

Spark & Spanner

The Official
Publication of the
South Alabama
British Car Club

July 2022



From the President

Tom Renick

Pigging Out

I know that I ate too much. But the once a year happening over on Soldier Creek couldn't be missed [assuming you could see to drive there—Ed.]. That, of course, would be the annual Pig Roast over at **Tom Schmitz's** place. **Tom** reckons it to be about the 27th annual occurrence, subject to at least one missed because of COVID, and possible miscalculations over the last three decades. Anyway, the next one is in planning and by then we'll have it figured out exactly which one it is. Nevertheless, the weather was nice, and the threatened scattered thundershowers were thankfully scattered somewhere else.

The “Guest of Honor” arrived right on time and as usual, was stylishly tanned. Right at the appointed dinner hour, Tom opened him up and pulled out pork aplenty. That, with all the sumptuous side dishes and desserts the members of the three local British car clubs provided, resulted in the aforementioned admission of eating too much. It's true, but I'm not the only one who “pigged out.” We'll get over it, I'm sure.

Tom's swimming pool was open and some of us enjoyed a cool after dinner dip. Tom Matsoukas brought his pontoon boat and treated about three boatloads of British auto owners to a tour up and down the creek. The views of the homesteads from the water side are quite a bit different than from the front street for sure. All our sailors immensely enjoyed the ride. Thanks, Captain Tom, and especially **Chef Tom** for letting us dine all over his house each year.



Photo by Noel Eagleson



Our British Car Festival is creeping up upon us. Chairman **Brian Daly** and his capable staff have everything under control. Major sponsors are coming in well but we could use more class sponsors. Door prizes for all registrants are a little short so try soliciting donations or pick up something nice like what you would like to get. Bring it to the meeting or drop it off at the Garagemahal.

As always, if everyone helps out a little, this year's BCF can be the best yet.



Tom Renick is the president of South Alabama British Car Club. Here's visual evidence he's cornered the market on Sunbeams with “issues.”

On the cover: Members of SABCC, the Mardi Gras MG club, and the Panhandle British Car Association gather July 24, 2022 at the waterfront home of **Tom Schmitz** for the annual Pig Roast.

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

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.

British Car Festival is Supported by



Jaguar/Land Rover of the Gulf Coast

Activities Calendar

July 27, 2022

SABCC Monthly Meeting, Don Carlos Restaurant, Daphne, eat at 6:00, meet at 7:00, Dinner is on you.

August 23, 2022

SABCC Monthly Meeting, Don Carlos Restaurant, Daphne, eat at 6:00, meet at 7:00, you pay again.

August 27, 2022

Day Trip to Barber Museum, look for an email with all the details soon.

September 15-18, 2022

Southeast British Car Festival, Dillard, GA, details [here](#).

Oct. 21 and 22, 2022

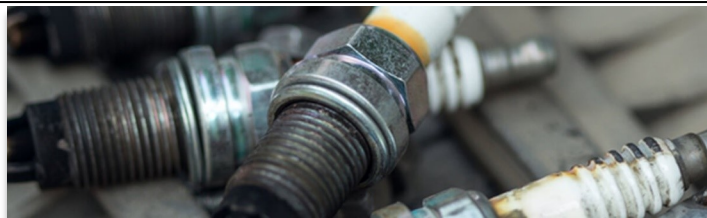
British Car Festival, details and registration form (yes, we are taking registrations) [here](#).

August 2022

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

Sparks

Club and Member News



Tri-Club Pig Roast

photos by Tom Renick and Ron Wolverton

A ophthalmic emergency kept **Ed.** from attending the Pig Roast [*I put in the wrong contact lens*] so he appreciates **Tom** and **Ron** sending along these pics.



Top Left: Tom Schmitz and Franz Bachmann attend to the guest of honor.

Bottom Left, and Top, Middle, and Bottom Right: Guests relax within and outside the Schmitz home.

More Pig Roast Photos



SABCC president **Tom Renick** poses with charter member **Elaine Coll**, who has recently returned to the area.



Knee replacement surgery was not sufficient to deter SABCC treasurer **Donna Eagleson** from enjoying the festivities.

