



# Crown Wheel and Opinion

The Almost Quarterly Newsletter of the Calgary MG Car Club  
Volume 2 – Number 3 – December 2022



**Merry  
Christmas to  
All and Miles  
of Happy  
Driving in  
2023**

## December Issue Highlights:

- A 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the MGB in England
- CMGCC Year-end
- George's TD - the Rebuild
- Yet Another Collection to View





## Crown Wheel and Opinion - volume 2, number 3

### Editor's Letter – December 2022

– Dean Harrison

**We** have survived another COVID year; the cars are put away for the season and we have settled into our winter routines. Whatever they now may be! This issue is designed to be a light holiday read for the end of 2022. So, sit back, grab a beverage, relax and hopefully enjoy it.

I want to thank a few people who have been regular contributors to the CW&O over the past couple of years for much of the copy in this issue:

First off, I want to thank Dominic Crawley from Canmore for the update on the restoration of George Raham's MG TD following its unfortunate disagreement with a pickup truck following a car show a couple years back. (Between age and COVID, everything seems to be just two years ago).

Second, during his travels to Europe this year mostly for family stuff, Andy Hardie continues to be a great source of stories for CW&O. This issue it's pictures and description of two iconic British facilities: 1. The PRODRIVE shop and museum, a Mecca for anyone with some Rallye Experience in their automotive history and 2. The combined MGCC/MGOC 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration for the MGB at the British Heritage Motor Museum at Gaydon.

And last, but not least, to John Towler: first for shepherding the club through two very difficult years of lockdowns, Zoom meetings and social distancing, he kept us active, on the road as much as possible and more or less sane despite everything. Not only that, but he also found time to provide every CW&O issue with a regular President's Update as well as technical articles and other material for publication.



**Shameless Plug Time!** The New Year is only a couple weeks away – and MG 2023 is now just over 6 months away. Take a look now at how you want to be involved in the biggest single event in the history of CMGCC. Reach out to Andy Hardie or anyone on the core committee and volunteer – there is lots for everyone to do!

Finally, enjoy the last issue for 2022, take the time now to be with family and good friends for the Holiday Season. We've all earned some time off and a cup or two of Good Cheer! The 'to do list' in the garage will still be there in January.

**From the two of us at Crown Wheel and Opinion:**

**Our Best Wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Joyful New Year**

*Dean and Trish Harrison*

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## Crown Wheel and Opinion

**Our club objective is “to enhance the MG British style of motoring and the preservation of the MG marque”**

CW & O is the ‘official’ publication of the Calgary MG Car Club. It is normally published four times per year although special issues will be produced when club activities warrant, or content is available. The material herein is the sole responsibility of the editors and cannot generally be blamed on the club executive or any club policies. Advertising is being considered for 2023 – let me know if you think it’s a good idea.

Questions, comments and even rebuttals are welcome. Letters (email) can be sent to:

[Newsletter@calgarymgcarclub.org](mailto:Newsletter@calgarymgcarclub.org)

Who knows, the editor (Ed.) may even publish them! – With or without comment – it all depends.

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**On the Cover this Issue: Tis the time of year to spend with friends and family, enjoying the hospitality of the time and sharing joy of the season with those around us.**

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## Presidential Ponderings –



Dear Members,

"As of writing this I am recovering from our annual Awards Banquet and Christmas Party. A great turnout of 38 members at the Danish Club, with a superb meal, fun games and of course the usual awards which were presented to:

Dick Averbs (Presidents Award)  
Andy and Donna Hardy (Todd Arthur)  
Duncan MacFarlane (Hard luck)  
Henri Lefebvre (Least Miles)  
Jim Herbert (Most Miles)

It has been my honour to represent the club as President over the last 2 years. I expected it to be relatively plain sailing, but soon after starting my term the pandemic transpired to challenge us all by severely affecting one of the main aspects of the club, that is the social side. However, Mr. Zoom came to the rescue, and then several members ably stepped up to facilitate the other main activity, that of driving our cars, a natural social distancing occupation! Some great tours were organized, throughout our home province in 2020 and into BC this year.

