



# A-Antics



*Camp Dearborn 5-18-14*

*Camp Dearborn Meet*  
Drive Your MG Day Report  
*MG Meets Riley Head-on*  
Happy Ending Stories



# Camp Dearborn Meet Pics 5-18-14



*Pics by Bruce Mann, Dale Brown (WDMGC), Dave Quinn. See page 3 for report and page 20 pics also.*



### *Camp Dearborn Meet Report*

The 2nd Annual Spring British Car Gathering and Picnic, hosted by the Windsor-Detroit MG Club was held at Camp Dearborn in Milford, MI on Sunday May 18. Nobody counted but about 70 cars, their owners and navigators enjoyed a perfect spring day in this wonderful setting. No registration, no formal car show or class parking, and no awards. It was just an opportunity to share our passion with fellow British car owners and clubs, and to get to know one another. On the field was a wonderful collection of MGs, Triumphs, Jaguars, Austin Healeys and other British marques. We fired up a grill for folks to cook their BYO lunch and Philip Wiltshire brought hamburgers for those who came without. Thanks Philip. This year we added a "Boot Sale" of used and spare parts with some treasures being found. We will have to do this again next year. *Steve Finch* (from June 2014 "Can-Am Connection"-Windsor-Detroit MG Club newsletter).

*Rowdies Attending were: John Alexander, Gordie & Tracey Bird, Tom Fant & Judy, Steve & Donna Finch, Steve Holiday, Jerry Kocsis, Bruce & Willy Mann, Tom Newton, Kevin Peck, Larry & Mitzi Pittman, Dave & Donna Quinn, Curt & Stephanie Smith, Bill Weakley, Phil & Jan Wiltshire.*



## **NAMGAR GT-39 Registration**

**Dear Rowdies,**

**You are invited to NAMGAR's Get Together - GT39, which will be hosted July 14-18, 2014 by the Ottawa MG Club in Ottawa, Canada's capital city.**

**It's not very often that a NAMGAR GT is held north of the US / Canada border. In fact, 2014 will be the first time in seven years and only the fourth time in NAMGAR's almost 40 year history that the GT will be held in Canada. This is a rare opportunity that you won't want to miss. For Canadians, it's a chance to attend a GT in your own country. For others, it's an opportunity to spend time experiencing the capital city of a foreign country.**

To register or RSVP click on one of the links below:

**[Register Now!](#)**

For more information go to the event website: <http://gt39.namgar.com/>

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**MICHIGAN CHAPTER OF NORTH AMERICAN MGA REGISTER**

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**History:** The Chapter was established August 14, 1976. It was NAMGAR's first chapter. We are a low-key club, dedicated to the preservation and enjoyment of our MGA's/ Anyone is welcome to join our chapter and they are asked to join NAMGAR as well.

**Chapter Dues:** \$20 annually (\$35 for printed newsletter)

**Nickname:** Rowdies

**Motto:** People First!

**Rowdies Site:**

<http://www.mgcars.org.uk/michiganrowdies/>

**MG Car Council Site:** <http://www.mgcars.org.uk/mgscouncil/>

**NAMGAR Web Site:** [www.namgar.com](http://www.namgar.com)

**Past Chapter Chairpersons:**

1976-1980	Bruce Nichols
1981-1982	Tom Latta
1983-1984	Dick Feight
1985-1988	Dave Smith
1989-1990	Dave Quinn
1991-1994	Mark Barnhart
1995-1995	Herb Maier
1996-1996	Tom Knoy
1997-1998	Neil Griffin
1999-2002	Bruce Nichols
2003-2004	Bob Sutton
2005-2008	Gordie Bird

# ROWDIES 2014 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## JULY

- 13 MAD DOGS & ENGLISHMEN  
Gilmore Museum-Hickory Corners, MI  
Bruce Nichols (269-273-3118)  
[nicholsbm@aol.com](mailto:nicholsbm@aol.com)
- 14-18 NAMGAR GT-39  
Courtyard Ottawa East-Ottawa, ONT.  
<http://www.gt39.namgar.com/>
- 20 CANADIAN TRANSPORTATION  
MUSEUM-ALL BRITISH CAR  
SHOW-Essex, Ontario. Windsor-Detroit  
MG Car Club.
- 25 CLARKSTON CAR SHOW  
Detail tbd
- 26 VINTAGE RACE-WATERFORD  
At Clarkston, MI-Vintage Car Racing Event  
[Waterford Hills Racing](http://www.waterfordhillsracing.com/)

## AUGUST

- 2 ROWDIE BIRTHDAY PARTY  
Lloyd & Janice Herring's-7600 Jericho Ave,  
NE  
Rockford, MI (616) 409-2414  
[jann2043@att.net](mailto:jann2043@att.net)
- 10 ALDEN SPORTS CAR SHOW  
[Twin Bay British Car Club](http://www.twinbaybritishcarclub.com/)
- 15-17 UNIVERSITY MOTORS MG  
SUMMER PARTY-Grand Rapids, MI  
*Stop over at Ken & Kathy Nelson's  
house about 5pm Sat (8-16) for pizza,  
beer, and free garage tour if you wish*  
**3126 Brentwood, SE Grand Rapids  
616-957-3158 or 616-901-0083**
- 24 4TH ANNUAL CRUISIN' HINES  
Hines Drive from Ann Arbor Trail to Outer  
Drive. Windsor Detroit MG Club  
<http://www.mgcars.org.uk/wdmgcc/>

