

Spark & Spanner

The Official
Publication of
the South
Alabama British
Car Club

December 2024



From the President

Ben Cummings

So, I have served as your president for an entire year. And it has been a pleasure. I hope that the coming year will be just as enjoyable and productive. The other officers and I have worked together to make the SABCC the best British car club that it has always been. And we will do it again.

I started the year at our January meeting with a history lesson about the founding of our club. I felt that, as new president, I should know where we came from. How did we come to be? And what have we done for the past three decades? It is good to know about our past, to know how to take us into the future. **Rodney McDonald** did an excellent job recapping the history of our club by reading excerpts from articles of our early years prepared by Michael Thomason.

One of my recurring topics is getting young people involved. So at one of our Spring meetings, I encouraged everyone to bring a young person. I asked everyone to bring a son, daughter, grandchild, or young friend to our meeting. It is important that we encourage young people to get involved in the club to ensure the club's continued success. I brought my daughter and had a wonderful time introducing her. I'm sure I didn't embarrass her.

Our picnic this year was extra special by the efforts of the **Bertagnollis**. **Michael** and **Andrea** organized and prepared a shrimp boil. A lot of effort went into getting and cooking the shrimp. And the shrimp were fantastic.

We also had several driving events this year thanks to our young vice-president of activities, **Max Menaker**. I was excited to have a young fella in his early twenties as an officer in our club. Unfortunately, he took a job out of town

and has left that position vacant. But during his term he prepared a couple of rallies and gathered a group of members to participate in a Cars and Coffee event. Some may recall that one of his rallies was on a particularly hot summer day. The club followed Max's lead and participated in a second Cars and Coffee event in the fall. I am pleased to say that at all the events we had a great showing of cars.

In October **Peter Lee** organized a successful British Car Festival. This was Peter's first year as show chairman and continued the success of **Brian Daly's** past festivals. About 150 cars registered for the show which nearly topped our record-breaking registration last year. A beautiful fall day may have attributed some to the success of the day. I know the weather sure may it one of the most pleasant festivals in recent memory. But it was the hard work of Peter, the committee members, and the many volunteers that made the festival fun and a great financial success.

The year concluded with the annual Christmas lunch and installation of officers. **Pat** and **Dave Couling** continued the tradition of the SABCC toy drive. Thank you to all for bringing an unwrapped present to the lunch. There were many presents under the Christmas tree that were later delivered to the Salvation Army. The lunch was a fun social. I tried to entertain with trivia questions and I hope everyone enjoyed a new twist in selecting the order in which the tables went through the buffet line.

The introduction and installation of the officers occurred after the meal was served and then I presented a few awards. This was my first attempt to write and present the awards. I must admit that I did receive help from **Noel** and past president **Tom**. It was an honor to recognize members for special efforts to that continue to make the club great.

So, to conclude, 2024 has been a great year and I look forward to another great year in 2025.

SABCC Club Officers

President	Ben Cummings
VP-Membership	Rick Black
VP-Activities	Volunteer Needed!
Secretary	Peter Lee
Treasurer	Donna Eagleson
Member at Large	Dick Bishop
Member at Large	Don Blosser
Member at Large	Tom Renick
Member at Large	Frank Stabler
Member at Large	Ron Wolverton
Technical Advisors	Pierre Fontana, Mike Darby, and Scott Paradise
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, and dues are only \$20 per year [*Inflation? Not here! Well, at least until 2025, perhaps-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



December 22, 2024

Magic Christmas in Lights

We will meet at 6:30 p.m. at Mobile International Speedway (7800 Park Blvd, Irvington, AL 36544) for the driving tour. Old cars are welcome but the musical accompaniment requires FM radio. Cost is \$7 per person.

December 24, 2024

Christmas Eve – NO CLUB MEETING

Not that we'd meet anyway on Christmas Eve, but the Dec. 8 Christmas Lunch took the place of our regular December meeting.

January 25, 2025

Veenschoten Shop Tour

We will meet for lunch at Derailed Diner at 11:30 at Interstate 10 and Wilcox Rd. (Exit 53), then caravan to **Fred Veenschoten's** shop west of Pensacola to see his current projects, which he presented at a recent meeting.

