Spark & Spanner

The Official Publication of the South Alabama British Car Club

July 2025

From the President

Ben Cummings

Club Members Helping Each Other

Just a few days before the Fourth of July, **Tom Renick**, **Noel Eagleson** and I helped **Michael King** retrieve a dusty 1967 MGB from an empty house. The car had sat in the garage for many years. The tires were flat and the rear brakes were locked. Wheel dollies were required to roll the car out into the open. But there were many obstacles that had to be overcome to get the car out of the garage, up to the street, and onto Tom's trailer. The garage was cluttered. A table of large advertising letters had to be moved. The lattice doors (which probably hadn't been opened in decades) were encouraged to open. And the roof was rotten and sagging. I bumped my head on a large section of dilapidated roof. Thankfully neither I nor the roof were damaged no more than before we encountered each other. A trailer was in the way and had to be moved. But it had a trailer lock. So, hooking it onto a truck was not an option. Fortunately, we were all feeling quite young and strong [*or desperate-Ed.*] so we pushed the trailer aside. Then there was a car parked in the driveway and the keys could not be found. So, again, we were feeling strong and young, so with the assistance of the wheel dollies we pushed the car out of the way.

The obstacles were gone, but the car was behind a house at the bottom of a hill. And the rear wheels were locked up. We used my truck to pull the car up the hill and drag it out into the street so that it could be put onto Tom's trailer. We may have worn off about an inch of rubber from the rear tires and Michael said we ruined a perfectly good set of 20 year old tires [*Michelin X radials!-Ed.*]. A neighbor came over to help us move it and he talked about the old man that once owned the car. He also knew a past club member, Michael Thomason, and reminisced about his passion for British cars. The street was somewhat busy, so we did get a lot of looks which made us prouder of our accomplishment. And the neighbors came out of the cool air-conditioning to watch the spectacle in the hot sun. Some of the onlookers may have never seen an old British car before and we were happy to show off the little MG.

Once it was safely onto the trailer we shook hands, patted one another on the back and thanked each other for a job well done. It was hard work but satisfying. Even though the work was hard, it was a fun afternoon. I enjoyed helping to save the old car. I enjoyed helping Michael get the car. I enjoyed seeing the neighbors and the cars drive by and the rubberneckers. And I enjoyed the camaraderie. It made me proud to be in the SABCC. One thing I like about the club is the help we give one another. We give each other advice and sometimes we help one another work on our cars. We do need each other to help share the knowledge of running and preserving these old cars. And I love how we are all so willing to do so. Occasionally, I will call a member in the directory with a question and an answer has always been happily given. So, thank you fellow SABCC members. Thank you for your willingness to help. Thank you for your friendship. And thank you for sharing your knowledge with one another. Keep up the good work.

Safety Fast,

Ben

Ben Cummings *is the president of the South Alabama British Car Club.*

On the cover: In honor of **Ed.'s** *recent purchase (see pp. 6-7), Ed. Emeritus* ***Rodney McDonald*** *had a bit of fun with ChatGPT.*

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Newsletter Editor	Michael King

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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? Tariffs? Not here! – Ed.*].

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Want a Club Shirt (or Jacket or Hat)?

SABCC uses Queensboro, which offers a large variety of embroidered shirts, jackets, hats, and other items, in men's, ladies, and youth styles, all of which can be embroidered with the SABCC logo. Here's it works:

1. Visit the Queensboro site, find a shirt (or other item) you like, and note the style number, size, and color name (make sure the item is available in your size and color). We can usually get items at half retail.
2. Send ***Ed.*** **(Michael King)** an email listing what you want, including quantity, style number, color name, and size for each item.
3. When Queensboro runs one of their sales, I will place a group order—**but we need at least five to get the best pricing**.
4. Once the order is placed, I will send you an email with your total, which will include the price of your items plus shipping and tax.
5. When I receive the order (usually a couple of weeks) I will let you know.
6. I'll deliver your items at the next club meeting or event, and you'll reimburse me.

Simple, right? So, start shopping, and send me your list! If you have any questions, call or text Michael at 251-689-1040.

Around the Bend

Upcoming Club Activities

July 20, 2025
Tri-Club Pig Roast

Tom Schmitz Residence, 9609 Soldier's Creek Dr., Lillian, AL 36549, 12:00 noon. Bring a side item and whatever you like to drink. British cars park in the driveway, others on the roadside.

