



The Dashpot

Autumn 2007



Ottawa MG Club

The Dashpot is the official publication of the Ottawa MG Club. Submissions for consideration should be sent to: freyung@rogers.com

www.omgc.info

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From The Editor's Desk

Here we are again with another edition of Dashpot, this one my last as Len Fortin, who clearly does not have enough to do, has volunteered to take over as editor of your favourite periodical. I have to say that I have enjoyed the two years or so that I have had this job, although at times I have found it difficult to find enough to fill all 28 pages. This may be a thing of the past, since now I have many more contributors and now have enough to pass on to Len for a good start on the Winter edition.

Thanks to all of you who have contributed over the past years, many thanks to Frank Rizzuti who mentored me in this job, and had to continually provide advice, and also thanks to all club members who allowed me the opportunity to serve in this capacity. It's been fun.

Take care, and happy motoring.

Terry Haines.

P.S. Those of you who are sharp eyed will notice the different fonts used in this edition. Sorry, but it was the only way I could fit everything in, besides, it's the content that counts, isn't it?

President's Message

Wow! Have we ever had great MG driving weather this fall. It seems like we have had a bonus month added onto the year, and it's not over yet. I hope that you have been able to take advantage of it. I got the TC out a few times, but not as often as I would have liked. This being semi-retired sure keeps one busy!

It has been said that in small organizations such as ours, 90% of the work is done by 10% of the members. Speaking for those in our Club who have volunteered for various tasks, I can say that we are quite happy with this arrangement as long as we feel that we are doing something worthwhile. Being President of OMGC over the past two years has been an easy task for me because of the rest of the 10% who have pitched in. In order for our Club to remain successful, we need the other 90% to do their part. I'm not asking too much. All you have to do is attend a few meetings, and take part in a few events. At our meeting in November, we shall appoint a new President. Please make his term as enjoyable as mine has been. PARTICIPATE!

Thanks!
Mark



TC 1045 at Shannonville

By Mark Evenchick

I have to admit that I am not a race car driver. I know a few of those guys, and I don't have the attitude, or self confidence, or courage for that matter, to drive the way that they do. However, the idea of driving fast on a race course does appeal to me, and I have had the opportunity to do that twice in the past year.

The first time was at the Motorsport Club of Ottawa "Goodwood in the Valley" event last fall at the new track at Calibogie. Because both the TD and TC were out of action at that time, I brought Erin's Midget for what turned out to be a pretty humbling experience. We just couldn't keep up. The track has so many corners that I never could remember where I was, and all of the corners seemed to be blind, so that going in, I couldn't see where I would be coming out. I had fun, but didn't really do too well. At the end of the day, we were given the opportunity to sit in the passenger seat while an experienced driver lapped the track. This was a real eye opener. I went out with Jay Saslove, an old friend who has been racing, and teaching at MCO racing schools for many years. He was driving around the corners scary fast, and at the same time calmly telling me what I had been doing wrong. One of his tips was not to try to steer coming out of the corners, but to come out on full throttle, and the car would "find its own way around". This takes a certain amount of faith!

Over the next few months I practiced that concept, mostly on acceleration ramps leading onto the 417. Assuming that you brake enough going into the corner, and catch the apex right, it really does work, at least in the under powered cars that I drive. However it might be a little more dangerous in a car with real horsepower.

When it was announced that as part of their event at Kingston in July of this year, the New England MGT Register would be holding a track day at the Shannonville Race Track, I was ready to give it another try. I anticipated that the TD would be ready to go by then. During its rebuild, it had been overbored by .080", and we had put larger valves in it, ported out the head, and matched the ports to the manifolds. I calculated that it was now 1326 cc s (standard is 1250) with a compression ratio of about 8.5:1. According to the XPAG tuning book, this was stage 1A, which means a prodigious 61 HP, as opposed to the standard 54 HP. I was hoping that the higher output would help, as the car is equipped with an MGA 4.3:1 crown and pinion set for highway cruising, instead of the standard 5.125:1 ratio. As it worked out, we couldn't take the TD because the engine was knocking pretty badly

and I didn't want to destroy it before finding out what the problem was.

So, I was left with plan B. We had been having a lot of problems with the TC last year which culminated in a broken crankshaft on our way home from Stowe in September. It was all back together again by May of this year, but I didn't have a whole lot of confidence in it. The T Register event was to be the beginning of our vacation, which was to be followed by a round trip of about 2000 miles to PEI and back. With so many problems last year, my confidence in the car was really shaken. I was worried about another trip home in a tow truck, but I didn't have any other choices, so at the last moment, we packed up all of the spares, loaded our luggage on the luggage rack and headed for Kingston.

The car ran great on our way to Kingston and the following day to Shannonville. It turned out to be a beautiful sunny day, which I took as a good omen. The last place that I wanted to be was on a racetrack in the rain with those skinny TC tires. On arrival the car had to go through a very rudimentary tech inspection. Seatbelts and fire extinguisher required, (no helmets Nomex or rollbars) all of the loose stuff out of the car, shake the front wheels, and run a stick of wood around the spokes listening for anything that was really out of tune. She passed with flying colours, so on out to the pit lane, where the fifty or so cars were divided into three groups for our first lapping session.

When I had signed up for this event, I had thought that I would be driving my trusty old TD. We have traveled over 60,000 miles together, and I was pretty comfortable in my abilities with it. The TC however was another kettle of fish completely. I had driven only about 4000 miles and had all kinds of problems with it. Being a prewar design, with it's hard suspension, fidgety steering, flexible frame, and those tall skinny wheels and tires, I was not too confident as we rolled out onto the track behind the pace car.

