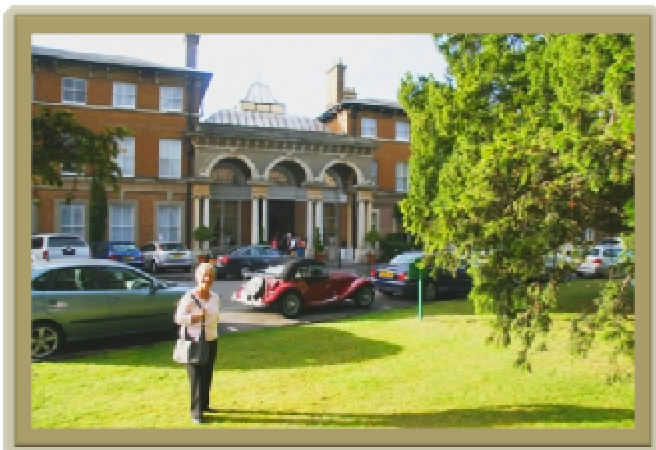


B39 FAREWELL TO ENGLAND
PROJECT: EUROPE 2011
SUBJECT: B39 FAREWELL TO ENGLAND SCRIPT
DATE: 31 JULY 201

During most of our travels we've had the luxury of booking a hotel ahead...but not today. When in a corner we always turn to booking.com and it has delivered with varied choices each time.



Such was the case in Weybridge and booking.com came through with a grand hotel at a reasonable price. Of course, last minute bookings on a weekend are often rewarded with the lowest rate but, many times, nothing is available to book. It's a form of roulette where the loser gets to spend the night in the MG. We hit the jackpot in the Oatlands Park Hotel, not minutes from the Brooklands Museum.



The hotel's main claim to fame is that it sits on the site of Henry VIII's former hunting grounds. Built in the mid 1800's as a traveler/vacationer hotel, it has carried on in the best tradition of countryside luxury. Of course, modern times have forced this grand dame into some changes.

EUROPE 2011

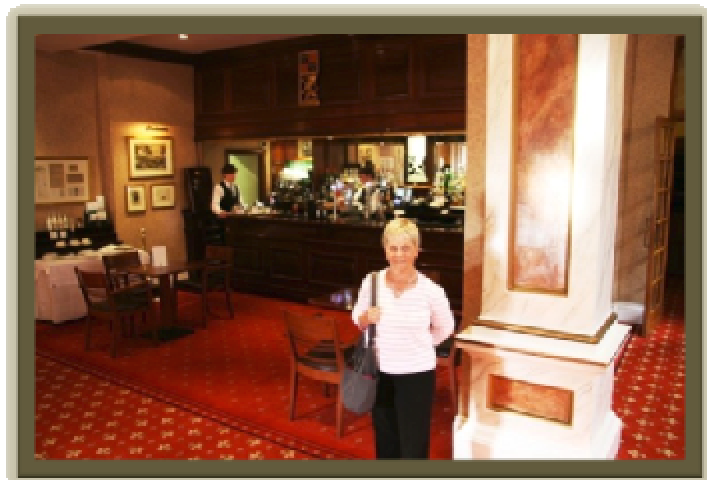
B39 Farewell To England

The lobby was chock full of the best-dressed people on our whole trip, all looking as if they were going to a party. Eager to be on the periphery, we unpacked and hurried back. The lobby was completely empty, not even an echo of the festive crowd. To keep revenue at its peak, the hotel has become the destination for wedding parties and affinity groups so all the beautiful people were now in some distant ballroom or in serious meetings.



We elected to have dinner in their elegant dining room, set for a dinner hour crowd that never materialized. Three overly attentive waiters, who would be short on tips this night, served us. One was a Lithuanian girl who came to England to improve her English. It's been six years but her new British accent still had strong Baltic undertones.

After dinner we dropped into the hotel bar to work on the blog (only place they had WiFi) and have a "Goodbye to England" drink. Our lament was not being able to attend an MG event during our stay in its mother country. A young couple was fascinated by the iPad2 as they'd never seen one...a situation we've found over and over again in Europe.



During our conversation the young man said, casually, "I suppose you're here for tomorrow's MG event?" "What event?" was our answer. He told us of a major MG rallye being held nearby the very next day and gave us directions. This chance meeting only proves, once again, the value of hanging out in hotel bars. Of course, it helps to have an MG and an iPad2 to ignite the magic.



The MG Surrey Run, organized by the Epsom Area MG Owners Club, originated in Leatherhead, not far from Weybridge but far enough for us to get lost again trying to follow extremely simple directions. We arrived just as the first MG B GT was departing but not to worry because there were over other 200 entries waiting to be flagged off...all MG's.



We've never before seen so many MG's in one pasture. We dutifully parked ours at the end of a line and walked around searching for other T Series.



Not much luck on that. One TC and two TD's was the total with our TF making it four. The rest were MG B's (the most), then A's with MG Midgets and a few F's rounding out the pack.



A surprise MG, although not a rallye entry, was the brand new MG 6, a four door saloon manufactured in China but assembled in Great Britain by English workers.



Considering MG's heritage in sedans, the ordinariness of this latest version was a disappointment to most attendees except the dealer who drove it in. If you're interested in the latest MG just copy down the information on the door but, be aware, an MG Magnette it is not.



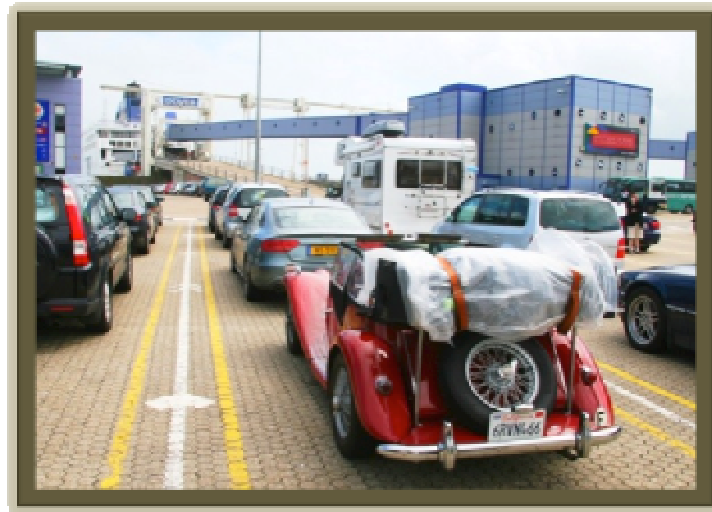
Our car was an immediate draw although English reserve kept many people from coming up to talk face to face. Louise, being naturally friendly, charmed them into conversations and out came their cameras.



We posed numerous times for this photo with every photographer reminding us not to block the California license.



Even though we were unable to participate in The MG Surrey Run because of ferry reservations in Dover, organizer Nigel Swann insisted we be photographed at the Start Line, just like the other 200+ MGs that paid for the privilege. A number of times he thanked us for coming; promised to give us featured space in the club magazine and said, "By jove, you two have made my day." We felt the very same.



After getting lost on the motorway (due to heavy rains and phlegmatic wipers) we arrived in Dover in time for a stop at the only restaurant on the quay...a Burger King no less. Next stop...Belgium.