

# THE OFF-SIDE UNDO



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“A gentleman does not motor about after dark” Joseph Lucas

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## Turkey Day Travels 2015

***Hot Springs and the Talimena Scenic Drive AR/OK*** – November 26, 2015.

Despite warnings of flash floods in Arkansas, Clay, Debbie, Martha and I struck out for a weekend in the Ouachita Mountains in West Central Arkansas. We had hoped for sunny blue skies so we might catch the last of the autumn leaves.



Martha crosses The Delta behind the wheel of the GT

The leaves remained, however all were heavily saturated from weeks of rain. Martha and I traveled in our GT and Clay and Debbie in their tourer. We left the Magnolia State under sunny skies and made it to Hot Springs, our first overnight stop without a hint of rain.



Crossing the Mighty Mississippi under clear skies

We enjoyed an evening stroll down to dinner at Belle Arti and our Thanksgiving dinner of Italian fare. Next day the weather took a turn for the wet as predicted. After a meal at the world famous Pancake Shop under heavy, wet skies we headed west along the south side of Lake Ouachita to Pencil Bluff. At Pencil Bluff we ran across Hwy 88 and a marker for the Lum and Abner Museum and the Jot'em Down Store in Pine Ridge AR. The name rang a bell with me and always looking for a new outlet for "exploration juices", off we went down Hwy 88.



Our view of the rain soaked Talimena Trail

It is amazing what you can find out there on the back roads when you're not really expecting anything. We spent about an hour wandering around in the Jot'em Down Store and museum, listening to old radio broadcasts of the Lum and Abner show, checking out many interesting items, and visiting with the caretaker

Kathryn Stucker. If you need updating on Lum and Abner you can catch up with them and their humor at [www.lum-abner.com](http://www.lum-abner.com). Back into the rain and an hour's drive, we made it to our Friday night stop in Mena and a bite of lunch at the Sky Line Diner in downtown Mena. During our paddling over from Hot Springs Brother Clay's MG had developed a periodic rattle. After unloading at the Mena Mountain Resort we slogged up and down Hwy 71 and found perhaps the only partially dry spot in that part of Arkansas to crawl partway under his B and deduced that the source of the rattle was exhaust related. It was cool and very wet and the last thing we wanted to do was to tackle a deranged exhaust out in the open. However, the thought of a buzzing exhaust in "top up" conditions would only guarantee a headache for the next two days and about 400 miles left in our trip. We hit Main Street Mena and found a local shop that was willing to correct the misaligned exhaust. After ten minutes of separation, the MG was returned sans rattle. That beat the heck out of lying around in the rain attempting a repair or two days of Excedrins.

Saturday was our turn around day but not before we continued our trek west along the Scenic Talimena Drive. A stop 30 minutes after our departure from Mena was made at the recently refurbished lodge at Queen Wilhelmina State Park. The hotel is located near the second highest peak in Arkansas, Rich Mountain, at 2,681 feet. The vistas are reportedly beautiful however on our visit the sights were pretty much socked in by rain and fog.



MGs at the Wonder House at Queen Wilhelmina State Park

We took the opportunity to warm near the great fire place and gather information on how the was inn named after a Queen from the Netherlands who arrived in this location. We then drove forty-five minutes over into the state of Oklahoma. The roads were clear and in good condition, albeit very wet. Needless to say, we pretty much had the road along the top of the ridge to ourselves. The vistas might have been magnificent, except for the fact that the visibility was limited to about 100 yards or so. At about that distance, the tail lights on Clay's MGB pretty much disappeared into the fog bank. Note to self; investigate brighter tail lamps. Stops at overlooks were not called for unless you were into cloud watching at very close range. Our return was made along Highway 270 which ran pretty much parallel to the Ouachita River.

Down in the valley, so to speak, it became very clear how much rain had fallen the week prior, and during our trip. All of the ditches, tributaries, creeks and even the Ouachita River were overflowing their banks.



1920 ALCO 4-6-0 Locomotive at Queen Wilhelmina State Park

As we headed back to pass thru Mena, our lunch stop, we continued our drive to the Saturday night stay at the Arlington Hotel.



