



# A-Antics



*MGA Driving In The  
Time Of Covid-19. Diane  
& Steve Mazurek Show  
Us How It's Done-see  
page 6*

*Drive Your MG Day  
British Turn Signals  
Sunday In The Park  
Car Crashes Off Ramps!*



## MICHIGAN CHAPTER OF NORTH AMERICAN MGA REGISTER

**Chairman Bill Weakley**4120 Pontiac Trail, Ann Arbor, MI 48105  
(734)996-2524 [wmmweakley@comcast.net](mailto:wmmweakley@comcast.net)**Treasurer Jeff Zorn**403 Bayou Village Dr, Tarpon Springs, FL 34689  
(727) 213-0663 [jzorn@mg-cars.org.uk](mailto:jzorn@mg-cars.org.uk)**A-Antics Editor Ken Nelson**3126 Brentwood SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506  
(616) 957-3158 [kenneth.nelson1@comcast.net](mailto:kenneth.nelson1@comcast.net)**A-Antics Assist:** Printing, distributing, &  
database: **Larry Pittman****Webmaster: Larry Pittman**11406 Majorca Pl, Fenton, MI 48430  
(810) 750-0047 [larrypit@chartermi.net](mailto:larrypit@chartermi.net)**Meets Chairman John Alexander**464 West Delhi Rd, Ann Arbor, MI 48103  
(734) 665-0682 [king\\_alex@msn.com](mailto:king_alex@msn.com)**Regalia Chairman Bruce Mann**960 Denbar Ct, White Lake, MI 48386  
(248) 698-3372 [bwmann@att.net](mailto:bwmann@att.net)**Membership Chairman Bruce Nichols**56343 Buckhorn Rd, Three Rivers, MI 49093  
(269) 273-3118 [nicholsbm@aol.com](mailto:nicholsbm@aol.com)

**A-Antics:** Published every other month.  
Opinions expressed are those of the writer and not necessarily of NAMGAR or the Chapter.  
Every effort is made to use appropriate material.  
The editor reserves the right to edit material for length and content. No placement is guaranteed. The entire contents are copyrighted, Michigan Chapter. Permission to use is granted, provided you give credit to both writer and the club.

**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:** \$25 annually (\$40 for printed newsletter)

**Nickname:** Rowdies

**Motto:** People First!

**Rowdies Site:**

<http://www.mg-cars.org.uk/michiganrowdies/>

**MG Car Council Site:** <http://www.mg-cars.org.uk/mgcouncil/>

**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
2009-2015	Dave Quinn
2016-	Bill Weakley





# MEMBERS PAGE

## Rowdies Website: Larry Pittman, Webmaster

<http://www.mg-cars.org.uk/michiganrowdies/>

Larry Pitman's Database Report: 55 Active and Paid-Up Members

**Deadline for submitting material for the next issue is: August 20, 2020**

## For Sale-1960 MGA

Matt Wigent's 1960 MGA

It has an 1800 three main bearing from 1964. The motor was completely rebuilt. I took off the Weber carbs and put in original SU carbs on it. It runs like a dream. Started yesterday after sitting for four months.



Leather seats (Lisa and I rebuilt the interior) Built in a stereo. No antenna but can play MP3s. You can get satellite radio easily. Stainless exhaust. The coil was removed from the generator and it works great. British Racing Green with almost all new chrome. Painting was done over ten years ago and needs freshening. Clutch was replaced. Brakes were finally right after a decade. Emergency brake works. Oil cooler. Fresh mini lites for knock off wheels. It will run for a long time but I want to make someone real happy.

I am asking \$17,500 based on what people have recommended. I am not firm on the price. I want it to go to the right people. I want someone who will appreciate it and take care of it. I do not want some high schooler driving it to school. Underneath the hood is no prize winner but it all runs great. Picture above. I can send others. It won 3rd prize at Battle of the Brits and I did not wash it. It is at my shop in Waterford Michigan and I have

a lift so you can look under it. Feel free to call me. I can talk about it all day.

**Matthew Wigent**  
2901 Middlebelt Road  
West Bloomfield, MI 48324  
(248) 949-3212

## For Sale-MGA Parts

For Sale: Item 1: Any one wanting to up grade your MGA to disc brakes I have a complete MGB wire wheel front cross member with all the parts to do the conversion. \$200

Item 2: If you want to convert from disc wheel to spoke wheel set up, I have a pair of MGA wire wheel front hubs and a complete wire wheel MGA rear end. Asking \$200 for the MGA parts.

If you need wire wheels, I have a set of four MGA wire wheels with Kelly Springfield 165 SR tires mounted and balanced. \$200 for the MGA wire wheels with tires.

Delivery on all items available in Michigan for gas money. **Mark Barnhart** cell 810-444-2054

## New Members

### Jeff & Janis DeVree-1957 1500 Roadster

3727 Pueblo Ct, SW Grandville, MI 49418

Cell Phone: 616-570-4400

[jdevree@comcast.net](mailto:jdevree@comcast.net)

## Letters

### It's In The Mail?

I know that some of the Rowdies have had a problem getting their copy of the A-Antics delivered to their home on time, and for that your editor apologizes. Jeff Zorn and Ken Nelson have worked with our printer to be sure the newsletters get printed and sent out in proper time, and it appears that he is doing his job, and that the problem is with our US Postal Service. Dave Quinn, John Alexander, and Curt Smith and perhaps others at times have had a delay of several weeks in getting delivery. Let your editor know if you have a prolonged delivery problem-I aim to get them delivered at least by the 2nd or 3rd week of the first month listed in our bi-monthly schedule. **Ken Nelson**

### ***Keeping Young In Your 9th Decade***

A recent Hemmings newsletter article reminded me of how to keep young well into your 80's (or even beyond). Michael Lamm wrote about some fortunately temporary health issues he had to deal with that made him realize he wasn't 18 anymore (he's 83). Like many Rowdies he's had a life-long hobby of working on old cars, but realized he couldn't do all the car things as quickly as a professional mechanic, where time=money.

As he said "I'm not really a mechanic in any professional sense. I'm much too slow, and that's usually intentional. I like to spread a job out, work on a car slowly, think about what I'm doing or should do, savor my successes and lament my failures. I do a lot of lamenting. But basically I'm in it for the fun, and it is a hobby that has given me a great deal of pleasure-has for decades".

He goes on to say "Although I currently feel better than okay, I have noticed that my post-diagnostic tinkering demands certain concessions. At 83, I have to be a lot more careful about how I work on cars. It used to be that I'd think nothing of skinning a knuckle or cutting a finger. Now...I try to avoid cuts and bruises of any sort. I wear these awful Kevlar sleeves when I work, and I'm using a heavier grade of gloves."

