

## Classic MGTD cruising to LAMB show at Fort Lyle Pona's 1952 ride has a colourful history

BY TROY LANDREVILLE, LANGLEY ADVANCE APRIL 19, 2012



Lyle Pona is the proud owner of a 1952 MGTD, which he is bringing to the Langley Area Mostly British Motoring Club show, being held Sunday starting at 10 a.m., in Fort Langley.

Photograph by: Troy Landreville, Langley Advance

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Lyle Pona is a self-described "biker."

His first motorcycle was equipped with a 1950s Triumph engine on a '49 rigid frame chopper that he bought in 1965.

"Even back then, we were building our own bikes from scrap," he said.

Over the years he continued riding several other bikes, including his last two Harleys.

Today, he's the proud owner of a '72 Triumph Bonneville.

So, on that front, he's what you'd might call an all-Canadian kind of guy.

But Pona also has an affinity for British modes of transport.

The vice president of the Langley Area Mostly British Motoring Club (LAMB), Pona plans on bringing his 1952 MGTD to the club's annual St.

George's Day British Motoring Show being held Sunday, April 22, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., on the lawns of the Fort Langley Community Hall.

Pona is well versed in his car's history. He said British Motors developed the MGTD in 1950 and added rack and pinion steering, and made smaller steel wheels so the vehicle would be able to weather North America's tougher road standards.

There were 139,000 of these models built between 1950 and '53, Pona said, and 85 per cent of those were made for export.

"Most of them went to the United States," he said. "The odd one ended up in Canada. If you're looking for one, you're more likely to find one in the U.S. than you are in Canada."

He added, "many have been reexported back to the UK as they had few left for British collectors."

Pona's first exposure to the MGTD came when he was a 15-year-old high school student working part time at a used car lot on Commercial Drive in Vancouver.

"They had a [MG] TC there that I used to wash and polish every day - that was part of my job," he said. "I used to sit behind the steering wheel and think, 'This is cool.'"

Years rolled by and Pona dreamed of sitting in the driver's seat of his very own MGTC or MGTD.

That dream came to reality about four years ago, and his MGTD has a colourful history.

Pona bought the vintage vehicle at an estate sale in Portland, Ore.

The now pristine-looking, pearl white MGTD was in rough shape when Pona came across it. The car had fender tears that needed welding, and wood rot.

"It had been parked in a barn since '76," he said. "The '76 plates were still on it when I bought it."

Pona had his prized possession trucked to Blaine, Wash., and then he drove it through export and customs. Once in Canada, en route to Pona's home in Brookwood, the MGTD broke down on 8th Avenue. "I had to haul it the rest of the way," Pona recollected, while laughing.

Pona said he rebuilt the car "from the ground up."

"I took every nut and bolt off of it, right down to the frame, took the engine out, and sandblasted every part of it, and started building it back up again," he said.

The car's motor is a dual carburetted 1250cc with 52 hp.

The MGTD can hit 55 mph comfortably, Pona said, noting that the four-speed vehicle has a gear ratio so low, "you can climb up a wall with it in first gear."

The car didn't come equipped with a heater, or a radio, so Pona listens to music in the MGTD on his iPhone, using blue tooth portable speakers.

Pona's MGTD won the Mayor's Choice Award last year at both the LAMB and Langley International shows, and also took top spot in its first showing at Minter Gardens Classic Car Show two years ago.

#### ABOUT THE LAMB SHOW

The show has been running for the past seven years and attracts all types of British cars, from the 1940s to modern.

Jaguars, Rolls Royces, Bentleys, Triumphs, MGs, Morris's, metropolitans, motorcycles, a double Decker bus, and London taxis have been displayed at past shows.

This year, a Sopwith Camel WWI-era fighter plane from the Canadian Museum of Flight will sit amongst the vehicles.

There were 75 entries last year and organizers are expecting between 75 and 90 on Sunday.

LAMB is a small club, with roughly 50 members, all from the Surrey/Langley area. The common bond is their love for British cars.

At this year's show, LAMB will be raffling off a '56 Chevy A&W pedal car, with all proceeds (including entry fees) going to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Langley.

Club members meet every second Thursday at Willowbrook Lanes. During their meetings, they often discuss new finds and offer support to others who are restoring their projects.

Many of the members drive their cars daily and some have more than one vehicle.

For more on the club, or to check out some of the types of cars and vehicles owned by its members, visit [www.lambscarclub.com](http://www.lambscarclub.com).

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