

Spark & Spanner

September 2026

The Official
Publication
of the South
Alabama
British Car
Club



From the President

Ben Cummings

A little patina moves me. A lot of patina makes the ground shake. My cars are rusty. I have even named one of my cars Rustie. To me, a little rust makes the car interesting. A couple of weeks ago at the Cars and Coffee at The Fort I drove my green MGB [see cover-Ed.]. It has an ample plenty amount of rust. And it received an ample plenty amount of interest. There were about eight British cars there representing the SABCC and my rusty one got all the looks and was even featured on a couple of Cars and Coffee posts. So, I'm not the only one that is moved by patina.

In the rear parking lot of my office (photo below) there are four heaps of rust (I mean four aged beauties of weathered metal) that I am trying to re-home. They are four MGB GTs that I saved from the landfill and are in varying stages of potential restoration. I have realized that I must purge my garage, and my daughter's garage, and

my mother's garage of future projects that I may never get to. Maybe I am finally growing up, and I now know that I don't need so many cars and that I can't save them all. But boy oh boy they are beautiful cars. The MGB GT has beautiful lines. And the rust on them makes my knees buckle. I just love them. And I wouldn't be surprised that if they could be driven to a Cars and Coffee they would get the most attention. [*Ben tells me he's sold two of them-Ed.*]

But my daughter is not so moved by patina. She wants a clean and shiny car. And that is what I propose to give her. Her MGB came back from the painter last week and I've already started putting the bits back on it. We have named the car Fiona as in the lady ogre from Shrek. Fiona was a nasty green monster at night that transformed into a beautiful lady at daylight. And this MGB was once a dirty green rusty car that will one day be a baby blue beauty (sadly with no rust). But to each his own.

Safety Fast,
Ben Cummings



On the cover: **Ben's** MGB at the Fort Cars and Coffee (photo via Facebook).



North American MGB Register

P.O. Box 876

Downers Grove, IL 60515-0876

Thank you for your inquiry into the North American MGB Register. We are the official register for MGB, MGB/GT, MGC, MGC/GT, MG V8, Midgets, MG 1100/1300 sedans, and all Post Abington MGs.

As a member of NAMGBR, you will receive:



The MG Driver

This bi-monthly magazine is packed with over 60 pages of useful information with the right mix of Technical and Member information.



Mutual Aid Directory (MAD)

Many members list their contact information to help fellow NAMGBR members in the event they break down in their area.



Annual Convention

In conjunction with a NAMGBR Chapter, we sponsor a convention highlighting a different part of the United States or Canada. This 4 day event features driving tours, a car show and a taste of the local food and drink. In 2026, MG2026 International will take place in Sandusky, OH.



Club Insurance

Does your club sponsor a car show, driving event or meeting? Many venues require insurance to hold the event on their property. If your club has 8 NAMGBR members and is a Chapter of NAMGBR...you're covered for free!



Member Classified

NAMGBR offers a free classified section in both the MG Driver and the website. Have an extra MG or parts you want to sell? Target your advertising to the people you know are buying MG.



Regalia

We have a number of ways you can show your NAMGBR membership to the public.



Car Insurance

NAMGBR is the first MG Register to offer members the 5% Hagerty Collector Car Insurance Discount. Being a member of NAMGBR can save you money on your insurance.



Dash Plaque

To commemorate your membership in NAMGBR, you receive a dash plaque to display in your car, home, office or where ever.



100,000/200,000 Mile Register

Has your MG gone the distance, and traveled over 100,000 or 200,000 miles? NAMGBR honors this achievement with a dash plaque your car can wear with pride.



Window Sticker

Proudly proclaim your membership in NAMGBR with this attractive two sided window sticker.



We look forward to having you as a member of NAMGBR!

Do you want to know more about the North American MGB Register? Check out our website at: www.namgbr.org

Do you want to be a member in the largest club in North America dedicated to the MGB, MGB/GT, MGC, MGC/GT, MG V8, Midget, 1100/1300 Sedans and Post Abington MGs?

Go to the website and either download a PDF membership form and mail with a check or instantly join via Credit Card

SABCC Club Officers

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VP-Membership	Rick Black
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Member at Large	Don Blosser
Member at Large	Tom Renick
Member at Large	Frank Stabler
Member at Large	Gil Stuart
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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.

Membership in SABCC is open to anyone with an interest in classic or modern British cars, and dues are only \$20 per year [*same as 1990—Ed.*].

British Car Festival is supported by:



MALONEY • LYONS, LLC
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

The Ghosts We Drive

BRITISH CAR FESTIVAL 2026
October 12, 2026
Fairhope, Alabama

Online registration, shirt orders, and payment at sabcc.org

THE GREAT GULF COAST ALL-BRITISH AUTOJUMBLE

Saturday, November 14, 2026

10AM—2PM

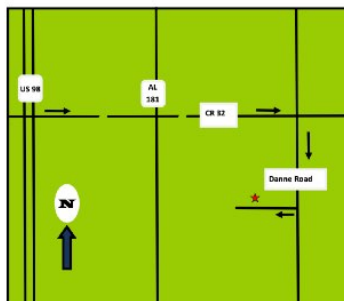
16695 Danne Road, Fairhope, Alabama

Phone 208-995-9103

Coffee, doughnuts & cold drinks on hand

Here is your opportunity to clear out your collection of British car parts, pieces and related automobilia in an event that spans the British car clubs of the north central Gulf Coast region!