## SEPTEMBER

- 5 NAMGAR AT THE GLEN  
60th Annual Collier Cup Race Sept 3-8 at  
Watkins Glen, NY [NAMGAR Events](http://www.namgar.com/)
- 7 CAMP DEARBORN FALL  
OUTING  
[Detroit Triumph Sportscar Club](http://www.detroittriumphsportsclub.com/)  
Battle of the Brits
- 26 ORPHAN CAR SHOW  
[Ypsilanti Automotive Heritage Museum](http://www.ypsilantiautomotiveheritagemuseum.com/)  
Ypsilanti, MI

## OCTOBER

- 18 ROWDIE COLOR TOUR &  
LUNCH-Dave & Phyllis Goeddeke  
(734.425.5254) [xenon2013@att.net](mailto:xenon2013@att.net)

## DECEMBER

- 6 ROWDIE CHRISTMAS PARTY  
Bone Island Grill, 4614 Francis St, Jackson,  
MI  
[Bone Island Grill Facebook Link](https://www.facebook.com/boneislandgrill/)  
Dave & Donna Quinn (517) 782-9749  
[dlqs2000@comcast.net](mailto:dlqs2000@comcast.net)

## 2015

## FEBRUARY

TBD BUSINESS MEET

**Register Your MGA With NAMGAR!**



Join over 2,000 enthusiastic owners in the restoration, preservation, and sheer enjoyment of driving an MGA, Midget, or variant of this noble breed. You'll receive six bi-monthly issues of MGA!, our full-color, award winning magazine, invitations to National and Regional Get-Togethers throughout the U.S. and Canada, plus a knowledge base and support group second to none. All this for just \$37.50 per year (North America), or \$52.50 (International). Get more information at <http://www.namgar.com>, or contact [registrar@namgar.com](mailto:registrar@namgar.com).



# MEMBERS PAGE

Rowdies Website: Larry Pittman, Webmaster

<http://www.mgcars.org.uk/michiganrowdies/>

Larry Pitman's Database Report:

66 Active and Paid-Up Members

## Win \$50

The Rowdies will have a drawing at each meet for a gift certificate worth \$50 in merchandise from Jeff Zorn's Little British Car Co.

We hope to see some new faces at our meets and encourage you to bring a friend to join. All paid-up members are eligible for the raffle to determine each meet's winner.

**Classified Ads:** Personal for sale or wanted classified ads are free to all paid-up members. Commercial ad rates: Full page \$40 issue/\$200 year; 1/2 page \$25 issue/\$135 year; 1/4 page \$20 issue/\$110 year; Business Card \$10 issue/\$55 year.

Total ads may not exceed 12-1/2% (2 pages of 16); ads accepted on first come, first served basis.

Send Email & Address Changes to Editor.

Deadline for submitting material for the next issue is: August 20, 2014

## Letters:

### *Picture Perfect*

*The photos in the printed version for the May-June issue look OUTSTANDING, both color and B&W. The higher resolution is really working well. If we passed some samples around at the Rowdies Birthday party I'll bet we would get a lot of people to convert to print next year.*

*Dave Quinn*

### *Torque Tips or Take Your Choice*

**Gordie Bird writes in about the rear axle wheel nut:**

*I recalled 180ft-lb as the torque spec for the MGB rear axle nut and since it is similar to the A, I thought I'd check on Barneys' site since he has been popping up lately.*

*It appears as though the torque is limited by the socket in that much above 150 it will slip. If you are interested in the science from Barney, read on...*

*"So the idea is to have the big nut tight enough that the inner bearing race cannot be moved about on the axle housing with the forces of acceleration and braking. This is why it requires a lot of torque. The standard*

*torque spec for a 1-1/2" fine threaded machine screw torqued to its yield point is 65,400 in-lb, or 5450 ft-lb (just to start with things in the proper perspective). This assumes a thread engagement length about equal to the diameter of the threaded fastener. Since this particular nut is only about 1/4" thick you can divide by 6 to find the maximum torque allowable of about 908 ft-lb (to preclude stripping the threads). So when dealing with a fastener of this diameter, a few hundred ft-lb of torque would be small potatoes, and there is no way that any normal human being will ever be able to apply enough torque to strip the thread. And that is why they didn't bother to list the torque spec in the factory shop manual".*

*Now I can tell you from experience that 100 ft-lb of torque on this nut is not much, and is in fact very marginal for performing the required clamping function. 150 ft-lbs is not a lot more, and is only about twice what you would apply to a 1/2" wheel lug nut. Using the big blue thin wall tube socket I can usually achieve between 150 and 175 ft-lb of torque before the socket threatens to slip off the nut and damage someone's body in the process (anyone in the vicinity), so that's about where I stop and call it sufficient. If the nut was a little thicker and I had a stronger socket I would have no qualms about giving it 200 to 300 ft-lb of torque. Bottom line is that you need to crank that puppy up about as tight as you can get it, and then give it a little extra kick. Hence my reference to "arms like Popeye the Sailor Man". If your reference manual says 180, I wouldn't argue with that.* Gordie Bird

### **From Dave Smith again:**

*Does the club's rear axle nut socket have a 3/4 inch drive? If so, the club should consider purchase of a 3/4 to 1/2 inch adapter. Very few members would have a 3/4 inch drive tool set. A 1/2 inch breaker bar should be in everyone's toolbox.*

*Also, Mark Barnhart did research on the proper torque for the octagonal nut. This torque value is nowhere to be found in Factory manuals. I believe*

Mark came up with 120-130 foot pounds of torque. The click type torque tool does not go to this number, but the beam torque tool does. If Mark can confirm that torque number, you may consider a durable label to help club members have a safe repair. (There is no published torque specification for the rear hub nut on the banjo style axle. Mark Barnhart said the engineers at the ARP racing fastener company determined the "Rockwell hardness" of the axle stub and nut. The heat treat company determined both the stub and nut are mild steel and not heat-treated. It was agreed that 130 to 150 foot/lbs torque was the maximum. Testing this further, tests with a dial indicator were done on the thread stretch. Starting at 80 foot/lbs and repeating this at 10 Ft/lb intervals, it was determined at 160 Ft/lbs stretch was indicated on the axel stub, rather than the nut. Over tightening the nut results in axle housing thread damage making for a very expensive replacement. Mark confidently recommends using 140 Ft/lbs as the maximum).

