

# THE OFF-SIDE UNDO

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

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## Drip Drop, Drizzly Drop

By John Turbeville

**Magee MS** - Don't you love mild MS winter days? Saturday February 9, was a most perfect sunny day in the lower 60's to start looking for the source of a dripping oil problem—often heavy dripping. The dripping, err... draining, was especially noticeable during last year's 1100 mile AR road trip where my '77 MGB consumed 5 quarts of oil. It was evident that it was my car leaving oily spots while gassing up and when parked at various overlooks, restaurants, and motel parking lots. So in preparation for this year's repeat mountain road experience upcoming in April, I needed to find a cure for oil- spot-itis. Charlie Durning



John, Charlie and Clay spot checking

Photo Courtesy John Turbeville

graciously agreed to host in his garage for this hunt. Thinking it may be burning oil along with dripping

oil, I purchased some valve stem seals. After removing the valve cover Charlie concluded that this was not an issue, so we moved on to the front tappet cover gasket. Charlie put his hands on a spare one in his shop rather quickly so with some hard prying, the tappet cover came off. This was indeed a big source of dripping as the old gasket had a gap allowing oil to seep out. We didn't have an o-ring for the tappet bolt so a quick trip down to O'Reilly's in Charlie's Magnette was in order. We stopped for lunch at McAlister's and then headed back to finish the project. Gene and Clay Johnston showed up to lend a hand and offer input on various sources of oil drips. We sprayed lots of carb cleaner and wiped oily residue from every source of oil outlets including the oil pressure lines, filter and block adapter, return lines, weep holes, tightened the oil pan bolts, and tightened the front cover bolts. After everything was considered, we left nothing unchecked. We turned our attention to Charlie's new CO (carbon monoxide) sniffer to see how she was burning fuel after a previous project of readjusting the float bowls. Charlie hooked up a fuel pressure gauge and determined 4 pounds of pressure was too much for the Weber's float bowls. In his storehouse of parts he produced a fuel pressure regulator, but no fittings, so off we go once again in the Magnette down to O'Reilly's. Thank goodness the Magnette has room for 4 adult men otherwise the Johnston brothers would have been left behind on our outing to the parts store. We got our various fittings installed, lowered the fuel pressure to 2.5 pounds, and after a test drive determined that all is well....but then I had a 52 mile drive home. Upon arriving I placed a fresh poster board under to car to see if any drips of oil appeared. Letting the car sit for a while, I went back out to garage to see how spotty the board had gotten. My hopes of a spot free board were dashed when I saw the long streak of black on the yellow board. Looks like the source is the weep hole in the bell housing which indicates a rear main seal failure. Who's hosting the next tech session and does he have an engine hoist?

Thanks Charlie, Gene, and Clay for a day of fun. There's never a dull moment with you three around.

## Fun Rally

By Gene Johnston

*Collins MS* – We'll, that was the starting point for the Deep South Alfa Romeo / English Motoring Club's Fun Rally which began in the wee morning hours of March 2, 2013. I'd replaced the 160 degree thermostat with a 180 degree in Ole Red in anticipation of quite a bit of driving during the cooler months this year but even that was no match for the 33 outside temp on the way down to Collins. In an effort to get some temp to register on the dash gauge I left home with the oil cooler taped over and all but about two inches of the radiator exposed and it was still a struggle to keep the indicator pointed near the temp gauges center. As I traveled south the needle finally began to crawl up. Heck, I could even feel a warm puff of warming air on my right ankle. The rally organizers had made arrangements for an early lunch at Morgan's on Main in Collins. In anticipation of traveling to some very remote areas of South Mississippi participants were warned to eat hardy as there were no, I mean no sources for nutrition once we got started. Following the great lunch the first of eighteen participants began departing Courthouse Square at 3 minute intervals beginning at 11:30am. My navigator Scott Gann and I set off near the end of the queue. I thought this might be a good strategy in case the low results were really my cause and not that of the navigator from prior forays into the most remote areas of Mississippi. Out of the gate we swooped and dipped thru the turns and twist as we hit all of the high spots; Hot Coffee, Hebron, Soso and Stringer only to name a few. As we travelled Scott and I managed to stay on course or so we thought judging by the look on the puzzled look on the faces of some of the other contestants that passed us traveling in the opposite direction. We did find that as long as we kept the speed up the heater would flow such a warm,

(hot?) air flow that we had to resort to opening the foot well vent and / or crack a window. The brief glimpses of blue sky that were visible earlier in the day became gray and overcast. The outside temp



2013 Fun Rally Winners

Photo Courtesy EMC

hit the mid-thirties by mid afternoon and the cross wind picked up to 15 to 20 mph. We motored on answering tricky questions with certainty completing stage one continuing thru stage two and the final run to the finish following check point two. I knew 2013 would be my year to score a trophy or at least a tie for a spot on the podium. Evidently the lack of success in prior years rest firmly on my shoulders as again there was no trophy, tie or even recognition for our efforts. Oh well, Scott and I had a great day touring the country side finishing without a sign of frost bite. Congratulations to the winners: 3<sup>rd</sup> place to Tommy and Lynn Williamson, 2<sup>nd</sup> to the ladies team of Donna Durning and Sally Sutherland and 1<sup>st</sup> place went to the husband and wife team of Steve and Karen Whitlow. Steve and Karen have a definite knack for the rallying thing finishing second last year and following up with a first in 2013. And a big THANK YOU to Charles Durning, Andy and Bonnie Menapace and Clay Johnston and all of the others that participated as organizers of the 2013 Fun Rally.

