

Spark & Spanner

The Official
Publication of
the South
Alabama British
Car Club

June 2023



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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 [*A bargain at twice the price-Ed.*].

British Car Festival is Supported by



Activities Calendar

June 27, 2023

Monthly Club Meeting, Don Carlos Restaurant, Daphne, eat at 6:00 p.m., meet at 7:00. Once again, it's your turn to pay for your meal.

June 29, 2023

BCF Planning Meeting, El Rancho, Daphne, noon.

July 23, 2023

Tri-Club Pig Roast, Schmitz home, Lillian, AL, noon. Bring a side dish and whatever you like to drink.

Sep. 27 – Oct. 1, 2023

Vintage Triumph Register National Convention, Dillard, GA, details at vtr2023.org.

Oct. 20-21, 2023

British Car Festival, Fairhope United Methodist Church.

June 2023

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

On the cover: *Mike Schiebert* and his wife *Michelle Patton* pose with their Series III E-Type OTS at the Silverhill show, with *Stewart Reisinger's* MGBGT and *Tom Schmitz's* MGTF 1500 in the background (photo courtesy *Rick Black*)

Sparks

Club and Member News

Silverhill Show

The Silverhill Veteran's Memorial Car Show is a longstanding tradition for the three British car clubs in this region – SABCC, the Mardi Gras MGs, and the Panhandle British Car Association. With the MGMGs arriving early every year to claim the southeast quadrant of the downtown intersection around which the show is arrayed, British car owners have a special place to display their motors amidst all the hot rods and “Yank Tanks” that are the majority of the entries.



The British corner (photo courtesy Rick Black)

Twenty Brits entered the May 29 show – nearly a tenth of the total field of 225. The MGMGs set up tents, chairs, and flags, providing a pleasant venue to enjoy some good cheer.

At the end of the day, the only British car to earn an award was a 1962 MGA from Monroeville, Ala. This was due to a change in the awards structure, where entrants were allowed to vote



More British motors (photo courtesy Rick Black, whose Jaguar is in the foreground)

on their ten favorite cars. The top 50 vote-getters (of which perhaps 45 were Chevys, Dodges, or Fords) received trophies, along with various awards by class or category. Next year, we Brit enthusiasts might need to vote more aggressive-



Third from left, the winning MGA (photo courtesy Paul Reese, PCBA).

ly. Nonetheless, since proceeds from the show are used to add to the Silverhill Veteran's Memorial, the event is most worthy of our participation, and a fun day to boot.

BCF Update

With the British Car Festival just four months away, planning is shifting into overdrive to ensure we are cruising to another successful event. Here's a quick rundown of recent activity:

- Maloney • Lyons, LLC, Attorneys at Law, will again be the Title Sponsor. Look for David J. Maloney to display of some of his personal car collection at the show.
- Recruitment is underway for General Sponsors and Class Sponsors, and the [form](#) is available on the website.
- You may now register your car(s): that [form](#) is also on the website.
- Classes have been reviewed and updated based on recent shows. The complete list is attached to the registration form.
- The T-shirt design is being finalized. Despite inflation, we will not have to raise prices. General sponsor logos will not appear on the shirts but will be on a banner at the show.

(update continues above right)

Condolences

SABCC expresses its deepest condolences to the following members and families:

- **Rick and Ginger Black** in the loss of Rick's stepmother, Betty Black, in May, 2023 after a long-term illness. Mrs. Black had been a longtime resident of Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania.
- **Mike and Nancy Darby** in the loss of Nancy's older sister, Sylvia Clark, in April, 2023 at the age of 79 after a short illness. Sylvia had been living in a retirement community in Lacey, Washington.
- **Tom Renick** in the loss of his aunt.
- The family of **Cecil Pugh**. Cecil joined SABCC in 2004.

BCF Update, continued

- Ten \$50 cash door prizes will be awarded, rather than the small door prizes provided in the past [*such as wire brushes-Ed.*]. These will be funded from the 50/50 drawings at our monthly meetings.
- The next BCF planning meeting will be **Thursday, June 29 at noon** at the El Rancho Restaurant in Daphne. **All are invited.**



*It may not be British, but **Michael Bertagnolli's** skills at operating a motor vehicle were very much appreciated by **Noel** and **Donna Eagleson** as he helped clear the remaining debris from a hurricane last year which impacted their property, the location of the all-important Garagemahal. Thanks, Michael!*

From the President

Tom Renick

The president's column is on vacation this month, due to the following:

- Our Dear Leader has just returned from a 10-day visit to the Holy Land. Thankfully, it remains holy even after his visit.
- On a more somber note, **Tom's** last surviving aunt passed away in north Mississippi and he is attending her services.

We anticipate his words of wisdom will return in July.

Road-Hardened Scars Bore Proof of the Journey

story by *Mason Blosser*

This is a continuation of “Blood, Sweat, Grease, and 20W50 Paved the Way” published in “Spark & Spanner” in [October 2022](#). Part one of the story detailed the long trip down from Manchester, NH to Fairhope, a 1,600-mile journey to return to my hometown and participate in my home club’s annual car show. This story covers my return trip and the experiences that unfolded.

