

OFF SIDE



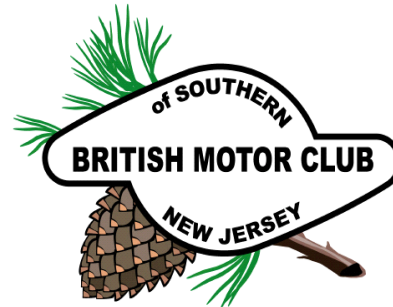
British Motor Club of Southern New Jersey

NEAR SIDE



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION
of THE BRITISH MOTOR CLUB
of SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY

January / February 2023
VOL. 33 ISSUE 01

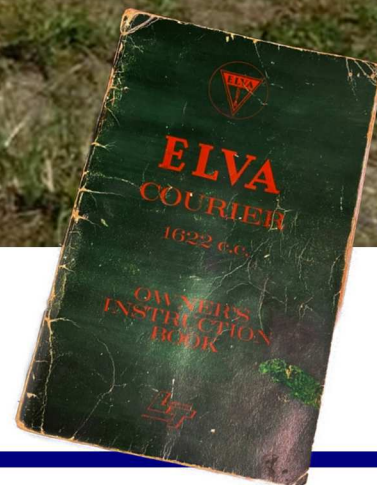


SHE GOES



BMC of SNJ Member Gary Cossaboon's Mk I Elva Courier

Also: Other British Car Events Calendar of the Northeast
Ah, The Memories, A Courier's long road back
A Mini History 100/154L, A49-year slumber, & More





BRITISH MOTOR CLUB
of
SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY



“Offside/Nearside” is the bi-monthly newsletter of the British Motor Club of Southern New Jersey (BMC), which was founded in 1992 to encourage the ownership, operation and preservation of British cars.

Membership is open to all owners of automobiles manufactured in Great Britain prior to 1996 and all owners of motorcycles manufactured in Great Britain prior to 1979.

The dues of \$15.00 per year, includes a subscription to “Offside/Nearside”. BMC is affiliated with the following organizations: MG Owners Club (MGOC); North American MGB Register (NAMGBR); North American MGA Register (NAMGAR); Vintage Triumph Register (VTR); Triumph Register of America (TRA).

BMC Meetings are generally held on the third Wednesday of each month in alternating locations to best reach our membership base.

Odd numbered months (January, March, May, July, September):
Seven Stars Diner 1890 Hurffville Rd, Sewell, NJ 08080

Even numbered months (February, April, June, August, October)
Uno Pizzeria & Grill, 2803 NJ 73, Maple Shade NJ 08052

Meetings are not planned for November or December due to holiday scheduling conflicts. Meetings typically begin at 7pm, with food service beginning at 6pm. Dates and times are subject to change, which will be communicated by email to club members.

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS

OFF SIDE / NEAR SIDE is YOUR Newsletter.

The Editors are always looking for new material.

No material / No Newsletter. Simple as that. Please submit British car related copy and especially personal experiences in your LBC for us to use in one of our six annual Newsletters. Project articles with pictures are really good.

PLEASE SEND NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE EDITOR :

Joe Marchione: editor@bmcsnj.org

Note: If you are emailing please leave a message on 609-272-9743 phone number so I’m sure to get it.

Thanks—Joe Marchione

PLEASE SEND FOR SALE, WANTED or FREE REQUESTS TO :

Ed Gaubert: mqgarage@comcast.net

Although we hope that these things are common sense, BMCSNJ has adopted the following policies and practices with respect to club sponsored events.

Membership meetings are sometimes held in restaurants that serve alcoholic beverages. We expect that members who choose to consume alcohol at these meetings will do so responsibly.

BMCSNJ supports safe and responsible enjoyment of British automobiles and motorcycles. All events sponsored by BMCSNJ are alcohol and drug free. Consumption or distribution of alcohol or controlled substances is expressly prohibited. All driving events are conducted in accordance with motor vehicle laws at all times.

This does not really represent a change to our prior policy or practice, it just documents it. If you have not been to one of our events before, come out and join us. You will be glad that you did.

>>>> DISCLAIMER!!! <<<<

Readers are warned that any attempt at mechanical or other modifications described herein is at their own risk. Good car mechanics results in pleasure; poor car mechanics results in, at best, a personal rebuild. The opinions expressed in the articles of this newsletter are not necessarily those of BMC, the editors or advertisers.

The editors take responsibility for any editorial mistakes or errors.

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The official BMCSNJ website can be
accessed at:
WWW.BMCSNJ.ORG

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Welcome to 2023!

I hope that you enjoyed the holiday season with your families and friends!

As time marches on, and on and on without fail, not only are we all getting older, but the cars that we all love are too. Our current database shows cars registered with the club from 1948 to present day. A car made in 1948 is now 75 years old! Even "later model" cars from the early 70's are over 50 years old. The amazing part is that the internet has transformed this worldwide hobby by allowing the exchange of limitless advice (some good and some not) and availability of parts to solve most any issue. There will always be less common cars and limited availability, but for the most part, supplies and knowledge are in ample supply. However, seeing cars on the computer monitor pales in comparison to experiencing them in real life. It is this enthusiasm and firsthand experience that makes a club like ours strong.

I am excited to get to work on events for 2023 and hope to continue with our traditional yearly events as well as adding some new ones. Since we have had the continued support of our members, our outstanding Board of Directors and support staff will carry on in 2023. The current BMC of SNJ leadership team is:

President - Steve Ferrante

Secretary - Tom Evans

Treasurer / Registrar - Brian Deam

Board Member/Former President - Ed Gaubert

Board Member / Resident Artist - Gary Warren

Newsletter Editor – Joe Marchione

Events Coordinator South – Tracy Westergard
(Gloucester, Salem, Cumberland and Cape May counties)

Events Coordinator North – John Stern
(Camden, Burlington, Atlantic and Ocean counties)

Rescue Squad Coordinator – Pete Cosmides

Website Coordinator – **THIS COULD BE YOU!**
LET ME KNOW!

We really are in need of someone with computer knowledge who can administer our website. If anyone has skills in this area, please step forward so that we can enhance what we have and move forward as we catch up with current technology. We are looking at software that will modernize how we run the club website and to make interaction with other club members easier.

Our calendar for our signature events for 2023 will be very similar to 2022. Our Memorial Gathering at Smithville, at least three tours, The British Car Owners Ice Cream Social and the Greenwich Show will all be repeated and my hope is to add another show/event in the northern region. I am also very hopeful that we can add a series of complementary informal gatherings led by club members. We will also make an effort to reduce schedule conflicts with other national and regional club events.

The success that we have enjoyed is a direct result of participation on all levels. From the Board Members and the Support Staff who lead the way to the event organizers and member participants, every group is needed for a positive end result.

Watch your email for an opportunity to purchase a shirt with an embroidered BMC of SNJ logo like the one shown in the picture. Ordering details will follow.



I look forward to seeing you all in 2023 as we all celebrate our 31st year and the 100th year anniversary of the MG!

Steve Ferrante
President, BMC of SNJ



SECRETARY'S SATCHEL

January / February 2023

by Tom Evans

Here it is again - Blwyddyn newydd dda – “Good New Year!”

2022 has now come and gone, WE ARE BACK!!!

So many events were restored this year and gratefully so. The monthly meetings have been growing in attendance, but we would like to see more members getting together at these meetings to reinforce our interest in our LBCs. We would also like to get back to having presentations on relevant topics, as we have done before, to inform and enlighten us on restoration and maintenance techniques. Speaking of maintenance techniques remember, we have the “Rescue Squad” that is there to help any member or acquaintance with simple repairs and maintenance to help keep their LBCs on the road. Please avail yourself of their services, they really enjoy doing it and you will benefit from it.

The calendar for 2023 is being built and preliminary information is in this issue of Off Side/Near Side but will be refined in time. Our staples will remain as will the monthly meetings starting on January 18th, 6PM dinner and 7PM meeting, at 7 Star Diner in Sewell. The schedule will remain the same for 2023, odd months in Sewell and even months in Maple Shade. If you have any contacts or suggestions for speakers or presentations contact Steve Ferrante or myself at our email address shown on this newsletter banner. I'm still using the Akso Noble spare USB battery.

Come out to the events in 2023, better yet, volunteer or pen a tour of your favorite area for us all to participate. Thanks again to all who have organized and attended last year's events. As we have said previously, it is important that we endeavor to promote the inclusion and growth of younger enthusiasts in classic restoration. This is vital to keeping the sport alive, invite them out to our meetings, gatherings and cruises, include them in your own rebuild, restoration, maintenance and repairs. They are out there; the auto tech schools are loaded with them.

See you on the road.

Happy Motoring
Tom Evans



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Treasurer/Registrar's Report
January / February 2023
Money Is No Object

by Brian Deam

Dear Members,

Happy New Year! We start 2023 in a very strong financial position and ready to fund all our initiatives for 2023. Presently we have 169 members, up 1 from November. You are our best marketing channel so keep spreading the word about our club.

January 1st is one of our two renewal dates and as of this date, 70% of those scheduled to renew have already done so. Thank you!! Two notices have been sent thus far and a third and final will be sent shortly. If you intend to renew, and we hope you do, please do so promptly. If you do not, please let us know that as well and why. Your feedback will help us improve the club.

Club dues remain at \$15/year (free if you volunteer to host an event) for which you receive six newsletters per year, access to our Facebook page and unlimited use of club supplied resources! Just a reminder that the Facebook page is for paying members and spouses only.

If you want to renew or if your membership has inadvertently lapsed, please send your payment using one of two methods:

- PayPal: sign on to www.PayPal.com and send your dues to "members@bmcsnj.org".
- Check: made payable to "British Motor Club of Southern NJ" and mailed to:

Brian Deam

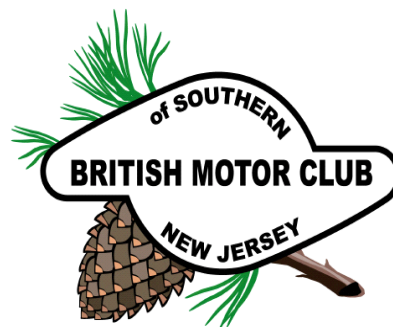
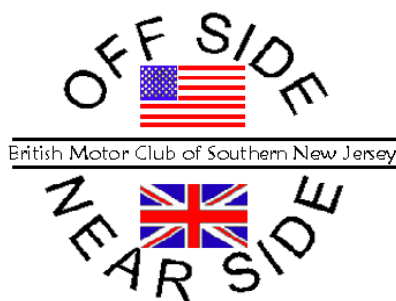
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Moorestown, NJ 08057

Again, thanks for your support and best wishes for a healthy and trouble free new year



<i>Welcome to our new and returning members:</i>		
Name	Town	Car
Dave Tomasso	Vineland	1972 TR6



The Editor Writes

Hello all from your editor.



