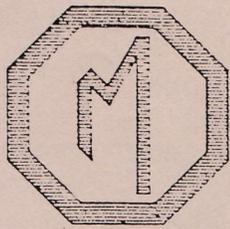
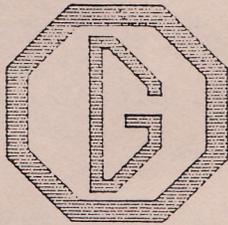


LA. MG C.C.
P.O. Box 641095
Kenner, La. 70064

SEPTEMBER 1988



MORRIS



AZETTE



TO:

JOHN & KATHIE WINTER
2029 GENERES
HARAHAN LA 70123

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The Official Newsletter Of
The Louisiana Centre Of The
MG Car Club



TECH TIPS

REPLACE MGB REAR WHEEL OIL SEALS

If you notice that the rear brakes are not grabbing evenly it could be from oil contaminated brake shoes. Pull off the rear drums and check for dampness. If things are wet, but it can't be determined if the brake cylinder or the axle seas is leaking, then clean down everything with spray-on brake cleaner in a can. Drive the car for a few days. pull the drums agian. Now the source of the wetness should be apparent.

If the oil is seeping from behind the axel hub then the oil seal needs to be changed. First thing, buy a seal; Gambino's stocks it, cost is \$4.00. Remove cotter pin, keep brake drum for now. Have someone depress the brake pedel very hard. Use a 1 5/16" socket and a good sized cheater bar to loosen the nut. An impact wrench is best. Remove drum, remove nut, and pry with a crowbar behind the hub while hitting along the side of the hub protrusion. This should pop loose the hub. If any of the 4 studs are in bad shape, now is the time to change them.

The oil seal is now exposed. Remove the tapered sleeve on the axle from the inside of the seal. Take a screwdriver and remove the seal. Oil the new seal and press in flush with the housing. Clean up the tapered sleeve with steel wool at the seal surface. Coat with grease and replace. Clean grease and replace hub. If the brake shoes are badly soaked, then thry should be replaced also. Replace the drum and adjust the brakes. Hold the pedal and torq the nut to 150 lbs. Replace the wheel and hit the road.

THE LOUISIANA CENTRE OF THE MG CAR CLUB

NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 1988

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New Membership - \$25 first year
 Regular Membership - \$20 annually
 Correspondence(outside 50mi radius) - \$10 annually
 Call anyone above for an application, or join is for a
 monthly meeting.

CLUB REGALIA AVAILIABLE

MG Club T-shirt(cream colour) - - - - - \$ 7.00
 MG Anniversary Sport Shirt (red) - - - - - 12.00
 LCMGCC Cloth sew-on patch - - - - - 2.00
 LCMGCC Window decal - - - - - 1.50
 MG Car Club lapel pin (large -limited quant) 3.00

MG MG

C A L E N D E R O F E V E N T S F O R 1 9 8 8

SEP 24 - - - - - ANNIVERSARY PICNIC
 SEP 27 - - - - - GENERAL MEETING
 OCT 8 & 9 - - - - - Memphis British Car Show
 Contact Jimmy Bruno
 OCT 15 - - - - - UNO Anitque & Classic Cars
 OCT 22 - - - - - N.O. Austin Healy Club's
 British Car Day
 OCT 25 - - - - - GENERAL MEETING
 NOV 6 - - - - - EE REYNOLDS MEMORIAL RALLYE
 DEC 10 - - - - - CHRISTMAS PARTY

OUT NEXT GENERAL MEETING WILL BE HELD AT 7:30 ON
 SEPTEMBER 27TH AT SHONEY'S, 3410 WILLIAMS BLVD, KENNER.

ENGLISH MOTORING CLUB'S
BRITISH CAR DAY 1988
JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

by Michael Delacerda

This year we had a strong showing of British cars in our caravan heading to Jackson, Mississippi for British Car Day 1988. There were five cars making the trip this year including Bill Giesler from the Austin Healey Club with his beautiful Austin Healey 3000. Members from our club included Jimmy Bruno, Rodger Talley, Roger Gibson and myself. We headed up I-55 with intentions of a quick breakfast in Hammond and then arriving on the grounds of Smith-Wills Stadium where the event was held. All was going as planned until about an hour or so into the trip, when Jim's MGB developed fuel pump problems. This only put us back about a half hour or so since I had an extra fuel pump in the trunk of my MGA. (See photos in this issue) The rest of the drive into Jackson was enjoyable since by this time the skies were clearing, making way for a sunny day.