## Tops Down 2013

**Rocky Springs MS** - March has and will continue to a very busy month. On March 16, 2013 nine cars met at the Clinton Mississippi Welcome Center on the Natchez Trace for our annual welcome to spring and St. Patrick's Day gathering. Shortly after 10:00am led by Keith Anderson with Mike Glore close behind we started south on The Trace to the usual rendezvous point, Rocky Springs, about half way down to Natchez. Part way down running at a good clip, remember the speed limit on The Trace is 50 mph, we ran upon Bonnie Menapace in one of the families Alfas. Bonnie picked up the pace not to be overrun by the gaggle(?) of LBC's hot on her heels. Arriving shortly after 11:00am we were greeted by early arrive Jake Weaver. I believe Jake's early arrival may be a first in the annals of EMC gatherings! Jake and

Donna were in the Jake's Range Rover. The weather for the day was perfect which brought out perhaps a record high count of cars, eighteen along with twenty six members and friends of the EMC. In addition to



Mike Glore's and Keith Anderson's parking lot pose

Photo Courtesy EMC

the regularly scheduled program we got to celebrate a birthday with Jim Enzman who took the award for the eldest member in attendance and got to recognize Ron Davis as the long distant traveler all the way down from Peoria IL in attendance with Joe Speetjens. Our lunch spread covered an easy two picnic tables with all sorts of foods fit for a king. Following a great lunch President Charlie During brought the masses to attention with a business meeting that was very efficient. The EMC Calendar was updated for the next few months and Clay Johnston reported that the EMC remains in the black and that to date the EMC had fifty three membership renewals which puts us a bit ahead in the membership count for the year. After policing the area we broke up and headed for homes north, south east and west. Thanks to everyone for your show of support and involvement during March. Twenty thirteen looks to be another banner year for the EMC.

### **Other Exhaust Rattles**

As stated, March as been a very busy month. Backing up a bit on March 9, 2013 Kent and Stephen Turner along with Steve Whitlow and your editor met at McB's in Ridgeland for a quick lunch then stopped by the Johnston garage for a short tech session on Steve's Midget installing a new speedo cable, bell housing inspection plug and clutch push rod. All tidied up we traveled down to the Raymond Airport to meet Pat Cashman out in his Jag and Ernie Clark to sight see the World War II bomber the Memphis Belle. While I lazed around the exterior most everyone else in our group did the walk thru tour commenting on how cramped the interior of the B-17 was. There was a good size crowd on hand for the event all honoring the brave men that gave so much to ensure our freedom.

Work continues in houses, homes and garages of enthusiast for the 2013 British car shows that begin with this month's New Orleans British Car Club's 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual British Car Day. Keep an eye on the calendar and your eye out for short notice events of the English Motoring Club. We hope you can join us.

Don't forget that EMC membership dues remain at the very reasonable price of \$25.00 and includes EMC decals and your very own subscription to the British Marque. Check out the membership form as well as the full 2013 calendar and other stuff at [www.msemc.org](http://www.msemc.org).

If you're not receiving e-mails from the EMC please contact me at [jjohnston18@msemc.org](mailto:jjohnston18@msemc.org) so we can keep you updated. Again, thanks for your support of the EMC.

Happy Motoring

The EMC

### **Events Calendar**

#### **March 22 -23, 2013 – New Orleans British Car Day / New Orleans LA**

Get your registration in early for the 23rd annual BMCNO British Car Day. The BMCNO has promised another great show in the Big Easy so have your bags packed and ready to go. Travelers from Jackson area can give me a ring. Watch their website for show details: [www.bmcno.org](http://www.bmcno.org). Travel plans with the EMC: Gene Johnston (601) 201 – 0801

#### **April 12 – 13, 2013 - Towne Center Euro Fest / Baton Rouge LA**

Mike Marsh has in the works a great spring addition to the Renaissance Euro Fest Car Show in Ridgeland. Entries are coming in fast and it's sure a big crowd will in showing and looking at the wonderful cars scheduled to attend the inaugural Towne Center Euro Fest. Details: [www.euro-fest.net](http://www.euro-fest.net)

#### **April 19 - 20, 2013 - Brits on the Bay / Pensacola FL**

The 2012 BOTB got a wee bit of rain but that didn't dampen the spirits in the least. For the 21st Annual show they'll fill the field with friends, fun and automobiles. Make plans to attend a great weekend this time promised to be in the sun. Travel down to Pensacola with the EMC to join us for this yearly migration to sunny Florida. The Friday night gathering is a do not miss so make plans early. Details: [www.pbca1.com](http://www.pbca1.com). Travel plans with the EMC: Gene Johnston (601) 201 – 0801