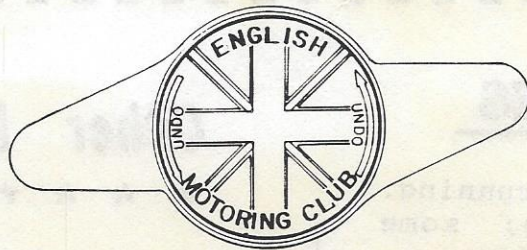


# Off-Side Undo



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**VOL. 9001**

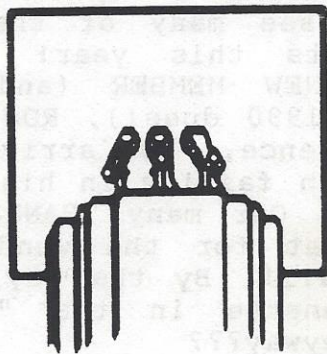
**PO Box 5263 Jackson, MS 39236-5263**

**JAN**

1/90

## **JANUARY BUSINESS MEETING SET**

This may seem a tad on the "formal" side to those of us who like to believe that our Club is a "laid back" kinda group, but it is a vital part of our EVENTS YEAR to meet and decide a few things UP FRONT! We have enjoyed a very successful 1989, now let's meet to PLAN for more of the same! ALEX & TERE WADE will be our gracious BUSINESS HOSTS for the evening, and PREZ PAT has picked the date & topics:



**JAN 27, 1990 6:30pm - 8:30pm  
WADE'S PLACE  
63 WILLOWBROOK RD  
BRANDON, MS (601)-825-9611**

Please join us to "DECIDE" on EVENT DATES; OFFICERS; EVENT COORDINATORS; FINANCIAL MATTERS; and all manner of other BUSINESS (ugh!) kind of things!

Now, isn't that the SMART thing to do? Get this stuff over ONCE at the beginning of the year, then just ENJOY all the good times we plan the REST of the YEAR? I'll close this by simply saying,  
**BE THERE OR GET ELECTED!**

## GLASSY - PHIDES

**SELL:** '61 or '62 TR4, not running.  
Needs interior; top/frame; some instruments. \$800 or best offer.  
Bobby Thompson (601)-335-8334(eve)  
(501)-265-5696 (day) - Greenville.

## 👉 LOTUS LIVES! 👈

THIS EXCERPT IS FROM "BRITISH SPORTS CAR", Dec issue, an article detailing the 1990 LOTUS ESPRIT TURBO SE (one FINE machine!):

"The ESPRIT SE" will set you back about \$12,000 more than the standard model, but I don't see that as a problem to someone who can justify such an automobile toy as this in their stable. Several knowledgeable automotive observers said that for all the car is, and for all that it can do, they cannot see it costing \$80,000. None of them, however, are potential customers anyway. Yes, it does seem a lot of money for 4 cylinders. But then, no one who actually bought a LOTUS ESPRIT TURBO ever watched a Ferrari go by, slapped his forehead in sudden realization, and said, "I COULDA HAD A V-8!"

## Heard a While Ago . . . . ➡ ➡ ➡

THERE ONCE WAS A LOVELY RED HEALEY,  
WHOSE BRAKES WERE CONSIDERED QUITE  
SQUEALY,

BUT AS DONALD WOULD SAY,  
NOT ONE BUYER WOULD PAY,  
JUST TO STOP, BUT TO WHEELIE QUITE  
FREELY!

