



# NORTH AMERICAN M M M NEWSLETTER

North American M M M  
Register  
Midget, Magna, Magnette

Winter 2012

*"Once in a great while someone makes an automobile that is a thing apart from all others, an impersonal machine possessing a definite personality.....many a man competent to know will argue that the most completely appealing and unforgettable personality ever built into a car was put into the smallest of them all: the MG Midget."*

Ken W. Purdy, *The Kings of the Road*

## Tales of Ancient Grease

By David Harrison

Recent chilly mornings in Virginia remind me of driving my 1933 MG LI, HY9497, to engineering class on frosty Bristol mornings. After unzipping the tonneau, the first challenge was to get the car started. My ancient battery was never much good, and had not been improved when a rear wheel decided to part company with the car due to insufficient whacking of the knockoff. The reduction in ground clearance during the incident cracked the bottom of the battery case, and the acid level was always low despite frequent raids on the chemistry lab and a poultice of plasticine. Such necessities as girls and beer meant there was never any money for a new battery. Fortunately my hall of residence was on a hill and I could usually rely on a push and gravity to start the engine, with the MkI starter as fallback.

Once in motion, the choke knob needed to be kept pulled out until the engine warmed up. Unfortunately, MG forgot to install either a thermostat or a choke lock. Changing gear required one hand for the gear lever and one hand to keep the choke knob pulled out to avoid stalling the engine, particularly when double declutching down.

An unavoidable left turn at a busy crossroad was a daily challenge. The LI had neither turn signals nor brake lights, so I had to hand signal my intention to slow and turn while approaching, then constantly signal the turn while waiting for traffic to clear at the stop. Hand signals are a lost art now but were essential in those days. The need for hand signals at the crossroad pretty well tied up the right hand, so three hands were needed without considering steering. My wheel bearings were worn, and the car needed constant steering corrections, even going straight. This required another hand, at least some of the time, though I could sometimes hold the wheel with my knees.

The old LI really needed a four handed driver on a cold morning. I quickly learned more tricky hand moves than a Vegas dealer. The gear lever and choke knob could be operated by the left hand, but not simultaneously. I could steer and signal with the right hand, but not simultaneously. A lot of juggling went on during my three years of ownership of HY 9497, two years at Bristol university and one with ICI in North Yorkshire. Then I met a nice warm girl and the cold, drafty, neglected MG began to lose its charm. I found a 1947 Triumph 1800 Roadster with roll up windows, a snug top and a powerful heater, and the LI was sold to another student for 30 pounds. HY 9497 was still on the UK M M M Register last time I checked, now restored as an L2. I wonder how the current owner handles a frosty morning drive.



*HY 9497 on a rare sunny day in the Yorkshire Dales.*

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# Chairman's Chatter—Time Marches On! By Jack Kahler

In Bill Tantau's flamboyant lingo "Not to wax the biblical but as we all know, there is a time for everything". While at the Beaulieu Autojumble "the beloved paradise for MMM car parts" in England this September with Lew Palmer, Dan Fest and Bill Richey had a weak moment. As usual, the Friday night after a full day of shopping for MMM bits, we Americans traveled to our favorite pub in Milford-on-Sea to join in Tom Metcalf's annual gala. During the early part of the evening Tom Metcalf pulled me aside into a separate room and informed me that our fearless NAMMMR leader for 22 years wants to retire. Tom then informed me that he and Bill would like for me to assume the duties as Chairman of the NAMMMR. My first response to myself was I live a comfortable, quiet life in paradise with my wonderful wife and MMM cars. Do I want to take on this challenge? I asked Tom a few Register operation questions and replied I will take on the challenge for at least the next two years. I must say with the help of Tom Metcalf, Lew Palmer, Larry Long and the rest of the Steering Committee the transition has been fun! I promise to the membership I will give it my all to make these coming years full of MMM activities and continued camaraderie of the MMM fraternity.

