

Spark & Spanner

The Official
Publication of
the South
Alabama British
Car Club

March 2024



From the President

Ben Cummings

February was a great month for the SABCC. We had the **John Twist** seminar on February 10th and then John was our special guest at our regular monthly meeting on the 27th. The seminar was well attended with over fifty people in attendance. The three local clubs, the SABCC, the MG MGs and the PBCA, were well represented. John Twist gave an informative and entertaining talk about the electrical components in British cars. John has said that he would like to conduct another seminar next year. As long as he is willing, I think the club would like to continue to host the John Twist seminars [*he wants to talk about SU carburetters next year-Ed.*].

At the February regular meeting there were two issues discussed that require further discussion. The Executive Committee has proposed increasing the dues from \$20 to \$30 and revisions to the bylaws were proposed. As your new president I want to assure you that bylaw and dues changes will not be made hastily. Proposed changes and reasons for those changes will be presented to all members and everyone will have the opportunity to comment. Admittedly, my knowledge of the Roberts Rules of Order is weak at best, but any changes to the club will be made following these rules. And please don't hesitate to correct me when I don't follow them correctly.

At our March meeting we will have a special presentation from PBCA and SABCC member **Fred Veenschoten**. He will present a slide show



of interesting cars, motorcycles, and machinery that any gear-head would love to see. I look forward to seeing what things have caught Fred's attention. He says not all items are British, but we may like the presentation anyway.

I have a fun idea for the April meeting. Let's make April special by inviting special guests. Bring a son or daughter or grandson or granddaughter (or any young person) with you to the April meeting. Let's get the next generation interested in our cars and show them that there is club that promotes British car enthusiasm. If there is a story about your car with the young person, please share it. We would especially love to hear what your young person has to say about your car. Does he or she love it, want it, or think it's weird?

I look forward to seeing you on March 26th.

Safety Fast,

Ben

SABCC Club Officers

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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! Well, at least until 2025, perhaps-Ed.*].

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Spark & Spanner Submissions

Ed. needs for your submissions for *Spark & Spanner*.

Categories include

- **Activities Calendar:** SABCC events, car shows, and other events worth noting
- **Sparks:** news about club members, activities, and events
- **Spannering:** car repairs, restoration projects, tips and tricks, and prepping a car for a show
- **Spare Parts:** Auction Roundup, British car news, and whatever *Ed.* finds interesting
- **Gotcha!:** how members acquired their cars
- **Around the Bend:** Synopses of upcoming car shows and other events
- **Feature Stories:** Longer general interest items
- **Classifieds:** Sell your car or parts, or list what you need to buy

Submissions should be sent to SparkSpanner@gmail.com. Almost any text format is acceptable. Please include relevant photos.

Around the Bend

Upcoming Club Activities



March 23, 2024

BMCNO British Car Day

Our British car friends in south Louisiana will host their annual show in a new site, the start of the trailhead in Covington, LA. SABCC is hosting a convoy from the IHOP in Tillman's Corner (4375 Rangeline Rd, Mobile, AL 36619) leaving at 8:00 a.m. Show up early if you want breakfast. The show address is 423 N. Theard St, Covington, LA 70433. Show registration is \$35 (after March 16) and you can register [here](#).

March 26, 2024

SABCC Monthly Meeting

Join your SABCC friends for our monthly meeting at Don Carlos Mexican Restaurant, 29669 AL-181, Daphne, 36526. The meeting starts

at 7:00, but you'll want to arrive around 5:30 or 6:00 to have plenty of time to eat and socialize. **Fred Veenschoten**, a skilled mechanic and machinist, will present an informative program.

April 19 and 20, 2024

PBCA Brits on the Bay

The Panhandle British Car Association will host its annual show in Pensacola's historic Seville Square on April 20, with the pre-show dinner at the nearby Museum of Commerce at 5:00 on the 19th. Celebrating 100 years of MG (sound familiar?), this is the closest all-British show to our neck of the woods. Registration is now open at the low price of just \$25 (the form is [here](#)), and they'd love to have you as a sponsor (that form is [here](#)). SABCC organizes a convoy to Pensacola; watch your email for details.