PBCA Tech Session

Several SABCC members attended a July 16 Panhandle British Car Association (PBCA) tech session at the Milton, Fla. garage of Bob Manske. Cars receiving attention at the session included a primrose yellow TR3, a red Jensen-Healey, and a green TR6. After the session, Bob opened up the grill and about 30 guests enjoyed hamburgers, bratwurst, hot dogs, and lots of sides.

PBCA is an active group and hosts many events in addition to the Pensacola show. Dues are only \$20, so you might want to be like **Ed**. and join them!



Keith Sanders did not really turn his back on the TR3.



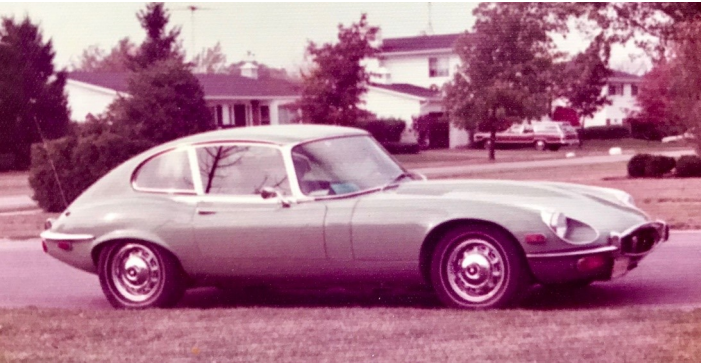
Fred Veenschoten (left and PBCA president **Bill Weeks** (right) with the Jensen-Healey.

The Fast Lane, circa 1974

story and photo by Bruce Mackey

Those of us of a certain age remember the launch of the Jaguar XK-E in 1961. Enzo Ferrari called the automobile “the most beautiful car ever made.”

The XK-E went on through three series until the production run ended in 1974. I purchased a 1972 XK-E in 1974. The car was equipped with the V-12 engine and 13 quarts of oil were needed for each oil change.



Bruce's XK-E

One of the advertising campaigns Jaguar used for the sleek sports car was the vehicle's ability to reach 150 mph. I was living in Libertyville, IL, a northern Chicago suburb, at the time and regularly commuted to the city on Interstate 294.

Heading northbound on the interstate, prior to the Deerfield toll booth, was a stretch of perfectly flat and straight highway.

One afternoon, while heading home (with no other cars on the road and at the naive age of 28) I decided to see if my Jag could reach 150 mph. The car rapidly hit 130 and 140 but then began to gain speed at a slower rate. Finally the speedometer hit 150 mph. But something else happened as well; even though it was summer, the road literally turned to a sheet of ice! I remember having virtually no control of the car. I knew not to brake as I took my foot off the throttle. I kept my hands firmly in the “10 and 2” position as the Jag gradually slowed to a manageable speed. I am not certain what rubber was on the car

at the time but I believe the tires were Dunlops.

So, I learned the XK-E could do 150 mph; however, I also learned the driver would have very little control of the vehicle.

British Cars of New Hampshire Show of Dreams Silver Jubilee

story and photos by Mason Blosser

My father, **Don Blosser**, and I were together in New England the weekend of July 23rd attending a British car show in Hudson, NH. As a member of SABCC and British Cars of New Hampshire (BCNH), I grew up in the SABCC club, but work drew me out to New Hampshire. Not giving up the passion for British Cars I made sure to bring my MG Midget up with me and join a local club. After a short hiatus due to COVID, BCNH resumed their annual show with nearly 200 cars pre-registered divided amongst nearly 30 classes. There was a wonderful variety of cars, some I had never even seen before like



Mason's 1979 MG Midget

a Jensen Interceptor and a Riley RMF. There was of course the standard showing of our tried and true MGBs, Jag E-Types, and Triumphs (250s, 3s, 4s, 6s, 7s). We even had a couple of Healey 3000s.

Although not British, one of the interesting show attractions was a 1910 Stanley Steamer. This vehicle manages an impressive 20 horse-power from a 26-gallon boiler tank and a 48:60 gear ratio. The catalog price was \$1,500 in 1910, which is about \$46,785.95 in today's money adjusted for inflation.