## Other Local Notes . . .

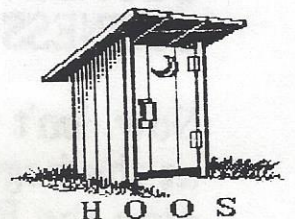
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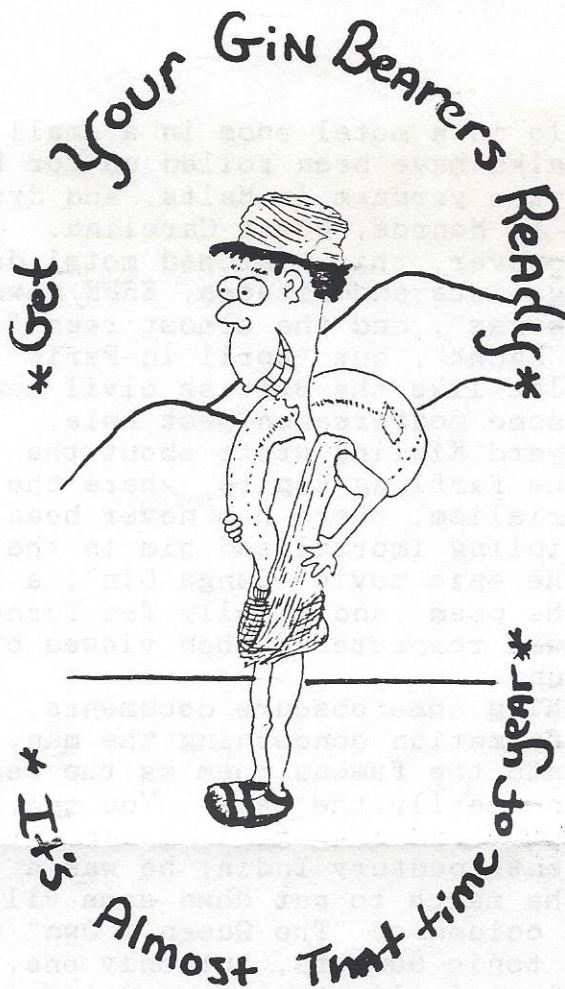
## Just Heard . . . . ➡ ➡ ➡

Seems there's this fella in the Memphis club who just "acquired" the ultimate tow vehicle for his Jag XK120 . . . would you believe Lamar McQuirter now owns a real-live ASTON MARTIN LAGONDA (vintage 1984)??? I guess it could be the new "fishin' car", also! Congratulations, Lamar, when do we get a ride?

## Christmas Cheer!

We met a number of new people at the EMC Christmas Party held at Keith & Pat Anderson's "new" home, I expect we'll see many of them at upcoming events this year! Even recruited a NEW MEMBER (and the first to pay 1990 dues!), RON MILLIET from Florence. Ron arrived in typical British fashion in his fine MGB roadster! Our many THANKS! go to Keith & Pat for the wonderful time had by all! By the way, who WAS that brunette in the "Santa Swim Suit", anyway???





\*THE EMPIRE TROPHY RALLY IS SCHEDULED FOR MAY 6, 1990\*  
\*IN VICKSBURG\*

\*PLEASE WATCH YOUR MAIL FOR A FLYER AND REGISTRATION FORM\*

We will expand the vintage rallying concept, so get those Curtas  
calculators and slide rules out of the attic and get into the style  
and spirit of the Empire Trophy

For additional information call:

Pat Cashman Work (601) 636-4545  
Home (601) 638-3240

John Simmers Home (601) 638-0968

REFLECTIONS ON "GUNGA DIN" - or "You may talk o' Gin and Beer when you're quartered  
safe out 'ere!"

I am writing this epistle in a motel room in a small town in North Carolina, in which the sidewalks have been rolled up for hours and there is no gin. The sun has crossed the yardarm in Malta, and dropped beneath the horizon, and there is NO GIN in Monroe, North Carolina. It's Christmas time. My luggage is lost, however, this wretched motel does have 34 TV channels. Among the televangelists and sitcoms, ESPN news is showing South Africans singing "White Christmas", and the almost reunified East and West Germans singing, not "Stille Nacht", but "April in Paris". In these situations I think I feel a lot like the British civil servants must have felt when exiled by duty to some godforsaken pest hole.

Since the days when Rudyard Kipling wrote about the life of the British in the outposts of the farflung Empire, where the thin red line kept the world safe for imperialism, there has never been a more touching character than Gunga Din. Kipling immortalized him in the poem "Gunga Din". Hollywood exploited him in the epic movie "Gunga Din", a film with no noticeable relationship to the poem, and finally Ted Turner colorized the whole damn thing so that it was respectable when viewed by Yuppies with wide screens and surround sound.