March 2024

SU	MO	TUE	WE	TH	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23 BMCNO Show
24	25	26 Club Meeting	27	28	29	30
31						

April 2024

SU	MO	TUE	WE	TH	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20 PBCA Show
21	22	23 Club Meeting	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Sparks

Club and Member News

A Nice Day on the Lawn

While the morning of Saturday, March 16 did not so much actually dawn, due to cloud cover, the skies did gradually lighten, and the zero percent chance of rain drew out 17 British cars for the annual display at the 72nd Annual Fairhope (Ala.) Arts and Crafts Festival. The Festival is one of the largest of its kind along the northern Gulf Coast, attracting some 200 vendors to the four main downtown streets of this charming artist's colony on the Eastern Shore of Mobile Bay.

The British car display is the signature annual event of the Mardi Gras MG Club, a self-



described "boutique" club based in Fairhope. MGMG members use a grassy, tree-shaded lawn on the downtown campus of Coastal Alabama Community College, decorating the site with British flags and erecting a pavilion with coffee,



Top, a Lotus Elan and an MGB, with Jaguar Row in the background (photo by **Ben Cummings**); bottom, **Robb Ogletree's** MGA and **Fred Veenschoten's** Morgan (photo by **Robb Ogletree**).



Three MGB roadsters in the foreground, with a variety of other open cars behind them (photo by **Robb Ogletree**).

(story continues next page)

Fairhope Display, continued

sweet treats, and plenty of chairs. Some years, the MGMG members have shown remarkable magnanimity to Britian’s former foes, the Germans and the Italians, by inviting the aficionados of those nation’s cars to participate. Of course, the Porsches, Ferraris, Fiats, BMWs, and other such lesser motors are relegated to the perimeters of the display area. Perhaps that’s why they didn’t show up this year!



Top, Rick Black, Gil Stuart, Chuck Kepler, Jerry Hall, David Pierce, and Robb Ogletree; bottom, PBCA first lady Mollie Reese with her MG TD (all photos this page by Noel Eagleson).

Besides the MGMG members, the 2024 display had its usual good turnout of cars from the SABCC, as well as from the Panhandle British Car Association. No prizes are awarded at the

display – the event is just a good opportunity for participants to blow out the cobwebs from their cars prior to the March 23 British Motoring Club of New Orleans show and the PBCA show on April 20. As always, SABCC sincerely thanks MGMG for their hard work and gracious hospitality!



Top, Gil Stuart and David Pierce with their B’s; bottom, Jon Gosnell, Ginger Black, Jerry Hall, Andrea Bertagnolli, Dave Roloson, Karen Roloson, and MGMG leader Dick Bishop.



The MG TF was so popular, it was even used to sell bread back in the day! This card was up for sale on eBay.

Spannering

Advice on Repairs, Parts, and Services

Starting a Car with Old Fuel

story by Jim Howland, Capital Triumph Register, Ltd. (reprinted from The Standard)

Starting a car with old fuel can be challenging, especially if the fuel has degraded over time. Here are some techniques you can try to start a car with old fuel:

1. **Check the Fuel System:** Ensure the fuel lines, filter, and carburetor are clean. If there is any debris or varnish buildup, it can impede fuel flow.
2. **Replace the Fuel Filter:** If the fuel filter is clogged, replace it before attempting to start the car. A clogged filter can prevent fuel from reaching the engine.
3. **Fuel Additives:** Add a fuel stabilizer or cleaner to the old fuel. This may help break down varnish and improve the fuel's combustibility. Follow the product instructions for the correct dosage.
4. **Fresh Fuel Mix:** If possible, add some fresh fuel to dilute the old fuel. A mix of fresh fuel might improve the overall quality and combustibility.
5. **Prime the Carburetor:** If your car has a carburetor, prime it by manually pouring a small amount of fuel directly into the carburetor. Be cautious not to flood the engine.
6. **Use Starting Fluid:** Spray a small amount of starting fluid into the air intake while cranking the engine. Starting fluid is highly flammable and can help ignite the engine even if the fuel is not optimal.
7. **Check Spark Plugs:** Ensure that the spark plugs are in good condition. Clean or replace them if necessary. Good spark plugs are crucial for ignition.
8. **Battery Condition:** Make sure the battery is fully charged. Cold cranking amps (CCA) are crucial for starting the engine, especially in colder temperatures.
9. **Crank the Engine:** Crank the engine for short bursts rather than continuous cranking to avoid overheating the starter motor.
10. **Patience:** Be patient. It might take a few attempts before the engine starts, especially if the fuel is really old and has deteriorated.

