



# Abingdon Rough Rider Review



May 2024

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## In Loving Memory



*Join us as we celebrate the life of*

### **Terry D. Sanders**

*March 8, 1938 - February 14, 2024*

Saturday, April 27, 2024

The Warehouse

499 Embarcadero, Building 17

Oakland, California

5<sup>th</sup> Ave. Marina on the Estuary

**At 1 PM**

**Kindly respond to Cindy at cinweiss51at gmail dot com or 916 716 1606**

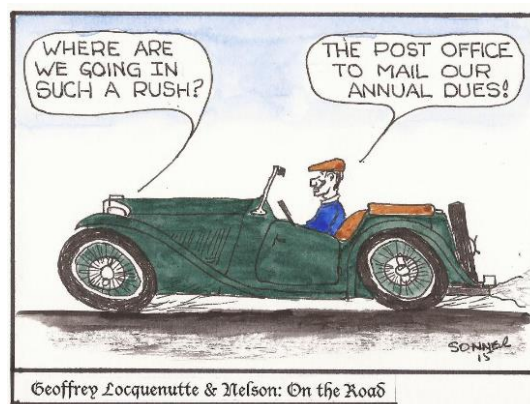
# 2024 Gold Country Weekend

**Friday-Sunday May 10-12**  
**Gold Country Run to**  
**Placerville – see the write-up**  
**details on next page!**

**The Spring Fling April 13 was called**  
**on account of rain**



**Oh yeah, and dues are due - \$20 to yours truly-**  
**1231 12th Ave SF CA 94122, or by PayPal to**  
**abingdonroughriders (at) yahoo (dot) com – call it**  
**a gift so they don't deduct a fee**



## Coming Events

**Friday-Sunday May 10-12 Gold Country Run to Placerville,**  
**Raffetto, Sonner**

**Saturday, June 15 Wine Country Run Healdsburg, Taylors**  
**July open**

**Sunday August 4 Sausage Run, Stobbes**

**September? Conclave – to be decided**

**Saturday November 16 Basque Dinner, Chalmers**

**Saturday/Sunday December 14-15 Holiday Party, Taylors**

## Other events

**Sunday May 19 Dixon Car Show & Swap meet**

**Saturday, June 8 MGs by the Bay-see further**

**GoF West Folsom CA October 14 - 18**

## Gold Country Weekend 2024 UPDATE from Brian and Kurt

The list of members who have indicated that they will be coming currently includes:

1. Allan and Linda **Chalmers**; Brian and Jane **Sonner** Kurt and Polly **Raffetto**
2. Alan and Victoria **Campbell** Dean and DonnaRae **Caccavo**
3. Rick and Judy **Storms**; John and Elizabeth **Taylor** Daniel **Shockey** Bill **Traill**
4. Charlie and Carolyn **Manchester** Ed **Dail** Ron **Engstrom** Jim and Mary **Johnson**
5. Bob and Carolyn **Alley**

**We need to hear from those who will be attending so that we can ensure sufficient food and notify the venues that we will be visiting. Please send a message to Brian at sonnerb at Comcast dot net as soon as you know your plans. Be sure to make your hotel reservations soon.**

In the past, because of the heat that time of year, many have left home early on Friday and arrived in Placerville slightly after noon. Before checking in at their accommodations, they came to the Sonner's to relax and catch up. We had been able to accommodate parking in prior years. The construction of two homes on the acre below our house has significantly reduced the parking space. I think we will still be able to accommodate the TCs at our house for the day. Kurt and Polly are making their place available Friday afternoon for the storage of trailers should you need a place to store them for the weekend. Please call or send a message to Kurt to coordinate the storage process. ([kurt.raffetto at reagan dot com](mailto:kurt.raffetto@reagan.com), 530 503-5451)

The Friday dinner will include Pheasant, Tri-tip, Green Salad, Fruit Salad, and Potato Salad provided for all. If there is a dinner item or dessert item that you would like to bring, PLEASE let us know so that we can coordinate it. AND, this is a BYOB event.

Friday afternoon = May 10, 2024 Meet at Brian and Jane Sonner's at 2700 Sleepy Hollow Ct.