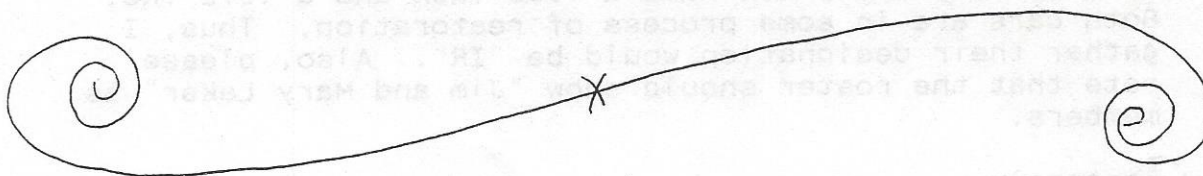
Recently, while researching some obscure documents, I found a previously unknown bit of information concerning the man, Gunga Din. Although Kipling wrote him into the famous poem as the regimental bhisti, or water carrier, this was not really the case. You see, Gunga Din was ~~actually one of the most trusted and essential men in any British military column on the move in nineteenth century India; he was a lime bearer.~~ When the Bengal Lancers were on the march to put down some villainous uprising around the Khyber Pass, each column of "The Queen's Own" would include several gin bearers, several tonic bearers, but only one, trusted lime bearer. (In inhospitable colonial climates the quinine in the tonic water is necessary to prevent malaria, the lime provides vitamin C to prevent scurvy, and the gin helps one forget why he is in an inhospitable colonial climate.) After all, when the Lancers were holed up in some ruins, faced with thousands of shrieking nationalistic natives (and/or various other unwashed special interest groups) on the attack from all directions, how could they keep their upper lips stiff? You can picture it, can't you? The Lancers each have only one bullet and one pipe of tobacco left, the last of the gin and tonic has been distributed, the enemy's heathen horde approaches and the cry among the powder and dust covered Lancers is "Din, Din, bring the lime over here, boy". Obviously the self-sacrificing Gunga Din did indeed come through with the lime at the cost of his own life. Their resolve strengthened the lancers rallied, the relief column arrived, British lives were saved, and India remained in the empire until Mountbatten gave it to his wife's paramour; but that's another story.

Kipling withheld the true role of Gunga Din as a matter of security but he has still provided us with an object lesson that can be related to our selfless support of our British cars. We have kept them alive in the Colonies by bearing the dollar rather than the essential lime; Pat and Barbara support The Lady and Fergie, I support Victoria and Albert. The faded glory of the Empire is still upheld by Alex and Tere, Dennis, Keith and on and on through a roll call of the EMC and all the other clubs. We have all supported these artifacts of a dying empire long after the death of that empire. Like the Turks, who when converted to Islam became more

fanatical than the Arabs who converted them, we have perhaps become even more British than the British while like the ever-faithful Gunga Din, we have suffered indignities at the hands of those we sought to emulate. The British have price-gouged us, shipped poor quality replacement parts, let the pound go up, and did not design the damn things right to start with. Still, like Gunga Din we have persevered with honor, and tried to behave as the English would like to believe they behaved.

In finally ending this this essay, I am tempted to wonder, with apologies to Kipling, if by the livin' Gawd who made us, we aren't better men (persons) than they are too, Gunga Din.

John Simmers  
11 December 89



11-26-89

Dear House's,

As I'm trying out this word processor, this seemed an opportune time to update you on a few things.

First, I no longer have my MGB. I took it to a high speed autocross in Grenada, where I (we?) did very well, and the car drew plenty of interest. Somebody in the Memphis SCCA now has it.

I now have two Bugeye Sprites. My '58 is "IR", and was raced from 1962 until about 1975. I have a '59 too, also an old production racer, which is complete and running. The car is not as stripped as my other one, and looks destined to be a vintage racer. It has a scattershield and an old spec race roll bar, but still has both seats, carpeting and an uncut body. This car may be for sale shortly.

I have excess S.U. carbs, including 1 1/8", 1 1/4", 1 1/2" (early type), as well as 1 3/4". I don't know how much demand there is around here, but if you know of anyone needing one, they can get in touch with me.

Gary Miller now has a late AH 3000, an older restoration. I think he has only one MGB--the competition car--but still has the 850 Mini, MGA, a restored Bugeye, a couple of unrestored Bugeyes,--that may be it. You can update the club directory and it will be accurate, at least for this month.

Also, most importantly, I'd like to make sure that the sponsors I worked with for BCD receive a Christmas card from the club. I will take care of this if it doesn't conflict with anything the club is sending and is OK with you.

Hopefully we'll be at the Christmas party. I'm looking forward to seeing everyone there.

Sincerely,

Jeff Hackman

Dear Craig:

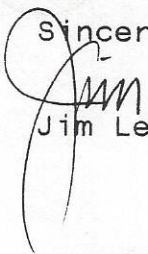
November 28, 1989

I enjoyed the November report and I want to compliment all concerned on the Jackson British Car Day. It was a special!

The British Car Day was especially worthwhile for me as a neophyte trying to put a TR3A back together. I found the secret of where many of pieces were supposed to fit. A camcorder is especially useful in making a record and I did get a fairly complete video record of the entrants (including the Triumph's).

You asked for an update on the member roster. Since the Day at Jackson I found a 1972 TR6 in need of a home and care so Mary and I now have a 1959 TR3A and a 1972 TR6. Both cars are in some process of restoration. Thus, I gather their designation would be "IR". Also, please note that the roster should show "Jim and Mary Leker" as members.