"So the abrupt realization that I'm no longer 18...that working on cars at 83 demands certain concessions and a generous dose of humility...has shown me that the automobile and the human anatomy share an aging process. Both deteriorate with time. And while cars are usually restorable, people aren't, but good maintenance and a pleasurable hobby help keep the body young, relatively speaking."

I would also add that a garage large enough to house a 4-post lift, as well as no rigid time schedule for project completion, and not laying on a cold concrete floor makes working much more enjoyable the older I get. As Mike says, while "12-hour days don't happen anymore... I can still put in that sort of time, but I really don't have to so I don't." Amen to that! I'd say 2-4 hours makes up a full workday for me today.

I've found that it's always the journey more than the destination that counts, and while I'm still a decade behind Mike Lamm, I'm happy to say that I'm with him all the way on his work guidelines. Take it easy and do a project to your level of enjoyment and comfort. It'll give us all something to look forward to getting up in the morning for, and that's not a bad thing at all!

***Ken Nelson***

### ***Old Guys Hang Tough!***

Dave Smith finally found the answer to what old guys do when they get to the nursing home. We should start petitioning now for our favorite retirement settlement to install a full service garage along with a car lift or two! ***Dave Smith***



### ***Not Easy Being Green***

Diane Mazurek writes in: Today is MSU's virtual commencement so Steve and I decided to celebrate since neither one of us attended ours in 1971. No money to rent gowns back then. One of the Music Department's PhD students plays the accordion and teaches Tom Izzo and another Associate Dean at the College of Nat Sci. Here he is participating in "MSU Shadows." I still get



goosebumps every time I hear it. Copy and paste link at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YkEYnN5tn-Q>

Be safe. Be healthy. Be happy. It's not easy being green. ***Diane & Steve Mazurek***





## Jack Stand Recall

This has been published several places, but just in case you haven't seen it, you should definitely heed the warning. I know our MGs are relatively light but not light enough to want it falling on your head.

I hope everyone is staying safe and making good use of your time or maybe just watching a lot of TV.

Let's all stay well and look forward to the next time we can all get together.

**Bill Weakley**

Thanks for this information Bill. It's very appropriate for me since I own "Big Red 3-Ton T43002" jack stands from Amazon which look exactly identical to the Harbor Freight ones and must be made by the same manufacturer and seem to function in the same identical fashion. I also have suspended my Rover on one of these since last November to rebuild the front suspension and steering box. It's still up on it currently. Investigating further shows a YouTube video explaining how these "fail". ( [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G7\\_Aa8pbM7Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G7_Aa8pbM7Y) ). They don't break, instead they 'release' if the lever adjuster arm can be pulled up against the weight of the car on the stand. In the video the guy uses a pry bar to lever the arm up to fail. So far, I've resisted the urge to crawl under with a pry bar and try this maneuver.

**Ken Nelson**

### Chinese Quality Control

I did have a jack stand failure circa 1990. Those Jack stands were 2k capacity and only used on MG's.

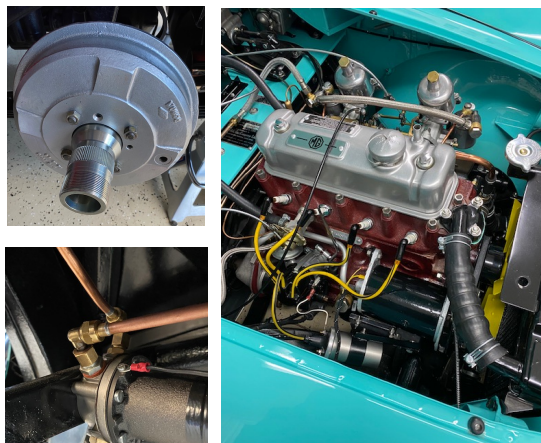
The retaining straps at the base of the four legs were bar stock and welded to the legs. The weld did not penetrate, and separated, allowing one leg to fail. Cannot say with certainty that they were Chinese, but they were imported, and all that was available in local auto stores.

On a similar note, Three weeks ago I had Chinese cut off wheel explode and struck my face shield, knocking it loose. The disc cut a 2 inch long Wound into my neck and a 1 inch long wound near my right collarbone. Did not cut the artery, but laid me up for a few days. I always used NORTON (made in USA) discs, but they are no longer on the market. I just LOVE that America has sent our Drug manufacture to China too. **Dave Smith**



## Ongoing Projects

Bruce Mann continues to work on his latest MGA project and has the pictures to prove it. **Bruce**



## MGB Video Online

This is a great program to watch concerning everything about the MGB and some about the "A", including many of the star players at MG. Good for Rowdie distribution, and sent by Philip Wiltshire. View it at <https://youtu.be/yPPDXKjVRfE>

Dave Quinn writes about it, "While I have seen many of the historical bits that appear in this video I had not seen the entire one hour show. I laughed out loud with the comment about the Healey 3000; something to the effect if there is a hint of rain you should not be allowed to drive it without a special license. I suspect this video maybe new to many Rowdies, so enjoy. Thanks Philip."

**Philip & Dave**

## Vive La France!

Mssr. Nelson,

I would indeed appreciate the opportunity to advertise in your worthy A-Antics journal! If you will forgive my forwardness, I have included the advert in this missive. If it pleases you, I can afford no more than a 2 page spread. Please feel free to visit our humble establishment when you attend the race nearby in le Mans. We will give a bargain price to your membership.

Yr Humble servant,

**J. Alexandre**

Prop. Café de Ruaudin



**Rowdies Celebrate Drive Your MG Day!****MAY 2020**

**Bill Weakley** commented on Drive Your MG Day, saying "My driveway is only 120 feet long, so it was hard to get up to 60 mph to get my scarf flying. We actually did go for a drive this afternoon. The weather was just too nice not to." New members **Kathy Bertolini and son Joe** took their MG Midget out.

**Steve & Diane Mazurek** wrote Attached is Diane and my contribution to the Drive Your MGA Day effort. It was just a 60 mile jaunt into Wisconsin and back, nothing special. It was a nice day, slight overcast and reaching 70 degrees. There was more traffic than anticipated considering the COVID-19 quarantine. In light of the COVID-19 quarantine, note that Diane and I are appropriately masked, gloved and separated by the mandatory social distance! (see cover picture of them with proper PPE attire for both). **Larry & Mitzi Pittman's MGA** said "I was all ready to go for a fun drive today. I thought my owners were too, but they decided my engine needed some help. I guess they thought they could have just as much fun staying home this year and there'd be plenty of time to get my engine back in. I missed being on the road on such a beautiful day but my owners celebrated with a champagne toast." **Bob Samyn** wrote "Got both of my MGA's out for several miles of driving. The Red 1960 just about 99% done, after 7 years of part time Restomod!

