



MG Car Club—Florida

FLORIDA OCTAGON

#158

April 2016

Dear fellow members:

We find April upon us, with afternoon showers but great weather to get out and drive. This is a beautiful time of year which makes you realize why we have so many snowbirds here in Florida!

This month's event is our meeting at the **Cocoa Village Spring Car Show**, Saturday April 16th. This should be a very nice relaxing afternoon for all, so hoping you're all registered and out waxing! No "Club gathering" place, just enter and say parking on Oleander Street for British cars ..

April holds many shows, including the **GOF in Ocala** and hoping to see some of you there. They are also asking for a memory board so if anyone has pictures they would like to share from past GOF's, bring to Cocoa Village. I will attend but have two sisters coming into town and I'm sure we'll be all over Ocala. Also, a big Thank you to all of you that attended Wheels Across the Pond, and the Mead Gardens show in Winter Park, for making us shine!

Would like to thank you all for your membership dues, meaning we have another year together! Your job is to help make this a fun club, welcoming new ideas and roads you want to share, let us know!

May is a big month. The 22nd is **Our Club's 60th Anniversary**. There is a special request on who is attending and how many for we are ordering food in and a headcount is needed, so please RSVP to Helen Kingston. Will be a fun afternoon with your MG or LBC. We will keep you posted on this special event.

May 28 is our **Honor Flight Car Show** down in the Indialantic, hoping you are all registered for that also. Board voted to donate \$100.00 for the cause. We do honor Len J. Coppold, he is an honored MGB member.

APRIL'S BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES:

Robert Turrall	April 3	Pam Price	April 4
Jeanne Jusseaume	April 16	Paula Zagar	April 25
Richard Jensen	April 26 th		

Anniversaries:

Dale & Marilyn Lewis April 22nd

I did notice on membership forms a lot of you did not list your birthday, just want to know the day not year, and if today is your special day make it one to celebrate everyday!

So until we meet again, you all know how to contact me if anything is needed. Keep Safety fast and a lot of love in your heart.

Your President,

Linda Knoblock-Raupp

April 16th is the Cocoa Village show, another yearly event(<http://visitcocoavillage.com/events/central-florida-car-show-in-cocoa-village/>). No "Club gathering" place, just enter and say parking on Oleander Street for British cars ..

May 22, also is the celebration of our 60th year, which we are planning a fun day in the Palm Bay Park ,more news on that later, our calendar is getting quite full!

MG Car Club – FL

60th Anniversary Picnic

Sunday, May 22, 2016

Your Board has been working on our 60th celebration for the Club.

The event will take place within the Ted Whitlock Community Center Park in Palm Bay at the Boy Scout pavilion.

Ed Price is putting together a morning drive arriving at the park around noon. Information will follow as to the meeting place to start the drive.

Sonny's BBQ is catering this event for the Club – it will be paid for by the Club as an appreciation of your loyalty over these years. Everything will be provided for you to enjoy lunch and an afternoon with other Club members. All you might need to bring is a chair to enjoy viewing some games we will have set up on the beautiful grass area surrounding this large pavilion.

It is of the utmost importance that you RSVP to me (Helen K.) (hjk10590@gmail.com) by **May 1st** – so that I can get an accurate headcount and can order the right amount of food from Sonny's BBQ.

Map of Park - <http://www.palmbayflorida.org/home/showdocument?id=11614>

May 28th is Space Coast Honor Flight show in the Indialantic, so get yourselves registered early! <http://classicreflectionsclub.com/2016-05-28%20Honor%20Flight%20Car%20Show%20FLYER.pdf>

June 25th - Exploration Tower - \$10.00 admission fee - Pt. Canaveral - Meet at Rockledge McD's 9am - Lunch at Pig & Whistle in Cocoa Beach afterwards

July 16th - Field Manor & Farm - I left a message to see if they are open yet for tours - stand by for more information - it was discussed having lunch at Grandpa's on 520.