July 22, 2025
Monthly Club Meeting

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

August 12, 2025

BCF Planning Meeting

Pier House, 5872 Battleship Pkwy, Spanish Fort, 36527—6:00 to eat and 7:00 to meet.

August 26, 2025
Monthly Club Meeting

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

July 2025

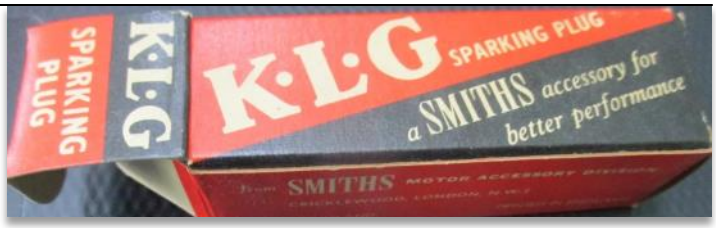
SU	MO	TUE	WE	TH	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20 PIG ROAST	21	22 CLUB MEETING	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

August 2025

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

Sparks

Club and Member News



Tri-Club Pig Roast is July 20

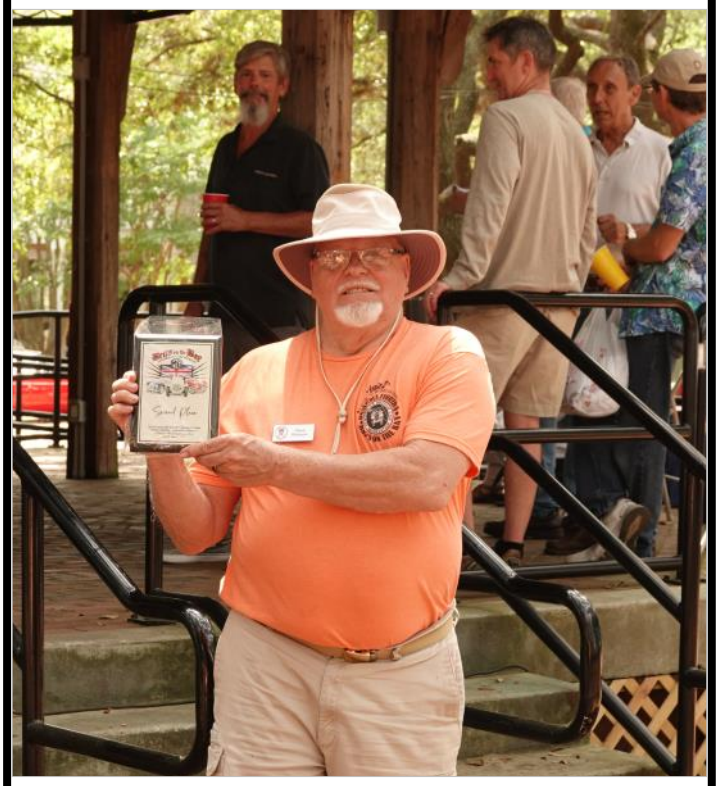
The Tri-Club Pig Roast, hosted by Tom Schmitz (pictured below) at his home on Soldier Creek in south Baldwin County, is a longstanding summer highlight. With members of SABCC, the Mardi Gras MG Club, and the Panhandle British Car Association participating, the event usually attracts more than seventy attendees.

While the Pig Roast starts at noon, the "guest of honor" usually makes an appearance around 1:30. In the meantime, everyone enjoys fellowship, appetizers, and touring Tom's onsite collection of British cars, both full-size and scale models. The swimming pool is available, and in past years, boat tours of the creek have been offered.

A special competition event, "Valve Cover Submarine Races," will be held this year. The valve cover that goes the farthest underwater wins. Valve covers will be "launched" from the ramp into Tom's pool. The cover will need wheels or some way of getting down the ramp on its own. The cover that goes the farthest by the time it sinks to the bottom wins (three tries per cover). Best Looking and Weirdest Awards will be given. Design choices are unlimited, other than nothing so heavy that it may dent the pool.

Go High on That Mountain, Dave

David Roloson died June 21, 2025. He and his wife Karen joined SABCC in 2018, and he was VP of Activities in 2024. Dave and Karen were also members of the Mardi Gras MG club.



