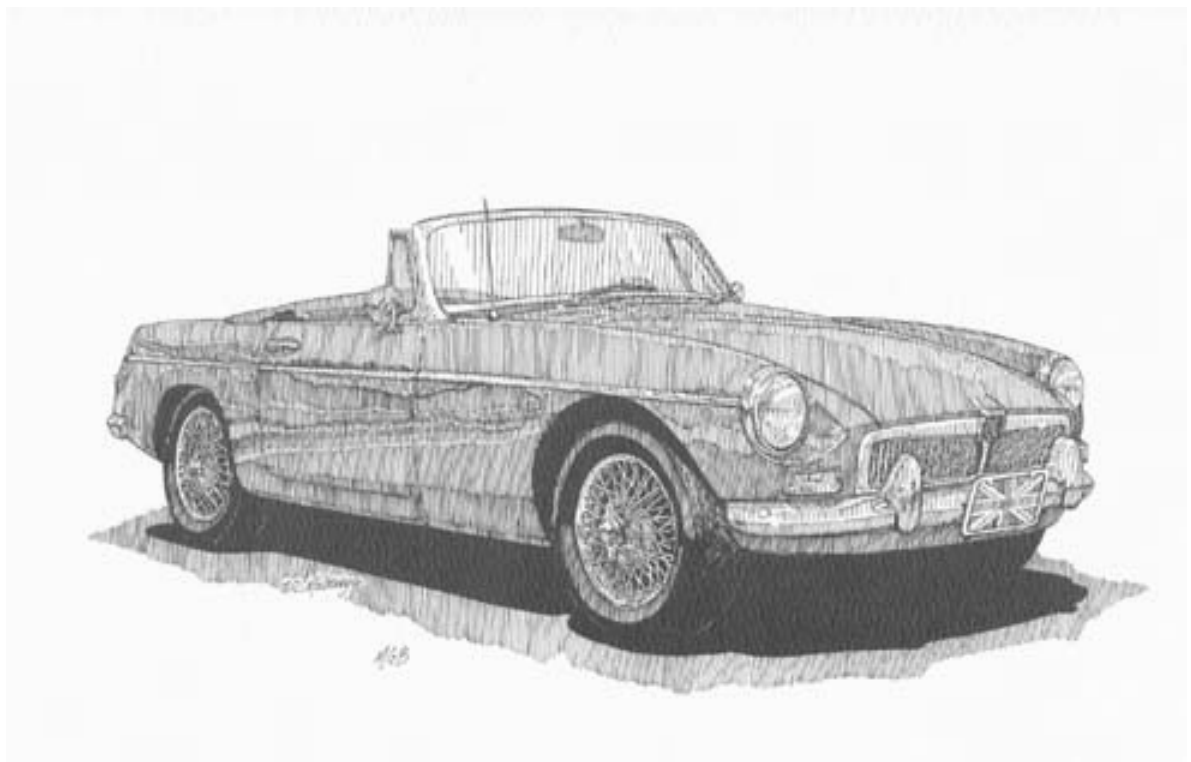




The Dashpot

Fall 2005



Ottawa MG Club

The Dashpot is the official publication of the Ottawa MG Club. Submissions for consideration should be sent to: frizzuti@sympatico.ca.

www.omgc.info

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From The Editor's Desk

The hot summer weather this year has made the driving season a great success. I have attended many car shows and driving events this year, the busiest year ever!

I am especially pleased with the out come of the British car day. It was well attended and next year will be even better. I am honoured to be part of the organizing committee and would like to thank all the British car clubs in the area that helped make it a great show.

Safety  *Fast*

Frank.

President's Message

by Len Fortin

(subliminal messages inserted throughout)

This year we are celebrating the 15th anniversary of the Ottawa MG Club. I consider myself quite fortunate to be among friends who are both passionate and proud to be part of this group of folks. Many of our events have had a 15th anniversary theme. We have learned a lot about, and, have often spoken fondly of, our first founding members. And although the 2005 driving season is slowly dwindling down, we shall not let this dampen our enthusiasm to go onwards, through the "not-so-great-winter-season" and emerge next Spring with a fresh attitude toward MG driving and MG fellowship. [don't forget to review your winter storage instruction list before the snow flies]

You may remember, over the last two years I have been encouraging you in my newsletter messages to "take up the MG octagonal torch" with these four words: Participation, Involvement, Encouragement and Adventure. And you may remember, there is an old saying, "Be careful what you wish for, because you might just get it!" Well, I think I got what I wished for. MG people who showed their participation by attending lots of meetings and lots of events; some meetings and events turned out to be record-breakers. MG people who demonstrated their involvement by taking on tasks and duties; from rally helpers, to director positions, to BBQ workers, to information providers. MG people who have conducted learning lessons and technical sessions to encourage even the least technical among us to dig in and try and fix things - or even take apart entire vehicles, whatever the case may be. And MG people who have been confident to tell a story or relate an incident from an adventure they experienced, whether it was just a run around the block, or a jaunt across the city or a caravan to one of the four points on the compass. You MGers have done a great job of getting into action. [please consider offering to help in the 2006 season in some fashion - coordinate an event, act as a director, host a get-together, volunteer for President or other position]

I think this driving season has been pretty reasonable. Perhaps a bit hot, but it sure has been better than those rainy weekend driving seasons where the sun disappeared on Friday and didn't reappear till Tuesday afternoon. Our Event Calendar contained a good mix of driving runs and car displays. Meetings have been well attended. One might say it has been pretty routine, and I suppose I could agree with that - however, I kinda like that about this club. Offer a good batch of tried and true stuff and mix in some new things (or some old things with a twist). I certainly hope you have enjoyed the last couple of years as much as I have. With our trip to the NAMGAR convention in Michigan, I think Debi's A will meet the long distance criteria for the BCCI LDA. If I'm not mistaken, there may be a good number of other club members who also reach this goal. [don't forget to review your winter storage instruction list before the snow flies][please consider offering to help in the 2006 season in some fashion - coordinate an event, act as a director, host a get-together, volunteer for President or other position]

Just recently I received a copy of some original OMGC documents. Dennis Campbell, one of the original club members (# 3 on our list) provided me with great copies of the first and second newsletter (August 1990 and November 1990). And he also provided me with a list of people who were on an early membership document (back then it was called a "membership roster"). After closely examining the "membership roster", I recognized several of the names. Some still are active members today.

