

# 1962 MGA MkII & 1951 MG TD

Owner David Littlefield ● Occupation Banker  
● Mileage 'Who's counting?'

## David Littlefield, with his MGA, braves the wilds of Texas and rides on a giant tarantula. No, really

Just who or what is the Cotton-Eyed Joe? When was the Battle of the Alamo? Where is a tarantula big enough to ride on? The answer to the last question is Texas, of course, where everything is big!

If you were in Grapevine, Texas between 16 and 20 July, you would know the answers to all of these questions, and you might have even received some Rallye bonus points for answering them! That's because the North American MGA Register (NAMGAR) had its 22nd annual national Get Together (or 'GT') in this quaint little western town between Dallas and Fort Worth in the Lone Star State.

Participants got to sample a real Texas barbecue, ride an ancient steam-powered train (dubbed the 'Tarantula'), kick up their boot heels to the Cotton-Eyed Joe (considered the 'national' dance of Texas), rope a Texas Longhorn, and sample a local Tex-Mex delicacy known as fajitas. Other events included technical seminars, a tyre-spinning funkhana, and an opportunity to see the Texas Rangers (not the legendary

gun-slinging law enforcement group, but the mostly unarmed baseball team). Of course, there was also a modicum of socialising, perhaps best measured by the substantial amount of tread worn off the wheels of the cart that was used to move beer kegs into the hospitality room.

Longhorn roping was the first skill test for the Gimmick Rallye held on the third day of the GT. The driver was required to mount a saddle placed on a sawhorse, then toss his lariat at a plastic Texas Longhorn some distance away. Yelling "yeeehaah" was optional, but recommended for greatest accuracy. Contestants then drove through 60 miles of countryside gathering answers to numerous clues, pitching horseshoes for points, and enduring tests of local historical knowledge. The concluding skill test involved tossing cowchips into a basket. Fortunately, since the Longhorn was plastic, it produced plastic cowchips that looked (and smelled, thankfully) like brown Frisbees.

A total of 72 gleaming MGAs and a handful of Bs and Ts participated in the GT. The cars ranged from concours quality restorations to well-used examples. The latter category included an obviously beloved 1500 with dalmatian patterned red and yellow primer. The personalised license tag

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### ● Home town Houston, Texas, USA

announced the car's name as 'Spot'. Also attending were two MGAs that had participated in the Brit Run to the Sun; a marathon pilgrimage to experience the midnight sun in Alaska. The trek was attempted by an esoteric band of British cars, including a Morgan. Barney Gaylord's MGA travelled a total of over 17,000 miles (that's no misprint) to Prudhoe Bay, and up and down the US (and up and down Colorado's Pikes Peak) in about eight weeks. His car was somewhat the worse for wear, after being sideswiped by a truck, blasted by gravel, and peppered by mosquitoes big enough to star in a Japanese horror flick. Tragically, the adventurers suffered the loss of one of our members, Dick Criswell who was killed when his MGB GT V8 was involved in a freak accident on the return trip from the Arctic Circle.

I drove my Mk II up from Houston to attend the event, a comparatively leisurely 300 miles. Although temperatures approached a wilting 100°F with 85% humidity (resulting in severe overheating of the driver), the trusty



MGA kept its cool and the temperature gauge never climbed above 200°. Which proves conclusively that a well-tuned, properly prepared MGA will not overheat in the worst of circumstances. A couple of the MGA Coupe owners were quite comfortable driving their cars in the afternoon heat, however, thanks to the clever installation of air-conditioning by Art Ziesk, a Dallas-based MG specialist and enthusiast. In any case, the afternoon tech sessions held in the comfortable air-conditioned meeting rooms of the Grapevine Hilton were extremely popular. Sessions on offer included evaluating and choosing a machine shop, rebuilding and tuning SU carburettors, and understanding

and rectifying the car's electrical system.

Thanks to the untiring two year effort of Ed Sass and other members of the Texas MG Register, the whole shebang went off without a hitch. There were few breakdowns; the one major exception being a brake problem experienced by one of the Coupes. Since the attendees were more than anxious to apply knowledge recently gleaned from tech sessions, the poor fellow was swamped with more helpful hints and helping hands than could logically fit around the left front wheel well.

This was the first NAMGAR GT held in Texas, and one of few not held in the Midwest or the Eastern USA. Although the MGAs present were not as numerous as in some recent GTs, we were grateful to those brave souls who endured the summer heat and persevered long distances to come and visit. Y'all come back, now, y'hear? **MGW**