Excitement abounding and victory claimed, Best in Class (1st place in MG Midgets and



Packed and ready to go

AH Sprites) and the Long Distance Award (let’s be truthful here, who could really compete with 1,600 miles on the odometer?) makes for a great confidence boost and excitement for the road ahead. I started my return trip in the dark of morning Sunday October 23rd. My superhuman aunt and uncle from part one once again volunteered to follow me for the start of my trip.

Packed up and ready to go, we hit the road. Leaving Fairhope, my hometown, was bitter-sweet. I had gotten what I came for – a great drive, a great car show, and some awards. Leaving the day immediately after the show, however, made the trip feel rushed, but I still had 1,600 miles to get home and unknown challenges ahead.

Sunday was a cold morning, I don’t remember the exact temperatures but it must have been in the 30s or 40s. With my hat pulled tight around my ears and my gloves on my hands, I put the

accelerator down and the little Triumph engine (1500 MG Midgets used the Triumph Spitfire 1500 engine) roared to life once again. Good ol’ faithful wasn’t going to let me down this time.

Driving on the back roads to get up to I-65 I felt comfortable behind the wheel. These were roads I used to drive all the time to college (Coastal Alabama Community College). I picked up the pace determined to get to the highway and get through Atlanta before traffic built up this Sunday morning.

My aunt and uncle followed close behind me as I darted past semi trucks that I was unsure if they could see me. I swear if I was determined enough (and maybe dumb enough) I could pass underneath one of these looming monsters beside me. “Not today and certainly not while both of us are moving” I told myself. I would store that idea away for another day. [No!-Ed.]

Sunday morning continued with pavement passing underneath me and the sound of my teeth chattering. We stopped at the Evergreen rest area to do a maintenance check and for me to hop into my aunt’s and uncle’s car with the heater on to warm up. Nothing of concern was found under the bonnet, bringing me a reassuring feeling.

Montgomery, Ala., my first fuel stop of the day, was pushing the fuel range of my Midget a little bit but nothing like how I would later in the trip. We pulled into Costco’s parking lot around 10:00 a.m. to gas up and grab some food from the food court for brunch. 30.5 miles per gallon – not too shabby.

The road continued from Montgomery toward Atlanta. We stopped at the Georgia Welcome Center for another maintenance check and for me to change to some lighter clothes. The morning was warming up quickly; it was already in the 70s now. This maintenance check revealed

(story continues next page)

Road-Hardened, continued

the carburetor air filter plate bolts had loosened up again. Tighten those back down, can't have a repeat of that disaster again (read about it in part one). Might need to get some lock-tight on those bolts if they do it again. Oil was a little low, so top it up and get back on the road again.

As we pushed into the Atlanta metro area I was getting ready for where my aunt and uncle following me would need to split off. I made a gas stop just before hitting I-285 so I could thank them for their appreciated work and wish them safe travels on their part back to Marietta. I had set my sights for the day on Charlotte, NC as my stopping point. I was determined to not go through Knoxville this time and prayed for better road conditions in the Carolinas than I had been greeted with in Tennessee. Now getting closer to the heart of Atlanta, the traffic was getting thicker and I lost track of my aunt and uncle somewhere in the traffic mix. So long and until next time, thank you!

Now on my own, I pushed through Atlanta's slow bumper to bumper traffic. It was Sunday – where the heck were all these people going? I-85 started to clear on the other side indicating I had escaped another major traffic city unscathed. From here on the story gets a little boring for a Sunday with nothing much but traffic, maintenance checks, and fuel stops.

As the sun was setting though, I found some road work on I-85 that slowed us to a crawl just outside of Charlotte. We would inch forward slowly, confined by road barriers on either side and makeshift pull-overs periodically. The sun would slowly sink beyond the horizon much sooner than I had planned for. I pushed onward in the fading light with a simple goal of getting in just a few more miles before ending the day. I wanted to get to the north side of Charlotte so when I left Monday morning, I would be leaving the city during morning rush hour instead of

entering the city.

With only a few miles left there was an accident which shut down all four lanes of traffic, forcing us to all merge to the right lane/shoulder with the guidance of the state police working to clear the scene and get traffic moving. This delayed me sitting still waiting for the scene to clear for about an hour. It was well after dark when I finally pulled off I-77 for gas and my planned hotel. Exhausted, I retired for the evening.

I had put in a hard and long effort Sunday, so starting out Monday I was relaxed and ready for a short day ahead of me. Today's goal was an easy 6 hours away to Alexandria, Va., a city I had visited several times to see friends and have some good food. I pulled out of the hotel parking lot promptly at 7:00 a.m. determined to get away from the city before any morning rush hour traffic had a chance to start forming.

I wasn't long down the road, though, until something concerning and puzzling happened. I was running up the road when suddenly "Crack! Bang!" A loud backfire came out the tail pipe! What the heck was that? I immediately made for the next exit and while exiting it happened again! The engine was running rough and there was a noticeable lack of power trying to exit and take the first turn available to me.

