



smoke in the wires

Sep. '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

Sep. 16, 2023

Veterans Helping Veterans Car Show and Jeep Bash, Battleship Memorial Park, Mobile Bay, 7:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., \$30. This is a judged show.

Sep. 18, 2023

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

SEPTEMBER 2023

Sun	Mo	Tue	We	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18 Club Meeting	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Tight Connections

Club and Member News

Hot August Morning

photos by Dick Bishop and David Menaker (SABCC)

Despite temperatures approaching triple digits, some 25 British car stalwarts representing three clubs – PBCA, South Alabama British Car Club, and Mardi Gras MG – participated in the August 19 road rally and food fest planned by SABCC VP of Activities Dave Roloson.

The group convened at PJ's Coffee in Spanish Fort, where plans for the day were discussed and world problem-solving began. From there, the caravan, consisting of one Aston Martin, one Austin-Healey, four Jaguars, one MG, one MINI, and one Triumph, along with a few motors of suspicious origins, began a 27-mile drive to the Derailed Diner on Wilcox Rd near Interstate 10. Along the way, we were joined by another MG, and a Japanese truck piloted by SABCC president Tom Renick, whose Sunbeam failed in its efforts to get more than about a mile from the Garagemahal. David and Patricia Couling met us at the diner in their Land Rover, bringing the total British count to eleven.

Lunch at the diner did not disappoint, and we were warmly greeted by Pepe', the general manager, and his team. Considerably more problem-solving ensued over burgers, Monte Cristo sandwiches, and onion rings.

After lunch, a remnant of the group dispatched themselves to Brodie's Cream and Bean in Silverhill, where the ice cream, as with the earlier lunch, met and surpassed expectations. The array of cars attracted a good bit of attention from the locals, with several taking photos of the motors on display.



Top, the line-up at PJ's; middle, a photo of the caravan; bottom, lunch at the Derailed Diner..

Hadji Temple Show

photos by Patrick Roberts and Ed.

The Hadji Shrine Temple on Nine Mile Rd. in Pensacola held an open car show on Sep. 9, and offered a British class, offering first, second, and third place trophies. Several PBCA members participated, and despite the heat, *Ed.* found the shade trees kept conditions comfortable.



Three Triumphs, a Morgan, a Lotus, and an MG.

First-place honors went to **Dwyke Rushing** for his Austin-Healey 3000 [*with a sporty V8 engine-Ed.*]; second went to **Fred Veenschoten** in his Morgan F-Super, and third to new member **Tim Garrold** and his 1939 MG TA. **Bob Manske** also won, with a miraculous healing of the top on his Jaguar XKR!



Top, first-place winner Dwyke Rushing; bottom, third-place honoree Tim Garrold. Fred Veenschoten left early.

A Sleeper

story and photos by Fred Veenschoten

We have all heard the term “sleeper,” which refers to a stock-looking car but with something special under the hood. Our friend, **George Bruno**, has such a car in his TR6. From the outside, it looks like a resto-mod, so it's not totally stock. The interior looks race car-like but more comfortable. The outside exhaust starts to give some clues. Pop the bonnet and now you see a lovely all-aluminum V8 Rover engine. This is the engine that in 1968 made the Morgan Plus 8 the fastest production car in the UK. So if you pull up next to a dark blue TR6, don't bother to rev your engine and glance over to the driver and nod toward the red light!!

Now the term Sleeper can also refer to a person. George is a quiet, unassuming kind of guy. You will see him standing and looking at a car, but not saying much. He is listening. He has figured out that you learn more with your mouth shut and your ears open than you do with your tongue wagging. George is a really clever guy and a fine craftsman. If you look closely at his TR6 and notice all the fine detail work he has done, I think you will agree with me.

George hasn't been sitting on his laurels, though. He has started another build. This time



Above, the sleeper TR6 with its Rover V8 engine.

it is a car from scratch. It has a boxed Model T chassis and solid front axle with torsion bar suspension. The rear has a Chevy differential, and the engine is a Jaguar 6-cylinder [*Preach, brother!-Ed.*]. He is planning to make his own aluminum body along the lines of the pre-war Mercedes W125 race car. George has bought an English wheel and will soon begin rolling and shrinking sheet metal. I really want to assist him with this and see if I can learn something.



