The Can Am CONNECTION

Vol. 20, No. 2- Newsletter of the Windsor-Detroit MG Club - March, 2000

It Was Another Great Hibernation Party - But Who Was Sleeping?

We went back to the Essex Country & Golf Club for our Hibernation Party and it was just as charming as the first time. The food was good, the company friendly and the prizes great.

This year we had a committee of ladies (**Fran Coulter & Janice Zorn**) To pick out prizes for the female members of the club. Seems at past parties the women weren't exactly overwhelmed by gifts of Castrol or battery chargers. This year they had scented soaps, candies and other girl things.

We still had the normal car stuff for the guys. Thanks to Don Ensley at English Motors, The Roadster Factory, Michigan Imports and Castrol.

We also had some really great Raffle Prizes. Prizes like luggage and really nice jackets from Castrol and the gang at Michigan Imports, an MG watch and $20 (U. S.!!) Gift Certificates from Jeff Zorn's Little British Car Co., a large framed poster depicting every MG model made donated by Tom Newton, and a night at the Nisbet Inn (won by outgoing president Dave Doolin).

Awards were also presented to worthy recipients. The envelope please:

The winner of the Rookie Award was **Elvin Davis** who I don't think has missed a meeting or event since joining in May. The Hard Luck Award went to **Rick Astley** for many troubles on the way to Strattford. The Mileage Trophy went to **Jeff Zorn** for mileage piled up just in his MGA (not counting the miles put on the MGB or Magnette).

The Loose Nut was awarded to **George Hameline,** Charter member of "Whimps Anonymous" and enthusiastic rallier who drove around Lake Michigan with a retired friend during last summer's Twist Summer Party. The Lucky Lucas Award went to **Guy & Ann St. John** who by the way are new grandparents of Lucas St. John.

The Navigator Award usually goes to the travelling companion who puts up with the most inconveniences of an over enthusiastic member. This year the winner is **Lise Brown,** new wife of president Dale Brown. She probably didn't realize she was marrying a club. Still, she has jumped in with both feet, helping organize last year's Lucas Rally and helping with all sorts of club activities. Welcome aboard Lise.

The Founder's Award goes to the couple who does the most for the club over the past year. Usually it goes to the most involved person in the club, the one who is at all the events, puts on several and often is an officer of the club as well. This year the Founder's Plate went to the **Doolins, Dave and Nancy** who both put in many hours keeping this club running. Dave of course is outgoing president and was a key instigator of many of the club's events and Nancy was often in the background, providing dinner at board meetings, helping with the Hibernation Party prizes etc.

All in all another relaxing, get dressed up, fun filled night out for club members.

The Can-Am Connection
is published 10 times a year by the Windsor-Detroit MG Club, Inc.

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Fine Print
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Safety Fast!

Ed Fleming, Editor

I've just returned from a drive in the Midget, top down, it's mostly cloudy, as in partly sunny, the temperature is 69 degrees (20 C) and it's the last week in February. What's **right** about this picture? This after a top down drive or two in January, including the Stupid Ride so that makes eleven months of top down driving in a row. Last year I took the Midget out of its winter storage bag for the Kimber Birthday Bash in April. And you know there will be at least one top down opportunity in March. Sounds like we've reached that stage in Global Warming where top down driving is about to become a year round event for the masses, not just us "Loose Nuts". I'm not quite as crazy as I used to be, and my older bones don't take to below freezing top down temps like they used to, so we really must be in the middle of global warming.

My second car was Frog-eye Sprite and my fourth car was a Midget with side curtains. Both were year round cars which saw a lot of top down driving on "cooler" days, but I don't remember as many real top down days as this past year. Like the economy, I wonder how much longer this can last?

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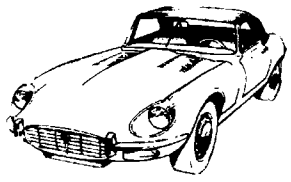

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Presidentially Speaking

By Dale Brown, President

On the occasion of my first article for the newsletter, I would like to take the opportunity to thank those who have provided all the support that is required to steer the wheel that drives the operation of this fine Windsor-Detroit MG Club. The upcoming year promises to be a fulfilling one for all and of course it cannot be accomplished without the help of all the members of the club. So throughout the year feel free to approach myself or any member of the board to provide ideas or to volunteer your help in any of the functions of the club.