I pulled into the closest service station unsure what I would find under the bonnet. I looked all over the engine for any sign of anything wrong, to no avail. The carburetor air filter appeared to be dirty – maybe it was causing a rich running condition? Patting myself on the back for thinking ahead so long ago, I dug through the boot to find the spare filter and swap it out. An extremely simple process . . . almost too simple. It didn't seem like that could be the answer but I couldn't find anything else.

I decided to take back roads for a while to see if

(story continues next page)

Road-Hardened, continued

anything further would present itself. It was around 7:45 a.m. so the world was beginning to wake up and get moving. Back roads took me through a small town center with heavy traffic and school kids trying to cross the road to get to school. I was too concerned with what was going on with the car that I couldn't fully appreciate the school kids pointing and observing the Midget.

The car was still running poorly. So poorly I decided to make another stop in an empty parking lot to take another look under the bonnet. I was tempted to mess with the carburetor mixture screw but resisted the temptation. Nothing should have changed with the mixture unless the filter was too dirty and preventing an appropriate air mixture, something that should have been resolved by swapping to the spare filter. No, onward I would go until I had another symptom to check out. I continued on back roads now leaving the populated area.

I had been going through a bit more oil now at every maintenance stop. For this symptom, though, I was certain I knew the reason. While I was in Fairhope I had stopped by the "Garagemahal," the SABCC's most common meeting place hosted by the late **Richard Cunningham** and his wife **Donna**, who is now remarried to husband **Noel Eagleson**.

With help from the regulars, **Noel, Tom, and Michael**, I had a chance to put the car up on the lift and go over it with a fine-tooth comb. While doing this inspection I noticed two of the front oil pan bolts were loose, and while trying to tighten them back up it was revealed they had stripped out. Unfortunately, with no easy fix available, I would have to wait until I got home to address this. I believed the increasing loss of oil was due to this, and as long as I kept a watchful eye on the oil level, I felt confident it wasn't a major problem. I did, however, need to

get some more oil because I had gone through my one-quart bottle I had packed way back in Manchester. I stopped in at an auto parts store and left with two more quarts stuffed into the already full boot with hopes it would be the only thing I needed to pick up while I was there.

The car was still running a little rough, but hadn't backfired since long ago on the highway. I continued on back roads for a while longer until I made another fuel stop for the morning. At this point the car was running pretty normal, with maybe a hint of sluggish acceleration, but it seemed to be improving over time. It was certainly better than back in the town center where it was painfully slow to simply get up to 30 mph off a green light.

I mapped my way back to the highway, but since I had gone off course for so long, it was going to be a lot of back roads to get back on track. Once I finally got back to an interstate on ramp I took a slow timid merge up to speed. The car seemed to handle it fine and hungered for more. More than satisfied to feed the beast, I slowly brought the car up to cruising speed, about 60 mph and patiently waited to see how it behaved the next few miles. Nothing further happened. Maybe it was bad gas way back in Charlotte? I had no way of truly telling, so I took it easy for the next few hours.

As noon approached, I got a text I was eagerly looking forward to seeing as I prepared for the Virginia welcome center. An amazing friend I met online in middle school while playing video games had texted me asking when I was going to make it to Alexandria, VA, where I wanted to go grab drinks and food. Korean BBQ of course, where else would we go! My ETA was showing a 3:00 p.m. arrival. I got back on the road excited for dinner plans and spending time with friends.

On the way to Alexandria the trip was once again normal. The engine was back to normal with its aggressive roar at 4,500 rpm devouring every mile of road ahead of it. The car seemed hungrier for

(story continues next page)

Road-Hardened, continued

miles than I was for KBBQ. I pulled into my hotel parking lot slightly later than my 3:00 ETA but still early enough that I could unpack and grab a shower to wash the road grime off before dinner. I then addressed my phone messages sending out updates to everyone that was following along that I had made it to Alexandria.

After an amazing night out swapping stories and catching up, with meat grilling on the tabletop grill, I retired to my hotel with a belly full and a smile on my face. I had made it this far with little problems. Just one more day to go and I would be home safe.

Tuesday October 25 came too early in the morning for me. I repacked the car, which was becoming the most annoying part of the trip every morning. I checked out of my hotel and got back on the road for the last day. Manchester was eight hours away. A long but achievable goal.

The weather, however, was very foreboding. As I pulled out on the highway, the fog was thick and low. Frustratingly, I would be fogged in all day long, but fortunately, it didn't rain. Lights on all day so people could see me, I trudged through the DC metro area and up the east coast. Following I-95 with my EZ-pass affixed to my windshield, I passed through toll booth after toll booth trying to get every mile in before stopping for gas. Can we take a moment to talk about the tolls on I-95 from DC to the Connecticut border? I paid close to \$45 in tolls! I could have taken my usual route north on I-81 to Scranton and I-84 east to avoid most of it, but that would cost me precious time. No time for diversions—I wanted to get home.