Bring your wares along with a table to display them on and join in the fun of finding even more stuff that you never knew you needed.



You are looking for County Road 32 (near Point Clear) which crosses over US Hwy 98, County Road 13 and State Highway 181
Off US Highway 98 (4-lane 98) near Point Clear: Turn onto County Road 32 from whichever direction you are coming from, cross over County Road 13 and Hwy 181. After that go 1 mile further and look for Danne Road on the right. Go .3 mile on Danne, then turn right and go 243 feet.
Can also get to Danne Road off County Road 13 and State Hwy 181.



Around the Bend

Upcoming Club Activities



Sep. 8, 2026

BCF Planning Meeting

Pier House, 5872 Battleship Pkwy, Spanish Fort—6:00 to eat and 7:00 to meet.

Sep. 12, 2026

British-German Invasion

West Florida Railroad Museum, 5003 Henry St, Milton, 10:00 a.m., details p. 7.

Sep. 22, 2026

Monthly Club Meeting

Don Carlos Restaurant, 29699 AL-181, Daphne—eat at 6:00, meet at 7:00.

Oct. 6, 2026

BCF Planning Meeting

Pier House, 5872 Battleship Pkwy, Spanish Fort—6:00 to eat and 7:00 to meet.

Oct. 16 and 17, 2026

British Car Festival

Fairhope United Methodist Church, 151 S Section St, dinner 6:30 Friday; registration opens 9:00 Saturday.

Oct. 27, 2026

Monthly Club Meeting

Don Carlos Restaurant, 29699 AL-181, Daphne—eat at 6:00, meet at 7:00.

Don't forget—Autojumble is Nov. 14!

SEPTEMBER

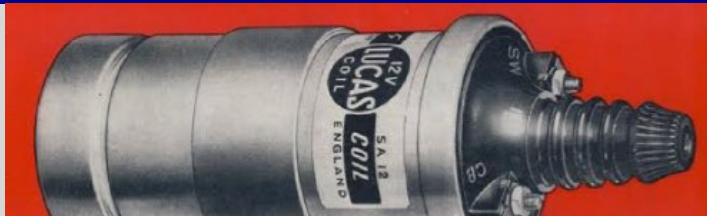
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	BCF PLNG.	9	10	11	RR MUS.
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	CLUB MTG.	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	1	2	3

OCTOBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
4	5	BCF PLNG.	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	BRITISH CAR FESTIVAL	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	CLUB MTG.	28	29	30	31

Sparks

Club and Member News



British Car Festival Update

The SABCC British Car Festival is about six weeks away, so here's an update on how we're doing:

Registrations. As of September 2, we have 49 cars registered. Twenty-two of the 31 classes have at least one car. We have cars from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee, and seven of the participants are attending our show for the first time. If you want to improve your odds of taking home an award, the classes currently having no entries are:

- Austin-Healey 100s/3000s
- Jaguar Classic Sports
- MGB and MGC GTs
- Modern Britannia
- Land Rover Classics
- Triumph Classic Sports, pre-1969
- Triumph Spitfires and GT6s
- Under Restoration

Now I fully expect that most, if not all, of these classes will have entries by the morning of the show, but just in case you're trying to decide what to bring, or what to purchase, I'm sharing this information. **Regardless, please register your car(s) as soon as possible.**

Sponsors. We have three Primary Sponsors, 20 General Sponsors, and 18 Class Sponsors. In 2025, we had the same number of Primary Sponsors, and we're only one shy in the General Sponsor category. However, we need 29 more Class Sponsors to equal last year. Our club members often comprise the majority of the Class Sponsors, but thus far this year only a few have

stepped up. Please consider going to our website to use the online sponsor registration and payment links (or print and mail the form with a check). The cost is only \$50, and helps support our show and other activities throughout the year.

Vendors. We have three vendors lined up to be at the Festival:

2UTires will be familiar to many of you who have used their mobile services to buy and install tires—and yes, they can balance wire wheels.

Vintage Euro LLC in Chapel Hill, Tennessee, sells new and used British car parts, model cars, related car items, memorabilia, etc. If you contact owner David Bishop, ahead of the show, he will endeavor to source the parts or items you need and bring them to the show. You may email him at dgbishop30@gmail.com.

Home Grown Claremore, owned by PBCA member Matt Wilkins, is a vinyl decal and laser engraving company. They create automobilia on a variety of materials, including metal, leather, wood, and cork. If you are seeking something special with your car's logo, please email Matt at homegrownclaremore@gmail.com.

Friday Dinner. We need desserts! We need appetizers! Please watch for the sign-up list at the September and October meetings, or contact Donna Eagleson. If you don't have her email or phone number, you can always send a message through the club website.

Volunteers. Many of our positions are already filled (thank you) but we can always find a place

Upcoming Activities

Our scheduled activity for September is the British-German Invasion at the West Florida Railroad Museum (see map below), on the 12th. The museum is accessible via US 90 or Interstate 10 (Garcon Pt. Rd. exit). It's about an hour from PJ's Coffee in Spanish Fort, and the event does not start until 10:00. so it should be an easy, pleasant trip for those who chose to caravan. Watch your email for final details. We hope this might be a precursor to reestablishing the Euro Show.

