The Can Am CONNECTION

Vol. 24, No. 4 - Newsletter of the Windsor-Detroit MG Club June, 2004

Spring has Sprung a Leak! May Weather Disrupts Club Events

The stormy May weather has made members wary about venturing out in their cars and forced at least one car show to be postponed. The cold front that wobbled about us providing heat to its south and cold to its north and storms in between no doubt kept some people busy mowing the grass that was jumping out of the ground.

The Fun on Wheels show scheduled for May 23rd was postponed by Heritage Village until June 13th so the club has decided to keep its plans just as before and participate on the new date. We did e-mail all those members for whom we have addresses but learned of the changed date too late for many of those who check their messages from work. We also get many messages back as undeliverable indicating that the e-mail address we have on file is no longer good. Keeping us up-to-date with your latest contact details helps us keep you informed.

In spite of gray skies, Rivertech was well attended and members got to see some beautiful cars at the storage facility. They also enjoyed a very pleasant drive to Ypsilanti and a fun place to eat lunch at the Side Track Restaurant.

Club members enjoying lunch at the Side Track

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E-mail
wdmgcc@mgcars.org.uk

Website
www.mgcars.org.uk/wdmgcc/
Webmaster: Mike Chachich

President
Ralph Poupard
519-776-6228

Vice President
Philip Wiltshire
248-676-0986

Treasurer
Jeff Zorn
248-489-1855

Secretary
Lise Brown
519-258-5987

Newsletter Editor
Rick Astley
28404 South Harwich Drive
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
248-737-1978
Fax: 248-538-8339
ricka@twmi.rr.com

Newsletter Production:
Dan Sokolowski, Anne Astley

Membership
Rick Astley
248-737-1978

Video Librarian
Tom Newton
313-562-2377

Regalia
Canada: Roli Sylvestre
519-969-2739
U.S.A.: Elvin Davis Jr.
248-960-2296

Membership Tags
Dave Doolin 248-349-2848

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The Windsor-Detroit MG Club
The International Local Club

Rick Astley—Editor

Maybe it's because I was raised in Europe and learned to drive there, but I really do have a thing about people riding the left lane. All over Europe, passing on the right side (left in the left-side-of-the-road driving UK and Ireland) is illegal and so anyone who drives slowly in what is called the passing lane, blocks all the traffic. A brief flash of headlights is not considered rude and just says, "I'm here and want to pass". I learned two things very quickly when I first visited the US back in the seventies: (1) flashing lights to ask someone to move over is taboo and (2) what a one fingered salute is (even that's different in the UK — but that's another story).

In Germany, where there is no real speed limit on the Autobahns, flashing lights at traffic ahead is an absolutely necessary safety requirement. I remember when some colleagues and I had rented a small Renault when on a business trip to Munich and loaded with 5 of us and our luggage, it had approximately the same acceleration as that of the USS Nimitz. At some point we had to pass a truck that itself was passing another truck, so we moved into the apparently clear left lane. Almost immediately, distant headlights could be seen in the mirror and we retreated back to the middle lane. In what seemed no time at all, a Mercedes roared passed us traveling at about 250 km/hr (155 mph) to our pathetic 105 km/hr (65 mph). Given this, it is interesting to note that traffic fatalities in Germany, per given number of vehicles, are about 67% of those in the US, the reasons for which are doubtless complex but that I am sure have something to do with the fact that you have to concentrate. You never see anyone shaving, reading, doing make-up, or even drinking coffee while driving in Europe.

When I visit the UK, which also has far lower accident rates than in the US, it takes me longer to adjust to the higher speeds than it does to driving on the left. Although, like Michigan, the speed limit on the motorways is 70 mph, in an effort to keep the traffic moving, the UK police seem to turn a blind eye to anyone traveling under 90 mph so long as they have good lane discipline, seem aware of what's around them and don't tailgate.

