



April 2009

The Nugnut

Northwestern, North Carolina



What's been happening in your garage this past winter?

As far as interesting news it's been quiet in this part of North Carolina even if one considers the mild winter we've had. There has not been much reported activity among club members and their cars by all accounts. But I'm hoping all that will change very soon and it's not just because fair weather has arrived.



A rare 2009 snowfall (picture by Bob Thompson)

In my little part of the universe a lot has been going on with me and my 1970 MGB. Some of you may recall I re-acquired my MGB in 2004 and that it has been in a state of restoration ever since. Along the way I have

ANNUAL DUES

How to GET A \$10.00 DISCOUNT
(See below)

The membership year for the club is from June 1, 2009 to May 31, 2010.

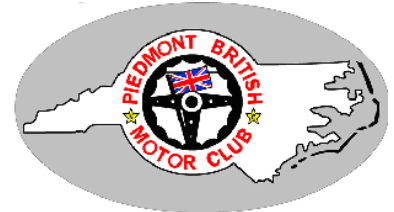
Dues will remain at \$25.00 per membership.

There is a \$10.00 early payment discount for dues paid by May 31.

The effect of the discount results in the dues being \$15.00 per membership for those club members who pay their dues no later than May 31. Payment must be received by the treasurer no later than May 31 or mailed to the treasurer and postmarked no later than May 31. Dues can be made payable to PBMC and mailed to 663 Kenway Loop, Mooresville, NC 28117.

A new membership application/renewal form can be down-loaded from our website. Please throw away any old forms that you have in your possession. Thanks

Nancy Causey,
Treasurer



Car Badges

Bob Ravich discussed offering car badges for club members at the last club meeting. The badges will be ordered through Joe Kaiser, the same vendor who recently supplied the clocks with the club's logo. Bob's preliminary information is that we can order a prototype for \$50. It is expected that if the club orders 25 more badges the cost will be \$19.95 for the 4" wide oval version. It was decided that the club wanted the chrome background which appears gray in this picture. Bob is hoping to have an example at the next club meeting. *dj*



May 2, 2009. See further details inside

**Next Meeting of the Piedmont British Motor Club Statesville, NC.
April 28, 2009
Join us for dinner at 6. The meeting usually starts around 7PM.**

experienced the proverbial one step forward and two steps backward phenomena we all go through it seems. Spell that “MONEY, FRUSTRATION AND STRESS!” Back in 2006 or so I had towed the car to Bob Thompson’s old garage in Statesville where the engine and tranny were taken out and rebuilt. While that was going on I had the car repainted which turned out to be a disaster in terms of correct color, cost and the quality of the job. Through a series of events that I will not go into here, the engine was put back in, I started putting the car back together, then it ended up at Ken Nicks garage in Jonesville, near Elkin, where it was stripped down again and repainted. This time my son, Ben, and I did all the prep work, which was an incredible experience if you have never done that before. There is nothing I can do to recommend it as an enjoyable experience.

Anyway, the second time around we got the correct BRG paint for the 1970 model year so it was beginning to feel all the agony, from my aching back, torn and scraped hands was worth the effort. My biggest problem after that was finding all the parts I had taken off the second time and carelessly set aside. If anyone has ever installed a windscreen or had to get upside down and peering back up to install instruments and wiring in an MG dash panel, try doing it two times within 6 months or so. The experience left me in awe as many times I wondered how they ever managed to move these cars down an assembly line at Abingdon. Maybe that is what drove British

Leyland out of business. They just could not sell enough cars fast enough to turn a profit.

At some point we decided it was time to see if the car would crank. With every precaution in place, including a fire extinguisher, the car fired up. For the first time in over 29 years I heard the beautiful sound of my engine. I’ve added that moment to the list of great experiences in my life!

I’d like to write that we had the car ready to go soon after but that was not the way it turned out. Even with adult supervision I was often unsure what I was doing and put off some things until I could figure out exactly how a part fit or, worse yet, why it did not work! I guess it got so bad that Ken Nicks who had pulled out his old Jag resto-rod project, began to brag that he would finish his car before I would mine. Embarrassed or not, I struggled on at my best pace until there was no longer an excuse to test drive the car. When all things are considered, mostly the limited technical knowledge of the “mechanic” involved, the car drove remarkably well. Skipping along, leaving out a lot of “insignificant” agonizing details for the reader to imagine, the day finally arrived and it was time to drive my car home. If you want to hear an interesting analogy of that day... do you recall the day you took your 1st newborn child home from the hospital? I was scared to death that I did not have enough knowledge to take care of the car if an unusual smell came up or a fluid leak occurred. Well just like that child so many years ago, as we got more



The MGB finally comes home (Feb 26, 2009)

acquainted, we are becoming more comfortable with each other every day. Maybe it is because the suspension and brakes are so much better than my old MGA, but I really like having roll up windows and a little more get up and go.