For those wanting an event on Sep. 12 closer to Mobile, Mac McNamara tells *Ed.* he's planning to participate in the Veterans Helping Veterans Annual Car Show & Jeep Bash. This show is from 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park. This show has a \$35 entry fee. Mac also advises the Dixie Wings Cruise-In will be Sep. 8 from 5:30 - 8:30 pm. All are welcome to help raise money for Wilmer Hall Children's

Home. The location is Newk's Restaurant, 7440 Airport Blvd., Mobile. If you do not normally attend the British Car Festival planning meetings, this is a nice mid-week option.

Finally, please make sure you've marked your calendars for the Autojumble on Saturday, Nov. 14 (see p. 4) and the SABCC Christmas Party on Sunday, Dec. 13.

Herman Samuel "Sam" Walter, Jr., 1943 - 2026

Sam Walter passed away peacefully on Saturday, August 15, 2026. He was born on March 28, 1943, to Herman Samuel Walter, Sr., and Alice Doar Walter in Walterboro,



Sam and Sandy with their first place award at the 2014 BCF (photo by **Robb Ogletree**).

South Carolina. Sam graduated from Clemson University with a degree in civil engineering and served in the United States Air Force. He proudly worked for International Paper Company at the mills in Georgetown, South Carolina; Mobile, Alabama; and Laurel, Mississippi. Sam was a charter member of SABCC and a member of Mardi Gras organizations. He was a member of Dauphin Way Baptist Church.

He was preceded in death by his parents and his wife, Sandra Thompson Walter. He is survived by his sister, Dot Osmon (Lee) of Florida, and nieces and nephews.

Sam and Sandy were a regular presence at club events for many years, driving a black MGB and later, a beautifully-restored TR4.

BRITISH GERMAN INVASION

TRAIN TICKET

ECONOMY CLASS

West Florida Railroad Museum

CAR SHOW FUNDRAISER

NAME OF PASSENGER: **FAMILY FUN**

FROM: **Your House**

TO: **5003 Henry St. Milton FL**

DATE: **09/12/2026**

TRAIN: **01234**

PLATFORM: **05**

CARRIAGE NO.: **2**

ARRIVE: **10 AM**

DEPARTURE: **1:00 PM**

DATE: **09/12/2026**

NAME: **FAMILY FUN**

TRAIN: **MILTON**

PLATFORM: **05**

SEAT: **9:30AM-10:00AM**

TIME: **9:30AM-10:00AM**

TRAIN TICKET

British-German Invasion

West Florida Railroad Museum

The **West Florida Railroad Museum** is located at 5003 Henry St. in Milton. British cars will enter from Fillmore St. (drive north on Henry St., turn left on Canal, then left on Fillmore).

My First MG

story and photos by Stewart Reisinger

I always wanted an older car to fix up or to do something with, but could not afford such a luxury, let alone purchasing parts to bring it up to my expectations.

So, for years, as my family grew, I had to be content with walking through the various car shows admiring the beautiful cars. I was somewhat envious and dreamed of the day that I could have a car to restore, drive, listen to the engine, polish, and be able to say, "this is my car." Growing up in the fifties and sixties certainly provided me with plenty of classics to wonder about as to which one I would finally someday choose. Would it be an American car or a European sports car?

In 1993 my family and I had the opportunity to move to Alabama, where we met Joe Buck in Mobile, who had an MGB roadster that he was restoring. He sparked my curiosity and I started asking questions like how available are MGBs? How do you find one to buy? Joe told me about the British car club in Mobile and that there was going to be a British Car show on October 7th, 1995, at the USS Alabama Battleship Park Museum in Mobile. So I planned to attend this show, as I had done in the past.

Some time later, at Joe's birthday party, I had the good fortune to meet Bob and Sue Mason, who were MGB enthusiasts. It soon became apparent



Peter Lee presents **Stew** a first place award for his MGBGT (see Epilogue) at the 2025 British Car Festival (photo by **Robb Ogletree**)

that I was talking with some very nice people, and they were clearly MGB experts and perfectionists. Just listening to them and hearing their enthusiasm for the British cars got me ready to buy one that night!

October 7th was a sunny and bright day in Mobile and a great day for the British Car Day. Shirley and I left our home in Daphne, just across the bay from Battleship Park. On our way we talked about how nice it would be to have a car so we could attend shows like this. When we arrived we saw Joe Buck and his Land Rover. We spent the next few hours just taking our time enjoying the beautiful cars. We soon met Bob Mason, and once again his enthusiasm got Shirley and me looking forward to the day that we could find our special MGB. He took me to



the Moss Motors RV and introduced me to Ken Smith and the array of literature from Moss Motors.

I mentioned to Ken that I would like to someday own an MGB. He explained that they were not hard to find. We continued to talk, and I explained that I wanted an MGB that had a little history, that would be of interest not only to me but to other people. That viewpoint must have

(story continues next page)

My First MG, continued

caught Ken's interest, because he proceeded to tell me about his yellow 1979 MGB he owned and would consider selling to me. He proceeded to show me that this was the same yellow car in the Moss Motors parts catalog. This is the same car on the cover of *MG Driver* magazine and on the cover of *Safety Fast*. Also, this car was driven across the US more than one time. I could tell he was very attached sentimentally to the car. He had my attention.