Remember, safety is paramount. Previous owners may have added several items that are not original. Electric fuel pumps are common and can cause damage to the engine bores by stripping off engine oil if left running unnoticed. The bores / pistons are known to freeze up for the infamous "it was running when last parked" syndrome. Try hand turning the crank to check for both movement and sounds. Take precautions to ensure proper ventilation and be aware of any potential fuel leaks in lines, tanks, and fittings right up to the carbs. If the car fails to start after multiple attempts, it might be advisable to seek professional assistance to assess and address any underlying issues.

One common check to "Sherlock" the history of the engine is the condition of the spark plugs looking for deposits and colors. See the chart on the next page.

[**Ed.** expresses his appreciation to Art Fournier, editor of the Capital Triumph Register, Ltd. newsletter, The Standard, for the opportunity to reprint this. Art produces a fine publication and I commend it to you, even if you are not a Triumph owner.]



DIAGNOSTIC CHART



Normal	Normal	Normal
<p>Using Unleaded Petrol</p> 	<p>Using Lead Replacement Petrol</p> 	<p>Using Lead Replacement Petrol</p> 
Symptoms	Causes	Remedy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard starting • Misfiring • Black exhaust smoke 	<p>Carbon Fouled</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rich mixture • Retarded ignition • Low compression • Too cold a spark plug 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check float level • Check choke • Check ignition timing • Check air cleaner • Check compression • Replace spark plug with correct heat range
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard starting • Misfiring • Grey / white exhaust smoke • Loss of oil 	<p>Oil Fouled</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worn rings • Worn piston • Leaking valve stem seals • Over-filled oil sump 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace worn components • Replace spark plug with correct heat range
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Pinking" under acceleration or climbing hills • Engine run-on after switching off 	<p>Overheated</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lean mixture • Advanced ignition timing • Too hot a spark plug 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check jets are not clogged • Check float level • Check ignition timing • Replace spark plug with correct heat range
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misfiring • Loss of power • Hard starting • Noise in engine 	<p>Damaged</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foreign particles inside cylinder • Broken or damaged valve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace spark plugs • Remove foreign or damaged components
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melted spark plug • Damaged piston crown • Damage to cylinder head 	<p>Under Tightened</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spark plug incorrectly torqued • Spark plug only hand tightened • Dirt or carbon in threads of cylinder head 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace spark plugs • Tighten spark plug to correct torque • Replace damaged components • Check compression on all cylinders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard starting • Reduced fuel economy 	<p>Worn</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normal electrode wear • $\pm 0.03\text{mm} / 1\ 000\text{km}$ • Fuel deposits (carbon, lead, additives & salts) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace spark plug with correct heat range
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redish brown stain above metal shell on insulator 	<p>Corona Stain</p>  <p>Corona Stain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oil particles suspended in the air adhere to the insulator due to high voltage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No deterioration to the function of the spark plug • Change spark plug ONLY at recommended service intervals