The track at Shannonville is arranged so that it can be changed into many different layouts. We were using a very short layout, just over a mile long, with only nine corners. It is flat, and on entering a corner, one can see the whole corner so there are no surprises on the other side. This makes it an ideal track for beginners.

We did fifteen laps, starting slowly, and then increasing in speed as we tried to follow the same line through the corners as the pace car. The TC felt pretty good. It had much less body roll than the TD s or TF s while cornering, and the back came around nicely when the throttle was applied coming out of the corners. I could see why so many vintage racers prefer TC s to the later TD s and TF s with their independent front suspension.

After all three groups had done their lapping sessions, we had a fifteen lap qualifying session. This was preceded by a drivers meeting, where we were told that we were just here for fun, and since most of us didn't know what we were doing, not to mention our total lack of safety equipment, we should drive carefully and not do anything stupid, and there was to be no passing in the corners. So off we went again. As I became more comfortable, I was taking the corners faster and faster. However, it became pretty apparent that my TC with its close to standard engine, and cruising crown and pinion set (4.5:1 from a Morris Minor 1000 as opposed to the standard 5.125:1) couldn't keep up with the faster cars on the straights. As I became more confident, I began braking a little bit later and harder entering the corners. There were some corners that I knew just weren't working right, but others that felt really good. I could tell that corner 6 was really working well, because I could hear parts grinding against each other under the car, and coming out of it, I had my left front wheel up on the curbing. This was really getting to be fun, but I had to remind myself that we still had a long trip ahead of us, so I should try to take it easy on the car. I also found that being overtaken by faster cars was not as traumatic as I thought it would be...no Porsches or BMWs here!

The event had been billed as a relay race, so after the lunch break the organizers had to sort out the details of how the teams were to be set up. At this point there were only about thirty of us who still wanted to participate, so we were split into two car teams...the slowest car teamed with the fastest, second slowest with second fastest etc. It was decided that the race would last for one half an hour, the winner being the team that completed the most laps in that time.

There was one competitor who had a full race TF, and was clearly faster than the rest of the field. At the driver's meeting, Bob Grunau, the organizer, asked him not to be too tough on the rest of us, and advised us that when we heard him coming "And you will hear him coming" to stay out of his way. As the details were being discussed, I was asked my opinion about something, and I suggested that it didn't matter to me, but that I would like to get going before it started to rain. The skies to the northwest had become dark and there was a smattering of raindrops on the cars. With all of the details worked out, the cars were lined up Le Mans style on the pit road. My teammate who was driving a TD, agreed that I could start first, and run the first fifteen minutes, but if it started to really rain, I would come in and let him finish.

I was really keen to get started, so as the inevitable yakking and kidding was going on, I got in the TC, started it up, and drove right up behind the car that had qualified slowest and was starting first. That seemed to get the others motivated and the race soon started. I followed the car in front for a full lap, but just didn't have the power to pass him, so at the end of the pit straight, I passed him on the inside going into corner one. I wasn't supposed to do that but it was the only way that I was going to get by. For the next few laps I was alone as other drivers tried to figure out how to get past him. He couldn't have run more than five laps, because it wasn't long before I heard that screaming TF. Being totally intimidated, I was ready to let him go by three corners before he actually caught up with me on the pit straight. The TF was past in an instant, and I was then passed by two more cars, one on either side, as we entered turn two. These two guys were really having a good dice as they went through corner two and corner three side by side. In an effort to get the car to go faster on the pit straight, I began downshifting to second in the last corner, and shifting at 5200 RPM. I don't think that this helped much, as I was still faced with shifting up to forth gear for instant at the end of the straight, or risk over revving the engine in third.

I really was having a good time, but soon the flag that signaled fifteen minutes was waved. In order to get my teammate started, I was required to drive "carefully" into the paddock area, stop the car, and then run under the stands, jump over the pit wall, and tap his rear fender. Having done this, I went up into the stands to watch the rest of the race. It was quite a spectacle...all these old guys, white hair blowing in the wind, with mad grins on their faces pushing their old M.G. s for all they were worth.

As the time ticked down, the skies had become really dark and lightening was visible in the distance. It seemed that just as the chequered flag dropped the heavens opened, and everyone raced to get the weather gear on their cars. We all got drenched, but at least the rain held off 'til the race had ended. We had all had a terrific time. There were no crashes, no damaged cars, and no one had a heart attack due to the adrenaline that was obviously flowing in excessive quantities.

Cheepo Cheepo – Escape To Kingston

June 2 & 3, 2007

The starting point for this event was NOT at a Tim Horton's as we usually do. We gathered in the parking lot of the Food Basics store in Kemptville (although it was virtually in the shadow of the Tim Horton's on highway 43). And as the vehicle numbers started to increase, higher and higher, there were several folks who snuck across the road for their morning slurp of coffee. Bob Stark was 'policing' the entire arrival aspect and making sure folks received their trip packages. Terry Haines was also watching carefully so he could deliver a bottle of Cheepo-Cheepo Port to each participating vehicle. And with each and every car that arrived, there came smiles and hugs and handshakes and laughter as we showed off our 'escapee' outfits. Larry, Moe & Kurly (Mark Evenchick, Doug McClure & Karl Koch - aka 'The Stooges') in their prisoner shirts complete with octagons. And amongst the bunch there were three striped outfit prisoners (Gerry Neville, Len Fortin & Bill Curnoe) who compared their shirt numbers to see who had been 'in the longest'. Joy Curnoe dressed as a Kemptville Police officer (I guess to keep Bill in line) and Deb Fortin dressed as a FEDS officer (Felon Escort & Delivery Service) (obviously to keep Len in line). Emmett & Connie Hicks wore striped shirts too, but not with actual stripes... with the word "stripes" in slanted and horizontal aspects. Ruth also wore a striped shirt – vertical stripes, more like a referee than a prisoner; perhaps as a forecast to the evening hockey game between the Senators & the Ducks. And Brian & Sheila Swan were dressed to the limit as 'Bonnie & Clyde on the run again'. Great participation for our Escape To Kingston. I would say we were ready to go... but Wayne Kilrea proved me wrong.