About that time my wife joined the conversation, and I told her that I wanted this MGB, and she said, OK! I turned to Ken and said, "Ken, I would like to buy your 1979 MGB." Ken was stunned. He said, "you're kidding," and I assured him that I was serious. Now the fun part started. Ken told me that as part of the deal I would have to pick the car up at his home in Goleta, California, which is near Santa Barbara. I immediately said OK, when will you be home? He really thought I was kidding. He said, "I'll be home after the Memphis, TN show, and I'll call you." I said, "OK, let me know and I will fly out and drive the car home." He looked at me and reminded me that it was 2,500 miles between Santa Barbara and Daphne, Alabama. I told him I like to drive and that did not matter. (This really goes to show how little I knew about British cars!) I was really excited and looking forward to the adventure. I then started the long wait for Ken to call and tell me that he was home and to come and get the car. He finally called October 27th. I asked Ken and Barbara to pick me up the evening of November 1st at the Los Angeles airport. I planned to leave Goleta and start my adventure on Thursday, November 2nd.

Ken and Barbara picked me up at the airport right on schedule and drove me up the beautiful coast from LA to Santa Barbara and checked me into a motel in Goleta. We then went to their home and I saw the B for the first time. It was everything I thought it would be. I could not wait to drive it. (Oh yeah, keep in mind that I had



never driven an MGB before!) Ken and I took care of the money business and then started to plan my trip back to Alabama. Over dinner that night we discussed whether it would be wise to drive the northern route, I-40, or the southern route on I-10. The weather looked good for I-40 that night, but there was a chance of snow moving in, and it would be close. I wanted to drive in on I-40 since I had never seen the countryside in that part before. And besides, I wanted to see old Route 66. (Boy, did I ever get my wish!)

The next morning, November 3rd, was sunny and bright in Goleta. Before leaving, Ken and I went to Moss Motors to buy parts that might be necessary for emergencies on my trip home. We went back to Ken's and I packed the car with my luggage, cameras, and parts. (I don't remember what parts I bought, but whatever I bought were the wrong parts!) The top was put down for the

(story continues next page)

My First MG, continued

first day because it was warm and sunny, and it was my first time driving my MGB. I would chance the rain, since I was going out into the desert. Ken gave me my final operator checkout and we all said our goodbyes. I soon realized as it came time to leave that it was very hard for Ken and Barbara to let go of the car. At ten o'clock I pulled away, leaving Ken waving goodbye in the rear-view mirror. I was now alone with three days of driving ahead of me, so I thought.

It was my intention to make it to Albuquerque, New Mexico the first day, Fort Smith, Arkansas the second night, and home to Daphne, Alabama the third night. I am used to driving long distances, and 800 miles a day did not seem to be out of the question. How little did I know that the MG had another schedule in mind. Let the adventure begin!

The drive down along the coast from Santa Barbara to Los Angeles, past where they film Baywatch, was pleasant as I learned how the car handled. The car was running strong and felt solid. All I had to do was concentrate on how to get home and enjoy the scenery. My first goal was to get to Barstow, where I would get onto Route 40 for the first time. Ken told me to be sure to gas up in Barstow before heading out over the Mojave Desert to Needles, because there were no gas stations for 132 miles.

My drive to Barstow was uneventful. However, when I pulled into a station for gas I heard a ticking sound coming from under the bonnet. Close inspection revealed that the starter coil was sparking to the fender. I found corrosion, which was easily cleaned to solve the problem. With a full tank of gas and no ticking, I left for Needles,

California, cruising nicely at 70 mph in overdrive.

The landscape turned to desert, Route 40 in front of me, a railroad track alongside, and my MGB. About halfway across the desert to Needles I noticed that I was losing power to some degree. I wrote it off to my imagination. Wrong! As I pulled into Needles I noticed that I was almost out of gas. It dawned on me that I was getting terrible mileage. Nothing to do now but gas up and head out for Albuquerque. It was very dry, so I bought two gallons of drinking water to take along. The elevation was about 2,600 feet above sea level. I was heading for the Rockies and Kingman, Arizona, which is about 3,500 feet above sea level.

As I approached Kingman I was now convinced that the B was losing power. After only 75 miles I was down to a quarter tank of gas. I fueled up again, checked for fuel leaks or anything, and found nothing, so I headed for Albuquerque. I had to pass through Flagstaff, Arizona first on the road to Albuquerque, and the road is all uphill. Flagstaff sits at around 7,000 feet above sea level. It was getting colder now with the increase in elevation and the sun setting behind me. There was a storm moving in ahead of me. This is fun! I was really starting to feel alone and I started to wonder if this was a good idea.

Somewhere between Kingman and a place called Seligman, which is about 40 miles from Flagstaff, the B started to blow black smoke and run quite rich. I could watch the gas gauge needle fall toward empty. The most the B would do for me was 40 mph. I could not keep it in overdrive any more, and in fact I had to downshift to third

(story continues next page)

My First MG, continued

some times on steep grades just to make it over the next hill. The needle was soon on empty just as I passed a sign that said Seligman, 30 miles. I was totally convinced and resigned to the fact that for the first time in my life I would run out of gas. Alone at night in the desert, the top down, cold, and a storm coming at me, I kept going, waiting for the B to start missing and finally come to a stop. But the mileage markers kept moving by, and soon, unbelievably, I was pulling into Seligman and onto Route 66!

I filled up the tank and found the Route 66 motel, and I was lucky to get the last room. I was now on the MG's schedule, not mine. The lady behind the desk turned on the no-vacancy sign. I was now having my Route 66 adventure! I called Ken Smith and let him know what was going on. Then I called Shirley and assured her that everything was OK.

I also called Bob Mason for advice and to explain what was going on, because the B had Mikuni sidedraft carburetors and they were very sensitive to elevation. We all agreed that when I got out of the mountains the B would start to run good again. So I started to read my new Haynes manual on how to put the top up. After getting the top up, I fell asleep for the night.