We, as the board, have already had quite a bit of input from our members and have, I think, an interesting year shaping up. Of the more interesting things to come about is our desire to improve our methods of communication to our members, provide a more structured format to our monthly meetings with more emphasis on some technical aspects of our cars and of course to provide some interesting and fun activities that will allow us to experience the joy of being an MG owner. (Even for former presidents who just can't seem to have the luck they need to actually drive their MGs).

In the way of communication, we are attempting to have our monthly newsletter delivered to you in advance of the monthly meetings and we encourage you to feel free to contribute to its content. If you have an interesting article or had any MG experiences that other members might be interested in, (an MG trip you experienced, a nice place to take your MG, a clever way you repaired something on your car) write it up and fax it to Ed at (248) 471-5731 or e-mail it to him at gazettenw@aol.com.

Speaking of e-mail, our membership director, Rick Astley has compiled quite a list of e-mail addresses of our members and has been sending messages about club functions directly to those members that he has on file. So if you haven't been receiving them, please send him your address at his e-mail address: ricka@mich.com. Rick also has a club roster that he can e-mail you if you're interested.

Rick has also established an amazing web site for all of us to use. We even plan to have a live demonstration of the web site at our next meeting. Please access the web at: http://www.mgcars.org.uk/wdmgcc/index.htm and bookmark it for regular viewing.

You will find notes from our meetings (in case you missed them and want to know what happened) as well as a calendar of events, various tech notes and articles, MG humor, links to other MG web sites and a photo gallery. We already have a good collection of members' cars going. We would also like to publish photos of our club events, so please forward any photos of your car with some words to go along with it or photos of club events to Rick via e-mail or "snail-mail".

Well I think I've written enough for this first one, so I'll bid adieu for now. Happy motoring and **"Safety Fast"**

Dale

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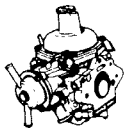

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Cecil Who?
Cecil Kimber, That's Who!
Kimber Who? Let Me Explain.

By Dan Zebarah

If you ask any MG enthusiast, "Who was Cecil Kimber?" most of them would be able to tell you that he built the first MG. However, very few would be able to tell you much more.

Cecil Kimber was born April 12, 1888 in London, the son of Henry and Fanny Kimber. His father and uncle ran a rather successful printing business. His mother was an accomplished artist.

As a boy, he learned to love sailing, learning how from an uncle who did yachting on the Thames estuary. This passion for the sea and boats became his favorite pastime.

At age 15, he went into his father's business, taking classes at the Manchester Technical School. At that time, he would bicycle for miles, in the hope of seeing a car or motorcycle. Remember, this was 1903 and both machines were rather scarce.

He eventually learned to drive a car, a 10hp Wolseley.

After two years of working for his father in the printing business, he saved up 18 Pounds, enough to buy a motorcycle, a 1906 Rex. He discovered that he could save money by performing repairs himself, eventually acquiring a 1907 Twin Rex. He started racing, winning a race against a 1909 Triumph. The race was held at dawn because of the 20 mph speed limit.

One day, while on an errand for his mother (which got him out of cutting the lawn), he was hit by a car, smashing his thigh and kneecap. After three years of unsuccessful operations, the injury healed by itself, leaving him with one leg shorter that the other. He walked with a limp from then on and was unable to ride a motorcycle.

Kimber married in 1915, while he was working at Shelfield-Simplex as assistant to the chief engineer. He worked at A. C. Cars, and eventually moved on to E. G. Wrigley, when disaster struck. Kimber had invested his life savings in Wrigley when they went bankrupt in 1921.

He moved to Oxford where he started working for William Morris. It was there the MG was born. He started modifying Morris cars, making them fast enough to win gold medals in races. These cars, called MG Super Sports, were just the beginning.

In 1924, he convinced Morris, now Lord Nuffield, to allow him to start building special cars with the MG name, cars which were designed to be MGs, not just souped up Morrises, which were being built up to that point. Nuffield consented, and on March 27, 1925, FC 7900 was registered. This car was built especially for the Land's End Trial, and earned Kimber and his passenger, Wilt Matthews, gold medals for its performance. This car was found in a scrapyard in 1932 and restored by the Abingdon Works, being called the "The first MG, built in 1923". This was obviously an error, but the car has been called "Old Number One" ever since.

In 1927 Kimber again went to Nuffield, requesting that a separate factory be constructed to build MGs. The factory was ready soon, and in September started cranking out the 18/80 model. In 1928 two new MGs debuted, the 18/80 six and the M-type Midget. These bore a departure from Morrises of past, Kimber had designed a new radiator, whose basic form remained virtually unchange until the 1950s.