Aug. 20th - Cape Canaveral Lighthouse - \$27.00 admission - meet at Exploration Tower - At 8:30am board a a/c'ed shutter bus.

In addition to the lighthouse, the 3-hour tour includes stops at Air Force Space & Missile History Center and at two historic launch complexes.

The tour also includes admission to Exploration Tower. Even thou the Club toured the Tower in June - the sites are always changing - so a view from the top will be different on this day!!

[MG CAR CLUB-FLORIDA, INC.](#)

[A LITTLE BACKGROUND & HISTORY FOR OLD AND NEW MEMBERS ALIKE](#)



There are many members now in our club who have heard of Jerry Keuper, but who did not have the pleasure of meeting and/or knowing him. We also have new members who have not heard of Jerry. We also have members who know our club is 60 years old but know not of its origins and history. Well, over the next two months, we will try to set that right in this newsletter by publishing the remembrances of a member who was there with Jerry as he resurrected a dormant club which was a chapter (aka centre) of the MG Car Club in England, which club was originally founded 1930 by the MG Car Company. The following is a brief history of the early years of the MG Car Club – Florida, by someone (Tom Bowman) who “was there” before, during and after those early years and who was

asked to try to put down some remembrances of those years.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MG CAR CLUB – FLORIDA AND JERRY KEUPER OUR CHAIRMAN EMERITUS

By Tom Bowman (originally published in January, 2009)

I think most of us (at least us old members), if asked who founded our club, would say "That's easy, Jerry Keuper did", and of course that's correct but it's not quite the whole story. I'll try in the following to provide some context and hopefully paint a picture of our founder that might provide some additional insight into who Jerry Keuper was, for those who didn't know him (including some things that people who did know him might not be aware of), and how he fits into the picture, and I'll also try to fill in some other blanks that might exist in what is generally known about our Club's history.

Shortly after Jerry and Natalie moved to the Indialantic/Melbourne Beach area from Bridgeport, CT, to work for RCA at the Cape, he became involved with a group of leading engineers and scientists at the Cape who wanted to start a school where engineers working there could earn advanced degrees and technicians could earn engineering degrees, since in those days (1957-58) the nearest engineering schools were in Gainesville and Miami. Faced with the need to decide who would run the new school, they decided Jerry could do it in his spare time. Although he was almost always referred to thereafter as the "Founder", in his later years Jerry came to request that he be called the "Founding President" to recognize the group effort that had been involved. (Editor's note: The story goes that Jerry and a group of friends were talking about starting the school and initial funding came up. One in the group reached

in his pocket and pulled out some money, put it on the bar and said, "Here is the start up money." It was 37 cents. But as we all know, more dollars followed that.)

The name chosen for the school was Brevard Engineering College, since Jerry's MG already had a parking sticker on its windshield that said "B.E.C." from the days when he had taught courses at the Bridgeport Engineering College (now the University of Bridgeport) in Connecticut before coming to Florida! As the school grew toward national prominence Jerry decided it had outgrown the "Brevard" name and with the help of Florida's Secretary of State, Tom Adams, it was changed to Florida Institute of Technology in 1966, and was commonly known as F.I.T. until Jerry's retirement in 1985. (A few years later a new regime decided initials didn't sound dignified enough and insisted that we all call it "Florida Tech" instead, which for me resulted in a lifetime supply of personal stationery since we were all ordered to get rid of the old stationery.)

Jerry was the university's president from the beginning until his retirement in 1985, and he also helped found the Florida-Colombia Alliance in 1970 or so, and helped establish a school in Colombia that is named for him, and he was a driving force in other organizations in the local area and nationally before deciding that we needed an MG club that would be for all MGs—sports cars, race cars, family cars, anything that was an MG—here on the Central East Coast of Florida, and further that he was going to make it happen.

