



smoke in the wires

Oct. '23

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smoke in the wires is compiled by
Michael King (also known as "Ed.")

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Membership in PBCA is open to anyone with an interest in classic or modern British cars, and dues are only \$20 per year. To join, visit www.pbca1.com.

Activities Calendar

Oct. 16, 2023

Monthly Club Meeting, The Hangar, Milton, eat at 6:00 p.m., meet at 7:00.

Oct. 20 – 21, 2023

SABCC British Car Festival, Fairhope United Methodist Church, Friday dinner 7:00 p.m., show registration 9:00 – 11:30 a.m., \$30. Registration form [here](#).

Oct. 28, 2023

Lillian Methodist Men's Club [Car Show](#), 8:00 – 2:00, US 98 and Perdido St., \$20 before Oct. 15 and \$25 after.

Nov. 4, 2023

Gulf Coast Autojumble, see p. 11.

OCTOBER 2023

Sun	Mo	Tue	We	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16 Club Meeting	17	18	19	20 SABCC British Car Festival, Fairhope	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28 Lillian Show
29	30	31	1	2	3	4 Auto-Jumble

Tight Connections

Dog Daze 2023

story by *Tom Matsoukas*
photos courtesy *Gail Sanders*

Dog Daze 2023 was a smaller than normal event. With members trekking around Spain (**Bill Weeks**), New York (**Bob Manske**), etc. (that would be **Taber Tompkins**, in Dune-din, Fla.) we missed your smiling faces.

There were 15 different routes to try and entice a more fun and exciting turnout. The event had four cars. **Paul and Mollie Reese** came in their recently-acquired, very nice 1953 MGTD. Tom **Schmitz** and sister **Linda** brought his XJS. **Rich** and **Darla Willows** had their Jag XK. **Gail and Keith Sanders'** MGC rounded out the field.

The very generous donations included 84 pounds of food, a box of bones, and \$620 in checks and cash. [*Very impressive, considering the number of participants-Ed.*]

The drives started at 10:00 and the three routes lasted 58 to 68 minutes. We ended at The Oar House for a lunch of great fun and friendship.

Awards were determined by time on the rally tie breakers.

- Paul and Mollie, first
- Tom and Linda, second
- Rich and Darla, third

Keith takes the lead for the broken compass at this time.

We have set the date for next year's event – October 5 2024 – and we look forward to seeing the event back to its full size. A very heartfelt thank you to everyone for support and participation!



Top, Tom signs up Paul; upper middle, final instructions; lower middle, a group shot; bottom, lunch at The Oar House.

Wiring Diagrams

Tech Tools and Tips

Beware the Restovirus

story by Chuck Wimberly, SABCC

Much has been written and said since the year 2020 concerning the COVID virus. I



take pen in hand today, gentle reader, to warn you of an equally debilitating malady which I call the Restovirus. The Restovirus is an insidious disease which afflicts its victim with the uncontrollable urge to restore an old car. I know whereof I speak, having succumbed to this disease on three separate occasions.

My first experience was with a Triumph TR6, the second with a Triumph TR4, and most recently with an Austin Healey Bugeye Sprite. The Restovirus is immediately recognizable by its ability to imbue its host with overpowering delusions of mechanical ability and financial solvency where neither are, in fact, present.

I am only now beginning to recover from a two-year-long siege of the virus during which I came perilously close to complete mental breakdown, bankruptcy and divorce. It was during this period when I began to realize that membership in the South Alabama British Car Club [*which also applies to PBCA; witness the Manske garage days-Ed.*] can have positive benefits to a Restovirus victim such as myself. Not the least of these benefits are the club members themselves.

Without the able assistance and generosity of

time and material of some of our membership, I very seriously doubt whether my recovery from the virus would have been possible. It took three complete engines to amass enough usable parts for the machine shop to be able to assemble what eventually became my motor. Two of those engines were given to me by **Tom Schmitz**, and the third by **Noel Eagleson**. It was only after a long and harrowing day that Noel and Tom Renick, and I were able to unseize the third motor, and make it a usable engine.

Dave Roloson was quick to offer his car trailer to take the car to various places during its journey to completion. Dave was also available to help, together with Don Pritchett when the two nursed me back from a delusional seizure in which I imagined myself capable of electrical wiring.