Another segue here, Have any of you had the experience of stopping for gas in New Jersey? It is interesting to say the least. In NJ it is illegal to pump your own gas. What?! Yeah, I know it might seem absurd to some of you but that is

how they do it there. Each gas station has an attendant stationed at the pumps to take your payment method and pump your gas—a call back maybe to full-service service stations. I didn't grow up in that time period and I hate waiting for someone else to do something I am more than capable of doing on my own.

As I was exiting Delaware I didn't know how many more miles were ahead of me in NJ before getting to New York. I already knew about the gas-pumping situation in NJ from past experience, though, so I was determined to get out of NJ before having to get gas. What I was not aware of, though, was that it is about 130 miles from the Delaware state line with NJ to the New York state line with NJ. I usually time my fill ups at about the 150 mile mark but I was already going into NJ with a few miles under the belt. I tried my best to get out of NJ before having to get gas but I was pushing 170 miles on the tank and I could tell the car was getting thirsty for gas. I wouldn't be surprised if I missed a few power strokes in my attempt to get out of NJ.

I reluctantly had to make a stop, though, as the fuel needle was resting on empty for far too long. I pulled off and into a filling station. Giving the attendant my card, I told him to put \$40 in the tank, unsure of how much gas was left in the tank, and not wanting to leave with anything less than a full tank. I also knew that the pump likes to shut off early because of the angle of the filler tube so someone unfamiliar with the car might allow the pump to stop early.

The attendant pumped 7.28 gallons! Whoa that's probably the lowest I've ever gotten it. The US 1500s got a 7.8 US gallon tank so I was basically running on fumes! The attendant then struggled to get the gas cap back on the filler tube for so long that I felt obligated to do it myself so I could get back on the road before he either damaged something or cost me 30 minutes. Again, I

(story continues next page)

Road-Hardened, continued

am hesitant to allow people to touch my car to begin with, but legislating that they have to pump my gas and making it illegal for me to do so makes me want to spend as little time in your state as possible.

My gas woes were not fully settled yet, though. When I got out of NJ and got to NY I made a further stop to top up because I wasn't sure if my tank was really filled up in NJ, as I didn't pump the gas myself so I wasn't able to gauge the shutoff myself. While I was able to pump my own gas in NY and wasn't worried about something simple like refitting the fuel cap, I was astonished by the price per gallon. Maybe I hit a bad station but I didn't want to shop around for cheaper gas because I wanted to get home as soon as possible. I paid \$5.699 per gallon for premium! I had never seen gas so high before!

Frustrated with the cost, I was still happy that the car took it and ran on down the road without problems. The fog from the morning was still lingering, though, even past midday. I only had to pass through two more states, so I was on the home stretch.

Passing through Connecticut and Massachusetts was uneventful, bringing me back to my adopted home state of New Hampshire. Finally after so many miles and so many days I was back! It was nearing 5:00 and the rush hour traffic was picking up. As I made it up I-93, I was reminded of my favorite brewery. Kelsen Brewing Company in Derry, NH posed as a perfect stop to wait until the traffic died down and to celebrate the long-fought trip with a beer and a pizza. I stopped in and took the moment to relax. I was almost home. Just 15 minutes away, I felt like I had been on the road forever.

I climbed out of the driver seat and limped to the bar. My legs were sore from the odd angles

forced upon them to keep the accelerator depressed for so long. Cruise control is an obvious engineering advancement in the late 20th century that should be better appreciated than it is.



My final takeaways from the trip are the following:

1. Don't be afraid to drive your little British car across long distances.
2. Take it easy and take back roads if you are concerned about something.
3. Be surprised by what auto parts stores have because some things really do fit your odd-ball car.
4. Take the time to enjoy the journey — not everything is about the starting location and the destination.

I particularly failed on number 4. I was so worried about what could go wrong I didn't focus on what was going right. I put smiles on so many people's faces. Random people I met at gas stations genuinely curious about the car and the story of the drive — had I really driven it all the way from NH? Kids on their way to school one random Monday morning in October, and all the drivers on the road who, although sometimes frighteningly, took a picture or recorded a video of me pattering along in the car on the highway.

I wrote this follow-up article at my favorite brewery in NH, but take the time to find those places that you wouldn't have normally stopped at along the road. That random restaurant serving Italian food or that hole in the wall bar in that has a good beer on tap and good people to talk to. Make the trip worth taking, regardless of the struggles faced on the road and remember, safety fast!

Spannering

Advice on Repairs, Parts, and Services



Anglia Motor Mounts

story and photos by Mac McNamara

I have replaced the badly decayed motor mounts in my Anglia. What is most fascinating is the motor mounts most readily available fit an early model Lotus 7, which shares many mechanical parts with the Anglia. These were less expensive and available immediately, whereas the sources I use to get parts would not be able to supply



Passenger side motor mounts, old and new

new mounts for two to three weeks. Guess which I went with (and I can say I have more Lotus parts, among several other exotics, on the car!).