David Roloson *with his plaque at the 2024 Pensacola show (photo by* ***Robb Ogletree****).*

Dave restored a 1961 Triumph TR4 roadster, painted bright green and black, that he named "Mrs. Emma Peel." Later, he acquired a Carnival Red 2001 Jaguar XJ8 Vanden Plas saloon, which won awards at the British Car Festival and at the "Brits on the Bay" show in Pensacola.

A veteran of the United States Navy, Dave was a man of deep faith and, as stated so well in his obituary, "infectious enthusiasm for his community and his passions." We will miss him.

Spannering

Tech, Repair, Restoration

Carport Find MGB

*story by **Michael King***

As President **Ben Cummings** shared in his column, I've just acquired my second MGB, a 1967 tourer. This is my fifth MG over the last five decades; the first three were Midget 1500s. After all this time, I finally have a chrome-bumper car (well, chrome and superficial ferric oxide).

My story with this car began a couple of months ago, when Ben forwarded me a classified ad. He was contacted by the seller, who acquired the car when he bought the house in which it was enveloped. Let me explain. Said house is a small bungalow in the Spring Hill section of Mobile, built in 1947 during the post-war boom. The lot falls away, so the dwelling has storage areas underneath, including a carport of sorts. The MGB was in this carport, which was open on two sides, and it had sat there "for about thirty years." The seller wanted $1000.

The seller sent this photo with his ad.

But this was not just any MGB. It was a 1967, considered by many the best of the nineteen-year run. More impressively, it appeared to be rust-free. I called Ben. "Have you seen this car?" "Yes." "Any rust?" "No." I was intrigued.

As newsletter editor, I see new ads before anyone else in the club. I believe that obliges me to let everyone else have an opportunity before I express an interest.

So I waited. And thought about it. And finally, I reached out to the seller. He said he still had the car and told me where it was. Communications broke down for a couple of weeks, and my wife said that might be an omen, but not being possessed of her good sense, I tried again—and a time was set to meet.

On June 12, **Noel Eagleson**, **Tom Renick**, Ben, and I answered the question of "how many SABCC presidents it takes to inspect an MGB." The four of us examined the car carefully, found some parts in an adjoining room, and generally agreed the car was a good buy. A deal was struck, a handshake was exchanged, and the presidential contingent adjourned to nearby Dreamland BBQ to celebrate.

The four presidents at stage 1 of the rescue.

(story continues next page)

Carport Find MGB, continued

Ben has already related the details of excising the car from storage, so I won't repeat his story, other than to say just how indebted I am to my friends. The car spent the night at Tom's place, as he had choir rehearsal that evening, but he has since taken it to the Garagemahal. I met Noel and Tom the following Saturday, and the three of us disassembled the seized rear brakes, converting the car from a dragger to a roller.

So what I have I learned about the car, and what will I do with it?

Noel sprays penetrating oil on the brake drum as Tom supervises.

First, it is quite complete. The engine bay is missing the heater blower motor and the air cleaners, but is otherwise intact. The soft goods in the interior are gone, except for the ratty seat covers, but the seat frames are fine and the dash, other than the glove box door, is intact—and its crash pad and vinyl topping are in good shape, as is the radio speaker console. The trunk has its spare, with what appears to be an original bias-ply tire on the rim, and the jack, spare tire hold-down, and knock-off wrench are present. The folding top frame is missing only a header.

Second, the car is mostly original. I need to order a British Motor Heritage Certificate, but its car number, GHN3L/118762, indicates a Mark I MGB built in March 1967, just before reversing lamps were added. Its engine number, 18GB-UH-84669, is also consistent with a Mark I MGB, without overdrive, produced about the same time as the car itself. Only a few modifications from factory specs are to be found—a vintage Les Leston wood-rim steering wheel, a luggage rack, a period-correct Motorola AM radio, and, most significantly, a respray from the original dark British Racing Green to a light silver. The old paint can be seen in the body cavities.

Finally, the overall condition of this long-unused B is remarkable, considering its storage conditions. All the body panels are extremely straight, including the aluminum bonnet, and none have been perforated by the tin worm. The trunk floor is similarly sound, and the floorboards and sills appear to be as well, although we think some patching or replacing might have been done. Even the silver paint appears to be good enough that wet-sanding and polishing might make it quite serviceable.