Scott Paradise painted the car, although he is not to be blamed for its appearance since I performed the body work during a four-month-long fit of imagining myself a body man.

Lyman Dykes contributed his mechanical skill to help with the timing of the engine and tuning of the carburetors. Lyman also gave invaluable help in the installation of a kit to allow forward opening of the bonnet and front fenders as a unit. Today, the car is finished, my marriage is intact, my bank account is a fond memory, and my hope for the future is that I will not suffer a relapse.

Beware the Restovirus, gentle reader, but if you should succumb, give thanks that you are a member of a British car club.

[*Chuck has registered his 1959 red Bugeye in the SABCC British Car Festival. Look for it at the show-Ed.*]

Jensen Healey Engine Project

story and photos by *Paul Reese*

The saga of **Eddie Toenes'** and **Paul Reese's** '74 Jensen Healey project continues. During the Sept. 16 Tech Day, the engine block was covered in oven cleaner, allowed to soak, and pressure



washed. The first picture (above) shows half the engine cleaned. The grease- and grime-covered pressure washer operator is not shown per the editor's "no dirty pictures" policy [*This is a family publication, after all-Ed.*].



At the Sept. 30 tech day, the engine was moved inside. **Fred Veenschoten** (above) is shown contemplating the dissection. After much more

contemplating, lots of penetrating oil and nut and bolt turning, and Bloody Marys, the crankshaft was out. The main and crankpin journals were measured for wear. The cylinder liners still need to be removed but one of them was also measured. Next is to contact a Lotus machine shop to discuss options.



Overall it went fairly well. One bolt head broken off but no bandages! And **Bob Manske** earned a bonus Bloody Mary for having a bolt with a head that fit a 3/4" hex head plug that needed to be removed.

Engine

In line 4 cylinder engine inclined at 45° Twin overhead camshafts, dual inlet and exhaust valves. Bore 3.75 in. (95.2 mm). Stroke 2.73 in. (69.3 mm) cubic capacity 120.5 cu. in. (1973 cc). Compression ratio 8.4 : 1. Crankshaft: fully balanced 5 main bearings. Lubrication: sump capacity 12.3 pints (7 litres), full flow oil filter. Fuel system: electric pump, in line paper element filter, twin carburetors, fuel tank capacity 11 gallons Imperial (13 gallons U.S.) 50 litres, remote mounted, dry paper element air cleaner. Ignition: coil, ballast resistor, 12v system, Champion N7Y spark plugs. Cooling: pressurised 10 p.s.i. Engine driven fan. Oil cooler.

Above, from a period brochure, are the specifications for the Jensen Healey's Lotus engine. Per Wikipedia, "This multi-valve engine was the first modern dual overhead cam 4 valve per cylinder engine to be mass-produced on an assembly line. This setup put out approximately 144 bhp (107 kW), topping out at 119 mph (192 km/h) and accelerating from zero to 60 mph in 7.8 seconds (8.1 seconds for the emission controlled U.S. version)."

The Best of

Pierre's Wisdom

Pierre Fontana

Machine Shop – and Machine Shop

Getting old means lots of experience, hoping to have learned a bit, and forgotten some . . .

I was trying a shortcut, as my favorite machine shop was tied up with race cars. I used a nearby shop for a very simple task: replacing a rear axle bearing. They have a 40-ton machine, electro-hydraulic; all you have to do is push a button, and a big gauge shows how much it is pushing. You can crush parts going too far.

Two unforeseen problems occurred. The bearing was aftermarket, and the center hole was sleeved to fit 1³/₄ axle shaft. I reassembled the axle on a 1937 Packard convertible (think “Great Gatsby”). A few days later, the wheel and axle almost came off, and I almost had a heart attack.

For a “pressed” bearing to fit tight and hold the axle in place, the tolerance has to be minus several thousandths of an inch and the pressure required should be over five tons. The company making the aftermarket bearing failed to follow the rules. Under warranty, they sent another bearing, and this time I went to my favorite machine shop. We watched the press push the bearing in place with less than 1500 lbs. on the gauge. The head machinist told me it would come off again unless I did like they do on race car axles: three tack welds to keep it from moving. I did that and it has held, so far so good.