After the motor mounts were replaced (a two-day adventure in itself), the cooling fan blade lined up much more correctly with the slanted radiator in the car, though it is sitting about a third-inch further away. Prior to replacement, the blade was about half-inch from the radiator,

but only at the top of the rotation and only for about a 2-inch (or so) part of the 8-inch blade's rotation. The bottom of the blade was almost 2.5 inches



Driver's side motor mount before replacement

away from the radiator. I am going to be testing the new placement thoroughly to see if driving in the warm, Southern weather will still cause overheating when in stop-and-go traffic. I will also be examining the possibility of adding a 10-inch blade instead of eight inches so that more of the radiator has cooling air pulled through it.

As you can see from the photos, the original mounts are at least 35 years old but may be as old as 63 years. The reason for the large span is due to my faulty memory, not being sure the motor mounts were replaced when the engine was rebuilt, by both Klaxton's (no longer in business, but there is a story that may one day be shared) and Competition Head on Butler Drive. It is also possible the mounts had been replaced by my grandfather over the years the car was in his possession. I am not sure and dad did not know either. I didn't think about the transmission mount when I ordered these mounts and will have to spend another day replacing that mount to complete the set.

Barn Find MGB

story by *Noel Eagleson*

photos by the author and *Donna Eagleson*

Last month **Terry Trovato** wrote an excellent article on **Lyman Dykes** liberating MGA and MGB roadsters from an old shed where they had been stored for the best part of 50 years.

Knowing that I love all things MG, Lyman contacted me and suggested I need to come and look at the "B" as he believed it was just too solid a roadster to part out.

It transpired that the B (a 1964 pull-handle) had been involved in a frontal collision which badly crumpled the passenger side fender, front apron and bonnet; thankfully, the chassis leg remained straight. Yes, the car was indeed very solid, however the interior was a real mess as a nursery of raccoons over the years had turned what had once been beautiful English red leather seats into shreds and used the floors as a glorified latrine!

Not one to be deterred, I enlisted our ever-helpful club president and we trailered the car home, but not into the Garagemahal as a lot of petrified detritus (fancy word for poop) would have to be excavated from the interior, and the seats would need to be removed.



Noel Eagleson and Tom Renick arrive with the MGB

When working around old British cars, having an understanding spouse is one thing but when **Donna** saw the car and interior, she said, "I'll help you get that all cleaned out!" So, the next day she donned her worst yard clothes and complete with goggles, gloves and mask, proceeded to remove all the aforesaid mess. Now that's one wonderful partner! [*Amen-Ed.*]

With the interior removed, I could then start to really inspect the structural integrity. This did not show any rust-through in the outer sills, rear dogleg and castlerails, all notorious tin-worn areas on MGBs.

There was nevertheless some rust-through on each floor pan in the front footwells so there will be some cutting and welding required [*would it really be a British car without that?-Ed.*].



Preparing to gut the interior

I have always had a soft spot for the early 1962-65 pull-handle-door MGB's. I feel they drive and show better coupled with the smooth 4-speed, three-synchro gearbox and delightful handling. Later models all suffered from a fair degree of dilution from the initial pedigree as designed by Don Hayter and chief engineer Syd Enever, two of the great names synonymous with Abingdon and MG.

During the course of Donna's archaeological dig she unearthed several documents and pieces of paper all of which help trace the history of the car from when it was first registered new in Alabama. That will have to wait until next month, so please be sure to "sign in" for the next instalment. Safety Fast!

The Best of

Pierre's Wisdom

Pierre Fontana

Your New Oils

Looking at the Fall issue of *XK's Unlimited*, I noticed an interesting message. One of the additives we have in oil now is zinc dialkyl dithiophosphate (ZDDP). A critical anti-wear ingredient in motor oil, it is being phased out, as it hurts catalytic converters.

In our old-fashioned engines, with direct friction on tappets and cams, it was of critical importance. You can purchase this additive at www.zddplus.com. A four-ounce bottle, for \$10.95, is enough for one oil change [*with inflation, the [cheapest current price](#) I could find is \$24 for two bottles-Ed.*]. Other additives are also good for your car, such as molybdenum-based oil.

I like to look at their magazine, as make me feel rich. It's the only place you can buy a new bare hood for your XKE for only \$14,000 plus crating and shipping. [*Moss acquired XKs Unlimited a couple of years ago; new E-Type bonnets now sell for \$15,999 to \$23,799.99-Ed.*]

Lucas OEM or Aftermarket

Working on a very "sleepy" Austin Healey Sprite in storage for more than 12 years kept me busy re-awakening hydraulics, fuel, and ignition, replacing the necessary little items to make it drivable again. One of my repairs was the generator. With a simple cleaning of the commutator, and new brushes, and it was charging well again, but not for long. The fields looked bad; insulation was flaking off, so I had to replace an expensive part, plus time, or purchase another generator.

Moss offered a choice, a rebuilt Lucas exchange (\$100.00 core), with heavy-item shipping two times plus \$130.00, or a new after market unit,



All photos courtesy **Pierre Fontana**

no exchange, for \$139.00, so I left the choice to owner. He opted for the new one.