The steps he took to get the club started will be touched on a little further along, but first I need to describe how I fit into that picture. I arrived at F.I.T. in 1969 from Martin Marietta Corp. in Denver where I had worked in propulsion research for several years. (I had never heard of F.I.T. or been to

Florida until a friend from my Caltech days learned that the school was looking for a faculty member in my field. Many people I met here told me about Jerry's MG as soon as they saw my YA or heard that I had one. (I drove it from Denver, through the remnants of a hurricane on the Gulf Coast, in fact.) So I always looked for Jerry's TD whenever I walked past his office, which was located at the school's main entrance on Country Club Road, but his TD never seemed to be parked near his office. When I did eventually see it, it was clearly in fairly presentable condition but not quite a "show car". Everyone said he had driven it "everywhere" after the school's start in 1958, including in parades and such carrying the new school's banner, and that one result was that he quickly became well known throughout the Melbourne/Eau Gallie community as "the scientist in

the MG", but that he mostly stopped driving it later on in the 60s, possibly because it didn't fit the new more mainstream image he was trying to project for the school.

In the years that followed, my contacts with the school's top honcho were quite limited until the Fall of 1974, when the U.S. Agency for International Development contacted Jerry with an invitation for F.I.T. to send three people on a 3-week trip through Egypt, paid for by the government (ours, of course), visiting "emerging" universities there in an effort to choose a potential partner school. The objective was that we would help the partner school develop their science and engineering endeavors in a direction that would be more compatible with modern trends in this country (and elsewhere in the developed world), and in the process help their country evolve into a good friend of the U.S. and reinforce their shift away from their former Soviet "friends".

Jerry's decision was that he and John Miller, our academic VP, would go, and that in order to have someone along who could interact with their faculty members on a colleague-to-colleague basis (and engineer-to-engineer, since he and John were both scientists) that I would go with them. So for three weeks we traveled together in Egypt, getting to know some of the engineering faculty and administrators at a number of Egyptian universities and in the process learning a lot about a country and culture we were all pretty unfamiliar with, including (of course!) visiting many ancient places we had all learned about in school and seen in the movies. As a result Jerry and I got to know each other a lot better than previously. In particular, Jerry knew about my MG YA and had seen it on the campus (and probably elsewhere too) and he started asking me a lot of questions about it and talking about his TD and his and Natalie's adventures in it, including the famous upside-down-in-a-snowdrift story from the early days of their marriage. From that we moved on to MG history, various MG clubs and activities, and so on—there was really not a whole lot else to do on cold February evenings in university towns with no night life and mostly just camel races and emotional soap operas, in Arabic, on the TV. So Jerry and I talked, at length, mostly about MGs. Most evenings for 3 weeks. It was obvious that he became more and more interested (and energized) as the days went by, and came up with a never ending stream of good questions. He wanted to know everything there was to know about both the cars and their history, and the questions didn't end after we got back to Melbourne but the information flow became much more 2-way as he made contact with countless well-known MG people all over the world and frequently phoned to fill me in on whom he had spoken with and what he had learned, so that was a great learning experience for me too. Previously most of what I had known about the MG world pertained

to the cars, their history, the Classic MG Club of Florida and the New England T Register, but not the international social and racing scene centered around old MGs that had evolved in the years since WWII. Nearly all aspects of the MG world, here and elsewhere, became central to Jerry's MG universe.

A significant event following our return from Egypt was Jerry's participation in his first GoF! It was GoF Mk XII South, put on by the Orlando Classic MG Club, as they had been doing every Spring since 1967, and this one was held south of Orlando near US192 and I4, in about March of 1978. The two of us met at my house and drove over together, Jerry in front in his TD with me following in the family Pontiac since I was in the middle of restoring my MG YA. Not far west of I-95 I started seeing a lot of oil being thrown out of his car and passed him and waved him over. Old T-series hands will have probably already guessed the problem, as Jerry was



surely far from the first to have changed the oil and filter and forgotten to dig the old rubber sealing ring out of its groove before putting the new ring in! We pulled onto the shoulder and took care of the problem, and after that all was well, Jerry had a great time at the GoF and probably talked to everyone there, and from then on nearly to the end of his life he almost never missed a GoF South and flew north and west to many other GoFs, becoming very well known both locally and around the country in the process.