The second problem was on the same car. I installed a “rebuilt” (by a specialist) water pump – \$442.06, no cheap job. About six months and 500 miles later, the “pressed” hub came off the pump at speed and destroyed the radiator. I am sending it back to the rebuilder in



All photos courtesy Pierre Fontana

Texas. Seems it's hard to count on anything . . .



Top, the failed water pump; bottom, the fan that separated from it.

Pierre Fontana is a technical advisor for SABCC. This column first ran in November 2014.

Spare Wires

News on British Cars and the Hobby

Of MGs and Mid-Engines: Mid-Engine MG Cars Through the Years

story by Rodney McDonald, SABCC

Designers of sports cars have embraced mid-mounted engines for their improved weight distribution and superior handling characteristics. While nearly all purpose-built race vehicles feature mid-engine configurations, today, very few production cars do so, and most of those are high-end, high-performance models. However, one scrappy marque produced mid-engine designs for years, although only one actually went into production: MG.

After the end of the Second World War, MG once again took up the challenge of chasing class speed records, as they had done before the conflict. MG's first mid-engine design was the EX181, a car built to break class speed records in 1957 and raise MG's profile in the USA.



Stirling Moss stands next to the MG EX181 after completing the record runs (Credit: MG Archives)

Powered by a supercharged 1.5-liter prototype MGA twin-cam engine, the "Roaring Raindrop" set six world speed records in its class before retiring. The EX181 is now on display at the British Motor Museum in Gaydon.

MG's team of designers and engineers were never short on inspiration, but they almost always faced budget constraints imposed by their parent organizations. So, it would come as no surprise to learn that MG proposed a mid-engine sports car in the late 1960s.

By 1969, mid-engine sports cars were already in production by Lotus (Europa) and Porsche (914) and would soon be joined by Fiat's X1/9 in 1972. The British Leyland Motor Corporation tasked MG's designers with developing a mid-engine replacement for both the MG Midget and



MG ADO21 Styling Model (Credit: AROnline.co.uk)

Triumph Spitfire, codenamed ADO21.

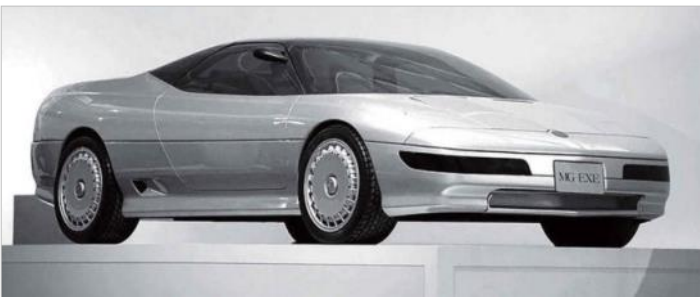
Originally, ADO21 was designed to use a mid-mounted four-cylinder E-series 1748cc engine. However, this new engine, which would later find a home in the Austin Maxi, was quite tall when combined with its gearbox, making it almost unsuitable for a mid-ship layout. MG persevered and came up with a design reminiscent of the early Lotus Europa, featuring a "letter-slot" rear window and buttresses to

(story continues next page)

Mid-Engine MGs, continued

create a more flowing profile. The engineering team even mounted the mid-engine drivetrain and its subframe in an MGB-GT for testing. Ultimately, it was decided that a derivative of the ADO21 front-engine design would go into production as the Triumph TR7, and the ADO21 styling mockup was discarded.

MG's next venture into mid-engine cars was the MG EX-E, first showcased at the Frankfurt Motor Show in 1985. This striking concept, somewhat reminiscent of the contemporary Acura NSX, was powered by a derivative of the MG Metro 6R4 rally car, which was also used in the Jaguar XJ220 supercar. The detuned V6 four-cam engine delivered power to all four wheels through a five-speed gearbox. The expected power output was 250 bhp and 225 lb./ft of torque. Although the EX-E had the potential to be a stunning production car that could elevate MG's prestige, financial constraints led to its cancellation, possibly due to Rover's ill-fated return to North America under the Sterling name.



MG EX-E Concept Car (Credit: Austin-Rover Archives)

The team that worked on the MG EX-E later embarked on developing a production sports car inspired by the EX-E prototype. This car would eventually emerge as the MGF in 1995.

