



Flywheel:

The Open Road Beckons

August 2020, Vol. 1:5



Photo: Pete Moffett

President Sean: Summer is passing by quickly and the NBCC has been pretty active as you can see in this month's *Flywheel*. On July 14 we had an amazing turnout of 30 people at the club BBQ located at the Holiday Inn. Lots of much needed laughs and smiles were had by all.

Many members have offered their places to accommodate the club, and the executive are actively discussing these options for September. We do appreciate it and will be in touch with those who have volunteered shortly. The idea of a potluck/picnic is appealing and even having a little run before or after could be in the works. The sticking point is ensuring adequate washroom facilities.

We are exploring other locations in the region, as well, so stay tuned and we'll have some announcements shortly!

—Sean



Photo: Pete Moffett

Members' News:

For every one of us who wreaks havoc when picking up a wrench, there are the folks who actually enjoy working on their cars and are good at it. **Bruce Bowman** is one of those folks, and this month it's his turn to share with us:

Fun with British Cars

We must be nuts to drive these old, slow cars. Too slow, too hot in summer, too cold in winter, too wet in the rain—the list could go on for the full page. I have four cars, obtained in the following order:

- 1959 TR3A
- 1958 Morris Minor Shooting Brake (estate wagon)
- 1960 Morris Minor 1000 Convertible
- 1970 Triumph TR6

I also rebuilt and sold a VW Thing, often seen at car shows around Hamilton.

None of the listed cars could be driven—they did not run, had no brakes, were all nearly beyond repair.

The Triumphs' bodies were stripped off to bare frames. The Morris Cars are Unibody, so, to bare shells. Still, I am a fixer, not a buyer—I only replace parts if I have no other option.

Let me tell you some of the fun of my first rebuild, the 1959 TR3A. I bought the car in St Catharines and it looked OK for a nearly 60-year old car. The car did run, kind of. It was not drivable, though, as it had a bad wheel bearing. On inspection at home, the body was removed from the non-existent frame. The frame was rotted, broken, and unusable. At this point I had an expensive parts car. I swept up most of the frame, thinking a British car rebuild may not be for me.

Yet, after some deep thought, I approached the challenge head-on. It would be back on the road!

I located a used, rust-free (sort of) frame and a rear fender in Nevada and shipped it to Niagara Falls, NY. Then the real fun started. The body frame had also rotted. So I had the parts fabricated to my specs at a stamping shop in St. Catharines. The engine was rebuilt with a large 40-over bore kit, crank, valves, etc. All new brakes, lines, hoses, rear springs, and rebuilt front-end bushings...everything new or rebuilt. The transmission was replaced with a TR6 unit to get full 4-gear syncro.

Now we had a bare car needing paint, so I painted the car black and orange in my garage. There's a first for everything. Looks OK from 20+ feet. Had custom upholstery to match the paint job, and powder coated the wire wheels black (I had to buy an old cook stove as my good wife refused to let me bake the wheels in her oven).

There is a lot more to the tale of this old car, of course. It was my first but not the last. I love driving the TR3. It's raw, real driving, fully exposed, and it goes like hell with a nice bark. And I have 3 more LBCs to tell you about later.

—Bruce Bowman + understanding wife, Joy



Photo: the Bowmans

There's a line in a Harrison Ford movie about building a shopping centre with a Swiss Army knife. I suspect Bruce could do it!

Jim and Linda Collacott are again enjoying their MGB-GT. It was a little late coming out this year as Jim relates:



Photo: the Collacotts

I didn't want to get the GT back on the road without a mechanic giving it a thorough going over. I had concerns with the brakes and fuel pump. I drove up to Oakwood Motors here in Niagara Falls and talked to the owner/mechanic about my concerns. Alex Djurkovic, automotive tech, told me his early mechanic training was on British cars and he'd be happy to get it in as soon as he had space.

Alex called a couple of days later and we arranged the time. I called CAA for a flat bed at 10:00 a.m. on the assigned day and, after a few delays, the driver came at about 2:00 p.m. He stated he had already taken a few MGs to garages for driving preparations but hadn't seen a hardtop. Once it was loaded up and secured, I said I would follow him up McLeod to Oakwood. Just after we passed Dorchester, the CAA driver rear ended a van. After waiting for traffic to clear, we got to

the side of the road and I told the driver I would continue to Oakwood Motors to tell them what happened.

Alex called to say the MG had been delivered safely at 4:50 p.m. So, starting at 10 a.m., it took almost 7 hours to get there.

Happily after a new master cylinder, bushings in the brake and clutch pedals, seals in the lines and a cleaning up of the brakes, pads and shoes, and without any fuel-pump problems, we are back on the road. Much thanks to Tom Haines for directing me to British Auto Sport in Troy, Ontario, to buy the parts.

Safe motoring,
Jim

Thanks, Jim. Oakwood sounds like another resource to add to our garage list.