The economics of restoration are usually not favorable to the one paying the bills. 1967 MGBs are desirable cars—one restored to a very high standard sold recently on Bring a Trailer for $24,550—but even that restorer probably did not break even. For that reason, I am leaning toward a sympathetic refurbishment. including sorting all the mechanical systems, installing a new top and interior, and saving the silver paint. That paint plays well into my personal preferences: I like blue. I have been pricing out a blue top, blue carpets, blue trim panels, and blue leather seats, rather than the original black. I have not, however, entirely ruled out a full restoration to as-new condition and color scheme.

Regardless, I plan to have fun (I already am). And, I hope to save a rather special MG for future generations to enjoy.

[*Note: I'm looking for indoor space to store and work on the car and will pay rent; if you can help, let me know.*]

Spare Parts

Motivating an Industry: The BMC B-Series Engine

story and pictures by ***Rodney McDonald***

The BMC "B" Series engine was one of the world's most successful medium-displacement four cylinder power plants with production lasting some 32 years. Designed by the Austin Motor Company prior to their merger with Morris Motors and the formation of BMC, the B-series was one of the firm's earliest overhead valve engines.

Early B-series engine

In keeping with the technology of the times, the B-series one-piece crankcase and block was cast iron with a cast iron head. The camshaft was mounted low in the block. The overhead valves were operated via steel pushrods acting on rocker arms. Originally, the engine was built with a three main bearing crankshaft which gave early B-series engines a free-revving nature, but the lack of crankshaft support led to shaft "whip" and eventual failure. Later engines were supplied with five main bearings.

The standard cast iron head had two siamesed inlet ports and three exhaust ports, all on one side of the head. It also benefitted from work by legendary engine tuner Harry Weslake, who designed the unique—and patented—heart-shaped combustion chamber.

Its first production application was in the new Austin Cambridge saloon with engine capacities of 1.2 and 1.5 liters on offer. Morris used the B-series in their Cowley saloon and MG installed it in the ZA Magnette, albeit with twin SU carburetors which gave the sporty saloon 60 BHP—10 more than the single carburetor 1.5-liter Austin or Morris. MG further developed the engine for the MGA sports car and was able to extract 68 BHP with clever tuning.

The B-series went through an evolutionary change in 1961 when the block was redesigned to permit greater bore diameter. The engine received bores of slightly over 76mm which provided 1622cc capacity. Again, careful tuning increased power output up to 83 BHP. The final evolution of the B-series came when the capacity was increased to 1798cc with the introduction of the MGB.

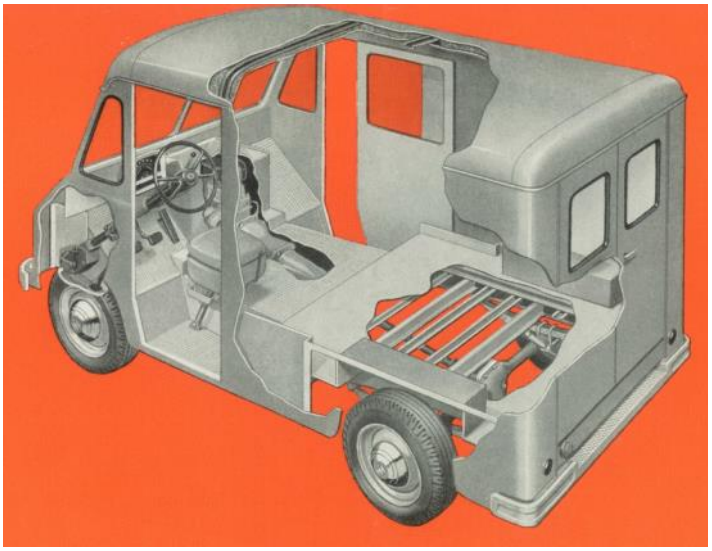
Engineers at MG were responsible for a couple modifications to the B-series, both of which involved overhead camshafts. A twin-cam version was introduced in a high-specification MGA produced from 1958 through 1960. This modification produced 108 BHP in high compression (9.9:1) form. The aluminum head was a cross-flow design with eight individual ports. The MGA Twin Cam developed a reputation for short service life primarily due to holed pistons. The issue was traced back to inadvertent lean running and was corrected, but the damage to the reputation of the engine was done.