Placerville, CA 95667 (530 748-9681)

Friday dinner = May 10, 2024, meet at The Sonner's home about @ 5 PM for dinner at 6PM

Saturday morning drive = May 11, 2024 Arrive @ 7:30 AM at Annie's Mimosas, 155 Placerville Dr. Placerville for breakfast. Depart @ 9:30 AM for drive and arrive at Caccavo's at 1130 AM for lunch and to view car collection

Saturday evening dinner = May 11, 2024 @ 5:30 PM at The Placerville Public House, 305 Main

Street, Placerville

Sunday morning breakfast = May 12, 2024 @ 0730 AM at Sweetie Pie's, 577 Main Street,

Placerville,

Sunday morning depart for home after breakfast

As you know, the Annual Gold Country Weekend is scheduled this year for the 10<sup>th</sup> through the 12<sup>th</sup> of May in Placerville. The event is being planned by Kurt Raffetto [(530) 503-

5451] and Brian Sonner [(530) 748-9681]. Please email Brian Sonner so that we will know how many will be attending the meals and driving activities.

We have notified the National 9 Inn in Placerville of the dates and they are anxious for our return and suggested individuals **call soon** and reserve ground floor rooms [(530) 622-3884] (1500 Broadway, Placerville, CA 95667). Mention that you are with the Abingdon Rough Riders. They will extend to you the winter rates for your visit (Queen: \$88/night includes all taxes. King or two doubles: \$104.50/night includes all taxes.) If you prefer other accommodations we can make recommendations and provide contact numbers. Once you have let us know you are coming, we will circulate information concerning dining, etc. This is a great time for all of us to gather, catch up and enjoy our friendships.

### **Schedule of events:**

#### **Friday May 10<sup>th</sup>:**

Gather at the Sonner Home (2700 Sleepy Hollow Ct., Placerville, CA 95667) in the afternoon (530) 748-9681. Parking for trailers is no longer available there; but you can leave trailers at Kurt Raffetto's home at 1866 Carson Rd. Placerville. Give Kurt a call to ensure the gate is open (530) 503-5451]. The meal should be ready about **6:00 pm**. The menu will be Tri-Tip and Pheasant. BYOB please. We will socialize and catch up with one another's recent adventures.

#### **Saturday May 11<sup>th</sup>:**

We are planning a nice drive through the southwest portion of El Dorado County and will have lunch. We have arranged for a gathering for breakfast at **07:30 am** as a group at **Annie's Mimosas**, 155 Placerville Dr. Placerville, CA 95667. We plan to leave on the drive about **9:00 am** from the parking lot at Raley's which is across the street from Annie's Mimosas. We will finish the drive at Dean and DonnaRae Caccavo's home (2948 Stagecoach Road, Placerville, CA 95667 <Gate Code: 47552>) with a look at their car collection. We will arrange for lunch to be delivered there so that we can enjoy being together and the lovely surroundings.

We will meet at **The Placerville Public House** (305 Main Street, Placerville) at **5:30 pm** for dinner. After dinner you have the evening free.

#### **Sunday May 12<sup>th</sup>:**

We will meet for breakfast at **Sweetie Pie's** in Placerville at 577 Main St. Placerville at **7:30 am** (Same location as last year). After breakfast we can all get on the road to get home before it gets hot (or before it snows).

### **Our Founding member, Bob Winkelmann has left us**

He had been living at Muir Beach and got together with us occasionally in recent years. He was 95. He had an amazing life – RAF mechanic on Seafires, the carrier version of Spitfires during WWII, he built 160 Formula cars with his name, and was featured in a great read in *Automobile Magazine* in 1994, featured below.

A photo of two Formula cars owned by TC Motoring Guild members – Roy Jones and Ernie Page is shown.



# HOGAN'S GROVE

*Youth is served  
in a '47  
MG TC.*

*Bolinas, California—*

All day he chased the sun across Texas. At noon it stood above him, but then, inexorably, it drew ahead. The land stretched as flat as a drum from horizon to horizon. The road would turn north at Santa Fe.

About sundown, he saw two dogs lying beside the road and another sitting by them. He pulled over, and the dog that had been sitting immediately ran under the MG TC. He turned off the engine at once. Leaning over the driver's door, he saw that the two others were dead. They were German shepherds, a good-looking mother and her pup. Both had been hit.