In very short order he was a veritable storehouse of knowledge about MGs and the people around the world who were prominent in MG circles, and he contacted them and began attending many of the major MG events, shows, races, and so on, in GB, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, South Africa, Australia, etc., as well as in other parts of the U.S. And many of the people he got to know started coming to Florida, and staying with Jerry and Natalie in their big two-story house by the sea in Melbourne Beach. He started our club (I'll get back to that in a bit) and also the North American MMM Register. The annual membership directory of that organization used to state (maybe it still does) that the organization was "created . . . by Jerry Keuper to provide a means of communication among owners of MMM cars in North America. 'MMM' refers to Midget, Magna and Magnette: the overhead cam MGs produced from 1929 to 1936." In 2003 they said they had 178 members who owned 405 MMM cars encompassing 24 different models! The most active members race their cars at various times and places during the year and often travel to England for major races, tours and other events, some times even shipping their cars (or borrowing MGs from friends there) so they can be participants in whatever is going on. Their quarterly "Newsletter" continues to this day to list Jerry as their "Founding Editor", and until shortly after his demise it also listed him as the club's "Founder".

Getting back to the start of our club, which pre-dates the start of Jerry's North American MMM Register by several years, I think it really started with Jerry's house by the beach, and all those international visitors who were prominent in the hobby, and Jerry's remarkable ability to put together lists of "people in the area who have MGs" and contact them, invite them to his house, get them involved with meeting his visitors, and maintain the

contacts. There were a number of occasions at his house when he invited a lot of MG people over to meet interesting visitors who were there because they shared Jerry's enthusiasm for the cars, or had shown up in their MGs from afar, and in many cases were well known people in the MG world.

The house itself was rather well known in Melbourne Beach and Indialantic when it was being built, as word got out that he had insisted that it had to have a basement, when it was common knowledge that the water table in this part of Florida is too high for houses to have basements and they would always have standing water. Jerry's response was



to point out that his house would be located next to the beach and several feet higher than the top of the sand, so therefore it would not be possible for the water table to come up to the level of his basement floor. He was right, of course, and certainly in all the many times I helped Jerry in the basement or otherwise visited the basement (and it was hard to stop by his house without at least popping downstairs to see what he was working on) I never saw any sign of water ever having been there.

Visitors over the years, if they were car people, or often even if they were not, always got a tour of the basement. One side was his workshop, and the other contained display of a huge number of MG posters and other MG items plus an immense photo gallery displaying some 400 8"

by 10" photos of family and friends and (especially in the later years) photos taken of his and Natalie's travels and many friends all over the world. He also had on display many artifacts from his World War II days in the O.S.S.

(predecessor of the CIA) pertaining to the Burma-China Theater. One of them was his sidearm. Jerry quickly located and bought the 2-seater J2 that was his first pre-war MG, and restored it with a duo-green paint job using the color codes I had used for my YA. (They were colors used on various MGs in the 1930s, and when the first Y-types were built after the war a few of them were painted in 30s colors,

presumably using up some paint stocks that had been stored since car production stopped in 1939, as a way of coping with postwar shortages.) He took that car on its trailer to its first GoF Mk XV, near Tampa in 1981, while it was still just a body shell in primer. Next came the PA (the red car) and then considerably later the black L1 police car. Along the way, he started building the little garages that he put in his front yard, out of sight from the street because of all the big trees in front of his house. There were eventually four of them, I think, plus a more rudimentary one on the ocean side of the house for the 2-seater NA that he bought shortly



before his declining health prevented him from restoring it. A tree fell on one of the garages during a hurricane, demolishing the building but miraculously sparing the MG in it that he was starting to build up from the bare frame. The hurricane also cleared out a lot of the vegetation that kept it all from being visible from the street. (Needless to say, he never attempted to get any building permits.) Every garage had a dehumidifier with a hose running outside so he wouldn't have to tend to it, and I think most of them even had small through-the-wall AC units too. After the house was sold, following his death and Natalie's death a few months later, all those small buildings were quickly removed by the new owners.