Unfortunately my Midget didn't win any prizes (probably because they combined Sprites, Midgets, and Spitfires together) [*I hate classes that broad-Ed.*]. It was a good weekend and a good showing of cars. If anyone is ever in the NH area be on the lookout for some small British cars zipping through the back roads. [*Great article, Mason! Please see his additional photos on the next page—Ed.*]

More BCNH Show of Dreams Photos by Mason Blosser



Austin-Healey 3000, in BRG. No, Ed. does not know if this is a BT6, a BN7, or a BR549.



1910 Stanley Steamer



Jensen-Healeys, in typical 1970s colors.

2022 BCF Classes *[Even with some revisions and consolidations, we still have more than most—Ed.]*

Class	Class Description
A	Austin Healey 100/3000, All Types
B	Austin Healey Sprite and MG Midget, 1961 - 1979
BE	Austin Healey "Bugeye" Sprite
C	Jaguar Classic Sports (XK 120, 140 and 150, and other models)
CE	Jaguar XKE (E-Type)
D	Jaguar Modern Sports, 1976 forward (XJS, XK, F-Types)
E	Jaguar Classic Saloons (pre-1995 including S-Types, Mark series, XJ6 and XJ12)
F	Jaguar Modern Saloons & Shooting Brakes (sedans, wagons, and SUVs, 1995 fwd)
G	Pre-War MG's & MG T series
H	MGA Roadster & Coupe
I	MGB and MGC Roadsters, 1962 – 1974, Chrome Bumper
J	MGB and MGC Roadsters, 1974 ½ - 1980, "Rubber" Bumper
K	MGB and MGC GTs, 1965 - 1980
M	Classic Mini, All Types 1959 - 2000
MM	Modern MINI, All Types, 2002 - Present
N	Classic Britannia Saloons and Shooting Brakes, Other Makes, Pre-2000
O	Classic Britannia Sports, Other Makes, Pre-2000 (coupes and convertibles)
OL	Lotus, all years and models (includes licensed reproductions, e.g. Caterham)
OM	Morgan, all years and models
P	Modern Britannia Sports, Other Makes, 2000 forward (coupes and convertibles)
Q	Modern Britannia Saloons and Shooting Brakes, Other Makes, 2000 forward
R	Land Rover Classics (pre-2022 Defenders, Range Rovers pre-1995)
RR	Land Rover Modern (All Models not in Classics)
S	Sunbeam, All Models
T	Triumph Spitfire and GT6
U	Triumph TR6, 1969 - 1973
UU	Triumph TR6, 1974 - 1976
V	Triumph Sports, Other Models, pre-1968 (including TR2, TR3, TR4, and TR250)
W	Triumph, All Other Models and Years (includes TR7, TR8, Stag, and saloons)
X	Motorcycles
Y	Restoration Class
Z	Commercial Vehicles (taxis, lorries, buses, vans)

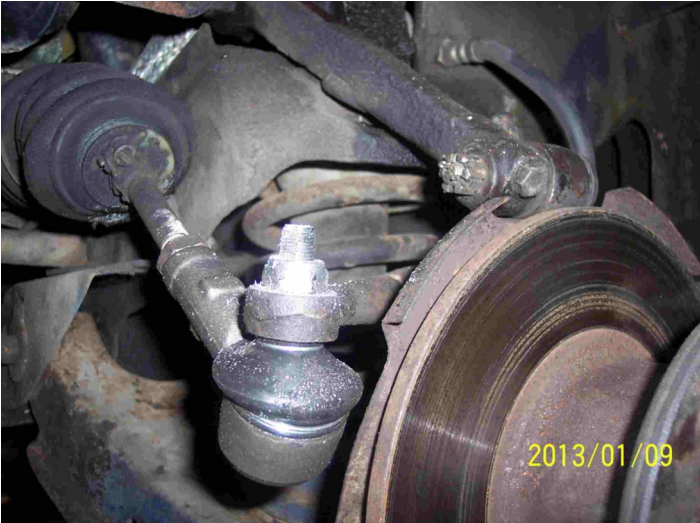
The Best of

Pierre's Wisdom

Pierre Fontana

Midget Front Suspension

A Midget tranny replacement snowballed into a complete brake job. That made me notice a worn-out front suspension, tie rod ends, etc.