Bob Winkelmann sat back and looked over the rangeland. He was at the highest point in the world, even higher than the town he could see ahead on the horizon. The only sounds were the wind in the telephone wires and the ping of cooling metal from the TC. He saw no sign of life. No ranch house, no place that such a handsome dog might have come from. He looked down once more at the dead mother and pup. It was odd. He climbed out, got down on hands and knees on the warm asphalt, and looked under the car. The pup crouched there, staring back at him. He coaxed it out and picked it up, soothing it with his voice. Holding it in the crook of his

arm, he unsnapped the tonneau cover over the passenger's seat. There wasn't room to put the animal behind the seat because his footlocker fit there exactly. There wasn't room on the floor in front of the seat for anything other than his toolbox. His duffel bag lay on top of this box, half-covering the seat. These three things were his sole possessions, apart from the red TC. He moved his bag to make enough space on the passenger's seat and set the pup down, smoothing its ears with his hand. He went around the car and got back in behind the wheel, then reached over and pulled the tonneau cover over the pup and snapped it up. He drove on. In a few miles, he

BY CHARLES FOX

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DAVID GROVE



reached the town of Paducah, so that was what he called the pup.

He was heading north again after a year in Wichita Falls. He was twenty-five, tuned by the deprivation of a world war just past, case-hardened by necessity and emergency. When he arrived, assigned to a squadron of P51 Mustang fighter aircraft, Wichita Falls had about six stoplights. He had quickly found there were two other TCs in town. One was on the same air base, owned by Dave Naetzker, a fellow airman from Jamestown, New York. The other was owned by J.I. Staley, a wealthy and mildly eccentric Texas oil man. "Jay Eye," as he liked to be called, was a Stanford man and an Anglophile. He also owned the only Jaguar XK120 in the Southwest, but he mostly drove a Cadillac Coupe de Ville. Vigorous and slight of build, he had a quick wit and reminded Bob of Noel Coward. On weekends, the three of them would drive to the first ess curve in the road to practice their cornering techniques. They had to go about ninety miles.

J.I. had a mansion in town, which he referred to as his townhouse. He also had land outside town with a one-story ranch house he called the Cavortorium, stocked with steaks and whisky.

The land around was flat, mesquite covered. The highest point was a J.I. oil derrick. Bob, Dave, and J.I. chased one another over the ground in their MGs, and a rough track was born. With tongue in cheek, J.I. christened this place Hogan's Grove, after Watkins Glen. The first U.S. Grand Prix was yet years away, but the racetrack at Watkins Glen was already famous.

At Hogan's Grove, they had to race "Australian pursuit" style because of the dust, giving each other a half-lap start, plowing the corners, shoulders hunched, eyes shining. Bob drove so hard that he regularly broke spokes and had to rebuild the wheels.

The three TCs were the nucleus of an informal, ephemeral sports car gathering. Passers-by stopped to watch, and word spread rapidly. One Sunday, a woman in a purple Muntz Jet with a scarf to match joined in. A fourth TC appeared, driven by Rick Carter. He rolled it trying a cornering technique involving a hand brake described by Al Coppel in a pulp paperback novel that was popular at the time.

Another day, young Lloyd Ruby drove up in J.I.'s former XK120. Ruby

was still years away from being a legend at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, but he still had the makings of a sleepy-eyed good old boy.

Another Sunday a Texan, rangy, lean, and competitive as hell, appeared from Dallas, driving a Cadillac-engined Allard. He introduced himself as Carroll Shelby. When they had finished chasing one another through the mesquite, he cooked them some of the finest chili they would ever taste.

Hogan's Grove was the best show in the state. It only lasted six weeks, but the memory was to last a lifetime. J.I., in his nineties now, still sends Bob Christmas cards. They would do many things of a much higher order, these men, but they were none of them ever to have more fun than at Hogan's Grove.

Now, with the pup beside him, Bob was coming from Dallas, which was then a tank stop in a railroad town. He had worked at Clarence Talley's foreign-car dealership for a few weeks. He had driven up fresh out of the air force and told Clarence he was available as a mechanic. With his London accent, his TC, and his toolbox full of Whitworth spanners, Bob was hired immediately.

There weren't any mechanics for these cars. There were Ford and Chevy mechanics in the local garages, but they didn't want to know about TCs or any other foreign car. If an import broke, they weren't a bit surprised. So Clarence gave Bob \$100 a week when the going rate was \$60. Bob pulled on his overalls and went to work. The problem was always the same. Someone had cannibalized a part to fix another car and never replaced it. The disabled car was then pushed aside in the shop to become what they had called in the British Naval Air Force a hangar queen. In Texas, a hangar queen was known as a Christmas tree, a car they took presents from when spares were unavailable. Bob fixed several hangar queens for Clarence.