So here we are. The driving season is upon us and nobody is more ready to get out there on these beautiful NC mountain roads than me.

PS: I have already heard there is a great drive waiting for us up the Mt Rogers (VA) way and John Mchaffie, who lives in the Winston Salem area, tells me there are many interesting roads we need to explore over that way too.

Ask not what your club can do for you...



...what can you do for your club?

I brought this up during the March club meeting. We do not need an act of congress to take a drive. So check your email, if the weatherman predicts good weather, let’s go make it a day of it!

I sincerely hope we can have more impromptu club drives this year.

dj

Just could not resist putting this in the newsletter. If you are looking for an extraordinary place to visit, this is an incredible museum located at Wright-Patterson AFB outside Dayton, OH (www.afmuseum.com). My only complaint, there are so many historical aircraft, including all the former Air Force One planes, it is just impossible to see everything in one day! *dj*



“What's in your 'Onboard' Tool Kit for your B?”

(Posted 22 March 2009, UK time)

Hi all,

Just wondering... For your toolkit which you have onboard your B, what are the essentials you keep in the car at all times?

You know the ones... those bits and pieces that will cover you if your B should ever need 'on the road maintenance'... plus any others you simply feel you couldn't do without.

Thanks,

Mark Duggan, New Zealand

A mallet...for whacking the fuel pump!

Dave O'Neill 2, Solihull, UK

AAA card, credit card and a cell phone. Cheers –

David DuBois, Bremerton, WA, USA

Duct tape and number 8 fencing wire :)

Simon Jansen, Auckland, New Zealand.

Points & condenser, hoses, hose clips, 15 thou feeler gauge, 7/16, 1/2, 9/16 spanners, flat & cross head screwdrivers, mole grips, bulbs, rotor arm, coolant, fuel, oil, brake fluid, fuses, tyre repair bottle,

brake light switch, scissor jack, jump leads, tow rope, torch with flashing beacon, warning triangle, hi viz, cable ties, duct tape, stainless welding wire, phone charger, bit of carpet to lie on under car!

Chris at Octarine Services, Essex, UK

Chris, what is the brake fluid for? I am trying to think of a situation where you lose all the fluid on the go but you are then able to repair it at the side of the road and keep going?

As well as all the kinds of things mentioned I also have a little multimeter. Useful for checking voltages and fuse continuity and so on.

Simon Jansen, Auckland, New Zealand.

Simon,

If the clutch M/C level falls due to a leak, it is possible to top up the tank and pump the pedal furiously for a short while and get clutch action back.

IME I use most of the bits on other people's cars!! *Chris at Octarine*

Services, Essex, UK

Reprinted from the BBS, MG Cars Enthusiasts' Club Limited (March 2009)



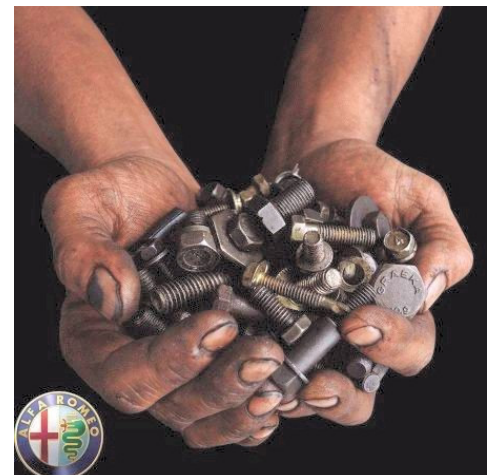
Birthdays for April

**Don Annas
Jim Causey
Clifton Gordon
PJ Lenihan
Harry Watkin**



"DAMMIT" TOOL: Any handy tool that you grab and throw across the garage While yelling "DAMMIT" at the top of your lungs. It is also, most often, The next tool that you will need.

If Lucas made guns, wars would not start either!



Which character best describes you?