**Dave Quinn replies:**

*I think I can answer all your questions:*

- socket is 1/2" drive.
- I have 1/2" breaker bar which is 17-1/2" long. Slipping a pipe over the end extends it to over 3 feet. That should be enough. I could actually add another 3 feet of pipe to make it 6 feet if needed.
- I have a 3/4" drive set; no need for the club to buy. If someone felt it necessary to use it, they would need to buy a reducer. But the 1/2 drive should do the job in my opinion.
- Mark's recommendation was not to exceed 140 foot pounds.

Dave Quinn

**Dave Smith retorts:**

*Great news that our socket is 1/2 inch drive. I have seen several of the blue tube sockets and all were 3/4 inch drive.*

*The breaker bar is excellent for removal of the nut, but I believe in use of a torque wrench for reinstallation. As Mark mentioned, we failed the axle nut on the race car, and the right rear hub was loose after the collier Cup Race. That incident caused Mark to do the professional research so we had sufficient torque to hold the hub, but not excessive torque that would strip the threads, as it did on our car.*

Dave Smith

**Slippery Subject**

*Editors: I spoke with the Technical representative of Red Line Oil just now to confirm that Red Line engine oils have all the protection needed for our A series and B series engines with a flat tappet camshaft and after a break-in period. Another benefit experienced with my race car was the drop in engine oil temperature when switching from Castrol 20-50 to Red Line 30 weight. The decrease was 15 degrees under identical conditions. This is additional heat that the cooling system had to dissipate when using conventional oil.*

*Many of the engine oils on the market today are designed for camshafts with roller tappets, so do not protect sliding surfaces in the same way. Many sources believe that premature wear of the camshaft and tappets are the consequence.*

*Use of Red Line MTL (Manual Transmission Lubricant) is also very successful in our British manual transmissions. MTL has additives that give the best friction level of the synchronizer (baulk) rings to grip the 2-3-4 gears when upshifting or downshifting. The factory recommendations of heavier motor oil were determined decades before synthetic transmission products were available.*

*The information in this article is based on my street and racing experiences and is not an endorsement of any product. Use of any engine or transmission lubricant is the decision of the car owner.*

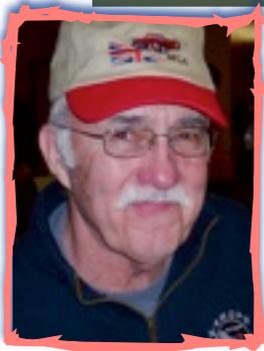
Dave Smith

*Thanks Dave. Helpful information, and I'll put it in the next newsletter also. Does it matter that Red Line Oil is not multi-weight. Does it need any extra ZZDP zinc additive with the Red Line?*

Ken Nelson

*Red Line engine oil is sold using the straight weight number such as 30 weight. However if you look at the container it states that 30W meets the multigrade specification for 10W30. Red Line oil does not need any additives with ZZDP to fully protect flat tappet engines. All of our British engines use flat tappets.*

Dave Smith



**CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER**

by Dave Quinn

The Rowdies were well represented in the NAMGAR's May-June 2014 issue. Starting things off was the great cover shot of Tom Fant's Blue 1960 1600. Next,

NAMGAR's VP declared a rule change starting with the next GT whereby sheer attendance numbers will be replaced by a ratio formula, called the Chapter Recognition Award. Since the Rowdies won both of NAMGAR's Chapter GT Attendance Awards, no Chapter can top our record! Mark Barnhart submitted EX181 exclusive photos along with an article. Then a Rowdy's MGA was selected for the sexy two-page centerfold photo - Andrew Hoffman's black 1960 1600. The following page was wordsmith Ken Nelson's article on Ottawa or Bust. Which was then follow by a recap Ken's story in the Looking Back, Twenty-Five Years Ago section. Well-done Rowdies.

Since most of us are not getting younger I thought I would share a tech tip for lumbar support. If you have lower back issues when driving you might try this solution. I originally bought this setup for the Honda S2000 as the seats were designed more for racing than comfort. I was hoping it would help Donna with her back problem. After selling the car I switched the support over to the MGA. I don't use it all the time but it gives me a chance to vary the size of the lumbar support for comfort on long drives. This link shows how the lumbar support device looks and works: <http://www.sportsimportsltd.com/inseluinairc.html> You can order it there for \$29.95 or you can cut the cost by two-thirds by just building the same

thing for \$10.18 from the following two links for a bladder and bulb:

<http://www.schoolkidshealthcare.com/product/mabis-1-tube-bladder-only>

# 281026 for large adult. \$7.59 for the bladder and hose: <http://www.schoolkidshealthcare.com/product/replacement-bulb-and-valve-assembly> \$2.59 for the bulb.

