pack for your home. The EV is also useful for emergency power. In west Marin county we lost commercial power for four days during the 1982 storm and 6-8 hour blackouts occur each year. During the blackout I run 100-watt reading lights in the house from the traction battery pack.

Car conversions to battery operation can be accomplished by most anyone who can use common tools with some technical skill. Perhaps the quickest way to obtain the technical help is to join the Electric Auto Association, Membership is \$25 per year for 12 monthly issues of the international newsletter and notices of chapter meetings.

The future of EVs is now much more promising in California with the Air Quality Management Control Districts setting standards to reduce air pollution. Of the 23 million registered motor vehicles in California, about 4,000 are registered as electrics according to the California Department of Motor Vehicles. High power density batteries at a reasonable price are still at least five years away we are told -- but the battery industry has been telling us that for at least five decades. Now, at least the four year

\$260 million public-private venture has been funded to develop better batteries. The United States Advanced Battery Consortium is one of several joint research projects recently initiated by Chrysler, General Motors, Ford and the Electric Power Research Institute, with the U.S. Department of Energy providing one half of the funding.. Before 1915 more than one-half of all the motor cars on the road were electrics. I can't help but wonder when we will see that ratio in the urban areas again, but improved batteries at reasonable cost could speed the change from internal combustion to electric vehicles.

[The following report previously appeared on the Internet EV List, read by about 800 free subscribers around the world. It has brought a number of people online talking of their experiences with H2s and H3s. It also appeared in the GLEAN/EVNews Magazine in the July & November 1996 issues.]

ZAPI H2 now installed in my '59 MGA Roadster

The ZAPI H2 controller is working in the traction mode. I took the MGA out for 25 miles over several 400 foot hills to Abbotts Lagoon and North Beach on the Pt. Reyes National Seashore. The hills are still green on the Pacific Ocean with the high-low temperature reading in San Francisco of 62° F to 51° F. And I successfully passed the hill climb where my 11 year old controller blew up several weeks ago. Compared to my 4 previous controllers the first thing I notice is that you can creep when starting. Although the 5k ohm linear pot is the same one I used with other controllers, the ZAPI start program provides different speed curves so the forward start can be very slow, half the speed of walking but moves up quickly to full current. And the controller is silent, I can hear the microswitch on the throttle pedal. No Curtis 1231C whine!

I have been waiting for regen since I first converted my '59 MGA Roadster in 1972. There are streets with 12 to 20% grades which I can easily go up but I do not trust my drum brakes on the long down hill.

After talking in person and by email with Gary Flo of InnEVations, he said to me three times 'talk to Greg McCrea,' Electric Conversions in Sacramento CA who drives with a regen H2 in his own car

We had just the 8 blinks so then it was for us to try to interpret the diagnosis page. We had installed the main contactor ahead of the traction positive feed and the ZAPI wanted it controlled just ahead of the motor with the B+ plus on at the controller at all times.

All the H2 contactor solenoids work on traction battery voltage so I used a 96 volt relay to control my 12 VDC Albright. With my 16 - 12 volt deep-cycle Optimas with BAT Ultra-Force catalyst connected in series-parallel, I get good acceleration for the two lane county roads through hilly terrain.

The H2 400 is the best controller I have ever used, it is flexible, can be reprogrammed in the future and can be used in other applications. And the price is right, less than half the cost of other controllers I considered, none of which would give me regen at this time. I recommend it for any light duty pickup or car as an ICE weighing under about 2400 pounds. My MGA weighed 1995# initially, now 2500# with equal weight on each axle. The H2 600 would be best for cars up to 50% heavier.

I have been running my Italian ZAPI H2 400 amp 96 VDC controller in the standard traction mode since June 1996. The ZAPI 400 amp was considerably less expensive even with shipping from Italy added than other controllers for standard traction.

My 11 year old controller had given up so I was in the market for a new one, but I wanted one that did not squeal and also had regenerative braking. My only choice was the ZAPI H2, a well proven controller for pumps, lift trucks and EVs in Europe.

For regenerative braking there is the added cost of additional contactors. In mid-October the Albright contactors arrived from the UK, they ship about every 6 weeks but the August vacations got in the way. For regen you need a changeover contactor (single pole-double throw) and reversing contactor (doubled pole-double throw) at \$190 and \$329 respectively. This certainly adds to the cost of regen. But I require regen braking as the MGA has drum brakes all around for the paved roads on hills in my neighborhood, to 18% on hills 400 to 1000 feet above sea level.