Lunch break after our return from Oklahoma

It was another wet and wild day, but the MG's took it all in good stride. Making Hot Springs prior to night fall, we dried out, cleaned up, and made our way to the Copper Penny for a bit of grub. We called it an early evening after watching a bit of the Egg Bowl. Sunday morning we were up to another morning of rain. We had a quick bite of breakfast at The Arlington, checked out of the hotel, and we were on the road to more rain. If you get the idea that we should have requested a duck boat, you're correct.



Clay's B needed Marine Radar rather than GPS

Despite the continuous supply of water from above, we made good time heading home. We continued to be pelted until about an hour from Jackson, and finally

received a break from the deluge that we had endured for three days. You may ask how we could have enjoyed a long weekend with lots of miles, close to 850 miles for me, and an additional 100 for Brother Clay and Debbie. Well, other than the minor issues with an exhaust, both B's ran, as expected, were tracking straight and true. They never skipped a beat while motoring quite well thru roads covered with water. The wipers, plus a good coating of Rain-X, kept the windshield clean, and other than damp carpets for the most part, the interiors and occupants remained dry and toasty. The leaves were still present and in all of their glory, the roads were all passable, just a bit wet, and we had a great time during our stops along the way. Wander out in adverse weather again? You bet! We had a great time on our Turkey Day travels, 2015.



**This 'n That**  
**By Charlie Durning**

### **Front Disc Brakes on a Budget**

When I acquired my 1958 MG Magnette, the first thing I noticed was the pathetic brakes. Since the Magnette hadn't had much love in the previous decades of its life, I decided to treat her to a complete brake overhaul consisting of wheel cylinders, brake shoes, master cylinder, and finally park brake cables. In the end the brakes weren't much better.

I did search for a disc brake kit for the Magnette. Originally I found a highly touted conversion that used unavailable "Greene" brackets. That conversion uses a combination of an unavailable bracket, MGB calipers, solid rotors, and rare MGA

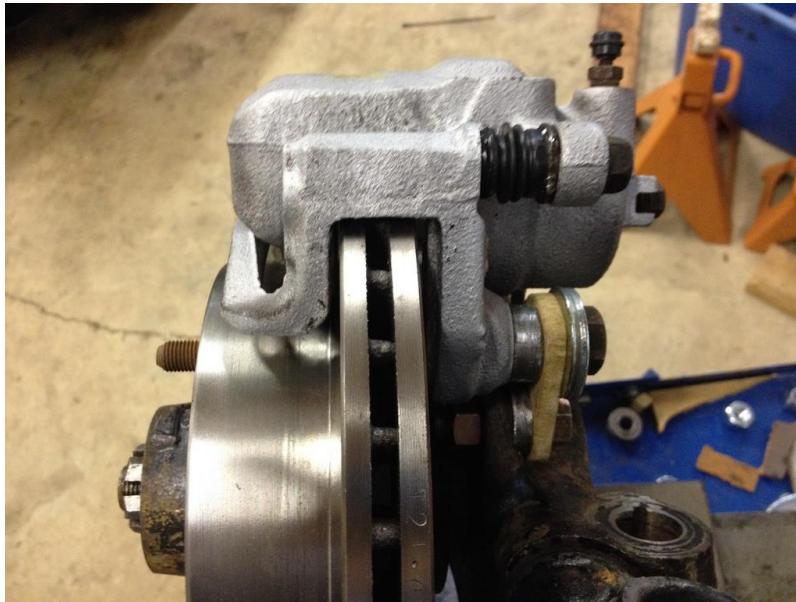
hubs, all sourced separately - not a good solution. Eventually I stumbled upon a kit offered by NTG, in England, using the same components as the "Greene" conversion; I just couldn't stomach the cost. There must be another way.

Considering how simple it was to convert the Morris with Nissan parts, I once again looked to Nissan. There were several options to consider and each had tradeoffs. I focused on the brakes for the front of the Nissan 240SX. The 240SX is about 300 pounds heavier than the Midgette, the caliper bore is the same as the MGB, the 240SX master cylinder has the same bore as the Midgette, and, as a benefit, the rotors are vented. Sounds like a good match. At first I was concerned that the 240SX rotors are only 10". The NTG and the Greene conversions use 10.75" rotors. On the plus side the 240SX pads have considerably more surface area than the MGB. I rationalized the 10" rotors could be suitable.