January 28, 2025

Monthly Club Meeting

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

December 2024

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	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
LIGHTS TOUR		NO CLUB MEETING				
29	30	31				

January 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	21	22	23	24	25
						SHOP TOUR
26	27	28	29	30	31	
		CLUB MEETING				

Sparks

Club and Member News

SABCC Christmas Luncheon

SABCC's annual Christmas luncheon was held Dec. 8 in a new venue, the Camellia Room at Homestead Village in Fairhope. The meal was catered by Diane Cartmell, Owner & Chef of *Oui Oui Paris* Restaurant, located outside Homestead Village, and featured stuffed chicken breast and baked cod. The highlight of the lunch is always the awards presentation — see story, next page.



Above, club president **Ben Cummings** discusses the lunch with caterer Diane Cartmell; below left, a group shot; below, **Noel Eagleson** shows the antique picnic basket filled with English goodies presented to **Andrea Bertagnolli** (photos courtesy **Donna Eagleson**)



SABCC's 2025 officers, from left, **Rick Black**, VP Membership; **Donna Eagleson**, Treasurer; **Peter Lee**, Secretary, Show Chair, and Webmaster; **Tom Renick**, Member at Large; **Don Blosser**, Member at Large; **Frank Stabler**, Member at Large; **W. R. "Dick" Bishop**, Member at Large; and **Ben Cummings**, President. (photo courtesy **Ron Wolverton**, also a Member at Large)

Awards at 2024 Christmas Lunch

article by **Ben Cummings**

photos by **Ron Wolverson**

There is a tradition of giving awards at the Christmas lunch to recognize members for extraordinary efforts in service to the Club. The theme of the awards was paint colors. Each award was named from the color palette of the MGB. The following awards were given by club president, **Ben Cummings**.

Harvest Gold Award



Ginger Black

The Queen of Carnaby Street – in recognition of her hard work selling club t-shirts for the British Car Festival.

Golden Beige Award



Keith and Donna Jarvis

Purveyors of the finest coffee to the Royal

Household – in recognition of providing the coffee and doughnuts every year at the British Car Festival.

Blue Royale Award

Michael King

Media Tycoon of Fleet Street – for outstanding work producing the club newsletter. [*Thanks – and blue is my favourite colour-Ed.*]

British Racing Green Award



Gil Stuart

A new club member that stepped into gear and got things moving – in recognition of his assistance in obtaining General and Class Sponsors for the British Car Festival.

Tartan Red Award



Dave and Pat Couling

Charity Cruisers – for organizing the annual Christmas Charity Toy Drive.

(story continues next page)

2024 Awards, continued

Tahiti Blue Award



Peter Lee

Top Gear Grinder – an invaluable member who maintains the club website, club communications, monthly minutes, hosts virtual executive committee meetings, and can run a slideshow on the big TV. He did an outstanding job with the BCF and has a great, mostly British, soundtrack.

Primrose Yellow Award



Don Pritchett

Senior Pit Crew Mechanic of the Matchbox and Hot Wheels Races – for an outstanding member dedicated to youth involvement. *[He also makes some mighty fine special trophies-Ed.]*

Carmine Red Award



Andrea Bertagnolli

“This Lady is not for Turning” (Margaret Thatcher) – for exceptional work with the BCF Sponsors and Door Prizes. Andrea was also gifted as Most Outstanding Member of the Year a picnic box to mount to her luggage rack on her beautiful MGB.

And then there was one more award to the husband of the Member of the Year, **Michael Bertagnolli**.

Vermillion Red Award



Michael Bertagnolli

For being the Husband of the Member of the Year – thank you for the boiled shrimp at the SABCC Picnic!

'Twas the Night Before the Car Show

By Michael Carnell (*Just British Online Motoring Magazine*)

'Twas the night before the car show, but I was out in the shed. My car wasn't budging – the danged thing was dead.

The battery and petrol had been checked twice with care, the tires kicked too, to make sure they held air.

The plugs were all snugged up, tight on their leads, while shop towels betrayed how much knuckles can bleed.

Once more I inspected the rotor and cap, but that car was intent on a long freakin' nap.

When out in the street there arose such a clatter, I sat up real fast to see what was the matter.

Into the sump my head slammed with a bash, crunched back to the floor – I grew faint with the crash.

The lump on my forehead and ringing in ears, gave an aura of migraine, while nausea grew near.

But then what to my watering eyes should appear? Why an old Morris tow truck with grinding of gears!

There was a little old driver, so crazy and quick, I knew in a moment it must be Dip Stick.

More bewildered than brilliant his mechanics they came, And he laughed and he hollered, and called them by name!