Now, as Bob drove on toward Santa Fe with Paducah under the tonneau cover beside him, he thought that it had been a good year in Wichita Falls, but he was glad to be going back north. He was pleased to be finished with the U.S. Air Force. It was a powerful air force, but it had seemed fat and comfortable after lean years in England keeping the English navy Spitfires flying. Seafires, they called them. They had to be

ready to fly at dawn, no matter what the problem. If you didn't have a part, you made it. That was the kind of discipline he was used to, the kind of austerity. Not the surfeit and plenty of the U.S. Air Force as it prepared to support the ground forces going into Korea.

His younger brother, Roy, was in Denver. Bob had left England because he had lost his driver's license for a year. He was intending to return when the suspension was up, but instead he called Roy, his mother, Kathleen, and his stepfather, Gordon Gale, onetime London Metropolitan policeman and lately captain in the Royal Wiltshire Regiment. Postwar Britain was struggling with bomb damage and rationing. America was booming. They joined him in Salt Lake City, where there was space and the skies were not cloudy all day. Bob and Roy entered the U.S. Air Force as policemen, but as surely as if the nuts and bolts had stuck out from under Bob's skin, the air force had made him a mechanic. Roy remained an MP. Now discharged, too, Roy was waiting in Denver with the idea of starting a security business, using his MP buddies.

With the pup beside him, Bob slept

**T**hey would do many things of a much higher order, these men, but they were never to have more fun than at Hogan's Grove.





#### HOGAN'S GROVE

on the ground outside Santa Fe, and in the morning he drove north, heading the TC up the western hem of the Rockies, wondering how he was going to be a racing driver in a world where there was so little racing.

Their father, Robert Winkelmann, was in the motor trade in London. From the first, Bob remembered expensive motorcars, Lalique emblems, cut glass, silk tassels, and walnut. There wasn't much else but luxury trade in those days. Bob's world had been cars until 1942, when he went into the Sea Cadets and was sent to a naval air base, just as the Americans were arriving. He was put in a hangar filled with fighting aircraft and taught to keep them flying. He was fourteen. For the next three years, all he thought about was how to modify a Seafire so it could keep up with a Messerschmitt. It was a tit-for-tat search for speed, altitude, and armament, a strict competition where performance was linked to survival.

Bob saw this TC he drove through the mountains as a fighter plane on wheels. He knew it as well as he had known his planes. Like them, the TC was *pur sang*, uncompromising, uncomfortable to some, rough-riding with its solid front axle.

The TC was the last machine built by Lord Nuffield before he sold MG to Austin. It had a 1250-cc overhead-valve pushrod engine, with a long stroke that gave the block a tall and rather delicate, gothic look. The valve cover was difficult to seal, so it tended to leak warm oil. The valves chattered and the engine whirred in a friendly fashion.

● The TC threw a wheel bearing one afternoon in Vernon, Texas. Bob pulled over at the side of the road, got out, and walked into town to the local Massey-Harris tractor dealership and bought a tractor bearing. He walked back and, sitting on the ground beside the car, using the tool from his MG toolbox, replaced the bearing. That's what a TC owner was supposed to do. That's the kind of person the car was built for. One who would roll up his sleeves with relish and get out his tools and fix the problem, not one who would throw up his hands in horror at how far away the next pay phone was, let alone how far the dealer was located.

When he arrived in Denver, he went to see Roy. Roy was surprised to see the pup. Roy's security business was still in the planning stage. Bob went to work

temporarily for Kirt Kirscher at Denver Imported Motors. After a few weeks, he went on to Salt Lake City. He kept Paducah with him in the car. The pup was at home on the passenger's seat.

His mother still lived in Salt Lake City with Gordon. The youngest of twelve children, Kathleen was still, in truth, a Londoner. She had divorced Bob's father before the war. When Bob told her that he wanted to keep going west to San Francisco, she said, "Get on with it," which is what she always said. But Bob still didn't have enough money saved. He gave Paducah to his mother to look after and went to look for a job. Despite his impatience, Bob felt good to be back in Salt Lake City, his first American home.