Speaking of red MGB-GTs, who knew that the late **Peter Tork** of Monkees fame wrote and recorded a song about his favourite car, **his own red MGB-GT**? Rewinding 50 years, we can picture him tooling through Laurel Canyon, one of the '60s musically creative places. Jim and Linda, this song is for you.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oEAweANo88s>

*Lately my mind is drifting back
To former days that used to be
I think about some folks I knew and of my MGB-GT
People let me tell you that if I had to make a recipe
For fun in driving I would have to spell it MGB-GT
Cruising, using, choosing it
Amusing myself without a care
Striving, Driving hot-rod driving
Not arriving anywhere
Folks, this little car of mine
Was like a kitten purring throatily
Sometimes it even seem to soar
Into the heavens, my red MGB-GT
Tooling, fuelling my good feeling
Schooling me in ways to know
Soaring, flooring it, adoring it
My little way to go
Folks, this little car of mine
Was like a kitten purring throatily
Sometimes it even seemed to soar
Into the heavens, my red MGB-GT
But I, I learned you have to lose some things
Before you treasure them; that's how it goes
And I, I didn't give time to my car
And I lost my car to time: what did I know?
And so Life carries on
And lots of things are better now for me
And yet I think back on those golden times
When I had my red MGB-GT*

Perhaps not in the pantheon of great automotive tunes, but appealing to a few of us who own tin tops wearing the Octagon logo.

Somewhere on the Left Coast, there is a very lucky child. Or a Shriner.



Thanks to **Lee Peekstock** for this photo taken in Seattle by his brother

Harry's Garage: If you haven't checked out *Harry's Garage* on YouTube, you should. Harry Metcalfe is a wealthy farmer, developer, and founder of EVO magazine.



He has quite a stable of thoroughbred cars, along with a down-to-earth way of presenting them. I especially like his exotic car adventures...not the silly histrionics of *Top Gear*, but a genuine love of using his classics. For example, taking a '72 Rolls Royce to the Arctic Circle to see the Northern Lights; driving a Testa Rossa to the Sahara Desert; and showing us how to fit a couple of bicycles and an outboard motor into a Lamborghini Countach. This guy is the real thing, and his classics do not live in gilded cages. Just search for [Harry's Garage](#).

Editor Jim:

One-Tank Holidays

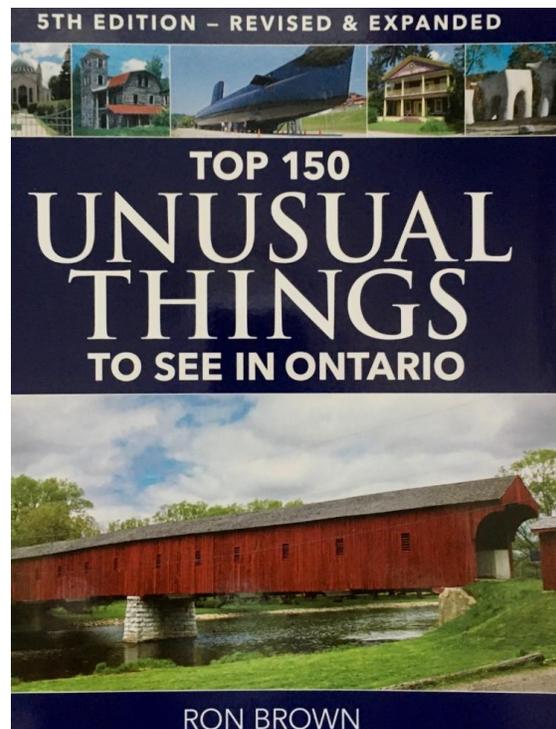
This year's "big event" has scuppered a lot of vacation plans. However, there is a lot to visit right here in our own beautiful province. The best way to do this of course is in our LBCs along the lesser-travelled thoroughfares. Day trips and staycations are fine, but how about a one-tank holiday? The idea is to structure a short, three- or four-day holiday trip within the orbit of a tank of fuel.

This notion was hatched some years back when Cheryl and I decided to take the B and get out of the house for a few days. I actually wrote about it...



...for the old Cruise Library on our former website. However I doubt anyone ever read it because, as near as I can tell, the library feature was a big, fat flop. But moving on...Ron Brown's book *Top 150 Unusual Thing to See in Ontario* would be a fun way to rekindle the idea. How about Port Dover's ghost mausoleum? Or the West Montrose covered bridge, Ruthven, Sparta's eclectic main street,

Goderich's octagonal main street, Houghton's sand hill or the Crawford Lake Iroquois longhouse re-creations? Choose unique places that are off the beaten track, string them together, and fill the tank. Heck, Cheryl and I once drove to Punkeydoodles Corners just to say we had been there. I confess I was more excited than she. Getting there was the thing. Drive at a leisurely pace along the lesser roads and stop often. The fun and the fuel will both be optimized.



Enjoy the rest of August and remember that your newsletter contributions are appreciated. Hope to see you at the next BBQ.

Cheers,
Jim

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