The factory moved again, to Abingdon, two years later, and the MG Car Company was registered with Kimber being appointed managing director.

After the outbreak of the war in 1939, MG (along with the other automotive manufactures) turned to defense. His organizational abilities transformed the Abingdon works into an armory in a short time. However, his ideas for wartime production did not fit in with the Nuffield organization.

He got a contract to manufacture the nose of the Albemarle bomber, but the management at Nuffield were not pleased. Kimber was accused of being a non-conformist. He was fired by Miles Thomas in 1941.

He joined Specialloid Pistons, a position to last for the duration of the war. He was also approached by John Black, Chairman of Standard, who had acquired Triumph. Perhaps he wanted Kimber to head a post war Triumph company. Nobody knows.

On February 5, 1945, while traveling on Specialloid business, the train he was on suddenly backed up, flipping the last car over into a bridge. Kimber was killed instantly.

It's ironic that a man whose motto became, "Safety Fast!" was killed in a train moving at walking speed.

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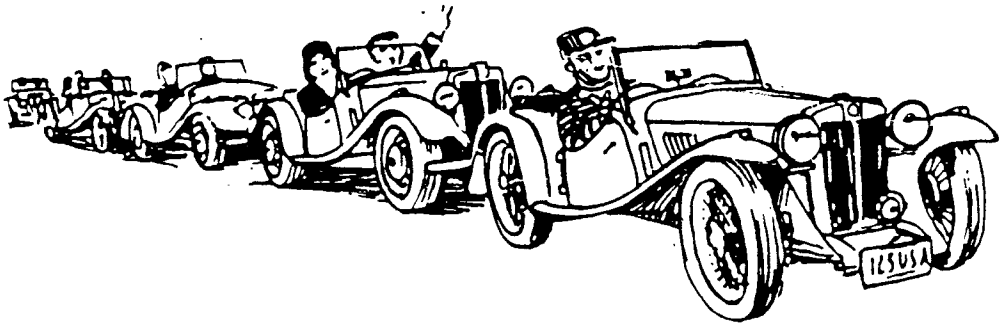
Second Driving Event Of The Year Is Coming Saturday, April 8th!

Featuring A Movie, Birthday Cake, Buffalo, And Scads of Fellow MG Enthusiasts



It's Cecil Kimber's birthday party time again!

Kimber, for those of you new to MGs was the founding father of MG sports cars. See the biography on the opposite page. Born April 12, 1888 (notice all those 8's?).

We'll celebrate his birthday on the 8th, what with the 12th being on a Wednesday.

Once again Marcia Greiner will bake a delicious birthday cake (ask anyone who's attended past birthday parties).

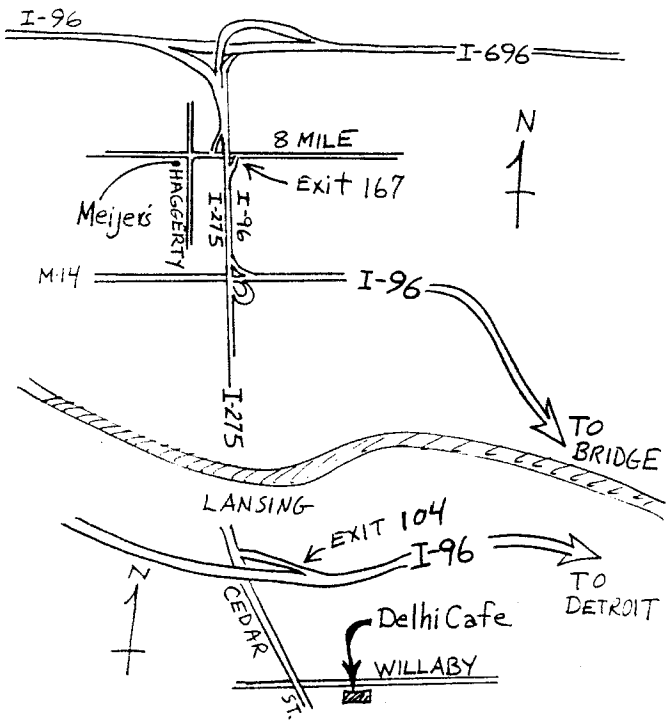
We'll meet at the usual Meijer's parking lot at Haggerty and 8 Mile just off I-275 and meander over some great twisting sports cars roads to Lansing.