Some are now on our Former Members list. And some names came as a bit of a surprise to me. I met one of the chaps on this "membership roster" at a Fortin family event a few years ago and, after chatting about this and that, the MG relationship came up in conversation. This chap, who shall remain nameless at this time, told me he was once a member of the Ottawa MG Club. I didn't believe it. I had been a member for some years and I had seen all the member names on our membership list (having published the OMGC Newsletter previously).



Well, now I stand corrected. He was listed on the original MG membership roster. But he had not been given a number - perhaps he didn't pay his membership dues. Anyway, he no longer has an MG (not that it's a mandatory requirement, so said Hugo Leech) so I guess it is of little consequence. [if you haven't done so already, don't forget to bring your membership dues up to date so you can get a copy of this newsletter - but then, if you haven't already, you won't get this newsletter anyway, so it's of little consequence]



Thank you to each and every member of the Ottawa MG Club for a great season. I have enjoyed myself. [don't forget to review your winter storage instruction list before the snow flies] please consider offering to help in the 2006 season in some fashion - coordinate an event, act as a director, host a get-together, volunteer for President or other position][if you haven't done so already, don't forget to bring your membership dues up to date so you can get a copy of this newsletter - but then, if you haven't already, you won't get this newsletter anyway, so it's of little consequence]

Safety Fast!

Len



Me Humble Bea

by Graham Ayers

I sat of the floor of the garage, facing the left wheel arch, the Feb/Mar (2001) issue of *MG World* in one hand and a cuppa in the other. I had already read the article on overhauling the front suspension several times and carefully studied the photographs. The time had come to stop procrastinating and get on with the job.

As a prelude all the nuts and bolts had been double-dosed with Release all the previous day, and left to soak overnight. I use a hypodermic syringe to apply it directly where, and in the quantity, needed. A bit of a radical tool but Dad used one for twenty years with great success.

The 'Bolt Seized in the Bottom Fulcrum Bushing' snag raised its ugly little head shortly into the job. I had been forewarned of it so it wasn't a particular surprise. Elongation of the lower fulcrum bolt hole in the wishbone arm had pretty well confirmed it.

Rather than using brute force, which usually proves unsuccessful and often results in damage to other parts, I drilled a pilot hole in the head of the bolt then a larger one the same diameter as the bolt and sheared it off. Drilling the side of the nut and cracking it allowed removal of the wishbone arms.

The next day I was off down to the MG supplier with the old stub axles to get an exchange pair of rebuilt ones.

New parts for the front suspension included the wishbone swivel, the wishbone arms, bushings, washers and nuts. A new kit for the bottom fulcrum, including the bolt/pin and the new seals.

All the nuts and bolts were greased before installation and the seals carefully put on. With a little gentle persuasion the new axle slid into place.

When things are going too easily, it is a sure sign that another snag is imminent and right on cue it appeared. Gotta love that Murphy and his blessed Law!

To avoid separating the ball joint I had removed the steering arm from the stub axle. When it came time to reinstall it, the second bolt it would not go into its hole. Close inspection revealed that a bolt had been previously broken in the hole then drilled out, but not cleanly. Nor had the threads been tapped. I missed this when I bought it and it had obviously been missed during the rebuild.

Dagframmit!!!! The last bolt and the job would have been completed.

I called the MG parts supplier and explained the problem. He said he had some. It turned out that he only had rights left, no lefts left. For those who have a supplier of parts nearby, be ye forever thankful.

On the positive side, (one must always have one of those handy) the forced halt of the axle installation gave me an opportunity to do some other jobs that, in hindsight, would have been a lot more awkward with it in place.

These included a liberal application of rust preventative in the area behind the splash shield, a coat of underseal on the new shield and a new seal. The new bolts were greased to facilitate future removal. One side, done one to go.

I removed the headlamp and bowl and side marker lamp then gave the wheel arch a good cleaning and one or two heavy coats of underseal.

The headlamp bowl was sandblasted before it got a coat of rust- inhibiting paint followed by an application of underseal, the wiring recovered with loom tape, a new wing grommet installed, a tap through the blind nuts and the bowl reinstalled with a new seal and the correct bolts.

The replacement stub axle took a month to arrive. When I finally got my hands on it the first thing I did was run a tap through each bolt hole to avoid any repetition of the previous snag.

This time it went in and bolted up without a hitch. Grease on every nut and bolt as well as through the grease fittings (and regular greasing hereafter) should give the new stub axles a few years of use.

Over the years, on numerous occasions, I have wondered why I ever took this project on, or if I shouldn't sell it and take up "Messing about in boats" (See 'Wind in the Willows'), learning to play the banjo (See Len Fortin!) or some such thing. The leak in the front carburettor is still there and now I find that the outside pad in the right calliper is worn considerably more than the inner.

As Christopher Columbus said on his way to China - "We're getting closer".

Of course he had no idea how much further his goal was either!



The Little Red Light and Generator Brushes

by Karl Leclerc

You're driving along in your MGA when suddenly, the red light at the bottom of the tachometer starts glowing. In simplistic terms, this little red light goes on when more electricity is being used by the car than is being produced by the generator, draining the battery.