Sincerely,

  
Jim Leker

## ROOSTER FACTORY

In a most dramatic turn of events, Charles Runyan, the proprietor of the world famous "Roadster Factory", has made public his intents to restructure his parts supply house. Runyan has sold his entire parts inventory to Gordon Shumway, a retired Postal Clerk, who has been impersonating celebrities from Ken Richardson of England to Elvis Presley. Shumway is in the process of setting up his own supply house, "UMPS R US" and should be in business by the end of the year.

Runyan will rename his company to the "ROOSTER FACTORY" and will begin to supply parts to the growing market of Chevrolet Vega, Ford Pinto, and AMC Gremlin restorers. The change came about when on the evening of October 17th Runyan was struck by a falling book from his library shelf when an aftershock from the tragic San Francisco quake struck the Western Pennsylvania countryside. It only registered 0.0000001 on the Richter Scale, but it was sufficient enough to cause the offending book to fall. "That's when the voice came to me", Runyan stated. The voice told him to get rid of all those foreign parts, and help the truly needy cars of the world. In addition to a wide supply of mechanical parts for the cars Runyan will now support, he will also carry an array of accessories that have been popular to the owners of these vehicles. The new items include cinder block jack supports, brass cuspidors, "Baby in the Trunk" and "My other Car is on Blocks" window stickers, gun racks for back windows, Red Man brand chewing tobacco, and ball caps with tacky phrases.

(THANKS to the editors of "THE TRUMPET", the Georgia Triumph Association's newsletter, for this bit of earth-shaking news!)

# The big MGs

*In the '30s the sports car builder tried its hand at large cars*

By Roger Barlow

**M**Gs are little open two-seaters or 2 + ½ coupes. The idea of a big MG? Poppycock and nonsense!

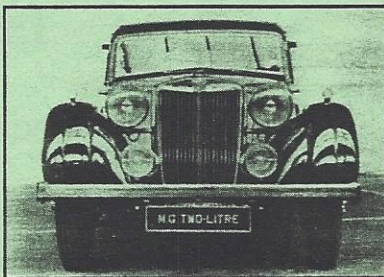
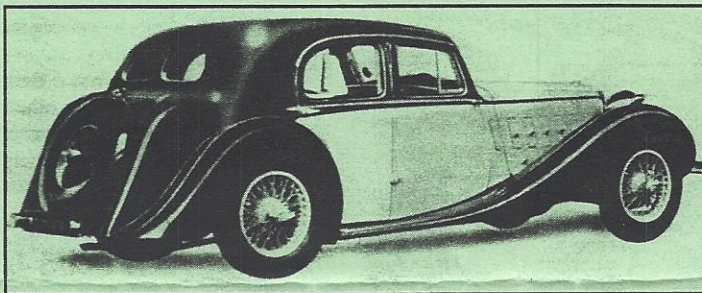
Agreed that to most drivers today the very idea of a "big" MG is a contradiction. An automotive oxymoron. If it's an MG it can't be big ... if it's big it can't be an MG! Right, mate?

Nevertheless, Abingdon actually made two forays into the large car field. First in 1928-31 with the 18/85 six (fewer than 750 were built), then the model here under consideration of which over 3000 were produced.

This later MG ("big" by virtue of its 123-inch wheelbase) was announced in 1935, but must have taken another year to get into actual production, and was continued until the onset of World War II. The model designation was SA and it was listed by the makers as a 2.0-liter—despite a displacement of 2288cc (almost immediately increased to 2322). Hard to understand why the factory chose to understate the actual engine size of this new model, which was primarily created to compete head on with William Lyons's 2664cc SS models (soon to be known as Jaguars). But when the SA got an almost identical companion model in 1938 (the WA), with a 3.25-inch-wider rear track and the engine enlarged to 2561cc, it was properly designated the 2.6-liter MG, thus better qualified to do battle with the successful cats from Coventry—on the road and in the ads.

The Morris-MG executives must have reasoned that their new model could, indeed, effectively compete with Bill Lyons's cars as their popularity up til then had been due solely to a "sporting" low build and low price—not their mechanical specifications, build quality or performance demonstrated in actual competition. The big MG would have an ohv six-cylinder pushrod engine, like the new Jaguars, but it would be built to higher standards, even though both the sedan and drophead (convertible) would match the prices (\$1,975 and \$2,075) of the Coventry cars. Where the MG had a

clear advantage was in the marque's enviable reputation earned the hard way by victories in every type of motorsports save Grand Prix events—sports car road racing, rallies, hillclimbs, track racing at Brooklands, mud-slogging "trials" and even setting world records in several classes.



