



The Off-Side Undo

English Motoring Club of Mississippi

(601) 442-8684

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"A GENTLEMAN DOES NOT MOTOR ABOUT AFTER DARK." -- JOSEPH LUCAS, ATTRIB.

OCTOBER 2001

2001: An MG Odyssey

by John Simmers, EMC Special Correspondent

Prologue

By way of a prologue (with facts and figures), Florence, the wife, and I drove our 1969 MGC GT, along with an 80-lb. yellow lab, from Vicksburg, MS, to Harrisonburg, VA. There I left said wife and lab to visit the relations and set forth to St. Paul, MN, with the daughter unit, Susan. The CGT is an excellent long distance cruiser, and as it approaches 160,000 miles it is nicely broken in.

I had a day for Florence to vacuum up the vast amount of yellow Labrador hair, and I cleaned and repacked the car with the daughter's luggage, and headed out across the mountains to St. Paul — via Charleston, WV; Lexington, KY; Indianapolis, IN; and Madison, WI. The innumerable small towns and outposts along the route between these landmarks and the local color are best left to my daughter Susan's impressions that really are the heart of this report, so I now turn the narrative over to Susan.

Pants in Tomah, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the MGC GT by Susan Simmers

My father calls me, wants to know if I want to go on a road trip to Minnesota. He's in Mississippi, I'm in Virginia, I say sure. Thus begins the MG 2001 Odyssey Tour, me and Dad, cramped car, wind blowing in our hair, in my case also a spunky little bug that I think hitched from Illinois to Wisconsin in my hat, and deaf as posts from that "purring" engine.

We are headed to a car show in St. Paul. I am only along to see the world, so I hope this doesn't offend the purists — there were a lot of cars, they were shiny. I can only speak of what I saw, not who had the cleanest whatnots — that's not my job.

What I will say is what I've discovered.

I have discovered that people eat cheese curds. I discovered that there are an awful lot of cows and corn between Virginia and Minnesota. I learned a lot about

gas station bathrooms. I learned the term "sanitary" is only a term. I learned that you should always bring your own liquor, and they sell lotto tickets everywhere, and sometimes you can get both!

I discovered that there are places where Dads still fill up the backs of their beat-up pickups with ratty, Popsicle-stained kids to go get bait to go fishin' — I learned this in West Virginia, where a 10-year-old girl explained to me how to tell a good worm from a bad one.

I also learned that if you forget to pack pants, you can get them in Tomah, WI, providing you are 8 feet tall, which I am not, but the people there won't laugh if you roll the cuffs up. I saw little kids hoot at Dad's MGC GT, maybe the way he thought at that age, "When I grow up, I gotta get one of those," sitting on their porches, dreaming away. I saw women swooning, men jealous, and awe-inspired kids.

I also discovered that Minnesota people really do talk that way, and they don't really mind if you think it's funny. They do, too.

At the show, there was a great camaraderie, good weather, beer, entertainment, beer, yah sure, ya betcha. It was lovely, the little ones had sunscreen, the big ones had, well, beer. But it was a nice trip for me. I saw wildflowers, mountains, cows, great sunsets, cows, beautiful prairie, cows, and now I have a lovely assortment of refrigerator magnets. But mainly I got a chance to hang out with my Dad and meet some interesting people.

I opted for the hotel Jacuzzi. I can only be interested in car parts for so long. But I do think it's great when people come together to share, even be it over a valve cover.

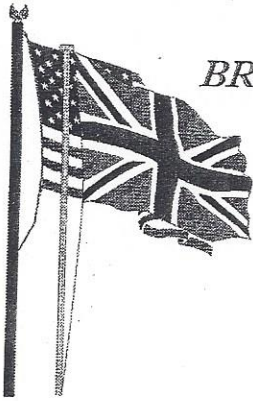
Epilogue (John again)

A few more facts and figures. The return route gave us a different set of roads across the great West Virginia Mountains and really good climbs and descents on two-lane roads back to Virginia, a nice change from the plains and prairies. Reunited with wife and dog, we headed back home to Vicksburg, MS, over two of the hottest days of the year. Temperatures were 100° F in Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi — or, in other words, 1200° F inside the CGT. Total trip mileage was just over 4,400 miles and no mechanical problems.

The 2001 MG Odyssey was great! Thanks, guys, for the organization.

Postscript

On September 1, 2001, my daughter, Susan, died of unexpected natural causes. She was 30. I miss her so very much.



'BRITS ON THE BLUFF'
BRITISH CAR SHOW AND COMPETITION

October 12 - 14, 2001

Natchez, Mississippi

Presented By

English Motoring Club

23 Rochelle Street

Brandon, Mississippi 39047-8470

(601) 442-8684

This will be a Concours d' Elegance (points) judged show with awards and dash plaques presented by Mississippi's English Motoring Club. Entry fee of \$25 per car.

A Fun-Filled Weekend

Friday evening October 12th will feature a Welcome Reception at the Ramada Hilltop Inn, which has a commanding view of the Mississippi River. On Saturday October 13th, Brits on the Bluff car show participants will motor through town accompanied by a Police Escort to the show site: the magnificent antebellum mansion "Rosalie," circa 1820. It is within walking distance to fine antique stores, quaint gift shops and outstanding restaurants. In addition, Friday through Sunday, over 20 antebellum mansions will be open for touring. Architecturally magnificent, many feature priceless antiques and accessories. All cars will be in place by 11:00 a.m. Saturday and judging will commence at 12:30 p.m. Many special awards will also be presented during the Awards Ceremony which will take place at approximately 3:30 p.m.

Overnight Accommodations

The English Motoring Club has reserved a block of rooms at the Ramada Inn Hilltop. When making reservations, be sure and tell them you are with the English Motoring Club:

Motels -

Ramada Inn Hilltop 800-256-6311. This motel has a commanding view of the Mississippi River and is right across the highway from the assembly point for the Parade through town. Special EMC rate of \$65 per night.

Natchez Bed & Breakfasts - For B&B reservations simply call Natchez Pilgrimage Tours at 1-800-647-6742. Many Natchez B&Bs are restored antebellum mansions; NPT will give you a slate of prices and describe the facilities in detail.

For further information about any or all aspects of the show and weekend call or e-mail Terry Trovato (601) 442-8684; terryt@callon.com