The first thing to do would be to pull over in a safe location to confirm that the fan belt has not broken off. The fact that a broken belt will stop the generator from recharging the battery becomes a minor issue when considering the fact that it will also stop the water pump from circulating coolant around the engine. Is the temperature gauge also giving you a hint? A spare belt is inexpensive to carry and is easily replaced. While under the bonnet, check that the belt is not too loose. For adjustment, the manual recommends that a ½ inch deflection should be possible with moderate thumb pressure along the longest course in between pulleys. In fact, the generator will still run properly with up to 1 inch deflection. Contrary to later alternators, generators do not require a very tight belt and some slop will actually prolong bearing life. The belt can easily be tightened to specs by first loosening the two nuts on top of the generator and the nut on the front bottom bracket in order to pivot the generator.

Assuming that the rest of the electrical system is in good order, the next likely cause would be a fault with the generator (also known as a dynamo by previous generations...). Early MGB owners are not immune as they also get their juice from the same type of generator.

If you are lucky enough to have this happen in daylight, on a warm sunny day and not too far away from home, you do not have to worry too much. Providing that you turn off all accessories (headlights, wipers, blower, radio, etc), the battery stores enough power to keep the ignition sparks going for an hour and maybe more. Exactly how long is debatable and will depend on the state of charge, the type of coil being used and other issues beyond the scope of this article. Suffice to say, a battery in decent condition should get you home. If you try to stretch it too long, the spark will get weaker, performance will degrade and the engine will start missing, warning you that failure is imminent and that it needs TLC.

Once you get home, in the hotel parking lot, a service station or as a minimum, in a safe location, the next step is to go over the generator. Checking the electrical output is only a matter of a few minutes and can easily be accomplished with minimal tools.

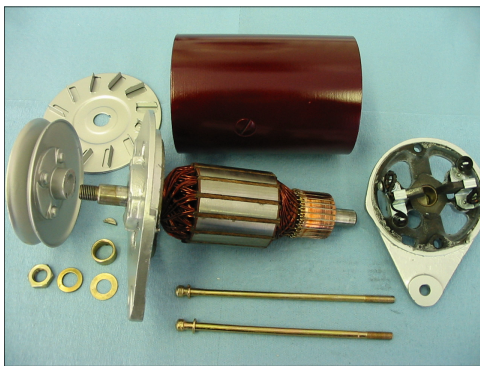
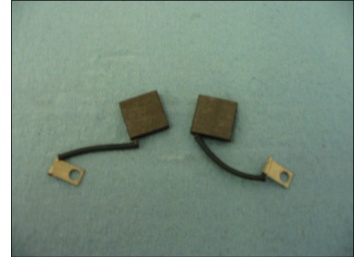
Start by checking the electrical connections. Easy enough: The big D terminal on the generator is wired to the D terminal on the voltage regulator (also known as the control box by some folks with funny accents...) and, the same way, F goes to F.

The next step will consist in checking the generator output. Simply disconnect the wires going to the two terminals behind the generator. Ground the two terminals together with a small piece of wire and hook up a voltmeter (on a 0-20 volt scale) between one of the terminals and a good ground. Start the engine and let it run at idling speed (no more than 1000 rpm) while taking a reading with the voltmeter.

There are four likely outcomes:

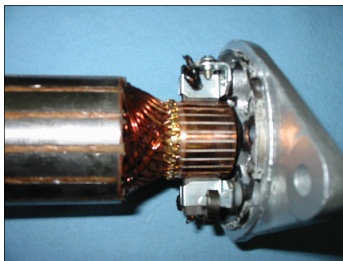
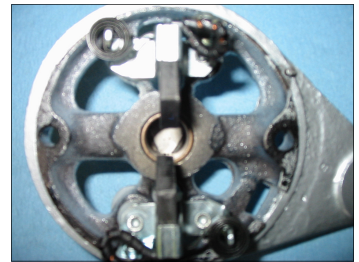
- A reading between 12 and 16 volts is normal and normally indicative of a working generator. The problem probably lies elsewhere. Consult the workshop manual for further testing and possible faults with other components.
- A reading of 1 volt or less is normally indicative of a faulty field winding.
- A reading of 4-5 volts is normally indicative of a faulty armature winding.
- No reading is normally indicative that the brittle carbon brushes have worn themselves out or have disintegrated.

Spare brushes are cheap and occupy very little space in the tool kit. Furthermore, changing brushes is easily accomplished and only requires a few basic tools.



As can be seen on this picture, the generator is a rather simple assembly that can be easily removed from the car and dismantled. Removal is accomplished by taking out the front bracket nut and the two nuts on top of the generator. Disassembly is a simple three-step process. Start by removing the front pulley nut, its lock washer, the pulley, the woodruff key and the spacer. Unscrew the two long through-bolts, remove them as well as the back end bracket. The front end bracket with the armature and its bearing assembly can then be removed as a unit from the yoke if need be.

As soon as the end-bracket is removed, one can quickly identify the rectangular boxes in which the carbon brushes are held in place with small springs. Replacing the old brushes (if you can still find them at the end of the wires...) is easy enough as well as completing the electrical connection for the wires and resetting the springs.



Re-assembly is, as they say in most manuals, the reverse of the procedure. However, getting the brushes in place over the commutator while inserting the back end bracket, may require a bit of patience. Personally, I like to insert two small screwdrivers through the back end bracket to hold back the brushes while I push the bracket in.

The parking lot repair is completed when the generator goes back in and the red light stays off... Happy motoring!



MG Adventures in "The County"

by Roger White

The first feeling of disquiet came in the parking lot of the Waupoos Winery when the clutch pedal of our '79 B only released half-way up its normal travel. It was Sunday afternoon of this past beautiful Labor Day weekend in Prince Edward County, some 260 kilometers from home in Ottawa.

Up until then, it had been a great trip. Together with friends and fellow OMGC members Ian and Madeline Taylor in their '73 B, Nancy and I had left Ottawa the Saturday morning, taking the River Road to the Swan Pub (the cars certainly know this destination!), across and down to Kars then Merrickville to Smith Falls, Portland and Westport, down CR 10 to Kingston, then along Highway 33 to the Glenora Ferry and across to Picton.