At some point during the 'getting ready to go' phase of this event, it was noticed that radiator fluid was leaking from Wayne's "B". Yup, the heater valve was releasing fluid at an alarming rate. No amount of opening/closing the valve would make it stop. Surgery was needed and it was needed fast! With the bonnet in the open position, and more and more 'technicians' gathering about, the plan was established and put into action. A pan to catch the fluid when the bottom rad hose was removed. A new gasket and interim plate to be manufactured from scratch after the heater valve was taken off. A plug to stop up the heater hose. Tape to hold the pieces out of the way. Some water to be sourced to replenish the rad when the job was done. A funnel to guide the liquid safely into the system. And a role of paper towels to keep things as dry as possible. With tools and talk and trials and tribulations, Wayne removed the lower hose and drained the rad... Len removed the heater valve and hoses & controls... Chris Billings manufactured the plate by hand from an old dash plaque... Jordan Jones hand carved the gasket from some appropriate material and completed the reinstallation. It was a success. The patient would be able to Escape To Kingston!

The run to our final destination did have a stop for lunch in the Westport area – the Lion's Club Park at Sand Lake. Nice place. Shade trees. Tables. Waterfront. And an occasional cool breeze helped us through the very hot and humid weather. But before starting on the 2nd half of the trip we were encouraged to do a bit of a walkabout in Westport and enter our names into a draw at the Village Green Shop in town. Then meet at the church to start the drive to the Confederation Hotel in Kingston. And although there are shorter ways to get to there from here – Bob's route was a very pleasant, casual run with good roads. And only once did we get a bit mixed up, and took a slightly wrong turn and had a bit of a turn-about to get back on track. I think it was a sign from the great Cheepo-Cheepo god in the sky telling us to slow down the pace. This was supposed to be a carefree weekend. So we took the hint and dropped it down a notch. The flowers and the fauna and the greenery along the way, along with the sunshine, confirmed this was Ontario at it's best!

The hotel provides underground parking and we took advantage of it by trying to cram 40 or so MGs into the 2 levels. The guard at the doorway did show some concern about the non-MG vehicles that were part of the convoy, but relented after some confirmation. And I don't think there was a spot left after we all had arrived.

So the rest of the late afternoon was for registration at the hotel desk, a visit to the bar (where we ran our server Andrew off his feet), some shopping at the many downtown places across the street, and time to enjoy the waterfront, feel the cool breeze in the shade and watch the boats – oh, and of course to tell some tall tales about this and other trips and events. Then, on to dinner in the banquet room. All enjoyed a wonderful buffet meal and great tasting raspberry dessert. Every table was just a-buzz with folks chatting and having a good time.

After the meal, Bob walked to the front of the room dressed as the “Cheepo-Cheepo County Magistrate”, complete with the judge's white wig and the judge's black gown and the judge's brown gavel. And he called us to order!

First, some ‘funny formalities’ in the ‘County Of Cheepo’ including the reading of the Queen's Pardon, supplied by Robert Lloyd-Rees, and a presentation of “official forgiveness” to Len Fortin for all previous navigational errors and equipment malfunctions. And a gift for Terry Haines, the club official vintner, for supplying the Cheepo-Cheepo Special Edition Pot Hole Port. Then the awarding of some very fine gifts and door prizes to participants. It looked like Bob was having a lot of fun with this ‘Escape’ theme. And to thank him and Bernadette for all their efforts, Mark presented them with a gift (an MG Wind Chime) and our combined thanks. With hardly a minute to spare, the wide screen TV was switched on and many chairs were relocated to allow the hockey fans among our numbers to enjoy the Senators & Ducks game.

In the morning, with the Senators and their fans in a very good mood, breakfast buffet was served in the restaurant. And arrangements were made to have our special photo op on the front steps of the City Hall building. Complete with Bob's GT (sporting the ‘Cheepo Police’ sign) and Mark's TC (showing off an OMGC sign). Say “Cheepo!”

Before we left Kingston, we were encouraged to visit the “Olden Green” gift shop downtown and participate in a draw – Eric & Barbara Dudley were the winners here of a lovely gift basket. And, are you ready for this... they were also the winners of the prize from the Village Green Shop in Westport! Incroyable!

Overall, great participation and fun for our Escape To Kingston. I would say we were ready to go home... but Dave Moore proved me wrong. There was an oily looking puddle under the gearbox of his “B”. Inspection confirmed it was an increase of a known leak but it had to be dealt with – but how many ‘technicians’ can you get under 1 MG??? So Dave acquired some special ‘stop leak stuff’ and filled the reservoir in hopes of getting home without further incident. And as I understand it, it only leaked seriously when he drove at speeds of less than 65 mph. Obviously Dave had a great drive home, but did Helen? They arrived safe and sound but he has an engine and gearbox re-and-re to accomplish. Just as Wayne Kilrea has a heater valve job to complete.

This does prove one thing... we cannot seem to ‘escape’ neither the fun nor the tech stuff in our travels. And I wouldn't want to miss a moment of any of it.

Member Profile

by Frank Rizzuti

Roger White, Club Librarian
Member # 149

What year is your B?