This from editors of neighboring British car clubs who wishes to keep their identities unknown. *dz*

Hello again Danny,

You asked about our club energy. You have hit on the universal lament of every club. It is very common. Our club has about 185 members. Of that about 40 are "active," meaning they attend at least ONE event a year. That means all the work is done by less than a dozen dedicated, enthusiastic, selfless people. All we can do is plug away at it and have as much fun as possible doing it.

Regarding having people write articles: I struggle with this too. There are a couple of people that regularly send articles and I am always after people to write about what they are doing or events they attend. Most folks are intimidated if you ask them to "write an article." So I ask for photos and get them to jot down some notes about

News of local Interest

Monroe Cruise In

The City of Monroe will be hosting cruise-ins beginning April 10th thru Oct. 2009. They will be held the every 2nd Friday of each month. From what I'm hearing, it's supposed to have huge turn-outs.

This is not the same as the one

each photo. Before they know it, you have the bones for an article. I just piece the captions together and "flesh" it out for a more readable format. One good paragraph and several photos and I've filled a page.

It's funny, I have noticed that most clubs break down to the same following folks:

The "Heart of the Club" (the one person who you associate with all club things and the first person called about anything.

The cranky "Curmudgeon" who usually votes against the grain on everything or at least complains about it (he or she is tolerated as they do some valuable service to the club,

The "Guru" who can diagnose and fix anything on the side of the road with string and a rock (always have this person along on longer trips!

The "Snob" (we have several) who are special because they drive a certain type, model, year, color, SN or famous car. They want to.

recognized for their specialness and take every opportunity to talk about themselves, but rarely DO anything for the club

There is usually one single, relatively good looking "Hottie" that everyone hopes will show up to add some class to our events. (That would be our dear *Gussie Fink-Nottle*, she still has all her own teeth and just had her knees replaced so she is also a great dancer.)

Nice chatting with you and look forward to crossing paths some time. Exchanging ideas among fellow newsletter editors is always great for new ideas or the chance outright to steal articles. All of us encourage this as we are all in the same rust bucket together.

If you print this please do not use our real names as it will only draw more attention to our character defects.

Regards,

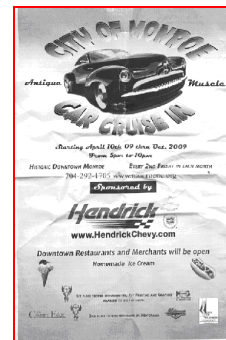
Art Vandelay, James Robert Baker
(noms de plume, of course)

Here's a little challenge: can you guess the true identity of these pen names?

previously held by DMI. Check out the Downtown Merchants Monroe event at www.monroenc.org <<http://www.monroenc.org/>>

Please pass the word and let's see if Monroe can be as popular as Oakboro's cruise-nite.

Check out the attached a flyer with some of the details.



South Mountain State Park Ride

Hi All:

At our last meeting of the Lake Norman Sports Car Group, one of the members, Bob Johnson, suggested a ride to the South Mountain State Park. It's located in Burke County, about 20 miles south of Morganton. I thought that some of the members of the PBMC might like to join the group for the ride.

It looks like it would be a great ride with a picnic in the park. The date that has been proposed for this trip is Saturday, May 16th. The LKN Group will meet at the Acropolis Restaurant (at exit 28 off I-77 in

Cornelius) at 9:00, have a quick coffee / breakfast and then start the ride. It will likely be more convenient for the PBMC folks to meet at another point along the way for those coming from the Statesville area. It would be helpful if you would express your level of interest. To that end, if you think that you'd like to join in, please let me know by May 1st so that we can get a rough head count. You can e mail me at ljrjr@bellsouth.net.

Click on the following links to get the information on the park.

Bob Ravich

From: Bob Johnson [bjsbj8@gmail.com]

To: Robert & Lucy Ravich
Subj: South Mtn State Park

Bob,

First link is to the general park info, second is to the brochure they hand out.

<http://www.ncparks.gov/Visit/parks/somo/main.php>

<http://www.ncparks.gov/Visit/parks/somo/pics/brochure.pdf>

I will give them a call before Sat. to find out if there is anything special we need to know before we go.

Bob Johnson

PJ's Trip to the Beach with the North Carolina MG Car Club

Sunday, April 5, 2009

We just returned from a fun trip to the beach, there were about 70 participants including 30 MGs, an XK120 Jag, a Lotus, a TR3 and a Spitfire.

We had a great time with the NCMG car club in Swansboro. Since the MG logo is an octagon we couldn't resist the opportunity for a group photo at the Octagon House, circa 1855 in Cedar Point, NC. A visit to Hammock's Beach State Park was

enjoyed by the 70 club members which included several cars from the Cape Fear British car club.

