

Spark & Spanner

The Official
Publication of the
South Alabama
British Car Club

April 2022



From the President

Tom Renick

Back in the Swing of Things

The calendar's been red hot since our last plate of fried rice and beans at Don's hacienda. Our two major neighboring British car clubs have gotten back in the swing of things since taking a sabbatical because of COVID.

Our Louisiana kin, the British Motoring Club of New Orleans (BMCNO), was able to restart its show with the help of a friendly Catholic church in a reasonable neighboring city that still wasn't holding on to a mask mandate. Seven members convoyed over and met up with other members there. The site was a large grassy field that provided more than enough space for all the slightly less than 100 cars entered. Our prize winnings weren't the best but the men of the church cooked up some really big, delicious, juicy hamburgers that helped make the trip worthwhile [*the fish was good as well-Ed.*].

More recently, the Panhandle British Car Association (PBCA) show, alias "Brits on the Bay," was back at its old digs at Seville Square in beautiful downtown Pensacola. It's always a really nice setting under those large, old live oaks—very similar to our United Methodist Church setting in Fairhope. Nine of our British cars rounded up and headed out from Spanish Fort in convoy on Hwy 90 at 8:30, rendezvousing with several others of our clan at the park. When the dust settled, there were about 110 cars huddled under the trees including a bunch of really nice and unusual ones, and I'm proud to say that we made off with a truckload of prizes. Congratulation to everyone who entered. Start planning now to enter both of these events



Photo by Noel Eagleson

next year. Let's show them some real competition.

Coming up in May is our annual club picnic. This serves as the May meeting so we will not meet at Don Carlos next month. This never fails to be a sociable get-together out in the open air under the big pavilion at Oscar Johnson Park. The park is about a mile east of Silverhill on Hwy 104 (can't miss it), but for you GPS dependents, it does have an address—6811 State Highway 104, Silverhill, AL, 36576. The club furnishes some fixin's, but some small items and manpower are still needed. Call or see **Donna Eagleson** to help.

A more distant annual event, the Auto Jumble, is being cogitated by **Noel Eagleson**. A good date in November is what's needed. Any suggestions, see **Noel**. Don't have a clue what an Auto Jumble is, see **Noel**.

Lastly, in case you haven't noticed lately, you must realize that we have a world-class newsletter and a world-class website. Thank **Michael King** and Peter **Lee** for that. And remember, when we each do a little bit, we can accomplish a ton.

[**Tom Renick** is the president of South Alabama British Car Club. When he doesn't have a clue, he cogitates.]

SABCC Club Officers

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

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Membership in SABCC is open to anyone with an interest in classic or modern British cars.

Activities Calendar

April 26, 2022

Monthly Club Meeting, Don Carlos Restaurant, Daphne, eat at 6:00, meet at 7:00, the meal is on you.

May 10, 2022

British Car Festival Planning Meeting, El Rancho Restaurant, Daphne, eat at 6:00, meet at 7:00, your treat.

May 14, 2022

SABCC Annual Club Picnic, Oscar Johnson Park, Silverhill, Ala.

May 24, 2022

Nothing, The club picnic takes the place of the regular May meeting.

May 28, 2022

Silverhill Veteran's Memorial Car Show, Hwys. 55 and 104, Silverhill, Ala.

May 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10 BCF Plng.	11	12	13	14 Club Picnic
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28 Silver- hill
29	30	31				

British Car Festival is Supported by



Jaguar/Land Rover of the Gulf Coast

Sparks

Club and Member News



SABCC at “Brits by the Bay”

photos by Robb Ogletree

Following a two-year COVID hiatus, the members of the Panhandle British Car Association (PBCA) were duly pleased to be back in action with their “Brits by the Bay” event. If any varnish or sludge had built up in the show’s carburetters, it was not evident, as everything ran very smoothly all day. One hundred twenty registrations were logged, and 110 cars took the field in historic Seville Square in downtown Pensacola, Fla. With bright, sunny skies and mild temperatures, the day was perfectly suited for admiring a diverse selection of British motors.

On the eve of the show, PBCA threw their usual dinner at the Museum of Commerce, near the show site. While the club provided red beans and rice and meatball subs, attendees were spoiled for choice with a wide array of dinner and dessert options.

SABCC had its usual convoy of participants and its usual fine showing at the awards ceremony.