Salt Lake City was where he had bought the TC. He had seen it in a used-car lot soon after he arrived. It was a 1947, painted a hideous yellow. He inspected it closely. The car's serial number was TC 1920. There was a sign over the lot, Austin of England, but there had been no Austins from England here for a long time. Under this was written "Proprietor: Battle Fatigue Anderson." When Bob went in to ask about the car, he saw that Anderson slept on a bunk in the corner. Anderson told Bob that the car came from Canada. The Canadians had made it as far as Salt Lake City before a half-shaft broke. He wanted \$1700 for the car, as is. He didn't have a spare half-shaft. Bob guessed that Anderson had got the car for two bus tickets back to Canada. For a year it stayed there unsold, unmoving. Every week Bob came down to see if Anderson was ready to drop the price. They got to know each other on a first-name basis. It wasn't until the spring of 1951, when the English Chancellor of the Exchequer devalued the British pound by over a quarter, cutting the value of the TC in half—making it, at \$1700, the same price as the new MG TD—that Anderson capitulated. He sold the TC to Bob for \$1100, of which \$400 was allowed in trade for Bob's '39 Chevrolet coupe.

Bob made payments out of his \$78-per-month air force pay, which left him enough to buy a bar of soap and a couple of pints of beer, and that was all he needed. It was then that the air force had sent him to Wichita Falls.

Now he was back in Salt Lake with Paducah. Bernard Musser of Foreign Cars made him shop foreman mechanic, although Bob made no secret of wanting



**H**e had  
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Every week Bob  
came down to see it.

.....

to go to San Francisco. They sold seven new Jaguars that summer—six Mark VII sedans and one XK120—and a Rolls-Royce, to a rancher in Elko.

With the first freeze, all seven Jag-





cars hit the shop simultaneously with seized engines. There was pandemonium. The trouble lay with the steel shim used for a head gasket. The alcohol-based antifreeze leaked past into the cylinders. England's "green and pleasant land" had no such cold. The cars simply weren't designed to deal with extremes. An irate rancher from Big Piney, Wyoming, hauled his Jaguar in on a flatbed truck. He was furious. His wife and kids had been coming back home when the car broke down between the front gate and the ranch house in a blizzard, a distance of some four or five miles. Had his foreman not found them on his way back from town, this oversight could have become a tragedy.

Bob found the fix in a wire-reinforced gasket material called Klingerite. Installing a handmade head gasket with gobs of Cadillac Sealer and using aircraft glycol as antifreeze, he got all seven cars back on the road.

The Rolls-Royce they had sold kept coming back with the complaint of excessive oil consumption. Rolls sent a rep out from England. He arrived in a three-piece suit, showing a lot of French cuff with gold cuff links and tie pin. Removing his jacket and links, he turned up his sleeves and pulled out the oil filter. The oil ran up to his elbows, thick and black. Sending the man was an impressive gesture for the owner, but he obviously couldn't fix the problem. The mechanics laughed at him. The Rolls-Royce man left in a huff, remarking sharply, "If the owner can't afford a quart of oil every once in a while, take the bloody car away from him."

Bob was disturbed. In London, he might have laughed, too, but this wasn't London. This rancher was not cowed by the Rolls-Royce. He owed it nothing. He just wanted a car that worked.

When Bob was a boy, the teacher in geography class had drawn a huge daisy on the blackboard. The center he had colored gold. On each petal he had the children write the name of a British colony. Under this design, the teacher had written in capital letters, "The sun never sets on the British Empire."

Bob had learned from his father that nothing could be finer than an English car, that no one would ever make anything to compare. But the world was different now. Secure in their superiority, his own people were failing to read the writing on the wall.

Some time after this incident, Bob asked Musser for his time and left. He took a job as an aircraft mechanic at Thompson's Air Service, keeping a radial-engined Cessna aloft. All day they flew at fifty feet over an oil pipeline, inspecting it for leaks. At night he drove a taxi. When he had saved enough, he kissed his mother goodbye and left Paducah with her. He wanted her to have something of himself to hold. He got into the TC and drove west. He was in San Francisco long enough to meet and fall in love with Polly. Then Roy telephoned and persuaded Bob to come to Denver and run his guard service.

Bob and Polly got back into the TC and headed east. They stopped in Winnemucca, Nevada, to get married. They stopped in Salt Lake to introduce Polly to Kathleen and Gordon and to honeymoon. Paducah was at home here now. Bob and Polly went on to join Roy in



**P**aducah  
saw some deer  
in the garden.  
He went out  
of the house  
and joined them.

.....

**HOGAN'S GROVE**

Denver. Bob became operations manager of Roy's Frontier Guard Service, responsible for 120 people, who would guard anything you had.