The next challenge was to find rotors with enough offset to enable using the original Midgette hubs. In searching rotor specs I found a Toyota Cressida vented rear rotor would fill the need. The best part is it is 10.5 inches. Once the rotor arrived I headed down to a buddy's house to use his lathe.

Since the drum for the Midgette uses the outside of the hub flange as a pilot, I had to come up with a solution to keep the rotor concentric with the hub. I decided to machine the snout of the hub for a pilot. Once that size was established I then bored out the pilot hole in the rotor to fit the newly machined hub.

Back in the shop I mocked everything up using a spare Midgette hub and spindle and a caliper bracket made from MDF. To my disappointment the caliper hits the web inside of the Midgette wheel. Oh well, back to the books to find smaller rotor. In measuring the interference it looked like a 10" rotor would allow enough clearance.



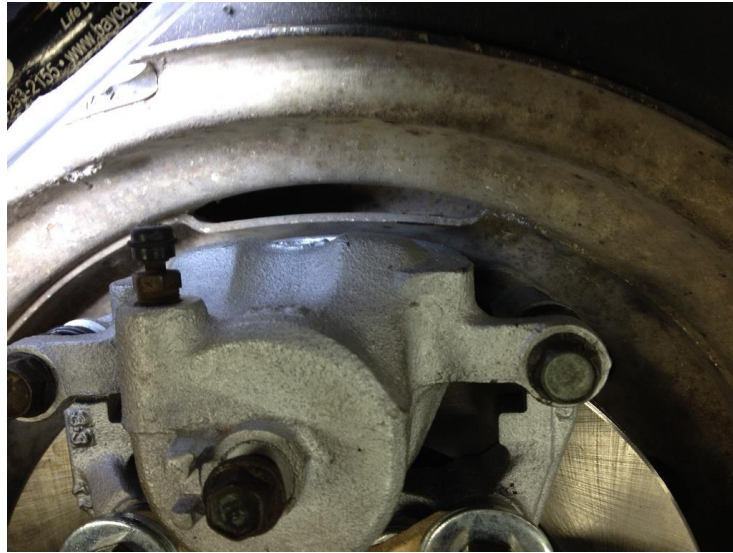
Since I hated to give up the  $\frac{1}{2}$ " I thought I'd see if TR-6 wheels would clear. They did, so that is an option to keep the 10.5" rotors. Well, the Magnette still has good tires and the skinny tires are a poor fit for the TR-6 wheels. I continued the search for a 10" rotor. The 10" rotor will remain on the car until I convert to different wheels.



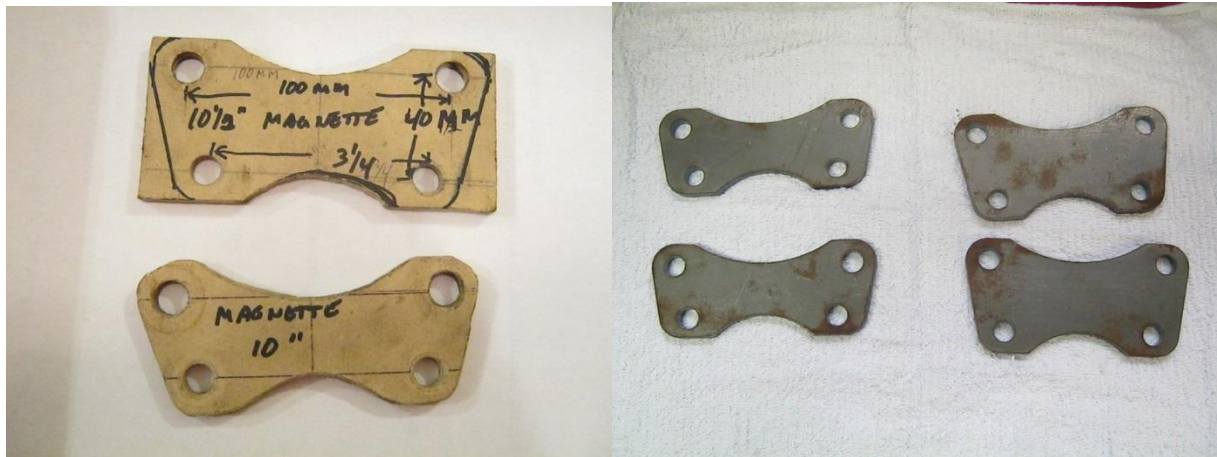
Back to the rotor spec books. My search found a 10" rotor from a Mazda RX7 with exactly, well close enough, offset as the 10.5" rotor. Off again to my buddie's house for some quick lathe work.