Members taking home plaques were:

- **Bill Cashion**, First Place, 1951 Jaguar XK120
- **Ben Cummings**, “Diamond in the Rough,” 1969 Austin-Healey Sprite
- **Aaron Graeb**, First Place, 1963 Triumph Spitfire
- **William Heritage**, First Place, 2005 Morgan
- **Michael King**, First Place, 2001 Jaguar XJR and 2011 Jaguar XK (and First Place for sister-in-law Jennifer King’s 1978 MGB, piloted by **Brian Daly**) [Not having other cars in one’s classes helps-Ed.]
- **Mac McNamara**, Second Place, 1960 Ford Anglia DeLuxe
- **David Menaker**, Second Place, 2012 Jaguar XKR Coupe [This car was put in the wrong class and deserved first in the XK/XKR class-Ed.]



SABCC cars lined up in Spanish Fort on the way to Pensacola.

- **Dannette Menaker**, First Place, 2022 Land Rover Defender 110
- **Robb Ogletree**, Second Place, 1962 MGA
- **Tom Renick**, First Place, 1965 Sunbeam Tiger
- **Dave Roloson**, Third Place, 1961 Triumph TR4
- **Linda Ross**, First Place, 1968 Jaguar E-Type OTS
- **Tom Schmitz**, First Place, 1967 Austin Mini Cooper S; Second Place, 1967 Mini Moke; First Place, 1995 Jaguar XJS
- **Eddie Toenes**, Second Place, 1962 Triumph TR4
- **Bob Zabzdyr**, Third Place, 1983 Carbodies FX4R London Taxi

[Ed. apologizes for any omissions or errors on this list.]



Members gather for a group photo at the end of the day.

More photos from Brits by the Bay, Pensacola, April 23, 2022



MGAs, featuring Robb's 1962



Jags, You Are?



More MGAs



Lotuses, or is that Loti?



Austin-Healeys (note the glint of the Diamond in the Rough)



Bob Z's London Taxi



TR6s



Vanden Plas Princess, fit for The Queen

Now Orleans British Car Day

photos by Robb Ogletree

Our esteemed president has already shared the highlights of the restart of the New Orleans British Car Day, so little is left for **Ed.** to do besides share some photos and a list of awardees.

SABCC members receiving trophies included:

- **Jeff Herndon**, Best in Show, 1954 Jaguar XK120 OTS, and First Place, 1970 Jaguar E-Type
- **Michael King**, Second Place, 2001 Jaguar XJR, and longest distance traveled in a British car [actually, **Tom Schmitz** might have driven further, but he wasn't paying attention when they asked-Ed.]
- **Robb Ogletree** Second Place, 1962 MGA
- **Tom Schmitz**, Second Place, 2007 Jaguar XK



Are you sure that Lotus is yellow?



Morgan Three-Wheeler (note helpful license plate)



TR6s



Land Rover Defender Truck, in full survival mode



Donna Eagleson is a rose among thorns (Tom Renick, Don Pritchett, Noel Eagleson, Brian Daly, and Robb Ogletree) as the convoy prepares to hit I-10 (photo by Ed., aka Chief Thorn)



Tom Renick trailered his 1965 Sunbeam Tiger to New Orleans, and its Mediterranean Blue paint looked resplendent against the bright blue skies.

My Uncle's Motors

Peter Lee; photos courtesy of the author

If you don't know, my parents immigrated to the U.S. in the sixties from England. Therefore, the bulk of my family is in the U.K., in contrast to my wife, who has cousins galore here.

Recently I found out from my father that my uncle Richard's car club was doing a listing of his car ownership history for their monthly newsletter. This included his personal comments and memories of the more notable models as shared by my aunt Louise. She forwarded on the source pictures to my side of the family so we could see for ourselves before the article was produced.

This uncle, Richard Lee, lives in Otley, West Yorkshire which is part of the larger Leeds city area. Now his club is a little different from ours. The [Chevin Motor Club](#) is made up of car enthusiasts and bills itself as a "home for all," as they do not focus on just one make or nationality. They even accept makes from the colonies [*Gasp!-Ed.*].

When the article came out listing my Uncle Richard's auto history there were some really notable models: a Hillman Imp, XKEs, Tigers, and a Mustang. I'm just going to skip over that last one.