We'd driven through a couple of small rain clouds, barely serious enough to put the windshield wipers on, stopping for lunch in Merrickville. We'd exchanged waves with drivers of two TR6s, a Midget and a black vintage T-Bird en route, with the sun now fully out, and a perfect 24 degree C. outdoor temperature for the coolant. After a break in Kingston for our navigators to do a little outlet shopping (plus a \$40 fill-up!) we flogged through the city past the prisons and caught the ferry right away at Glenora after a delightful blast along the scenic 33.

After sharing the short ferry crossing with mostly motorcyclists, a short hop along Picton Bay, a couple of turns and we arrived on schedule at our B&B, Eastlake House on Centre Street in Picton. Friendly hosts John and Julie showed us to our splendid, large antique furnished rooms in their delightful 1907 residence. With the trusty Bs safely tucked away at the back near a carriage house to kill for, we strolled to a quirky bistro for dinner, then played a few rubbers of bridge over glasses of wine in the B&B's screened-in side porch. For once, the drivers ended the evening ahead of the navigators at the bridge table. As we later settled in for a good night's sleep, I thought to myself "it doesn't get better than this." Great weather, good friends, pretty scenery and mostly clear roads, the cars on song, a delightful B&B at a good price....

Sunday morning, after mimosas and a tasty apple flan breakfast, it was tonneau covers off and away through "the County". To Bloomfield first, still along 33, still under bright sunshine and in perfect temperatures. More navigator shopping while the drivers enjoyed coffee at an outdoor cafe and idle chat about moving to this paradise at our doorstep.

Later, we meandered on, again traveling largely empty twisting paved roads, past the Sandbanks area, through Cherry Valley, through picturesque Milford, eventually reaching our lunch destination, the County Cider Company and Estate Winery on CR 8. Other happy motorists on these great country roads included those driving a gleaming black late model B roadster, a scruffy BGT, a dark green TR6, a Spitfire and a mint '59 Porsche 356 roadster. Naturally, the friendliest waves came from the MG'ers. There were also quite a few squadrons of motorcyclists, the weekend warrior accountant types rather than the tattooed, kitten-eating biker variety.

But it was amazing to me that on a perfect Labor Day weekend in a great vacation setting, the traffic was still light. I hadn't been to the County in years, and indeed remembered it as an unspoiled, still largely agricultural area. The Sandbanks Park is busy, sure, but thanks to the strong agricultural base, and what must be pretty firm local government, the area has still been spared from jam-packed housing development and accompanying strip mall horrors with the same shopping chain stores every few miles.

And part of the strength of the County's agricultural base is the relatively new wine industry. There are currently 11 wineries listed in County guides, and that's a good thing.

At the County Cider winery, we had a great lunch of ice-cold tasty cider and sandwiches, under an outdoor trellis, gazing out over the sun sparkling blue water of Prince Edward Bay.

Finally pulling ourselves away from this vista, we headed down the road to the Waupoos Winery, more upscale with dining again available outside in a white framed pagoda building, where we sampled various whites and reds at 50 cents a glass.

And so to the parking lot with a warm buzz on, the trunks of our Bs not quite full of some bargain clothing, a few knick-knacks, and carefully boxed bottles of cider and wine. And in my case, to find a clutch pedal that definitely didn't feel right.

In preparation for this expedition, both Ian and I had consulted and we thought we had together amassed enough replacement fluids, fan belts, tool kits, duct tape, bulbs, rad hoses, flashlights, fuses, bits of wire, nuts and bolts, electrical tape, clips and other stuff that we would be prepared for any eventuality. Between us, we could have rescued a convoy of broken down MGs.

And I'd carefully topped up the clutch reservoir before leaving, among other fluid checks, and after a quick look in the Waupoos parking lot, determined that the clutch fluid level was right up to the threads. Hmmmm. Well, perhaps it was just an air lock somewhere in the hydraulics.

The gears shifted readily enough, and we headed back to the B&B in the late afternoon sunshine. The B was fine, exhaust note bouncing throatily off the hedges, gauges showing perfect oil pressure and temperature, no sign of any clutch slipping, an oldies tape on the deck, all was well.

A nap and change of clothes back at the B&B and it was time to head out to dinner. Our hosts had recommended the Hidden Bistro a few kilometers east of the town centre and secured us reservations.

Nancy and I led the way in our B. And it wasn't just an air lock. I'd engage first, and even with the clutch pedal pressed down practically through the firewall, the car kept moving. I pulled over and deliberately stalled it, quite concerned now. After a short discussion with the others, I thought that we might as well try to make it to the restaurant anyway.

Leap-frogging away from stop signs, I was able to get the car in and out of the rest of the gears, so we went to dinner.

The Hidden Bistro is a fine restaurant, with awe inspiring gardens behind it, great service, fine wines, delightful subdued lighting ambience and a French-inspired menu of tasty food. I might as well have been eating a plate of ashes as I thought about options.

These were:

- A) Engage the help of B&B host John in tracking down a local mechanic who could fix the car tomorrow, the holiday Monday of the Labor Day weekend. Funnily enough, a car guy himself, John had mentioned when we checked in that he knew a good mechanic if we needed one. At the time, a ridiculous notion.
- B) Depending on a), leave the car to be fixed, find a rental, drive back to Ottawa in rental following Ian and Madeline in their B, return later in week with rental, pick up fixed B and return to Ottawa.
- C) Same as b), but cadge ride with other Ottawa-based guests coincidentally staying at B&B until late Monday, then use our other car to retrieve the B later in the week.
- D) Call CAA and demand they trailer B to Ottawa tomorrow with Nancy and self as card-carrying passengers.
- E) Trade MGs even-Steven with Ian and Madeline.
- F) Try trip back in our car and resort to option d) as required.