Pierre's Wisdom

Pierre Fontana

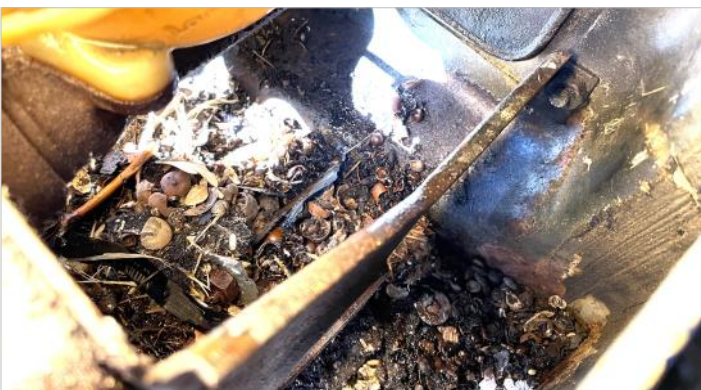
Pay Attention, Pilgrim

An SABCC member recently acquired a 1971 MGB in fairly nice condition. The previous owner bragged about all the work done to make it better and faster before he stored it 14 years ago. Surprisingly, with a carburetor overhaul and a loaned distributor and wires, it fired up from a boat gas tank. My job was to make it drive, stop and de-clutch.



The MGB awaiting its refresh

All the hydraulics were a total loss from being stationary for so long. I found a big rat's nest under the master cylinders, with corrosion due to humidity resulting in a gooey mess. Removing the pedal box was a pain, and heat from a welding rig was the only way to turn anything. To my surprise, both master cylinders (brake and clutch) were only held in place by the top bolts;



The hydraulic system mess



All photos courtesy Pierre Fontana

the pedal box was held in place by four bolts, with no copper sealing washers or lock washers. This makes for dangerous brakes. All four small screws holding the rear drums in place were missing, and the locking tabs on the front calipers were missing, so I asked for caliper kits and pistons, both master cylinders, rear wheel cylinders, hoses, and a proportion valve kit.



The MGB awaiting its refresh

While waiting on parts, I checked the steering. It had never ever been serviced, and I found a dry and rusty rack. Cleaning the rust, lubricating everything, and new tie rods were the cure.

My point is too many shortcuts could have turned into major problems. "Caveat emptor" is a reality. It is a good thing the car was not drivable. Checking your new toy may not be possible or obvious without digging into it.

Pierre Fontana is a technical advisor for SABCC.

Spare Parts

News from the British Car World

The Final Jaguars?

According to various news outlets, Jaguar will cease production of internal combustion car models in a few short months. [GBNews.com](https://www.gbnews.com) states “Car brand Jaguar has announced that it will stop producing its XE, XF and F-Type models at its West Midlands factory in June as it begins honing in on electric vehicle production. Production at the Castle Bromwich site in the West Midlands will cease later this year, although the three models will remain on sale and available to order via the Jaguar website.” The F-Pace and E-Pace ICE SUVs, and the electric I-Pace crossover, remain in production for now.

Is this the beginning of the end? Will Jaguar, which built its reputation on sports cars and saloons, be like Buick, which only offers crossovers and SUVs? Or, will it go away entirely?

The official word is “no.” Joe Eberhardt, North American head of Jaguar, has told the [media](#) the plan is to switch to an all-electric lineup by 2025. The first new model, a four-door grand touring car, will be released in 2025, at a price of around \$125,000. The company promises more power than any prior model and a range of over 400 miles.

[I’ve owned at least one Jaguar for the past fifteen years, so I hope this strategy works. I would hate to see the brand disappear. On the other hand, Jaguar has survived other crises over its nearly 90-year history, including disdain for the XJ-S when it succeeded the E-Type, quality issues under British Leyland, and the “Forduar” era (1989 to 2009) when Jaguars shared parts and even platforms with its US parent. Under Tata Motors, the years, and cars, since 2009 have been generally very good; may this trend continue – Ed.]

Auction Roundup: Classic Minis

[MINI is the featured marque for SABCC’s show, so I’ll highlight them in the next few Auction Roundups-Ed.]

1960 Morris Mini-Minor Deluxe



Not Sold for \$13,850 on Bring a Trailer

This early Mini was resprayed in its original Clipper Blue in 2019; in 2023, it was converted to left hand drive and fitted with an interior from Newton Commercial of Suffolk. Highly attractive, with very few demerits, this car drew strong bidding but fell short of the reserve.