Enthusiasts within Austin-Rover pushed for a two-seat sports car worthy of the MG name. In the early 1990s, three separate teams were tasked with developing a two-seat open sports car for MG. The proposals included front-engine

rear drive, front-engine front-drive, and mid-engine-rear drive configurations. The chosen design was the mid-engine proposal.

The car that would become the MGF was developed throughout the early nineties. Similar to the ill-fated ADO21, a mockup of the dual overhead cam, four-cylinder powertrain and subframe were tested in a nondescript hatchback for road testing. The Rover Metro, humorously referred to as the "Pizza Van," provided essential design feedback for validating the suspension and driveline.

The base four-cylinder K-series engine coupled with a five-speed gearbox became the standard offering in the MGF, with an optional version featuring innovative variable valve timing. Luxuries such as air conditioning, power steering, and eventually a CVT automatic transmission were available.



MGF Launch Publicity Photo (Credit: Austin-Rover Archives)

The production MGF made its debut at the Geneva Motor Show in 1995, marking MG's entry into the mid-engine sports car market. The MGF would undergo several design changes during its production run and would be later rebranded as the MGTF.

[Rodney McDonald is the editor emeritus of SABCC's Spark & Spanner, and the proud owner of a 1996 MGF.]

An MG for the Aristocracy? Perhaps Not

*story by Noel Eagleson
images courtesy of the author*

Since Cecil Kimber formed MG in 1923, the name has always been associated with the production of small sports cars that appealed to enthusiasts who enjoyed motorsport in general. They were relatively cheap and easily repaired, which perfectly suited those with a minimum of mechanical knowledge. The history of MG's success in international events including Le Mans and the Monte Carlo rally are very well documented in many fine publications focusing on all things MG. Even today many MG enthusiasts enter their cherished cars in local club and Historic racing events mainly in the UK, the US, and Australia.

Pre-WW2 MG did produce some rather attractively-bodied saloons; the very rare Airline Coupe T type and the SA saloon and drop-head Tickford Coupe specially built by Salmons of Newport Pagnall, Buckinghamshire are just two examples.

By 1948 most British car makers were back in business and MG now formed part of the Nuffield organization, which in 1952 following a merger with Austin became the British Motor Corporation headed by Sir Leonard Lord. MGs continued to be produced at Abingdon and the T-Type sports cars were much in demand, particularly here in the States where they were often raced at circuits like Watkins Glen and lake Elkhart on Saturdays and driven to church on Sundays.

In 1953 MG introduced the very attractive Magnette ZA saloon; they handled and braked well with a good quality leather trim. There followed a ZB Varitone model with a 64 HP upgraded engine. These cars were targeted at the better-off

class including your friendly bank manager or insurance broker.

Fast forward to the 1960s and BMC took to "badge engineering" in a big way with the arrival of ADO16 (Amalgamated Design Office Project No 16). This was a comfortable and affordable saloon designed with hydrolastic suspension by Sir Alex Issigonis and body by Pininfarina of Italy. They were truly a car for the working man and BMC capitalized on that with badged engineered variants including Austin, Morris, MG, Riley, Wolseley, and Vanden Plas Princess. Engines were 1098cc -1275cc A series transverse four-cylinders.

They were a great little car and I owned a 1965 Wolseley-badged car complete with strip speedometer set in a wooden dash and leather seats as standard. Yes, the Wolseley badge on the radiator grille did light up at night. Having front wheel drive traction sure was a big advantage when travelling on snow- or ice-covered narrow country roads back in Northern Ireland.



In this highly-competitive sector of world-wide car production, BMC was keen to have as big a slice of the pie as possible, so the "marketing gurus" came up with the answer!

By December 1963 they decided they would upgrade the rather opulent Vanden Plas version of

(story continues next page)

MG for the Aristocracy, continued

ADO16 by grafting on MG badges to the standard VP grille and boot lid (trunk) plus MG 1100 hubcaps. The cars were built by Austin at Longbridge and then transported to Kingsbury, north London where skilled craftsmen fitted out the interior. A total of only 154/156 were built, all being left-hand drive and aimed at the American market.