This is the final note that Bill sent to the Steering Committee:



**Jack and Bill at Watkins Glen**

Steering gents, Not to wax biblical but as we all know, there is a time for everything. Due mainly to my new lifestyle here at the ranch in the mountains of northern CA, I find it difficult if not impossible to travel, participate, and network in the MMM world as I feel your Chairman should - so effective here today, and much like the Honorable Jerry Keuper did some 20+/- years ago when he formed the original Steering Committee, sat me down in his study and asked me to Chair the NAMMMR, I have asked Jack Kahler to assume the Chairmanship. Jack is thoroughly invested in things MMM, has established appropriate contacts in the worldwide brotherhood, and is willing to bring fresh ideas and energy to our select fraternity. I know you will continue your support for the betterment and longevity of our NAMMMR.

Many thanks! Bill

Bill has shown outstanding leadership qualities in leading the Register and the Steering Committee, and we are all indebted to his dedication in bringing us where we are today. Thank you, Bill, for an outstanding 22 years!

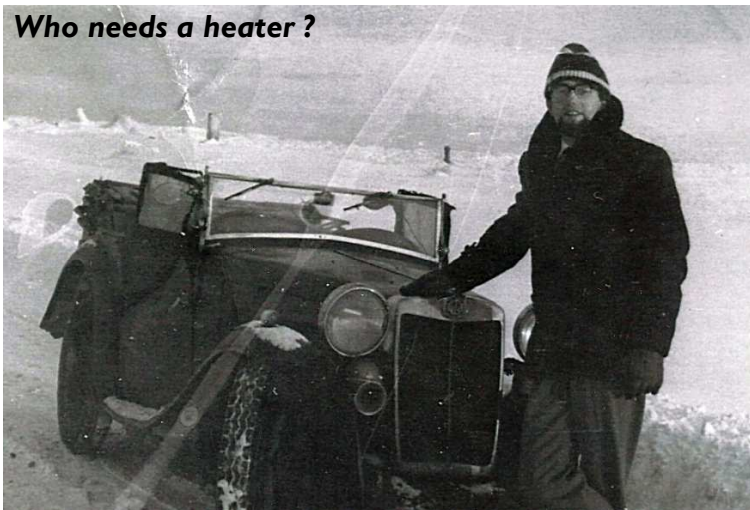
It is indeed a pleasure for me to announce that I have chosen Bill Richey to replace me on our Steering Committee. Bill will be a real plus to the Committee as he is MMM through and through! He will give the Register coverage in the mid South of our country where we have many members. I will continue to rep the Western US along with Pete and Larry. Please welcome Bill, and I look forward to working with all of you as we go into 2013 that is shaping up to be one of our most exciting years ever!

And one final note: Since Larry is about to be dealing with advertisers to our newsletter from all over the world I have given him a new title as DIRECTOR OF REGISTER COMMUNICATIONS. I also made an agreement he would not get a raise in pay!!  
(Ed: I think we should vote on that!!)

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS to you and YOURS!**

**Cheers, Jack.**

**Who needs a heater ?**



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**Register web site at:**

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**Of Australia web site at:**

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# Registrar Ramblings

By Lew Palmer

As you will read in other parts of this issue, there have been some significant changes in the lineup of your Register officers and steering committee. However, I remain the registrar for the foreseeable future. Thus, I need to issue my annual appeal.

Within this newsletter you will find your renewal form. The format has changed somewhat this year; however, the process is much the same. Please note any changes to your contact details and to your car ownership. Make those changes directly on the form and mail back to me along with your renewal dues. Note that due to the costs of printing and postage, we have had to increase the dues to \$40 for North American members and \$50 per year for overseas members. Hopefully, this will cover our costs and allow the Register to continue providing the high quality newsletter to which you have grown accustomed.

Another significant change has been made to the process this year. If there are no changes to your membership details, you are now able to pay your dues via PayPal. In that case there is no need to return your renewal form. We will simply publish the directory using exactly the same information as it appeared in the 2012 directory.