The Swansboro Police stopped traffic enabling our 30 LBCs [little British cars] to form a convoy. The 1.3 mile walk at the Croatan National Forest was a welcome bit of exercise. From there we were able to view the White Oak River and the wetlands.

The day was topped off with a Noggin and Natter at the home of Ron and Mary Howard.
Cheers,

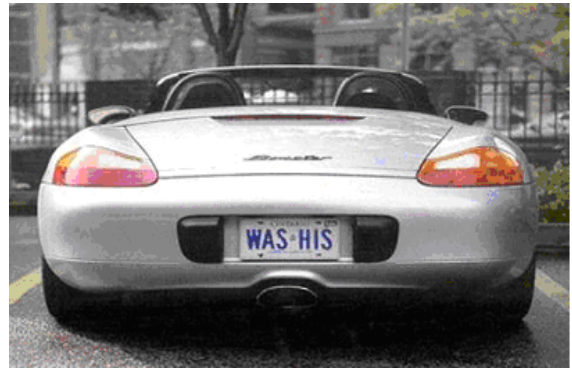
Brenda and PJ



A Little Humor



Submitted by Rick Dynesius (3-15-09)



Revenge is sweet

Meet Jack Austin

One of the perks of writing the newsletter and maintaining the website comes from the people you meet along the way. So it was that Jack Austin from nearby Blowing Rock recently emailed me about listing his trailer for sale in the newsletter. Now after a few email exchanges we have another British car owner friend on the radar screen and someone who might join us in a drive along the Blue Ridge Parkway.

I've since learned that Jack is a man of many talents that always seemed to include time for little British cars. Check out his website at www.twigwork.com. There you will see how he occupies his time when the economy is flourishing and the summer residents of Blowing Rock flock there for the season.

So let me introduce you to another British car lover. *dj*

Jack Austin lives just outside of Blowing Rock as a semi-retired refugee from the big city, he says. He's spent most of his

adult life working on European cars. "First the Brit stuff in the early sixties and later the Mercedes and Ferraris as the Limeys were nudged back off shore."

Jack does several things to keep food on the table now, but he still offers his expertise on British cars built prior to 1985 and brokers individual vehicles and private collections. As I've learned by emailing back and forth Jack is not a snob by any stretch, but he is selective about the cars and the company he keeps. (Since I seem to have made the cut maybe the rest of you guys will be nicer to me in the future). He's got a five thousand square foot hobby shop hidden behind a pile of rocks and rhododendron near Blowing rock, and invites any of us who happen to be in the neighborhood "to please drop in when the weather gets warmer. The fridge is full and there are lawn chairs around the cars. Emergency pit stops are encouraged, but if you can, please let him know you are

coming so he can put on some clean cloths and brush his teeth."

Jack started working on LBCs before graduating high school, and jumped into it seriously after dropping out of college in 1966. He morphed several times, first working with another guy in Greensboro manufacturing 36HP VW engine repair kits and things like gear knobs during the day and building racing SCCA cars nights. "We achieved nothing outstanding except going through his inheritance fairly quickly" he said.

Doing various oddball jobs he eventually marched into the local MG dealer and proclaimed to be "the hottest thing with a wrench that they would ever see." Remember that old saying ... "you can fool some of the people some of the time...." He later moved over to another dealer in High Point that handled both MGs and Fiats around 1968 or 1969. "I distantly remember having to deal with the FIAT 850s and

MGCs that came out about that time. "That might have been the beginning of my lifelong fight with anxiety and depression" he says.

Jack apparently has strong opinions; "the MGBs and Spridgets were always reliable as long as idiots kept their hands off of them. It was the MGC that no one could control because it came to us without warning and had teething troubles. The car was and is still great, but we had little warning and unfortunately the new owners did a lot of the "development work". Of course the poor little Fiats that had the crap run out of them from day one were a PITA because such small bore cars were not really suited for American roads or driving styles. The 124 Spyders and coups were good cars though. The MGCs had a propensity to overheat, but they were and still are like a locomotive once rolling downhill. I love them. It was a shame that Leyland was such a corporate mess back then and couldn't fully sort the Cs before they had to move on to some of the really bad stuff that came out of their design shops."