Top, George's latest project with the Ed.-approved Jaguar engine; bottom, the Craftsman in his shop.

George doesn't have a shop full of fancy equipment. It is basic tools and is as “Old Shop” as you will find anywhere. He does do wonderful things with what he has, and that is the mark of a Craftsman.

Wiring Diagrams

Tech Tools and Tips

Manske Tech Day – Aug. 26, 2023

*story by Bob Manske
photos by Paul Reese*

Fun day! The usual famous Bloody Marys were provided by **Paul Reese** and a surprise gallon or two (or three) of Margaritas was provided by **Keith Sanders**. **Taber Tompkins** brought plenty of yummy doughnuts.

We adjusted the clutch in **Dick Maddux's** Triumph TR3A. His was the first car we worked on.

The red MGB (photo, right) got a new steering wheel thanks to **Joe Stevens** and his air impact tool used to remove the old wheel. A rear tail light also was repaired. It had a wire that became disconnected.



Monica Bachmann's green MGB (photo, below) was supposed to get the old steering wheel from the red one, but alas, Joe was not able to remove that one. So he soaked the stubborn nut and shaft with penetrating oil and will try again later.



Fred Veenschoten and

unnamed co-workers worked on **Judith Gallego's** MGB GT brakes.

The humorous highlight of the day didn't involve cars but was when Taber instructed Monica, **Risa Manske**, **Toni Veenschoten**, and **Gail Sanders** in the fine art of cigar smoking. He had made a special trip to a cigar store the day before to get some premium, top quality, mild cigars. Toni and Risa opted out of actually lighting up a cigar, but the brave and more adventuresome Monica and Gail puffed away and said they really enjoyed their cigars – and Margaritas and rum-filled chocolate cherries supplied by Monica.

The last car of the day was a Volvo owned by **Cameron** and **Lisa Leonard** . . . not an LBC, but an emergency plugged-up AC condensation drain tube (water was dumping into the passenger compartment).

On the lift both Cameron and Lisa did their best to get to the plugged part of the offending tube, but were ultimately defeated by evil

Volvo engineers who had made certain no DIY owner would repair the problem. An impressive amount of stopped-up



The engine from the rescued Jensen Healey (see Aug. "Smoke") relaxes in a pool. It's now on a stand for analysis.

water all drained out while they tried to fix the problem. Maybe the tube cleaned itself from all the yanking, banging and wiggling?

Sunbeam Surprises

story and photo by Tom Renick, SABCC

You never know what new surprise you might find when rejuvenating a non-running vehicle. In this case, it's Ruby, my latest Sunbeam rescue. Taking one look under the rear end, it was obvious that something was amiss with the emergency brake setup. The cable to the right is down, forward, and under the spring. The bar to the left is down, forward, bent, and under the spring. Both are supposed to be straight across, above the springs, and connected to the emergency brake operating levers to the rear of the backing plates.



Old Ruby's faulty emergency brake setup

The upshot of this lucky find is that in the past, someone had removed the axles and replaced them on the wrong sides. The only way to fix the emergency brake problem was to yank out the axles and reverse them, which we did. Then, the backing plates would be configured to correctly connect the cable and bar.