1981 British Leyland 1000



Sold for \$10,000 on Cars and Bids

In green with a white top, over black vinyl, this left-hand drive model offered several performance and style modifications, but had various flaws and blemishes. Some would be easy to fix, but corrosion “around the fuel filler cap, on the trunk lid, and on the underbody components” is more concerning. Nonetheless, the price was considered market-correct.

1970 Mini Van Project



Sold for \$9,688 on Cars and Bids

Sprayed over body flaws in “resale red,” with golf cart wheels and tires out back, and missing a VIN plate, this van nonetheless drew a fair amount of interest as a fun project, helped by its 1275cc motor. Commenters pointed out that the van is actually a Mk IV (1976-1983), not a 1970 as described.

Classifieds

1965 MGB Roadster



Restored to include rebuilt engine in 1990s. Recent work includes new clutch, radiator, hydraulic master cylinders, tie rod ends, and overdrive and transmission parts. Car has painted, knockoff wire wheels and good tires. Runs great. Lots of extra parts and accessories. Asking \$15,000.

Roger, 850-206-9811

2002 Jaguar XK8



124,500 miles, garage kept, new top, new paint and in great condition. \$10,500. [This car belongs to a friend of SABCC member *Tony McLaughlin*, and is in the Rock Creek Golf Club in Fairhope-Ed.]

Jeff, 256-390-6437

1972 MGB



I have decided to sell my waaaaayyy over restored 1972 MGB for a number of reasons, health being the main one. The car received a bare metal restoration in 2009. The body was done by Continental Classic Cars in Moss Point, MS with the engine, transmission and overdrive all receiving a full, complete overhaul by our own **Mike Darby**. It has always fired up quickly even after a few months of not being driven and has been very reliable. I wouldn't hesitate to do a trip with this car like Mike did a number of years ago with his MGA.

I have extensive documentation for this vehicle, including receipts for all work done, BHMC Certificate and photo documentation. The car is the original Mallard Green. This car was restored with no budget and an open checkbook and, while not a concours restoration in the strictest sense of the word, it has been restored to a level that is far beyond what the car was new. I'd like to offer it locally before putting it out nationally. The asking price is \$25,000 and while not cheap is far, far less than I have invested in the car. Many more photos are available.

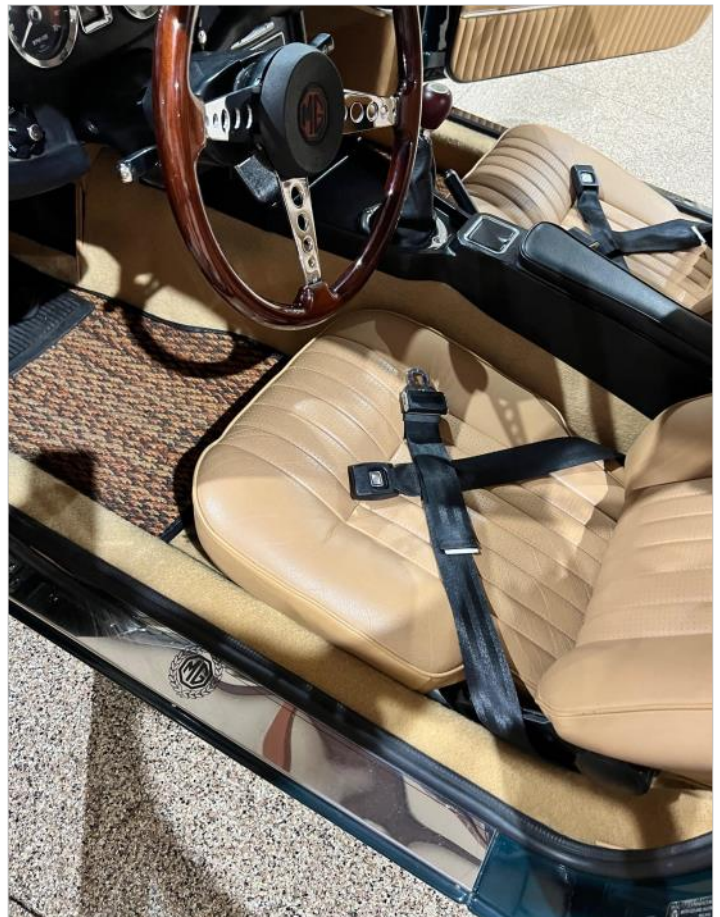
It is available for a test drive an inspection on an appointment only basis as a friend is allowing me to store it with his large classic/ antique car collection out near the airport.