On a trip to New York state recently, I noticed that drivers there tended to use the left lane only for passing. Part of the reason, no doubt, is that the use of hand held phones is banned there and drivers are less distracted and are more aware of what is around them; but part of it is certainly the driving culture. I asked a colleague who was raised here in Michigan why he always stayed in the left lane and he had no problem with it at all, apparently seeing no obligation or reason to move over whatever his speed. So I thought perhaps it's me who is wrong, trying to bring my European way of doing things to Michigan. On the other hand, maybe I am not so out of touch. One small item of news that caught my eye last new year's day was hidden among the plethora of new laws that States enact on that day. From Jan 1st this year, Illinois introduced a Left Lane Law which says: "While traveling on an interstate highway, a vehicle may not be driven in the left lane, except when overtaking and passing another vehicle". (This prohibition does not apply to authorized emergency vehicles while engaged in official duties).

The state senator who sponsored the bill, said in a statement: "On a multi-lane highway, drivers who detain others in the left lane cause more problems than simply annoying the drivers who want to pass. Tailgating and congestion on our highways and Interstates lead to accidents, especially when road conditions are not that good. It also detains emergency service vehicles that may be caught in the back traffic". According to the statute, left lane drivers must get out of the way of someone coming up behind them even if that driver is breaking the speed limit. If a slower vehicle in the left lane blocks a speeding driver, both will be breaking the law. The lead vehicle is obligated to move aside and let the following vehicle pass and allow law enforcement officials to give that speeder a ticket. I wonder if Illinois drivers now flash those in front when they want to pass, I have to go there soon so I'll try it out!

That will no doubt bring me back to why the British flip 2 fingers and not one. It all has to do with the Battle of Agincourt, long bows and the French. But wait! I am at the bottom of the page and will have to leave that story until another month.

Presidentially Speaking

By Ralph Poupard — Club President

Time is sure flying. It seems hard to believe it's June already, although, we've had enough rain for what seems like an entire summer. If you haven't driven your MG in the rain you probably haven't driven it too far.

I pulled into the pits to change over to rain tires on my MGB just in time for the Rivertech/ Hudson Museum Tour. Despite the overcast, threatening skies the heavy rainfall held off until the drive home. The Rivertech facility held some fabulous cars, in particular a perfect green MGTC, a BRG Bugeye Sprite, and a silver Porche Speedster. Also, from the modern era was one of the new Ford GTs (the road-going version of the GT40 of Le Mans fame) and a Lotus Elise. The lightweight Elise has a claimed 0-60 time of 4.8 seconds and sterling handling to match, and for those who have the means (that leaves me out) is coming to the US this spring for reportedly about $39,000. I must admit I have a soft spot for Bugeye Sprites. A classmate of mine in College had an Iris Blue Bugeye. That tiny 948 cc engine ran like a champ and when accelerating, revved up to the redline RPM without hesitation, a form of torture that he used many times. When we finished at Rivertech we had a pleasant lunch and then hit the Miller Motors/ Hudson Museum. This is a wonderful small museum that is packed with interesting cars and items. I have gained a new respect for the Corvair of which there were 4 on display plus a cutaway engine display that rotated, so you could see how the moving parts worked. The Miller Motors section was like it was from a time warp with many fine Hudson examples and the repair shop and parts area looking like the workers would return on Monday. It was a very enjoyable day.

We had a good turnout for the meeting at the Nisbet in May, and this time the rain held off. It was a fine night and we held the meeting outside on and around the patio.

The Fun on Wheels event scheduled for May 23rd at Heritage Village was postponed by the organizers, due to flooding from the monsoon like rains that Essex County has been enduring throughout late April and May. It will now take place on Sunday June 13th. Hopefully the weather will cooperate this time. Plan on a pleasant day amongst classic cars and trucks, hot rods, a flea market, and historic buildings in the warm sunshine. (I'm really going out on a limb now!) On the 19th and 20th we will be making the annual trip to the Stratford Festival. Sunday July 11th is the Mad Dogs and Englishmen Show, and Saturday July 17th is the RM Classic Car Show and picnic.

May 24th to 28th was British Car week, and I must admit I had forgotten about it during last month's column. It is always the last full week of May and includes both the preceding and following weekend. This week has been set aside to celebrate the wonderful British Cars of the past, that have come to be an important part of our lives. Cars are, after all, only machines, but our British Cars seem to have personalities of their own, perhaps partly due to their minor shortcomings. They beg us not to take ourselves and maybe life in general too seriously, all the while giving immense motoring enjoyment. The idea of British Car week is for owners to get their cars out on the road in their little corner of North America and give them the exposure they deserve, perhaps attracting future enthusiasts. I hope you had a chance to drive your car that week. As I am writing this I have had mine out several times, but sadly I have not seen another British car on the road. The Essex Winery tour will have fallen in this week and I'm sure we will have had some British Cars there!