November 3, 1995. The second day. I woke up to find a sheet of ice covering the B and the sky was big and bright. I thought if I could find a garage in town and have a mechanic take a look to see if anything could be done to tweak the carburetors and get better performance. I went to a local gas station across from the motel and was told that there was a man by the name of Buck down at the other end of town who could probably help

me, but he didn't open until 8 am. So I started the B and drove to the other end of town and found Buck's garage. I pulled in and started my long vigil. I got my Haynes manual and started to read again. Soon a big country sedan came to a sliding stop and a bearded man looked at me. I said, "are you Buck?" and he said "yep, get in, let's go for breakfast and a cup of coffee." After breakfast, two cigarettes, and two cups of coffee, Buck let me know that it sounded like my plugs were fouled. When we got back to the garage he not only found that the plugs were fouled, but were also only finger tight, and one almost fell out! I could not believe what I saw. Buck recognized the Mikuni carbs from his motorcycle racing days and explained that they were very touchy. He declined to adjust them. So with new plugs installed I finally pulled out of Seligman, Arizona, and was very thankful to good old Buck.

As I passed through Flagstaff the B was running pretty darn good. I thought the problem was solved. I actually forgot about the problems and started to admire the beauty of the Rockies as I headed to Albuquerque. However, the MG was feeling ignored, because it started to blow more black smoke and drink gas at an enormous rate again no further than 50 miles from Flagstaff. I pulled off onto Route 66 in Holbrook. I was pretty upset, but hopeful.

Now Holbrook did not look like the kind of place that could solve all my problems, to say the least. I found a service center that specialized in Volkswagens. Maybe they could help me. Their technician, after removing the valve cover and checking the rockers, was convinced that there was a hole in a piston. Now let me tell you that I was reaching a new low. It was time to think

(story continues next page)

My First MG, continued

about shipping it home. I pulled back onto Hopi Street and called Ken Smith for help. He was totally surprised, and shocked me by letting me know there was a really good garage in Holbrook by the name of Dave's Service Center. Now Dave wasn't there, but his partner called Dave, and Dave said he would be on his way to the garage to help me. In the meantime I helped Dave's partner paint the garage door. I also went next door and purchased my Route 66 hat pin, which I earned. Dave finally arrived (I learned what Western Standard Time is) and proceeded to do a compression check and found nothing wrong! He cleaned the plugs and leaned out the carbs a little, and I was back on the road to Albuquerque. I called Ken Smith again and gave him an update, and he got in touch with Don and Carol



Tyrack in Albuquerque at the Taos Garage. They specialize in MGBs, and he said he would go over the car for me. Somehow the B did hold together. I called Don Tyrack and he told me that he and Ken had been talking. He told me to come by the shop in the morning at 7 am. I spent the night in Albuquerque.

November 4, 1995 — The third day. Saturday morning was bright and clear. Don met me at the garage and took care of the most important thing

first. He made coffee! And then he started to methodically go through the car's ignition system, keeping an evil eye on the carburetors. He replaced the starter coil, plugs, points, condenser, rotor, and ignition wire set. He found the vacuum advance lines connected to the carburetors in the wrong ports. He explained to me the carburetor operation and proceeded to make some subtle changes for altitude, keeping in mind that I would be going to lower elevations soon. As Don was tuning the carbs a radiator hose started to leak. The fan motors were not working, so he replaced both of them. We finally gave it a run up and down the hills in Albuquerque and it performed very well. Don felt it would make it to Alabama without further issues. He was not a fan of the Makuni carbs and suggested that as soon as I got home I consider installing other carburetors. Don suggested I use high-octane gas until I got home. Don's work was excellent and it really made a difference. I can't say enough nice things about Don and Carol. They really made me feel welcome, and Don certainly is a very good mechanic. The people in Albuquerque are lucky to have them in their community.

I pulled away from Albuquerque about 10 am Saturday morning and headed east for Amarillo, Texas. The B was now running strong again. The mountains leaving Albuquerque did not present a lot of problems because of the altitude. Don did not lean out the carburetors all the way, because he knew that I would soon be dropping down onto the flats of Texas and Oklahoma. My gas mileage improved, but I still was not getting over 200 miles to the tank. I drove through to Amarillo and only stopped in Oklahoma City for gas. At 1 am on Sunday morning I pulled into Fort Smith,

(story continues next page)

My First MG, continued

Arkansas and went straight to bed, totally exhausted.

November 5th, 1995 — The fourth day. The wake-up call came at 6 am and I was up and back on the road for the last leg of my adventure. I



would be happy to be home today. Actually, the rest of the trip down through Little Rock and into Jackson, Mississippi and into Daphne, Alabama was uneventful. Thank God! As I was going across Mobile Bay I called home and told them I would be there in about ten minutes. It sure felt funny to pull into my driveway knowing that I had made it. As I rounded the house, to my surprise I had a welcoming committee. All of my family, along with Bob and Sue Mason, were there to greet me with champagne and cheers.

In retrospect, the car is everything that I wanted. It has a great story to go along with its great looks and style. If the carburetors, spark plugs, fans, and radiator hose hadn't failed I would have made it just fine, all 2,424 miles. My family calls the MGB the "Honey Bee" because it is yellow and has black stripes.

Epilogue

Was I out of my mind to take on this adventure? Probably YES. Fortunately, I did not know anything about the reliability of the MGB in such

cases and I was looking for adventure. I was very naive. I did not have tools with me. Looking back I would have had a tool box full of tools, and maybe a trailer.