Bob and Polly had a daughter, Corbi.

The MG Car Club of England had a branch in Denver, and the newly formed Sports Car Club of America was putting on competitive events. The SCCA officials accepted Bob's MG Club card as a competition license, and he was off to the races. They would go many miles for a race. There were four or five road races a summer in places like Steamboat Springs, Salida, La Junta, and Aspen. Californians came to Colorado, and so did Texans. Those who did were true enthusiasts. The towns were given over to racing, as if it were the Mille Miglia in Italy.

Les Gaylord, a saloon keeper, ran the Aspen race. He saw it as a way of bringing people to the town. They ran a five-mile hill-climb at Lookout Peak, where Buffalo Bill is buried. They rallied on abandoned mountain railroad beds, beautifully graded, the rails and ties removed. They ran up to old mining camps like Georgetown and Leadville. The distances were long, the times given them short. Thus, the rallies quickly became races. Maybe twenty cars would appear. For Bob and Polly and their little daughter, life was good. The TC was part of the family. They drove fast; all was before them.

In 1953, Bob and Polly drove the TC to a race at Madera off Highway 99, south of Modesto. It was Bob's first race in California. The engine ran a rod bearing, and for the only time in its racing history, the car was towed home. It was driven to and from every race ex-

cept that one under its own power. Back in Denver, Bob took the engine apart and discovered the TC's Achilles' heel. The oil pickup was on the left side of the sump. In counterclockwise American races, the oil congregated on the right side of the sump, starving the pickup pipe and ruining the bearings. Bob built a baffle down the center of the pan and moved the oil pickup pipe, and this solved the problem.

Bob drove to San Francisco in 1954 to see the race in Golden Gate Park. He climbed a tree and watched, suspended above the track from a branch.

He had earlier gone to see the race at Pebble Beach in 1950. Phil Hill, who in 1961 was to become world champion in a Ferrari after Wolfgang von Trips was killed, won. Hill's close friend Arnold Stubbs raced in a TC in which the 1250 engine had been replaced by a V-8-60. The car was called 2 Jr. A V-8-60 was a 60-bhp flathead Ford V-8. Bob dismissed it as a side-valve engine, which he considered retrogressive. Americans would do anything for raw power.

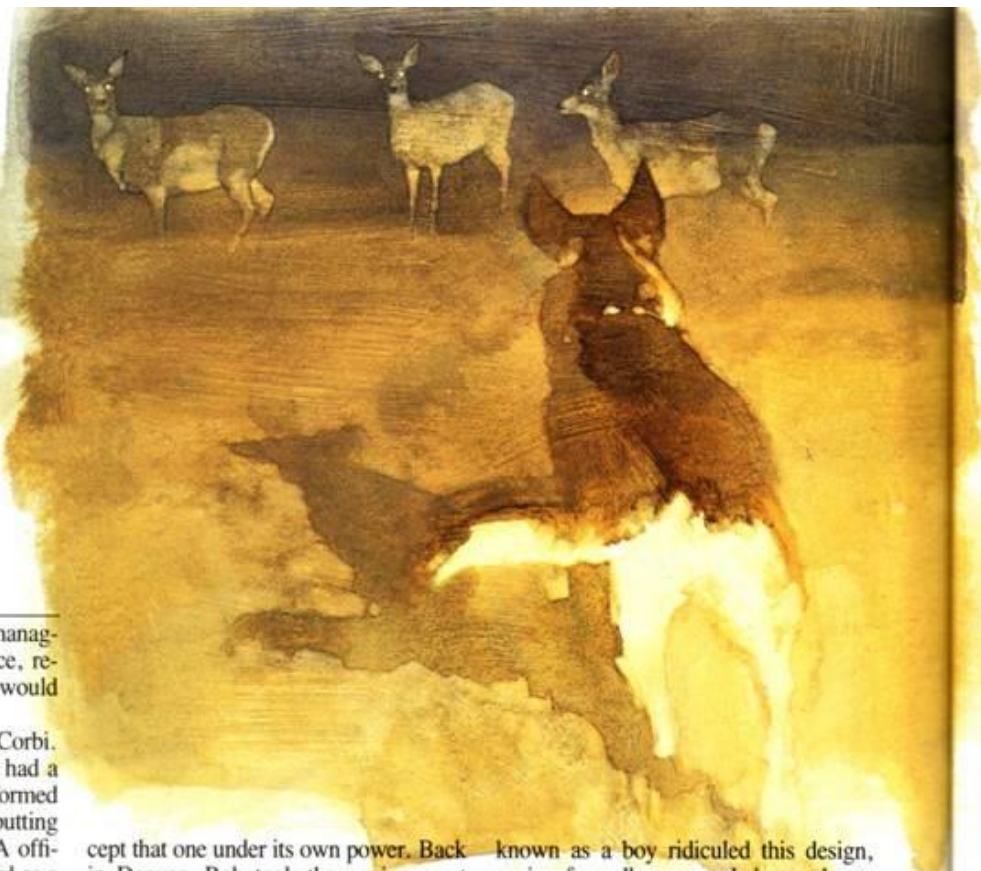
Bob saw the flathead as nothing more than a slab of iron that bolted to the block with recessions for the valve heads and the inlet and exhaust ports. From the carburetor, the fuel mixture had to turn four 90-degree corners to get into the combustion chamber and four more to get out. Engineers he had