Once we arrived, there was lots of things to see and do. There was a swap meet and vendor booths set up on the grounds where you could browse through the antique parts and memorabilia. I obtained an original piece of sales literature for my MG 1100. He had sales brochures for all types of cars including Rileys, Hillmans and some very old Renaults. Most of the pieces were \$20.00, but he gave it to me free saying something about feeling sorry for me for actually owning an MG 1100. Next to the vendors' area there was something they were calling a car corral, where cars of all makes and models were gathered for the event. Of course there was the usual Fan Belt Toss, Spark Plug Changing contest, Trivia Board and all the expected things to go with a British Car Day. The most interesting thing to me though was the Trivia Board. It contained pictures of twenty very obscure British cars in which you had to guess the make.

I guess the real reason we all went was for the British cars. There were certainly lots to look at since there was everything from an MGTA to fully equipped Land Rovers.

Louisiana MG Car Club members Cliff Hughes and Fred Mayer were also there looking at all the British beauties. Hopefully Cliff's MGA will be ready for next years judging.

The judging that took place was that for People's Choice. Because there was such a variety of cars present, there were many different classes. Jimmy Bruno won 2nd Place in the Crome Bumper Class as well as Roger Gibson taking 2nd for his Rubber Bumper 1980 Limited Edition MGB. Bill Giesler also won 2nd in his class for his Austin Healey 3000 and yours truly came in 1st in the MGA category. We all had a wonderful time at Jackson's British Car Day 1988, and I'm sure everyone involved is looking forward to next year.

WEEKEND RACERS'

PART FOUR—

"It's a rod," Fletcher says.

"Damn. I don't know," says Tony, dispiritedly examining the shards: "I just don't know. I was babying it. I can't figure it." Anything could have caused it, an invisible internal fracture in a rod, for example. Sandy doesn't look at the painful of innards. "I've seen them before," she says, not dignifying the horrible by paying it undue attention. She has worked like a dog on that engine and can't be happy, but it doesn't show. Fletcher tells Tony he is sorry it happened and means it.

"It's not fair," comments a bystander.

"Nobody said it was going to be fair," says Sandy laconically. The heat is terrible.

That night, as the stifling warmth relents a little and the air becomes savory with the smoke of 50 barbecues, Sandy sits in the van and talks about why people race. She has taken an SCCA driver's school and driven in a regional—i.e., lower level—race. As she warms to the subject, she grows animated and positively sparkles.

"It's exciting, a different world out there," she says. "You come fast around that turn and down the straight and all you can think is, *Make it go faster*. And then you pop over the hill and go sailing down the slope and around one curve and around another, and it's like a roller coaster, except you're in charge.

"That's what racing is like: getting to drive the roller coaster."

Neither Fletcher nor Tony could have said that. Yet her description is deliberate: a repetition, she tells me, of a presentation on racing she once gave at a Dale Carnegie course she took, heaven knows why. There is nothing of Carnegie in Sandy.

Nor in Fletcher. "Can't do much with these old dinosaurs, not when you gotta race against tube-frame Mazdas," he says, as Team 20 works on the cars into the night, the gasoline pageantry of Road Atlanta swirling around them. "But I can still win. At least I can beat 90 percent of the drivers, just because I've got more experience. I know how my car handles, and I can take 'em in the turns. On the straights, they just blast by me. I don't have the power."

Fletcher is not modest. He is not aggressively cocky, not ungracious, not unpleasant to be around; but just under the surface he has a large ego with sharp teeth. If he didn't have it, he wouldn't win. Ego, more than talent, produces

victory on the track—not conceit, but a single-minded unwillingness to lose. As someone once said, all things are possible for him who refuses to listen to reason. "I've got the killer instinct, I guess," says Fletcher. "And, let's face it, racing is mostly ego."

But if he really wants to win, why does he keep racing Triumphs?