Ken McElhaney, Jr.

251-401-4474

jekadad@hotmail.com or

Ken.mcelhaney@gmail.com



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

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

"MINI Gets Medicare"



Celebrating 65 Years of MINI
British Car Festival 2024

October 19, 2024
Fairhope, Alabama



British Car Festival registration is open!
The form is available [here](#). The fee is just \$25 (\$30 after Oct. 1).

We also are signing up sponsors, and that form is [here](#):

- **General Sponsors: \$250** (three classes, name on banner, recognition at the show and in 12 months of newsletters)
- **Class Sponsors: \$40** (one class, recognition in 12 months of newsletters)



Thank you Sponsors!



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Weak and Rusty

Michael King, Editor, *Spark & Spanner*

Sweat the Small Stuff

Did you ever listen to “Car Talk” on National Public Radio? Hosted by Click and Clack, the Tappet Brothers, also known as Tom and Ray Magliozzi, I was a huge fan of this show, which offered equal doses of hilarity and car advice.

On one episode, a caller asked about repairing something trivial on his car – I seem to recall it was a opera lamp, one of the American makers’ affectations in the Malaise Era (late 70’s to early ‘80’s). Consisting of small white lights on the door pillars, and usually found with full or half vinyl (“landau”) roofs, these were intended to add class and distinction.

Anyway, the caller believed fixing the lamp wasn’t worth the cost and effort. While he probably was right, Tom and Ray made an interesting point, which has stuck with me for some 30 years now. Overlooking the first small problems with a car (or anything else) makes overlooking the next ones easier, and before you know it, you’re comfortable with holes in the seats, rust in the fenders, putrid smells, and goodness knows what else. The inexorable path to the “crush,” to mimic Ray’s Boston brogue, is that much closer.

Last month, I wrote about repairs that are financially pointless. Simply put, sometimes the best strategy is to throw in the (greasy) towel. I give you the 4-liter engine in my 2001 Jaguar XJR, which may eventually throw its timing chains due to weak tensioners. If that happens, the engine is just a hunk of mangled aluminum and steel. I think I’m OK for now, due to a lack of noise on startup and relatively low miles, but it could happen.



Ed.’s little Jaguar family

On the other hand, if I neglect the minor issues, I eventually will develop a disdain for the car. A good example is the shocks. I had clunks and vibration front and rear. Now, with new shocks and bushings all around, the car is transformed. I’m in love with it again.

Next week, my Jaguar XFR – which has become my daily driver – gets a new headliner. I’ve replaced some exterior trim, and I have a replacement Bluetooth module, washer pump, and hood struts to install. I also plan to detail the car (I’m not sure if I will do it or pay someone), and have the wheels blasted and refurbished.

As for my Jaguar XK convertible, I knew when I bought it that it would never be cosmetically perfect. It has more miles (76,000) than any of my other cars, and was not as carefully kept by previous owners as the other Jaguars. Still, I’ve already made some upgrades, and very soon, the new convertible top I bought for it will be installed.

Finally, my humble MGB, which I cosmetically refurbished six years ago, needs some attention, including a thorough cleaning and some wet-sanding and polishing. I also have a new rebuilt engine, with a set of SU carbs, to install if I ever find some spare time.

So, sweat the small stuff. If you do, you just might find you fall in love with your car(s) – all over again.

And now, for something completely different . . .



I didn't have a picture for the back page, so I decided to search Google Images for "ugly Jaguar." I think I found the winner.

Spark & Spanner

South Alabama British Car Club

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*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**.*