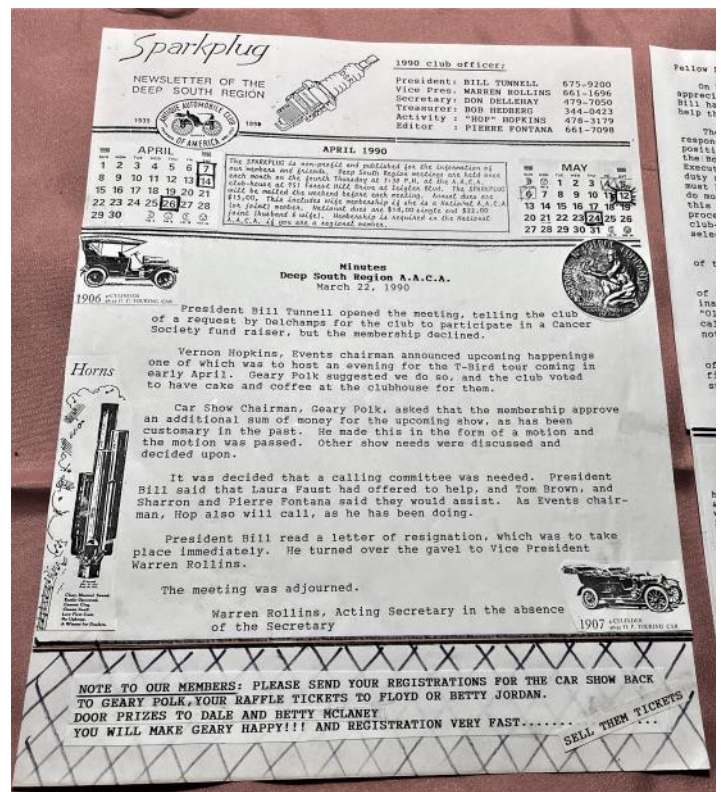
With the brake kits in, soon we will have sufficient brakes to at least stop the back end of old Ruby [that should be interesting; if doubt exists as to the efficacy of the front brakes, I think I will observe from a distance-Ed.].

Old-Tech Newsletters

story and photo by Pierre Fontana

This is the way it was before computers and photocopy machines: a good old manual typewriter, and a mimeograph machine turned manually to print one page at a time from a stencil you made with collages, appliques, drawings, and pictures from an original page as you see here—very time consuming. The equivalent of “white out” was used to correct your mistakes. The fluid used in the drum was somewhat like brake fluid—very volatile with a strong smell, it gave you a “high.”

Each newsletter was addressed, stamped and mailed. To keep from licking stamps I would reimburse the hospital I worked for, and naturally used their mimeograph machine. Those were the days . . . my hat's off to Michael. [When I was in high school, I learned to type on a manual typewriter, and as a teacher's aide, ran a (motorized) mimeograph machine. I am grateful for modern technology.]



A page from the March 27, 1990 edition of “Sparkplug,” newsletter of Mobile’s Deep South Region car club.

Pierre's Wisdom

Pierre Fontana

Member's Pleasant Surprise

It is always a pleasure to work on a nice car, after so many years on working on derelicts with low-budget salvations. A two-member team (uncle and nephew) worked for two years resurrecting this Midget; I must admire their work; it is very neat and professional. The car runs well and they succeeded in making it a drivable pleasure. Having some electrical gremlins, it was time for a little help.



The Midget's clean engine bay.

I would like to take the opportunity to address one of the main deficiencies of some British cars. This is a not mistake Joseph Lucas made, but the result of time and corrosion. BULLET CONNECTORS—I like them, they are OK. Try working on an Italian wire harness . . . However, they are not sealed from the weather, and in time they corrode, build up resistance, or plain stop conducting. The female connector loses its



All photos courtesy Pierre Fontana

grip, and one accessory stops working, and many replacement accessories are purchased by mistake.

Cleaning the bullet part with a wire brush or replacing connectors is the solution, But corroded connectors do not always pull out whole and replacing a torn bullet is now easier. They are available two ways: the old, soldered type as original or a crimp-on type. The latter one requires a special available crimping tool, and some are better than others. Patience in disconnecting them will help. Cut out the rubber sleeve, and pry the metal crimp to save time and the original wires. I had to make up a few short connecting harnesses for the side marker lights and others. I robbed the old harness to get the correct color code. One great thing Joseph did is sticking with same color code for years after years and for cars as well. A Rolls taillight wire is red just like on any other British car.

Patience, and a test light, are your best weapons. Make sure all grounds are clean and tight after everything was painted during restoration.

Pierre Fontana is a technical advisor for SABCC.



Spare Wires

News on British Cars and the Hobby

Vintage Racing Brings Classic Cars to Life

story by **Rodney McDonald**
photos courtesy of the author

Since you're reading this issue of *Smoke in the Wires*, we can safely assume that you're into classic cars [or lack better reading material-Ed.]. You probably like attending car shows and driving events that the regional car clubs sponsor. But what if you wanted – more? Vintage racing might be the event you're looking for.