After a somewhat subdued dinner, we kangarooed back to the B&B followed at a safe distance by Ian and Madeline in their B. The women beat the men at bridge this time and we all had restless nights, thanks to an outdoor back-to-school party of drunken, yelling teenagers next door to the B&B.

The next morning, another great breakfast restored spirits and after conferring with the others, it was option f) all the way. We'd go back along Highway 2 (stuck on the 401 was not to be contemplated, really) and hope for the best. There was no fluid under our car, and the clutch reservoir was still right up to the same level as before. It was too bad we had to head straight back, as we'd all planned more meandering through the County to visit more wineries and a leisurely lunch en route to Ottawa, but as Madeline graciously pointed out: "It's all about the little cars".

Checked out, packed up, and it was "chocks away; let us pray". Another beautiful day and we trundled out of Picton northeast to meet up with Highway 2.

There is a movie (and remake) about drivers taking a truck through the jungle carrying a load of nitroglycerin and I was sweating as much as those guys as the kilometers rolled under our wheels.

But gradually I was able to relax. The revs were rock steady at the right speeds, no slippage at all, and the B moved through the gears once we were out of first, no problem. Traffic was light on Highway 2 and the little towns for the most part presented no stop light difficulties really if I timed it right.

Taking a break after Napanee, we pulled over and there was news of a fresh potential disaster.

Now Ian and Madeline's B was showing a glowing ignition light. We checked the fan belt – hardly any play at all. No voltmeter on Ian's car so couldn't tell if the battery

was discharging but chances were it was. All else seemed okay under the hood, so perhaps

a) timing was a bit off or b) alternator was about to explode. Hmm, well we had seven sets of jumper cables between us so, forge on!

Another impatient flog through Kingston traffic, still sticking to the Highway 2 route, then we stopped in Gananoque for lunch at an outdoor pub, carrying on along the Heritage Highway with the glistening St. Lawrence on our right. Both cars were fine, Ian's ignition light no longer glowing – seemed to be related to low rev speed especially when he was in overdrive. Ian confessed he'd been quietly praying for the light to go out, and with higher revving through Kingston traffic, it did. And by now I was well used to timing my own rolling stops to let our car's low end torque pull us through stop lights in second gear.

Through Mallorytown, Brockville, a coffee and outdoor bridge break near Prescott, then we took CR 22 at Cardinal to join the River Road. Past the Swan again, a fill up for another \$40 worth of gas at the Drummond's at Manotick and by 5 p.m. we were all safely home in Ottawa.

Later diagnoses by our respective shops? In my case, a new clutch master cylinder and slave cylinder kit is required, and in Ian's, a loose alternator connection, slight adjustment to the timing and yep, idle speed was a tad on the low side.

While this round trip of 600 kilometers or so hardly compares to major odysseys taken by many club members in their MGs, it was still a bit of a trek and trouble can rear its head on any trip, even in a new car. That we were able get back in a pair of 25-year-old-plus cars, admittedly kept fettled and slobbered over by their owners, speaks to the basic toughness and simplicity of these machines. And, it has to be said in all modesty, to the "Carry on!" spirit of OMGC members and their navigators.

Navigators Nancy and Madeline pose with shopping trophies in Bloomfield. MGs look good too!



If you go:

*Prince Edward County is a perfect destination for a weekend MG trip, with great roads, splendid scenery, and some 50 Bed and Breakfast locations to choose from, plus resorts, camping, cottages, fine dining, the wineries, antique shops and recreational activities galore. For complete information, go to: **www.pec.on.ca***

North American MGA Register Convention - GT30 - Mackinaw City, Michigan

July 2005
by Len Fortin

When we departed from Kilmarnock on our adventure to the NAMGAR GT30, the first part of the trip was to cross over one of the shortest bridges in the area - the Kilmarnock Locks. Two days later as we arrived in Mackinaw City, Michigan, we crossed over one of the longest suspension bridges in the world (who knew??). Several days later on our return trip, the exact opposite occurred - firstly crossing the long suspension bridge; lastly crossing the short bridge at Kilmarnock. From the time we left Kilmarnock, till the time we got back, a number of fun and challenging things happened. [None as challenging as the event that occurred on our last visit to Michigan - see a previous issue story NAMGAR 2001 - but fun and challenging all the same]

On Monday, our first day run on the provincial highways to Parry Sound wasn't very eventful. We stopped for lunch in Bracebridge at a place called "Any Bee's". The weather was sunny and hot. It was quite late in the afternoon when we got to Parry Sound and the search for a place to stay overnight was a challenge. [note: Karl Leclerc and Patricia Duperre, who also went to the GT30, left a day earlier and had wisely preplanned their overnight stops. I wasn't so wise.] Debi and I located and took temporary refuge at the Parry Sound CAA office in hopes of locating some accommodation. But just about every hotel / motel was booked up due to some sort of "reunion of anyone and everyone who ever lived in Parry Sound" event. Fortunately, the CAA folks came through for us with a nice spot at a not-to-shabby place called "Trappers Inn". Clean rooms. Reasonable price. Restaurant & bar next door. Sold!

From Parry Sound to the area south of Sudbury there is very, very little to see. A hundred plus miles of rocks and trees and not much else. Scenic, but it was another hot day. For lunch we stopped near Blind River at a place called "Auberge Eldo Inn". The White Fish dinner was superb - a specialty at this place. As we sat on the shaded patio, a chap approached us and chatted about "Debi's A". During our brief conversation I mentioned that we would be stopping in Sudbury on our return trip and I planned to visit an MGB enthusiast friend by the name of Chris Culliford, who we had met on the NAMGAR 2001 trip. Well, this chap knew Chris Culliford in Sudbury (there's a coincidence) but knew him as a radio announcer - not an MGB enthusiast. Could there be two Chris Cullifords? I'd have to check this out on our return trip.