My B is a '79, Pageant Blue (original paint) purchased in July 1999.

Is this your first MG?

Technically the '79 is my first MG, though first car ever was a '61 Austin Healey Sprite which was a badge engineered MG Midget with exactly the same mechanicals. Only other British car was a '71 Austin Mini bought brand new.

The Sprite has a special place as first car ever, though was basically an unsafe wreck and should have been pushed over a cliff, but it kept me mobile for a couple of years. The Mini was a great car to drive, had silly things always going wrong, but never left me stranded. Have to say the '79 B is my favorite - have invested a lot of time and \$\$ upgrading it. It is converted to twin SUs, have also added electronic ignition, oil cooler, auxiliary fan, ss exhaust plus creature comforts like new leather seats and upgraded stereo. Everything works, even the dash clock, and I've made it about as reliable and good to drive as I can. Only thing that would make it better would be overdrive. At the moment, it's running perfectly and I love it.

What was your best MG day?

A beautiful Saturday of the Labor Day weekend in Prince Edward County 2 years ago in convoy with friends and OMGC members the Taylors in their B touring the wineries, taste-testing and filling the boot with vino.

Your Worst?

The same frickin' day when the hydraulics on the clutch gave out! Managed to nurse it back to Ottawa though and new master and slave clutch cylinders fixed it. But talk about a mood swing.

What do you like best about the Ottawa MG Club?

The OMGC members show great spirit, humor and friendliness. Many are happy to give good advice on the mechanical side, and the events are always well organized. Most of the members are like MGs - fun, solid, no snobbery.



Smiths Falls Car Show - Sunday May 13th
(the "A" doesn't win an award, again)

This annual get-together, hosted by the Antique Automobile Car Club, was the 35th edition of this event. It was held at the Lombardy Fair Grounds just south west of Smiths Falls on Highway 15. And although it really does focus on North American vehicles, other marques from the non-North American production scene are always welcome.

Deb and I were among the first vehicles to arrive and register in the "A". So we got first choice of display spots in the show field in the non-North American vehicle area. Choosing a spot right beside the pathway for pedestrians, I felt we might be able to entice many visitors to vote for the "A" as part of their "People Choice" ballots and perhaps win a fine prize.

Not long after we arrived, along came a couple of other OMGC folks. Norm & Norma Mouldey in their '62 Iris Blue "B". And Dave Sankey, driving his recently rebuilt, and almost finished, Triumph. Both these vehicles would give the "A" some strong competition, but the "A" is still a strong contender. And as it turned out, we were the only 3 non-North American vehicles at the show.

As the morning progressed, dozens and dozens and dozens of North American vehicles arrived onsite. All makes and models and colours and variations. From some pretty spectacular Detroit machinery to a raggedy old Dodge fixer-upper. One of just about everything was there on display. OMGC members Brian & Sheila Swan proudly displayed their 1932 Ford (in the area for such vehicles - we couldn't have Brian's Ford in the non-North American section with us, and, of course, we couldn't put our British vehicles in with the Fords). We must have done a half-dozen walkabouts to see each and every vehicle on display. Some brought back wonderful memories of my earlier 'growing up' years. Paint jobs and restoration work on many were flawless.

Along with the car show were bunches and bunches of vendors - old parts, new crafts, old books and new products. Lots of stuff to choose from. Here also we must have done a half-dozen walkabouts to be sure we didn't miss anything on the previous stroll through the vendor area. Deb and I found a nifty old book about the history of the automobile - in German! Perfect to send over to our son-in-law Martin in Austria. And we purchased a few yummy jars of jam for breakfast toast. The weather was a bit breezy with the sun peeking out every once in while but one was wise to wear a jacket to keep the chill off.

And when the time arrived to call out the winners, the '62 Iris Blue "B" and the almost finished Triumph took the awards. The Fortin's and the "A" went home with only a book and some jam, and of course the company of good folks, to remind us of the great day.

TO THE PACIFIC COAST IN AN MGA

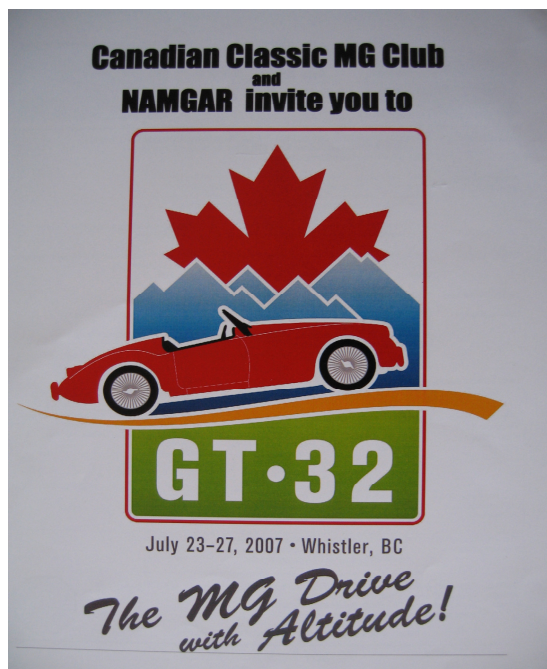
PART ONE

By Karl Leclerc

These are excerpts from the journal we kept as Patricia and I drove our 1962 MGA Mark II some 3500 miles to Whistler, British Columbia. The aim was to attend NAMGAR GT-32 (North American MGA Register Get-Together # 32) which, this year, was to be held in the charming ski resort. The real purpose was to enjoy an extended vacation.