known as a boy ridiculed this design, saying four elbows equaled one plug.

As a teen, he'd owned a 1926 Triumph Riccardo motorcycle. Designed by the brilliant Harry Riccardo, the 500-cc single-cylinder engine boasted a four-valve head, with two inlet and two exhaust valves. Bob found the remains of the old bike at the dump and nicknamed it Thumper (English slang for single-cylinder engines). The frame was completely rusted away, but the engine turned over. The valves operated out in the open with just a grease fitting for lubrication. There was no oil pump in the engine; the roller-bearing "bottom end" was given a shot every few miles with a hand-operated "Ki-gass" pump mounted on the oil tank. The oil dripped on the road through a hole in the bottom of the crankcase. This was called a total-loss system. Installed in a New Imperial frame, old Thumper ran off and hid from the new postwar Triumph 500-cc Speed Twins of 1948, demonstrating to Bob a design superiority unrecognized by the auto industry until Ford of Britain produced the BDA four-valve engine for the Escort in the Seventies.

Bob was a small-engine aficionado. *Multum in parvo* ("much from little"), that was his motto. Someone had told him it was Fiat's motto. He liked the idea of getting the most from the least.

After two years in Denver, he left





Roy's guard service and started a foreign-car repair shop. It was an immediate success, and so he shut it down. He didn't want to be a success in Colorado. He wanted to go back to San Francisco.

This time, he went west in the TC with Polly and Corbi. Bill Breeze hired him at the Sports Car Center on the mud flats in Sausalito. Bill was just called Breeze, even by his wife. Breeze had the only dynamometer in northern California. They made a lot of the parts you couldn't get for imported cars. They were an odd but dedicated group of metal artists who labored long hours to make sports cars that had for the most part already been bettered elsewhere. They were essentially the same kind of independent individuals, prepared to gamble heavily on themselves, not really caring overmuch about success, far more preoccupied with the realization of their visions. They needed to live outside the mainstream, and the mud flats, with its armada of old houseboats, was a natural place for them to congregate.

Bob kept racing the TC. Racing was divided broadly into two categories: over and under 1500 cc. The TC ran the latter. It irked Bob that he had to leave 250 cc on the table. He looked around for pistons to bring the TC up to 1500 cc. He found them in a prewar Lincoln Zephyr V-12 made of aluminum. These lightweight pistons reduced reciprocating weight and allowed for higher revs. He bored out the TC block until the cylinder walls were dangerously thin. This gave him the extra 250 cc and more horsepower. In addition, he milled the head, fitted bigger carburetors, and with elaborate porting got above 90 bhp. He replaced the standard steel doors, fenders, hood, and gas tank with aluminum, reducing the overall weight by 400 pounds. This included the addition of triple-laced sixteen-inch wire wheels with wider tires. This TC breathed fire. Bob called it the Thinwall Special for the thinness of the cylinder walls. With it, he beat Porsches and won most MG races overall, despite its being the oldest car in the field.

It grew increasingly expensive to stay competitive, especially for a family man earning \$120 a week. By 1957, the TC was overwhelmed by European exotica: modified Porsches and OSCAs and Erminis, which had Fiat engines. To keep racing, Bob had to put all the iron back on the car and return to the original displacement plus an allowed overbore

of thirty thou. The TC was then eligible for the SCCA's new production category. It was some compensation to him that, by then, there were enough MGs to have their own race. In the eight years he owned the car, he put 100 races on it and somewhere around 280,000 miles.