"Money. I've got too much invested to start over. Besides, I just like racing these old things. I get a kick out of being able to win in something that isn't supposed to win. It's a challenge."

Does he ever think about having a really competitive car?

"Always. Always. I think about selling the Triumph and getting something better. Thing is, you can never sell your toys for what you've put in them." He figures he has \$20,000 invested in his Triumph, twice what he could sell it for, and a newer, tube-frame car would cost \$40,000. Fletcher might do quite well in a better car. But sooner or later, he would also bump into his limitations—find that there is always somebody better. Team 20 is fortunate because its aspirations match its abilities.

Somebody dropping by offers condolences on the ravaged engine of Tony's car. "Hell, it sounded good to me. What happened?"

"Dunno, brother."

"New engine, wasn't it?"

"Yep."

"You just have to take what comes," Sandy says philosophically. The race the next day will show how right she is.

FLETCHER STARTS THE day's racing in style, swooping onto the Road Atlanta track with the engine singing—but then pulls into the pits on the pace lap.

Later, as Team 20 sits watching the videotapes of the race in Tony's trailer in Farmville two nights after the debacle, what happened becomes abundantly clear. On the last turn before the back straightaway, Fletcher lost every bit of his oil pressure but didn't notice and kept on driving. How that engine held together without oil for most of a lap will be an eternal mystery. On the straightaway, he looked at the gauge and cut the engine, tried to pull over, couldn't get through the pack, and had to fire it up to keep from causing a crash.

The tape shows Sandy running to the car with a tool box, Fletcher explaining the loss of oil, Sandy pulling the hood off, and saying, not quite phlegmatically, "It's hopeless."

The oil line had blown off. The night before the race, they had rerouted the

line to bypass the Oberg and had stretched it too tight. "Guess we got careless," Fletcher, never one to make excuses, would say later. Dark, laconic resignation from Sandy, anger at himself from Fletcher. Both are used to such disaster: Sandy says that they blow an engine about every three races. Usually, though, they complete more than one lap before the engine goes.

Eight hundred miles of driving, a couple of thousand dollars, one beautiful engine wrecked, a rear end ruined, countless man-hours in garages and machine shops, probable damage to Fletcher's engine, nine quarts of oil on the track, and not one lap of racing completed. This was the first time they had lost both cars without even getting into the race. Yet Team 20 doesn't crush easily. There will be other races, and they will win some of them. You take what comes, and if you can't, you find another sport.

Sitting in Tony's trailer, they click in another tape, this one of Charlotte Motor Speedway earlier in the year. Even on tape, heat shimmers off polished hoods in little waves. Drivers strap themselves in with heavy webbing, slip on helmets and Nomex fire-proof gloves, gaze tense and focused through green visors. Wives check hood latches and tire pressure. This stuff lives deep in the hormones. The scene differs only in mechanical particulars from a field of medieval knights strapping on armor and checking stirrups for a tournament. Guinevere didn't build engines, but you can't have everything. Even jousting has come to an accommodation with modernity.

On the tape, the official holds up her hand: time to go racing. Motors cough into life, unmuffled, fierce, running rough and sullen. Tuned to the edge of hysteria, cammed for full throttle and high RPMs, they don't know how to idle. Drivers goose them, more from nerves than need. *Whoppobbawhoppobbawhaaap!whaap!* Engine after engine blats into rhythmic explosion, the sound felt in the tissues of the lungs, strong and exhilarating.

The tape shows Fletcher going full bore down the straights toward the next turn, standing on the brakes at the last possible second, down-shifting into third at 100 miles per hour, taking the curve at the edge of traction, flooring her out, then doing it again. Occasionally his hand leaves the wheel to point to one side or the other, telling cars in a higher class which side to pass him on.

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As a matter of courtesy you don't block faster traffic. The car vibrates, engine howls, a turn flashes toward the car and twists to the right, then the hill drops precipitously down. This is where Tony says he lets off but Fletcher keeps his foot to the floor for every last drop of caterwauling speed, 140 m.p.h. and climbing....

"He won't quit trying," says Sandy, with a mixture of pride and amusement. "I might figure I had third place and ease off, make sure I don't blow the engine. Not Fletcher. He figures maybe it'll hold together and just keeps on getting it."