To the point of the story, the tie rods Moss sent looked fantastic, a nice replacement, but no country of origin on the box. The only problem was the stud was longer and rubbed into the wheel on my test drive. The wheels were "Minator," in nice cast aluminum. You can see the aluminum shavings on new tie rod. I cut some of the stud off and all was quiet again.

A tip on Midget shocks—with their single upper arm, they are susceptible to wear. When I replaced the upper bushing, the arm was limp, but had no side play, and that is good. Filling the shock with 20w hydraulic oil took a long time of pumping the arm up and down, burping it like a baby, but it restored the natural stiffness the shock should have.

The Queen and her Bentley

One Sunday, the Queen came out of church and her Bentley would not start. This made me wonder if the Bentley dealer opened on Sunday for such an



All photos courtesy **Pierre Fontana**

important customer. I pictured in my mind the Queen's car behind a wrecker.

I then wondered about Bentley, so I searched the 'net. They are owned and produced by Volkswagen, whose annual revenue is \$159.3 billion! They own Audi, Bugatti, Lamborghini, Porsche, Skoda, plus a line of commercial vehicles, as well as diesel and gasoline engines builders. They also own 50 percent of Suzuki. Having 501,956 employees worldwide is not bad when you remember Ferdinand Porsche was Hitler's best friend, and produced the most devastating tank of WW II, the "Tiger tank," responsible for the deaths of thousands of American and British soldiers.

VW had no engine to use in its Bentley, so they made a deal with BMW to furnish V8 and V12 engines. In return, they would let BMW use the Rolls emblem, still owned by VW—one smart move.

I bet the Queen did not call a cab to go home.

Pierre Fontana is an SABCC technical advisor. This article first ran in January 2013. Today, VW Group, the world's second-largest auto manufacturer, "comprises ten brands from five European countries: Volkswagen, Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles, ŠKODA, SEAT, CUPRA, Audi, Lamborghini, Bentley, Porsche and Ducati. In addition, the Volkswagen Group offers a wide range of further brands and business units including financial services." (VW Group website). Annual revenue in 2021 was \$296 billion, and VW now has 668,000 employees. The Queen got two £10 million Bentleys for her Golden Jubilee.

Spare Parts

Club Shirts

Of late, **Ed.** seems to have found himself in the shirt business. While haberdashery is certainly a noble profession (consider the alternative—or maybe not), **Ed.** does not plan to give up his day job.

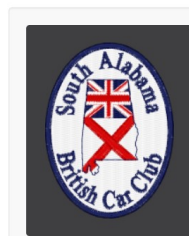
Nonetheless, **Ed.** is willing to continue this side gig which, although it does not pay well (i.e., at all), does

consume a fair amount of his spare time. Why, you say? Well, in this case, the shirts



ON SALE

\$29.50
TODAY'S PRICE



proudly bear the SABCC logo, embroidered in its full red, white, and blue splendor.

Ed. found a company named [Queensboro](#) that offers fair prices, friendly customer service, and a wide selection of products, including shirts, hats, jackets, and other items. He placed an order in 2021 and found the quality of their work to be good. In July 2022, he placed two more orders, comprising 19 shirts for 14 members. Prices have ranged between \$20 and \$30, including tax and shipping.

While you can request a shirt at any time simply by emailing **Ed.** at sparkspanner@gmail.com, ordering several shirts at once lowers the per-shirt shipping costs. Also, the company regularly offers half-price sales, which is how we've managed to keep the prices reasonably low.

Feel free to peruse the Queensboro site at your leisure, and drop **Ed.** a line whenever you'd like to add some SABCC apparel to your collection.

Auction Roundup—Entry Level

[Last month, we featured cars over \$100,000. This month, we look at the other end of price range—Ed.]

1976 Jaguar XJ12C



Sold for \$5,000 on Hemmings

A rare model, this V12 Jaguar is described as needing a full restoration, but the engine “tries to start.”

2008 MINI Cooper S 6-Speed



Sold for \$8,456 on Bring a Trailer

With only 77k miles and no major issues noted, this heavily-modified Cooper seems to be a bargain buy.

