Last Word

When my interest blossomed for MG's many years ago, the considered opinion among paleontologist was that the differentiating characteristic of man's ancestor, Homo Erectus, and the rest of the animal kingdom was the capacity to manufacture tools. Current research, of course, has disproven this theory as well as most theories taught to me as a lad, but my early reflections on this common identity with early man cemented within me a love for tools and machines which has endured.

In the many articles that I have written for the newsletter, I have received only two responses from registrants: the first was a request to contribute articles which might be of more human interest and the second, my articles were "too technical" and "not everyone has a milling machine and a lathe!" Experience is often a great educator and after forty-five years of vintage engine building, my opinion is that the Triple M engines are considerably more difficult to rebuild than T-series MG's, 250 Ferraris, Lotus, HRG, Healey and the like. Every tolerance in the Triple M engine is a machined tolerance which makes obvious the necessity to have some sort of machine to accomplish most tasks. My mission in composing tech articles has simply been to show how I did things. They have been written with an observation and humility that there are perhaps multiple paths by which like challenges might be addressed.

With this, my last article for the newsletter, I have tried to come up with a subject matter that, although might not be authentic to MG, does not require an expensive tool or machine. It does, however, require a simple bubble balancer sometimes found at a garage sale.

Wheel Balancing:

There are MG owners and MG drivers. I am of the latter type and if my K can't pull at 6000 rpm or negotiate a Colorado Mountain pass at speed, I don't want to own it. But to have it stay on the road, my steering and suspension have to be tuned which includes precision balancing of my wheels.

The rims on the MMM cars are reasonably narrow compared to wheels used on modern cars. Balance considerations are usually confined to a single plane which permits the use of a bubble balancer with excellent results. Note: if a modern spin balancer is used, the attachments must locate the inner hub with a tapered cone and a reverse tapered cone to capture the outside taper located on the outside of the wheel hub. In my previous life, I had machined special adaptors for 32mm, 42mm, 52mm, Bugatti and Rolls Royce for this purpose.

This photo shows the general layout. It incorporates the use of 1/8" diameter lead solder, a bubble balancer and a chair to ease the discomfort from the long hours required to accomplish this job.

The object is to use the lead wire wrapped around designated spokes to counter a combined imbalance in the wheel and tire.

This is normally done in "paired weights" under the guidance and instruction from the bubble wheel balance manufacturer. Using test weights placed where the solder can be wrapped around appropriate spokes and with a calculation of the amount of weight per inch of lead wire needed, a counterbalance of weight can bring the wheel into balance.

After the lead wire is wrapped around the designated spokes and balance is achieved, I wrap both ends of the solder with old fashion friction tape that you might have used on your hockey stick if you were a hockey player. I then secure the tape with a twist of safety wire. The result is both tidy and vintage looking: no stick-ons for me.

Last Words:

For me, the writing of technical articles for the newsletter has paralleled my engagement in poetry and fiddle playing: it has nurtured a desire to share knowledge and to give forward wisdoms that, for me, were so hard fought to learn. It also has allowed me to intersect with "My Tribe," my people, and especially the administrators of the Register whose passion keeps the flames alive for all things pertaining to MG. To them, I give my thanks.

Best,
Chris