Our call to arms by the Meets Chairman was simple enough, "start up our trusty English stallions and move them out onto our respective driveways", take a photo or two and enliven our Editor. Easy enough. For those with detective eyes you will notice the fender mirrors are missing and no holes. Don't I wish. Optical elusion. The holes are there; to be filled with mirrors soon enough. The mirrors are a pain in that location if doing anything with the engine. Assignment done. Pull back in the garage.



**Dave & Donna Quinn  
Sent In Their Report**



Governor lifts the ban. Memories of past meets there conjured up thoughts of a slight rule break as we chatted with the owner. However, one must honor the Rowdies tradition not to drink and drive. The owner said he couldn't wait to see the parking lot filled once again with MGAs. He mentioned they have done some interior remodeling and changed the menu and that he would love to see us oil the parking lot as soon as the ban is lifted.

But wait, the heartbeat of the streets are calling even if the pubs are closed. Well it is the first Saturday of May and in past years a certain pub often started the Drive Your MG gathering. The weather could not have been any better in the mid-70s with sunshine and cloud breaks. The drive to Gregory began. In true British irony our destination was first established as a trading post in 1907 and serving the surrounding area ever since, except of course it was closed until the



The Quinn's report



We missed washing down fish and chips with a pint of ale and getting rowdy with our Rowdie friends but the 80 mile top down drive brought a smile to our faces.

It has 44 miles this past few weeks! The Blue 1959 has 5K miles of FUN! **Curt & Stephanie Smith** wrote "Here's a few photos from the drive your MGA day that wasn't! Curt and I took a short drive on Saturday, May 2 to observe the event we were supposed to host! Naturally we were bummed that the weather was very beautiful and would have been a perfect day for the Rowdies to meet. Ah, but this pandemic continues! We are happy to report the clutch replacement was a success! Curt was pleased with how well the car handled. **John Alexander & Carolyn King** said "I really did drive my MGA on the appropriate day (and not much since!) and here is photographic evidence. It was a beautiful day for a drive and we celebrated with Gin'n'Tonics with our family - drinking thru straws inserted thru holes in our masks while observing social distancing. Meanwhile, on the West side of Michigan, **Ken & Kathy Nelson** proclaimed the day to be a somewhat limited drive, but a wonderful day, and "simply glorious to finally get my MGA out on the road again!"



## Drive Your MG Day Pictures-May 4, 2020





## **? CANCELED: ROWDIES 2020 EVENTS-THE LIST THAT 'EVER' CHANGES**

*Currently Our Club Events Are Either Canceled Or In Limbo-But See Below & Stay Tuned!*

### **June**

- 20-21 G-field Village Motor Muster: **Canceled**
- 23-26 GOF Central: **Canceled**
- 26-28 Mid-Ohio Vintage Races: Races are still on but probably with no spectators
- 28 Michiana Brits Car Show: **Canceled**

### **July**

- 10 Ann Arbor Rolling Sculpture: **Canceled**
- 11-12 Mad Dogs: **Canceled**
- 25-26 Waterford Hills Road Races: **Canceled**

### **Aug**

- 1 Rowdie Birthday Party : **JUST CANCELED**
- 9 Alden Car Show: Nothing on the TwinBay British Car Club website. **Probably canceled.**
- 22 Tom Fant's Rowdie Beach Party: **Still not canceled**

### **Sept**

- 13 Battle of the Brits: **Still listed**
- 17-20 SouthEast British Car Festival, Dillard, Ga.: **Still listed**
- 18 Cars on the Green, Dixboro, MI: **Still listed**
- 20 Orphan Car Show, Ypsi., Mi.: Museum closed, no word on registration for 2020 so ?????
- 29-Oct 2 Put-In-Bay Races: **Races still listed**

### **October**

- TBD Rowdie Fall Color Tour by Quinn: **Hopeful**
- TBD Rowdie Weekend Colour Tour of the North by Fant: **Canceled**

### **Dec.**

- 6 Rowdie Christmas Party: **Still listed**

### ***Hello Everyone,***

In the first column you can see John Alexander's list of events on our calendar and their current status. The first non-cancelled event is our Rowdie Birthday Party (*SORRY-JUST CANCELED*), but we need to see if any changes will be made about where and how it will be arranged, ie still at member's house outdoors or perhaps an outdoor park, etc?. One option would be to delay it, although I am not confident that the situation will be much different a month or two later. When the weather is nice, we spend most of our time outdoors, but not all. If the weather is not cooperative, there could be a need for protection from rain or temperature, ie perhaps indoors or with tenting? Perhaps in an outdoors park mid-state, and could be cancelled if raining/bad weather? The biggest consideration might be bathroom availability and how to manage the proper social distancing. I would not feel comfortable unless we followed all the current Covid-19 state guidelines in the current COVID situation.

So I would like to get some more opinions and thoughts from members. You can send them to any of the club officers by email or discuss on the phone; addresses and numbers are listed in the front of this newsletter. The only other item I want to bring up concerning the calendar is that we could be having more get-togethers like the one we had recently at Park Lyon North. I think it worked fine, and I felt that we were all pretty safe. I encourage imaginative thinking and new ideas. Let's get together to do something and have some fun!

***Chairman Bill***

### Register Your MGA With NAMGAR!



Join over 2,000 enthusiastic owners in the restoration, preservation, and sheer enjoyment of driving an MGA, Magnette, 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).







**Chairman's Chatter****Bill Weakley**

Well, we finally had a driving event. As soon as the local authorities allowed, our eager Events Chairman, John Alexander, quickly put together a BYOE(everything) picnic at Park Lyndon North, on North Territorial Road north of

Chelsea on Sunday June 7. If I recall correctly, we had seven MGAs (three red, two green, two blue), one MGB and a Morgan trike.

The weather was perfect, and we had the park mostly to ourselves. We spread out on the lawn and visited at reasonably safe distances. There were no hugs or handshakes. Someday we'll get back to that. Personally, I have really missed seeing everyone, so it was great to visit with those who made the trip.

Interestingly, at least five of the guys were sporting facial hair. Early in the lockdown I went several days without shaving, and Mary Ellen said "Why don't you just let it grow?" So I did. I haven't had a beard since 1977, and I don't know that I will keep it very long.