So, stock up on Rainex and pull your car out for a drive, preferably to one of our events. Until next time...

Safety MG Fast

Ralph

Jeanette and Bill Reeves' 1976 MGB

This beautiful vermillion red MGB is owned by Jeanette Reeves and husband Bill Reeves. Jeanette was first introduced to the British cars by her father who owned three MGs over time. She owned a white MGB in California, then drove it home to Michigan by herself. That car was sold after the trip home. Her father opened the Sunday paper one day several years later and came upon an ad for a MBG. On a whim he went to see the car. He made a deal with the owner and brought it home. Jeanette visited her parents and saw the MGB in the garage. It was the same white MGB she had driven home from California several years earlier! Her father did not realize what he had purchased.

The Vermillion MGB was purchased in 1992 in Fraser. The car has always been in good driving condition. Only regular maintenance items and parts have been purchased to keep up the condition. Two years ago it was painted for the first time. A shop in Windsor was located that did rust repair and paint for a reasonable price. Jeanette and Bill also paid in Canadian funds and took advantage of the exchange rate. They added a new interior (seats and carpet) and put all the exterior pieces back on.

Jeanette and Bill became members of the WDMGCC when Guy St. John was president. They made contact with club members at a MG event in Grand Rapids. They are long time members who tell us they enjoy the monthly newsletter and they try to attend an event or meeting each summer.

The photos were taken at the Battle of the Brit's last September at Freedom Hill Park in Sterling Heights.

What's Your Car Called?

By Rich Wagner

Last month we asked members to tell us about any pet names they have for their British cars. Here's the story behind the names Rich and Adrienne Wagner have given to their's.

It's all my wife's fault that we own British cars! 13 years ago, Adrienne said to me, "Wouldn't it be nice if we could have another sports car like you had when we first met?" Way back then, I had a 1961 Triumph TR-3A. I didn't know what I'd find when I began looking, but we settled on a 1975 MGB with a "mirror finish" black body, creamy gray interior and matching cloth top. This car was absolutely stunning to look at and quite naturally, we thought of her as a she. Since "Babycakes" is a pet name for Adrienne (she also has one for me), this beautiful car soon became "Babycakes II".

The inspiration for Babycakes actually came from a 1966 movie called "The Russians Are Coming". It's a comedy about a Russian sub that gets stranded in New England and there's a memorable line in the film where one the stranded sailors says; "200 watts of power Babycakes" as he's trying to flirt with a woman in an electronics store.

Mr. Majestic

A year later, we bought a second 1975 MGB. This one was Tahiti Blue with a very loud exhaust and a competition cam that together, reminded me more of a dragster than a British sports car. This was certainly no lady, and it wasn't long before he became known as Mr. Majestic reflecting both the deep blue color and the toughness of Charles Bronson's character in "Mr. Majestic".

Three years later, we found another Triumph TR-3A. The long sweeping curves were too pretty to be thought of as anything else but female, so she's called Ruby because of her original deep red color and the Kenny Roger's tune, "Ruby, Don't Take Your Love to Town"

TODAY:

"Babycakes II" eventually was restored to her original beautiful finish and sold. Mr. Majestic (much like it's owner), has mellowed over the years and now purrs along sporting a stainless steel exhaust. The rebuilt engine also has an original equipment cam for that healthy sounding classic British car exhaust and he's ready to travel anywhere.

"Ruby" is ready to travel too, but after one successful drive to Florida, any trips in her will probably be limited to less than a week.

Giving your car an affectionate name can really make for a closer relationship between you and your vehicle. You'll never really understand unless you try it yourself.

Ruby

The First MGB-GT

from Enjoying MG

When the MGB was launched in 1962 it was only available as an open two-seater and there was nothing to replace the popular MGA coupé that had satisfied the needs of those preferring closed cars. Shortly after the MGB went on sale the company did make a good hardtop available but plans for a fixed-head version were still at the drawing board stage. One enterprising Brussels-based coachbuilder realised a demand existed for a proper, closed MGB sports coupé and exhibited an extensively modified car at the 1964 Brussels Motor Show. This attractive car created a lot of interest and he decided to go into series production of his MG Berlinette.