Energy drinks and brewpubs are both booming business these days. If you'll recall brewpubs were high on the list of Rowdies places to go for a meet. Many of them list brews at 6.5% percent or higher. Still none that I've seen can top what some of our parents were drinking back in the day. I know a lot of you remember Geritol ads from early TV for iron poor blood. The original formula contained twice the iron found in a pound of calf's liver! But one of the reasons Geritol was the energy tonic of its day was the 12% alcohol it added to the vitamin B. When we set up the brewpub drive maybe we should find one the serves calf's liver too.

*Chairman Dave*

**Run-down...no pep because of TIRED BLOOD?**

Take fast-acting **GERITOL**

**FEEL STRONGER FAST**  
in just 7 days - or money back!

When you feel weak and run-down, your trouble may be due to what doctors call iron deficiency anemia. We call it Tired Blood. Check with your doctor. And to feel stronger fast, take GERITOL, the high-potency tonic that begins to strengthen *immediately*. Tired Blood is just twenty-four hours. In only one day Geritol-iron is in your bloodstream carrying strength and energy to every part of your body.

Check with your doctor, and if Tired Blood is your problem, take Geritol, liquid or tablets, every day. Feel stronger fast - in just seven days - or money back! \*This is not a cure for anemia.

**Rowdie Birthday Party-Lloyd and Janice Herring's**  
***Saturday August 2, 2014 7600 Jericho Ave, NE***  
***Rockford, MI Phone 616-866-0270***

**Starts at 1 pm-Bring a Dish To Pass and Items to Donate for the Time Honored Rowdie Auction-BYOB and BYOMG + Lots of Cash for the Auction. (This is our only Fund Raiser for the year and it's better than a paper drive or a car wash.) The Club will provide meat on the grill-Lloyd will provide the Grill from his MGA for the Cooking. Auction to follow food and libations. Entertainment is provided by "Carb and the Four Singing Cylinders".**



The directions are I-96 to East Beltline (M-44) exit N. to 10 mile Rd and turn left (West) to Rockford. Becomes Division Ave. in Rockford. Continue West over Rogue River and turn left (South) on Oak St. which becomes Jericho Rd. Look for 7600 on your left. Reminder to bring goodies for the auction, a dish to pass, and your own adult beverage. email Lloyd/Janice herring <[jann2043@att.net](mailto:jann2043@att.net)>.



# Mad Dogs & Englishmen British Car Faire 7-13-14



*Photos from 2013 show-Ken Nelson.*



**Sunday, July 13. 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**  
**Registration, 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**

The 24th Annual British Car Faire is a day full of family fun, open to all British made vehicles! The show will feature cars for sale and swap meet area. Enjoy people's choice judging, car games, and rides in the Museum's Austin London Taxi and Tea Time, too!

**General Admission: \$10.00 per person – children 11 & under are FREE**  
**Show Car Registration Fee: \$25.00 per vehicle**  
Includes all museum exhibits at no extra charge.

**Sponsor: Mad Dogs & Englishmen Club**  
**Direct Contact: Sue Lane**  
**Phone: (269) 344 - 5555**  
**Email: [smlane714@yahoo.com](mailto:smlane714@yahoo.com)**  
**Website: [www.maddogsandenglishmen.org](http://www.maddogsandenglishmen.org)**

## Classic Sportscar's Comparison of a Prewar MG to Riley- reprinted from June 2013 Classic Sportscar Magazine

Looking back now, the way in which the British motor industry developed after WW2 – the mergers, the sharing of components and the dilution of marque identity – was already in evidence during the second half of the 1930s. At the heart of this were two



1933 MG-K3 Magnette



companies that began the decade doing battle on the racetracks as well as in the showrooms – Riley and MG.

Both offered advanced, sporting models that reflected their competition success. They traded overall victory in the prestigious RAC Tourist Trophy for six consecutive years, with no less a driver than Tazio Nuvolari claiming it for MG in 1933 (Ed: *in a K-3 Magnette*).

Renowned tuner Freddie

Dixon soon hit back, taking consecutive wins for Riley in 1935 and '36. And then there was Raymond Mays' 'White Riley', based on the Brooklands Six model and which formed the stepping stone on his way to building the voiturette ERAs.

MG soon discovered, however, that all of that success didn't necessarily pay the bills. In 1935 the company became part of the Nuffield Organisation, the expensive racing program was halted and the design office was shifted from Abingdon to Cowley. Rather than being given a relatively free hand at the head of the marque, Cecil Kimber was instructed to concentrate more on the bottom line than the chequered flag. It had

been fun while it lasted but, from then on, MG would be forced to rely far more heavily on the Morris and Wolseley parts bins.

The first new model to upset the purists was the SA of



1938 MG-SA Tickford

1935 – a luxurious, heavy 2-litre saloon that signalled a shift in ethos for the company and was designed to take



1938 MG-VA Saloon Car

on SS. A year later came its little brother, the 1&1/2-litre VA. While the chassis and the bodywork (saloon, tourer or drophead) were bespoke, the 1548cc engine was developed from that used in the Morris Twelve and Wolseley 12/48. Much of the running gear was sourced the same way and, while enthusiasts pined for the old school of MGs, there was no doubt that this approach put the company on a far more stable financial footing. Almost as many VAs were sold in the first year of production as Magnettes over the previous three.

In Coventry, meanwhile, Riley was focused solely on expansion. In 1935, and still reveling in the success of the Nine, the firm reintroduced a 1&1/2-litre four-cylinder model to its range, something that had been missing since 1928 and which put it in direct competition with the VA.

While Percy Riley wanted to develop the existing 1633cc six-cylinder powerplant to cover



1935 Riley 1 1/2 litre Falcon Saloon

this sector of the market, his brothers – Victor and Stanley – preferred to create an entirely new unit. It was designed by Hugh Rose, who had previously been working on the company's transmissions, and used many of the elements that could be found on its smaller sibling, such as hemispherical combustion chambers and twin camshafts that were mounted high in the block. The 'hot-spot' induction system – in which the exhaust gases heated the intake manifold to ensure the most efficient flow – was retained, albeit altered from that found on the Nine.