Patricia and I decided very early in the process that driving like mad everyday just to get there was not our preferred course of action. We decided to take five weeks and to make it a "visit" of Western Canada. The best way to drive across any country has to be in an open car. What could be more appropriate than an MG?

D MINUS 180



That would be 6 months prior to departure... Used the internet to register for the GT. Organizers love it when participants register early. It makes it easier for their planning. So they promote it by having early bird prizes and stuff. Surely, we'll get something... Some six months prior to the event, 106 couples had already registered. We were number 107. I guess we are not the only weirdos in the club... probably explains why we made so many friends so quickly...

D MINUS 21

You've broken the code: 3 weeks prior to departure... Went over the car and verified the major systems. Complete lube job including greasing the wheel bearings. Changed the oil (don't want to have to do it before reaching destination). Complete tune-up (head torque, valve lash, timing, carbs, etc) including a brand new ignition system (points, condenser, plugs, rotor, distributor cap, wires, etc). Since the road through the Rocky Mountains can throw at you a drop in altitude of 1 mile in less than 8 miles of travel, it may not be the right place to realize the brakes aren't working, I decided to double check.

Packed a few extra spare parts. I normally carry a bunch of spares all the time (generator, fuel pump, points, condenser, coil, distributor cap, wires, rotor, plugs, radiator hoses, etc) but given the length of the trip, I decided to add a few: throttle cable, extra points, heater valve and hoses, carburetor rebuild kits, head gasket set, intake and exhaust valves with guides, generator brushes, electrical wire, bullet connectors, radiator cap. I decided against bringing a spare water pump as the one on the car is only two years old and has only been driven about 9000 miles. The space freed up will allow the navigator to load extra clothes. I will regret that decision a few weeks later...

The priorities for packing are now established. Priority One: things that make the navigator happy. Pri Two: things that make the car stop. Pri Three: things that make the car go. Any room left? Go back to Pri One.

Gave the MGA a spirited test drive. Working great! Gave the car its last wash and coat of wax for the next 3000 miles. The shiny looks will be short-lived; hopefully some level of protection for the paint will remain...

D MINUS 1

Re-assessing the lack of luggage space. Wishing we would be going to an MGB instead of an MGA event; that would double the trunk space. The driver thinned out his luggage to 8 T-shirts, 2 pairs of shorts, one pair of jeans, one pair of slacks, 3 shirts, a pair of shoes, sandals and underwear for 8 days. Taking advantage of her "S" size over the driver's "XXL", the navigator was able to pack a few extra items. In any case, laundry soap will be required once a week. Add a GORE-TEX coat and a polar fleece to be kept in the cabin. Did not forget sunglasses and driving caps.

A few tips about packing for an MGA event:

Fancy clothes not required for drivers, better save the space for navigator skirts and heels, this will be appreciated by all parties;

Flip the spare tire and use the inside of the wheel to store your soft tool bag and a few spares;

From inside the cabin, you'll notice that once the top is folded back, it rests on the portion of the spare tire that protrudes on the back shelf. Each side of the tire, under the top, can be used to store a small (soft) bag of spare parts. A couple of bad weather coats can also be rolled and tied with elastic bands and stored in the small space above the top. More than likely, these will only be required when the top is also needed;

In the boot, one soft "Day-bag" on each side of the tire and one suit-type bag on top of the spare and that boot is full. Advantage: really limits the shopping for a while ... until the navigator realizes she can ship stuff via parcels along the way...

FRIDAY 29 JUN D-DAY

08:30 AM. Odometer reads 28200 miles: better take a picture of that. The tank is full. That means that the fuel gauge will read somewhere between full and $\frac{3}{4}$ depending on how hard you brake at that traffic light and on the amount of sloshing in the tank.

Destination for today: Sudbury, via Hwy 17. Two years ago, when going to GT-30 in Michigan, we drove along the more scenic route along Georgian Bay via Parry Sound. This year, we decided on the shorter route. After all, we have a few thousand miles to go and it will be nice to get out of Ontario as painlessly as possible. Not to be: Aboriginal tribes have decided to pick that same day to protest and delays are expected on roads going through reservations. Lots of those where we're going... 9 hours later: only minimal delays imposed by aboriginal tribes. Reached the hotel in time for dinner and a couple of pints. Odometer: 28501. 300 miles per day in an MGA is an honest day of driving. You can certainly drive more but it will quickly lose its appeal after a few repetitions. Checked the fluid levels (engine oil, gearbox oil, coolant): all look good.



SAT 30 JUN – SCIENCE DAY

Spent the day visiting the two major attractions in Sudbury: Dynamic Earth and Science North. Both wonderful. Dynamic earth explained the geology and the mining industry in Northern Ontario. While we waited for the next elevator, we “panned” for gold the old fashioned way. The underground guided tour is a definite “must do”. The trip down below took you through three mines: the century-old mine, the mine from the fifty’s and the modern mining operation. Bring a jacket. Buy the “Duo” passport at either location to save a few bucks. Science North was also a lot of fun: 4 levels of exhibits from Minerals to Human Performance, and from Antarctica to the North Pole. Very well done. Would recommend the IMAX feature films for all but leave the virtual rides for the kids.



SUN 1 JULY – CANADA DAY

Celebrated by driving all day. Lunch in Sault-Ste-Marie. Was there a couple of years ago with the A. Basically drove through. Evening stop: Wawa Motor Inn. Why Wawa? Two reasons: first, it is the halfway point between Sudbury and Thunder Bay, effectively splitting the 630 miles into two more manageable chunks, second, it has a “Big” picture opportunity: the Big Goose at the village entrance. We started taking the “big” picture collection a few years ago while traveling in Pat’s B and have not stopped since. There will be many more opportunities on this trip.