The only right-hand-drive MG Berlinette

Brussels-born Jacques Coune had trained as an interior designer, but through his father he became involved with selling surplus military vehicles and establishing a small garage. This brought him in contact with other dealers and one of these, the local Ferrari importer, provided him with the chance to attend many of the major European motor shows. As a result he became the Belgian agent for Arbarth bolt-on tuning kits and exhaust systems and for Iso, who started by producing the lsetta bubble car and went on to build the Iso Rivolta and Grifo.

Coune established a coachbuilding arm to his business using people from around Turin in Northern Italy where there were many skilled metalworkers. He developed a drop-head version of the Volvo 122S and also a luxury Mercedes, based on the 220SE, but both were only produced in small numbers. It was partly as an exercise to display their skills that the special MGB was designed. The bodies of the first six cars were constructed of metal, but when series production became a reality they turned to glass-fibre, a material that they had become used to handling.

The main MGB chassis structure and mechanical components remained unchanged, but the conversion process was extensive and involved removing items like the windscreen, trim, rear wings, boot lid, plus the deck and rear panels. After reinforcing the chassis a large glass-fibre roof section was bonded in place and this accepted Renault R8 front and rear windscreen glass, the new windscreen being taller that that used for the roadster. Details like interior trim, special steering wheels, etc. varied from car to car.

The MG Berlinette was not a hatchback like the MGB-GT

In April 1964 the only right-hand drive example ever built was delivered to Walter Oldfield, the managing director of Nuffield Press, but the story goes that this was as a result of a meeting between Jacques Coune and Alec lssigonis [designer of the Austin/ Morris Mini]. The roadster used was sent from the factory to Belgium, minus hood and the other parts that would not be needed. When completed it was delivered to Abingdon where it was driven for the purpose of evaluation by a number of the top management at BMC. Despite the Coune Berlinette's appeal, the arrival of the Abingdon built MGB-GT eventually killed off the pricier Belgian version.

WANTED

DEAD OR DRIVEABLE

YOUR CAR PICTURE

Let us have a picture of your car and some anecdotal information so that we can feature it in *Can-Am Connection* and the club web-site gallery.

ALSO WANTED

Pictures of members in their childhood or as young adults for our The Young and the Reckless feature

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Nice MG! Look Again!

A couple of years ago at Mad Dogs in Kalamazoo I congratulated somebody on the condition of his MG-TD. He accepted my compliment without comment but when I looked more carefully I soon realized this was no MG, in fact it was more VW Beetle than MG!

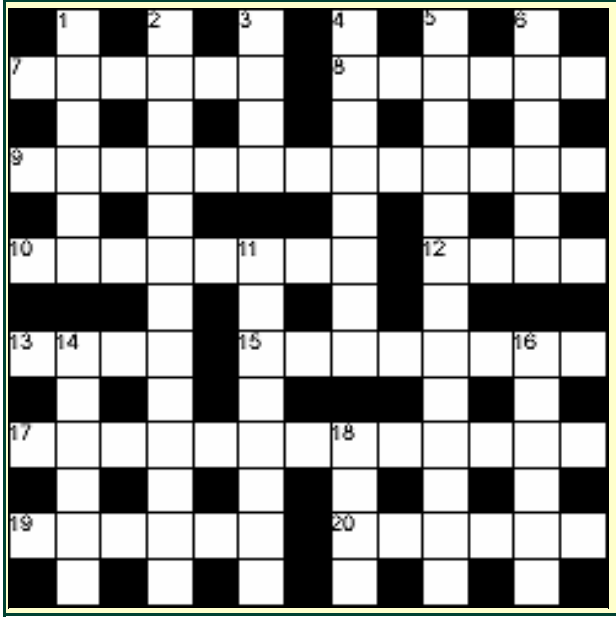
There is a good business in replica cars and the MG has seen its share of copies as the pictures below will attest. Don't they say that imitation is the finest form of flattery?

This "TD" is VW based

This "TF" was made in New Zealand, the chassis source is unknown

Now here's a twist. This "AC Ace" is built on an MG-TD chassis.