I remember that the only part I bought at Moss Motors when I visited was a KEY FOB! (No kidding.)

When I went to pay my bill for the repairs by Don Tyrack in Albuquerque, he said Ken took care of it.

How Buck knew that the plugs were loose I will never know. Unbelievable.

In Oklahoma City I picked up an Alabama football game on the radio. I took it as a good sign.

I went on to install new carbs, intake manifold, and a heat shield. I also replaced the clutch, all under tutelage of Bob Mason. I did the work and Bob drank coffee.

I kept the car for about four years and sold it to one of our club members. I had to make room for a new 1966 MGBGT project car which I have fully restored. The club member then sold it to a lady some where in Missouri. I'm currently trying to track it down to finish this story.

Ken and Barbara Smith, have gone on to meet their maker. They were great people. To write this story I tried to call Don Tyrack. When I did not get an answer to my calls, I called a garage down the road from them to see what happened. A guy by the name of "Ken Darby" answered the phone and told me that they passed on. Bob Mason has also passed on. I appreciate Don and Bob's help. *[Stew's story is a reminder that we British car owners get by with a little help from our friends. More than 30 years after his cross-country trip, he's still an active enthusiast, and his MGBGT is one of the nicest I've seen. -Ed.]*

Spannering

It's There for a Reason

story and photo by Rodney McDonald

A number of publications cite the need for the foam seal that closes up the gap between the radiator and the diaphragm plate on MGBs (up to 1977). Mine has never had one and I thought I



was OK without it. The car has always run about a needle width past the "N" mark on the gauge and I have never had a problem with overheating. However, with the staggeringly hot conditions we've experienced along our part of

the Gulf Coast, the old girl was running a bit hotter than expected.

A few MGB owners I've known extol the virtues of Moss Motors part number 282-905 "Seal, Radiator to Support" - the foam rubber packing that prevents air flow around the radiator and forces it the flow through it. They tell me that it makes a world of difference in operating temperature.

Having nothing to lose, I decided to give it a whirl and see if it would help my issue. My long-suffering spouse told me that one of her favorite sewing supply stores had foam rubber sheets on hand. We bought one 2 inches thick, and I cut a strip off of it 2 by 1-1/2 inches. A two-foot section fit the gap just fine.

Afterwards, I took the 'B' out for a blast to see how well the foam strip did its job. Very nicely, it turns out. The temperature gauge showed the usual slightly-past-the "N" running. The only downside is that the foam is light green (something to do with how wonderful it is for the environment).

Easy Method for Cleaning Light Lenses

story and photo by Rodney McDonald

I'm basically lazy and I'm always looking for ways to make my workload a bit lighter - even down to detailing my classic cars. Now, I'll probably be dropped from Griot's Garage mailing list, but I've got a tip for you and here it is:

To clean light lenses both inside and out with

(story continues next page)

Cleaning Light Lenses, continued

excellent results and minimum effort, put them in your dishwasher.

That's it. The warm water and detergent will get both plastic and glass lenses looking clear and spotless. Don't worry about the potential for etching from the detergent as it takes literally hundreds of cycles for that to appear. This method is also perfect for rehabbing old, used lenses from your parts cars, too. The folks that I've passed this on to so far have been impressed with their results.

My crack legal team wants me to tell you that you are on your own if you use this tip [*I believe Rodney mentioned his long-suffering spouse in his previous story-Ed.*].



Darling, are those CAR PARTS in my dishwasher?

Auction Roundup—Less Than One

We look at British cars with engines less than a liter.

1959 Morris Minor 1000 Convertible



Sold for \$9,619 on Bring a Trailer

Here's a handsome Morris in BRG with a tan top over green vinyl. No major issues were noted.

1960 Austin-Healey "Bugeye" Sprite



Sold for \$13,000 on Bring a Trailer

With the same 948cc engine as the Morris, above, this Sprite was refurbished in 2022 with a repaint in blue, many new parts, and new upholstery and carpets. The paint is nice, but sorry, blue over teddy bear brown is not to my taste.

1967 Austin Mini Moke



Sold (Aug. 15, 2024) for \$19,950 on Hemmings In "excellent condition," this British Leyland Yellow Moke with a green top and seats features a four-bag golf bag carrier, although I'd think most courses would look askance to it being on their cart paths. With an 848cc engine producing 34 horsepower, the Moke fell short of its original intent as a military vehicle—but they're fun.

Spare Parts

Everyone Loves an Oddball, Episode 9: Don't Make Me Get the Torch

story and photos by Peter Lee

Something I have realized lately is that when you start doing a lot of wrenching on anything, you run into obstacles to overcome. I was working on changing the timing belt for a friend. This is the fourth time I have done this job on a Honda.

Honda torques the crank pulley bolt so tight it is nightmare to remove with standard garage tools. Last time I did this, I finally accomplished the task by using a 6-foot exhaust pipe on a breaker bar and it broke loose sounding like a gunshot. I broke multiple sockets, extensions, and one breaker bar that day. But this time I brought something new to the game paired with my ½" battery powered impact.

I give you the Duralast crank bolt socket. Vintage 2026 and available for around 30 bucks. Paired



with my big impact this popped the bolt off on one hit. I am a mechanical engineer by education, so I understand rotational mass, kinetic energy and inertia. I don't care. The bolt came off so fast that as far as I am concerned, this socket is made with a core of wood from Gandalf's staff. No broken anything. No progressively bigger breaker bars. Just magic.