There was also some pretty long hair on the guys. I had gone almost four months without a haircut. My hair had not been that long since the 70s. As with most everyone, I have had lots of time at home that I could use to work on my MGs, but I really don't have much to do. However, this is summer, and we have a large yard with a garden and seven flower beds. In addition to yard work, I have had two trees broken down by storms which required a lot of chain saw work and clean up. We really enjoy the yard this time of year but haven't been able to share it with others.

I have been thinking about distributors. I am tempted to send one of my distributors off to have it overhauled just to see if it would make a difference. They all seem to work properly, but I keep reading about how getting the advance recurved for modern fuels improves the operation. Does it really? Has anyone done this?

I have found some little projects to work on my MGs. It seems strange not to have major work to do. Instead, I am fine tuning and making little improvements here and there. The biggest project I tackled was installation of cruise control on the MGA. Some may scoff, but after the 1,000 mile round trip to Dubuque last year, my right knee could have used a break. I have had the same setup on the MGC for several years.

Last year when I was having trouble with it, I bought a second complete set from Murph's Kits, thinking that the actuator and control module was the problem. It wasn't. Apparently, I had an intermittent bad connection somewhere. After rerouting some of the dash wiring and installing the new dash, the cruise control works perfectly.

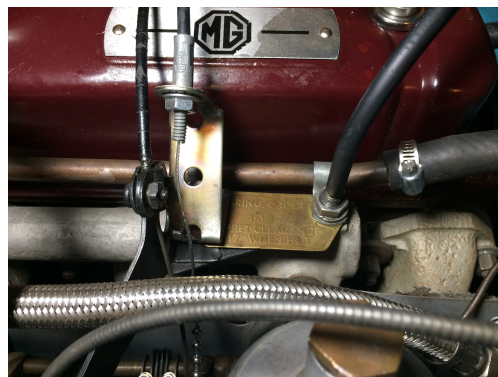
So I ended up with a complete cruise control set that I could put in the A. Installation was pretty straightforward with the actuator and almost all the wiring behind the dash. The only minor hitch was finding a connection for the vacuum source. The only standard vacuum connection is the one for the distributor vacuum advance. I followed Tom Fant's advice and drilled a 1/8" hole axially through one the studs that hold the firing order plate to the manifold.

I was concerned that the small diameter hole might mean I would need a vacuum reservoir, but it seems to work well without it. It holds speed going up hills, at least what passes for hills around here. I'm looking forward to our next MGA trip, whenever that might be.

On the subject of events, I can tell you that the Rowdie board is having discussions about future events. We really want to have some. Every non-Rowdie event that we were planning to attend has been cancelled well into the fall. We are open to suggestions, as long as we can allow for reasonable COVID-19 safety measures. We are focused on the Rowdie Birthday Party, hoping we can hold it on the planned date. It seems likely that we will be worrying about the COVID-19 virus for months yet, at least through the end of the year. So we need to take that into account. It doesn't mean we can't do anything, we just have to take reasonable precautions. Let's all stay healthy until the medical profession catches up with this disease.

One thing you can do now is to drive your MGA and take pictures of you, your partner/spouse, and your car in different places. Then send them to Ken Nelson to see yourselves in the next A-Antics.

**Chairman Bill**





**September 17-20, 2020**

The **Peachtree MG Registry** presents:

A Southern British Car Weekend in the mountains of  
North Georgia at  
The Dillard House Inn, Dillard, GA.

<https://www.dillardhouse.com>

**All makes and models of British cars and motorcycles are welcome!**

This is also a **NAMGAR** regional event with  
**MG Magnette ZA and ZB**, built between 1953 and 1958, as the  
**featured model!** Here is a video of the Dillard show field from 2018:

[youtube.com/watch?v=qVvlzc7oceU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qVvlzc7oceU)

**NOTICE!** We planned to open registrations for Dillard 2020 on April 1st. However, the PMGR Board has decided that, in view of the Corona Virus Pandemic, it would be best to hold off opening reservations until later. **However, The event is not cancelled!** We will revisit the situation in mid to late June and make a final decision about the event at that time.

However, because of limited availability of rooms, we recommend that all who want to attend the Dillard weekend this year, go ahead and make your reservations at the Dillard House. You can cancel them later, if appropriate. When you call the Dillard House, ask for Emily. Reservations 706-746-5348 Toll Free 800-541-0671, Ext 1.

The Group Code is SEBF2020MG

The Dillard House website is: <https://www.dillardhouse.com>

If Dillard House fills up or you prefer other housing, here are 2 links:

<http://www.rabuncountyrecreation.com/.../lodging-information....>

<https://www.dillardgeorgia.com/lodging/>

If you have questions,  
please feel free to  
contact Steve Ratcliffe,  
[pmgrwebmaster@gmail.com](mailto:pmgrwebmaster@gmail.com)



# Fixing British Brake & Signal Lights

## If the "Blinkers" & Brake Lights Fail, Something Must Be Done. So Try An Expensive Fix...Or Something Cheaper.

by John Gunnell

**T**HIS IS A tale about making the brake lights and signal lights on a vintage British sports car work the way they should. We will tell you about the bad luck and high cost (about \$350) we ran into while trying to make these repairs the "original" way. Then, we'll outline how we got things working reliably with an \$8 toggle switch and an expenditure of about \$27 for a brake light switch and flasher or roughly 10 percent of the "original" cost.

When we bought a '52 MG TD in 2000 we were happier than a pig in mud. The TD had been a dream car of ours since childhood. Who cared if the car didn't have windows? Who cared if it didn't have a heater? Who cared if it didn't have "blinkers" (the British term for signal lights)? It was a car we had wanted since dad bought us a toy version...and nothing else mattered.

### Making a Case for Blinkers

Well...maybe not having blinkers mattered a little. Like the time we had that close call with the double trailer semi truck! Then, too, driving at night was always a bit scary. And who wanted to explain, over and over again, to doubting state troopers, that hand signals are legal in Wisconsin and that we really are "grandfathered in" as far as blinkers go.

Signal lights didn't become mandatory safety equipment on cars imported into the United States until 1953. If you see an MG TD with round taillights, it had blinkers as standard equipment. If the taillights are vertical rectangles, signal lights were an option or aftermarket addition. All MG TFs, which were built in 1954 and 1955, also have blinkers and round taillights.