The Windsor - Detroit MG Club Crossword



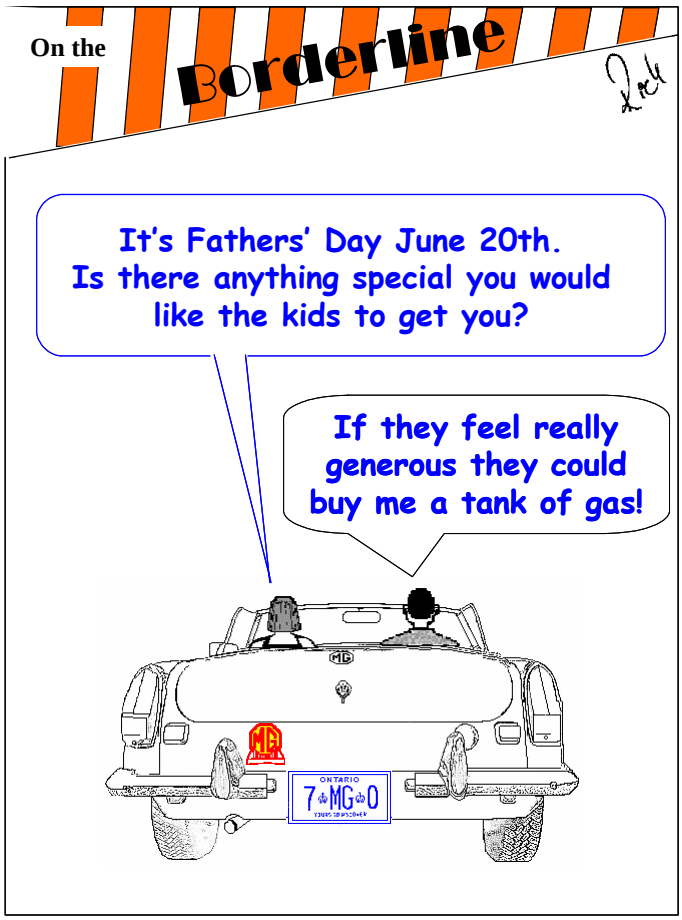
Across

7 Souped-up car
8 Some Lotus cars
9 Fuel mixture passage way (5-8)
10 Batteries' negative electrodes
12 Scarce
13 Mil
15 Became a property renter
17 Dome lamp (8-5)
19 Motor vehicle building
20 Fan belt wheel

Down

1 Eye part
2 Contributor to global warming (10-3)
3 First man
4 Lord Alfred —, 19C English poet
5 Rear axle gear systems
6 Professional car buyer and seller
11 Got the car ready for show
14 Japanese cars
16 Reverberated
18 Cord

Solution page 10



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Can I Help You?

An accountant, without much interest in things mechanical, went into the spares department of his car dealership and requested a 710 cap to replace the one that was lost at a gas station. The spares clerk asked the make and model of the car and proceeded to scroll through the computer listing looking for any part-number resembling 710, but couldn't find anything.

The driver insisted that although he knew nothing about cars, he had a knack with numbers and distinctly remembered the cap having the figures 710 clearly marked on it. The clerk consulted colleagues but none of them could help and in the end the driver left empty handed.

Could you have helped him find a new 710 cap?

A clue — the accountant was originally Australian. *Rick A.*

Did You Know?

That handbooks for MGBs and Spridgets specify 98 octane fuel. However, that is a Research Octane Number (RON). Look carefully at the pump in North America and it says that the octane rating is (RON +MON)/2. MON is Road Octane Number and is about 10 points less than the RON number. So 98 RON is about 88 MON and (98 + 88)/2 = 93. That still means, unfortunately, these cars need the expensive Premium stuff.

Use a lower octane and the car will ping; a very damaging engine phenomenon. It may also run-on after the key is turned off. Both problems can be solved by retarding the ignition. That will allow you to use cheaper fuel but is not without its own cost in poorer performance.

Classified Advertisements

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1978 MG Midget. 31,000 miles; no rust, new paint/carpet, long time owner, many updates. $4,200 or best.
734-522-7336 after 6 anytime weekends. Or email 58beau@comcast.net. Garden City, MI.