Yep, Me again. Your club Editor. If you've seen the cover (and how could you miss it) then you couldn't help but notice BMC of SNJ member Gary Cossaboon's beautiful, and rather rare 1959 ELVA COURIER Mk. I. One of only 110 made by the Elva car manufacturer in the UK that produced very relevant sports and competition cars in the 1950s and 60s. Just *READ ALL ABOUT IT* in this first Newsletter of 2023.

Joe Marchione

So all that brings me back to:

SEEKING MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS !!!!!

I am soliciting member articles for the

March / April 2023 newsletter (and beyond)

LOOKING FOR ARTICLES ABOUT

YOUR CAR !!!!! How about THAT !

***And you can't hide because I know members who own one and two
so I expect some Action !!***



So, if you are an owner, present or past, or have a story about one of those wonderful British cars, or are even just an admirer, **please** consider sending in something about your car and you and your car's experiences together.

Could be how you found it, how you brought it back from the dead, how you love it, how you lost it — anything will do. Or just send a picture of you and your car! Doesn't have to be a big deal.

If you're interested please send any material to your Editor, at "editor@bmcsnj.org".

I'm asking now because our cutoff date for member articles is at least one month before the month of the newsletter. Meaning that to have your piece published in the March / April 2023 newsletter please get anything to me no later than **February 18th. 2023.**

**Although if I get it later I could still publish it in another later newsletter
so please don't hesitate !**

***** Also please consider contributing a member or project profile....Anytime !!***

A member profile lets our members know a little bit about you and your car.

Some excellent examples are John and Joyce with their 1950 MGY in January 2020's newsletter. Or Eric Sundberg and his MGA restoration and, our very own Club President, Steve Ferrante and his cars, both in July 2019's newsletter.

And there are many more member contributors in these newsletters.

You can find all these and more on our [BMCSNJ website at bmcsnj.org](http://bmcsnj.org).

So please consider putting together one about you and your car (cars?).

All I need is some pictures of you and your car and some text telling our club members a little about yourself. Doesn't have to be much.

Thanks, Joe Marchione



Attention BMC of SNJ Members!
I am happy to announce a new benefit available to the club!

The BMC of SNJ RESCUE SQUAD



Perhaps your British car is languishing in your garage due to a mechanical roadblock that you have encountered that has prevented you from enjoying your car.

We have harnessed the collective talent of several club members and are instituting a program that we call "BMC of SNJ Rescue Squad." Our goal is to provide volunteers to help you get your car back on the road. Short of routine maintenance and full restorations, we can help if you have a problem you can't overcome by sending a group of volunteers to your home garage and help you through the process.

Maybe you have a clutch or brake system that needs to be bled and you're struggling with the process. Or, perhaps your turn signals stopped working and you can't wind your way through the electrical diagram to make the repair. Maybe your car ran when parked and doesn't want to start now. Let us know and we will do all we can to arrange for the help you need.

This will provide some fun, social interaction and productive garage time for all parties involved. Refreshments are optional!

One of our original BMC members, Pete Cosmides has offered to get this program off the ground.

So, if you need some help, please contact Pete and he will determine if we can be of assistance. Pete can be reached by email at tundramgb@hotmail.com

By the way, if you want to get involved with the Rescue Squad, you can let Pete know that as well. You don't need to be an expert, but perhaps you have mastered certain mechanical aspects that will come in handy to others under the right circumstances.

Steve Ferrante
President, BMC of SNJ
president@bmcsnj.org





Image used with permission, DCTownsend—sportsscarart.com

I have always been attracted to Britain's automobile designer/entrepreneurs of the 1950s and 60s who, frustrated and bored with the same ol' same ol' stuffy automotive offerings from the era's establishment manufacturers, decided to change the way things were done. After fending off a major technical powerhouse like Germany there were many British car and racing enthusiasts in postwar England bursting with winning attitude. Military trained engineers with mechanical ability who looked around at what was offered and thought – I can do that and do it better. Make it faster, handle better, and do it on three wheels ! (Well actually, that only worked best for those Morgan guys.) They might coerce a friend or two, and a couple of others, and with sheer enthusiasm, build something from their imagination in their girlfriend's father's garage (Lotus creator Colin Chapman was good at that) and create a real racing machine or sporty road car capable of competing with, and *beating* some of the world's finest marques !



One such enthusiast who, after a spirited drive in a friend's Morgan, wanted to build and race a car himself, was Frank Nichols. Nichols served in the British army during WWII where he learned vehicle mechanics. A veteran of Dunkirk, and the North African campaign including the battle of El Alamein, Nichols had been severely injured and nearly paralyzed for two years. Ironically his brother, John was also injured in the war and the two were sent to South Africa to convalesce. Frank put this time to good use by reading all manner of automotive books and magazines with the intention of using this knowledge to enter the business upon his return.

With money he received from the military following the war, he opened a small garage in 1947 in Westham near Bexhill. He offered repairs, used car sales, and within a few years with the garage succeeding, (and following that ride behind the wheel of his friend's Morgan,) he had enough surplus to start playing around with racing.

In late 1953, he commissioned a "Special", designed and constructed by his friend, Mike Chapman in nearby Hastings, and while it was being built, bought a secondhand Lotus VI with which to gain some experience. The CSM Special which was delivered late in 1954, was a typical Special of its time. This little sports racing car could ex



The CMS SPECIAL

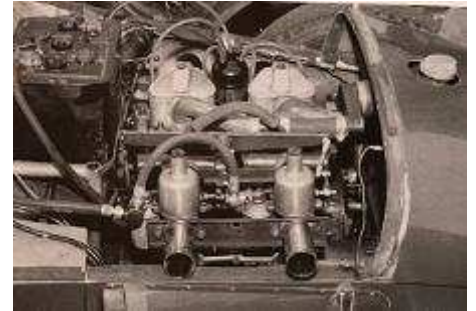
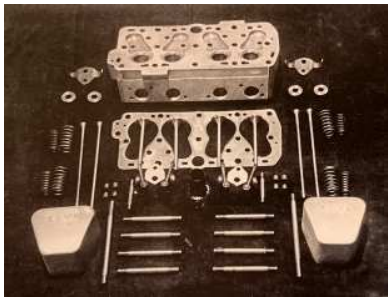
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ceed 100 mph and was powered by a Ford 10 engine in a space frame multi-tubular chassis. It was sheathed in a simple aluminum body styled along Lotus VI lines with an independent front end (split Ford axle) and a coil spring-suspended beam rear end located by a Panhard rod. In the search for extra performance and knowing that he could make improvements, a frame was built up ... without any drawings .. those were the days, and the transmission was via Buckler close ratio gears.

Frank and his mechanic had designed an overhead conversion for the Ford engine, which lowered displacement down from 1,172 cc to 1,100 cc, and fitted it with a special camshaft. This conversion contributed to the great success of the CMS. It gave an increase of up to 90% in power output, depending on the degree of tuning, and several modified Ford saloons and a Thames van (?!) were raced with considerable success..



Frank's driving style was very much a "blood and guts" approach, with the throttle either fully open or shut. There was nothing in between, no subtlety. It was a technique which did not lend itself to wet conditions which, not surprisingly, Nichols hated. A shrewd man, Nichols soon lent his car to John Bolster who wrote glowingly about it in Autosport, mentioning the possibility of replicas to be sold in kit form for around 500£s. This upset Lotus' Colin Chapman who threatened to sue for infringement of copyright on the grounds that the car used a space frame similar to his Lotus design. Frank's reply was roughly translated. "Seek ye the sage and the onion" (editor: or as I once heard, "Bugger Off ya Bas***d !")



Lotus Mk VI



Colin Chapman

The idea of the space frame had anyway, been around for quite some time, though it has to be said that the CSM did bear a resemblance to a Lotus VI except that it used a torque tube. (It's interesting that Frank and Colin Chapman later became good friends collaborating on a number of projects).

On one occasion, Nichols beat Colin Chapman at Brands Hatch and Chapman came up to ask what the secret of the engine was, "If I told you wouldn't believe me," came the reply, "but I'm not going to tell you." Nichol's response was not only the guarding of a trade secret, there was just a touch of the *shamed face* there too, for he had raised the compression ratio to giddy heights by heating up the cylinder head and melting two brazing rods into each combustion chamber. It's the sort of crude blacksmith approach one wouldn't want to admit to.

With operations going so well, it was decided to design another car, conceived by Nichols and Malcolm Witts, with Bill Murphy assisting with the bodywork. The car would be a useful showpiece

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for an engine conversion Witts, Frank's mechanic, suggested making. This overhead inlet valve/side exhaust valve head gave 65 bhp at 5.700 rpm when fitted with twin SUs and Nichols saw commercial possibilities. Racing the new car could drum up orders for the head - to sell heads - to make money - to build more cars to race. Sounds like a win - win. The success of his vehicle soon attracted the attention of like-minded enthusiasts who requested that further cars be built. Allegedly, while at a track testing their new machine, Jim Murphy, the brother of Dr. Bill Murphy, a friend of Frank's exclaimed "Elle Va" ! French for "she goes". Frank thought, right you are and thus "ELVA Sports Racing Cars" was born and soon began to "go" from success to success.



ELVA Mk II Sports Racer

supply a neat but crudely styled aluminum body. They soon caught the attention of racing driver, Chuck Dietrich in the U.S., and following his excellent results with the Elva Mark II, (Elva's sports racer not to be confused with the later Courier Mk. II) a large number of orders were received from America.

In the best traditions of the Fifties, Frank was testing his car in chassis form at Brands Hatch when an onlooker asked if he could perhaps buy one. With the first sale the "Special Builder" becomes a "Constructor" and so it was that the Elva Engineering Co Ltd was formed. The rolling chassis, less engine, gearbox and body, cost 350£s. The works could, for a price,



This is the alloy prototype built at London Road Garage, the Elva 1954 start with sportracers.