The border crossing in Sault Ste. Marie wasn't too bad. It was hot and the temperature gauge did move up and up until it was off the scale but we were able to make it through and return to some normalcy in short order. In the late afternoon of travel day 2, Tuesday, we arrived in Mackinaw City. Our accommodations were reserved at the local Days Inn. I was a bit concerned about the place when I made the reservation about a month before. You see I had failed to reserve early at the NAMGAR main host hotel, the Ramada, and was left with only the local Days Inn as an option. [another note: Karl Leclerc & Patricia Duperre, who also went to the GT30, had wisely reserved at the Ramada many months before.]

As things turned out, the Ramada was undergoing some significant renovations with noise and dust and construction workers all about (something not very nice for hotel guests to have to put up with), while the Days Inn had completed a full renovation of the entire hotel just a month before and every room was comfortable, clean and inviting. Lady Luck shone on us this time.

For breakfast on Wednesday we went to the "Pancake Chef". A real hometown place with servers just as hometown friendly. The main event car show was held on Wednesday at a place called Conkling Heritage Park, not too far from the hotel down near the water. The day was sunny and hot. We had left a heat wave in Ontario only to be greeted by a heat wave in Michigan. There were a few trees in area so we joined several other MGers taking refuge under the branches and took advantage of as much shade as we could. As I understand it, there were about 225 cars in total - mostly A's - with a smattering of other models; and among those others, 3 wonderful Magnettes (one of which was a Farina model). A boxed lunch was included as part of the NAMGAR show. Dinner was on our own and we enjoyed some Mackinaw City pizza.

Thursday was full of Technical Sessions and, if you could afford it, High Tea at the Grand Hotel on Mackinaw Island. Deb and I spent the day driving about and shopping and had a great meal at the "Dixie Saloon". Late in the day, after completing all our shopping, we took a break to cool off in our room at the Days Inn. A bit later, I couldn't get the A to start. The starter would not even engage. This was not good. I walked down to the Ramada and found Rick Brown (an MG excellent enthusiast - you may have met Rick as he has been in Ottawa several times). After speaking to some folks who know all about these things, it appeared that the problem was likely caused by the starter being jammed engaged. With this technical advise from other MGers, Rick drove us back to the disabled A where we proceeded to rock the vehicle, in gear, back and forth. Then that wonderful "click" sound as the starter disengaged. The A was able to start successfully and we were able to attend the evening NAMGAR dinner. It was a buffet at a local arena and a silent auction was held with some nifty stuff to bid on.

On Friday, you could take a driving tour of the Soo Locks, or attend more tech sessions and participate in the Funkhana. The well-known John Twist, owner of University Motors, conducted his famous Rolling Tech Session in the parking lot of the Ramada. Again it was sunny and hot but John persevered through car after car after car with his helpful tips and tricks and adjustments. Almost every single vehicle needed some sort of carburetor adjustment. Must be an MGA thing. Every one of the vehicles ran better after being reviewed by John. I stopped counting after 25 vehicles had passed by his workstation. He really knows his stuff!

A technical session on sheet metal and welding sounded interesting so I attended. Session leader Carl Heideman didn't actually conduct any real welding onsite but he did have an interesting and very humorous approach to getting several of the main points about successful welding across to those of us who want to learn how. First, you can't weld what you can't see - you have to be able to see what you are going to weld! Second, you can't weld dirt - your work must be clean! Third, you can't weld air - your materials must be fitted properly. And fourth, beware of the stretch and warp factors - metal and heat and welding produce a lot of stretch and warp so prepare for it. A very good session without even doing any actual welding.

Later, I tried the Funkhana, in the rear lot of the Ramada. Only 2 events to challenge the driver. First, from about 50 feet away, you have a marshal set two vertical poles at a distance apart you think will accommodate your vehicle as you drive through – then you drive through. If you touch either post, you fail the event. If you successfully travel between the posts, the number of inches clearance on both sides is your penalty. The least penalty points wins the event. I had a 13 inch penalty. The winner had just 3 inches of clearance. Second, a special balance contraption was waiting for drivers to maneuver their vehicle onto. Like a large platform, long and wide enough to accommodate an MGA, with a crosswise balance point about mid-way, you would drive the vehicle onto the platform just far enough to allow the rear to raise up, and the front to dip down, and keep the whole thing balanced for the count of 1000 and 1 / 1000 and 2. It was a challenge. My time was all the way up to 1000 and 30 before I had to give it up. The winner accomplished it in a mere 9 seconds. Great Funkhana events. We should try them.

Then later that evening the Awards Banquet was an opportunity to show appreciation to all the winners of the various car classes and express thanks to the organizers of the events.

On Saturday morning Karl & Pat and Deb & I set off for the return trip back to Ontario via Sudbury. It continued to be sunny and hot and we did want to get as much of the highway behind us as possible before the afternoon crept up on us. At the border crossing at Sault Ste. Marie there was quite a lineup of vehicles heading into Canada. I was about 20th in line and Karl was not too far behind me. The movement was very slow and as we inched forward, the temperature gauge kept rising and rising and it was sure to go way off the scale if I didn't do something. I decided to shut the engine off. I hopped out and pushed the vehicle up towards the crossing along side those others in the line, fully intending to "hop back in" when my turn came up. To my surprise, a border guard came out and motioned me to enter a closed crossing gate - all the time offering water to cool the engine. I graciously declined, fearing a major catastrophe if I put cool water in a scorching engine. So instead of having to wait my turn, she allowed me to push the A through the closed crossing gate and while Deb and I performed the push, we answered the border guard's routine questions... "Are you Canadians?" "Yes!" "Do you have any bad stuff with you?" "No!" "OK, park over there till you cool down and have a nice day." We were through. That was it. So we cooled down as we waited for Karl & Pat, who came through the traditional way without any overheating issues at all. Then on to Sudbury.