British Car Repair and Maintenance. North Oakland County area. Complete service available. Very reasonable.
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1978 MGB moved here with me from BC in 2003. Kept inside over winter. Brand new paint job and brand new Pirelli tires. I would like $6,500 Cdn.
Evenings at 613-544-8449 or via e-mail, alexander.mitchell@sympatico.ca (Kingston, Ontario).

British Car Posters & Ads
Jay Kollin 734-455-6949

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

1975 MGB, Tahiti Blue/Black interior; engine rebuilt by John Twist. $7,500.
Rich Wagner 248 624-9573

1976 MG Midget. Less than 1,000 miles on rebuilt motor; restorable condition or use for parts; top; tonneau cover included. $900 or best.
248-366-1092 for details. (Commerce, MI)

Parts For Sale. Used Radiator for 77-80 MGB-$50, 1 Oil cooler-13 row-$40, Emission Bracket w/canisters-$15, 1 Fuel filler neck-$5, 2 Wheel trim rings- best offer, 1 License plate bracket w/chrome lights-best offer.
Harry Mac Lean 248-641-5011 or HMac483017@aol.com

For sale '57 MGA project car. Open to any reasonable offer. Call Don Shearer 252-5108 any time after 4:00 pm or email, m1kk1d66@mnsi.net

1979 MGB. excellent condition, 7,000 ORIGINAL miles; garaged, summer-driven only; all original (excepting replacement parts). Asking $15,000. Only serious buyers please.
Contact shauna_matthews@msn.com. (Lansing, MI).

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Contact the editor if you wish to respond to an e-mail-only contact, but have no access yourself.

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British Car and Motorcycle Show Fort Meigs, Perrysburg June 6th

The show takes place on the grounds of Ft. Meigs and it's a very pleasant setting. The fort will be open for viewing.

The event runs from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. Unless you have pre-registered, the registration fee on the day will be $12.

The participants will gather at the Pilot Truck Stop on I-75 at Nedeau Rd. This exit is the first exit south of the I-75/ I-275 interchange in Monroe. The truck stop is on the west side of the freeway. Please be there by 9 a.m. for a timely departure. The drive down to the fort takes just less than an hour and, unfortunately, is mostly freeway. However, once we get off of the freeway, the remaining 10 miles or so, follow along the banks of the Maumee river. There are some quaint small towns and beautiful houses to take in. In the past, there has been a large, high crane that folks have been invited to go up in and take pictures of the show grounds. Yours truly has not yet gone up but the courageous Dale Brown has. There are various contests to participate in as well as the usual opportunity to cast your vote. Come 3 pm or so.I'll lead the group back to I-75 and back towards the truck stop where everyone can go their own way.

Matt Bade

Summer British Knights. Our good friends at the Detroit Triumph Sports Car Club have once again invited us to join them the 3rd Wednesday of each month. This year, Summer British Knight will be at Gatsby's, 45701 Grand River, Novi. June 16th is the next date.

Metro Detroit Road Closures

Unfortunately, road closures made it difficult for some people to meet the Rivertech departure time last month. Various projects are on-going throughout the summer but ramp and lane closures usually occur at weekends. Recent flooding has aggravated the situation further.

The main junctions affecting people coming from Canada are the I-96 ramps to and from roads between and including Telegraph Rd and the Southfield Freeway, so allow plenty of time if any of those junctions are on your route.

Fun on Wheels ~ Sunday June 13th

This is the event postponed from last month

Starting at about 9 AM we'll meet at a new Tim Hortons in the 5200 block of Walker Rd., at the corner of Walker and North Talbot Rd.in Windsor. From the Tunnel turn right on Park, right on Goyeau and left on Wyandotte St. Continue on Wyandotte until a few blocks past the Kildare House and turn right on Walker. From the Bridge continue down Huron Church Road which turns into Hwy 3. until you hit Walker Road Turn left on Walker and the Tim Hortons is several blocks down on the right. We'll try to leave the Tim Hortons before 10 AM and caravan out to Heritage Village, a turn of the century village just outside Essex, Ontario.

We are usually the only British cars there making us unique among the hot rods and antique cars that have numbered as high as 500 in the past. The cars are parked among the historic buildings of the village. If you wish bring some lawn chairs, and a picnic lunch or you can purchase food at the pavilion. There is a flea market also, although it is mostly for American vehicles.