ELVA COURIER First Show Car. Note "script" Elva nose badge and trafficator

As demand continued to increase, Elva Cars expanded into larger factories in the Bexhill and Hastings area. Most of the production of Elva's various models were destined for the U.S., and it was Elva's US importer, Walter R. Dickson who suggested that Elva produce a road going car to take advantage of America's growing interest in British sports cars like the MGAs and TRs that could be driven around town during the week and raced at the track on weekends.

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Elle Commence (She Begins)

And so, it was in 1957 that Nicholas made the decision to build a sports car, which was very ambitious given that Elva was only in its third year of existence. This became the ultimate responsibility of Peter Knott, introduced to Nichols by Archie Scott-Brown. Knott stayed with Elva for only a short time and the Courier was his only design for the company. Frank said, "The Courier was conceived as a car for the road which could also take part in competitions and the ideal customer would

have a *weatherproof head* and a *pneumatic bum !!*"

Walter Dickson who owned Continental Motors, Ltd., a US importer for Elva Sports Racers, ordered 30 cars and his installment payments allowed the car to be built and developed. Frank said, "Dickson later ran into financial difficulties and his problems affected us badly but I have to say that for a long time he



did very well for us." How this did affect Elva will be explained later but following those first 30 cars over 80% of all Courier production was to be sent over the water. But not to Dickson. A new factory was opened in Hastings to produce the Couriers which first appeared on the circuits in 1958. The Courier was an instant success and was soon winning racing on both sides of the Atlantic.




The Courier was a simple, light car which featured a tubular steel ladder-type chassis, was fitted with the 1489cc BMC Series "B" engine, also used in the MGA, and was tuned to give 72 bhp against the 68 bhp of the MGA, which weighed 500 lbs. more. The Elva was therefore significantly quicker than the MGA. Both topped out at 98 mph, but the Elva could do 0-60 mph in about nine seconds, two seconds faster than the MGA.

The Courier handled well and was sold in the states for an initial price of about \$1500 USD. While the prototype had an aluminum body, production cars had one made of fiberglass. Split windscreens were featured on the first 110 cars (confirmed by registry and photo proof). All cars had an Elva produced wishbone with coil springs independent front suspension. The rear end was the Riley 1.5 beam axle, located by radius arms and a Panhard rod.



One well-known American racing driver later wrote that his Courier was perfectly balanced with neutral steering – four-wheel drifts could be set up and maintained with ease. The only modification made to the chassis specification on his car was to put appropriate degrees of negative camber into the front wheels; indeed, the SCCA eventually had to modify its class structure to move the Courier up to compete against bigger-engined cars. It has to be said, though, that the Courier faced little in the way of real opposition in its class. Due to its success in the U.S., the Courier was moved up into the E-production class to compete against MG Twin-cams, Porsche Supers etc.

Mr. Nice

One cannot talk about the Courier in competition here in the United States (*especially* as a member of The British Car Club of Southern New Jersey) without remembering the most successful Courier Driver to come out of Summit, New Jersey USA, **Mark Donohue !** 

Elva Couriers were Mark's racing machine of choice in his early racing career and that beautiful



Mark Donohue and his Courier



combination of lightness, balance, and some magic known only to Mark as his "Unfair Advantage" helped Mark to, in 1961 win the 1960-1961 Sports Car Club of America E-Production National Championships with an Elva Courier. Nicknamed "Captain Nice, and later "Dark Monohue," Mark was not only a accomplished race car driver but also a 1959 graduate of Brown University with a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering. This contributed to Mark's ability to set up his own race car as well as driving it to victories, and was what he called his "*unfair advantage*". ("Unfair Advantage" later became the name of a book about Donohue's racing career.

At the age of twenty-two, while a senior at Brown, Donohue began racing his 1957 Corvette. He won the first event he entered, a hillclimb in Belknap County, New Hampshire. And while the Summit, New Jersey, resident began racing with a 1957 Corvette, he went on to race not only Elva Couriers, but at least a dozen of the world's most spectacular cars and became the No. 1 driver for Penske Racing, a team owned by fellow EMPA Hall of Fame member Roger Penske. Penske Racing was – and still is – one of the most dominant teams in the history of motorsports.

A tragic turn

In 1975 Mark was driving a March Formula one car for the Roger Penske's racing team. At the Austrian Grand Prix, Donohue's career, along with Formula One aspirations, took a tragic turn. During a practice session for the race, Donohue lost control of his March after a tire failed, sending him into the catch fencing at the fastest corner on the track. Vöest Hügel Kurve, a track marshal was killed by debris from the accident, but Donohue did not appear to be injured significantly after hitting his head in the accident. A headache resulted, however, and worsened. After going to the hospital the next day, Donohue lapsed into a coma from a cerebral hemorrhage and died. He was survived by his wife and two sons from his first marriage. Donohue is buried at St. Teresa Cemetery in Summit, New Jersey.



Vineland, NJ speedway movie, July 24, 1960 start ... six of the first 8 on FP grid were Couriers, with Donohue on pole !!

By the end of 1959 nearly fifty cars had been sent to the U.S. and further cars were being produced at the rate of three per week, being very much hand built. Some modifications were made at the beginning of 1960, the most obvious being the one-piece windscreen, together with a revised dashboard layout. At this time, the Courier also became available on the home UK market. Cars could be obtained there in kit form, thus saving the purchase tax of those days. The body/chassis unit was supplied complete with lights, interior trim, all electrical wiring done and the instruments and battery in place. All that required fitting were the suspension units, rear axle and, of course, the engine and gearbox. Generally, it was a simple matter of doing up a few nuts and bolts, and the car was on the road ready to go in about eighteen hours.



One version of the Courier built at Hastings was a lightweight racer called the Spyder. It used a lighter fiberglass body and modifications were made to the chassis and suspension – it was also fitted with Elva mag. alloy wheels and Alfin brake drums.

Elva also had in mind a coupe version of the Courier, and towards the end of 1960 a hard top car was built. This car featured independent rear suspension with inboard rear drum brakes, discs on the front, and was the prototype for the next generation of Couriers. Unfortunately, this was not to happen.



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Servicing All Makes and Models of Foreign Cars



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It was as easy to convince someone in 1959, as it is today, that there is a deal they shouldn't - couldn't resist. Such was the case with a US importer named Walter Dickson. His Washington DC business, Continental Motors, Ltd, was established in the spring of 1957, and within a year added Elva to its line of imported cars. Dickson had developed a relationship with Frank Nichols based on importing his racing machines and, as such, had planted a seed in Frank's mind about producing the Courier as a staple for the Elva company. After all, the British sportscar market was exploding in the US and gaining sales steadily. In anticipation of playing a significant role in setting up the Courier franchise in the US, Dickson established a company, Elva Imports, Ltd. in August 1959 as a distributor for the roadster. Many deals in history have been secured on a handshake and it seemed that Nichols was convinced enough with Dickson's honesty, to start the process of gearing up to produce the Courier in exportable numbers. Why would he worry about Dickson's promise to pay for all the Couriers up front? The only problem was that Dickson had no reserves to make these payments. Continental Motors was a shoestring flim-flam operation all along. Dickson would always come up short when making payments back to England, which were due whenever the cars docked in the US. Despite trying to keep things in a whirlwind of shams and financial chaos, the banks and the law finally caught up with him and his schemes. On 03 November 1959, United States Marshals and eight private detectives seized 39 automobiles from the lot of Continental Motors, Ltd, at 1401 Rhode Island Avenue, NE, Washington, DC. They were also

searching for an additional 48 automobiles which were once on the Continental lot. The seizure was based on debt by Continental of more than \$167,000 to an export-import firm in New York City. In November of 1960, Walter R. Dickson was indicted by a specially convened grand jury of \$200,000 fraud. The gist of the indictment was that Dickson had borrowed money to purchase inventory of autos and sold the autos to customers without paying the original lender for each of the cars sold. By failing to notify the purchasers of the continuing encumbrances against their cars, the customers lost title to "their" cars to the original lender of moneys to Dickson. Dickson was finally convicted on 27 of 40 counts of forgery, fraud, and embezzlement. Additional cars had found their way to a California distributor and dockside in Baltimore. All in both locations were seized.

MEANWHILE

Meanwhile, Elva was having terrific success with their Sports Racer track cars. Always one to spot a trend, it was in mid-1959 that Nicholas had Elva build an FJ (Formula Junior) car before any of his rivals. Elva's FJ was a slim, front engine car with Lockheed drum brakes (outboard at the front, inboard at the rear), coil spring and wishbone front suspension and independent rear suspension with lower single arms, fixed-length drive shafts and trailing radius arms. Initially a tuned BMC Series "A" engine was fitted driven through a four-speed BMC gearbox. On September 6, 1959, at Cadours, France, against the best Continental opposition, Bill de Selincourt scored a memorable victory in his Elva FJ. Then at Brands Hatch on October 4th, Mike McKee, De Selincourt, Chris Lawrence and Peter Jopp took the top four places in the first British race to be organized specifically for FJ cars.



On September 6, 1959, at Cadours, France, against the best Continental opposition, Bill de Selincourt scored a memorable victory in his Elva FJ. Then at Brands Hatch on October 4th, Mike McKee, De Selincourt, Chris Lawrence and Peter Jopp took the top four places in the first British race to be organized specifically for FJ cars.

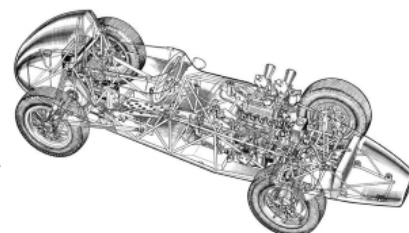


The big event of the year, though, was the Boxing Day* Brands Hatch meeting with new cars from Lotus, Cooper, Lola and Gemini, driven by Jim Clark in his first single-seater race. Peter Arundell and Chris Threlfall in the Elva works cars both had Mitter-tuned three-cylinder two-stroke DKW units



that were powerful but temperamental. The new cars from Lotus, Lola and Cooper all had teething troubles and Arundell won easily with Threlfall in third place. The most important race to win is always the last one of a season and as a result, Elva received an astonishing number of orders. Some have written that as many as 150 FJ's were produced but the Elva Owner's Club believes that 69 is the more likely figure.