In 1959, soon after he turned thirty, having worked with metal since he was fourteen, Bob decided it was time to get his hands clean and make money. He now had a son, Robert Gordon, to support as well. He sold the TC for \$1100, what he had paid for it eight years earlier, and opened a cabinet shop in Sausalito with the proceeds. Odette "Frenchie" Bigler in Sausalito bought the car. Women were beginning to go racing. Frenchie raced it for another three or four seasons and then sold it to a Chinese collector who retired it and restored it to its original specifications.

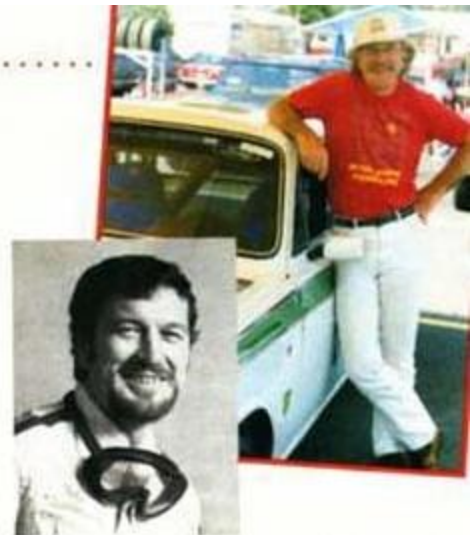
Paducah went as he had come. In autumn, cold and drought drove deer down out of the high country into Salt Lake City itself. Kathleen told Bob that Paducah saw some in the yard. He went out of the house and joined them. She said he didn't chase them, he just went off with them, as if entranced or somehow fallen in love. She never did see him again.

Bob returned to England for the 1963 European season, where he managed his brother Roy's Lotus Formula Junior team. But then he made his way back to California, where he settled and still lives. From Robert Winkelmann Racing, the Sausalito shop he opened, he campaigned a Lotus in the U.S. Road Racing Championship—Graham Hill won the under-two-liter category in his car in '64—and ran a Ford factory team of Lotus Cortinas and an Anglia in the mid-Sixties. At around that same time, he co-manufactured and sold more than 150 Palliser-Winkelmann formula racing cars across the country. The excitement of racing, the feeling he had back at Hogan's Grove all those years ago, never left him. But when the OPEC oil scare made it uneconomical to continue in business, he quit racing in 1974, having accomplished much but earned very little money.

For the past twenty years, Bob Winkelmann has lived in semiretirement in an old farmhouse north of San Francisco. He and his son are currently restoring the old Anglia for vintage racing. "For him to drive," says Bob, "and maybe for me, too." ●



Roy Jones and Ernie Page have been racing their Winkelman Formula Fords. First at the University of VARA at Buttonwillow, and then at VARA's season opening event at the new Chuckwalla Valley Raceway located at Desert Center, halfway between Indio and Blythe....not exactly the garden spot of the uni-verse, but where else can you find land cheap enough to build a race track?? Ernie's car is a recent acquisition, but Roy has been VARA For-mula Ford Class Champion the past four years



Then (left) and now: Robert Winkelmann, the transplanted Briton whose youthful exploits in his MG TC are recounted by Charles Fox in "Hogan's Grove" in this month's issue.

Editorial assistance provided by Véronique Chemain and Peter Valentine.



# GREAT KNOBS!

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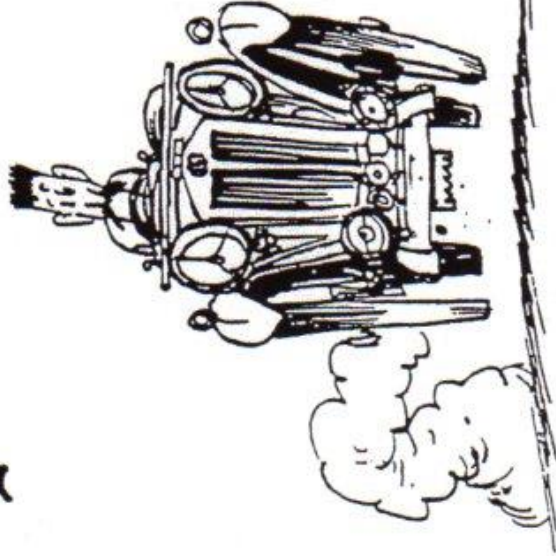
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