**The SA (above) and WA were MG's last attempt at big cars. Main differences between the two models were the WA's larger engine and wider rear track. Both shared 123-inch wheelbase and wore a traditional MG grille up front**

The SA and WA would proudly flaunt the famous MG Octagon badge on their traditional MG radiators and hubs of their steering wheels. How could any enthusiast resist!

The four-door sedan was designed by Cecil Kimber, MG's managing director, and would be built on the efficient Morris body assembly lines, while the drophead would be executed by the specialist coachbuilder, Salmons. Both the sedan, with its side-mounted spare, and the drophead, with its spare on the trunk lid, were exceptionally smart.

Were they more attractive than Lyons's new Jaguars? The differences were not striking; but for me the MG had the edge as it was a tad more crisp and purposeful. Probably because it did its best to be an MG, albeit a larger, more civilized one, while Lyons's cars did their very best to look like Bentleys.

Nevertheless the SA and WA MGs were not pure MG. Few models from Abingdon were, of course, for the M in MG was derived from Morris and so were as many

components as possible in most models. In this instance it was Wolseley, the old respected carmaker now part of the growing Nuffield empire, that provided their 18/80 chassis and engine, suitably modified by MG engineers and Cecil Kimber, for the big MGs. This chassis was quite conventional but well-designed with substantial bracing and boxed-in side rails having large lightening holes. Suspension was still (like Jaguar and Bentley) half-elliptic front and rear.

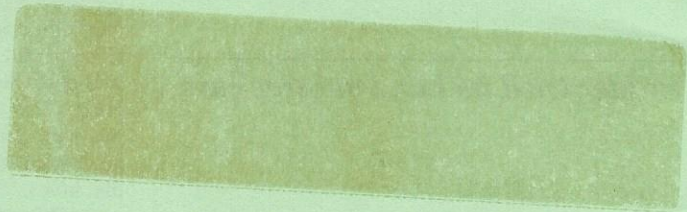
There was much about the specification of the big MGs (especially the 2.6) to beguile an enthusiastic owner: twin electric fuel pumps, two special downdraft SU carburetors with horizontal dashpots, maintenance rendered easier by grouped grease nipples in the engine compartment (with pipes to the various bushings), oil heat exchanger in the block, an elaborate tool tray in the trunk lid, the handsome burl walnut fascia boasting MG's octagonal instruments (including tachometer), a steering wheel adjustable for reach. Even a built-in hydraulic jacking system. Both models had four-speed gearboxes. Brakes were hydraulic with separate master cylinders for front and rear. The SA's and WA's drums were 12 and 14 inches in diameter respectively. Jaguar still had mechanical brakes.

The SA's 2322cc engine had a bore and stroke of 69.5 x 102 mm, producing 78 hp at 4200. Insufficient to equal the performance of the almost 200 pounds heavier 2.5-liter Jaguar—although it apparently satisfied the technical editor of *The Motor* who praised it lavishly after driving one for some months.

The WA, with the bore increased to 73mm (and price to \$2,210 sedan, \$2,340 drophead) had 95 hp at 4400 rpm which certainly brought its performance up to that of the 2.5-liter Jaguars, though not the 3.5 with its 120 hp engine.

The big MGs had only a limited success as their run was cut short by the war in '39. But surely the 2.6 could beneficially have been continued after 1945 without disrupting the production of other Nuffield models—if only in drophead guise with Salmons again doing the body. Wolseley even had a 3.5-liter engine that could have enabled the big MG to compete with the 3.5 Jaguar. There was unquestionably a home market for this car while its availability as a very salable and prestige-building companion model to the TC in the American market would have been invaluable.

Unhappily, it was not to be. ■



JACKSON, MS 39296  
PO BOX 5263  
*English Motoring Club*



# HAPPENINGS ON WHEELS

- (EMC) 1990 BUSINESS MEETING . . .  
Brandon, MS Jan 27
- (EMC) SPRING TOPS DOWN PARTY . . .  
?? Mar ??
- DOGWOOD DAYS ART FESTIVAL -  
BRITISH CAR GATHERING . . .  
Maryville, TN Apr 21
- (EMC) EMPIRE TROPHY RALLEY . . .  
Vicksburg, MS May 4-6
- (EMC) BRITISH CAR DAY . . .  
Jackson, MS ??