Across the Pond, though, Charlie Kolb's Elva-BMC swept all before it and became perhaps the most successful Elva built. Although it was clear that the rear-engine revolution had arrived, Elva was so busy fulfilling its orders that it was quite late in the year before the second-generation Elva FJ car made its debut.



This was in the British Empire Trophy at Silverstone on October 1st. In appalling conditions, Chuck Dietrich, on his first visit to the circuit, brought his BMC- powered car home behind the Lotus-Fords of Henry Taylor and Peter Arundell, beating the likes of Trevor Taylor and Denny Hulme.

By the end of 1960 Elva was producing an average of four to five cars a week with Couriers accounting for around three quarters of the sales, and with the rest being divided between the FJ car and the MkV Sports-Racer. Most were going to the states and Frank became a regular trans-Atlantic commuter.



Unfortunately, back in England, Nichols was advised that due to the American importer Walter Dickson, **being jailed (!)**, Elva was not to receive payment for a number of cars previously shipped, including some in transit. This was needless to say, a major problem. So bad in fact that Elva was forced into voluntary liquidation, which was almost the end for the Courier.

Nichols however had already produced a prototype Courier Mk II which had already been displayed at the London Auto Show. A few Courier Mk IIs even went into production before the Dickson debacle and

at least one special coupe based on the Mk. II roadster type was built, featuring a reverse-rake window.



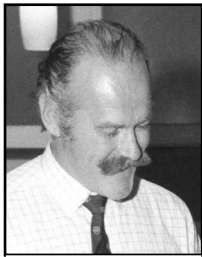
TO THE RESCUE

Fortunately, Elva's chances of remaining alive began looking better when, with financial backing from Carl Haas and others, Frank was able to set up "Elva Cars Ltd." for production of the Sports Racer track cars. The Courier project including all the jigs and molding tools, were sold to Messrs Trojan of Croydon, which was trying to diversify it's product line.



Two classic vintage models in one shot! June Palmer posing on the roof of a vintage Elva Courier out in the countryside, just outside Biggin Hill. At the time this shot was taken Biggin Hill was in Kent, UK, but now sits in the London Borough of Bromley.

Enter The TROJANS (She Goes ... and Continues !)



Peter Agg

Trojan Ltd. was a manufacturer of trucks and vans until war broke out, and during hostilities made bomb racks and parachute containers. With peace, van production restarted and in 1959, the company was bought by Peter Agg. Two years later, the firm returned to car production with the German-licensed Heinkel three-wheeled "bubble" car and then with the Elva Courier sports car.



Heinkel, one of the leading German aircraft manufacturers, was

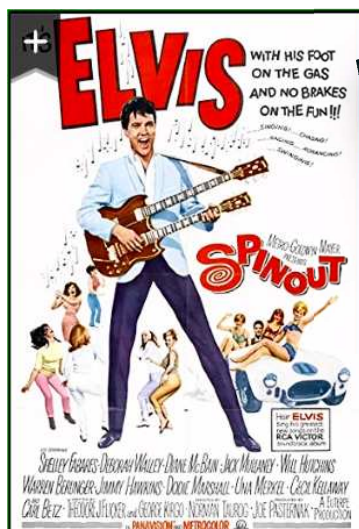


like Messerschmitt after the war, forced to find other activities to run its factories. In 1956 he built a small car that was inspired by the Isetta, but more technically advanced, with, in particular, the adoption of a four-stroke engine. This car sold well, but did not do well economically. In 1958, Heinkel closed the German



Trojan's 200

factory from which 11,975 vehicles had been produced, and transferred the assembly line to Ireland, where another 6,486 microcars were assembled. But the Irish Heinkel had many flaws, and the image of this car was tarnished. In 1961, Trojan bought the Irish site from Heinkel , as well as the assembly line, a hundred finished cars and a stock of parts. Production of the Trojan 200 began in the summer of 1961, and lasted until 1964, with another 6,187 built. The company acquired the rights to build the Elva Courier sports car in 1962, producing 210 cars between 1962 and 1965 when production switched from road cars to the **McLaren-Elva racing car.**



NOT McLaren-Elva



McLaren-Elva

One of the very few films that show a Cheetah sports car being raced. Bill Thomas' Cheetah was an extremely rare sports car that was designed to compete against Carroll Shelby's Cobra. Additionally, the "Fox Five" was actually a **McLaren Elva**. Being able to watch these cars in action is almost worth the price of admission.

FUN FACT

When Mike McCoy (Elvis Presley) crashes his white AC Cobra into the water it suddenly changes into a Mistral bodied Austin-Healey.

El Va again, But

In September 1962, Trojan publicly announced that the Courier was **back in production** after a break of several months following their takeover. As previously said Trojan's main products before taking on Elva were trucks, vans, scooters, a few military items and the bubble car. Although the Courier was back, Trojan's lack of experience with competition sports cars was not without consequence. The Courier Mk III was complex to produce, and as produced by Trojan, a much lower performer than the Mk II. Unfortunately, that race proven experience which had been so apparent in the Courier's earlier models somehow had vanished and the '63 couriers had far from a happy press reception with many criticisms regarding poor handling and the bad finish of the launch cars. Originally the most amazing handling car in it's class (and others classes as well) had now become impossible to control sliding off the curves and spinning badly at the least provocation !

One of the most important characteristics of the Courier Mk I and Mk II design was the 50/50 weight balance which made them particularly stable . This was achieved by placing the motor including bellhousing and transmission further aft on the chassis, effecting the space in the cockpit. The disadvantage was less room for the passenger and an odd driving position. With a large amount of the footwells now taken, the driver and passenger were forced to face slightly towards the outboard wings (fenders). It was a bit of a trick for the driver to keep their feet from knocking (or locking) together while trying to navigate the pedals. One driver mentioned that you better put on your "skinny" shoes if you expected to make clean shifts.



Cramped? Lot's of "legroom" in the boot

The cramped conditions were pointed out in one of the sportscar magazine reviews at the time of the Courier's release. Trojan took this criticism a bit too seriously. Having more experience with Vans and scooters than racing cars they figured that the easiest way to solve that problem was to just move the engine forward. This would allowing more leg room and a smaller transmission tunnel. Easy-peazy. Can't hurt – Right ? Wrong !! Gone was the superb 50/50 balance and the Couriers fantastic handling. In this difficult context, Nichols was called in to the rescue Trojan and help educate them in the art of balancing the Courier Mk IV's new style and convenience advantage in the marketplace and still maintain it's competitive advantage on the racetrack. Frank of course told them to move the bloody engine back where it belonged. And they did - and it worked.

1963 and Four New Models

The 1963 models, launched at the Royal Automobile's Country Club in Woodcote Park, were to be produced at a rate of at least ten per week and consisted of the Mk III roadster at 965£ (kit form 716£), the new Mk III coupe with Ford Anglia type reverse angled rear screen, the Mk IV roadster with independent suspension, and lastly, the Mk IV coupe with I.R.S and a streamlined fast-back was previewed, although very few were actually produced.



In an effort to provide the Courier with such creature features that would give the occupants at least some modicum of comfort (and dryness), the Courier Mk IV was designed using Triumph Spitfire doors, with *real roll down windows* that replaced the small side curtains of the earlier Mk I thru III.



All of the new cars were to be built with a revised box-section chassis of Trojan design and were initially fitted with the 1622cc MGA engine. The Mk IV later borrowed its 4-cylinder 1800 cm3 from the MGB. However a number of the original tubular chassis had been moved from Elva's Hastings location to Trojan's works in Croydon and the first 25 cars sold were built on these chassis, while a further three tubular all-independent coupes were built at a later date using the Hastings design.

Courier Mk III - *The Young People's Sportscar of the FUTURE!*

Detail differences on the Mk III included an air scoop on the bonnet which were not on the Mk II. Options listed in October 1962 included wire wheels, rear disc brakes and independent rear suspension, all at 148 pounds extra! When the box-section chassis made its appearance, it used suspension and steering components from the Triumph Vitesse while the independent rear suspension models used Salisbury components. It was also anticipated that the then, newly announced, 1800cc MGB engine would be offered, and the U.S. market would be tempted with a ful-



ly equipped roadster and a race-trim lightweight model.

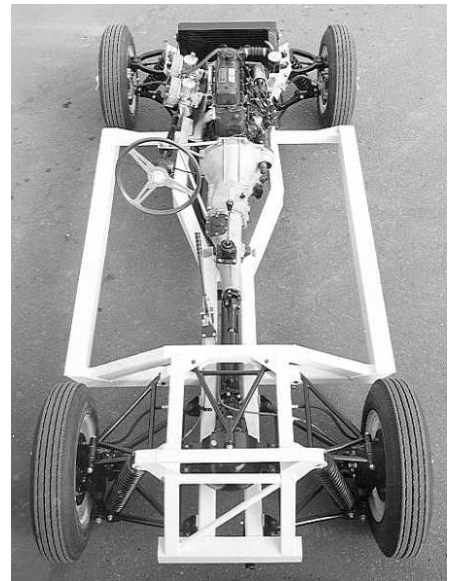
A press release issued at the time of the Trojan launch of their latest Couriers stated that young people were looking for a car of known engine quality with a coach-built sports body giving maximum power to weight ratio with a top speed equal to cars costing perhaps three times the price and on that basis, the Elva Courier was therefore a car with a future. By April '63, 80 cars were on the order books! The future looked rather bright.





Following the lead from Hastings, it became obvious that an all independent Courier roadster was the next step. Thus the modified and strengthened box-section chassis, incorporating the new 'Tru-track' suspension was drawn up. When this chassis, termed the 'T' Type made it's appearance, it used front suspension and steering components from the Triumph Vitesse and independent rear suspension common to the TVR models of the day.

The updated Mk IVs differed from the standard Mk IV in having the Tru-Track independent rear suspension and more powerful brakes (10 3/4" discs in front). Visually, it was distinguished by an updated body design which featured a large cockpit, a restyled bonnet and a large boot. Engine options included 1800 MGB or the 1500 Cortina GT, and all versions were still available in kit form with an engine power range from 60 to 140 bhp. The earlier Mk III was also continued, and in standard from the roadsters would reach 0-60 in 8 seconds. A wide range of accessories were available for all models. It was claimed at the time the Courier was the only 100mph two-seater with all independent suspension available in the UK for under 1000 £s.