This year we have something new. When we get to Lansing, we'll attend a private showing of the movie "Grand Prix" starring James Garner, one of Car and Driver's 10 Best Car Movies. Then we'll head over to the Delhi Restaurant for lunch and cake and parking lot discussions of things MG with the other Michigan MG clubs.

So, put a charge in those batteries, change the oil, check the pressure in the tires, make sure you have a half tank of gas, and a pack of cigarettes, wear your sun glasses, and hit the road to Lansing (to paraphrase the Blues Brothers).

What: Kimber Birthday Bash
When: Saturday, April 8th, 8:00 A.M.
Where: Caravan leaves the Meijer's parking lot at 8:20 A.M. (See Map)
What to Bring: Sunglasses, <u>full</u> tank of gas, pack of cigarettes (optional), driving gloves, party attitude.

For those late risers, or those wanting to travel on their own, meet at the Delhi Restaurant in Lansing at noon. See other map.



The Windsor-Detroit MG Club Enters The 21st Century At... www.mgcars.org.uk/wdmgcc/

Rick Astley our new membership chairman has set up our club website and it's a grand site. He has got the most recent and past newsletter there, old MG road tests from Road & Track, photo stories of club members' cars, maps to events, up to the minute membership directory, and much more. For those of you who are more computer and Y2K compliant than our cars, check it out.

If you have a good story about your MG, how you found it, what you've done to it or with it, trips you've taken in it etc. send them to Rick (digitally at ricka@mich.com or by regular mail at 28404 S. Harwich Dr., Farmington Hills, MI 48334-4281) and we'll add them to the site.

Meeting Site Remains At the Nisbet Inn For The Foreseeable Future.

The club seems to be the kiss of death for restaurants on the U.S. side of the border. Our latest find, "The Blarneystone" had a fire. This after the Botsford Inn closed after over 160 years in business and a restaurant in Livonia closed after we threatened to hold our meetings there. So for March, April and May we'll have our second Wednesday of the month meetings at the Nisbet Inn.

Wear Your Name Tag! Haven't Got Yours? See Dave Doolin!

We have almost 200 members in the club. It's difficult to know everyone by name. So please wear your name tag to club events.

If you haven't got a name tag see or call Dave "wear your name tag" Doolin. Dave has volunteered to be in charge of name tags. See him at one of the meetings or call him at (248) 347-3466. It's that easy and they're free.

Canadian Dues Finally Catch Up With The Exchange Rate.

The club has raised the dues to $35 Canadian to more closely reflect the current exchange rate. Since all our Canadian members have paid their current memberships, this won't effect you for another year. For those U. S. members who were thinking of saving a bundle by paying your dues in Canadian funds, you might as well just pay in good old U. S. greenbacks.

Mileage Contest Off and Running. Sign Up Now!

Our annual mileage contest started January 1st and several members signed up at the Stupid Ride. With the nice weather we've had this winter, many members have been amassing miles already. But it's not too late to start. Sign up before the second driving event of the year, the Kimber Birthday Bash and get driving.

To make your mileage count, call Jeff Zorn at (248) 489-1855.

Where Have All The Movies Gone?

Chuck Wiley, our Video Librarian reports that many of the club's videos have not been returned to him. If you have borrowed one of our videos, please return it to Chuck as soon as possible. Call him at (734) 586-2500

The Emerald Necklace MG Register extends an invitation to all MG enthusiasts as we celebrate our 20th year by hosting MG2000 - **The 9th Annual International Convention of The North American MGB Register** in Cleveland, Ohio, June 15 - 18, 2000. Enjoy the splendor of the North Coast as well as one of America's finest metroparks systems.

More information is available on our website at ***www. mgcleveland.com*** or contact Lynne Burgess at 614/899-2394.

We highly suggest booking your hotel rooms now at the Holiday Inn located at I-77 and Rockside Road, Independence by calling direct at 216/524-8050. Please ask for Lisa and be sure to mention MG2000 to get the event rate of $99.00 per night.