We kept an exact log of miles driven and fuel purchased at each service station. So far, averaged 33 miles per gallon. With a car fully loaded. Many modern engines don’t get that much.

MON 2 JULY – AROUND LAKE SUPERIOR

Cold morning followed by heavy rain. Engine sputters a little when driving in 2 inches of water and getting the ignition components all wet. Minor leakage in the cabin. Good day to wear shorts, avoid getting the pants wet. Northern Ontario getting boring: rocks, trees, trucks and moose. Decided to cancel our visit to Fort Williams because of the torrential rain. Went straight to the Day's Inn in Thunder Bay. Short dash to a Montana for dinner; and to a Timmy for breakfast.

After watching the weather forecast on TV, went to the internet to download the latest weather maps. Old habit from my days as a dive boat captain.

TUES 3 JULY - BEAT THE STORM

Decided to leave early in the morning in order to avoid a weather system coming from the southwest that is bringing thunderstorms, hail and heavy rains. We could see the front closing in over the left fender of the car. Should have left a little earlier...or increase speed... That was successful as the mass of clouds started losing ground in relation to the moving MG and slipped to the left, and eventually in the rear window. Reached the Best Western in Kenora by lunch time. Luckily, our room was ready. A few drinks at lunch. Afternoon nap. Copious flow of wine with dinner. Great lake view from the top floor restaurant. Red sky at night, sailor's delight.



WED 4 JULY – FIRST MG ENCOUNTER

Today's destination: Winnipeg. Only 130 miles to go. Easy day ahead. Took advantage of the short distance to sleep in and oxidize the alcohol... Sunshine is back. Top gets folded down. West on Hwy 17 then Hwy 1.

When traveling long distances in MGs, you end up developing some rituals. Pat would celebrate provincial border crossings by snapping a picture of the border signs. When crossing time zones: I would adjust my watch with a sense of accomplishment. Today, we crossed into Manitoba and moved our watches back by one hour.

On this road, something else surprises you, suddenly, without warning. The town of Beausejour, Manitoba marks the end of the boreal forest. In less than a mile, the trees disappear and the transition to the prairie wheat and canola fields is complete.

Reached Winnipeg by lunch. Visited the Royal Canadian Mint in the afternoon. As it gets explained during the tour, the Mint in Ottawa produces collector's pieces; the coins that you carry in your pockets are struck in Winnipeg. Well worth the visit.

Speaking of coins: the hotel has a coin-operated laundry. We happen to have 6 days' worth of clothes that could use the attention. This ritual will later repeat itself an average of once a week.

When you travel in an MG, even laundry rooms become social venues. We meet two contractors from Ottawa that have been staying in the hotel for a few months. They saw us drive in the MGA and they tell us that their favorite Wednesday evening gig is the local cruise night which is held a couple of blocks away from the hotel. After a small detour by the Elephant & Castle for dinner and a few pints, Pat and I show up, on foot. The MG caps we are wearing quickly identify us to Roger and Wern, a couple of local British car enthusiasts. They quickly pull us to their respective red MGB and green MGA Twin Cam. On this trip, Winnipeg marks the location of our first MG encounter. After some 30 minutes of pleasant discussions, they convince us to go back to the hotel and drive back with the A. As a reminder that this trip was all about driving and not about showing the A, the skies open up with a downpour of biblical proportions, putting an end to the cruise night, and adding to the pile of clothes that will need drying.

THUR 5 JULY – THE WALK-A-THON

Lazy morning...made it to the coffee shop breakfast just in time to avoid the hordes of civil servants coming for their coffee break. Back to the hotel underground parking for an hour of preventive maintenance on the A. That will also become a weekly ritual... until actual repairs are needed. This time, everything looks in order.

Spent the afternoon visiting The Forks, an area that has remained a trading place for centuries, right at the intersection of the Assiniboine

River and Red River. The market is quite interesting with its abundance of exotic fruits and vegetables. The local businesses impress with the quality of their products (and the bakery remains my favorite...) The Johnson Terminal, just across from the market, was showing an exhibition centered on the province of Manitoba. Very informative. Many more miles did not register on the odometer but were certainly felt by the legs and feet after the rest of the day was dedicated to shopping the wider downtown area. Outstanding dinner at AMICI Restaurant on Broadway St. The fact that we wore sandals and T-shirts did not seem to bother the staff or the other clients, all wearing suits and ties. Sorry, no room for that... and it is 39 degrees centigrade outside...

FRI 6 JULY – BEAT THE HEAT !

Second time on this trip that we decide to travel early in the morning in order to avoid extreme weather. Now trying to avoid the excessive heat. The forecast calls for another day close to 40 degrees. Always difficult on the engine and on the passengers. We have some 350 miles before reaching destination. Left at 6 AM. Mid morning, the temperature in the prairies has already reached 35C. Pat had the good idea of parking the car with nose into the wind during our morning stretch. This had a measurable effect and cooled the engine substantially. We settled for bottles of water that we had frozen overnight before stuffing them in the cooler. After setting our watches back another hour, we reached Regina around 1 PM local. Too hot to visit or do anything... spent the afternoon in the hotel pool.

SAT 7 JULY – WEDDING DAY

Today destination: Saskatoon. The drive was typically flat. However, there was a surprise waiting for us in Saskatoon. Today is the 7th day of the 7th month of year 2007... 7/7/7. Some 35 superstitious couples from the area have decided that this would be the perfect date to get married. There are two big hotels in town that can accommodate the receptions and the Delta is one of them. You can see wedding dresses everywhere. The city church bells rang non-stop all afternoon. I can almost imagine the priest ending each ceremony: "Next!"