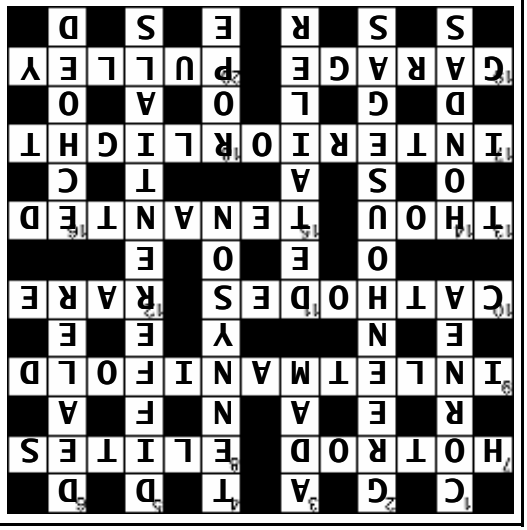
After several hours, when most people want to leave, we will caravan to Essex to a local pub or restaurant with a British atmosphere. We can stay until later in the afternoon and leave at our leisure. It will not be far from the highway that leads back to the Bridge and Tunnel.

Ralph Poupard

London BCC Classic Car Show London, Ontario — June 5th

Please meet at the Tim Hortons at County Rd 42 and Manning at 7:15 to head for the show. Contact Steve Brown 519-737-6848 or Stephen020@sympatico.ca if further information is required

Solution to Crossword Page 8



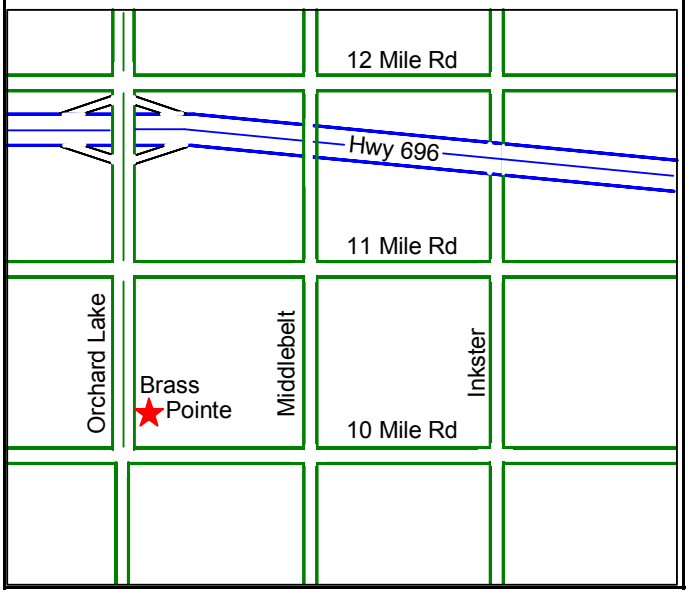
Calendar of Events

Bold Text Indicates Windsor-Detroit MG Club Events.

June	
Sat. 5th	**London BCC Classic Car Show London, ON. See opposite page**
Sun. 6th	**6th Annual British Car and Motorcycle Show, Fort Meigs, Perrysburg. See opposite page**
Wed. 9th	**Monthly Meeting — Brass Pointe**
Sun. 13th	**Fun on Wheels, Heritage Village Essex, ON. See opposite page**
Sat. 19th - Sun. 20th	**Stratford Festival, Stratford, ON Contact Philip Wiltshire for details.**
July	.
Sat. 10th	**Mad Dogs and Englishmen XIV Gilmore Car Museum, MI**
Wed. 14th	**Monthly Meeting — Nisbet Inn**
Fri. 16th - Sun. 18th	**RM Classic Car Show, Chatham, ON**
August	
Fri. 6th - Sat. 7th	**American Lemans Racing Series Mosport, ON**
Wed. 11th	**Monthly Meeting — Brass Pointe**
Thur. 12th - Sun. 15th	University Motors Summer Party Reunion - Grand Rapids. MI
Sat. 21st	**Alternative dream Cruise**

June Meeting

June 9th — Brass Pointe Restaurant
24234 Orchard Lake Road, Farmington Hills, Michigan



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