In August it was my pleasure to venture to Peterborough with half a dozen others who drove or flew to MG2022, where we were able to celebrate all things MG and promote our own long-awaited event coming up next summer.

Hosting the banquet was my last action as outgoing President, and now I am pleased to hand over this duty to Duncan who I'm sure will steer the club admirably for at least the next 12 months. With Reg as new Events Coordinator, Troy as our new secretary, Henri continuing as Treasurer, and Azim picking up the Membership role (plus myself demoted to VP with a new car!), I'm looking forward to 2023 with relish.

A very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all!"

John Towler,  
Calgary, AB



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## **Newsletter Quiz number 9**



**Anyone know the Make and Model of this car? (Bonus for getting the year too)  
(I figure anyone in our club would know most rare MG models so I'm continuing with other  
makes, and they may or may not always be British)**

**Here is the answer to the last quiz question**

**Answer to Newsletter**

**Quiz number 8:**



1953 Daimler Conquest Roadster

Thanks again to Andy Hardie for the picture and suggestion of the Daimler for quiz number 8.

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## Letters (This issue there still aren't some!)

Hey – we love the feedback – and we do publish them! So let us know what you like, dislike, want to see more/less of or just to tell us off. Somewhat like Car and Driver we can always tell you what we think, we are somewhat irreverent, not always politically correct and we control the content!

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## Club News

### Membership

Membership dues are now due for 2023. A big change for the new year is a return to our regular dues level. Individual memberships are back to \$40.00 annually, reflecting a return to more activities and events in the upcoming year.

### AGM

November saw our traditional, in-person AGM taking place. This year marked major changes for the club as several executive members stepped back from their current roles. CW&O would like to say thank you to John Towler, Dick Avern and Charles Champagne for their work and contributions to the club over the past year. Our newly elected executive includes:

- Duncan MacFarlane, President;
- John Towler, Vice-President, and Past-President, a role he automatically gets to fill;
- Reg Beckett, Events Coordinator;
- Henri Lefebvre, continuing as Treasurer;
- Troy Parker, a new member as Secretary, a role vacant for the past year.

As well, our executive appointments include:

- Andy Hardie, MG2023 Chairman;
- Azim Bhatia, Membership Chairman;
- David Morris and Terrence Walters, looking after web presence and website;
- Dean and Trish Harrison, co-editors for the Crown Wheel and Opinion.

Look for new profiles for our executive in the first issue of CW&O for 2023. (Fair warning to the executive – we will be looking for pictures and a new profile for the newsletter in January.)

## Year End Christmas Party

December 9, 2022! Saw 38 members and guests out to enjoy MG style hospitality, a great meal and the usual rounds of stories from the events of the past year. Unfortunately for us, Trish and I were locked



into another event that night and had to miss it. But we have it on good authority that everyone enjoyed themselves. As well. Our year end awards were presented. Here are the winners for 2022:



President's Trophy – for contributions to the club over the year – Dick Averts



Least Miles Driven over the year – Henri Lefebvre – unusual for Henri and Nicole who usually challenge for most miles!



Andy and Donna Hardie – the Todd Arthur Memorial Award for club service and promotion as voted by the members each year. Our greatest Ambassadors ever!



The Holey Piston Award to Duncan MacFarlane for an unfortunate altercation with another vehicle who wanted the piece of road Duncan occupied.

Missing is Jim Herbert, who travelled the most miles this year. His MGB GT covered a lot of highway miles in 2022.

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## Feature Articles

### Some travel highlights from summer 2022 with Donna and Andy Hardie

Some of our members spent a good deal of time overseas in 2022. Andy and Donna travelled to England for a family wedding and managed to include some other travel both around the British Isles and into other parts of Europe. Judging by the picture the wedding was a pretty formal affair. (Note – this will not be the required dress code for MG 2023 or most other CMGCC events in the coming year. But, you never



know, it could be! 😊 )

Summer 2022 came up with some surprises, and I'd like to share a couple of the bigger ones from when Donna and I were in England.