"I don't go racing to be in second place," Fletcher says. This may be wise in a quest for national standing, and it may not, but Fletcher piles up a respectable record of seconds and thirds in a car that really shouldn't do it. Not bad for an aging green brontosaurus.

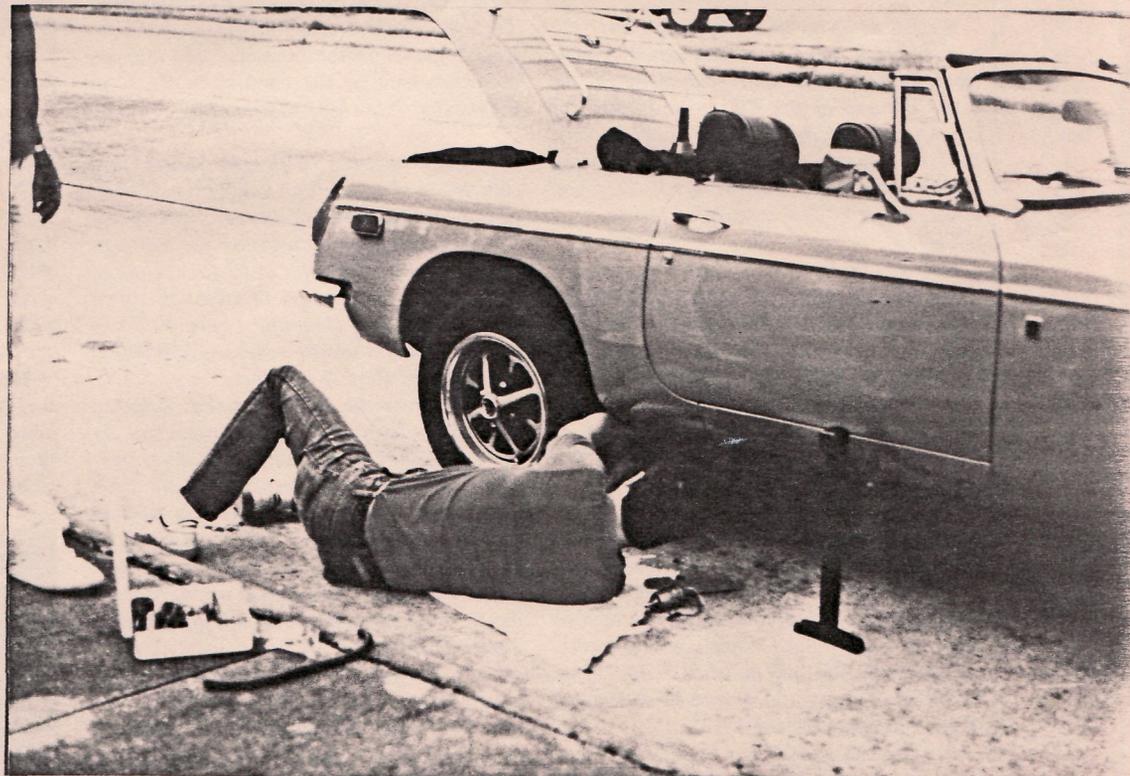
When the race is over, Tony turns off the video and starts feeding Amber. Work comes early. "You know," he says, "I'm thinking about getting Carrillo rods, if I can get the money together. I'm getting sick of engines going south on me."

Carrillo rods, specially made and almost infinitely strong, go for \$140 each. Tony's car needs six. A package of eight runs \$1,130. The outlay is considerable for a man who has just spent \$500 for nothing in Atlanta and has to come up with a new engine fast.

"Buncha money," Fletcher says, as he and Sandy walk out into the night. "Maybe, though. Come on over tomorrow night, and we'll get started on an engine for your car. We can find something." □



Brother, can you spare a fuel pump?





SYNCHRONOUS IDIOSYNCRASIES

There will always be a Britain and there will always be those fiercely independent folks who fixate on British cars

By Leon Mandel

Somewhere, somehow it has entered legend that Americans became enchanted with foreign cars through an osmotic process involving contact with them during World War II.