When driving with the ZAPI the car is in free wheeling as long as the throttle is just barely on. With the release of the throttle microswitch the mode is that of compression on an ICE engine. Then with the use of the brake pedal stop light switch connected to a relay a further speed reduction occurs by putting a larger regen current back in to the battery pack.

For regen to work without damage to the motor it is necessary to move the brush ring to a neutral position midway between the clockwise and counter-clockwise direction of the motor. This is not difficult to do although it took me several months to find the information for my Prestolite 4001 motor.

Two different hand held programming consoles are available at extra charge but Greg McCrea, Electric Conversions, Sacramento CA programmed mine for straight traction before he shipped it to me so I did not need to buy one.

The initial installation took several days as the instruction manual is for the factory installers but after you done it once it will be easier another time. Greg plans to assemble ZAPIs in metal box with heat sinks and wiring complete so only the motor and battery cables need to feed in. Also a terminal block will be available for the microswitches leads making the installation much easier.

Greg came over in October to show me how to cable the new Albright contactor and reprogram the H2 for regen. I now feel much safer and under control going down the hills. There has never been any trouble going up hill.

and stocks them. So I made the two hour drive. I always like to meet an EV component supplier in person and know that my calls will be returned if I have questions. Greg was that kind of guy. He does conversions and repairs on EVs and had several phone calls and customers come in while I was there, each person getting his undivided attention. I was glad to wait and observe how his shop operates. Greg does consulting in Switzerland and elsewhere in Europe for firms with special electric propulsion needs in their vehicle development projects.

Electric go cart tracks are a very popular charge per ride activity in Europe. They must have a much smaller percent of the population of lawyers than the US. He also visits the ZAPI factory in Poggio a Caiano near Florence, Italy, talks with the technicians at the factory and brings back controllers as personal baggage on the return flight, saving on the shipping bill.

Greg's background includes solar-thermal and low-NOx natural gas combustion technology which seems to progress naturally to the lowest NOx technology; EVs. Much of the work at the shop includes support to EV users, from private conversions to government fleet operated OEM electrics.

This provides an ideal opportunity to upgrade antiquated components as they fail with new technology. This makes the users happy to get the "Latest" while the shop technicians gain the "breaking in" experience of installation and tuning. For the last three years at the current location, Greg has also been dealing in EV related surplus such as high tension aircraft alternators suitable for hybrid drives and electric fork lifts to the menial cable and contactors. Most of this material is from the military, a real life Swords to Plowshares operation.

The H2 comes in three physical sizes, I chose the 400A with reversing DPDT and braking SPDT contactors. This is the only one to fit in the space available in the MGA. There are also 500A and 600A models which are longer, both available for up to 96 VDC. There will be a 120 volt model coming out in August. The H3 is two H2s tied together which may be why the H3 is more difficult to set up. Greg McCrea specializes in H2s, Gary Flo does H2s and H3s.

The H2 400A was US \$545 and the H2 600A US \$676, shipping from Italy added, contactors extra, programming labor a small extra charge. Two different programming hand held consoles are available at extra charge but Greg programmed mine for straight traction before he shipped it to me so I did not need to buy one. Later I will remove my Prestolite 4001 motor (a predecessor to Advanced DC Motor installed circa 1978) to retard the brush ring to neutral as advised for regen mode. Some one will come to Inverness and reprogram the E-Prom for regen. There is something about the California central valley summer heat that encourages people to come visit the Pacific shore.

One of the fellows I first met in Greg's shop was Robb Robel who repairs and converts cars there. Robb is also working on his own EV and about to install a H2. He was going on vacation in two weeks so I suggested he and his wife stay in our guest apartment as other EVers have. They did and we learned together, me mostly from Robb, how to read the 65 page 'User's Manual' translated from Italian to the English version by an Italian and locating the 20 or so pages that apply to this particular H2. It is really a shop manual for a technician who is wiring up lift trucks, field weakening, 5 cable motors instead of four, speed check, etc. I will be able to do a second H2 installation much more quickly after this first rather lengthy learning process. I recommend anyone doing their first ZAPI installation have a consultant come for 4-6 hours. I hope there will be a true 'Owners manual' available soon.

The H2 has an LED indicator lamp on the controller which flashes from 1 to 9, and 32 blinks or remains on. Each decoding blink displayed gives you one or more trouble descriptions for each. The continuous blink indicates low battery charge with less than 10% residual charge.



Compared to my four previous controllers the first thing I notice is that you can creep when starting. Although the 5k ohm linear pot is the same one I used with other controllers, the ZAPI start program provides different speed curves so the forward start can be very slow, half the speed of walking but moves up quickly to full current.

The ZAPI controller has built-in resistors across the contactor points so there is no arcing and no extra diodes are required in the solenoid circuit.