He certainly does clean up pretty good. Now that we have seen this picture, we will be looking to Andy and Donna to add a previously never before seen measure of class to our events in the future! 😊

Andy and Donna bookended their trip with visits to a couple of iconic British Automotive Venues:

1. PRODRIVE – the foremost builder of World Championship level rally cars; and
2. The British Heritage Motor Museum at Gaydon

### A Visit to PRODRIVE

Words and images by Andy Hardie

Just a few days after arriving in England, we were treated to a guided tour of PRODRIVE at Banbury, Oxfordshire, only ten minutes up the road from where we were staying, at my sister's house.

PRODRIVE is a company (<https://www.prodrive.com>) that develops and builds some very serious race and rally cars, and in the past has been responsible for the factory Subaru WRC effort, and the Aston Martin World Endurance racing team amongst many other world class race and rally cars. They have been in business for 30+ years building and campaigning in international motorsport and developed many technologies outside of motorsport as well. A trip to their website makes for some very



interesting reading, so while you're at the computer reading Crown Wheel and Opinion, why not take a trip over there. Maybe go get a coffee and a snack first ☺

Arrangements were made through a friend of my sister who works at PRODRIVE, for a guided tour, and was very "last minute" so I didn't have any time to prepare myself for what was in store. To say that I spent two hours of my life completely slack jawed would be an understatement, starting with the MG 6R4 proudly displayed in the reception area as soon as we walked through the front door.

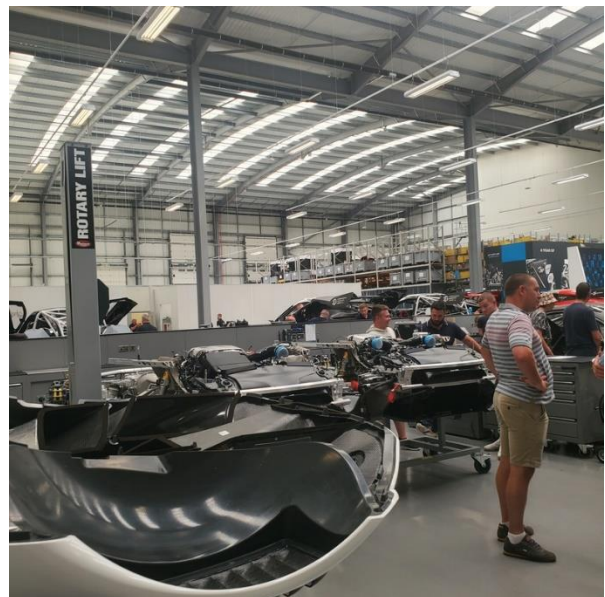


MG 6R4 – Yes it is an MG – a Groupe B Rally Monster from the days before Group B was banned by the FIA and the cars were deemed too dangerous.

Race shops are typically pretty organized spaces, and in the upper echelons pretty (surgically??) clean.

What makes PRODRIVE different is the scope, and scale, of the work they perform. It's as much a factory as it is a race shop. Nearly everything that goes into a car prepared by them is built by them. Engines, drivelines, suspension, brakes, electrical systems and wiring harnesses, roll cages and chassis, bodywork, everything is built to purpose and fabricated and developed in house.

The recently installed engine dyno has to be the piece de la resistance. Able to handle almost 900 hp, it is capable of much more than brief absolute power runs. It can be set up to run full event simulations as intake air temperature and pressure is adjustable and





The tour was capped off by being introduced to PRODRIVE's logistics manager, who graciously walked me out to the yard to look over the truck fleet, complete with the 8 truck/trailer combinations being readied for departure to Bahrain, for a desert rally there.

gear changes can be simulated. This means complete race simulations can be run on nearly any circuit, or any portion of the Dakar Rally can likewise be simulated. A very sophisticated piece of kit to aid in making power trains as predictable in real world situations as possible.