Our overnight accommodations at the Best Western in Sudbury were quite comfortable. And together, Karl & Pat and Deb & I enjoyed some wonderful food and drink at Shaugnessy's Pub not too far from the hotel. Many thanks to Karl & Pat for sharing some wonderful times. And although the other three in this group were exhausted from the day, I chose to drive out and see Chris Culliford - to determine if he was both an MGB enthusiast and a radio announcer. He was! He did have a former career at a local radio station and is well known in these parts (thus the notoriety with the chap we met at the Auberge Eldo Inn). But he continues his enthusiasm with British cars as he has expanded his stable. His 72 B is just one among his fleet. A 67 BGT. A Jaguar. A Mini Cooper S. And a garage full of parts and pieces and stories to match. It was wonderful to see him and his wife and I was very glad to pay him a visit.

On the last traveling day, Sunday, we were going to take separate routes home. Karl & Pat would take a more northerly route back to the east end of Ottawa. Deb and I would take a southern route, similar to the route we used to get to Mackinaw City. There was a threat of rain but it had not yet started as we parted company. For us it waited until we were out of Sudbury, on that long stretch towards Parry Sound, then it started to rain. And it rained and rained and rained almost all the way to Perth - with just a wee bit of a clearing as we headed across the lock bridge at Kilmarnock. For Karl & Pat, as we later found out, the thunder and lightening and torrential rain followed them all along their northern path with them passing through at least 5 significant storms.

But you know the famous MGer saying:

Not the heat of the day, nor the pounding rain, nor the frustration of the border crossing, nor the disappointment of the accommodations, nor the worry of a breakdown, nor anything else Mother Nature or Master Fate sends our way will deter us from having a good time. We had a good time!



A Country Drive To Alfred With "ZOLDB"

for the

OMGC Corn Roast with Dave & Michele

Saturday August 13, 2005

This Ottawa MG Club event had lots of things in it that I really like. MGs; of course! Corn on the cob; one of my favorites! Great weather; for roof down driving! BBQ burgers; another of my favorites! A good driving route; open roads & scenic places! Special blueberry & peach cake dessert; another of my most favorites. And many wonderful people; sharing a simply wonderful time.

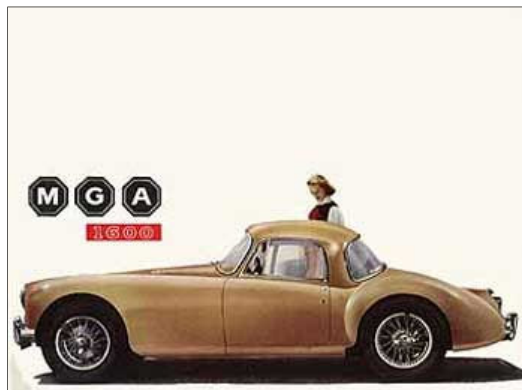
Dave & Michele led us in "Z OLD B" from the starting point at Louis' Restaurant to their house in Alfred. No nasty mechanical breakdowns or roadside restorations on this run. However, even though we were using the '2nd vehicle drop back' routine, Dennis Campbell (in his VW GTI) did take a wrong turn somewhere. Dave's driving instructions helped Dennis get back on track. And at our destination we all parked together at the back, on a gently sloped grassy hillside, close to the hanger. A picture perfect set up.

Upon arrival, some folks set up chairs in the shade and some folks enjoyed a swim in the pool. In no time at all, the corn was on the boil and the burs were on the BBQ. Many thanks to Dave's friend William for cooking the corn to a "T". Thanks to both William and Shirley Spekkens for helping out. And thanks to Karl Leclerc for his great BBQ burger cooking expertise.

Then, a surprise visit from another of Dave's friends, Geoff Anderson. He joined the get-together by flying in on his home-built bi-plane, he calls the 'Boredom Fighter', and landing at the airstrip behind Dave & Michele's place. The wee plane attracted lots of attention from everyone. It was quite a remarkable aircraft. Thanks to Geoff for the visit and also to his wife Fiona for bringing along some delicious Nanaimo bars for desert.

The afternoon passed far too quickly. When Dave's flyer friend took off from the airstrip, he did three wonderful flybys directly overhead. Several of our shutterbugs took some pictures of the plane as it flew over the lineup of MGs. I can hardly wait to see those.

A wonderful day. Superb food. A great drive. Only good surprises. Shared amongst friends. I like all these things. Thanks again to Dave & Michele.



Gumball Rally 2005

What starts and ends in the country setting of Kemptville? Runs along really great local roads for more than 100 miles? Includes 40 vehicles, mostly MGs? Asks about thirty sights & signs questions? And ends up by a water's edge picturesque setting for a BBQ?

The Gumball Rally / OMGC 15th Anniversary Edition!

Bill & Joy Curnoe really pulled out all the stops for this one. Bill plotted out a superb route through little villages and towns, along wonderful county roads, with stops at significant waterway locks and historic waterfront sites. A really great jaunt in an MG. Joy put together the largest bunch of tasty BBQ food I had ever seen. And the people and the cars – oh, the cars... 40 participating cars, with almost all of them MGs. And the people – oh, the people... from near and from far in this Eastern Ontario area and even one couple from Australia!! [MG TC owners Neville & Helen Grigsby, on temporary assignment from Perth, Australia; who know MG owner Graham Mackie, another chap from OZ, who is a friend of the Fortin's and the Evenchick's]

This year's run was a real rally. Not using the "2nd vehicle fall back" routine. Just out there with your navigator, looking for signs and watching the sights. I did the route with Bill's nephew Scott as my navigator. Scott enjoys MGs and he likes to rally so we were a good pair. I was focused on getting through the route quickly – Scott was focused on getting the answers to the questions. I think my quickness led to a disaster with his answers. We did get our rally notes to rally-master Pat, first, but we didn't do all that well for correctness. Overall winners in fact were Doug & Kathy McClure. [yes, yes, Kathy volunteered to help with the checking of the rally results but this had nothing to do with the final totals] The volunteer brigade really came out for this event. BBQ operators, food helpers, rally checkers – and thanks to everyone for lending a hand – it really made the event go smoothly with so many people able to join in.