This got me thinking about other items in the garage that have made my life easier. And hopefully, you readers have some experiences that can be shared to others. Send it to me and I'll make a tool idea section on the website to help spread our experiences to interested parties.

So here goes tool surprise number 2. The crow's foot wrench set. I have had a set of these for years but have only used them



twice. But when I did, they saved my butt. They work in places where a socket or ratcheting wrench won't fit. I can turn the bolt in a confined space a bit at a time and as I reach the extent of the room I'm working in, I can turn the crow's foot with the bolt head to reposition for the next turn. It was slow going but it got there and I had no other ideas on how to do it

The brake cube. Many rear brake pistons need to be rotated back into the caliper when pressing it open due to the emergency brake functions. This cube was made to be placed between a C-clamp and turned with a screwdriver while you

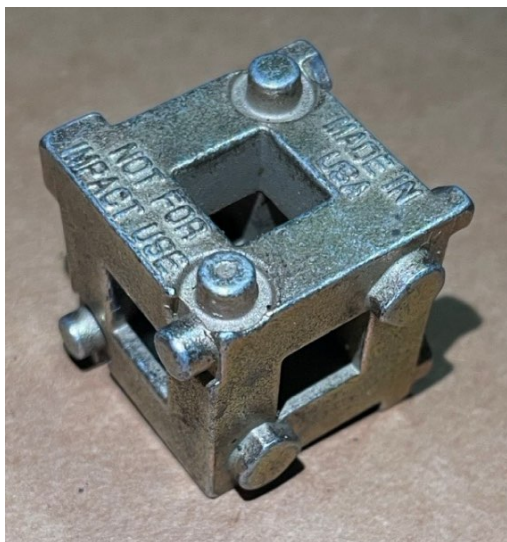
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Don't Make Me Get the Torch, continued

tightened the clamp.

Nowadays there are nice kits you can find that apply to most auto applications, but I keep this around for the special

days that I always seem to deal with.



The power probe. I only bought one of these in the last few years, finally bringing me out of the dark [Lucas?-Ed.] ages. I got it when I started having trouble with Mini fuel pumps. You hook it up to the battery directly and can then move to the component with the probe and manually activate it. This allows you to directly force the item to run. In the case of electrical systems of wires and connectors, you can open a plug and if you know the pin, you can test the whole run to the questionable item in one quick shot. You just have to understand



what you're testing and if it will respond correctly. First-gen Mini starter solenoids can be directly fired if you open the main harness connector and fire the right pin making your diagnostics much easier

Locking hose clamp pliers. I hate dealing with those things as they should better be classed as a mechanic torture device. I used channel locks, needle nose, and vice grips but they never really worked well, especially when you tried to slide them over after opening and they pop off, catching your finger tip. The blue-handled set below I bought from Harbor Freight. They can



reach into a tight spot and lock open a hose clamp so you can safely manipulate it. My next upgrade is the red-handled model which is more flexible to position, not requiring such a straight shot.

Now how about one that I have yet to use? I bought it when I realized I could have used it on a project but didn't have one. A butterfly impact, named for the top lever that activates it. It's made for small areas or precision tightening. I have had one for



(story continues next page)

Don't Make Me Get the Torch, continued

probably 25 years now but it has a massive layer of dust on it.

Last one is a no brainer that most people don't think about—a smaller torque wrench. I have a



big Snap-On ½" torque wrench rated for 30-200 lb-ft or torque. That's all well and good for axle bolts or such. But nowadays I use my baby torque wrench 20 times more often. I bought a 3/8" 3-28 NM or 25-250 inch-lbs wrench and it has been a staple of everything I do. These smaller bolts are very critical and, speaking from experience, they break easily if your calibrated arm is a little out of practice. Autos are precision designed. Torque values are there to maintain that precision and I find they help me keep up with where I am in the process when I have to cross off the proper torque. I haven't considered it but am thinking about investing in the ¼" torch wrench model just in case.

So, what have I missed? What have your experiences shown you as something your toolbox cannot be without? Send suggestions through <https://sabcc.org/contact-us> on the SABCC web page as that is a direct line to me. [I'd remiss if I didn't add that auto parts stores offer a variety of unusual tools for rent. AutoZone, and probably others, fully refund the rental fee when the tool is returned.-Ed.]

Classifieds

1975 MG Midget—\$8,500

Up for sale is my British Racing Green MG Midget. This is the 50th anniversary edition. It's a fun little car to drive around, and is road ready! Interior leather is in amazing shape. Exterior paint is in good shape. Vinyl top is showing age and needs replacement, but I only drive in fair weather with the top down, which is why I haven't replaced it! Tires have plenty of life on them. I always get so many comments every time I take it out for a drive. I've owned it for around six years, and just don't get to use it as much as I was hoping. Car is kept under car cover and is well taken care of. This vehicle is looking for a good home, and is a wonderful date night car. Located in Fairhope; more photos and video at <https://www.facebook.com/marketplace/item/1038513159120505>.

Stephen Zuercher
steve.zerk@gmail.com



1951 Jaguar XK 120 FHC—Asking \$85,000 Triumph TR4—Asking \$20,500

The time has come for me to try to sell my 1951 Jaguar XK 150 FHC. It was fully restored 1988—2005 and was in storage from 1990—2005. I purchased it in 2009 (see full story in July 2024 *Spark & Spanner*). It has been re-powered with a 5-liter (302 ci) Ford V8 engine and has a 5-speed manual transmission. I have added air conditioning (heat and cool), disc brakes on front, 60-spoke chrome knockoff wire wheel with hubs, bushings, seals and bearings. It has black leather seats. New Holley carb recently installed. The car is in great shape and ready for a new home.