Modified and strengthened box-section chassis, incorporating the new 'Tru-Track' suspension termed the 'T' Type



Left: Connie Schuchard's Courier Mk IV 'T' Type, Ford Cortina 1500 powered, four wheel discs, and new 'Tru-Track' suspension, built for the London Earls Court Auto Show.
Right: One of two Courier Mk IVs owned by Fred Schuchard, also 'Tru-Track' but MGB 1800 powered.

(Continued from page 21)

BMW mid-engined GT 160



Following Trojan's purchase of the Courier line, Frank continued to produce superbly competitive sports racing cars within a reformed company. The Gem that he hoped would revive the brand was a beautiful BMW mid-engined GT 160 coupe at the 1964 Turin Motor Show. The reason it was launched in Italy was that the car was styled and bodied by local *carrozzeria* Fissore.

Dubbed the GT160, it was effectively a coupe version of the successful Mk VII sports racer.



Accordingly, the GT160 was built around a spaceframe chassis with independent suspension on all four corners. Like most of the Mk VII's, the production car featured a BMW-sourced two-litre, four-cylinder engine. Further developed by Nerus engineering with the help of BMW, it produced around 185 bhp. Mated to a Hewland five-speed gearbox, it was

mounted longitudinally ahead of the rear axle. This one was aimed at a much more upscale market than the Courier. But with a cost price too high, the car was produced in only three copies.

Production of the Elva Mk 4 was taken over by Ken Sheppard, who assembled the last thirty-eight in the Trojan factory in Croydon.

After a few seasons in Formula 5000, Trojan entered F1 in 1974. A new team called Trojan Tauranac Racing started six Grands Prix, with a best result of tenth place. The adventure ended before the end of the season, due to lack of budget. Elva's racing endeavors also were eventually taken over by Trojan.



1964 - Ken Sheppard T-Types. A new Sebring Elva ? Tony Ellis and the Elva 3000 of 1968 ? Or maybe not.

In January 1964 a new Sebring Elva was shown at the Racing Car Show which had an even better power to weight ratio, being built on a lightened chassis with a thinner glass fiber body. It featured a limited slip differential and magnesium wheels. However, Trojan was becoming less enamored with the Courier as they were moving towards the link-up with McLaren-Elva sports racers. In October 1965, production of the Courier was transferred to Ken Sheppard Customized Sports Cars Ltd. Of Shenley, Herts. Ken was to concentrate on the Mk IV T-Type 1800 for export.



The home market was to be under the care of Tony Ellis (Sports Cars) Ltd. of Eton Wick, Berkshire, and he was to handle the sales/service of all Couriers from the Mk I through to the Mk IV. Tony made valiant efforts to promote Courier sales, one being a Mk IV T-Type fitted with a Minnow Turbocharger, but perhaps the best being the Elva 3000 of 1968, a car designed with the American market in mind.



ELVA

*a fast smart pace maker
with Tru-Trak independent
rear suspension*



This car was an almost completely re-designed Mk IV coupe fitted with the Ford V6 3-litre engine. Its performance was described as shattering – once again that traditional Elva roadholding had been achieved in a car with a top speed of 125 mph and 0-60 in 6.5 seconds.

The sad thing was that the necessary finance never materialized for production of the exciting Elva 3000, and only the one car was ever built.

After all these attempts to revamp, remake and revive the brand, Ken Sheppard had just about run out of energy and enthusiasm, and thus in 1969 the Elva name finally sank without trace, taking the Courier with it. Though it was an untidy end, several hundred Couriers had been built, and they're assured of becoming even more collectable as the years go by.

The first 110 Couriers were Mk.1 cars (1500cc) proven by the Elva Registry and 184 Mk.II Couriers were produced adding up 94 export units (chassis #100/xxx series). 65 UK cars and "kits", (chassis #200/xxx series) and the 25 TROJAN practice builds from Hastings spare parts add to the total.

In the end, records show that just 210 were to emerge from Trojan's Croydon works over the next four years - 28 tubular chassis (including three IRS cars), 116 box-section chassis with beam axles (Mk III and IV), and 66 all-independent Mk IV 'T' Types. This figure also includes four 'Sebring' Couriers, introduced at the 1964 Racing Car Show in an attempt to put the Courier back on the motor sport map.

It appears that apart from high performance models, 104 Trojan couriers were sold with 1622cc MGA units, 94 with 1800cc MGB units, and just eight with the 1500GT Ford engines. There were 175 roadsters and 35 coupes and of those, 152 were left hand drive.



Frank Nichols in Ray Hoepers very early 100-6-L at some car show they both attended.
Frank told Ray that Ray's Courier was the most original one he'd seen and signed the glove-box for him. Cool !
*note trafficator



And now more words from Joe.

I have to end this piece by saying, as a former Courier owner and being associated with a number of others belonging to family members, friends and BMC of SNJ members, the Elva Courier was, (is) just a wonderful little car. Just a fun, quick, quirky, and very complete ride. The very definition of the LBC (little British sports car). It's really incredible that for such a limited production car there were so many in our South Jersey club. I was fortunate to own a Elva Courier Mk. IV, MGA 1500 powered with a stiff axle (E1101) that my sister Connie originally owned. I inherited that car when she bought a ' T' Type, Cortina Powered, IRS, discs all round, Mk IV (the London Earls Court show car), Brother-in-law Fred Schuchard owned two different Courier IV 'T' Types MGB powered, (One the Turin, Italy auto show car), my best friend Buddy Smead in Vineland showed up one day with a Blue Mk I split windshield car. Another great friend, Al Chacote in Vermont (and soon to be club member) owns (since 1962), a white (with a wrap-around racing stripe) MGA powered Mk II, club members, Skip Lustig owns one of Fred's MGB Mk. IV 'T' Types which he restored beautifully BRG, Carl Schwab with a very unusual Mk III that was converted from it's MGA race engine & trans which were replaced by a 1974 Alfa Romeo 2 liter & 5 speed, and Gary Cossaboon's beautifully restored white split-window Mk I that has the smoothest, flawless fiberglass work I've ever seen. And more but gotta wrap this up.

Thank you Frank Nichols for creating this fun and fantastic sportscar, the Elva Courier .
Joe Marchione



If you're interested in more Elva information I can highly recommend Janos Wimpffen's definitive history, "ELVA, The Cars, The People, The History".

Editor: Below is a piece that Fred Schuchard wrote for our newsletter some years ago about his time at Ed Roth's foreign sales and service. One of the few places who took on the Elva line.

Ah, the memories!

By Fred Schuchard

I began work at Ed Roth & Son sometime in 1963. Initially, it was a part time job in the sales department - my full time job was at the DuPont Company, specifically the Eastern Laboratory Division, in Gibbstown, NJ.

Ed Roth & Son was a small 'mom & pop' imported car dealer located in Glassboro, NJ, a growing college town in southern New Jersey about an hour's drive from Philadelphia, PA. The founder, Ed Roth, had passed away a few years before I was hired. His son, Val Roth was running the business.

Ed Roth & Son was originally a Packard dealership and had a loyal following of customers throughout the Gloucester County area. Sometime in the early 1950s, Ed Roth was attending the NY Automobile Show and was attracted to the MGTD on exhibit there. He made arrangements to purchase a car and become a franchised dealer (under J. S. Inskip, an east coast distributor headquartered in Manhattan) at his Glassboro location. As a result, he was one of the earliest British car dealers in the country. By the time I started work there in 1963, Ed Roth had died, the Packard cars were out of production, and Ed Roth & Son was a thriving British Motor Corporation (BMC), Alfa Romeo, and SAAB dealership under Val Roth's leadership. Within a few years he also acquired the Morgan, Elva, Lotus, Datsun (Nissan), and Honda motorcycle franchises. We were not a large agency but we sold a wide variety of vehicles!

Elva connection

Now begins my Elva connection. During the summer of 1964 a beautiful silver Mk.IV T-Type Elva Courier pulled into the agency. It was driven by Fred Opert. I was familiar with earlier Elva Couriers from my many weekends spent at area racing circuits attending SCCA races both as a spectator and as pit crew. The famous 'duets' between Mark Donahue and Jay Signore in their Elva Couriers were legendary. Racing at its best.

Fred Opert



Fred Opert introduced himself as the area sales representative for Elva cars under the auspices of Carl Haas of Chicago, IL. He was visiting the local imported car dealers hopefully to establish an Elva franchise at one of them. Our entire staff poured out of our showroom and shop to see the car. A lot of us took test drives, including Val Roth. We decided to become a dealer and ordered our first car.

Val picked up the Elva at the docks in NYC. It was a white Mk.IV with a black interior. The top and tonneau cover were black vinyl. This car was not a T-Series like the silver demo driven by Fred Opert. It had a solid rear axle and a 1622cc MGA Mk.2 engine and transmission. After detailing it, we placed it in our showroom.



Fred Schuchard's future Courier >>> A T-type, all disc, MGB, IRS Mk-IV. The Turin Italy Auto Show car.



The word spread fast that we were an Elva dealer. One afternoon a young teen aged boy visited our showroom on his way back from school in Philadelphia to Vineland, NJ, his home town. He was familiar with Elvas and learned through the grapevine that we had one on display. I was on duty that day and answered all of his questions. He said that his sister had owned a Triumph TR-3 in the past and was looking to buy another sports car. She had already test driven a new Triumph Spitfire but he thought the Elva might interest her. He left his telephone number and I called the next day to set up an appointment. This chance encounter became a turning point in my life.

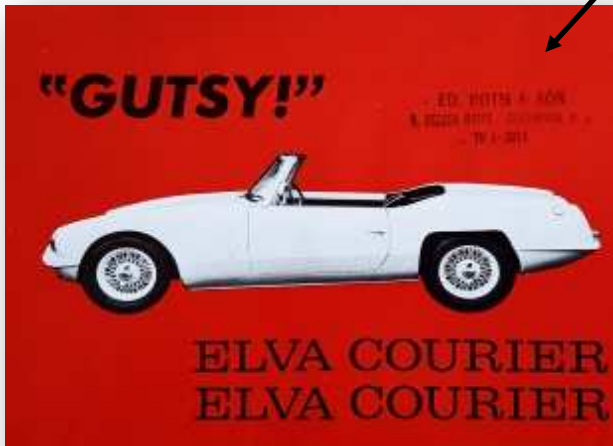
The young boy in question was none other than Joe Marchione. His sister, Connie liked this car and bought it. I also liked her and asked her to go to the NY Automobile Show with me. This we did and the rest, as they say, is history. We have been married 56 years. Fred Schuchard

Connie Schuchard's second (!) Courier. A T-type, all disc, Cortina powered, IRS Mk-IV at the Cherry Hill NJ Mall.