The mock up with the 10" rotor and a new MDF caliper bracket looked good. The acid test is to fit the original Magnette wheel. Eureka! It fits with just enough clearance.



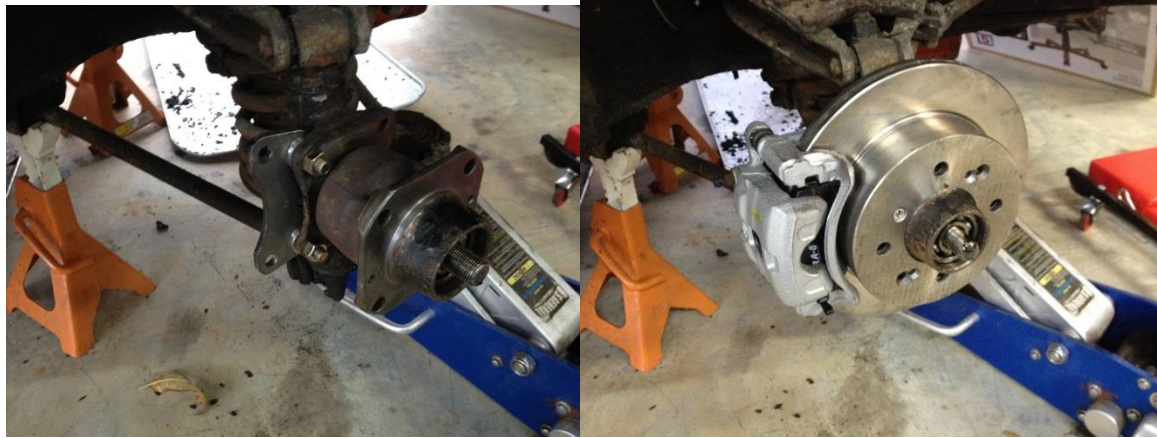
Since MDF is not a good choice for the final bracket, the next thing was to get the brackets made from steel. I found a local shop that was willing to take on the project. Two weeks later I have laser cut steel brackets for both the 10" and the 10.5" rotors. They did beautiful work.



All that was left was to strip off the drum brakes and fit the discs. The dirt, grit, and caked road grime, notwithstanding, the teardown was uneventful. It's amazing how much stuff can build up in nearly 60 years!

The caliper bracket was fit to the spindle without any issues. After the modified hub was installed, the 10" rotor and caliper were trial fit. Clearances were

checked and all looked good. I did discover an issue with the caliper hitting the coil spring when turning to full lock. Not good, so I made a steering stop to keep the caliper out of the coil spring.



**Machined hub pilot**

**Trial fit**

The last issue was the flexible brake hose. The flex hose had to clear a number of obstacles, which included the front suspension, inner body panels, and the tires. After several hoses that hit one thing or another, I found that the rear brake hose from a Saturn S series sedan was just right. To make that hose work some concessions had to be made.

On the Magnette, the hose attaches to the underside of the frame bracket. In order for the Saturn hose to clear everything, it needed to be attached to the top of the frame bracket. Since the end of the brake pipe had to be changed to a Metric fitting, I went ahead and made up a new pipe that would accommodate the new hose.



The next issue is the master cylinder. There are 2 trains of thought when converting to disc brakes. One is to remove the check valve and the other is to leave it in. Since the master cylinder is a real pain to remove, I decided to try it with the valve in. As it turns out that was a good choice. I also installed a raised reservoir cap to accommodate the greater fluid requirement for disc brakes.



After a quick bleed it was time for a test drive. To say there is a considerable difference in braking is an understatement. Now the Chick Magnette will stop with confidence. All in all - time well spent.