Should you have changes in your contact details or in your car ownership, you may still pay via PayPal, but you will need to mail back your renewal form in addition (or you may email me with the changes at [lew@roundaboutmanor.com](mailto:lew@roundaboutmanor.com)). Be sure, however, to clearly identify yourself either by full name or by membership number.

To pay via PayPal, log on to PayPal with your PayPal ID and send the appropriate amount to [renewal@nammmr.org](mailto:renewal@nammmr.org).

And, we recently reached a milestone with the registration of number 500!! We welcome Joe & Cathy Gunderson who bought Bill Tantau's PA!! Congratulations to Joe and Cathy! Now lets see if we can get it up to 510!! Meanwhile, please join me in welcoming the following new members.

Gary Ford  
Allentown, PA  
PA0935

Alan McCreery  
Annandale, NJ  
J3112

Win Gould  
Lake Bluff, IL  
PA0392

Joe & Cathy Gunderson  
Littleton, CO  
PA1688

*Happy Holidays and a Very MG New Year!*

*Lew*



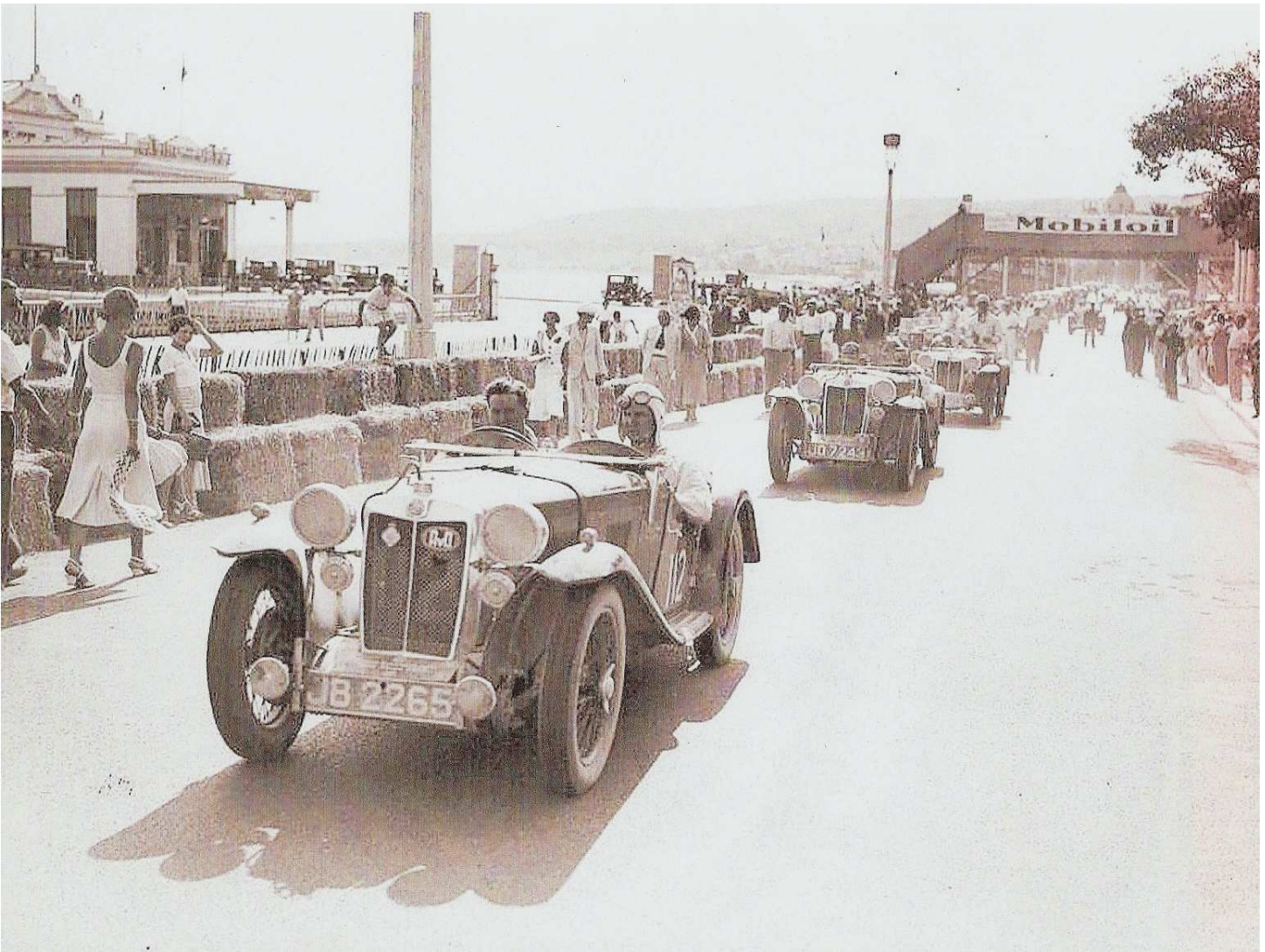
*Norman Dewis in the Harrison L2—  
see page 4*