SUN 8 JULY – BOATING IN SASKATCHEWAN



Got up just in time to catch the tail end of the breakfast buffet before they shut it down. Walked a few miles along the South Saskatchewan River. Quickly getting hot again.

In a quest for some air conditioning, we visited the Mendel Arts Gallery. Overall, I was disappointed. There is plenty to see. I guess I just don't get most of the artists. In fact, the only work I really enjoyed was from an 18th century British artist who painted scenes of drunken soldiers with well-endowed prostitutes. Go figure...

Further down the walking trail along the River, we came upon the Saskatchewan Princess, a typical tourist tour boat. The one hour tour provided a good break from the walking and allowed the discovery of many fantastic views. Also very informative.

Back at the hotel, the Samurai Japanese Restaurant served outstanding sushi with copious quantities of sake, all very reasonably priced.

MON 9 JULY – PRAIRIE STORMS



Left Saskatoon at 8 AM in a light drizzle. Crossed the Alberta border at the same time as the trip odometer turned 2000 miles. Then the heavy rain came. Drove through three different layers of weather systems, each one more violent than the other. The MGA side curtains were no match for the horizontal rain. Another good day to wear shorts, or a bathing suit. Pat decided to go camping and used the raincoats to build herself a little pop-tent inside the car. She came out dryer than I did.

Rain-X proved to be worth every penny as it repelled water off the windshield perfectly. I am happy that I brought the bottle for re-application as needed, which is pretty much every time you wash the windshield. It will last a lot longer if you only use a wet micro-fiber cloth to clean the windshield.

And the rain went away as quickly as it came. Days like these leave a lasting impression. However, we were pretty lucky with the weather on this trip. In 35 days spent on the road, we only had a total of 5 days of rain.

Sunshine rolled in just in time to allow us to witness the biggest break in the continuity of the prairies: the Badlands. We have reached the land of the dinosaurs: Drumheller, Alberta. This small town will forever remain in our memories as it was from this moment that we forgot all about the mileage that needed to be done and really started enjoying the attractions. But MG's have their own way of getting back some attention: join us for Part Deux of the journey in the next edition of The Dashpot.

My Report On The Boot'n'Bonnet Autojumble

(April 29 in Kingston – by Len Fortin)

This annual event, conducted by the Boot'n'Bonnet All British Car Club, is getting more and more popular among British Car enthusiasts in the Eastern Ontario region. I've been to a few. But always to browse. Never to sell anything (like some over zealous vendor barking at passers-by to encourage them to part with their money) and I never seemed to buy anything (like a fanatical parts aficionado seeking a great bargain to complete some sort of acquisition quest). But this year was a bit different for me. I gathered up every MG part in my vast inventory and plopped them into cases, boxes and bins – and quite a number of other parts that were too large to fit into them – and arranged for a vendor table where I could offer these fine goods at discount prices. With thoughts of monumental sales, I also gathered up a good quantity of plastic bags, from my large collection, to be sure customers could carry their purchases safely home.

Now there are two things that I needed to make this venture work smoothly – a helper to assist with the lifting and toting of all the cases, boxes and bins – and quite a number of other parts that were too large to fit into them; and a pricing plan that will make the products, no matter how dirty and greasy they are, look attractive to potential customers. I had both. Emmett Hicks acted as my helper. And a couple of Victoria British parts catalogues were the basis of my pricing program.

So it was early on that Sunday morning when we unloaded my truck of all the cases, boxes and bins – and quite a number of other parts that were too large to fit into them – and placed them all strategically on and about our vendor table. And then, of course, we had to go wash up to remove all the grease and dirt from our hands.

I knew in a moment that my offerings were worthy, because for the most part, the items I had on display were somewhat similar to those of several other vendors. I had headlights and side-marker lamps and carburetors and gauges and big bits & pieces and small bits & pieces and all manner of bits & pieces. So did lots of other vendors. And most of those other vendors had signs and stickers showing the price of their products; but I was going to be competitive and do my pricing "on the spot". If someone looked interested in any particular treasure, I'd first tell them the story behind the item, and second, do a quick search through the Victoria British catalogue, then do some fast math in my head to announce my price. A foolproof plan, I thought.

Well it wasn't quite like I had planned. Many of my parts offerings were quite dirty and greasy and it appeared that even with good pricing – potential customers weren't very interested. Were their "quality" expectations too high? Or were my standards for "good" parts too low? But I carried on, and did some fine-tuning to the pricing program.

In the 3 ½ hours we spent at the Autojumble I actually did sell some stuff. Some "B" stuff and some "A" stuff and some Midget stuff; although the Midget stuff was actually Andrea's stuff (I just act as caretaker to the vehicle and the parts while she and Martin are living in Vienna). And I think there were more sales of Midget stuff than B and A stuff.

But with each used part that I touched and with each and every sale I attempted to conduct, I got an emotional rush from the story that was associated with the used part:

The "B" shock absorbers.... and the story of Bob Tytanek. A former club member who sold me the shock absorber conversion kits for my '73 "B" so many years ago. Bob now lives in the Niagara region. My '73 "B" now has North American shocks. And I kept those original lever shocks all these years. Too dirty. Too greasy. They didn't sell.

The "A" tail-light/body plinth... mistakenly identified by many attendees as one of the parts that had to be replaced on Debi's "A" due to the Michigan mishap. This couldn't be further from the truth. Knowledgeable club members remember well that it was the front of Debi's "A" that ran into the back of my '73 "B". This spare part on the table came to me from a completely different source – a story I must tell you in another issue. It didn't sell either.