Left to Right: Steve Roth, Fred Schuchard, Marc Greisler, Joe Marchione, and a cute girl Joe convinced to sit in the car

<<< Editor Joe: On the left is one of Fred's original Elva Courier sales brochures stamped by Fred himself. I actually found this on Ebay !!



(Editor Joe) * Look closely at the stamp on the upper left of the brochure. An ED ROTH & SON stamp which was stamped by Fred's own hand at his desk in 1964. Can't believe it but I found it on EBAY in 2015 !!!

The truly amazing part is that the on line picture of the brochure did not have the stamp on it and we only found it was stamped when I received it.

<<< To Left

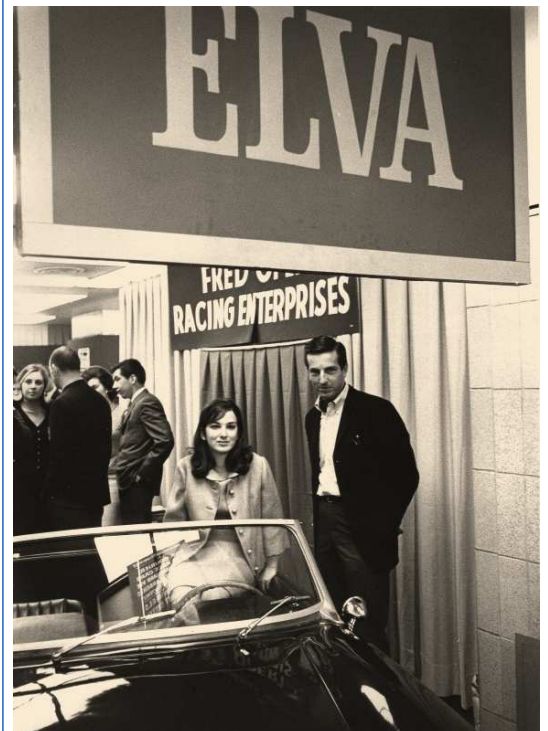
A proud (my Sister) Connie Sitting in her beautiful Courier "T" Type at Fred Opert's booth at the 1965 New York Auto Show.

This car was specifically built for the London Earls Court Motor Show and besides it's IRS was fitted with all wheel discs, a Ford Cortina Motor, and a super paint job. I drove it and I'll tell you, it was one sweet handling and beautiful Courier.

But I can't complain as I inherited her previous MGA stiff axle Courier IV E1101 which was the first mk IV imported to the US. Not too shabby

To Right >>>

Connie & Fred Schuchard, at Fred Opert's Elva booth, NY Auto Show.



The Long and Winding Road of E1101

This Elva Courier Mk. IV is # E1101 which was Connie Schuchard's first, originally white, Elva. Later it was painted red and became her brother's (me) Joe Marchione's car. (BMCofSNJ's Editor).

I drove the car for about a year or two but then enrolled in a school in Daytona Beach Fla. And for some young and very foolish reason sold the car while at school there and never heard of it again.



I was at the spring Carlisle car show in Pa. and saw a guy talking to a couple others and he was wearing an ELVA T-Shirt ! His name is Al Chicote, owner of a Courier Mk. II living in Vermont. We had a lot in common (love of Elva Couriers among other things) and became fast friends Exchanging a lot of Elva information. One day Al called and said he had heard that someone (Bob) in Canada had found a red Mk IV in a broken down barn. The car had literally been crushed when the barn roof collapsed but one of Bob's friends owned the old barn and told him if Bob could managed to drag the car out he could have it.

Bob had just retired and felt he needed a project so, meticulously - amazingly, he accomplished the impossible and restored it. Believe me. That car was crushed. Al said that it looked like and Elephant had sat on it. I saw pictures. It did. Even more amazing was that the car was identified as Connie and my lost Elva **E1101 !!!** Bob offered to sell the car to me and I really wanted to buy it considering the personal history. Unfortunately I had just purchased a Mk I project car and (sadly) just didn't have the money and the car was sold to someone else.



Forward to about a year later when, at the Lewes, Del. British car show, which Joe and Connie and husband Fred Schuchard attended every year, I saw a green Elva Courier Mk. IV across the show field while setting up my Lotus which I brought to the show every year. I walked over to where Fred was setting up his Morgan Plus 4 and told Fred that I had noticed a BRG Elva Courier across the field and, being old Elva owners and being so involved with Elvas back in the '60s, we should go over a have a look.

When I looked in the engine bay and looked at the car's ID plate I saw something quite shocking. On the plate the chassis number read **E1101**, the very same car that Fred had sold to Connie in 1965 while a salesman at Ed Roth's dealership in Glassboro, NJ - which led to them becoming husband and wife - which was passed to brother Joe (me) and the rest is history. History that had managed to come full circle.

When the car was sold in Canada it was purchased by Bill Tattersall of Frankford, Del. Who then, of course, brought it to the Lewes car show. Fred brought Connie over to see the car which brought tears to Connie's eyes. It was that car that brought them together. There were tears in my eyes too but because I really should had bought that car !!! Oh Well. Another fish story about the one that got away.

Whew ! Joe Marchione





*A mini history of
Elva Courier
#100/154L*

Amazingly there are, in 2023, **FOUR** (!) Elva Couriers in our club BMCof SNJ. That's four of only less than 400 total Couriers of all types ever built ! Here's a "Mini history" of 100/154L sent to me by Carl Schwab.
Joe Marchione (Editor)

Hi Joe,
A mini history of my car.

Elva Courier #100/154L. Listed by owners club in England as a 1961 sold to R. Alexander in San Antonio, Texas. Bob Gaunt began SCCA racing in the car in 1965. It was raced in VSCCA by several owners including Harvey Segal from the 1980's on. It was listed as a 1959 to meet VSCCA rules and the NJ title shows 1959. VSCCA allowed this car to race with disc front brakes in violation of their own rules. Roy Oppedisano (of NJ at the time) converted the car to street use. The MGA race engine & trans were replaced by a 1974 Alfa Romeo 2 liter & 5 speed. The car still has competition rear axles & hubs. I have added additional street items like windshield wipers, a top and side curtains that it did not have.

Carl Schwab



Carl's Mk3 and Gary's Cossaboon's Mk. I just behind

A 1959 Elva Courier, unrestored and still in the hands of its second owner, emerges from its 49-year slumber



- Take a look at that hand-painted transverse racing stripe, stretching from one rocker panel to the other. You know there has to be a story there.
- A U.K. commission number painted on the nose, on this American-spec left-hand-drive car? There must be a story connected with that, too.
- And then there's the windshield, an MGB unit that's been made to fit in place of the car's proprietary frame....

Al Chicote knows every one of these stories by heart. He and his 1959 Elva Courier have been together since the car was just four years old, and Al was a college student from Pennsylvania spending his summer on the Jersey shore.

There's at least one more story to be told here, one of purloined dashboard gauges that led to the Elva being taken off the road in 1966, only to emerge earlier this year after a 49-year layover, still wearing its original paint, and running on its original coil. But that's getting ahead of our narrative. Al was a contented MGA 1600 owner when an Elva first crossed his path, purring by while he waited for a friend in the parking area of the 1963 Sebring 12 Hours. "I was immediately awestruck--I had never seen a car like that before," he recalls.

It was on a summer's day in 1963 that the Elva entered Al's life. He needed a part for his MGA, and, instead of going to the dealer who sold him the car as he usually did, he took some friends' advice and went to Ladd Motors in Lebanon, Pennsylvania. What should he see there but a white, one-owner Courier?

"Fate? It had to be," Al laughs. "I ended up going home with the Elva, and never got the part. Parting with the MGA, for a car that had me awestruck, was a no-brainer." The Courier became Al's daily driver, and performed well. He made two round-trips between his home in Pennsylvania and Tampa, Florida, where he attended college. Aside from a brief flirtation with a Porsche 356 Coupe, Al and the Elva were inseparable.

During a group discussion on racing stripes, the idea of a transverse racing stripe on Al's Elva was born. "This was the period of time when racing stripes were becoming quite popular," he recalls. Wide stripes, narrow stripes, asymmetrical stripes--everyone was trying to find a way to be cooler than the other guys.

"This conversation took place in one of the local watering holes, where you could get seven beers for a dollar. I jokingly say I think I must have had \$40 worth of beers!" he laughs. "But I had enough that I said, 'Okay, they want to see a racing stripe? Let's go put a racing stripe on the Elva.' We take masking tape, newspaper and a rattle can of black paint, and there's the racing stripe. Goes from one side of the car to the other. Just to be obstinate. They want to see a racing stripe? We'll show them a racing stripe!"



In the summer of '66 came the accident that resulted in the windshield transplant. Al was driving along a Pennsylvania country road when he passed a truck, laden with road stones, going in the other direction. Two stones fell out of the truck; Al swerved to avoid one, but the second hit the windshield, shattering it.

He turned around and began chasing the truck, but caught the attention of a police officer, who pulled him over. Once Al had explained the situation, the officer joined in pursuit of the truck, which at this point had vanished into the hills. Flying along the roadway at 85

MPH, it occurred to Al that his story might not hold water if he never caught up with the truck. But he did, and when Al gestured in the truck's direction, the police cruiser--which Al had thought had been hard pressed to keep up with the Elva's pace--effortlessly flew past.

The upshot: The truck driver got two tickets, for being overloaded and having no cover. And Al got a ticket for having no inspection sticker, to go along with his broken windshield. Elva windshields being almost impossible to locate, he opted for the MGB alternative.

Later that summer, Al made the fateful decision to lend the Elva to a friend who wanted to impress his date. The car had a weak battery, and when it wouldn't start, the friend left it parked under a freeway. That's where Al found it after getting home at 3 a.m. from his bartending job. "I called him and said, 'You got it there, you bring it back up.' Well, he didn't. Next night, I got home at the same time, and there the tonneau cover was, laid over. Not good." A thief had tried to hotwire the car, cutting the wires to the combination headlamp/ignition switch, and had taken all the gauges as a consolation prize when he couldn't get the Elva to start.

