

# Spark & Spanner

The Official  
Publication of  
the South  
Alabama British  
Car Club

November 2023



# From the President

Tom Renick

## Happy Thanksgiving

Since our last meeting, interesting things have happened and excitement is building for year-end festivities.

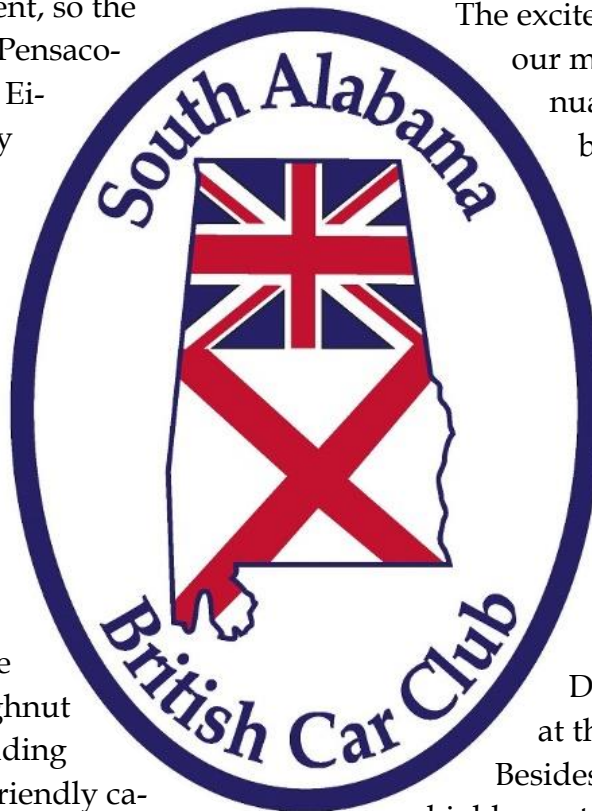
The interesting thing was the annual Autojumble, this year held at **Tom Schmitz's** Hut which is all the way across the county near Lillian, not far from the Florida line. Naturally, a lot of folks from the Panhandle club went, so the Hut was all the way across Pensacola to near the Alabama line. Either way, the Hut is a dandy place for such a gathering with plenty of space for all the goodies that enthusiastic British car buffs / entrepreneurs hauled in to sell or trade. From what I saw, some garages got cleared out, and some got stocked up. The whole enterprise ran on the coffee and donuts that **Donna Eagleson** arranged for us, and not one drop of coffee nor one doughnut escaped consummation. Adding the gorgeous weather and friendly camaraderie made this one event not to be missed.

For you bean counters and logistical analysts, **Brian Daly** held his much-heralded "Hot Wash-up" session with the BCF committee. While it is recognized that the Festival was the biggest and best yet and went off as smoothly as newly caterpillar-ed silk, there is always room for im-



Photo by **Noel Eagleson**

provement. With a few tweaks, next year's show should be a humdinger.



The excitement for the year peaks out at our meeting in December at the annual Christmas luncheon hosted by the Rock Creek Golf Club.

Besides a very delicious meal, there will be the ever-suspenseful awards, and the installation of officers for 2024 (perhaps new ones this time). Be sure to take a wrapped gift for the children to be delivered by our very own **Dave and Pat Couling**. Thank them for the help.

Don't miss the fun and frivolity at the November meeting the 28th.

Besides the usual delectable fare, the highly-contested election of officers will be held, and some big spender will go home with a wad from the 50-50 game. Consult your calendars.

By the time you get this, Thanksgiving may already have passed. Nevertheless, Happy Thanksgiving to all, coming or going.

*When he's not inventing new word forms ("caterpillar-ed?"), **Tom Renick** is president of SABCC.*

**On the cover:** *Gulf Coast Autojumble host **Tom Schmitz** with grandnephew A. J.; **Chuck Wimberly** is in the background (photo by **Donna Eagleson**).*

## SABCC Club Officers

|                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| President         | Tom Renick     |
| VP-Membership     | Rick Black     |
| VP-Activities     | Dave Roloson   |
| Secretary         | Peter Lee      |
| Treasurer         | Donna Eagleson |
| Member at Large   | Dick Bishop    |
| Member at Large   | Ben Cummings   |
| Member at Large   | Frank Stabler  |
| Member at Large   | Ron Wolverton  |
| Technical Advisor | Pierre Fontana |
| Technical Advisor | Mike Darby     |
| Webmaster         | Peter Lee      |
| Historian         | Robb Ogletree  |
| Newsletter Editor | Michael King   |

*Spark & Spanner* is the official publication of the South Alabama British Car Club and is published monthly for the benefit of SABCC members. Permission to use this material by other British car club publications is granted provided credit is given to *Spark & Spanner*. Address comments or submissions to [SparkSpanner@gmail.com](mailto:SparkSpanner@gmail.com).