## Two Big Focus Events Planned For 2013

Yep, we have TWO this coming year. The first will be at Put-In-Bay in Ohio. Details are not available at this time, but will be included in the next issue. The other event will be held in conjunction with the annual gathering of the western US and Canada T-series cars, at the Gathering of the Faithful in Carefree, AZ, Oct. 28 through Nov 1, 2013. Detailed information, including hotel information and registration forms, can be found at [Gofwest.org](http://Gofwest.org).





*This is a rare pic of JB 2265 , driven by W.E.C.Watkinson, and leading the MG Alpine Rally team on a victory parade at Nice . I have never seen it published anywhere so this may be a first. **Dave Harrison***

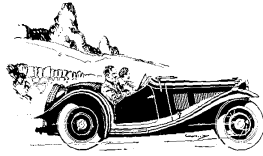


I suppose quite a few famous posteriors have sat in the L2. Certainly Watkinson and Jackson put some serious seat time in during the five day Alpine Trial in 1933, not to mention the drive from Abingdon and back. After buying the car from John Thornley, Watkinson trialed the car extensively in 1934, putting another 10,000 miles on the car, This does not include the many trips back to Abingdon to service the car and deal with complaints. Maybe John Thornley took it out for a test drive or two. Its too bad the L2 does not have an odometer, just the K3 tach.

The Colliers must have put in some seat time too, the car was driven around various race tracks in the ARCA days, and was driven to and from Memphis for the 1936 Cotton Carnival race. Barron Collier drove the L2 in the Memphis race, gaining 3 rd place. In an amazing coincidence, the race was won by younger brother Sam Collier, driving the Auburn speedster which the two brothers drove in the 1933 Alpine Trial.

The L2 bagged another celebrity posterior this March. I had invited Norman Dewis of Jaguar fame to be guest of honour at the VJC's hosting of the JCNA AGM, and at our XKExperience, celebrating 50 years of the E-type. Norman was the development engineer and test driver for the E- type and drove 77RW to Geneva for the 1961 debut in an epic overnight dash to provide a second demonstrator car. He is an incredible bloke, over 90 and fit as a fiddle, full of Jaguar memories and lore, and a most gracious and willing guest. A great man and wonderful ambassador for Jaguar. Even though he is a Jaguar man through and through, I believe he liked the old L2.

**David Harrison**



## NAMMM REGISTER NEWSLETTER

### North American MMM Register

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The NAMMM Register Newsletter is published quarterly beginning in March of each year. The deadline for "camera ready" contributions—stories, technical reports, ads, and general information—is the end of Feb., May, Aug., and Nov. Please submit all contributions to Larry Long via:

e-mail at [NAMMMRNewsletter@aol.com](mailto:NAMMMRNewsletter@aol.com)

"snail-mail" at 1411 Foxenwood Drive,  
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Contributions are solicited for all activities associated with your MMM cars: local or national events you have participated in, technical tips, restoration progress, etc. Let us know what you are doing with your cars and how you have been enjoying them.

\*\*\*\*\*

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