In 45bhp Standard form, carburetion was via a single Zenith. The later Special Series option had twin Zeniths or twin SUs, and upped the output to 52bhp, while from 1936 the really sporting gentleman could

specify the 61bhp Sprite Series engine, with crossflow cylinder head and water-heated inlet manifold.

Chassis number 0251 was the first VA built, and was displayed at Olympia for the 1936 Motor Show. "The wings are different to later cars, the lights are smaller and it has a fly-off handbrake," explains (*it's owner*) Bush. "I put the original motor back in – a previous owner had fitted a Morris Marina unit and automatic gearbox! It's now the first engine in the first chassis, but that's not to say it's a museum piece. I've taken it to France, Germany and Holland."

A new chassis was developed, too, featuring box-section side members and tubular cross-members, and further braced via diagonal cables that crossed at the centre. As for body styles, the Kestrel saloon (which

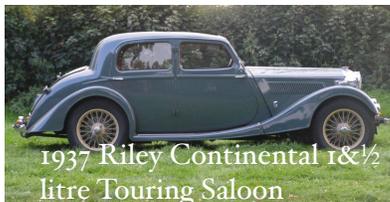


1936 Riley Kestrel 6-light (window) 1&1/2 litre Saloon

would be offered at £345) and Lynx four-door tourer (£335) were already popular on other chassis, so they were adapted for use on the 1&1/2-litre, which became known as the 12/4.

(*Ed: 12/4 meant 12 hp for taxation in the British system and 4 meant 4 cylinders. This was their 1&1/2 litre engine*). There was a newcomer, too, in the shape of the Falcon saloon. This design was slightly more upright than the svelte Kestrel, with the intention that it would be for buyers who desired a little more room and practicality.

Trying to keep up with the development of Riley models of this era is a time-consuming business. In 1936 alone came four more variations on the 1&1/2-litre theme: the spacious six-light Adelphi; the two-seater Sprite, which was based on the MPH platform; the entry-level Merlin; and a six-light version of the Kestrel. There were also three chassis, each with a different wheelbase. The shortest was for the Merlin, the middle one carried the Falcon and Lynx, and the longest was for the Adelphi and Kestrel.



1937 Riley Continental 1&1/2 litre Touring Saloon

Into this ever-changing maelstrom of bodies came the Touring saloon of 1937, and it is this elegant shape that adorns our featured car. The model

is commonly referred to as the Continental, which was to have been its official name until Rolls-Royce

objected. It was offered for only one year in this form – the 1938 Touring is, confusingly, a completely different car. As with so many Riley saloons of the era, it's beautifully resolved – perhaps not quite as flowing as the six-light Kestrel, but more sporting than the Falcon. The idea was that it would be a practical choice, hence the boot, which looks as though it should be spacious yet is anything but. The spare wheel prevents you from packing much luggage, which rather blunts the 'Touring' objective.'

The MG looks more substantial than the Riley – especially around the rear three-quarters – and it features a more upright boot, which again is not as capacious as you would expect. Comparison driving features are noted below.

### RILEY 12/4

Mike Hedges

"I've owned this car for about 28 years, but I've been a Riley enthusiast since before I could drive. The Continental is a rare beast – not that many were made and few have survived. The engine had frost damage so I had to find a new block, and the cylinder head had split. It's a well-travelled car – it's been to Norway, France, Spain, Ireland and Scotland. I can get out of it after a full day without feeling fatigued. The preselector helps – it's very good in modern traffic."

### MG VA 1&1/2 litre

The upright grille and twin spare wheels (a factory option) both contribute to the feeling that the VA is the more conservative, grown-up design. It's full of neat details, though. The liberal use of the Octagon badge was apparently at the behest of Cecil Kimber, who was keen that MG's identity should still be clearly stamped upon the new model. As such, you can find it on everything from the doorhandles to the interior lamps.

Inside, both cars offer the combination of atmosphere and discreet good taste that can only come from a 1930s saloon. Into the staple diet of wood and leather are woven contemporary touches such as Art Deco sunburst door cards and elegant dials set – on the Riley as in the MG – within a centrally mounted wooden dashboard. The VA feels more airy and spacious, but both cars offer cosy, comfortable and beautifully sculpted rear seats.

Slide behind the wheel of the MG and your feet rest quite high, with the pedals close together. It's a

commanding viewpoint that enables you to easily place the car when you're on the move. As with so many models of this era, the VA and Riley 'wander' down the road, the wheels following every little variation. If you are clumsy with the steering – especially on badly maintained B-roads – you can easily end up over-correcting, but you soon adapt to the way in which they chatter along.

Contrary to its exterior appearance, the MG feels like the more sporting of the two thanks, in this instance, to Bush having uprated the engine to the 1708cc, 63bhp specification that was used in police VAs. It therefore sounds stronger than the Riley's 'four', pulling well through the gears, although both cars are equally happy maintaining a 50mph cruise. There is synchromesh on all but first gear, but nonetheless Bush double-declutches his way up and down the 'box, moving the stubby lever through its delightful open gate – complete with a 'lock-out' for reverse – so I do likewise. On more than one occasion, we approach a corner and I go to change down, only for him to assure me that it's fine where it is and the torque will pull the car through, which – of course – it does.