In the summer of 2000—our first season driving an MG—we flogged that primitive little TD over 8000 miles of roads. Whenever we made a turn, most folks behind us thought we were either pointing at the sights or working a kink out of our elbow. We considered adding signal lights, but ultimately we took the easy road and bought an MG TF in 2001. "At least we'll have blinkers," we thought.

When the MG arrived on a trailer from Connecticut, we realized why the price was on the reasonable side—the car was a survivor. The lady owner said she



These parts are found in the Lucas vacuum switch of the style without a U-shaped contact.



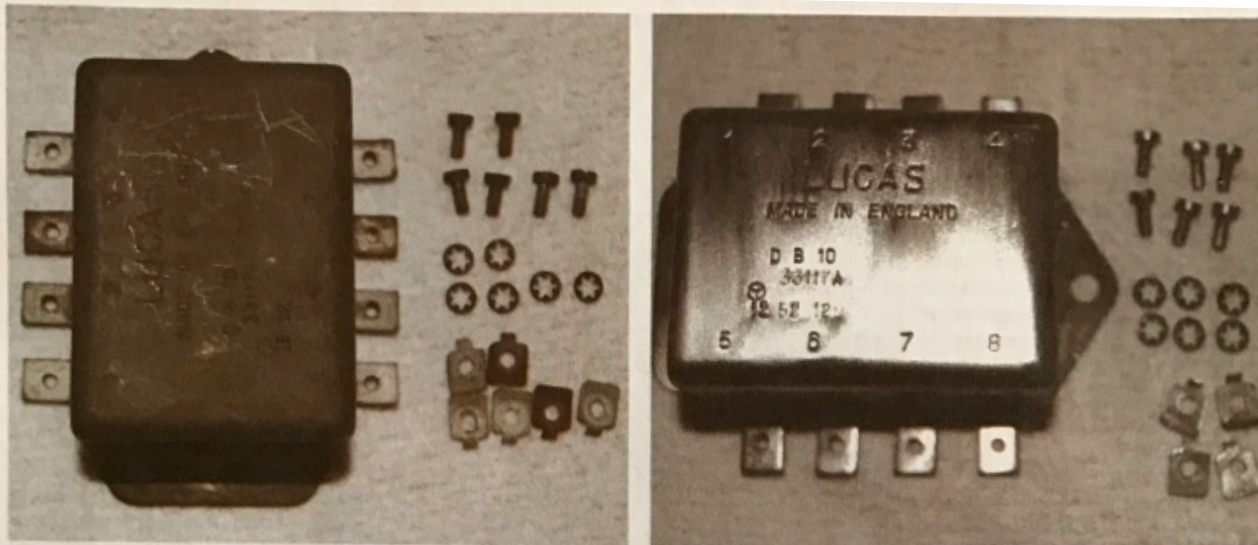
Though the Lucas switch did not function properly, it was not the reason that the blinkers and brake lights stopped working. The problem was in this Lucas relay mounted on the firewall.

would send us receipts for all the work she had done the last time the car was serviced, but she didn't tell us the last service was done in the '80s. In the long run, we had to redo everything that had been fixed up to that point, including the blinkers. Initially, the "only" problem was the funky Lucas turn signal switch.

### A Look at the Lucas Switch

The round, barrel-shaped, black Bakelite switch is actually a vacuum-operated switch in a cylindrical casing that protrudes through the instrument panel toward the driver. Where the switch pokes through the dash there is a plastic handle—either white or black (depend-





This is how the relay looked when it was removed from the car (left). It has a total of eight clearly numbered terminals. The brake lights come off terminal No. 5 and the blinkers come off terminal No. 7. Each terminal on the relay should have a small screw, a small washer and a small clip. We lost a couple during removal, so a magnetic screwdriver is suggested. All the connectors needed a good wire brushing. The photo on the right shows the relay after we cleaned the cover and all of the electrical terminals with a wire brush on a wheel. Originally, the cover probably was not shiny, but it looked great and some clear can keep it shiny.

ing on what British car model the switch came from)—that the driver swings to the left for a left turn and to the right for a right turn. An indicator light on the instrument panel tells you when the switch is on. However, there is only one indicator light and it blinks for turns in either direction. In other words, the indicator light does not tell you whether the car is signaling a move to the left or right.

Instead of having a mechanical canceling device to turn off the switch, the Lucas switch uses vacuum. When working properly, the switch holds vacuum for approximately 15 seconds. As the vacuum escapes, the plastic handle slowly returns to the 6 o'clock (straight down) position and the active blinkers and indicator light go off.

But when the switch isn't working properly, all kinds of things happen. You can have no blinkers, slow blinkers on one side or blinkers that stay on until you manually find the "sweet spot" where they finally shut off.

### Some Bad and Good Results

As noted above, when the TF arrived it seemed we would finally have an MG with blinkers so we could drive safely—especially at night. Unfortunately, the vacuum switch wasn't working very well. We took the car to British Marque Restorations in Marshfield, Wisconsin, where proprietor Sean Brennan ordered a reproduction Lucas switch from a catalog supplier. Sean didn't know if the repro was made by Lucas or was a copy of a Lucas

switch, but when he installed it, the switch did not work at all. Sean returned it and put the old switch back in the car.

We still had no signal lights yet were reluctant to drop another \$150 for one of the new switches in the catalog. We started looking on eBay for an NOS switch and never found one. Used switches that were supposedly good were available and generally drew bids of about \$100-\$125 back then. They didn't seem like a wise investment, so we continued to tinker with the defective switch. When it still didn't work, we made hand signals and avoided night driving.

There is an excellent Internet group (mg-t@autotx.team.net) through which T-Series MG owners share technical expertise. The listers there all said that the Lucas vacuum switches could not be repaired. However, one eBay seller from Dayton, Ohio, said that he could, indeed, repair them. His shop rate was \$75 an hour and he said the repair took an hour. His price for repairs was half the cost of a new switch, so we sent him the old one. When it came back a few weeks later, we installed it in the instrument panel and carefully replaced the three electrical wires that we had tagged for position on the back of the switch. And it worked.

We were so happy to have working blinkers that we purchased a second non-functioning switch on eBay and sent it to the same vendor. He repaired it, too. But since we had no immediate need for it, it went on the shelf. The long-range plan was to someday use it on the MG

TD, but we just never got around to doing that. So it sat for four or five years.

### Then, a Series of Problems

The switch repaired by the man from Dayton worked fine from 2003 until early 2008, but last fall it began acting up again. It still worked on right turns, but not when turning left. When we got sick of being limited to right turns, we decided to take the switch apart and check it. We found that a U-shaped copper contact made the connections for a left or right turn and the left side of the U was gone.