In fact, during that war car owners hid their cars to keep them from being confiscated and were deprived of gasoline to drive the ones that weren't hidden. What's more, during those times, passenger car travel on the highway was at very least perilous.

We fell in love with foreign cars after the war because some entrepreneurial Americans spotted them squirreled away in obscure corners of the European Theatre of Operations and thought they could make a buck by bringing them into the U.S. during a time (after peace was declared) when you couldn't get a domestic auto for love or money.

We fell in love with them because we were influenced by the earliest manifestation of the genus Yuppie, the first wave of travelers to a European continent where the lights had gone back on and from which anything, even what was then called "L'eau Qui Fait Pssst", later to become known as "Perrier", was saleable in America because it was, well, it was exotic.

It always rains in Portland except when they put on a car event; then it never rains. It wouldn't have dared rain during the All British Field Meet, the most outrageous orgy of sharp edges, piano wire wheels, winged mascots and polished wood since the fleets of the world passed in review for the coronation of Edward #7.

For two days at the end of August, Portland International Raceway was chock-a-block with: Austin-Healey (the honored marque on this 11th annual occasion), AC, Bentley, Dellow, Fairthorpe Electron, Ginetta, Healey Silverstone, Invicta, Jaguar,

Lagonda, Morgan, Ogle, Panther, Rover, Riley, Standard, Triumph, Vauxhall, Westwind and Y Series Tourer. Xebecs and Zebras were busy elsewhere.

They sat shining in the bright Pacific Northwest sun, in rows of one (the Fairthorpe and the AC) and rows of fifty (the MGs). There were north of 500 of them. Think of it. Imagine it. Believe it. More than 500 British cars still running, gathered together, not in some elephant's graveyard, but on the greensward of a municipally owned race track, in celebration of our past. Their owners had brought them there to rejoice together in the pleasures and agonies of membership in the band of brothers, in the legions of the S.U. Carburetor.

Postwar owners of British sports cars (the tiny, sad sedans that came over—Austin A30 for example—were all but ignored) and sports sedans banded together for self-protection. And in pride. And to exchange sparse, and hard-to-get information about their balky, recalcitrant charges. They formed a nation within a nation. And within each nation, there were tribes.

There were the MGs, tattered, battered warriors who could be distinguished by their pugnacity. There were the Jaguar people. They came complete with Tam o'Shanters, string-back gloves and Norfolk jackets. You could spot them in a room by the way they were forever running their hands over anything made of wood. Morgans were the easiest of all to identify: They simply could not bring themselves to sit in a chair without first checking to see whether it was fitted with a whoopee cushion. (For those of you spared the Morgan experience, understand that the adjusting mechanism on the seat consisted entirely and wholly of an inflatable cushion.) Less wealthy Austin-Healeyites, that is to say Sprite owners, sported glasses with lenses ground so their eyes bulged for all the world

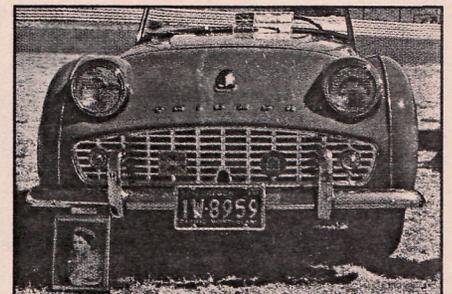
The sun shone on Portland International Raceway for 11th annual All British Field Meet; Austin-Healey was the honored marque



to notice. Rich Healeyites, the ones with the red and black LeMans model, wore belted shoes (as even their bonnets were leather belted), belted blouses, belted shirts and some of them even had their cheeks louvered. Triumph persons always wore long-sleeved shirts. Their elbows were worn through to the bone from hanging out the cut-down doors of their TR2s and 3s.

The tribes may have been diverse, but the people were as one. Individualistic, stubborn, wrongheaded, sure of themselves and though independent, also willing to share woes and sorrows as well as pleasures and parts. Indeed it was the best of times.

John and Fern Rollin began all this getting together business in Portland. They were members of the Jaguar Car Club and they knew in their hearts that if anyone were to be able to organize such a zany gathering



Triumph TR2 posed with Queen (above); smart TD belongs to MG restorer, Steve Rollin; Morgans were on hand (far right)