

Hi, Jack,

Andrea and I and Matilda had a most delightful afternoon together. It was delightful enough for me to write a blog for our website, which might be okay to send to the membership, or even to the **Marque** for the newsletter? There is a very small commercial plug near the end but mostly it's just the musings of a satisfied MGA driver at the end of a lovely day with his wife and little red car.

Here is the text of the blog. Sorry it's so long:

In these days of Coronavirus messing up our lives, it's hard to find solace and forget about the crisis the world is facing. It's my belief that the right way to deal with the disruption of our lives is to find something that is meaningful to us and indulge in that thing once in a while. That might be going for a walk with someone in your family or with friends, while keeping a safe distance from one another and wearing a mask. It might be having tea or a drink with friends outdoors, ten feet or more apart to stay safe. Or it might have something to do with British cars.

In our case, Andrea and I decided to celebrate Drive Your MGA Day by doing exactly that, taking dear old Matilda out for a good run. Those who know us may be aware that we own a 1960 MGA roadster and have done so for 41 years. We have had her all in pieces lots of times, two self-inflicted paint jobs, two engine rebuilds, an MGB engine and overdrive transplant 25 years ago, towed an MGA trailer with her out to the Marietta, Ohio NAMGAR GT in '87, on and on and on. In recent years, she has not been driven much, and to be honest, she had suffered from neglect. Much like the shoemaker's kids going barefoot, the Rogers Motors MG is a scruffy, if much-loved, driver.

So this spring I decided it was time to fix a few things and get Matilda back in shape as a more "regular" driver. To this end, we bought a set of new wire wheels (tubeless MWS wheels from Moss Motors) and a set of new Federal tires to replace the 40-year-old Michelin XZXs that were all about to burst from dry rot.

Last year we rebuilt a distributor and installed a Pertronix ignition. Now she drives great, and safely, too with the new rubber. Safety Fast, no less. We also did some rattle-can-touch-up on her nose and installed a new grille, and she does look quite good, especially from about 20 feet away. And at 60 mph, she looks as good as the best trophy-winning MGA in the country, and sounds about the same.

It was 72 degrees at the house this morning, so Andrea put on a white May morning dress and I dug out a pair of shorts and dusted off a decent shirt and straw hat, and off we went in search of adventure on back roads in north-central Massachusetts. Matilda was running great and the new tires don't rattle and thump as though they are about to blow up (which the old ones definitely were: they say you should replace tires every seven years, so I guess we got our money's worth out of those Michelins, which were used anyhow when we put them on a LONG time ago). And no loose-spline clunks or steering-wheel vibrations from the new wheels: what an improvement!







Our route took us north through New Salem. We explored a dirt road, slow and gentle-like, past a local winery and through an old village of lovely out-of-the-way New England farmhouses. The place looked as though nothing had changed there since 1890. One huge old barn was part-dismantled, obviously being restored with all new outside barn boards on the original chestnut frame; beautiful!

On we sped through North New Salem and into Wendell and Erving, all on small, winding roads. We found some exquisite driving roads in North Orange, long hills with brand new blacktop and wonderful sweeping bends, just perfect for an MGA on a sunny spring day. Passing into Warwick, we found a lovely spot by a small drinking water reservoir for a photo-op. Cars always look good next to bodies of water, I think. After the reservoir, Matilda took us into Blissville (we blinked and missed it, sad to say) and finally into Tully, another little village with its own lake and mountain, all with the same name. Soon we were on our way home, through Athol and Orange and a long blast south down Route 202. Turning onto our road off 202, I thought I would try out the new tires, so we went round more or less sidewise with the power on. I would say that the Federals are a little softer than the Michelins, which might be partly due to the Michelins being hard as rocks from age, and partly due to the deep tread area of the new tires, which allows tread squirm until the tires wear a little. That probably won't happen in my lifetime, unless I figure out how to put a couple more thousand miles on this car each year, so maybe I will try inflating the rears a bit more. I used to run about 45psi back in salad days when I went autocrossing, after all. Since the shop is at our home, we don't go much of anyplace these days, so it's a challenge to put any significant mileage on the MGA, the Mark 2 Jaguar, the Sprite and the Volvo 122S, since we like them all and like to drive them.



The only troubles we had on our 85 miles or so this afternoon were a dodgy overdrive switch, which has been a little recalcitrant for years, and some slight engine pinging after she had gotten good and hot, indicating that I need to retard the timing a whisker. I must dismantle and clean that switch, something you can do with the old Lucas parts if you are patient.

It was a nice indulgence for us both to take an afternoon and goof off like this. Since Moss Motors and Victoria British have been closed due to the pandemic, Rogers Motors has been crazy busy with new parts orders, as we are a Moss master distributor and we are open for business, with most common MGA and MGB parts on the shelf. The workshop has also been busy, with an MGA in for some major rust repair to the chassis and inner body structure, as well as a lot of smaller jobs, plus a couple of Jag

rebuilt and a Midget engine swap on the horizon. To be honest, both Andrea and I needed a break to forget about the world's troubles and our own workload. But now it's getting late and we must get a couple of orders ready for FedEx, so I will go and get on with it.

It has been a wonderful day.

Drive your British car and by all means, stay safe!



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