Jack has some personal opinions about some of the car lines that he has encountered over the years. He even finds himself lusting after a TR3 or a Jaguar sedan from time to time, and that means a lot coming from an MG kind of guy. LOL "Trust me! He says. MGBs are the best bang for the buck! They made a ton of them, the parts are relatively inexpensive and they are easy to work on. T

Series MGs are worthy of everyone's respect and the MGA will be a favorite of mine until I find myself pushing a walker around. Spridgets were my LBC of choice until I reached a certain personal dimensional level and found that I could no longer 'slip into the glove' as easily as I once could. E-Types look terrific and go like hell, but for me, they are less comfortable to drive. The sedans, on the other hand have gotten a bad rap over the years when in fact they are very nice cars that are reliable as a hammer if tended to correctly and can be had for very little money now. The big Healeys are heavier machines, but they are the image of what a British sports car is supposed to be and sound wonderful. TRs are a great foil for MGs and I think that mankind would have had much less fun had the line not been invented. Sort of like MGs, the different TRs brought different flavors to the nifty car world and I love to hear, watch and drive them all. The older Ferraris and Maseratis are wonderful automobiles, but they are sort of like expensive high maintenance women, if you get my drift. Mercedes Benz used to make the finest road vehicles on earth, or at least they did until they "went electronic" in the late seventies and early eighties. BMWs are not exactly my personal cup of tea, but I respect them highly. They make great engines and all of them handle very well. Alfa is a little like a junior Ferrari or Maserati in spirit, but they are, of course, lighter and actually more practical than their GT brethren. You don't have to get

up toward the \$ century mark to start enjoying them.

During the winter of 1971 or 1972 Jack made a run up to the mountains to attend "a party" and loved the area. He returned home, sold off some of his toys and moved lock, stock and barrel to Boone where he opened a shop in a leaky old building on King Street. He says he worked on nearly anything European by day and partied in Blowing Rock by night.

The next few years, until 1979 or 1980, he says are sort of a blur. The shop ebbed and flowed in size and location but generally grew and he ended up partnering with a friend. "I worked on the British iron while he concentrated on the Porsches." At some point he decided he'd had enough, sold everything to his partner and took off for a tour of the western US and Canada in a VW Westphalia van.

After that episode Jack returned to Blowing Rock and met and married his wife, Kathleen. They have been together now for 34 years or so, "or at least that is what she tells me." The latter part of that decade was taken up with work on LBCs, Italian stuff such as Alfas, a Ferrari and Maserati or two and his Dino. He also tried to make his fortune in other ways "but that is a completely separate story that entails lots of tears and can only be told over several empty beer bottles."

In 1980, with the mountain tourist economy in decline, Jack

moved his family to Tallahassee Florida where he first went bust trying to write and market self-help automotive literature. He then opened a repair shop in a couple of mini-warehouses. He “took in the few Brit cars that were around back then but made my living working on Mercedes and a few other high end makes. At its height AutoHaus was the largest independent Euro service facility between Tampa and Atlanta and Jacksonville and Mobile.” The core business concentrated on Mercedes, Ferraris, BMWs, Rolls and Jaguars but it took in what ever other Euro cars that could find their way through the gates and were owned by reasonable folks.”



AutoHaus circa 1980

In 1989 a fellow walked into AutoHaus in Tallahassee as it was named, and announced in a booming voice to the receptionist that he wanted to buy the place. Hearing his words, Jack says, as he sat in his office down the hall and being of sound mind at the time, he tells me that “I immediately fell to my knees and acknowledged that there was indeed a God.” It took about an hour to sketch out a deal and year to go through all of the legalities, but he sold the

business, most of the flatlander goodies and moved the family back to Blowing Rock, a happy man.

With thoughts of an early retirement back on the mountain he and Kathleen started looking for "fulfillment" and soon started a small business designing and wholesaling local crafts that they commissioned from the mountain "hollar people."

He eventually built a building up on the mountain behind the house where he thought he would end his days making clocks out of weeds with a hatchet. “Actually that little enterprise worked very well and did very well until last year when the high end home accessory business began slipping away.”

Like all of us once bitten, Jack eventually found his way back to LBCs. He bought an old MGB from some guy down in SC. “This caused me to break out my tools again and clear out a corner of the building for the car’s maintenance. As the ‘twig business’ declined along with the rest of the national economy, Jack found himself spending more and more time working on his own MG plus a smattering of local Healeys, Jags, MGs and other cars, “owned by folks who seemed to be reasonable sorts and whom I deemed appreciated my skills.”