Bill Cashion
704-500-4843



Frame-off restoration several years ago. Brand new tires, carbs rebuilt, new oil gaskets and full maintenance in June 2026. No rust, great paint and redone interior. Drives great. Amazing car with numerous car show trophies. I love the car but my 75-year-old back doesn't.

Craig Vinson
CraigOVinson@gmail.com
251-609-7035



Triumph TR4 Axle—\$250

Solid axle with hubs. [*Incorrectly listed as a TR6 axle last month-Ed.*]

Colin Jahnke
cjahnke@runbox.com



1959 Triumph TR3

This was my late father's TR-3, in British Racing Green over full tan leather with green piping. It was fully restored in approximately 2010 and then was in Utah until 2023 when it was moved to Alabama. The car has two-stage paint, a tan convertible top and tonneau, painted wire wheels, and overdrive. Includes spare tire and side curtains. Clear title. It will need some TLC from a new owner due to a few items that have developed since moving here. A few small exposed metal areas have succumbed to the humid, salty air and rusted. Also, while attempting to change the oil this summer, the drain plug snapped off so it will need to be drilled out (I do have a replacement magnetic plug on hand). But more pressing is while removing oil through the dipstick tube, I pulled out some coolant in the process so there is likely a head gasket leak that will require repair. It is still functional and does turn over. Based on these mechanical and cosmetic issues, we are asking \$13,000.

Colin Jahnke
cjahnke@runbox.com



Triumph Herald Parts Car—FREE

I have a Triumph Herald convertible parts car to give away. It has no engine or transmission. The body is poor. It is on the frame with four wheels. A trailer can be backed within eight feet of the parts car. Located in midtown Mobile.

Keith Jarvis
 251-422-7979

2013 Jaguar XKR-S

Special edition 550 hp coupe. No issues with vehicle, tires in great shape (new on rear).

Rick Nerger
 850-450-1329
rnerger@yahoo.com



Weak and Rusty

Michael King, Editor

The High Cost of Upkeep, Part II

Last month, I wrote about the high cost of owning and maintaining an automobile, and promised to finish the story this month. Several (OK, two or three, but that's more than usual) folks told me they were looking forward to Part II, but we all know the sequel is never as good as the first part, right? Nonetheless, here goes.

I believe as a car club we can do three things to help our fellow sufferers with their car woes. To sum it up, I offer just three words: Advise, Educate, and Support.

Let's start with "Advise." I'm just salesperson at an auto parts store, and a hack mechanic, but you'd be amazed at how many people I see who know far less than me about cars—yes, really. If you know how to change oil, or tires, or the difference between ATF and brake fluid, you are well ahead of most people who drive every day. Be willing to share what you know. You are a member of a car club. You like cars, and people know that. At family gatherings, social events, work, or wherever, don't ignore pleas for help, just because you don't have all the answers. Give advice, offer suggestions, and recommend resources (including auto parts stores, which will do free battery / starter / alternator tests and free OBD scans). You might keep someone from spending money unnecessarily, or help forestall a little problem before it becomes a big one.

Second is "Educate." Several years ago, I started a little group within SABCC to discuss ways we could do more in the community. One idea we discussed was creating or at least helping to underwrite local programs to teach people about

their cars. Peter Lee mentioned that Scouting USA offers a merit badge on auto maintenance. He obtained the program for his troop (by the way, his daughter Maddie became an Eagle Scout). Other clubs have organized programs to help young people learn to drive manual transmissions. I still have a vision of offering a community program on interpreting the various warning lights on car dashboards. For example, did you know the image to the right is "Key Sinking in Lake?" OK, maybe it's coolant temperature, but again, I'm just a parts salesman. Knowledge is power. Let's share what we know.



Finally, and now I'm going from preachin' to meddlin', let's talk about "Support." Our club raises a fair amount of money in the community each year from our car show. While we need to keep a healthy balance on hand to support our club activities (e.g., what if another pandemic hits and we cannot have our show), I'd suggest our current bank balance gives us some wiggle room. Last month, I talked about the shortage of trained auto technicians. What can we, as a club, do to help? In Robertsedale, the South Baldwin Center for Technology offers a hands-on automotive technology program for high school students. We've had some contact with them in the past, but we can do more, and in the process, get these future mechanics interested in the sorts of cars we drive. Would scholarships, first sets of tools, or other financial assistance help these students further their education?

I don't claim to have all the answers (remember, I just sell auto parts). But I do know we have folks in our club who care, and we have resources (including money). Please let's do something to keep cars—especially British ones—affordable.

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And now, for something completely different . . .



You've heard of Monterey Car Week, held each August in California? What about the least prestigious event of the week, the Concours d'Lecons? Our president loves patina, so I share with you this photo by Mark Vaughn of Autoweek, who writes "This 1964 Ford Galaxie wagon was in two demolition derbies in 1977 then parked in a barn for 43 years because you never know when you might have to enter demo derby #3. In 2024 it was hauled out of the barn and someone swapped in an LS truck motor and Turbo 400 transmission. It also got a '4000 Watt Stereo, just because.'"



South Alabama British Car Club

www.sabcc.org

On Facebook, look for the **Friends of South Alabama British Car Club** group