The Riley features Armstrong Siddeley's preselector gearbox that was adopted as part of the company's determination to make driving as easy as possible. Operating it is indeed simple: once you're on the move, you slide the column-mounted lever into the relevant position. When you next press and release the gear-change pedal, that ratio will be selected. Coming from a time when synchromesh was in its infancy, you can see the appeal for owners who struggled with a manual gearbox.

That said, Riley did offer a three-speed, dual-overdrive transmission as an option from mid-1937. In fact, when the 12/4 was launched at the London Motor Show, the Falcon on display was fitted with an all-synchromesh unit, the development and production of which was subsequently abandoned. The harsh lessons that had been learned at Abingdon, and which resulted in the VA sitting comfortably within a streamlined range between the SA and T-series sports cars, took a little longer to reach Coventry.

By 1938, however, Riley's ambitious approach had caught up with it and, on 24 February, the Receiver was called in. That September, Riley joined MG as part of the Nuffield Organisation after a proposed merger with Triumph failed. Assurances were given by William Morris himself that "the company may add to the great reputation it has so deservedly won". In mid-1936, the

Riley range comprised four different engines and 22 model variations. For 1939, only the 1&1/2- and 2&1/2-litre engines survived, in saloon or drophead bodies.

While the MG-VA proved unpopular among the diehards when new, it was – and remains – a classy and very able rival for the 12/4, a car introduced at the height of Riley's powers. The latter's crisp, delicate styling gives it the edge for me but, in this uprated form, the MG feels impressively sporting and adds up to more than the sum of its relatively humble parts. The rivalry between the two marques would continue but, once they were under the same roof, it would never be quite the same again.

#### **MG VA Specifications:**

Sold/number built 1937-'39/2407 Construction steel chassis, ash frame, steel panels, aluminium-skinned doors and bootlid Engine all-iron, overhead-valve 1549cc 'four,' twin SU carburettors Max power 54bhp @ 4500rpm Max torque not quoted Transmission four-speed manual, no synchro on first, driving rear wheels Suspension: front beam axle rear live axle; semi-elliptic leaf springs, anti-roll shackles, adjustable hydraulic dampers f/r Steering worm and nut Brakes hydraulically operated 10in drums Length 14ft 3in (4343mm) Width 5ft 2in (1575mm) Height 5ft 13/4in (1568mm) Wheelbase 9ft (2743mm) Weight 2574lb (1168kg) 0-50mph 15.8 secs Top speed 76mph Mpg 22 Price new £325 Price now £20-40,000

#### **RILEY 12/4 CONTINENTAL Specifications:**

Sold/number built 1937/150 Construction steel box-section chassis, tubular crossmembers, ash frame, aluminium panels, steel wings and running boards Engine all-iron, overhead-valve 1496cc 'four,' single Zenith carburettor Max power 45bhp @ 4800rpm Max torque not quoted Transmission four-speed Armstrong Siddeley preselector, driving rear wheels Suspension: front beam axle rear live axle; semi-elliptic springs, Luvax dampers f/r Steering worm and segment Brakes rod-operated drums Length 14ft 6 1/2in (4430mm) Width 5ft 11/2in (1530mm) Height 4ft 11 1/2in (2629mm) Wheelbase 9ft 4 1/2in (2840mm) Weight 2799lb (1270kg) 0-50mph 17 secs Top speed 73mph Mpg 27 Price new £350 ('37) Price now £20-30,000



# ALL BRITISH CAR SHOW & Parts Sale

Sunday, July 20th, 2014

Canadian Transportation Museum and Heritage Village  
Essex, Ontario

9:00 ~ 2:00 pm

Show Cars ~ \$10.00

General Admission ~ \$5.00

12 and Under ~ Free



\* Diner opens 8 am until 2 pm\*  
\*Boarding House Food available  
(in village)\*

\*Beer Garden 11-2pm\*  
\*Door Prizes 1-2pm\*

#### From Detroit

Follow Huron Church South to HWY #3  
Follow HWY #3 Leamington to County Rd 23, turn right  
Museum is 6 minutes on right

#### From Toronto

Follow 401 W turn left Belle River Rd (County Rd 27)  
Follow 27, turn right on County Rd. 8, then next left on 27  
Follow 27, through Cottam, cross HWY 3, follow until road ends  
Turn Left on County Rd. 23 (Arner Townline)  
Museum is 5 minutes on right



In association with the  
Windsor Detroit MG Club  
[www.wdmgc.com](http://www.wdmgc.com)



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## ***Tales Of Woe With Happy Endings!*** ***by Gordie Bird, Dave Smith, Ken Nelson***

### ***Gordie Bird Starts his tale:***

Anyone out there who has built or restored a car knows there is a sorting out period where the loose nuts are tightened, usually completed in the first few outings. Sometimes it takes longer.

Many of you know Rowdie Brad Dryden, whose fortune took him to Atlanta early in this century. Along with him went his nicely sorted '56 roadster. After one summer in Atlanta in an open car, he set his sights on a coupe with AC.

Along came hurricane Katrina, and in the aftermath, an opportunity to buy a slightly soaked project coupe. Within a couple of years, Carl Heidemman from Eclectic motors had completed the frame, sheet metal, and paint and Brad's coupe (aptly named Katrina) was ready for assembly. I built a 5 main 1800 and Brad had a five speed shipped to my house. The plan was for Brad to pick up Katrina at Carls shop in Holland, then trailer to my house where we would install motor and 5 speed trans.

The problem started as soon as the 5 speed arrived in my garage. The bell housing for the Ford Sierra 5 speed had to be machined to fit the flywheel of the MG, so that was the first thing I tried to fit, and it didn't. New plan, load engine/trans in back of truck and plan to install later in Atlanta when correct bell housing was obtained.