The copy of the newsletter has been placed in PDF form on the [SABCC website gallery page](#) under the "Other activities" category, so that everyone can see not just the article, but the entire newsletter.

I can't leave out my other uncle, Michael Lee. He passed in 2020, but I have the picture to the right and it says everything—a bathtub-fairing Triumph. I'm jealous.



Highlights from Richard Lee's Collection



Above left, a rather dashing young Richard with his first new car, a Hillman Imp. Above right, Richard's Fiat, first in a long line of blue cars.



Richard's blue MGBGT



Above, Richard's series 1 E-Type undergoing restoration in 1973; below is his series 3 E-Type in the "correct" color.



Spannering

Advice on Repairs, Parts, and Services

SABCC's Roving Repair Service

Within the last month, SABCC members, led by club secretary **Peter Lee**, have traveled to the homes of British car owners to help them with vexing issues. On March 25, **Peter** and **Ed.** visited **Mark McElwain** at his home in Daphne to help him remove the right upper dash panel of his 2006 Aston Martin V8 Vantage [OK, I was there to spectate and take pictures; Peter did all the work-Ed.]. Some DPO (dump previous owner) had cut the expensive leather on the dash; **Mark** had sourced a new hide and a shop to install it; but was a bit worried about removing the panel, since it covers an airbag. He shared YouTube videos with the team, and **Peter**, armed with knowledge and a lot of confidence, had the panel removed in a jiffy.



Mark's dash, with the upper panel removed and the airbag safely in place. Inset, the cut leather on the panel.

The second repair took place at the Fairhope home of a gentleman who was helping his mother-in-law sell her bright red 1974 MGB. Unfortunately, the boot latch was broken and the boot could not be opened. **Noel Eagleson**, **Ed.**, **Peter**, and club president **Tom Renick** arrived in a massive show of force [or hot air--Ed.], but despite all this brain power [or



hot air--Ed.], the team struggled mightily. Fortunately, **Peter** had been again been watching YouTube videos, and armed with a fancy boroscope that connected wirelessly to his phone, could see inside the boot.

When all other attempts failed, he drilled a hole underneath the loose



Noel and Peter at work, as **Tom** continues to cogitate.

an MGB scale model kit, which he purchased from the owner. The MGB itself has since found a new home.



Success, and a treasure for **Noel**.



Noel discusses options with the owner's son-in-law, while **Tom** cogitates.

handle, and using his scope and a piece of coat hanger wire, was able to pop the latch. While no pot of gold was found, **Noel** did discover a treasure in the form of



No word has

Time to get out the drill.

come from **Peter** as to whether rolling repair service will become a regular offering.



The Best of

Pierre's Wisdom

Pierre Fontana

Engine Rebuilding is Changing

Machine shop prices are going up like gas prices. They have to put up with more from OSHA, EPA, and the rest of the alphabet soup, which costs them more to comply, including dirty rags.

Now Moss threw me a curve. I rebuilt a 1974 MGB engine for a friend, who purchased the car new in '74. It was his graduation present as he became an orthopedic surgeon.

He has logged so many miles on it that I have a thick list of maintenance and repairs. I had to bore the cylinders 0.030, and turned the crank 0.020 to get solid meat.

I ordered the best gaskets from Moss, but the lower set was the surprise. It was like a jigsaw puzzle with the cuts never finished, with all gaskets from same one big piece and all the same thickness. I had to use an Xacto knife, and gently finish cutting left over tabs, which is about a 20-minute job if you want to keep it neat and not ruin the small gaskets.

This is disappointing "progress," as the main seal which was so nice and strong before is now very light and flimsy. You will have to be careful not to ruin it installing it. They called it "improved," one improvement being that they had the seal between oil filter housing and the block.

Now the best gasket from Moss is Payen, which I have used for many years. We do not have copper head gaskets anymore, they are "composition," but you can order them extra, which is what I suggest. The curious part is the label. It is the same old label, by a Leyland division, and bears the OE quality brand, but on the side in very small letters it said "MADE IN BELGIUM." That's no problem, but on the gasket's clear plastic wrap, it has a sticker, "MADE IN ITALY." The bearings, pistons, and timing chain came in plain boxes, only marked "U.K."