(story continues next page)

B-Series Engine, continued

Twin-Cam head on a B-series engine

The B-series (in both gasoline and diesel versions) found a home under the bonnets of literally dozens of models around the world with some of the more unusual being Massey-Harris combines, International Harvester delivery vans and some Mercedes vans in the 1970s. The B-Series was also built under license by Nissan in Japan and Hindustan Motors in India.



International Harvester Metro-Mite Van

Auction Roundup: B-Series Engines

Below, some notable auctions of cars with the B-Series.

1958 MGA Twin Cam

Sold for $70,000 on Bring a Trailer

$70 large is big money, even for a twin-cam, but this red over black car is the first LHD twin cam built, and it was owned by British car distributor Kjell Qvale. First used as a racing car, many performance components are in place.

1966 MGB

Sold for $11,025 on Hemmings

Restored in 2013-2014, an overdrive 4-synchro transmission was fitted to this green over black car, but the engine was not rebuilt, and the engine bay needed detailing.

1957 MG Magnette ZB

Sold for $38,500 on Bring a Trailer

Stunning in two-tone green over tan leather, this Magnette was treated to a decade-long restoration. A Datsun 280ZX five-speed transmission was fitted, along with a three-main-bearing MGB engine, over-bored to 1950 cc.

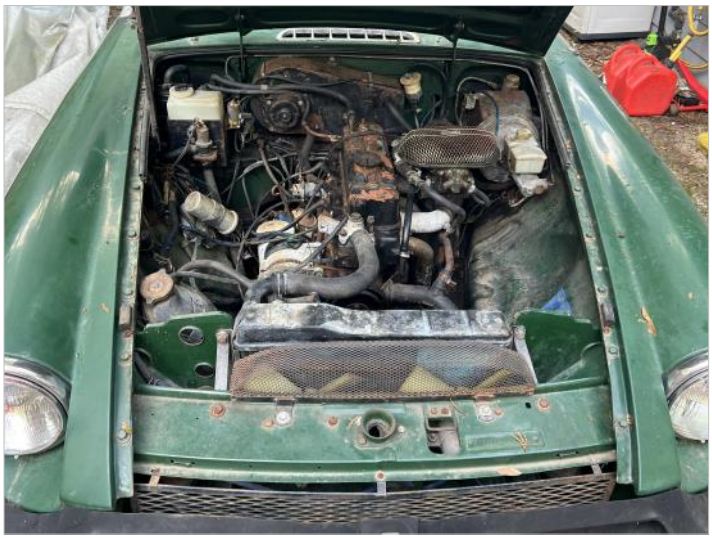
1957 Nash Metropolitan

Sold for $8,025 on Hagerty

An unrestored survivor, this blue and white car was rust free, ran and drove well, and included a new interior kit.

Classifieds

1980 MGB



Non-running 1980 MGB for sale in the Niceville area. The seller was given the car by an uncle, who had purchased the car new. It was parked in a climate controlled garage since 1997. Odometer appears to show 94K miles. Asking $2,250.

Ryne Davis
(850) 384-3067; Ryne.davis02@gmail.com

1965 Triumph Herald

Convertible (cloth top).

Keith Jarvis
251-422-7979

1975 MGB

Good running condition, no rust. Asking $3500.

Cathy Saxton
cathygsaxton@yahoo.com

1960 Morris Minor 1000 Tourer

This car won first place in the Small Sedan class at the PBCA show some years ago. Selling due to death of owner (seller's father). Spare parts included. $17.000.

Steve McCain
202-821-8753
steve.mccain1980@gmail.com

1931 Model A Ford Town Sedan

Model A Town Sedan with a Briggs body. Complete frame off restoration completed around 2000. Six-volt electrical system. Original motor. Interior is LeBaron Bonney grey fabric seats, carpet, and side and ceiling panels; professionally installed. Paint color is Washington Blue, with real, professionally hand-done pinstriping. Housed in an enclosed garage from the time of purchase, through the restoration, and to the present; driven or run in place weekly. Many "add-ons" and additional parts, equipment and manuals (list available upon request). Asking price - $28,000, everything included. More information upon request.