Eventually, Steve Holliday and I planned a trip to Brads' to install the engine/trans into the coupe. This was the first 5 speed installation any of us had done. After a long weekend, and a few hiccups, the engine ran. Katrina (the car) was still far from drivable, but a milestone had been reached. As with many projects, life gets in the way and progress was slow for the next few years. AC components to be sourced and custom

brackets to be fabricated, not to mention, an interior to complete.

Finally, a couple years ago or so, Katrina was sufficiently complete to get her on the road. And on the road, albeit briefly, she was. Two immediate problems; engine got real hot real fast, and after only a few miles, when parked, she immediately dumped most of her transmission fluid on the ground. Brad sourced a local shop to inspect and repair. New front seal installed in transmission. Next test drive, same results. Decision was made to source a new transmission directly from England and to replace the entire unit. No one could figure out why the trans was losing fluid, catastrophically. It was believed that the barely adequate stock radiator just could not keep up with the additional load created by the AC system so a custom aluminum radiator was sourced. Finally all of the pieces were, (once again), in place and I planned a trip over a long Easter weekend to install a brand new 5 speed.

For once everything went smoothly and, after only a day and a half, we were out driving. There was no transmission leak, good oil pressure, and low engine temps. AC charged and blowing cold. Seemed like Katrina was finally ready for a trip. And, if you attend GT-39, you'll have a chance to see her. Brad will trailer to Michigan and then drive Katrina to Ottawa.

With the Brit Car Gods obviously smiling on me after all the efforts above, it seemed like a good time to attempt the final sorting of my own car. Well, that and the two weeks Tracey would be in Arizona visiting her Dad. Since my car was put back together in 2006, I've had a non-fatal transmission problem. Thanks to many club members input, I thought I had an idea, finally, of

exactly what the problem was. Of course the engine and transmission would have to come out for the repair.



After a few days, and some assistance from Rowdies Steve Holliday and Matt Wigent, I was ready for a test drive. The timing happened to coincide with drive your MG day May 18th, so off to Jerrys Pub I

**.....(then) the shift lever separated from the transmission and came off in my hand!**

went for a shakedown cruise. I had my bag-o-tools with me in case there was any further sorting to be done. On the way I stopped by Bruce



Manns' house to see his TD project and try and get him, and his MGA, out for a drive. Bruce declined, as he had made other plans, and it was a rainy, cold morning, so I was on my way. For about a mile until I began downshifting to come to a stop, and the shift lever separated from the transmission and came off in my hand! Clutch depressed and safely off the road, I immediately saw that the large cir-clip that retains the shift lever to the shift tower had not been fully seated and had dislodged. Fortunately, none of the bits had gone missing and a parking lot was about 200 ft away. The Brit Car Gods were still smiling on me as I had the right tools in my little bag-o-tools and it took 10 to 15 minutes to get it all back in,

and fully seated. I arrived at Jerrys Pub just about 15 minutes late. Oh, and the transmission, while not quite 'track ready' is much better than before and ready for the trip to Ottawa. **Gordie Bird**

***Dave Smith continues with his tale next on "Drive Your MG Day"***

Getting in the spirit of the day, I rolled out my 1967 AH Sprite. It was a crisp and cool morning, but no threat of rain. The drive was good with occasional sun thru the clouds moments.

About 6 miles from the destination, I noticed the engine temp went from 170 up to 190. As I knew the radiator was topped off, and the fan belt was tight, I soldiered on. About a mile later the temp went from 190 to off the top of the scale. I could then smell coolant, so knew the gauge was telling the truth.

Having Hagerty road service, I arranged for transport back to Dave Quinn's home, and Chari drove down in the SAAB. Dave & Donna were back home from Jerry's bar, and we had a nice dinner to wrap up the day. A couple days later I retrieved the Sprite with my car trailer. Next up is to replace the thermostat and check out the water pump for a failed impeller.

*Moral of the story: If you do not drive your LBC you will never find the gremlins. Dave Smith*

***Finally Ken Nelson tells this story:***

About 3 years ago the same overheating happened to me driving the MGA back from our local sailing club (about 2 miles). Half way home I could hear the antifreeze boiling and then noted the gauge. The good news was I had 80 lbs of oil pressure in the radiator. I knew the bad news. I let it cool down and drove slowly home. The thermostat had jammed shut-I always thought they were designed to stick open if anything failed. Best news was no damage done and all OK since replacing it. **Ken Nelson**

**Gotta Get Back In Time—An Amazing MG Trip to the Classic Motorsports Mitty at Road Atlanta. by Steve Finch**

Where to today Mr. Peabody? Sherman, set the *Wayback Machine* to 1978. Today we are going to relive the SCCA National Championship Runoffs.

My brother, Neal, and I took a fly-away trip to Road Atlanta for The Classic Motorsports Mitty vintage sportscar races the last weekend of April. We arrived on Friday and started walking thru the pits talking about the things that we recognized and what had changed since last we were there. That was in 1978 when we crewed for the Bob Owens Sports and Imports MG Midget at the SCCA Runoffs. We won the 1978 2nd Place National Championship Trophy for F Production sportscars.

Bob Owens Sports and Imports was the MG, Triumph, Austin, Jaguar dealership in Westland MI from 1958 through 1980. Many of the cars in our Club were first bought from that dealership. Neal, our roommate Louie, and I crewed for that car at Waterford Hills for a number of years in the mid-‘70s. Neal was a at the dealership mechanic, Louie was service write-up, and Barry Hartzel was the Service Manager. The car was owned by Bob Owens (Jr) and Barry was the driver and chief mechanic. We lost track of Bob Owens and the car when the dealership closed in 1980.