The new one came, a Lucas look-alike but for the field connector and a little larger diameter. This was not too noticeable, but the surprise was



Aftermarket Sprite alternator

in mounting it; the slightly larger diameter made it impossible to lower it as it was, so a longer belt was necessary, and I had to make the adjusting bracket a couple inches longer. Once in place it looks normal, but I wasted a couple hours getting it right. This turned out good for the owner and bad for me. I am learning always. The moral of the story is the aftermarket may surprise you.

Pierre Fontana is a technical advisor for SABCC. This article originally was published in Sept. 2014.

Spare Parts

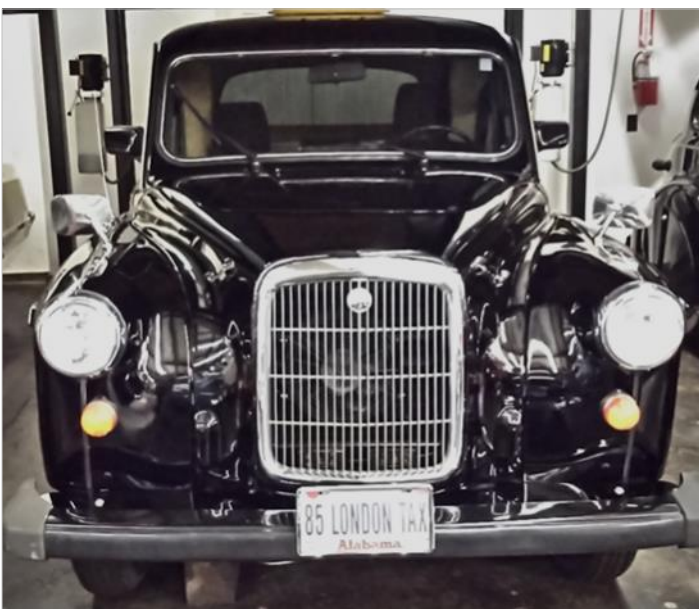
A Visit to the Henderson Museum

story and photos by Mac McNamara

Kathy and I were able to visit the Henderson Museum, a collection of over 130 cars of Mobile Lumber Company owner Jim Henderson. Cars in his collection range from a 1911 Model T Roadster to a 2012 Mustang GT 350-H Anniversary Edition with Carrol Shelby's signature on the dashboard plaque.



A flag at the museum.



1985 London Taxi...with a story to be heard from Mr. Henderson, himself!



He has three cars (that I am aware of) that have participated in the Great Race, a 2,000-plus mile run of cars no newer than 1974. This year's race is traveling from St. Augustine, Florida and will be stopping in Auburn's Toomer's Corner for lunch on Sunday, June 25 (12:00 or so) and staying overnight in Birmingham before moving on to Graceland in Memphis, Tenn. via Tupelo, Miss. and eventually finishing in Colorado Springs. Perhaps we can get an entourage to travel to Auburn Sunday morning to meet, greet



Liberace's 1966 Rolls-Royce

and cheer the cars on? [Please see the next page for a detailed itinerary of the 2023 Great Race, which Mac helpfully included with this article-Ed.]

Also in the collection are Liberace's 1966 Rolls Royce and a 1985 London Taxi. We are working on trying to get Mr. Henderson to enter (or just bring) his Taxi to our car show, as well as open the museum to the SABCC club members.

[Thanks, Mac, for this article and for reaching out to Mr. Henderson. SABCC toured the museum several years ago, but I can verify that it's worth seeing again-Ed.]



SATURDAY, JUNE 24

START: Francis Field, St. Augustine, FL – 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.
OVERNIGHT: Main Street, Tifton, GA – 5 p.m.

SUNDAY, JUNE 25

LUNCH: Toomer's Corner, Auburn, AL – 12:15 p.m.
OVERNIGHT: Uptown at Protective Stadium, Birmingham, AL – 4:30 p.m.

MONDAY, JUNE 26

LUNCH: Lee County Courthouse, Tupelo, MS – noon
OVERNIGHT: Guesthouse/Graceland, Memphis, TN – 5 p.m.

TUESDAY, JUNE 27

LUNCH: Argenta, Downtown, North Little Rock, AR – 11:45 a.m.
OVERNIGHT: Russellville Depot, Russellville, AR – 4:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28

LUNCH: BW Inn Of The Ozarks, Eureka Springs, AR – 12:15 p.m.
OVERNIGHT: Main Street/Historic US 66, Joplin, MO – 5 p.m.

THURSDAY, JUNE 29

LUNCH: Lyon County Fairgrounds, Emporia, KS – 1 p.m.
OVERNIGHT: Mosely Street/Old Town, Wichita, KS – 5 p.m.

FRIDAY, JUNE 30

LUNCH: SRCA Drag Strip, Great Bend, KS – noon
OVERNIGHT: Main St./Stevens Park, Garden City, KS – 5 p.m.

SATURDAY, JULY 1

LUNCH: Colorado Welcome Center, Lamar, CO – 11:00 a.m.
OVERNIGHT: Pueblo Union Depot, Pueblo, CO – 4 p.m.