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Calendar of Events

Note: Items listed in **Bold Type are Windsor-Detroit MG Club Events.**

For up to date information on club events call Chuck Wiley at (734) 586-2500, Ed Fleming at (248) 349-3799 or Roli Sylvestre at (519) 969-2739 or see our Website at:

www.mgcars.org.uk/wdmgcc/

March 2000

Mar 8 Monthly Meeting-Nisbet Inn

April, 2000

Apr 8 Kimber Birthday Bash & Movie *Grand Prix*
Apr 12 Monthly Meeting-Nisbet Inn
Apr 17 Board Meeting, D. Brown's (519-258-5987

May, 2000

May 19 Monthly Meeting
May 28 Autocross Lawrance Tech U., Southfield

June, 2000

Jun 11 Carnival of Cars
Jun 14 Monthly Meeting
Jun 15-18 MG 2000-Cleveland, OH (440) 331-4205

July, 2000

Jul 8-9 Mad Dogs & Englishmen-Kalamazoo
Jul 12 Monthly Meeting
Jul 17-22 MGA GT25 Morgantown W.Va.

August, 2000

Aug 4 Concours in the Park-Clarkston
Aug 5-6 Historic Races & Meadowbrook Concours
Aug 9 Monthly Meeting
Aug 12 Fire and Ice Rally
Aug 16-20 Abingdon '00 Summer Party, Abingdon, IL. (This event replaces John Twist's Summer Party)

September 2000

Sep 10 Battle of the Brits, Sue Snyder 810-979-4875
Sep 13 Monthly Meeting

October 2000

Oct 11 Monthly Meeting
Oct 15 Colour Tour

November 2000

Nov 8 Monthly Meeting

December, 2000

Dec 13 Monthly meeting-Gift Exchange Night

Unclassified Ads

Unclassified ads run for three issues or for however long I feel like running them. They are free for members and $5.00 for non-members. Call Ed Fleming at (248) 349-3799 to place your ad.

FOR SALE

Ceramic Models, business card holders, mugs etc. Hand made and personalized. We've actually won prizes for these things and our stuff is on display at the Morgan factory, Kimber House in Abingdon, the Detroit Institute of Arts, and the Pewabic Pottery. Call Marcia Greiner (248) 348-1473

British Car Brochures & Ads. Jay Kollin (734) 455-6949

'74 MGB-GT Chroome bumper, BRG $4,500, Steve Hartz (248) 628-9595 (3)

'74 Chrome bumper MGB Roadster, AZ car with overdrive, body striped to metal and painted with Deltron in Black Tulip. New Ochre interior, stainless steel exhaust, rebuilt engine, many "speed" parts, photos and documentation of extensive list of new parts. $8,500. Believe me, the only reason I'm selling this is due to divorce. This has been a pet project for ten years. Call Rich 248-669-9507 (eve) 248-576-6567 (days) (1)

Complete set NOS Fiberglass fenders for MGA, $950. Fronts only $650, rears only $450, also have original used metal fenders. Complete good frame $500. Many other MGA parts. MGB good used wire wheels, $20 each. Roger Melton, 248-258-8890 (1)

MGB & Midget body panels, made in England, Britannia Enterprises, Troy. James Savage. 248-689-7259 (11)

'69 MGC Wire wheels, overdrive, spare drive train and other spares, $6900 Dan (810) 678-3018 (10)

Great gifts & other interesting items for your MG or other LBC. While supply lasts-licensed MG logo watches $50-$85, halogen bulbs (up to 100% brighter), electronic ignition, MG logo tire valve stem caps & more. Authorized Moss distributor, save $$$. Jeff Zorn at Little British Car Co. (248) 489-0022 or on the Web www.LBCarCo.com

'69 MG Midget, British Racing Green, Original owner, 56,000 miles, always garaged: (248) 553-6707. (10)

MGB Parts. Mid 70's rebuilt engine, transmission, new clutch, steering, luggage rack, top bows, wiper motor, trim parts, $450. Roger Phelps (810) 655-2838. (10)

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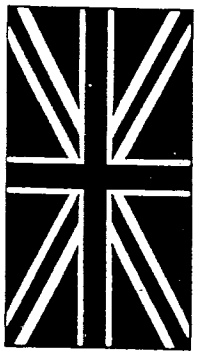
MGA Project car, around $3500, Dave Doolin, (248) 347-3466 (10)

Chrome bumper MGB project car - rust free with original sills and floors, no major accidents. Not running okay. Call Mike Derderian at (810) 731-4434 or e-mail at derderia@tir.com



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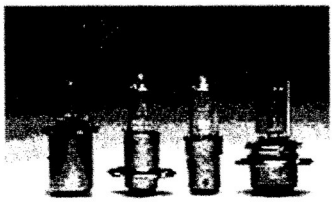

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