We are familiar with modern auto racing in all its forms, such as NASCAR, Formula 1, Indy Car and such. But, like the old cars we love and drive, old racing cars never really go away, either. In fact, many of them live vigorous lives in the ownership of racing enthusiasts. And when racing enthusiasts gather, you can bet there's going to be a race. And here in the deep south, we are fortunate to have several racing venues nearby that host these vintage events.

The nation's largest sanctioning body for vintage racing is Historic Sportscar Racing – HSR. These are the folks that organize and



The late **Richard Cunningham** checks out a Group 44 Jaguar at Daytona..

produce racing events at road courses all over North America. Like the traveling minstrel shows of a century ago, HSR's calendar of races moves from region to region with several events occurring within a calendar quarter in one region of the continent.



An Aston at Daytona.

For example, events within comfortable driving distance of the Gulf Coast include HSR Spring Fling at Sebring in March, The Mitty at Road Atlanta in April, HSR Fall Historics at Road Atlanta in September, HSR Classic Daytona 24 Hour in November and the HSR Classic Sebring 12 Hour in December.

Unlike other racing, HSR events allow the spectators to enter the paddock area where these awesome classic racing cars are prepared (or repaired) for the event. Spectators maintain a respectful distance from the work going on, but more often than not, you'll be waved in closer by the owners or team members to get a closer look or snag that perfect shot for your photo collection. And since these events are the hobby of most owners, you'll find them to be eager to talk about their cars and racing.

(story continues next page)

Vintage Racing, continued

Most venues allow spectators to wander from vantage point to vantage point to be able to catch all the action. Best of all, vintage racing events aren't just one race. The cars are grouped by class and each class has multiple appearances on track over the weekend.

The racing is just as exciting as you might imagine. Very few owners coddle their cars. In fact, most of them are hammer and tongs on the



The Mitty at Road Atlanta

track, going for that small opening that puts them further up the order. I recall one race for sports cars at The Mitty featured an incredibly well-driven MG Midget holding off an MGB-GT V8 for nearly half an hour. It was probably one of the all-time great races that I've seen.

I've been fortunate to have attended The Mitty at Road Atlanta three times and each I had a ball, except one year, when rain washed out the Sunday event. And I enjoyed the HSR Classic Daytona 24 Hour on the Daytona road course. While the event wasn't a single 24-hour race, the different classes raced during both day and night hours. It was thrilling.

The best way to get involved as a spectator is to become a member of HSR. For \$135.00, you receive a "hard card" that gets you into ANY HSR event in the country for one year. Simply put the card on a lanyard and you're waved in at the gate. It also allows you to partake in

scheduled HSR gatherings at events such as driver and crew dinners.

There is another group that organizes vintage racing events called the Sportscar Vintage Racing Association. While I've not been to any of their events, members of both groups attend events sanctioned by each body.

SVRA's calendar includes events at Sebring in February, NOLA Motorsports Park and Road Atlanta in March.

If you want to go with the season pass at SVRA, it's \$100.00 for one full year of events, for TWO people. Once you purchase your pass, simply walk up to the Will Call window at the event you want to attend and your pass will be waiting. Oh, a quarterly magazine is part of the package, too.



Turning in a hot lap at the Mitty is a TR4 racer.

Vintage racing events also host some incredible vendors selling things we car lovers just can't live without. From artwork to die cast models to books – you'll find it at a vintage racing venue.

Of course, the parking lot is another opportunity to spot your favorite classic cars. Local attendees drive their classics and there is usually reserved parking for them at the site.

Vintage racing is just one facet of the classic car hobby. It's an opportunity to see classic racing cars from all points in history used as they were intended to be used. Give it try.

Auction Roundup: MG T-Series

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

1949 MG TC 5-Speed



Sold for \$31,200 on Bring a Trailer

Featuring a high-quality restoration, front disc brakes, and a 5-speed 'box, this green over tan TC got top dollar.

1953 MG TD



Sold for \$17,850 on Hemmings

Owned by the seller since 1962, this car was restored by University Motors. The seats and exterior color are not original, but otherwise the car had only minor flaws.