"Now Austin! Now Triumph! Now MG and Jaguar! On Healey! On Mini! On Morgan and Rover!

Get that car off the lift, and watch out for that wall! Now back away! Back away! Back away all!"

As good money before a long shop visit flies, And when met with a rebuild, bills mount to the sky.



So up to his full height sir Dip Stick he grew, despite a kink in his back, and I believe his leg too.

And then, in a fuse flash, I heard under breath, the swearing and calling for previous owner's death.

As I bandaged my head, and was fumbling around, down the first Castrol can came with a terrible bound.

He was dressed all in Dickies, from his pants to his shirt, and his clothes were adorned with gas, oil and dirt.

A couple of rags he had stuck in his belt, and he left stains on the concrete wherever he knelt.

His eyes-how demented, his pupils how twitchy. I offered to help him, but he laughed out of pity.

His crusty old mouth, twisted up like a bow, and the stubble he wore had a good three days growth.

A slow burning cigar he held tight in his teeth, and the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath.

He had a broad face and a nicely round belly, you could tell he liked his chair right in front of the telly!

He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf, and I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself!

A wink of his eye and a twist of his head, soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.

He spoke very few words as he turned to his work, and after tuning the SUs, he turned with a jerk.

Then he turned the key one and hit the starter, wow, she started right up as he hit the gas harder!

He sprang to his truck, to his team gave a whistle, and away they all zoomed, like shot out of a missile.

But I heard him call out, over a backfiring blast, "Happy car show to all, and to all safety fast!"

[The late *Terry Trovato* sent this to me in 2022-Ed.]

Pierre's Wisdom

Pierre Fontana

British Car Air-Conditioning

Just so you will know, way back years ago, in the beginning of British cars offering air-conditioning, shop owners were required to take a course on maintenance, recovery, and dispensing [of refrigerants-Ed.]. I still have my card.

The Freon used was very efficient but bad for the for the environment, so in time it was replaced by a better one we use now, R-134a. It is reasonably priced and can be purchased anywhere; I've found Walmart to be the cheapest. You can still purchase the old Freon, R-12, but it is not manufactured anymore so you will have to pay dearly. [You will also pay about four times the price of R-134a for the newest refrigerant, R-1234yf, which has been used in some cars since 2013 and



All photos courtesy **Pierre Fontana**

most since about 2018; by next year, all cars are expected to be using it-Ed.]

Retrofitting the old system is easy, don't let them tell you differently. A few modern "o" rings, seals, an orifice tube, a dryer, a complete purge of the old stuff, vacuuming the system for 30 minutes, and a recharge with Freon R-134a and oil are all that is necessary. I have done too many to count. All the equipment needed can be borrowed from parts houses and it is OK for you to do your own car.

You would be surprised at the strange way we checked for leaks years ago. It entails a propane torch with a suction tube to pick up the leak. In turn the freon burning in the flame would turn it to green. The only problem was the transformed flame produced Phosgene gas, which armies used to kill each other during World War I, so it was a dangerous process.

Later we used an ultraviolet dye we could pick up with polarized goggles, and now we have sniffers. And, lots of us have vent windows. so we have no need for A/C [Well, unless it's raining-Ed.].

Pierre Fontana is a technical advisor for SABCC.



A Graphic Guide to Current Ownership of Historic British Marques

Can't recall who owns your favorite British marque? **Rodney McDonald** put together this handy guide.



**Mini • Triumph
Riley • Rolls Royce**



**Land Rover • Rover
Jaguar • Daimler**



Lotus



**Austin • Morris
MG • Wolseley**



**Singer • Sunbeam
Hillman**



Bentley

Minis as Advertising Vehicles

story by Rodney McDonald

The classic Mini has always been a blank canvas for the creative types. From John Cooper's hot rod Cooper and Cooper S models to platforms for sometimes zany creations, Minis spur the imagination. In the UK, the classic Mini has been used for a number of memorable advertising campaigns. These are some of our favorites.

The Outspan Mini

The promotional brainchild of the Capespan firm of South Africa, the Outspan Mini was a fiberglass representation of an orange placed on a shortened Mini platform. Outspan ordered five of the potentially roly-poly little cars for PR



Outspan Mini (photo courtesy thisbrighton.co.uk)

duty in the UK in the early 1970s. Orange was certainly the theme with an orange interior made even more so with the use of orange tinted glass for the side windows. The only break from the sea of orange was the green OUTSPAN lettering and the stalk on top. The Outspan Mini contained a driver and a young lady who would alight from the giant orange bearing a basket of fruit to mingle with curious onlookers.