SUNDAY, JULY 2

FINISH: Tejon Street, Colorado Springs, CO – 1 p.m.



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A Brief History of MG

by Mark J. McCourt and
David LaChance, [Hemmings](#)

Great Britain's best-loved sports car brand is celebrating its centenary this year, marking 100 years since founder Cecil Kimber – then general manager of The Morris Garages – began “tuning” standard Morris Motors cars by upgrading their engines, improving their suspensions and brakes, and fitting distinctive, sporty new coachwork. Those special models were called “M.G. Super Sport Morrises” in honor of William Morris (later Lord Nuffield) and his Morris Garages business. MG would soon design and build its own special automobiles whose motorsports pedigree originated with Kimber's Morris Cowley-based, Land's End Trial-winning “Old Number One” of 1925. Regular production began around 1927, and the M.G. Car Company Ltd. was formally registered in July 1930.

By the middle of that decade, this fast-growing marque offered an impressive range of sports and touring cars. Even as it came under greater control of its parent company, MG continued to expand its popularity at home and abroad. In the years after World War II, America would be its largest market, where MG became virtually synonymous with sports cars. The original, Abingdon-based MG firm was closed in autumn 1980, but the brand name lived on, applied to sporty Austin-Rover models; there was a renaissance of MG sports car production through the 1990s. That the now-Chinese-owned brand enjoys increasing sales of affordable electric cars today underlines the enduring fondness for the “sacred octagon.” [Ed. thanks **Tony McLaughlin** for sending this article. The MG centenary will be the theme of this year's SABCC British Car Festival.]



M-Type Midget, one of the earliest production MGs



Jason Thomas sent this picture of his son and new daughter-in-law leaving their June 11 wedding in his MGA, saying “I have worked on this restoration for 10 years and finally had the motivation to finish for them to use as the getaway vehicle.” Looks great, Jason!

Auction Roundup: Trucks

1959 Morris Minor Panel Van



Sold for \$12,250 on Bring A Trailer

Finished in an "interesting" shade of brown, with a yellow roof and custom graphics, over black vinyl, this refurbished van presented very well.

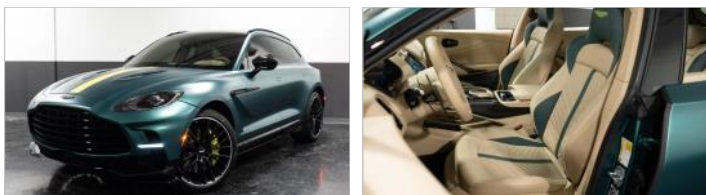
1992 Land Rover Defender 90 Pickup 200Tdi 5-Speed



Sold for \$12,100 on Bring a Trailer

In running condition, but with rust issues, dents, interior blemishes, and other issues, this red over black turbodiesel pickup was considered a "steal" by commenters – nice versions sell for three to four times this price.

2023 Aston Martin DBX707



Not Sold for \$216,707 on Bring A Trailer

In as-new condition, with 1,400 miles, the final bid for this Aston was \$75k below its sticker price. If the owner thought they could flip it for a profit, they were wrong.

1976 Land Rover 101 Truck



Sold for \$33,600 on Hemmings

This forward-control truck is "one of a kind." Thank God.

Around the Bend

Here's a brief rundown of upcoming events:

- **Tri-Club Pig Roast**, July 23, noon, **Tom Schmitz** home, Lillian: Held each year at Tom's home on Soldier Creek, this event brings together members from SABCC, the Mardi Gras MGs, and the Panhandle British Car Association for all the pork, salads, sides, and desserts you could possibly want. Best of all, it's free! All you need to bring is a dish to share and whatever you care to drink. British cars get preferred parking. You'll enjoy seeing Tom's onsite garages and vast collection of model cars, relaxing by or in the pool, and watching boats go by. PBCA's Tom Matsoukas is bringing his pontoon boat for tours up and down the creek.
- **Vintage Triumph Register National Convention**, Sep. 27 – Oct. 1, Dillard, GA: Most know Dillard for its MG event, but this year it's also hosting the VTR convention. The theme is "Celebrating the Vision of Giovanni Michelotti," honoring the Italian designer of many of our favorite British cars. For more information, visit vtr2023.org.
- **British Car Festival**, Oct. 20 and 21, Fairhope United Methodist Church: Our show is closer than you think! This is the time to be recruiting sponsors, preparing your own car, and letting show chair **Brian Daly** know how you can help.
- **Gulf Coast Autojumble**, Nov. 4, 10:00 a.m.: The annual three-club swap meet for all things British motoring will be held again this year at **Tom Schmitz's** "Garagemahut" in Elberta. Mark your calendar and start gathering your junk great items to sell.

Classifieds

MGB Projects or Parts Cars

Red car \$300; green car \$500. Both are rough, but the engine in the green car turns freely. For more information, contact Ben Cummings, who can put you in touch with the seller.