Since we couldn't find a source for this copper contact (and still haven't) we decided to install the second switch that had been rebuilt back in 2003—the one we had originally intended to use on the MG TD. Unfortunately, it didn't work as well as the first switch that was repaired. It lost vacuum immediately on one side. On the other side, the switch stayed on and did not cancel even after the handle moved back to the 6 o'clock position.

Since the broken electrical contact was the only real problem with the first switch, we decided we could pirate this part from the second switch.

Unfortunately, when we took it apart we noticed that it was designed differently inside and did not have the copper, U-shaped contact we wanted to "pirate" for the first switch. Eventually we learned that the second switch (the one that didn't work right) was of an early design with a smooth mechanism. The one with



the U-shaped copper contact could easily be repaired if we found another contact.

### Pulling It for Repairs

Swapping switches in and out of a T-Series MG is an easy, 10-minute job. You undo a small screw to remove the plastic handle, use padded pliers to loosen a knurled, bright metal collar that holds the switch firmly in the instrument panel and you reach behind the panel to pull the switch out and lower it. Then you tag and undo the three wire leads and remove the Bakelite vacuum switch.

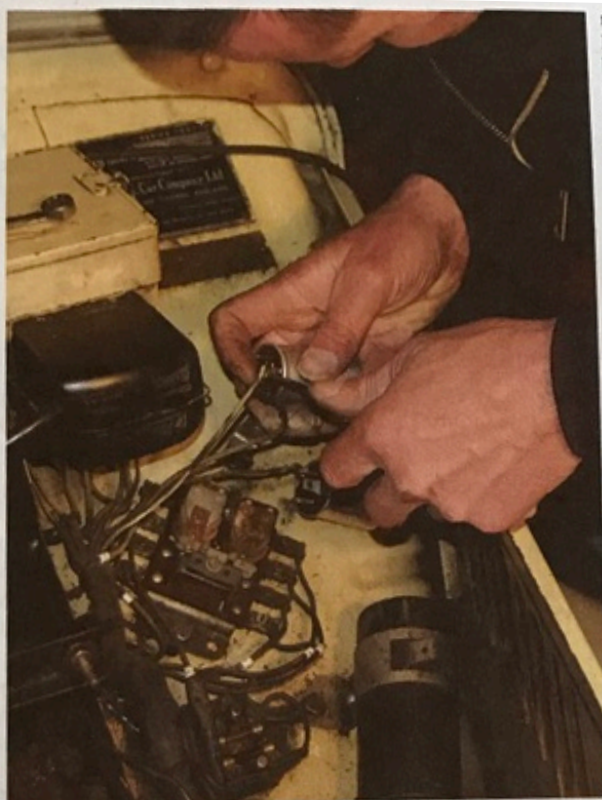
But even after several such swaps, none of the lights on the rear of the car were working. At this point we had spent about \$350 buying used switches, shipping them out for repairs, having them fixed (to last just a short while) and so on. Instead of having the satisfaction of knowing the money was well spent, we had nothing—no blinkers, no brake lights and no really good ideas.

Naturally we blamed the Lucas switch for "blowing out the lights," but when we went to [mg-t@autox.team.net](mailto:mg-t@autox.team.net) for help, we were told that wasn't possible. For example, Larry Karpman commented, "The vacuum canceling on the turn signal unit has nothing to do with the electrics. It's a mechanical function. I had similar problems awhile back, and as your brake lights are affected also, I'd test the large Lucas relay (with eight connectors) mounted on the firewall. It could be sticking or incorrectly adjusted, which will affect your brake lights (which come off connector No. 5) and your blinkers." Larry said that his tested bad, so he replaced it. "Many have success just adjusting the contacts though," he added.

We also got a response from Dave DuBois of SU Fuel Pump Restorations in Bremerton, Washington, who said, "Larry is correct, the self-canceling function of the standard Lucas turn signal switch is strictly mechanical and has nothing whatsoever to do with the turn signals working." Like Larry, Dave suspected that the problems we were experiencing were probably centered in the Lucas turn signal relay as much as in the switch.

### Finally, an Inexpensive Solution

Following Dave's recommendations we turned the ignition on, crawled under the car (jacking wasn't necessary) and shorted between the two terminals on the brake light switch to see if the brake



Mechanic Vince Sauberlich "dressed" the contact points with a small point file and used a dental pick to adjust the gap. Getting the right settings was a matter of trial and error—and they didn't work properly the first few times.

lights came on. If they do, the switch is bad. Ours did not, so next we looked at the turn signal relay. Dave had e-mailed a copy of the MG TF wiring schematic and we also found a neat color version of the same diagram in a 2006 issue of the *Sacred Octagon* magazine published by the New England MGT Register (this is actually the national club for T-Series cars).

Dave said my mechanic friend Vince Sauberlich should turn on the ignition and disconnect the primary wires from the coil to avoid frying the coil and points. Then he told Vince to run a jumper wire from terminal No. 5 to terminal No. 7 on the relay while his helper (me) stepped on the brake pedal. With that, one brake light should come on, he said. "If the brake lights on both sides come on, then one of the normally closed contacts in your relay is the problem," Dave explained. "Now have Vince jumper terminal No. 5 to terminal No. 3 on the relay while you step on the brake," Dave continued. "See if the light on the other side comes on. If it does, then both of your contacts in the relay, which would normally be closed, will

need work." According to Dave, if there were still no brake lights after these two tests, my car would have wiring problems going from the fuse block to the brake light switch.

Fortunately, the brake light switch the T Series MG uses can be replaced by a universal 12-volt double-terminal screw-in type switch that you can buy at most auto parts stores. With the ones we bought, you attach the wires to the terminals with screws.

We actually purchased two of them, paying \$19 at NAPA for their brand and \$12 at a Bumper-to-Bumper store for a sturdier looking Standard Auto Products brand switch. We also bought a flasher unit for about \$15 which Vince installed as well.

Dave DuBois has found that some currently available brake light switches fail just a short time after they are installed. He believes this is because they are not designed to handle the 3-amp load that the T-Series brake lights generate. Dave's Web site tells how you can make up a brake light relay/arc suppression circuit and install it so the new switch

will not fail. It is available in the Other Tech Articles section of his site at <http://homepages.donobi.net/sufuelpumps>. For those not inclined toward do-it-yourself electrical work, Dave makes and sells the same replacement circuit for \$15. Its use is highly recommended these days.