Outspan Minis are still a nostalgic favorite in the UK with the surviving cars making appearances at Mini rallies and historic motoring events.

Duckhams Mini

Based on another shortened Mini platform, the Duckhams Mini was built in 1968 to resemble an outsized gallon can of Duckhams motor oil. The "can" was sheet metal over a tubular steel frame



Outspan Mini (photo courtesy thisbrighton.co.uk)

and the rear axle was taken from a Ford product to, one assumes, give it an aggressive stance.

As with other promotional vehicles, the Duckhams Oil Mini was frequently seen at motorsports events and on the open road to promote the brand. Duckhams was also associated with Formula 1 racing particularly with Lotus. The Duckhams Mini currently resides in the British Motor Heritage Museum in Gaydon

(story continues next page)

Minis as Advertising, continued

Levis Mini

While not as flamboyant as the first two cars here, the Levis Mini was done up in denim blue



Levis Mini —does the original still exist? (photo courtesy the author)

with orange top stitching recalling the seams on the iconic Levis jeans. A representation of the trademark brass button appeared on the bonnet along with zipper graphics on the sides of the car. Sadly, there is not much information available about the Levis promotional Mini, other than a few images of miniatures around the Internet.

Of course the modern MINI is as much a canvas for today's American marketers with versions running



Photo via shiftingglances.com

about with giant Red Bull cans on their back and there is even a MINI "wienermobile" in the wild.

Auction Roundup: Red and Green

In keeping with the season, cars in Christmas colours.

2024 McLaren 750S Spider



Not sold for \$336,853 on Bring a Trailer

Was Grinchy Green (actually Elite Mantis) the issue, or was the seller expecting too much? The sticker was \$401k.

2023 Range Rover P530 SE



Sold for \$118,000 on Cars and Bids

In Belgravia Green over Caraway leather, this luxury SUV features a 4.4 litre V8 with 523 hp.

1994 Jaguar XJ6 Vanden Plas



Sold for \$6,000 on Bring a Trailer

The X40 saloons were not universally loved, due to their square head- and tail-lamps, but with just 47k miles, this clean Flamenco over Ivory car jingled someone's bells.

1951 Hillman Minx Convertible



Sold for \$11,500 on Hemmings

Sporting new paint, and a top and interior in very good condition, perhaps the only negative (at least for traditionalists) about this car is that it sports a Chevrolet 350 V8 and a GM automatic transmission.

Classifieds

1971 Lotus Europa S2 Project Car

I started a frame-off restoration on this car, and it is mostly in boxes. Before I moved to Mobile four years ago, I was preparing the parts to put the car back together. But in moving I lost my garage and age, health and time force me to sell it.

Here are some of the things I bought for the rebuild:

- shocks/springs (from Banks Europa in England)
- aluminum radiator (custom made, group buy)
- aluminum flywheel (Fidanza)
- pistons (custom made Wiseco)
- intake manifold and Weber carb
- stainless steel door hinges
- reground cam (Elgin, hot street grind)
- windscreen (used, but in very good shape)
- crashpad
- four 185/60-13 Yokohama A008 tires

Body doesn't look pretty but it is mostly cosmetic; there are several places that need repair. There are several coats of paint. Wheels are Minilites and there is a set of four 185/60-13 Yokohama A008 tires with less than 10 miles of use. I bought them as the last set I could find in the US. They have been stored in black plastic bags in a cool dry space. Suspension is complete with some new bushings etc.

All brake parts and lines are there. I have a box of NOS parts that I think includes cylinder rebuild kits and stainless pistons. (Some parts are same as TR parts, e.g., trunnions, rotors, heater valve.)

Electrical components (gauges, wipers, window

lifts, lights etc.) all work. Harness is there, but I was planning to rewire to modern standards. Interior is complete, but seats and crash pad need padding and covering and it needs a headliner. Fascia has been sanded and stained. Steering wheel is a small Momo, not the stock one.

My engine is missing a crankshaft. One of the four liners is broken. The head has a thumb sized chunk missing – could be welded if one knows a great aluminum welder, but it would probably be better/easier to get a new head. There was nothing wrong with the transaxle.

I have both Factory Repair Manual and Factory Service Parts Book. I also have a ton of other literature on the Europa both in hard and electronic copy.