Membership in SABCC is open to anyone with an interest in classic or modern British cars, and dues are only \$20 per year [*Inflation? Not here! Ed.*].

British Car Festival is Supported by



## Activities Calendar

**November 28, 2023**

**Monthly Club Meeting**, Don Carlos Restaurant, eat at 6:00 p.m. (no turkey on their menu, but the bill still comes to you), meet at 7:00.

**December 10, 2023**

**BCF Christmas Party**, Rock Creek Golf Club, 12:30. The Christmas party serves as our December meeting; we will NOT meet Dec, 26.

## Nov./Dec. 2023

Su Mo Tu We Th Fri Sat

|                       |    |                    |    |    |    |    |
|-----------------------|----|--------------------|----|----|----|----|
| 26                    | 27 | 28<br>Club Meeting | 29 | 30 | 1  | 2  |
| 3                     | 4  | 5                  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  |
| 10<br>Christmas Party | 11 | 12                 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17                    | 18 | 19                 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24                    | 25 | 26                 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| 31                    |    |                    |    |    |    |    |

# Sparks

## Club and Member News

### Buying, Selling, and Socializing – The Great Gulf Coast Autojumble

Held November 4, at **Tom Schmitz's "Hut,"** the annual British swap meet attracted 48 people (and one border collie named Barley) on a warm, sunny Elberta day. Bargains were to be had inside and outside, including free coffee, cold drinks, and doughnuts.

With another successful event in the books, the Autojumble planning team is discussing the next one. *Ed.* even heard rumors of lunch!



SABCC president **Tom Renick** admires a piece of artwork (photo by *Donna Eagleson*).



Top photo, **Noel Eagleson** checks out former SABCC member **John Shaw's** table; bottom photo, **Tom Schmitz's** cars provide a backdrop for merchandise (photos by *Donna Eagleson*).

Top photo, **Melissa Silhan** chats with **Noel Eagleson's** daughter **Leslie**, who is visiting from Northern Ireland, while **Ed.** reaches for another doughnut (photo by *Donna Eagleson*); bottom photo, **Pierre Fontana** (far right) enjoys the day (photo by *Ed.*).

## More Autojumble Photos



Top photo, **Pierre Fontana** and **Don Pritchett** stop shopping long enough for a picture; bottom photo, incoming president **Ben Cummings** seems pleased with his Lucas finds (photos by Noel Eagleson).

## Congratulations Rodney!

“Spark & Spanner” Editor Emeritus **Rodney McDonald** was recognized by the North American MGB Register (NAMGBR) as 2023’s Best Contributing Author to “The MG Driver,” NAMGBR’s monthly magazine. Robert Rushing sent *Ed.* this photo from the NAMGBR’s Annual General Meeting, at which annual awards are presented (the photo was sent via text message, so *Ed.* asks that you overlook the fuzziness).



Rodney was recognized for his article on the 250,000 MGB, the Blaze Orange car featured at our recent British Car Festival. This story was picked up not only by “The MG Driver,” but by enthusiast publications in the U.S. and abroad. More important, the story is the culmination of Rodney’s 20-year effort to find the car, owned by the late Tony Wilson. Well done, sir!

The Best of

## Pierre's Wisdom

Pierre Fontana

## Your New Toy, a Used Car

Sacrilege it may be to call your new toy a used car, but it is the reality. So many hands had a part in keeping it alive or performed the best work they knew how, but what did they know?



I had to install a rear end in a very nice 1980 Spitfire; while "under," I looked for safety or wear issues. Brake fluid was dripping on me, an easy solution. To inspect the shoes, I popped the drum off. The surprise was not the leaking wheel cylinder, but the shoes wearing at an odd pattern and angle. The previous "mechanic,"



All photos courtesy **Pierre Fontana**



probably a technician, had mounted the strong shoe springs in front instead of the back, twisting the shoes at an angle against the drum.

So when you buy your "new" (used) car, take a look where you can't see. Many years ago, when I first opened a shop on Pillans Street, some of my "poor customers" were young lawyers with no private practice. To make a living they worked for the City of Mobile as assistant district attorneys. One thing they impressed me with is that if a car has a wreck or causes injuries, you are safe as long as it was correctly repaired with the proper parts. This meant NO negligence on your part. The opposite would mean they will own your house. So, make sure your car is 100 percent safe and "kosher."

*Pierre Fontana is a technical advisor for SABCC. This column first ran in December 2014.*

# Spare Parts

## “Storage Unit Find” TR6

**Pierre Fontana** sent *Ed.* these photos of a 1975 TR6, noting that “barn finds” are hard to find in a big city, so this is storage unit find.