The cost? Considering the results and compared with the available kit this is indeed a bargain. Then taking in that the Nissan brake parts are modern and readily available as compared to the available kit, using 50 year old technology, this is indeed a home run, and at **one fifth the cost of the NTG kit!**

The finished product. *The purists will never know.*



I want to thank Donna for putting up with my mania, my buddy Joe for the use of his lathe, and Brother Clay for his evaluation of the finished product.



# Exhaust Rattles

By John Tuberville

Progress on the TR6! Keith Anderson came over, and we loaded a trailer and truck to get the frame, fenders, hood, trunk lid, and the tub to Tim Ross Restorations in Crystal Springs for glass bead blasting. Upon closer inspection of the frame, Tim asked if we could find another, as mine had been damaged in the past and repairs were weak spots. So Keith made a phone and we secured a fairly good frame for \$75. Now we just need to take off trailing arms, shocks, and fuel lines and get it to Tim Ross for blasting.



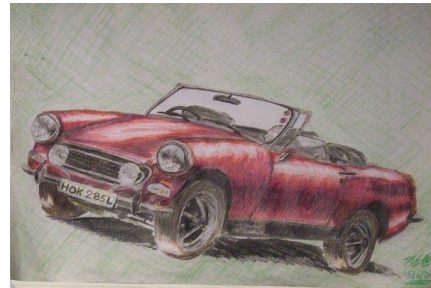
January is the time for our annual business meeting. It is also a time for awards. The giving of awards is a fun aspect of the business meeting. Take some time and consider joining in on the fun by creating and giving an award. An award can be to anyone for any reason. We have 4 perpetual awards, so it will be fun to see who gets the pleasure of receiving one of those. The Eager Beaver is awaiting for someone. Who will be the lucky recipient this year?

# Fun with Midgets!

## Part 4



By Steve Whitlow



The beginning of a new year brings a time of reflection upon the one just ended. It got me thinking, it was just about this time last year that I began to seriously consider Charlie's offer to use a corner of his expanded shop to complete the restoration of my 1976 MG Midget, my first car.

In 2010-11 I had stripped the little car's exterior and interior to have it resprayed, and in the process, had replaced the windscreen, installed all new rubber bits, restored the interior, replaced the top, and resprayed the Rostyles. There, the project stalled. Lifting the bonnet, one was presented with an engine bay that was *not* a pretty sight! The suspension, especially the front, after 127k miles and forty years of wear and tear, was in need of a rebuild. My wife and I had hoped to sell our house and move to one with a proper garage, among other amenities, but when that didn't work out the parts sat in boxes in the basement and the years began to roll by. I decided to take Charlie up on his offer, after all I wasn't getting any younger!

With the suspension work completed and the engine pulled, it was time to remove the remaining ancillaries. I was relieved to find the plenum chamber was in good shape after removing the badly corroded batter shelf. The new BMH shelf seems to be a perfect fit. So I set about my tasks. In short order, out they

came: pedal box, wiper motor, throttle, bonnet release and choke cables, brake pipes and fittings, windscreen washer pump, etc. The oil pressure pipe and switch junction were removed and the combination water temp/oil pressure gauge was released from the dash and carefully, very carefully, the water temp capillary tube was pulled through the firewall to the safety of the passenger seat. The wiring harness and fuse box were loosened, cleaned and tucked out of the way.

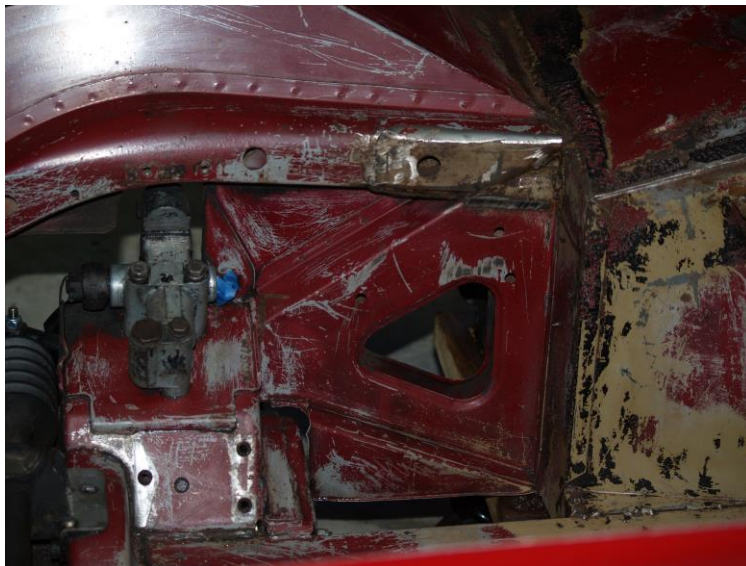
So with the front bumper removed, I was ready to begin the paint prep work.