Al put the car in storage. "And as I moved through life, so did the car, going from one storage area into another, until it was in my neighbor's barn for 28 years." Finally, in 2008, he decided to launch its rehabilitation, prompted by his friends in the Berkshire British Motor Club and the VSCCA.

This is when Al constructed what he calls the Elva Cave. In this long, narrow, unheated, wood-framed structure, Al and his friends would spend long hours rebuilding the brakes, replacing the exhaust and getting the Elva's four-cylinder engine to roar again.

The biggest challenges to the work were "time and money, and sourcing parts. That was the biggest drawback," Al says. Information about Elvas can be hard to come by, and Al had to work to find out what kind of clutch





master cylinder was used in his car, for instance, or what kind of flares belonged on his brake lines. "It's been sort of like an archaeology dig, the restoration of this. It's been fun," he says. "I did have a lot of help from people. Local people, people in the club." He also forged connections with a number of Elva owners.

One of the finishing touches was the application of the XLP 142 registration number, which Al freely admits is completely inauthentic. It's based on a factory photo of a U.K. car with registration number XLP 147, with the X standing for export,

and the LP referring to its original registration in South London. The 142 is from the car's serial number.

Although the project dragged on long enough for some of Al's friends to doubt the car's very existence, the Elva finally made its debut at a British car show in Woodstock, New York, this past fall, arriving on a trailer. Its first voyage under its own power was to a Hemmings Cruise-In, where it took our Favorite British Car award.

What was it like, driving the car after a 49-year lapse? "You can't explain it," he says, and laughs. "It was a great feeling. Let's just say it was a super-great feeling. I refer to it as being a time machine. It



was like going back to the '60s, it really was." He's reacquainting himself with the car's various noises, sorting the benign from the bad. "Though I'm thrilled to beans that I'm actually driving this thing, I did forget how chattery a fiberglass body is! The hood rattling, the boot lid rattling and everything else."

He's spent much time pondering what, if anything, to do about the car's appearance. "The original thought was eventually we'll make it look like it did when it came out of the factory," he says. But those who see the car are split

50-50 between urging him not to touch it, and those who think it deserves "something better. That 'deserves something better' is what I think I'm leaning to.

"Someone said, 'You know, if you had kept the car on the road, and had tended to its bruises and its scratches, you would at least have touched it up. Touching it up still keeps it original. And besides that, when you put the racing stripe on, that was the end of originality!'"

Al has a correct Elva windshield to install, and plans to at least cover over the areas of bare fiberglass, to protect the body. But mainly, this is a time for driving. He and the Elva have a lot of catching up to do.

Original article written by David LaChance in "Sports and Exotics"
09/24/2018

Time Line

1963: Purchased ELVA mid summer; 2nd known 'steward'; purchased to race it, (never did).

2 round trips from Manchester, PA to Tampa, FL; rallies, gymkanans, drives to FL races to spectate.

1964: Spent summer in Ocean City, NJ; Fall and Winter in Central PA; mid winter taken off road to prep for racing (never prepped).

1965: Spring, back on road; Summer in OC, NJ; Washington, DC for winter (had snow tires).

1966: 1/2 Summer in OC, NJ; in PA for maintenance; road debris damage original windscreen (adapted current 'B' windscreen); Fall, vandalized in DC and removed from service.

1966 - 2008: ELVA in various storage facilities ending up in neighbors barn for roughly 28 years. Elva was always on jack stands during storage.

2008: Early Fall, removed from neighbors barn and placed into 'ELVA Cave' (extended narrow garage); began 7 year rehabilitation (not restoration as you can see); parts sourcing was biggest challenge since Elva's parts are sourced from a variety of British and other European cars and no know 'build list' exist.

2014: Fall, started ELVA for first time since 1966; 90% all original mechanical parts; most rubber components replaced; SU's not adjusted since 1966; original coil.

October 5th, 2014 First public appearance since 1966 at Woodstock, NY British Car Show (trailer to Woodstock due to not trusting generator).

2015: May 14, First time driven on public roads since 1966, a ten mile round trip to the First of the season's Hemmings Motor News Cruise In, in Bennington, VT. (Favorite British Car plaque)

June 6-7 Manchester (VT) 29th Annual Car Show, (2nd place European Cars to 1999)

Multiple club drives and personal drives as the ELVA and I get reacquainted and add up those 'smile miles'.

2016 - current: Ella va ! Indeed, ' She Goes' as we clock roughly 2500 mile each season to Cruise In's, Rallies, Car Shows (earned several award), Drives to a variety points of interest and many ' Smile Miles' just driving.

Gauges were Stolen and Ignition wires cut.

2015 Ready for another road trip...

Needless to say, there are many stories around XLP 142 Elva Courier. One involves a very good friend, who was a PA State Trooper. I only had the ELVA a short time (1963) and we were out enjoying the Elva's agility and on a stretch that was most conducive for the ELVA to, well, ELLA VA !



As we were approaching triple digits my 'Trooper' friend asked "How're the tires ?!?" I replied "Fine ! Just put some 'Intsa-Spare' in right front !", at which he replied, "Mind slowing down a bit ??!"

Flash forward to 2008 and our removing the 'jack stands' so we can roll the ELVA out of the barn. HA !! The right front tire was the only tire that didn't need air !

Al Chicote

The History of Automotive Turn Signals (or Trafficators)

As you probably can imagine, early automobile drivers signaled to pedestrians and other drivers their intention to make a turn with their hands. They probably pointed to the direction that they were about to turn to and depended on the pedestrian to be paying attention. (editor: good luck. At least they didn't have ear buds cranking out high energy rock n' Roll ... while Texting!) After a period of time, a more uniform method of communicating had to develop, sort of like bicycles do today.

Then they went electric.

There was a big problem with hand signals, however: you couldn't see them at night. They first appeared in the 1900s, when they were activated either mechanically or pneumatically. In 1908, Alfredo Barrachini in Rome added electric lights inside the arms that turned on as they extended, but operation was still by a cable system. Edgar A. Walz. In 1925, developed and secured a patent for one and tried to market it to major car manufacturers. Believe it or not, the major car manufacturers just weren't interested and the patent expired fourteen years later. Finally a complete system that combined internal illumination and solenoid operation came in 1927 when Berlin-based Max Ruhl and Ernst Neuman.

Trafficators

In the 1940s, signaling turns was via these little semaphore-like indicators called "Trafficators" which were illuminated and were powered by electro magnets that swung up when they were engaged. When they were "off", the trafficators folded back into the door pillars or fenders.



America got involved

Back in the States, Buick was the first U.S. automaker to offer factory-installed *flashing* turn signals. Introduced in 1939 as a safety feature, turn signals were advertised as "Flash-Way Directional Indicators" and were an option.



These flashing signals only operated on the rear lights. In 1940, Buick enhanced their directional indicators by extending the signals to front lights too and adding a self-canceling mechanism. In that year, directional signals became standard on Buick, Cadillac, LaSalle, and the Hudson vehicles yet still optional on Chevrolet, Oldsmobile, and Pontiac.

The Sixties brought other innovations to turn signals. Initial plans called for Ford to install blinking sequential rear turn signals on their 1964 Thunderbird but installation was put off for more than a year while they were approved by regulators. 1968 marked another "major" change as the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 108 required amber (rather than the earlier white) lenses for front turn signals (rear signals could be red or amber.)

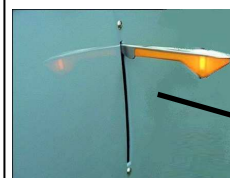
Today, LEDs are common

Today, many new cars use reliable light-emitting diode (LED) technology for signal lighting. Such lights do not depend on lens color, the semiconductors within emit true red and amber hues. LED lights are very efficient and ultra-bright, it may not be long before filament-style bulbs will have been phased out completely. Though the basic turn signal technology hasn't changed in years, future improvements may include increased luminous strength and reliability. There has been some talk about intelligent turn signals that will sense when the lights should be activated.



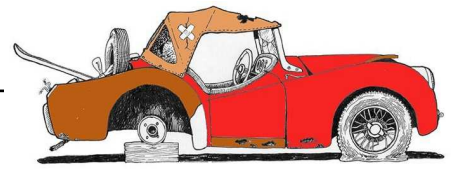
Trafficator as used in Europe and the UK.

In the 1940s and 50s they were used on many cars made in the UK, including on the prototype and a very few of the very first early ELVA Couriers, they were soon discontinued. There are early Courier shells that did not have them installed but you could still see the indentations in the inside of the fiberglass where there was the intention of installing them.



>>>>>>

SWAP MEET



YOUR AD COULD APPEAR HERE Find a home for those extra parts or that car that you will never get around to restoring. Raise some cash to buy more extra parts or projects that you do not need!!
Contact Ed Gaubert: mgarage@comcast.net

FOR SALE: 1963 Morgan Plus 4 Drop Head Coupe.

A rare body type, this car has the original numbers – engine, transmission and rear axle.

- Fully restored chassis, engine and running gear.
- Powder coated wire wheels.
- Wooden body frame completely rebuilt.
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- New wiring harness.
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- New rear wheel cylinders and rear axle bearings.
- New input and output shaft transmission bearings.
- Rebuilt lever shocks (rear) and new tubular shocks (front),
- New 6v batteries (2) and new battery trays.
- New marine plywood floors.
- Other restoration items too numerous to list here.
- Original top needs re-stitching and zippered rear window needs replacing.
- Complete expense records.
- Extra engine (TR-3) and all replaced parts saved.