Resting in very dry, dusty, and good condition, the car was stored for 24 years (the tag date is 1999). Soapy water was needed to drag it out. The rear brakes are frozen in place, and two of the dry-rotted tires collapsed. Regardless, as **Pierre** notes, one does not often get this lucky with a find. He says he can't wait to hear it run.



## Auction Roundup: MG Midgets

[In keeping with the BCF theme, Auction Roundup is featuring a different MG series each month-Ed.]

### 1975 MG Midget



**Sold** for \$4,800 on Bring a Trailer

*Yes, it has interior wear and a bit of tin worm, but this cheap, cheerful car is a great point of entry to the hobby.*

### 1967 MG Midget



**Sold** for \$13,456 on Bring a Trailer

*A charming cream over red chrome-bumper car, this Midget offered the desirable 1275 engine, wire wheels, and a one-owner history, offsetting some cosmetic issues.*

### 1977 MG Midget



**Sold** for \$18,000 on Bring a Trailer

*Resprayed in Tahiti Blue over an Autumn Leaf interior, this lovely Midget had a rebuilt engine, transmission, suspension, and brakes, and only minor flaws.*

### 1972 MG Midget



**Not Sold** for \$8,000 on Bring a Trailer

*Despite numerous high-performance mods, the blackout treatment on this car may have caused the unmet reserve.*

# Classifieds

## 1960 Triumph TR3

Stored in rear of my shop for the past few years. Too many new projects. This one needs to go.

- Frame clean, straight, painted a few years ago. no rust
- Tires, brakes, and wheel bearings new
- Engine turns free but has not been run in many years
- Gearbox shifts easily
- Body is off the car; floor pans and door sills are rough, but rest of the sheet metal is pretty straight.
- Lots of new parts included
- Carbs were rebuilt by Mike Darby a few years back

I also have a spare TR3 engine and two TR3 gearboxes that I will include or can sell separately.

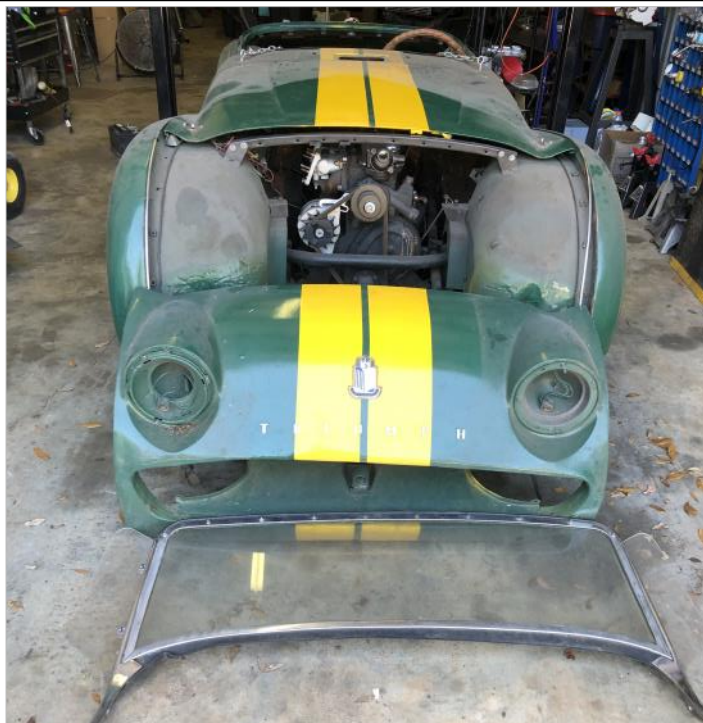
Car can be seen in Daphne. I have lots more photos if anyone is interested.

I'm asking \$2500 for the lot. Let's talk.

*Laramie Dixey*

251-472-6446

*planetdixey@gmail.com*



3 quarts of Redline MT90 75W90 GL4 manual transmission lubricant and one of high performance 75W90 gear oil for sale, \$10 each. They are old, but should be good. **Bob Bulfin, [Bobbulfin@gmail.com](mailto:Bobbulfin@gmail.com)**



## 2015 Jaguar F-Type S

Pristine condition. Kept covered in garage. Only 17,588 miles. Special order interior. \$35,000.



*Text 478-361-0997*

## 1948 MG TC

Matching numbers; less than 2,000 miles since frame-off restoration. Many upgrades to engine and drive train. \$29,000.



*Text 251-752-4434*

## 1980 Triumph Spitfire 1500

Pageant Blue. Runs and drives, but needs restoration work. New mechanical fuel pump, rear brake parts except drums, seat belts and hardware, gas cap seal and gas filters, windshield wipers, and hood prop rods. Needs convertible top, rust area repair around the trunk lid corner and bottom, interior work. Rubber bumpers in bad shape, so started conversion to chrome; rear complete, front not done. Previous owners used older seats without headrests and a stripe on the hood with the "Triumph" wreath logo. \$3500.