In automotive terms this badge-engineered MG was a total flop; obviously the more affluent American public did not care for picnic tables in the back of the front seats, Connolly leather upholstery and Wilton carpets. This was clearly not an MG for the enthusiast or indeed the aristocrat and this last-ditch attempt faded out around September 1966. An Austin America became the next variant for the US Market.

Having attended many British classic car shows in several states I have yet to actually see an MG Princess 1100 other than through period photographs and a sales catalogue I picked up recently. Apparently, one may be on display in a museum collection in Kansas; if you know this to be correct, please let me know.

On a final note, the BMC/British Leyland range of Badge engineered ADO16 family cars ceased production around June 1974 with over 1.4 million rolling of the assembly lines.

Auction Roundup: MGAs

[In keeping with the MG Centenary, Auction Roundup is featuring a different MG series each month-Ed.]

1960 MGA 1600 Roadster



Sold for \$17,750 on Bring a Trailer

Attractively finished in White over Red leather, this MGA's 2008 restoration shows some patina, and it has a Weber carb, but was considered well-bought.

1953 MGA 1600 Coupe



Sold for \$40,250 on Bring a Trailer

The subject of a ten-year restoration, apparently with no regard to cost, this Iris Blue coupe brought top dollar.

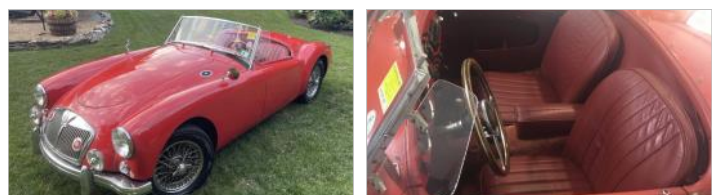
1962 MGA Roadster



Sold for \$27,038 on Hemmings

Restored in 1998-99 and still in very nice condition, this black over red Mark II earned a fair price.

1958 MGA Roadster



Not Sold for \$12,500 on Bring a Trailer

Commenters alleged corrosion hidden by filler, which likely killed any chances of selling this nice MGA driver.

Godspeed, Ann



PBCA greatly mourns the passing of **Ann Fell**, pictured here with **Bob Henson**. Services are to be announced.

Coming Soon

Here's a brief rundown of upcoming events:

- **British Car Festival**, Oct. 20 and 21, Fairhope United Methodist Church, \$30. The registration form is [here](#).
- **Lillian Methodist Men's Club Car Show**, Oct. 28, 8:00 – 2:00, US 98 and Perdido St. Open show offering an Import class as well as awards by decade.
- **Gulf Coast Autojumble**, Nov. 4, 10:00 a.m.: The annual three-club swap meet for all things British motoring will be held again this year at **Tom Schmitz's "Garagemahut"** in Elberta. Start scouring your garage!

THE GREAT GULF COAST ALL-BRITISH AUTOJUMBLE

Saturday, November 4
Tom Schmitz's "Hut"
Elberta, Alabama
10:00AM-2:00PM

Here is your opportunity to clear out your collection of British car parts, pieces and related automobilia in an event that spans the British car clubs of the north central Gulf Coast region!

Bring your wares along with a table to display them on and join in the fun of finding even more stuff that you never knew you needed.



The "Hut" is located on Old County Road 95 in Elberta, Alabama.

From the west: Take US Highway 98 thru Elberta to Old County Road 95, turn right.

From the east: Take US Highway 98 thru Lillian to Old County Road 95, turn left.

Go approx. 9 miles and look for the Union Jack on the right. The Hut is across from Lake Osprey RV Park at 12054 Gateway Drive, Elberta, AL 36530

Coffee and doughnuts will be ready for you!

Lost? Contact Tom Schmitz (251) 228-0007



South Alabama British Car Club British Car Festival Celebrating 100 Years of



Saturday, October 21, 2023

Fairhope United Methodist Church Campus • Fairhope, Alabama

9:00AM—4:00PM

Join the South Alabama British Car Club in celebrating the centennial of the MG Car Company at the 33rd annual British Car Festival. The event is free for the public to visit and view the approximately 150 classic British cars that will be on display. For details, visit www.sabcc.org.



Wire Nut

Michael King

Car Show Pointers

If you are not already aware, the SABCC British Car Festival is imminent. As a past chair of that august event [*actually, October 20 and 21-Ed.*] I do feel somewhat qualified to expound on a few simple guidelines that will make the day and a half better for everyone.