Dave also said we could wire a Radio Shack toggle switch temporarily in place of the Lucas vacuum switch with the green wire from the MG harness going to the center terminal, the green/yellow wire going to one of the outside terminals and the green/blue wire going to the other outside terminal. "With the ignition on, see if the turn signals work with this switch," he advised. "If they do, you can install a plain old single-pole, double-throw toggle switch from Radio Shack until you can get an original Lucas switch that works; if they still don't work, then the relay needs to have the contacts cleaned and adjusted so that they will work correctly."

The rear lights on my car still did not work with the toggle switch, so Vince took the cover off the relay and cleaned



and adjusted the contacts. After a bit of tinkering, they started to work fine and we suddenly had brake lights and blinkers again. We also decided to stick permanently with Dave's "plain old single-pole, double-throw toggle switch" for our signal lights. The only difference is that we bought our switch at Bumper-to-Bumper instead of Radio Shack. Installation of the toggle switch was straightforward. You pass the threaded portion of the toggle switch through the hole where the Bakelite switch had been and attach and tighten a collar nut on the back. Make the three electrical connections (the wires had already been tagged left, center, right) and you're ready to go. Furthermore, the toggle switch cost \$8.26 compared to the \$350 we had wasted trying to fix the Lucas switches. Since my MG TF is for driving, rather than show, we are more interested in functionality than originality.

Of course, we now have to remember to cancel the signals manually by flipping the switch back to the center each time we turn. That's no big deal. We also have to do that with the GM dealer-installed signal lights on our 1948 Pontiac. In fact, the green "blinkers-on" indicator light on the MG TF's instrument panel is a lot easier to see than the red indicator light



**We also replaced the brake light switch (the screw-in type with two terminals with screw-in connectors) with a store-bought Standard Auto Parts switch and then we installed this toggle switch. It also worked perfectly.**

on the chrome switch that is mounted to the Pontiac's steering column.

#### **But If You Want an Original Blinker Switch...**

If you are restoring your British sports car for show and have your heart set on an original Lucas vacuum switch, George Wolf of British Auto Specialty may be able to help you. We found George through an auction listing where he men-

tioned that he could repair Lucas switches. George does admit, however, that "none of these Neanderthal-engineered switches was ever real reliable."

Nonetheless, George knows a lot about repairing the vacuum function and other problems. Here are the basics of what he does to repair a switch:

1. Disassemble the switch. 2. Clean all the parts, being careful not to injure the critical leather seal. 3. Treat the leather seal to restore flexibility. 4. Lubricate the piston and contact assemblies. 5. Reassemble and test switch operation. 6. Adjust delay time. ■

#### **Resources**

**British Auto Specialty**  
340 Bent Grass Drive  
Roswell, GA 30076

**New England MG T Register, Ltd.**  
P.O. Box 1957  
Cary, NC 27512-1957  
607-432-6835  
nemgtr.org

**SU Fuel Pump Restoration**  
1913 South Marine Dr.  
Bremerton, WA 98312  
360-479-0462  
e-mail: SUFuelPumps@donobi.net

***"FIXING BRITISH BRAKE LIGHTS" came from Oct 2009 "AUTO RESTORER" magazine. The same Lucas dashboard turn signal switch (Lucas 31250 TPS1) and bulkhead relay box (Lucas DB10 relay) is used in our MGAs and the T-series cars, along with many other British cars of the 50's and 60's that use a combined single brake/turn signal bulb. Fortunately it usually is hard to leave it on unintentionally due to the archaic vacuum mechanical design, which often leaks air too quickly and cancels sooner than desired. I usually just try to hold it on with my left hand until starting into the turn when I let it cancel. A buzzer can be wired into the circuit at the switch if desired. It should run between the wire to the flashing indicator light on the dash and a good ground. It will then buzz with the indicator light. If replacing the in-line hydraulic brake light switch, be sure to use the correct thread as discussed in the March-April '20 A-Antics (1/8"x27 NPT thread).***



***Sunday In The Park - A Rowdies Retreat Report - June 7, 2020***

On a beautiful June 7th Sunday, with the sun shining brightly in a cloudless sky and a gentle breeze moving the 75 degree air to cool us, 14 intrepid MG Pilots and Navigators assembled at shady Park Lyndon in NW Washtenaw County to celebrate our return to the freedom of the road. (Note: I realize this was a long sentence, but I'm practicing my 19th century creative writing style.) As usual, we brought a bouquet of colour to the car park: 3 Red, 2 Green, 2 Blue MGA's, 1 Black MGB and 1 Black Morgan Three Wheeler. So beautiful. The unwashed masses were suitably impressed.

Our participants were Ken Nelson, Andy Hoffman, Kevin and Norma Peck, Tom Fant and Lynn Coombs, Bill Weakley, John and Carolyn Alexander, Jerry Jesion, Deb and Jeff Smith and Gene and Joan Johnson of the Windsor/Detroit MG Club.

We sat on the grass, in folding chairs and on the picnic table while we practiced social distancing, ate lunch and talked about our sequestration experiences. There was some difficulty trying to recognize the male participants, who now sport varying degrees of facial hair and ponytails - except for Tom who remains - well - Tom like.

After a bit, Tom led most of us on a spirited drive over the famous Hankerd Road, our own mini "Tail of the Dragon". That was fun! Thanks, Tom!

We returned back to the Park to finish up a really pleasant day.

***John Alexander, Meets Chairman***

*Your Editor Adds His Thoughts:* Greetings from the West side of the state. It was good seeing all you Rowdies today, most for the first time this year. Driving over and back from Grand Rapids on back roads was great and the car and weather were absolutely perfect. What a delightful drive! Thanks John, for arranging it. On the way there, though, I only made it as far as Mason, MI before a mandatory pit stop for the driver was necessary. In fact so necessary that I was seriously looking for some dense forest cover until I came upon a *Speedway* gas station in Mason. That provided a bathroom as well as my take-out lunch for the afternoon in the park. On the way back I made it home before stopping for "the pause that relieves", but I did fill up with gas once home. In fact, I got the gas gauge to bounce up and down off the big "E" for the last 10 miles or so before gas. 300 miles total, and the tank only took 10.7 gals for 28 mpg on mainly back roads. Thanks again for a wonderful day driving a great car!

Pictures are below.