1955 MG TF "1500"



Sold for \$22,000 on Bring A Trailer

Black vinyl rather than leather, and a few flaws and blenishes, made this TF a relative bargain.

1954 MG TF



Not Sold for \$14,600 on eBay (but relisted)

This TF has an MGB engine and other "accessories;" perhaps the lack of originality hurt its chances to sell.

Coming Soon

Here's a brief rundown of upcoming events:

- **Dog Day Rally**, watch for dates and details to be announced soon.
- **Vintage Triumph Register National Convention**, Sep. 27 – Oct. 1, Dillard, GA: The theme is "Celebrating the Vision of Giovanni Michelotti," honoring the Italian designer of many of our favorite British cars. For more information, visit vtr2023.org.
- **Renaissance Eurofest**, Oct. 14, 10:00 – 5:00, Ridgeland, Miss. See www.euro-fest.net.
- **British Car Festival**, Oct. 20 and 21, Fairhope United Methodist Church, \$25 before Oct. 13, \$30 on or after. The registration form is [here](#).
- **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!

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

My Favorite MGs

The focus of my British motoring is Jaguar; I own three of the “big cats,” and have had five in total. But I can’t get above my raisin’, which is why I still have an MG. The 1979 B in my garage is my fourth member of the Morris Garages family, so I that ought to mean I’m still permitted to talk about the marque that’s the focus of SABCC’s 2023 British Car Festival. So, here’s my list of my favorite sporting MGs, least to most:

- Chrome-bumper Midgets, 1961-1974: While ranking the chrome-bumper car lower than its rubber-bumper counterpart seems like heresy, I actually think the rubber nose visually “lengthens” the car, making it look less stubby and slab-sided.
 - Rubber-bumper Midgets, 1975-1979: As the photo above proves, I had a 1976 Midget “back in the day” (the photo was taken circa November 1980). Given to me by my dad, it was the first car I owned. I’ve since had two other examples of this series.
 - Rubber-bumper MGBs, 1974.5-1980: Even though I have an “RB MGB,” and am caretaker of my sister-in-law’s Damask Red 1977 (Stuart Waddington’s car), I must yield to consensus. Still, these are fine machines and for many the point of entry to our hobby.
 - MGB Limited Edition, 1980 (some are listed as 1981s): In the US, we mostly got the black car with the silver stripes. The front spoiler and alloy wheels helped update a dying car.
 - Chrome-Bumper MGBs, 1962-1974.5: For me, the earliest “pull-handle” cars are the purest and the best, followed by the GTs. I must admit, however, that I am not a fan of the hood scoop on MGCs (sorry, **Keith Sanders**).
 - Post-Abingdon MGs: Now that I’ve seen, and wrenched on, an MGF, thanks to my SABCC friend Rodney McDonald, I’m very impressed with what post-British Leyland Rover was able to do. I hope to see an RV8 soon; the pictures look great.
 - MG pre-war models: Yes, they are impractical on modern roads, but the earliest MGs, such as the M-Type that has made several appearances at the BCF (and will be back this year) are rolling history. Those with fabric bodies are particularly fascinating.
 - MG T-series, 1945-1955: I’m listing the T-series as a group, but I’m really talking about three specific cars – the TC, the TD, and the TF. My late father loved these cars and dreamed of owning one. No one can deny their importance in bringing British cars to the US. Of the three, my personal favorite is the TF, followed by the TC.
 - MGA, 1956-1962: And thus we come to my favorite MG, the MGA roadster and coupe, whose svelte bodies are in my opinion second only to the E-Type Jaguar for British car beauty and purity of line.
- So, that’s my ranking, but I like all MGs. That’s why I’m looking forward to seeing as many as I can in Fairhope on October 21.



PANHANDLE BRITISH CAR ASSOCIATION

2023 "Brits on the Bay" All British Car Show

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Fred Veenschoten

Warrington Chiropractic Clinic

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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 . . .



SABCC-er Frank Stabler spotted this MGB LE at our own National Museum of Naval Aviation. Given the recent, and ongoing, heat wave, this seems a highly sensible way to keep the interior a bit cooler, without resorting to the fendishly-hard procedure to raise the hood (or "put the top up" for us Yanks).



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