I'll let the pictures do the rest of the talking for now. If you want to know more, take a look at their web site, or catch me at a meeting or event and I will share some more firsthand experiences of the visit to this amazing facility. BTW, guided tours go Wednesday's and Saturday's if you find yourself in the UK wanting to check it out for yourself.



The old and the new: 1970s Ford Escort – 2022 Purpose built desert Rally car







Escort Interior – Rally Prepared



Early Subaru WRC Car

Editor's Note: I told you from the outset I had a bias for rally cars and events – Andy just brought me one story I couldn't resist!

## **The British Heritage Motor Museum – an Ultimate Celebration of the MGB**

At the other end of our time in Blighty was the combined MGCC/MGOC 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration for the MGB at the British Heritage Motor Museum at Gaydon. As we had only returned from Portugal at 3:00am, we didn't make the mid-morning start of the programme, and it was a bit of a rush to get around to see all we could before the 5:00pm closing.



There was a lot of ground to cover at Gaydon!



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We discovered after the fact that several other folks we knew were also in attendance, but we missed meeting up with them. The host MGCC had interviewed Jeremy Holdsworth of the MG Car Club of Toronto on stage prior to our arrival, and he had given a review of MG 2022 in Peterborough and put in a plug for MG 2023 in Calgary next July, which I later thanked him for.

I have never seen so many MGB's assembled in one place before. There was a chronological "time line" of cars assembled on the grass across the front of the main museum building, with hundreds more random examples parked in the area in front of the museum. Visiting MGB owners were offered "preferred parking" beyond, on the hill overlooking the car park and museum. There must have been 1500-2000 cars in all, with some very rare cars invited to attend, and given pride of place in front of the "Heritage Collection" building which houses Jaguar/Daimler Heritage on the ground floor, and the non-display collection belonging to the BMH Museum next door.



Amongst the rare cars on display were examples of the Jacques Coune's Berlinetta MGB's. These cars were the only way to have an MGB GT until the factory GT was introduced in 1965. They were first shown at the 1964 Belgium Auto Show, and 56 Coune fixed roof Berlinetta's were subsequently built before the factory GT arrived in October of 1965, and effectively killed it. Only 12 examples are believed to survive.

There had been talk between Jacques Coune and BMC about producing the attractive Coupe, but favor was given

to the Pininfarina designed car which retained more of the essence of the original MGB and was assuredly lighter and less expensive to produce in larger numbers.

Another rare car was "the other" LBL591E, Competitions Department MGB GT built to campaign at Sebring in 1967/68. There has been quite a bit of controversy as to which of the two examples (one on each side of the Atlantic) currently in existence claiming to be "the only MGB GT" prepared by BMC Competitions to race in Florida is genuine. Truth is, they probably both are as there were some "heavy prangs" requiring at least one re shell along the way. The UK example shown at Gaydon for the MGB 60<sup>th</sup> claims to be the 1967 Sebring car, and is Tartan Red. The study in all things LBL will probably leave you scratching your head, like me, but the Canadian LBL will be in Calgary for MG2023 courtesy of Ralph Zbarsky, and is the car prepared for the 1968 Targa Florio.





The museum is always worth a visit, and I think this was my third visit. New to me was the Jaguar/Daimler Heritage centre which was not even built when I last visited Gaydon. This building houses some early and unique examples of Jaguar and Daimler cars, though not a Daimler Conquest which was the subject of our last Car Quiz. I love Jaguars, so this building was a pleasant surprise for me. Upstairs can be found all the vehicles and other material rotated out of the British Motor Heritage Museum display floors next door, as well as a birds eye view of the Jaguar/Daimler workshop/maintenance area. Some interesting stuff in there on my visit, including an uber rare Jaguar XJ13.

Our Sunday afternoon was jammed pretty full, and it was over so very quickly, but after a month plus of pretty much nonstop activity, it was time to head back to my sister's for some well earned R&R for a couple of days before flying home to Canada.

Again, the pictures can do the rest of the talking.