Mike Japp, [webmaster@pbca1.org](mailto:webmaster@pbca1.org)

## 1993 Jaguar XJS Coupe

"Facelift" Jaguar coupe featuring smooth, durable 4.0-litre inline six and four-speed automatic. Full power accessories, "basketweave" alloy wheels, climate control, and trip computer. 138,000 miles. Boot lid requires repainting, and driver's seat and console lid need recovering. Good running and driving condition. \$2200.



Bob Henson, 251-962-4617



## 1993 Jaguar Vanden Plas Wheels

Set of four wheels from a Jaguar Vanden Plas saloon. Low mileage, but tires may be "aged out!" Can be had for a reasonable offer; seller will deliver within the normal limits of the three British car clubs.

Taber Tompkins [tabertoys@aol.com](mailto:tabertoys@aol.com)

Call/text 703-489-3993

Call/leave a message 850-682-3117

## 1980 Triumph Spitfire

Free for haul-away. Need removed as soon as possible. Car is about ten miles north of DeFuniak Springs. Parked outside for several years, non-running but complete. Books and title in hand, but never registered. The seller wants to give the British car clubs a chance before scrapping it!



*Herb Patterson*

850-699-8546

[kandh26@outlook.com](mailto:kandh26@outlook.com)



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# Weak and Rusty

Michael King, Editor, *Spark & Spanner*

## Grateful

Gratitude is official this week, even though it should be a daily habit. Nonetheless, in keeping with tradition, I'd like to mention some blessings for which I'm grateful. Since this is the SABCC newsletter, I'll be specific to the club and the hobby.

I'm grateful for a dad who loved cars, and especially British cars. When I was in third grade, he drove me to school in a Triumph Vitesse with leaky floorboards; about ten years later, he bought a 1976 Midget that I drove in college (he later gave it to me). He lived long enough to see my second Midget and my first two Jags.

I'm grateful for SABCC. Next February, I will mark fifteen years of membership. I remember my first meeting very well, but certainly had no idea at the time I'd serve four years as show chair, four years as president, seven years (and counting) as show registrar, and three years (and counting) as newsletter editor. But with all that, the honor for which I am most grateful is being named "Member of the Year" in 2010, my second year in the club.

I'm grateful for the friends I've made. Some have become mentors, including **Noel Eagleson**, **Rodney McDonald**, and the late **Richard Cunningham**, but each of you is special in your own way. I'm a better person for having known you.

I'm grateful for people who share their garages, their tools, and /or their knowledge. **Pierre Fontana** rescued me when I towed home a needy Midget from Mississippi nearly fifteen years ago. Later, **Richard Cunningham** rebuilt that car's engine and front suspension. The late **Stu-**

**art Waddington** helped me with my MGB, and **Noel**, and **Tom Renick**, helped me replace its engine with a used one I bought from **Mike Darby** when I spun the bearings. PBCA member **Bob Manske** regularly opens his garage for tech days and he and others help folks fix their cars.

I'm grateful for the welcoming nature and relaxed attitudes of most British car hobbyists. We don't try to outdo each other at shows. We don't worry about having the correct factory chalk marks on our fuel tanks. We don't (can't?) do burnouts. We appreciate cars that aren't perfect. And, we look for ways to help each other (see preceding paragraph).

I'm grateful for open car shows that make room for our little corner of the hobby. A British class or two, and a designated parking area, are minor concessions, but they help us feel welcomed and allow us to share our cars with a larger audience.

I'm grateful for collegiality between the three British car clubs in our area. The Fairhope Arts and Crafts display, PBCA's Brits on the Bay, the Pig Roast, our British Car Festival, and the Great Gulf Coast Autojumble are on each club's calendar – not just the host club. In February, SABCC hosted the **John Twist** tech session and invited members from all the clubs; we will do the same when John comes back next year.

I'm grateful for our club officers. **Tom Renick** leaves big shoes for **Ben Cummings** to fill, **Peter Lee** keeps us organized – and looking great on the web, **David Roloson** (and **Don Pritchett** before him) keeps us active, **Rick Black** maintains our membership structure, and **Donna Eagleson** – well, she does everything.

Finally, I'm grateful for you, the readers of this newsletter. Many of you have sent articles, photographs, classifieds, or other material I've used. Others have shared kind remarks or constructive feedback. Thank you.

And now, for something completely different . . .



*Meanwhile, at the Corvette section of a "Cars and Coffee..."*

## Spark & Spanner

South Alabama British Car Club

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Mobile, AL 36618



*Find us on Facebook! Look for our Facebook page, **South Alabama British Car Club**, and our Facebook group, **Friends of South Alabama British Car Club**.*