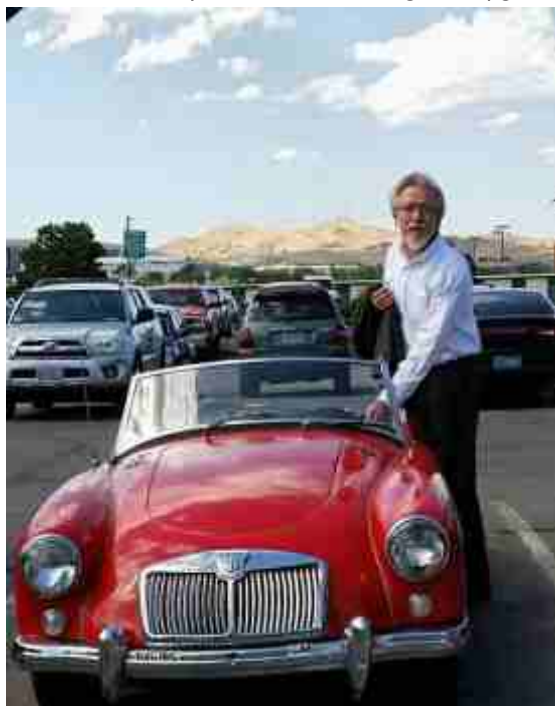
Although I have a reverse gear I find the electronic reverse is much easier to use as it can work with any forward gear. The reverse gear has such a high gear ratio with an electric motor with high starting torque that more than once I have broken the welded motor clamp while in reverse. A dash mounted locking toggle switch with forward, neutral and reverse is very quick to use and the passenger cannot easily accidentally change it for you.

Also I think it is important to have motor governor speed control. With the motor under no load even at 72 VDC and now at 96 VDC the motor runs too fast with the clutch disengaged. Certainly you want the motor under load to go much faster than an ICE as the electric has good torque at low speed but is much more efficient near its upper end. I do not want to lose battery power to resistive heat through inefficiency. There are 16 - 12 volt Optima prototype deep cycle batteries in two strings.

My next project is to install Rich Rudman's battery regulators to limit charging to 14.7 VDC on each sealed battery. The kits sell for \$7 or ready to install for \$20 each. John Wayland sells these regulators <Datsun1200@aol.com> .

To complete my 24 year old project I want a 7kW, 120/240 Vac onboard charger to use at home or on the road.

June 10, 1997: Zapi H2 MGA Fire Chief get an upgrade.



**TO BE CONTINUED**

# QUOTES FOR THE MONTH

And so you touch this limit, something happens and you suddenly can go a little bit further. With your mind power, your determination, your instinct, and the experience as well, you can fly very high.

If you no longer go for a gap that exists, you are no longer a racing driver.

I am not designed to come second or third. I am designed to win.

You commit yourself to such a level where there is no compromise. You give everything you have, everything, absolutely everything.

The past is just data. I only see the future.

With regard to performance, commitment, effort, dedication, there is no middle ground. Or you do something very well or not at all.

By being a racing driver you are under risk all the time. By being a racing driver means you are racing with other people. And if you no longer go for a gap that exists, you are no longer a racing driver because we are competing, we are competing to win. And the main motivation to all of us is to compete for victory, it's not to come 3rd, 4th, 5th or 6th. I race to win as long as I feel it's possible. Sometimes you get it wrong? Sure, it's impossible to get it right all the time. But I race designed to win, as long as I feel I'm doing it right,

Pure driving, pure racing, that's what makes me happy.

I want to live fully, very intensely. I would never want to live partially, suffering from illness or injury. If I ever happen to have an accident that eventually costs my life, I hope it happens in one instant.

I cannot live on an island of prosperity when I'm surrounded by a sea of misery.

And suddenly I realised that I was no longer driving the car consciously. I was driving it by a kind of instinct, only I was in a different dimension.

The harder I push, the more I find within myself. I am always looking for the next step, a different world to go into, areas where I have not been before. It's lonely driving a Grand Prix car, but very absorbing. I have experienced new sensations, and I want more. That is my excitement, my motivation.

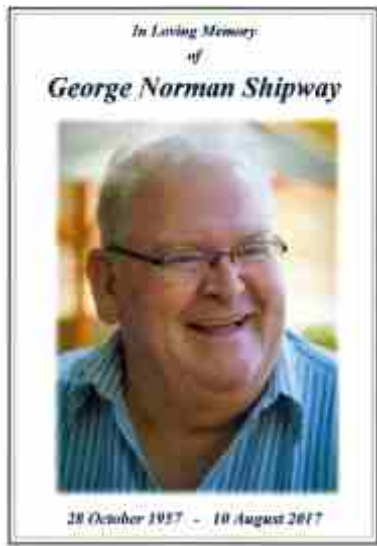
Racing, competing, it's in my blood. It's part of me, it's part of my life; I have been doing it all my life and it stands out above everything else.