All photos courtesy **Pierre Fontana**



I sure can't brag about parts origins to my customer; the real thing is still available from special sources, new old stock, but with no way to warranty that stuff, it is a hard choice to make.

They say, you can't go back, it is truer and truer, our hobby is changing like everything else. A couple of years ago, I went back to walk the street I roller-skated on as a growing kid, during four years of occupation by German forces. It made me so sad to see the change, the crowded street with no parking spots left anywhere, with the butcher shop and corner bar closed. It was a different world, I did not feel like I belonged

Pierre Fontana is an SABCC technical advisor. This article first ran in March 2012.

Spare Parts



Cars of the BMC

[Note from Ed.: We continue with a series of write-ups of British Motor Corporation autos discovered by member **Terry Trovato**.]



This is the third installment of Cars of the BMC featuring little known models here across the pond.



Morris Oxford Series II

Morris Oxford Series II -- The Oxford Series II was announced in May 1954 and notably received the Austin-designed B-Series overhead valve straight-4 engine. This modern at the time 1.5 Litre engine produced a respectable 50 hp and allowed the Oxford to reach a top speed of 74 mph. It featured hydraulic drum brakes all around and steering was of the rack and pinion type.

Austin A35 -- The A35 was very similar in appearance to the A30, except for a larger rear window. The semaphore/trafficator turn-signal indicators were replaced with modern front and rear-mounted flashing lights. The original A35 was offered as a two- or four-door saloon, a two-door "Countryman" estate and also as a van. The latter model continued in



Austin A35

production through to 1968. Pictured is a rare coupe version produced in 1956, with just 477 sold. Drawings were made for a sports tourer, but no prototype was ever built.

Morris Isis Series I – The Morris Isis Series I was launched in 1955 and featured a 6-cylinder engine featuring a single SU carburetor. The 4-speed gearbox had a column change and the vehicle was also available with an optional Borg-Warner overdrive [continued next page]



Morris Isis Series I

Cars of the BMC, continued

unit. With its six-cylinder engine, the Isis could reach 90 mph.

Morris Series MS - The Morris Six Series MS was a six cylinder midsize car from Morris Motors Limited which was produced from 1948 to 1953 and was added to the BMC fleet after that organization's creation in 1952. A Morris Series MS tested by the British magazine The Motor had a top speed of 82.5 mph and could accelerate from 0-60 mph in 22.4 seconds, and a fuel consumption of 20 miles per imperial gallon was recorded.



Morris Series MS

Auction Roundup—SBC Conversions

[Substantial evidence exists to support the theory that the “small-block Chevy,” or SBC, will fit in just about anything. This month we look at how British cars with 350-cubic-inch V8s (the most common SBC) fared in recent auctions—Ed.]

1953 MG TD



Not Sold at \$16,250 on Bring A Trailer

Built on a custom frame and finished in red over black vinyl, this 350-powered TD featured a four-speed manual transmission, upgraded brakes and steering, Stewart-Warner gauges, and a roll bar.

1953 Hillman Minx Mark VI Californian



Sold for \$20,250 on Bring a Trailer

This white and black over tan Hillman largely retains its original exterior appearance, but is powered by a 350 engine with a Muncie four-speed. Attractive car, attractive result.

LS1-Powered Diva Roadster



Not Sold at \$25,500 on Bring A Trailer

Styled after the Lotus Seven, this fiberglass-bodied roadster, finished in color-shifting purple with yellow accents over black, features a wood-trimmed dash, a four-speed automatic transmission, coilover suspension, dual roll hoops, and disc brakes. But, as one commenter said, “. . . no top, no side curtains, and the auto trans, won't bring the money.”

Watch Out for Shill Bidding

I expect you're thinking that if **Ed.** includes a photo of a Japanese car in “Spark & Spanner,”



he'd better have a good explanation. Well, you're right, and he does. Seems this car, a Nissan 240SX with just 590 miles, created a bit of a stir on the popular “Bring A Trailer” auction site. Commenters first noticed the car had significant paint work, and then realized that the high bidder was also the seller. Hagerty.com has an informative article on the issues with online auctions, which is available [here](#).

[Ed. thanks **Mac McNamara** for this story lead.]

Weak and Rusty

Michael King, Editor, *Spark & Spanner*

Still Scratching Itches

Last month, I wrote about fuel economy, including the relative lack thereof in my personal fleet. While gas prices have dropped slightly, they remain much higher than even just a few months ago.