Ben Cummings

ben@cummings-architecture.com

1971 Lotus Europa S2 Project

Lack of garage space, age and health force me to sell. I was doing a frame off restoration and starting to put it together, but it is mostly in boxes. Many new parts. Car is in Mobile.

Bob Bulfin, bobbulfin@gmail.com

334-559-9155

1978 MGB Roadster

Here is a beautiful 1978 MGB Roadster that I have owned for over 10 years. Originally a California car, I have had it resprayed in original white color, fitted a new soft top, a leather interior and renewed the carpet. I also added new Mini Mag wheels and rebuilt the braking system and much more. The car has electronic ignition and starts and runs great.

My asking price is \$9,000 ono and the car can be viewed and driven in Fairhope. The only reason for selling is I have purchased a 1967 Jaguar XK-E coupe and do not have storage for both cars.

Jack Steinmetz, 713-851-7609



Wanted – Sunbeam Autos

South Alabama area.

Tom Renick, 251-661-8333

Weak and Rusty

Michael King, Editor, *Spark & Spanner*

Errors and Omissions

First things first — I misspelled **Terry Trovato's** name in the byline of the excellent article he wrote about **Lyman Dykes'** barn-find MGA [*Noel Eagleson's fine article on p. 11 is about its barn companion, a 1964 MGB-Ed.*]. I apologize profusely!

Considering how many mistakes I tend to make in *Spark & Spanner*, you might be surprised to know that I really do read it carefully before I hit "send" on the transmittal email. I've tried various methods to reduce the error rate, including printing the entire issue before I send it, but invariably, on rereading an issue that's already gone out, I'll find some boneheaded flaw. A couple of times, these have been so egregious that I have sent out a replacement version.

I thought the reason for this was that I am an "intuitive" on a certain personality test you might have taken. It claims humans fall into 16 distinct "types" based on their ratings on four personality aspects. "Intuitives" allegedly perceive the world from a "big-picture" viewpoint, making leaps from Point A to Point F, while "sensings" are methodical, step-by-step folks.

This entire personality theory has been dismissed as "pseudoscience" by psychologists, and I tend to agree. If I'm really an intuitive, I ought to be totally uninterested with details and following instructions, choosing to "fly by the seat of my pants" and "work it out on my own."

To some extent, that's true, but when working on "Spark & Spanner," I do tend to sweat the details. For example, every text column is exactly 3.67 inches wide, so I resize every photo to that width. If I have more than one photo on a page, I really like to have each the same height, so I crop



photos to achieve that. I also hate white space, so I will make adjustments to eliminate it wherever possible [*you might claim that indicates obsessive-compulsive disorder, and you might just be right-Ed.*].

So what does all that have to do with cars? Well, a passion for the details is not a bad thing when you are working on something that you eventually plan to drive at 70 mph. I'm also finding that being a bit obsessive is helpful in my new auto parts store job. Our store stocks thousands of parts for hundreds of cars, and even a slight mistake can result in selling the customer an incorrect part. When that happens, the customer ends up back at the store with a demeanor far less pleasant than at their previous visit.

One of the most significant learning experiences I've had since joining SABCC 14 years ago was watching the late **Richard Cunningham** (see photo above) rebuild the engine in my 1979 MG Midget — the car I later sold to **Mason Blosser**, whose experience driving it from Fairhope to New Hampshire is documented in this newsletter. Richard's attention to detail was absolutely remarkable, and the quality of his work is evidenced by the fact that the little car completed the 3,200-mile trip. I've observed a similar level of precision in **Noel Eagleson's** rebuild of his 1954 MG TF, and I'm sure he'll do the same with the barn-find B.

So, see the big picture, but sweat the details. But please be tolerant of mistakes — yours, mine, and others'. Most won't be fatal.

32nd Annual British Car Festival Celebrating the **Triumph TR6**



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SABCC is a chapter of NAMGBR, and they provide insurance for our events. Your membership matters!

Spark & Spanner Submissions

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

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

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



Speaking of MGBs, here's the *Skipper* (CDR William R. "Dick" Bishop, USN Ret.) effecting repairs to his 1966 roadster, "Brooke," following a road hazard. The photo is courtesy *Dave Roloson*, whose XJ8 is parked behind Dick. Presumably, Dave helped with the repairs.

Earlier today, I saw a bumper sticker that said "I'm a veterinarian, therefore I can drive like an animal." Suddenly I realized how many proctologists are on the roads...

And speaking of road hazards, this was sent to *Ed.* by *Tony McLaughlin*. Dodge Chargers must be very popular with them.

And now, for something completely different . . .



Ron Wolverton sent Ed. a photo of a Rolls-Royce truck (inset) and when I was trying to learn more about it, I found this. Built on a Silver Shadow platform by Central Conversions of Florida, a shop specializing in Rolls-Royces, the intent was to have a truck that could haul other Rolls-Royces, using a three-car trailer. The spiked lug nuts are an, um, interesting choice.

Spark & Spanner

South Alabama British Car Club

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Mobile, AL 36618



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*.