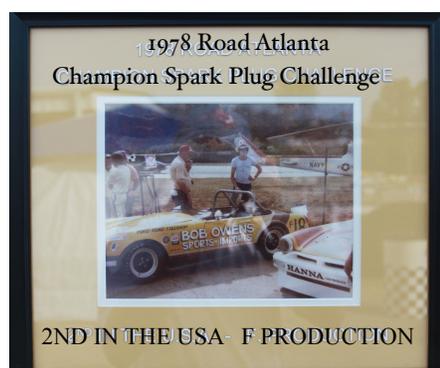
And then, right there in front of us, was the Bob Owens Midget. *WOW! I can't believe it. Here's the same car!* Hanging on a pole of the pit awning was a picture taken on the false grid before the race in 1978. We walked up and started talking to the guy in a driver's suit. Neal told the guy that he worked for Bob Owens back in the day and that we crewed for this car at that race. He told the driver that the guy with the cowboy hat in the picture behind the car was our roommate Louie. The driver said that's right, that the car is a re-creation of the original, and asked who we are. Neal said his name and the guy said *"Oh my God, Neal Finch, I'm Bob Owens."* It's been

over 35 years since we all raced together.

Needless to say the rest of the weekend was arguably one of best weekends in the last 35 years of my life. (*Ok, I got married in '76 so I can still say that.*) We got crew and hot pit passes and I got to do my old job again of Aesthetics Control Manager. I kept the car clean all weekend—clean is fast.

See, you never know what you might be missing when you pass up going to an MG event. Hope to see you all at MG meets this summer.

**Steve Finch** (Note: Click on “Gotta Get Back In Time” in the title for a musical treat)



## Rowdie Technical Tip

Recently a Rowdie experienced a leak at the rear axle hub on his MGA after replacing the O ring, Oil seal and paper gasket. Looking for a solution, we thought that the replacement O ring may have been the problem. In the photo, the replacement part on the left has a cross section of .115 inch. The part on the right has a larger cross section of .135 inch. Due to the depth of the groove in the Hub, the larger O ring will have more crush when the axle is mated to the hub for final assembly.

The part on the right was obtained by taking an original O ring to Applied Industrial Technologies In Lansing MI. The staff were able to determine the diameter of the original O ring and match it with Vendor "Goldspec" part number 01 235.



It is also important to verify that the face of the hub and the face of the axle are 100% flat.

Often there is a burr or distortion from a prior repair due to driving a screwdriver between the faces to get the axle to release. I have also found displaced metal on the edge of the axle and the hub when the prior repair beat on the edge to get them to separate.

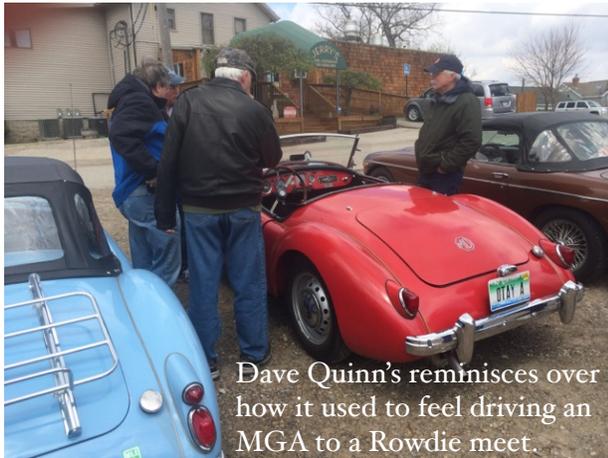
The cure is to find the high spots and then use a fine file to remove the displaced metal. If the faces are not totally flat, the two faces will not put the crush on the O ring and the paper gasket.

The hub is much easier to find the high spots and then file if it is in a vice, and not already installed on the axle.

Dave Smith

## *Drive Your MG Day Report-May 3, 2014*

The weather report the morning of May 3rd was for cloudy, cold, and likely rainy weather. Not exactly ideal for a driving day for little English sports cars with the top down and no effective heater. Chairman Dave had picked an ideal setting to drive to for “Natter and Noggin” as the Brits call it, or “Burger and a Beer” as the colonials in the US call it. Either way, we had a turnout of some stalwart MGA drivers at “Jerry’s Pub on the Lake” in the Irish Hills vacation area of Brooklyn, MI. If you’ve never been there, drive on down and you’ll see some attractive little lakeside resorts and scenery. On this day, the participants wisely chose to sit indoors instead of on an otherwise inviting deck patio. Fortunately, the conversation was warm and friendly, the company enjoyable, food delicious, and the beer outstanding. The attendees who arrived in their Little British Cars included Gordie Bird, Curt and Stephanie Smith, John Alexander, Bill and Mary Ellen Weakley, Kevin Peck, Tom Fant, and Ken and Kathy Nelson. Dave and Donna Quinn were there as well, but in Dave’s pickup instead of his prize winning MGA. In deference to the weather not all made it with the top down. Distances travelled in MG’s were from about 37 to 124 miles each way. Distances travelled in US-made pickup trucks were about 34 miles each way. (Hmm, do I see a trailer looming as a next purchase for the Quinn’s?). Everybody had a good time, even with sub-optimal weather, and the driving was still fun. Pictures below. **Ken Nelson**



Dave Quinn’s reminisces over how it used to feel driving an MGA to a Rowdie meet.



More Camp Dearborn Meet Pictures 5-18-14 *pictures by Dave Quinn, Dale Brown, Bruce Mann*