So how did I respond? Well, I improved my fleet average fuel economy by purchasing yes, another Jaguar. Trust me, I can explain . . .

About the time I was wrapping up the last issue of “Spark & Spanner,” a young man in New York City contacted me about my 1991 Jaguar XJ-S coupe. Even though I’d owned that car nearly thirteen years—longer than any other vehicle in my life—the time had come to pass it along to a new owner. You might even recall that I wrote about my interest in selling it in this space, and even included a classified ad in a couple of issues. The bottom line was that the car needed some work, and shops willing to work on these complicated machines, with their V12 engines and miles of wiring, are hard to find. The buyer met my price, had the car shipped to Long Island, and is, so far, very happy.

Selling the XJ-S eliminated a significant guzzler of refined dino-juice (9 mpg in town and no better than 16 on the highway), and also left a significant hole in my garage. Being the responsible adult that I am, I quickly seized on a 2011 Jaguar XK convertible, with a thrifty, normally-aspirated 5-liter V8, producing a mere 385 hp (by comparison, the Mighty 12 had 263 hp). Even better, the shapely body of the XK is rendered in aluminum, resulting in a curb weight of well under two tons!

So how did this pay off? Well, I am pleased to report that my new gas-sipper achieved as much as 28 mpg on the highway, and seems to be getting about 17 around town. Remember, my starting point was 9 and 16, respectively.



Even better, the XK outperforms (at least in the economy department) both my 2001 Jaguar XJR and my 2011 Jaguar XFR, whose supercharged mills rarely exceed 22 mpg on the highway.

If you’ve read this far, you’re probably thinking, “Who is he trying to kid? No one buys a Jaguar XK for fuel economy!” And, you’re right. After all, the EPA classifies the XK as a “micro-compact.” Yes, it has rear seats, but I’m not sure one of my wife’s cats would fit (and I don’t plan to try). The trunk has a whopping *seven* cubic feet of storage space.



The real reason I bought an XK is that I *wanted* one. I’ve wanted one for a long time, ever since I sold my 2006 Jaguar XK8 five years ago. The car is achingly beautiful, inside and out, and an absolute pleasure to drive. And, it was relatively inexpensive.

So I’m grateful that I’m at a point in my life where I can scratch itches now and then. If I can improve the economy of my fleet at the same time, even better.

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SABCC Grille Badges

The South Alabama British Car Club commissioned a grille badge featuring our fabulous club logo. These heavy enameled, 3-1/2 inch high badges on chrome plated metal are the perfect companion for your British car. The club has subsidized the cost so that the member price is only \$20.00.



Noel Eagleson is the keeper of the box of badges and brings them to club meetings, so look him up. Or, you can send an email SparkSpanner@gmail.com and we'll make arrangements to get one to you-.



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Spark & Spanner Submissions

Go ahead: make *Ed.*'s day. It's as easy as typing an email. That's right, *Ed.* is looking for your submissions for Spark & Spanner.

Every issue will include some, most, or all of the following:

- **Activities Calendar:** SABCC events, local and national car shows, and other events worth noting
- **Sparks:** news about club members, activities, and events
- **Spannering:** stories on car repairs, restoration projects, tips and tricks, and ideas on prepping a car for a show
- **Spare Parts:** Auction Roundup, news items on the British car industry, the collector car hobby, and anything else *Ed.* finds interesting
- **Gotcha!:** stories of how members acquired their cars
- **Just Around the Bend:** Synopses of upcoming car shows and other events
- **Feature Stories:** Longer submissions of general interest
- **Classifieds:** Sell your car or car parts - or let other members know what you'd like to buy

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

Resource Directory

Our guide to automotive resources has been released! If you have any other parts suppliers, mechanics, upholstery shops, machinists, or any other business, service, or vendor which might be helpful to SABCC members, please send these to *Ed.* at SparkSpanner@gmail.com.

Thanks!

And now, for something completely different . . .



Usually Ed. posts something sarcastic in this space, but this month, he thought he'd share a photo of his sister-in-law's MGB from an engagement photo shoot. The bride-elect contacted us through Facebook seeking a classic car for this occasion, and Ed. was more than happy to help. May the marriage be still going strong when the car is just a memory.

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**.