Editor's Note – Andy has a ton of pictures and experience with all manner of British Cars – I think an evening of museum touring vicariously through his pictures would make a fabulous meeting night.



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## George Raham's TD Rebuild – the Final Report

Text and Pictures by Dominic Crawley

On Father's Day, 2020 the local car club in Canmore organized a parade past the town's nursing homes followed by a car show in a local park. The day was clear and sunny and consequently the streets in town were crowded with pandemic weary visitors. Traffic was thick with long lines of cars. Turns on and off main roads taxed one's patience as breaks in the lines of cars were few and far between.

At the end of the car show, one CMGCC member, the late George Raham and his wife, Marian, were heading home in their MG TD when a pickup truck made a sudden left turn into the left front side of the TD. George's jammed speedometer showed that the impact occurred at 30 mph or 50 kph. I believe that the collision happened because the TD fit precisely into the forward blind spot of the pickup. A recent U.S. experiment, brought about because of rising pedestrian deaths, had children line up single file in front of a pickup truck to determine what the driver could see. The line stretched to the 12th child before any child became visible to the driver. Hence the unfortunate crash.

Although both Marian and George were wearing lap belts, their upper bodies pivoted forward. George bent the steering wheel with his face and required 4 stitches to close a split lip. Marian hit the dashboard and wind screen, broke facial bones and the wind screen, knocked out 2 front teeth and fractured her pelvis.

Fortunately, she has fully recovered from these injuries. George's insurance company offered to write the car off and pay George the insured value but George had a strong emotional attachment to the car and opted to re-build it. He bought the car in July 1951, made possible with a loan from his grandfather which he repaid by working at 3 part time jobs.

I agreed to help George with the re-build. The first job was to assess the damage. Body damage was obvious. The left front fender, left bonnet side and top, left headlamp and support bracket, rad shell, grill bars, splash apron, and front bumper were bent and crushed. Mechanical damage was also extensive.



The left front suspension was ripped off and with the exception of the coil spring, all the components were bent beyond repair. The steering rack was cracked and under the bonnet the radiator, generator, tach drive, distributor cap and coil were all destroyed. But most grievous of all, the frame was bent.

So the first task was to strip the car down to the bare frame, a job George and I did over the course of a few days. The next step was to get the frame to the frame straightening shop in Calgary and the body tub to Fix Auto, the local Canmore body shop. The tub only needed minor repair to the wood where the bonnet side panel had been driven into it. While the frame and tub were away we turned our attention to acquiring the needed replacement parts. Fortunately, our contact in the Vancouver Pre 56 MG Unclub was able to help. He contacted a



number of Unclub members who lined up almost everything we needed. ("Never throw anything MG away"). We headed off to Vancouver in George's venerable old Volvo station wagon. With stops at 4 different places, we filled the Volvo with most of what we needed.

As well as securing parts we were able to enjoy seeing the garages and shops of some Unclub members as well as the T Series cars they were restoring. Of special note was a visit to the shop of Colin Fitzgerald where we were able to see the very first T Series MG ever produced, MG TA 0250. Much of what we received was donated or made available at very reasonable cost. A pleasant change from most parts chasing expeditions!

Once back in Canmore the newly gotten body panels were sent off to the body shop to be re-finished and the left front suspension bits were cleaned, painted and assembled.



George made a decision, at this time that since the car was apart some desirable upgrades would be made. For some 6 decades George had in his possession an XPEG engine. These engines are rare as only 3800 were made and were an option in the MG TF, the last of the T Series. George's engine has an interesting history but that's a story for some other time. The XPEG is 1466cc whereas the standard XPAG is 1250cc. The XPEG has somewhat more horsepower but significantly more torque giving the engine a performance improvement of about 17%, something handy on mountain roads.

Cooling the bigger engine would be handled in part by an electric cooling fan, a standard hot rod part. Under the bonnet the damaged generator would be replaced with an alternator, a unit called a Dynamator which is identical in appearance to the original generator and most importantly has the mechanical tach drive necessary for operation of the tachometer.