Getting back to the formation of our club, I don't think it's possible to pin down any place or point in time and say "this is where it all started" or "this was our first official meeting" or anything of that nature, and I hope that maybe others can add something to this but I have a feeling that it never really happened quite that way; I think things just sort of evolved over a period of time before we had a name or official club officers or any written records. I would be



glad to be proven wrong about this if anyone can come up with anything. The first written record mentioning our club that I have is a sheet that Jerry handed out in a meeting (several meetings I think) in the early days of our club's existence. The sheet was a copy of a page in a book entitled "The MG Car Club: The First Seventy Years", and the page in question was headed "M.G. Car Club Florida" and indicated that Jerry Keuper had written it. Here's the first paragraph: "The M.G. Car Club Florida was the first MG car club to be formed in Florida and is still active today. It was organized

in Jacksonville Florida in 1956. It was known then as the Florida MG Touring Club Ltd. (Norman Ridgely was kindly gifted by Will Bowden an original grill badge of that club. It will be displayed at our May 2016 picnic.) At the same time was designated as the Florida Center of the M.G. Car Club. Jerry Keuper succeeded Bill McQuaid as chairman of the Florida Centre and moved the venue and records to Melbourne Florida. The other officers were Tom Bowman, Vice Chairman, Simon Johnson, Secretary (on leave from the Belfast Northern Ireland Centre) and Niel Nelson, treasurer. "(A copy of that page is attached.)

I expect it will come as a surprise to many to hear that our club began in Jacksonville in 1956! What this also doesn't say is that the move of the club from Jacksonville to Melbourne was the result of some months of work by Jerry to track down the remnants of a club that apparently had been inactive for some number of years, and to negotiate the transfer of the name, charter, records, and even an old bank account from Jax to Jerry's house in Melbourne Beach. Fortunately for us, Bill McQuaid (who is well known by T-Type MG enthusiasts throughout the state) knew Jerry and was helpful with the transfer, and Jerry drove up to Jax to pick up all the records and bring them south. Jerry told me that it all went very smoothly and Bill was quite helpful; I had declined his offer to accompany him there, since I was still working for a living.

The name we chose for the club, and still use, seemed to be ideal as it is closely related to the old "Florida Centre, M.G. Car Club" name without causing a conflict with the English club that I assume still owns the legal rights to that name.

Below is a page the book, "MG Car Club Centre the First Seventy Years", published in June, 2001, and covers 1930 through 2000.

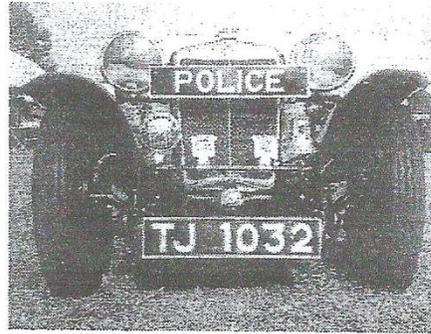
To be concluded in the May Newsletter.

M.G. Car Club Florida

Jerry Keuper

The M.G. Car Club Florida was the first M.G. car club to be formed in Florida and is still active today. It was organised in Jacksonville Florida in 1956. It was known then as the Florida M.G. Touring Club Ltd. but at the same time it was designated the Florida Centre of the M.G. Car Club. John F. McLeod was chairman of the Centre. In the early 'sixties applications for membership in the Florida Centre had to be approved by the Touring Club. Dues were only \$9 per year and included a car badge and a subscription to *Safety First!* Some time later another M.G. club was formed in Jacksonville to admit only T-types and earlier M.G.s. Bill McQuaid served as chairman of both clubs. Jerry Keuper succeeded Bill McQuaid as chairman of the Florida Centre and moved the venue and records to Melbourne Florida. The other officers were Tom Bowman, vice chairman, Simon Johnston, secretary (on leave from the Belfast Northern Ireland Centre) and Niel Nelson, treasurer.

