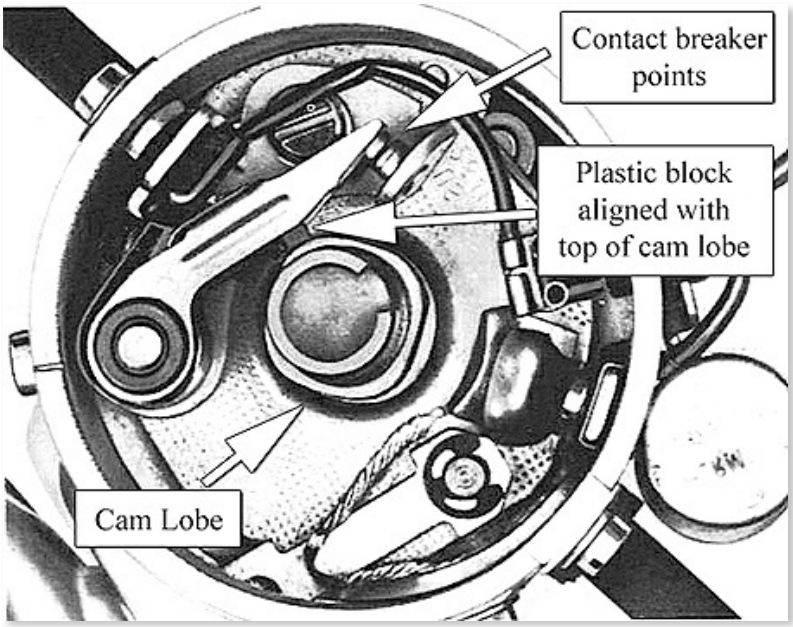
MIND THE GAP *By Len Fox (MGCC Geelong Member)*

OK. The MGB engine has been loosing power and backfiring, sometimes ferociously, getting progressively worse.The Little Lady is saying supportive things like 'I told you to stay on the highway!' Is there anything you can do? Well maybe. Not the only cause, but this problem can occur when the contact breaker points gap progressively closes. (sometimes as a new points set 'beds in').
You'll need a screwdriver.
Turn the ignition off. Take off the distributor cap. If you have to take off the spark plug leads mark where they came from. Pull off the rotor button so you can easily see the contact breaker assembly. Engage top gear. Roll the car until the heel on the plastic block aligns with the top of a cam lobe.The contact breaker points should now be open .Use your thumbnail to further open the moving contact Observe the gap remaining after you let it return. The correct gap is 0.016 inch. Now you need a gauge either to use directly or to give a mental picture of what 0.016 inch looks like.0.016" = Log book cover thickness. = Four thicknesses of folded and pressed banknote or copier paper. If the gap appears to be too small, the backfiring may be explained and the gap needs to be reset. The contact points assembly mounts on a pivot post through the plastic biock . The contact points assembly base is retained by one short screw located between the fixed contact point and the terminal where wires connect. Loosen the screw about one turn. This allows normally fixed contact to be moved slightly. Open the gap by pushing on the wires terminal. Guess the correct gap. Tighten the screw.Check that no foreign material is in the gap and replace rotor and cap.



Guessing is not as bad as it might seem. Remember we're trying to make the car run well enough to get home.The engine will tolerate a larger gap more readily than a small one.On the other hand, a gap equivalent to a credit card thickness is too wide.
If you feel you must measure the now widened gap, use the paper gauge by opening.the moving contact with your thumbnail, inserting the gauge and releasing the moving contact.The gauge should slide out with a gentle pull applied. If it's too loose or too tight, repeat until you're satisfled. The danger is that eroded points could tear the paper and leave debris in the gap. Finally, tighten the screw,check that no foreign material is in the gap and replace rotor and cap.