***Editor Ken***







## Rover Car Crashes Off Ramps!

*Many of us spend time reading forums online dealing with day to day problems of rebuilding a classic English car. There are valuable tips to be found there, but also a chance to air our frustrations over topics relating to car repair. Sometimes those frustrations can be presented in a rather entertaining fashion, no matter which type of English car is being discussed. Following is a discussion from my Rover P5 Car Club site. Read and see if any of you Rowdies out there can identify with this owner:*

### Car Owner presents his problem:

To the forum members: *For a long time, just as I'm arriving home, the front near side of the car has squeaked loudly, sounding like suspension, but maybe a little worse with turning the steering wheel.*



*Now the squeak is epic - think British comedy, mattress squeaking in next room volume, 'nudge-nudge, wink-wink' type squeaking. Now when the car is at rest, engine off, if I bounce the front near side up and down the squeak is very loud. I've sprayed everything I can see with WD 40 and to no avail. Is there a classic spot that squeaks??*

*So finally by spraying everything that I could see related to the suspension and steering with WD40 I seem to have at least temporarily fixed the squeak. The price I paid was driving the car off the end of the old portable inspection ramps that I was using to get a better look. I've dented the bottom of one panel and lost some paint, but it could have been a lot worse. The sight of one's beloved Rover crashing off ramps is not one I would recommend.*

*The noise when the car crashed off the inspection ramps was enough to bring the neighbours out, and certainly to bring my wife out of the house, who assumed I was squashed until proven otherwise. I had to reassure her and calm her, when all I wanted to do was get under the car and see what irreparable damage I had caused. She is a staunch supporter of the Rover addiction, but this has really tried her emotions. Her input prior to now has included periodically but surreptitiously reviewing my life insurance when I put the car up on stands, and checking that the fire extinguisher is reading 'fully charged' when I am dealing with carburettors. Learning to use the multimeter has opened her mind to the world of electricity and its attendant dangers. Basically she now sees car maintenance as being a high risk adrenaline-charged sport.*

### 1st Outside Advisor:

*"Drive-on-ramps are dangerous for the very reasons you outlined. They also limit access to the front end by virtue of their design and placement when used."*

### Car Owner:

*Thank you. I have encountered that problem before, and I'm happy to learn by trial and error or outside advice. But I always seem to err on the side of error. I think the problem is that the old ramps had a big lip at the front, requiring a generous squirt of power to get the car to mount the ramp. Hence causing it to continue, proceeding at speed off the end of the ramp. I have had a beer. OK I've had 2.*

### 1st Outside Advisor:

*"OK, now you're making me nervous just reading your 'car maintenance' threads! Try proceeding as follows: If you have a large floor jack rated for the weight, jack the front of the car up under the front crossmember of the subframe (directly under the radiator...there's a square plate welded to the crossmember.) Once raised, place axle stands (either side) under the front subframe extensions. Then remove the floor jack. Please do use proper axle stands in conjunction with an appropriate floor jack (and deep six those drive-on ramps!)"*

### Car Owner:

*Thanks as always. I had a bad feeling when I was placing the ramps before I got started. It's a while since I've done something really stupid, the last being taking apart a master cylinder in the garden and spending the next 4 hours looking for a spring that jumped out of the componentry at speed into dense underbrush, with a search area equal to all of Wales. I keep a notebook of the jobs I do for future reference, with errors highlighted so I don't do it again 2 years later. It is a very big book.*

*(Continued next page)*

***2<sup>nd</sup> Helpful Outside Advisor:***

“Jack the car up as advised above, then place the (do not) drive-off ramps under the front wheels. You are going to lie under the car, placing a hand on each component while your large and weighty helpmate / wife / apprentice bounces the front end of the car up and down. When you have found the bit that squeaks, you will be able to feel the vibration through your hand. While you are there, you may as well have him/her jiggle the steering R&L while you feel the tie-rod ends for clicking indicating wear. Examine carefully for any item which appears loose, or in imminent danger of falling off the car and onto your head (goggles and hard hat advised here)”.

***1<sup>st</sup> Outside Advisor:***

“As an aside I'm not really sure that it's a good idea to have the missus turning the wheel and bouncing the car whilst you're under it, even while wearing a hard hat!...Reminds me of a story... A guy secured himself with a long rope to the tow bar of his car whilst he was working on the far side of his house roof. Obviously he didn't want to fall...so this was his idea of a safety line! I suppose had he thought it through with greater clarity it might have been a good idea to tell his wife what he'd done or at the very least disable the ignition. You can guess the rest...Luckily some hedges below softened his descent and his wife heard the cacaphony as he descended.

Many moons ago I made a wooden block with a handle on it that I drag under any car I'm working on and keep close to me. It's hollow inside to hold tools but can take many tons in weight and is higher than I am fat. I don't trust jacks or metal car ramps, and a P5 is a bit heavy to try and do a bench press with. I reassess yearly to be certain the height-to-fat ratio hasn't reversed itself. Having said that, I made a set of New Year's Resolutions this year that might be worth your perusing to consider adopting for yourself in the future”.

## **Garage Safety-New Year's Resolutions**

1. I will not place any essential part of my anatomy beneath any Rover which is not supported upon ramps, axle stands or other substantial structures. Whilst parts of my body may be as decrepit as parts of my Rover, parts for it are not available on Ebay.
2. I will not work upon any part of the starting or charging system of my Rover without first checking that the battery has been disconnected or removed. Bright flashes, crackling noises and a smell of burning are OK on Bonfire Night, but not inside my Rover.
3. I will suffer no spark or flame to exist adjacent to any part of the fuel system or battery. I like having eyebrows.
4. I vow to forsake the use of adjustable wrenches and wherever possible utilize a socket or ring spanner upon recalcitrant nuts and bolts. Sometimes I will use the correct size.
5. I will always securely chock at least one wheel prior to jacking up the Rover; one feels such a fool getting run over by the Rover one is supposed to be fixing.
6. I will endeavour not to lose my tools, my temper, or my patience. When (but only when) all else has failed, I will read the instructions. And I will kill anyone who gets in my way if I continue to fail.
7. I will always use extreme caution when removing the radiator cap, lest such action par boil me or some innocent bystander. Besides, antifreeze is so expensive.
8. I will remember to clean up any and all of the noxious fluids expelled by my Rover before they ignite or poison wandering pets, passing children or the planet.
9. I must remember to place the gear selector in “Park” or “Neutral” before starting work. Chasing an escaping Rover along the street is harmful to one's local image as an icon of cool.
10. I promise never to forget the laws of Murphy, as these surpass all others. Especially the one which states “If everything seems to be going well, you have obviously overlooked something”. Every Rover owner knows that Murphy was an optimist.

***Submitted For Your Perusal by Ken Nelson***



***Some Pictures of the Wives and Kids in Our Car World, At Work & Enjoying Their MGs  
Send Me Some Of YOUR Favorite Pictures For The Next A-Antics Please!***