The frame and body tub came back, and we set to work mating them together as well as installing the front and rear suspension. George had supplied the frame shop with original drawings and dimensions of the frame, and he carefully checked that in its newly straightened state it was within factory specifications. It was, but specs have certain tolerances, say a 1/4

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inch this way or an 1/8 inch that way or another. Although the frame was within factory specs, the location of mounting holes and brackets were now slightly different than original.

So, the installation and mounting of almost every component required a lot of “fettling”, a fine old English word invented specifically for the building of old MG’s. Of course, the problem was exacerbated by the new body panels each of which had come from a different car with its own set of tolerances. George and I had reached the stage where the engine, gearbox, suspension and steering rack were mounted on the frame. As far as body panels, only the body tub was bolted on.



As we approached this stage of assembly George's battle with prostate cancer was beginning to ebb. His health declined and he was admitted to Canmore Hospital where sadly he passed away. A great loss to



the world of T Series cars and the Bow Valley skiing community! I had promised George that I would finish the re-build.

Fortunately, my son, Matthew, who has experience with Minis, stepped in to help. On a single Sunday we finished the rear of the body and got the petrol tank, the spare wheel rack, the rear wiring and the brake and taillights all installed. We upgraded the brake and tail lamps to LEDs. This improved the level of lighting from feeble to

fiery!

At this point, George's son, Doug, became involved so we devised a work schedule of 3 afternoons per week. We began working together in October of 2021 and had the car finished by May 2022. Doug is now the proud owner!

A final upgrade: In view of Marian's injuries in the combat with the pickup truck we installed shoulder seat belts. I designed a mounting system which guides the belt at the proper shoulder height to prevent spinal compression in a forward impact but which can be telescoped down to allow the tonneau cover to be used. This whole exercise was satisfying as it saved and improved a very special MG TD.



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## MG 2023 is 6 Months Away!

The next meeting for the core team for MG2023 is in January. If you have ideas or suggestions for the team let anyone on the committee know – or volunteer to become a part of it. We will need help from everyone in the club before and at the event. Let us know where you can help.

Even more important – **REGISTER** – this will be your closest to home opportunity to attend an event of this nature!



Please look to our calendar for all upcoming events. The calendar is currently the best source of the most current information and confirmation of what is on the schedule. Go to the main web page and scroll down to events. <http://calgarymgclub.org/main.html>

For 2023 watch for regular updates and event emails to supplement the calendar – regular communication about events with an option to sign up is going to be our new standard. And given a more regular publication schedule – maybe even some notices in the Newsletter!

## 2023 CMGCC Driving Challenge

There will be a 2023 Driving Challenge – Andy is totally focussed on July and MG2023 but our own challenge will continue. Look for updates in future issues and a new challenge to be raised at the January meeting when the winner for 2022 is announced.

## Technical Updates

It's that time of year. We all have more than enough work to do for the next few months to get our cars ready for spring. Again, this year, I resolved not to wait until almost spring to start working on the C – wish me luck with that. It hasn't happened so far, and I've owned the car for 11 years!



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If you have an interesting project you want to share with our members – let me know – we will get some pictures and write it up.

## **What to Look for in Upcoming Issues:**

### **Next Issue:**

- Meet your new Executive
- MG 2023 – everything you need to know, and how do I get involved?
- Acronyms Up the Ying Yang – NAMGBR, MGOC, NAMGAR, both MG and those ‘other’ marques – an alphabet soup of Classic Car Organizations

### **Future Issues:**

- Tour Suggestions: - where you can go in your LBC and find friends you haven’t met yet.
- More Member Profiles – who’s who in our zoo!
- MG Tech – how to fix something if/when it breaks, tips to help avoid having to fix something and general ideas to make our playing with our toys more enjoyable (like we need that!?)

**If you have an idea or suggestion for the newsletter, I am always looking for new content so don’t hold back. Every MG and LBC has an interesting story, we’d love to hear yours!**



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# The Back Page:

I think I said – “Easy over Crest!!!”



At the very least, somebody maybe asking Santa for some new parts!