The Midget Oil Pressure/Engine Temperature gauge... It was years ago when Andrea bought an old scrapped Midget for a few bucks. Martin and I "went

to town" one afternoon and took every worthy part, and perhaps some not-so-worthy parts, from this scrapped vehicle. We carefully inventoried every single part. For those parts that would fit, we placed them in cases and boxes and bins and for those parts that were too large to fit, we stored them in the rafters of his garage for some future requirement. You know, I don't recall ever opening even one of the cases or boxes or bins over the next several years and when they went to Vienna, all the inventory came to me for storage in Kilmarnock. And because the gauge was missing the very important temperature lead, it didn't sell.

The "B" stick shift knob... A very nice, and brand new in the box, stick shift knob that I have had for many years. It came from one of our first North American MGB Register convention trips. It still had the price tag on the box, although I did not actually buy it – as it was a prize for my efforts at one of the Funkhana events at the convention (third place at the "tire rolling through the pylons while wearing oven mitts" event). But I had never installed it on the '73 "B" as I was more connected to the original stick shift knob that came with the car when we bought it back in 1983. I suppose it was a matter of which memory was higher on my priority list. And my experience with this sort of item has been that other folks do the same thing... they have purchased or won a new shifter knob, but still favour the good old original. Not too many folks were interested in buying another from a "used parts" table. So, when the opportunity came around to have it go to a new home, I jumped at the chance and now the wonderfully clean and smooth walnut shifter knob with the MG logo inset into the top, found a new home in another person's inventory. Sort of sold!

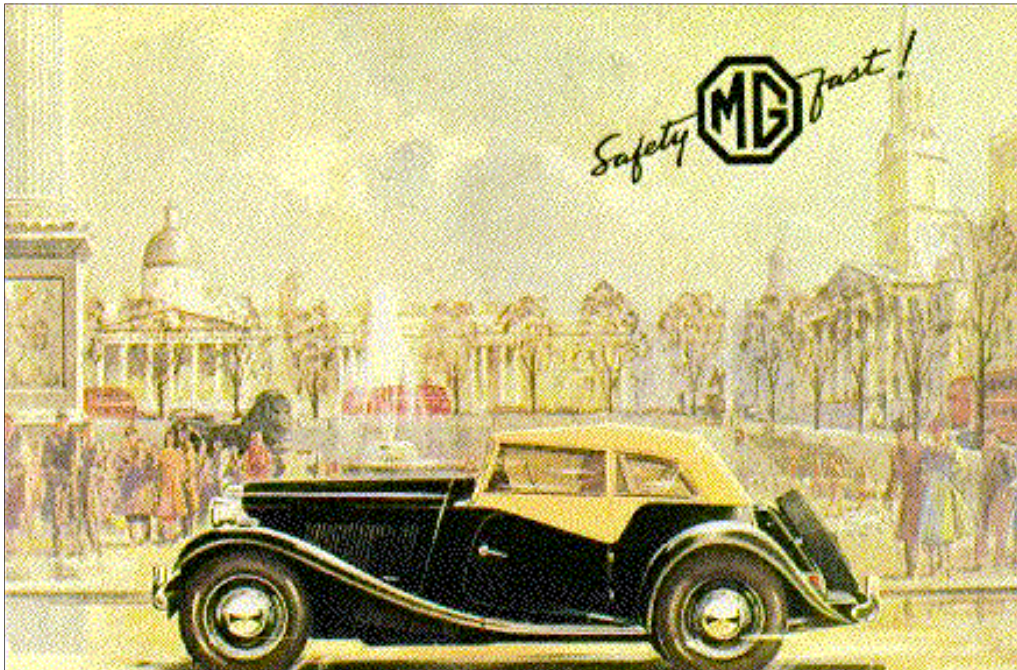
The Midget rear bumper.... and another story of the parts vehicle. One of the many, many parts salvaged by Martin and I on that hot summer day several years ago. A day that was spent in the company of a wonderful gentleman (Martin), doing one of my favourite things (fiddling with MGs), and ending up with a few cold beers sitting at a comfortable patio table (telling progressively taller and taller tales). At the Autojumble, the buyer who was interested in this spare part told me that it was in better shape than his current rear bumper and my pricing program convinced him to purchase it. Sold!

Now that the Autojumble is done for another year there a couple of things I must do. First, review my remaining parts inventory, piece by piece, so I'll be able to tell the true story behind each item and, second, count the cash from this year's sales and think about what other used parts I'll buy to make new memories.

MG Club Regalia

Item	Price
Long sleeve shirt	\$44
Short sleeve shirt	\$40
Hooded sweat shirt (heavy weight)	\$40
Sweat shirt (heavy weight)	\$36
Golf shirt	\$31
T shirt	\$18
Sign (magnetic)	\$18
Socks	\$16
Touque	\$16
Hat	\$15
Pins	\$10
Crests	\$8
Club jackets (available in a variety of colors and sizes)	\$170

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1. MG Model	<input type="text"/>		
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To help the club meet your MG needs, kindly complete the survey below:

Which of the following events would you be interested in attending?

- 1) Social/Fun Events: ☐ Club Meetings, ☐ Inter-Club Events, ☐ Get-Togethers, ☐ Car Shows
- 2) Driving Events: ☐ Short One Day Runs, ☐ Longer Two Day Runs, ☐ Non-Competitive Rally,
☐ Competitive Rally
- 3) Technical Events: ☐ Speakers at Meetings, Videos, etc, ☐ Hands On Technical Seminars,
Garage Tours
- 4) How would you like to be contacted about events?
☐ Phone ☐ Email

Additional Comments?

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