The car can be seen in Mobile, Alabama. Asking \$3500.

Bob Bulfin
bobbulfinatgmaild.com



1971 MGB Roadster



Thanks to Michael Bertagnolli, it runs great! New fuel filter, new distributor cap and rotor for Pertronix electronic ignition. Timing re-set and new valve cover gasket installed. Also has new tires and new rebound straps. A few years ago, Mike Darby installed a new fuel pump and a new radiator. The tach is not working and the heater has never worked. The paint is in good enough for running about the Eastern Shore but not show quality. The top in great shape and the interior is an eight out of 10. Why am I selling? Headquarters says I must reduce my number of toys. \$5,900.

Mike

251-422-9219 (text)

1975 Triumph TR6

Has been in storage and last registration was in 1991, recently purchased from an estate. Original color is code 84 Topaz; manufacture date 6/75. Motor is free and turns over by hand. I have not attempted to start. Car rolls and steers. Floors have some rust, more prevalent on passenger side, rockers look good, headlights good, taillights good other than a small amount of paint bubbling on left. Edge of hood & trunk good. Small amount of bubbles on lower passen-

ger door edge. The mechanics of the top work, canvas is shot, boot appears good condition. Trunk solid. Has spare & jack pieces. Tires will hold air long enough to load on trailer. Before cleaning I thought this was a full resto or complete parts car; after cleaning up at bit, I think with servicing the brakes, cooling system, engine & fuel system you'd have a nice patina driver. Located in Fairhope. \$5000 OBO.

Bradley Davis

bradleydavis72@yahoo.com



2024 British Car Festival

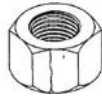


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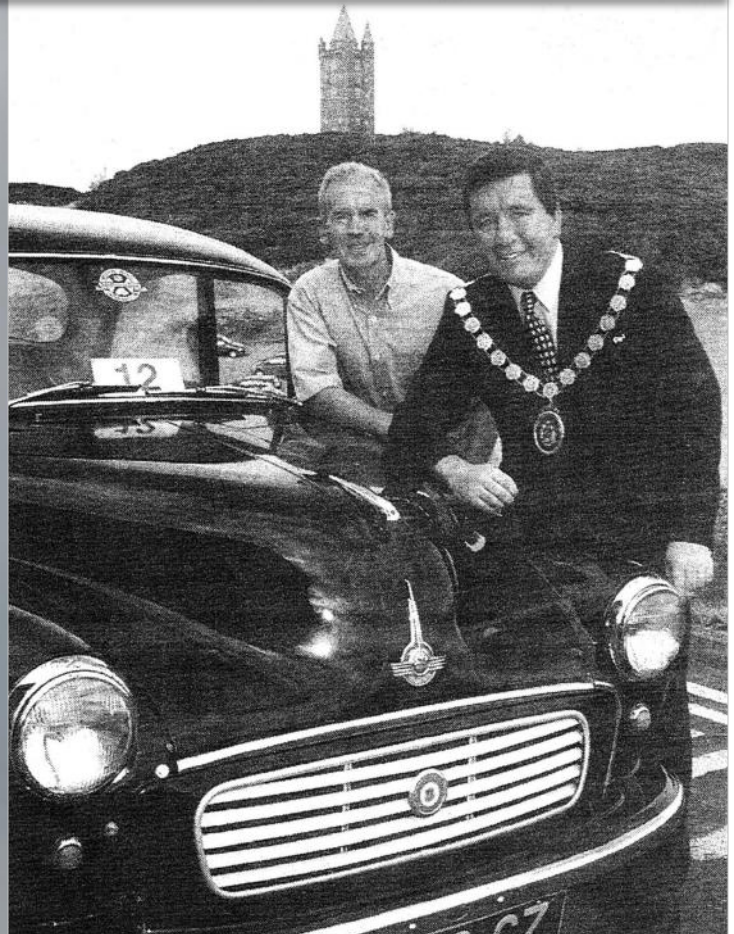


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And now, for something completely different . . .



*This month, we feature two classics: left, the E-Type Commemorative, presented by Jaguar Classic; and right, SABCC member **Noel Eagleson** (at the time the chairman of the Morris Minor Club, Northern Ireland Branch) with Mayor of Ards (No. Ireland), Councillor Alan McDowell, at the finish of the club's regional rally, ca. 1983.*

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**.*