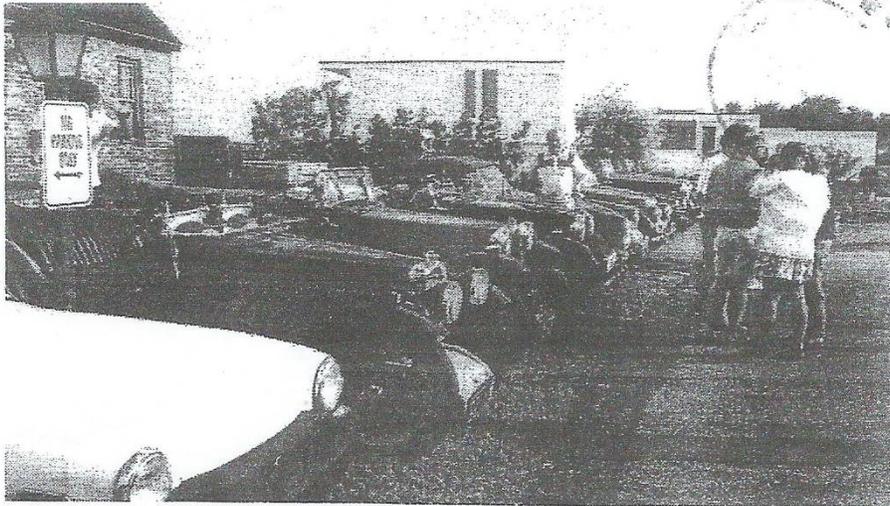
In 1984 the Florida Centre organised the first M.G. Jamboree and it was held on the campus of Florida Institute of Technology in Melbourne. M.G.s of all years and models were welcomed to participate in the Jamboree. This was a departure from the then statewide practice of admitting only T-types and earlier cars to M.G. gatherings. Syd and Joan Beer from England were invited guests and Syd spoke at the banquet about his trip to China in a Y-type. Who could forget the drama the next day during the gymkhana of Mike Dowley from England and Steve Foldhazy from Australia tearing up the ball field in Keuper's TD. Yes, the Jamboree was a great success.



Jerry Keuper's Lancashire Police L1

Our Club has had the privilege of hosting many members of the M.G. Car Club from around the world. Among them, to name a few, was Mike Hawke who made a fine presentation to our club on the Triple-M cars. Norman Ewing visited our club with a large contingent of M.G. folk from South Africa. Norm enchanted us with an accounting of his around-the-world trip on his honeymoon in an MGA. Also Harry Pyle and his wife made our club one of their stops in their around-the-world tour in a TC.

M.G. Car Club Florida newsletters have been sporadic, as have our activities. However, our loyal troops are always eager to hear from other members of the M.G. Car Club or stage an event when the occasion arises.



M.G. parking only at Melbourne Beach

This page is from a book titled (The MG Car Club The First Seventy Years). This article recognizes our club and our distinguished history. Jerry Keuper states this is an excellent book and recommends buying it. Contact him for more information at 321-723-3483

Safety Fast!

Club Officials

Linda Knoblock-Raupp 321-757-0180 (President)

Brian Mitchell 321-254-9605 (Vice President)

Helen Kingston 321-773-1455 (Treasurer)

VACANT (Secretary)

Richard Jensen 321-544-1467 (Director)

Len Coppold 321-752-0737 (Director)

John Perez 321-243-2661 (Director)

David Alexander 321-213-7051 (Immediate Past President)

Jerry Keuper Chairman Emeritus (In Memoriam)

MG Car Club – Florida www.mgcarclubflorida.org

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