First, register your car. Now. If you wait to the day of the show, you will have to outside the show field, trudge up to the registration table, fill out the form, and wait an hour or more for your personalized windscreen card. Conversely, if you pre-register (which you can do as late as the Friday night dinner, but why wait?) you can breeze through the line, collect your packet, and get on the field *without ever leaving your vehicle!*

Second, follow instructions. The SABCC members are there to help you. They will guide you to the photo area, then to the parking area for your car class. They will help you get parked in an orderly manner. And, if you are trailering your car, they will help you get parked on the trailer lot at nearby First Baptist Church of Fairhope. They are not trying to harass you! Be patient and do as you're told. Remember, we are all friends here.

Third, behave. We all are guests of Fairhope United Methodist Church, and we should show our gratitude for the eleven years (!) they have allowed SABCC to use their beautiful campus and facilities. That means we must respect their properties and policies, and leave no trace of our presence at the end of the show. My personal practice is to leave the parking areas cleaner than I found them, even if that means picking up trash I know was there long before the event.



Fourth, pay attention. The periodic announcements on the PA system are intended to help and inform. Listen to them. Also, we will have ten drawings throughout the day for very special door prizes, in a color and size that will fit anyone. You don't want to miss your number being called, if you are a winner.

Fifth, be welcoming. Registrants from places outside the region help keep the show interesting and diverse, and show visitors allow us to share our hobby with the general public. Wear your PBCA name badge, and if you see someone you don't know, introduce yourself!

Sixth, vote. The ballots in cars as soon as possible after registration closes. Carefully consider all the entries in each class and the car you think is Best of Show, but turn in your ballot as soon as possible so that counting team can do its work.

Finally, have fun. Even if your car doesn't win a plaque. Even if you don't win one of those fabulous door prizes. Even if you have to wait in line at the food truck. Even if your car is not parked in the shade. Even if the award ceremony doesn't start as early as you hoped. Even if we get rain. Remember, your attitude is contagious. Make yours one folks want to catch.

[*This column is adapted from one I wrote for the SABCC members, but I think it applies universally.-Ed.*]

PANHANDLE BRITISH CAR ASSOCIATION

2023 "Brits on the Bay" All British Car Show

PLEASE PATRONIZE OUR SPONSORS

Show Sponsors

Hood's Discount Home Center of Foley

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Tom Schmitz

Eddie & Terry Toenes

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Costello's Butcher & Deli

Frontier Motors

Pine Meadow Veterinary Clinic

Stephen Reese

Taber's Toybox

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Edward Jones-John Peacock, CFP

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Southern Gardens Florist

Terrezza Optical

Eddie & Terry Toenes

Fred Veenschoten

Warrington Chiropractic Clinic

George E. Wakeman

Bill & Donna Weeks



Classifieds

1972 MGB

Complete, documented restoration at a level beyond new; BHMC certificate and overdrive. \$25,000 asking price is far below cost of restoration. Test drive or inspection by appointment (car is in Mobile).



Ken McElhaney, 251-401-4474

1980 Triumph Spitfire 1500

Pageant Blue. Runs and drives, but needs restoration work. New mechanical fuel pump, new rear brake parts except drums, new seat belts and hardware, new gas cap seal and gas filters, new windshield wipers, new hood prop rods. Needs convertible top, some small rust area repair around the trunk lid corner and bottom, interior work. Rubber bumpers are in bad shape, so started conversion to chrome; rear complete, front not done. Previous owners used older seats without headrests and a stripe on the hood with the "Triumph" laurel wreath logo. \$3500.



Mike Japp, webmaster@pbca1.org

Vintage Trico Wiper Arm and Blade Cabinet

Asking \$50.

Mike Grieco
302-598-3885



Just one more thing, please . . .



Pierre Fontana sent Ed. this photo, saying he misses his old garage and the boys' companionship, the horsing around, the fabulous machines, and "odd ball" customers, so his wife Sharron made him a garage to play with. He said he hoped I would like it. Pierre, I like it very much indeed— Sharron is incredibly creative and talented.



Find us on the web at www.pbca1.com, or on Facebook at Panhandle British Car Association