1976 Triumph Spitfire 1500



Sold for \$10,000 on Bring A Trailer

Cheap Spitfires used to be easy to find. Now, even one with cosmetic issues can sell for five figures.

1979 MGB



Sold for \$7,350 on Hemmings

“Rubber-bumper” B’s are also a car that at one time were easy to find at a low price, but nice examples now often top \$10,000. This clean Carmine Red example, with a good respray, original interior, and no rust, appears to be another good buy.

Weak and Rusty

Michael King, Editor, *Spark & Spanner*

Saving One More

If you know me at all, you know I have a soft spot for the humble MG Midget. The first car I owned was a 1976 MG Midget "Special," and when I got back into the British hobby 13 years ago, I bought a 1979 Midget. While mostly rust-free, that car had plenty of other issues, but I learned a great deal working on it and only lost about half the money I spent on it when I sold it to **Mason Blosser**, who is still enjoying it in New England (see story and photo, p. 6).

So, when a nice lady in Opelika, Alabama contacted the club via Facebook wanting to dispose of a Midget that was down on its luck, I was interested. **Noel Eagleson, Tom Renick** and I headed out one morning and came back with the wee red car on a trailer, and rolled it into the Garagemahal.

We soon set about figuring out why the car did not run. Lack of fuel seemed to be the issue, and **Don Pritchett** quickly discovered that the add-on electric fuel pump had been wired backwards. Reversing the leads was a quick and no-cost solution to getting the car running and driving.

So, I once again had nearly rust-free Midget with issues, but in this case, most of them were cosmetic. First to go were the tattered black interior and the tired convertible top. Since the car is Carmine Red, I decided Victoria British's tan interior kit and a Prestige Autotrim tan top were the way to go. I also decided to re-bush the suspension, replace the rear springs, and install new front brake rotors and pads.

Parts in hand, I set to work. I'd nearly completed the interior when COVID hit. The car sat many months with no attention whatsoever.

Once restrictions were lifted, I slowly resumed working on the car, but about that time, a bit of good fortune came my way. Another club member expressed



interest in the car, and better yet, was willing to take it in a partially-unfinished state. I did not even have to advertise it; I'd put a sign on it indicating it would eventually be available and he contacted me.

That meant my work needed to resume, to at least get the car drivable. I mostly completed the underdash work, reinstalled the steering wheel and seats, and began efforts to restore it to a running state. The most important step in that was removing the very stale gas I had put in the tank when I



Interior, nearly complete, as it sat for many months.

first brought it back to the Garagemahal. I am indebted to **Don** and **Tom** for helping clean out and tune the Weber carburetor to get the car to a state where it runs reasonably well. A can of SeaFoam should take care of the rest of the issues.

Thus ends my history with the MG Midget. At my age, body shape, and lack of agility, I find these cars less than tolerable. But having saved one more, I salute the car that began my British car journey.

31st Annual British Car Festival Celebrating the MGA

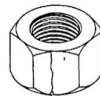


October 23, 2021 • Fairhope, Alabama

Thank you Sponsors!



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The Royal British Legion
Tommy and Joanne Hartwell

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-.



North American MGB Register

The only MEMBER-RUN organization for MGB, MGC, Midget, 1100/1300 and Post Abingdon Car owners.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP \$30 (\$45 overseas)

- *Dash plaque • Membership card • Window decal*
- *Six bi-monthly issues of The MG Driver, a 68-page informative magazine.*
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North American MGB Register

PO BOX 876 • Downers Grove, IL 62897-0876

Toll-free phone: 800-NAMGBR-1

www.namgbr.org

SABCC is a Chapter of NAMGBR

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 . . .



Terry Trovato sent Ed. this picture from the October 2021 edition of Sports Car Market, whose editors invited readers to pen an appropriate caption. Some suggestions: "The Edselcavator is the very best way to unearth long-buried barn finds." "Due to declining sales, Edsel tried the 'Caterpillar Edition.' Alas, it couldn't dig the brand out of the hole the grille had created." "By ordering the 'Dig your own grave' option, Edsel owners could rest in peace."

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**.