This is a complete, running car and can be driven while further improvements are made.
Inquiries answered promptly. Fred frschuch@gmail.com or call 856-305-2602. Price \$28,000

FOR SALE. Bundle of TR3 parts. One price for all:

- 1 black tonneau. Serviceable, but has a 6 inch split on the passenger side. Repaired but ugly.
- 1 pair of original TR3 Lucas horns. Dirty but they work.
- 1 pair of very nice wind wings

All for \$100. [Bruce Aydelotte 609-705-4753](mailto:BruceAydelotte@609-705-4753) or cuznbrucie@comcast.net

FOR SALE: 1958/59 Healey Sprite. Vintage all vinyl side curtains. Need renovation. Make offer.
Manny Paredes (MPareded@verizon.net)

FOR SALE: TR3 starter handle \$100. Bruce Aydelotte 609-705-4753 or cuznbrucie@comcast.net

FOR SALE: I have sold my TR6, and I have 13 years' worth of accumulated parts, some NOS hard to find items. Too much to list. Please email for details. [Stuart drshonick@gofeet.com](mailto:Stuart.drshonick@gofeet.com)

FOR SALE: 1974 TR6. Very good to excellent condition. Ready to enjoy. Car is located in Mt. Laurel. \$18,000. Call Jeff for details 856-296-9165

FOR SALE. TR3 hubcaps (5) with logo badge. One without. \$80 or best reasonable offer. Manny Paredes (MPareded@verizon.net)





FOR SALE. TR6 parts. Set of gauges \$150. Various other parts including heater, wheel trim rings, steering wheel. Text or email John 609-425-0878 or jarmand1@comcast.net

FOR SALE. I have a 1954 MGTF project for sale for the right offer. If you have any interest, please call, there is too much to describe in a short ad. Reggie Harris 856-264-6032 or reggie630@hotmail.com

FOR SALE. MGB parts. Engine and transmission in parts car \$500. Rust free doors complete, 2 four speed transmissions, other various parts from complete car. Text or email John 609-425-0878 or jarmand1@comcast.net

FOR SALE. MGB parts:

2 black driver quality top covers. Not certain of year. \$50 each
Early MGB head. Taken from my running 68 MGB 40 years ago. \$50
MGB aftermarket accessory grille guard. Make offer
MGB ANSA headers #MG0281. New \$125
Reggie Harris 856-264-6032 or reggie630@hotmail.com

FOR SALE. Bugeye Sprite radiator. Needs work. \$50. Reggie Harris 856-264-6032 or reggie630@hotmail.com

WANTED: Triumph overdrive transmission from TR3, TR4, TR250. TR5 or TR6. Any condition as long as the case is not cracked. George Lawton triumphtr4@hotmail.com

WANTED. MG Midget/Austin Healey Sprite differential, complete. 3.9 or 3.7 ratio preferred. Dan Carter 856-780-0373 or healeydan12@gmail.com

WANTED. Classic Mini. I am looking for a solid, presentable driver quality classic mini. I am flexible regarding specifications. If you know of one for sale, I am also appreciative of any solid leads. Willing to travel a reasonable distance from South Jersey, but I am not interested in long distance sight unseen deals. Thanks for any information or leads. Ed Doody 609-706-9246 or collbark@hotmail.com

WANTED. Handy mechanic (or inclined) to do some of the many things on some older collectibles (that may expand). Age now makes it difficult for me to do alone.

General knowledge and ability is all that is needed, as we can figure it out (and I am a fine parts finder) after that. No heavy restoration is expected.

Likely never urgent, and always a comfortable environment. Being on the I-95 corridor between exit 8 and Rt. 42 is great. If you are able to come to my always available, equipped and comfortable garage near Columbus NJ (off Exit 7 or Exit 6) that would be the absolute best.

Not expecting charity work. Reasonable rates are expected.

Call or text Jeff at 609-955-0378

SWAP MEET

FREE. Free to club members. 2 accessory air cleaners. Moss part number 223-240 for Stromberg CD175 carbs. Ed Doody 609-706 9246 or collbark@hotmail.com

FREE. One MG Midget 13 inch wire wheel. Manny Paredes (MPareded@verizon.net)



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

BMCSNJ supports safe and responsible enjoyment of British automobiles and motorcycles.
 All events sponsored by BMCSNJ are alcohol and drug free.
 Consumption or distribution of alcohol or controlled substances is expressly prohibited.
 All driving events are conducted in accordance with motor vehicle laws at all times.

DATE	BMC EVENT	LOCATION / STATUS
January 1/18	Membership Meeting Dinner at 6:00pm (member expense) Meeting at 7:00PM.	7 Stars Diner, Sewell 6 - 8:30 Steve Ferrante president@bmcsnj.org
February 2/15	Membership Meeting Dinner at 6:00pm (member expense) Meeting at 7:00PM.	Uno, Maple Shade 2803 NJ-73 S, Maple Shade, NJ 08052 6 - 8:30 Steve Ferrante president@bmcsnj.org
March 3/15	Membership Meeting Dinner at 6:00pm (member expense) Meeting at 7:00PM.	7 Stars Diner, Sewell 6 - 8:30 Steve Ferrante president@bmcsnj.org
April 4/19	Membership Meeting Dinner at 6:00pm (member expense) Meeting at 7:00PM.	Uno, Maple Shade 2803 NJ-73 S, Maple Shade, NJ 08052 6 - 8:30 Steve Ferrante president@bmcsnj.org
May 5/17	Membership Meeting Dinner at 6:00pm (member expense) Meeting at 7:00PM.	7 Stars Diner, Sewell 6 - 8:30 Steve Ferrante president@bmcsnj.org
May Date: TBD	Members Memorial Gathering at Smithville to benefit Samaritan Hospice 10am-2pm	For Directions: www.historicsmithville.com/directions CONTACT: mqgarage@comcast.net

(Events Continued on pg.38)

Events Continued



DATE	BMC EVENT	LOCATION / STATUS
June	Spring Tour Rain Date TBD	DETAILS COMING SOON
June 6/21	Membership Meeting Dinner at 6:00pm (member expense) Meeting at 7:00PM.	Uno, Maple Shade 2803 NJ-73 S, Maple Shade, NJ 08052 6 - 8:30 Steve Ferrante president@bmcsnj.org
July 7/19	Membership Meeting Dinner at 6:00pm (member expense) Meeting at 7:00PM.	7 Stars Diner, Sewell 6 - 8:30 Steve Ferrante president@bmcsnj.org
July TBD 6pm - 8:30pm	British Car Owners Ice Cream Social TBD	5 Points Custard E. Landis Ave (Rt 540) & Tuckahoe Rd. (Rt 557) E. Vineland, NJ Contact robgt71@verizon.net
August TBD	<i>Summer Tour</i>	DETAILS COMING SOON
August 8/16	Membership Meeting Dinner at 6:00pm (member expense) Meeting at 7:00PM.	Uno, Maple Shade 2803 NJ-73 S, Maple Shade, NJ 08052 6 - 8:30 Steve Ferrante president@bmcsnj.org



Events Continued



DATE	BMC EVENT	LOCATION / STATUS
September 9/20	Membership Meeting Dinner at 6:00pm (member expense) Meeting at 7:00PM.	7 Stars Diner, Sewell 6 - 8:30 Steve Ferrante president@bmcsnj.org
September TBD 10 AM until 2 PM	BMC of SNJ End of Year Show at Greenwich Artisans Faire Admission is \$5 per <u>car</u> - all occupants can visit the Artisans Faire for the cost of a single admission.	On the grounds of the Gibbon House, located at 960 Ye Greate Street, Greenwich, NJ 08323 Show hours from 10 AM until 2 PM Contact - Gary Warren, garswc@yahoo.com or 609 247 3499 (cell)
October TBD (No Rain Date)	The 25th Annual Elmer Harvest Day Festival and Car Show 	Questions regarding Harvest Day should be directed to Peggy at 856-521-0626. For more information, please contact GEABS at 609-670-0407 or visit their facebook page. https://www.facebook.com/greaterelmerareahistoricalsociety/
October 10/18	Membership Meeting Dinner at 6:00pm (member expense) Meeting at 7:00PM.	Uno, Maple Shade 2803 NJ-73 S, Maple Shade, NJ 08052 6 - 8:30 Steve Ferrante president@bmcsnj.org
October TBD	Fall Tour	DETAILS COMING SOON
December	No Membership Meeting in recognition of the holiday season	





British Car Event Calendar of the Northeast

With the kind permission of one of our neighboring clubs, Keystone British Car Club based in the Lehigh Valley I present to you their very comprehensive calendar of events featuring many British Car Shows and events of interest in the PA/NJ/DE region.

I know many of you have never attended a British Car Show and perhaps you don't quite know what to expect. If your car is not "show quality" that should not preclude you from attending. Not all attendees are trophy hunters and many folks just attend for the camaraderie and knowledge sharing that comes with a gathering of like minded British car enthusiasts. It's nice to attend these shows, enter your car and support the surrounding clubs of their efforts. If nothing else, it may garner some reciprocity for attendance at our clubs shows/events.

However, I think one important aspect of regularly attending these events is that it gets your car out on the road and away from your local neighborhood comfort zone.

It will push you to clean and maintain your car and engage you with the hobby. I have found that it is the cars that are used most regularly that often give the owner the most pleasure because it gets you to sort out any niggling issues with your car and makes it roadworthy. The more and further you travel, the more confidence you will have in the car for longer trips. In my case, I enjoy the drive to and from some of these events as I will usually choose a scenic route.

So, let's get out there and I hope to see you at some of these area events this season.

Peter Cosmides

Below is a link to a list British car events in the greater Northeast. (And beyond, for national meets and other large events of unique interest.) Also included are; classic car events and community car shows of interest to our members.

[TO ACCESS THE CALENDAR CLICK ON THE LINK BELOW](#)

[British Car Calendar | Keystone British Car Club](#)



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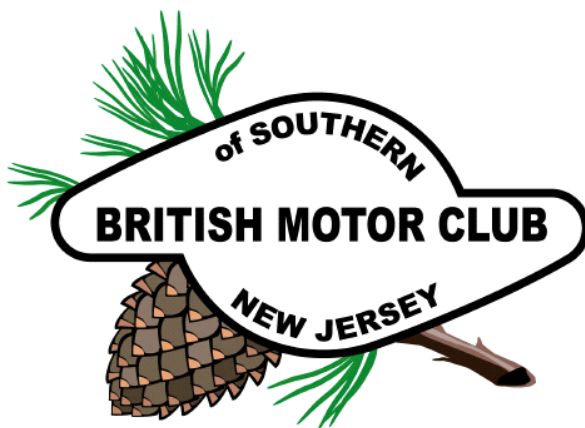
North American MGB Register

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 Toll-free phone: 800-NAMGBR-1
www.namgbr.org

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The BMCSNJ Web Site can be found at
WWW.BMCSNJ.ORG



British Motor Club of Southern New Jersey