Wealthy men can't live in an island that is encircled by poverty. We all breathe the same air. We must give a chance to everyone, at least a basic chance.

Winning is the most important. Everything is consequence of that.



**Ayrton Senna**



# GOODBYE GEORGE

When the Shipway boys came into our lives in the mid 80's they injected humour, fun and an enormous amount of automotive knowledge. They became almost honorary members of the MG family, and although they had Alfas Porsches and HUGE American cars they always both maintained that the people in the MG Car Club were best- so that they were often included in our trips away from the Blue Train, to France and Switzerland in 2001.

I can still remember on the Blue Train creeping away when Duncan, on hearing that Mike Allison had written "The Magic of MG" asked him "isn't that a misnomer?" Being identical twins, there was an immediate connection with my French identical twin pals- Bernard and Philippe Douchet- and on that trip their knowledge of all things Porsche and Mercedes stunned our Swiss hosts who owned the actual cars especially the factory 907 Porsche.

Our last night on France when the rest of the group wanted to shop or eat, they begged to be shown the Historic Stuff and we did Les Invalides, Napoleon Tomb, The Bastille (what was left in stone) and rode the Metro to their hearts content. After Duncan's tragic death George used to talk so often of that night and how they had both enjoyed seeing what they had wanted to see. This past ten years George and I have had good time together, going for breakfast at The Wanderers and our SAMCA involvement and the motoring general knowledge chats, for George, often the quiz master at our combine clubs quiz evenings, was a walking encyclopedia. We will ALL miss you George. You were a great pal.



George's Cadillac parked outside St Columba's Presbyterian Church where George had been an elder for some 26 years.



George's Cadillac with a view over George Hay Park where two marques catered for the overflow of mourners & tea after the service.

# TRADING POST

## Cars for sale

**Wanted MGTD windscreen frame part- the RH vertical channel section of the frame around the glass- Phone 082 457 8338**

**Two MGB engines freshly over hauled. One early 5 main bearing and one is an 18V Late model- Phone 073 453 6690**

**Peter Knight has his TD up for sale**

**Bob Osborn has produced a list of many parts MG and other classic car parts surplus to his requirements.**

**Stephen Grover is looking for hens teeth! He is after a gear box for a B V8.**

**Michael Dixon is in search of a Twin Cam engine (rarer than hens teeth!)**

## Great Link

## Gert Jubileus' weekly Steam Report

<http://sandstone-estates.com/images/pdf/gert/25%20July%202017x.pdf>



We bid farewell to Renso and Family who are shortly to depart for Sydney Australia and we wish them all the best of success

We wish Thelma Cunninghame a speedy recovery after a hip replacement following a fall. Our thoughts and prayers are with Thelma and Stuart

***Dick Knudson, founder of the New England MG "T" Register, passed away 2nd September.***

An email from Leesa Knudson informed us that her dad passed this morning. I am sure that I do not have to elaborate about what a giant Dick was in our MG world. Not only in the States, but everywhere. He will be missed, His passion for the marque was never ending. I can forward funeral arrangement if requested. The funeral will be September 8 near Dick's home in upstate New York. For those who may not have known, Dick was also an Anglican Minister, a college professor and not only the author of many MG Marque books, but also wrote books about espionage .



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## ***Forthcoming Runs, Noggin's and Events.***

### **September Natter & Noggin**

**Thursday 7**

Dave Lawrence retired airline pilot and acknowledged author and expert on MG Y-types will be giving a talk.

### **September Run**

**Sunday 10**

(Last month we headed South - this one is to the East!)

Meet at Old Eds at 09h30 to depart at 10h00 for Benoni

This will be a special event. We are visiting a private car museum in Benoni and have arranged for a bring and braai at the venue.

There will be a cash bar.

Travel to Craftsman Auto (Dave Wheeler) to meet with the Far East members at 10h30 to get to the venue at 11h00

We need numbers. Please advise by WhatsApp or call Bruce - 082 457 8338

### **October Natter & Noggin**

**Thursday 5**

TBA

### **Jacaranda Run**

**Sunday 22 October**

This is a long standing tradition and it finishes off at the Northerns Club House for a bring and braai.

Details of the convoy to follow

### **November Run**

**12 November**

Christmas Lunch. Venue and details to be advised





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