1978 Dodge/Mitsubishi Challenger

Restoration 2004 or 2005 with new paint and interior. Enclosed garage-kept since 2006. Driven or run in place weekly. Asking price - $12,000. More information upon request.

Nancy Pugh
251-680-1644

[*Not Brits, but* ***Ed.*** *is pleased to run these for Nancy*]

1967 Morgan Plus 4

Multi-year frame-up restoration recently completed. Car is as original as possible; stored in Pensacola; Florida title. Value is in the high $40-thousand to $50 thousand range. Accepting offers over $40 thousand.

Archie Hovanesian
(850) 748-0300

1975 Norton Commando Roadster

Purchased in 1989 and rebuilt engine, valve job, new pistons/rings, seals, bearings clutch, transmission new seals and Superblend bearings, Lucas electronic ignition. Amal carburetors replaced. Engine and transmission do not leak. Wheels rebuilt with stainless steel spokes, brakes rebuilt, disks skimmed, stainless steel braided hoses, stainless steel caliper pistons, Front brake master cylinder re-sleeved for higher pressure stopping power. Many steel parts and fasteners have been replaced with stainless steel. All electrics have either been rebuilt or replaced, everything works as it should. Bike has always been kept in garage and climate controlled. Bike starts easily, runs and looks great. This bike is a rider's bike and not just for showing. Also included, bike cover, clutch removal tool, shop manual and parts catalogue. Dainese full leather riding suit, Euro size 54, Bell full face helmet, motorcycle boots and gloves. $18,500.

Jack Steinmetz
713 851 7609
jackstein52@gmail.com

1978 MGB

This 1978 MG MGB has been with the seller for over 15 years and is powered by a 1.8 Liter inline-four engine with a four-speed manual transmission. Features include a AM/FM/ cassette stereo, a luggage rack. Repainted in original white and equipped with a new black vinyl convertible top over a black vinyl/leather interior, this garage kept, rust free California car, MGB is available now and comes with a car cover, receipts, vehicle documentation, owner's and shop manuals, a box of additional parts. Clear Alabama registration in the seller's name. A set of 175/70 Pirelli radial tires mounted on 14-inch MiniLite wheels with chrome center caps. The bucket seats/head rests, steering wheel, gear shift boot and center arm rest are covered in leather. All gauges work; rolled-over odometer reads 03520 miles. Recent service includes fluid change and tune-up. Best in class at 2023 SABCC show. $7000.

Jack Steinmetz
713 851 7609
jackstein52@gmail.com

1971 Triumph GT6 MKIII

I found this car at an estate sale outside of Chicago a couple years ago. It was in a private collection on a lift for 25 years. It's still all original except for the paint and Pertronix ignition. I believe the paint is a Rover color. NO RUST on this car! Runs good. It's a driver, not a concours car. This car is so beautiful that it deserves to live. Asking $12,700 or best offer to a good home.

Brian Beauchamp
850-685-0140
Beauchamp.brian@yahoo.com

1974 Jensen Healey

Two cars that I turned into one with spare parts. Structural metal work, including new floor pans, completed by BMC restorations in Kiln, MS. Includes hard top, Dellorto manifold, new aftermarket seats, and installed, complete AC system. Needs light bodywork and paint; ran when restoration began but not operated in over ten years. $5,000 invested, asking best offer.

Cortland Musgrave
504-559-4960
heytony9999@hotmail.com

Crankshaft Nut Found

Someone found this crankshaft pulley nut at the April PBCA show. Can anyone identify this nut? Does anyone know of someone missing theirs? Everyone should check their car to be sure their nut is still there. Please notify Fred Veenschoten with any info.

fredntoni@cox.net

2024 British Car Festival

"MINI Gets Medicare"

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And now, for something completely different . . .

So you need a truck, but an F150 Platinum or a Denali Ultimate isn't "bougie" enough? You probably should have bid on this Rolls-Royce Phantom III, featuring a 7.3 liter V12. The car began life as a Hooper-bodied 1939 limousine, and it sold July 10, 2025 on Bring a Trailer for $120,000.

Spark & Spanner

South Alabama British Car Club

PO Box 18036

Mobile, AL 36618

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