The rally wasn't without it's troublesome spots though.

First, Chris Billings had to spend some time under his "B" in the middle of nowhere, fixing a fuel line problem. Several cars had stopped to lend a hand. I also stopped to see if more help was needed. In fact, there was a need for a tiny clamp. I returned to my car to fetch a clamp out of the club spares bag and sent the required clamp back to the disabled car with my navigator/runner Scott. I told him to hurry it up as I would have the engine running so we could get on our way quickly. There was enough technical help here already, and I, as I said before, was focused on getting through the route quickly, although it made no difference at the end of the day.

And secondly, somewhere along the line Jim & Monique Bloomfield disappeared from the route. Now we weren't doing the "2nd vehicle fall back" routine but you can generally detect when a participating vehicle does not appear along the route and especially when it does not show up at the end of the rally. A bit later, a bit frustrated and in some new clothes, they showed up. A spilled cup of coffee forced them to head for home to change.

But, overall, the sun was bright – the route was great – the food was superb – and the fellowship was perfect. And after the awards were presented and a bit of cleanup was conducted, it was time to call it a day – a Great Day!

Canadian Tire Charity Car Show For The Queensway Carleton Hospital

July 30, 2005

Another hot Saturday in Ottawa. The weather in this area of the province has been unusually warm for an unusually long time. But one shouldn't complain when the opportunity comes about to fill a parking lot with lots and lots of great vehicles, including a dozen MGs. And it's always a pleasure to sit and chat with club members, and others, about all things MGish.

It was a special pleasure to chat with club members Eric & Barbara Dudley, who are not able to attend many meetings or events as their work schedules and aging parents consume most of their time. We spoke about their '76 B and how the year of production and the year of sale make a difference when recording the vehicle with the DOT – and how this can be confusing to MGers when it comes to particular colours and features that were only available in particular years. Sounds like government bureaucracy to me.

There was quite a myriad of automobiles at this show. Some big old 'boats'. Some tiny little run-about. Lots of old and some new. Lots of North American and some from elsewhere. Lots of colors. Lots of muscle. Lots of shine and lots of noise. Lots of fun!

A few of our OMGC participants won some door prizes and the day saw several interested passers-by asking questions about the various MGs that were there. I just love it when we can get together for ourselves and for others to enjoy MGing.

OMGC British Cars @ Orleans Cruise Night

Wednesday, August 10th

I'm not sure if anyone will provide a report on this event. I was unable to make it to the Cruise Night, but there were two OMGCers who did in fact, get there. I received e-mail notes from each of them the day after the event. Their story is short.

Dave Sankey reported that he got there around 6 o'clock but there was not a soul in the area. He buzzed about for a while and still no one showed up. He went home.

Robert Lloyd-Rees reported that he arrived about the same time, and could not find any other participants. He did a wee drive around but saw no one. He went home.

In speaking to the two of them recently, they were apparently at different areas of the parking lot at different times, never 'bumping' into each other during their entire 15 minute drive about. Incredible.

The Orleans Cruise Night event had been cancelled but no one sent any notifications to us so the news could be broadcast to our club members.

A Story Of Problems and Pleasantries

It was a pleasant Sunday morning, just right for a great MG drive from Kilmarnock to the Perth Road Village area – or at least it was pleasant for a little while. Deb and I were scheduled to attend a get-together at the home of my niece, Traci, and her husband, Dave, and their young son, Evan - as my other niece, Karen from Northern Ireland, had been visiting / babysitting for Traci & Dave for more than a month. My older sister, Wendy, from Kingston and my younger brother, Todd, from Kemptville would make their own way to the Perth Road Village area and we'd call it a Fortin Family Fun Fest. Deb and I started out with the '77 B, but the journey stopped being pleasant just as we were in the Lombardy area. The '77 stalled. We pulled off to the side. And it would not start.

With the hood up and the tools out and the check-over going as it should, the problem, Mr. Lucas, appeared to be electrical – no power to the fuel pump and no power to other things that need 12 volts to operate. So, uncertain of the time it might take to repair, I called the CAA folks and they would send out a truck to help. Within a minute of my call to the CAA, a red MGA appeared from the east. It was Doug & Kathy McClure, on their way to visit a friend at a cottage just up the road. Our despair turned to optimism.

Although Doug's first few words were, "What would a Sunday drive in the "A" be without bumping into the Fortin's on the side of the road with another breakdown" – or something of that nature, it was wonderful to have such good luck shine upon us. With a re-check of this and a confirmation of that, it was clear the problem was electrical, but we could get this thing running with a long bit of 'hot-wire' from the horn to the fuel pump. Done. Started. Running.

A call to the CAA to cancel the truck order. A hug and a big thank you to Doug. And we were on our way. Doug & Kathy, onward to their friend's place and as they drove off, Doug shouted out, "Don't forget to disconnect that hot wire when you get home or the pump will be running till the battery dies". Deb and I back to Kilmarnock to pick up another vehicle. I didn't want to risk another opportunity for the 'Prince Of Darkness' to shower us with more 'magic'.

The day did turn out to be a memorable one. A spot of trouble. A helpful solution. A visit with my Irish niece. A great BBQ and family get-together. And another Lucas story to add to the chronicles. MGing at it's best.

Len & Deb Fortin



All British Car Day

The first annual all British car day was a great success. We had over 160 cars attend the show. This years hot weather brought out the best British Cars from all over the region. The food, location and weather were all great. We have already started organizing the show for next year, same place, July 15th 2006.

Here are a few pictures from the show.

Frank Rizzuti



Pictures From The Past



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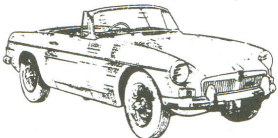
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