Here's a photo of the engine bay early days. The bonnet has been removed as well as the battery and heater. Also gone are the induction and exhaust systems. In fact these are gone for good, in their stead will go a pair of UK spec HS2s and a 4-2-1 tubular manifold and stainless sport exhaust system from Moss Europe.



The next photo shows the engine bay pretty much empty. The corrosion on the firewall is superficial and will be easy to remove. Actually, the entire car is very sound.



The last photo shows the inner RH wing with cleaning well under way. The lever shocks, steering column and steering rack will remain in place. After cleaning and painting them I'll mask them off before re-spraying the engine bay.

If you don't hear from me next month it's because I'm still removing forty years of baked on grease, oil and road grime. ***Wish me luck!***



# A Note from the President



John Turbeville

A nice crowd of hungry folks descended on the Cashman's garage for our annual Christmas gathering on the first Saturday in December. Lots of car talk and car viewing on a perfect Saturday afternoon. A big thanks to the Cashmans for hosting this event and a big thanks to all who attended.

Our January meeting will be held on January 16, 2016 at:  
Lone Star Steakhouse  
442 Riverwind Dr  
Pearl, MS 39208

It is next to the Hilton Garden Inn. We have a room reserved at 11:30 so come hungry and bring your Perpetual Awards to pass along to some unsuspecting soul. How cool it was to see an Austin Healey out this week at Sam's in Madison! Let's keep them rolling!

Wishing you all a Happy New Year!

# Natchez Euro Fest



**EMC members: mark your calendars now: *April 9, 2016.***

**EMC expected to be an Integral Part of Natchez Euro Fest**



The Euro Fest Classic European Auto & Motorcycle Show, held in Jackson and Baton Rouge for the past few years, is coming to Natchez on April 9, 2016. There is no entry fee for participants. Awards will be presented to Best In Class of 13 Different Classes, Sponsor's Choice, and Best of the Natchez Vintage and Nouveau. Additionally, the Mayor's Travel Awards will be presented to out-of-state entries for the Best of Show, pre-1992 and after 1992.

This event will not cancel the EMC annual “Brits of the Bluff” show in late September. Rather, it is a terrific additional opportunity for us to take part in what promises to be an outstanding display of European automotive engineering.

As part of Natchez’s Tri-centennial Celebration, Euro Fest will be a free, fun, family event held on the bluffs of the Mississippi River on the beautiful grounds of the Rosalie Mansion, adjacent to the City Park where EMC conducts Brits on the Bluff. The show will open to the public at 10:00 a.m. with the awards presentation at 4:00 pm.

Click on link below for all details.

<http://euro-fest.net/natchez/index.php>



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# From the Passenger Seat by Donna Durning



We always enjoy our gatherings with the EMC. Our Christmas gathering at Pat and Barbara Cashman's was no exception! As always, they were gracious hosts and showed everyone a good time! To see some highlights from the day, **click on the link below:**

## [Christmas at the Cashman's!](#)

**Editor's Note: Submissions are ALWAYS WELCOME! Please email me at [durning.donna@yahoo.com](mailto:durning.donna@yahoo.com) with your contributions!**

Don't forget that the 2015 year-end and 2016 kick-off gathering will be held the **third Saturday of January**. President John Turbeville has been working on arrangements. We will meet at Lone Star in Pearl next to the Hilton Garden Inn on **January 16, 2016, at 11:30**. Updates and information will be e-mailed soon. Be sure that during the lazy days of winter you keep your mind sharp thinking of some lucky recipient of your recognition or reward. It's always a great time so keep your calendar open.

Hope you can make one of the upcoming events.

The EMC

**Be sure to visit the web-site at [www.msemc.org](http://www.msemc.org)!**