At this point in time the twig business has receded into about half of the building and the LBCs have taken over the other

half. Over the past year or so Jack started to get more serious about the car thing, taking in the vehicles that he like to work on and brokering other cars and private collections.

As far as his present work is concerned, Jack wishes that it was all about LBCs and things related to them, “but the truth is that I am still somewhat involved in the home accessory business and a few other smaller endeavors.”



Jack and his MGB

Jack tells me he still lusts after high end Brit and Euro cars, but some of his real favorites are the more simple ones like the MGs, Healeys and Jaguars. “I like Triumphs too, of course, but I am like most MG guys in that I appreciate TRs but speak of them in dark tones whenever their owners are out of earshot. No, really, I do like them! I promise! Well, except for TR7s. For those of your membership who drive neither marque it is an inside joke.” ;-)

So as Jack says, “there you have it, something of a quick run down about my life with cars.”



Know an interesting British or European car owner, let’s get acquainted, share the story here.

dj

From the Website (www.twigwork.com.)

Jack Austin works alone in his small shop hidden away on the shoulder of Grandfather Mountain, where something special happens every day. In Jack's shop there is always something that recalls the spirit of the Great Camps and Lodges of the East and the Palatial Cabins of the Rockies.



bark and other resources of the nearby forests. They can be used in nearly any setting.

So it isn't necessary to live in the Adirondacks or Appalachians or even in the high Rockies to enjoy Jack's work. It is easy to find comfort and peace with his wonderful accessories made of twigs,

With his art having appeared in numerous design magazines and galleries Jack has now become one of the most original and most sought after rustic craftsmen in the country.

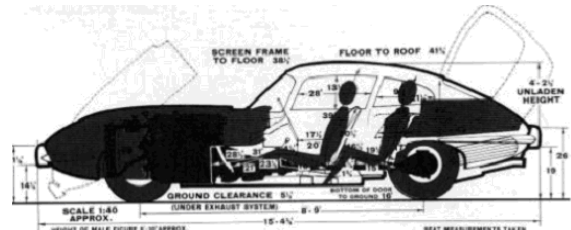
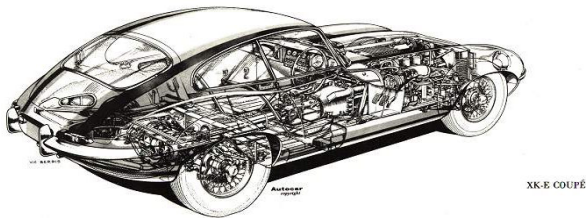
Update from Bob Thompson's Business April 6, 2009

Well I'm tickled with my latest progress on the shop. I set a goal yesterday of getting the lift working. Was a lot of work and I was pooped last night but between 9am and about 7pm I got it accomplished. The lift is working like new and much better than it has in many, many years at the old shop.



Yes Dick, I still have no walls and my roof leaks but I shall soon be working on cars there. Hope to get back on the roof very soon.

Bob

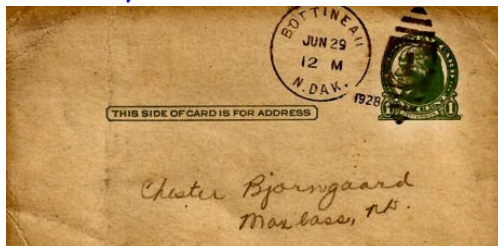


From a different time!

Check this out:

Read the back side of this card. The one-cent postage is not the story. This 1928 penny postcard was sent with a sales pitch from an auto repair garage in North Dakota.

Bob Thompson



Dear Sir:—
 We're writing this letter to you today because we want to help you get your money out of your Model T.
 It's still as good a car as it was the day the new Model A Ford was announced and there's no need to sacrifice it.
 The Model T Ford is still used by more people than any other automobile. Eight million are in active service right now and many of them can be driven one, two, three and five years and even longer.
 Bring your car to us and let us look it over. You'll be surprised to see how little it costs to put it in tip-top shape.
 New fenders, for instance, cost from \$3.50 to \$5.00 each, with a labor charge of \$1.00 to \$2.50. Tuning up the motor and replacing commutator case, brush and vibrator points costs only \$1.00, with a small charge for material. Brake shoes can be installed and emergency brakes equalized for a labor charge of only \$1.25. A labor charge of \$4.00 to \$5.00 will cover the overhauling of the front axle, rebushing springs and spring perches, and straightening, aligning and adjusting wheels.
 The labor charge for overhauling the average rear axle runs from \$5.75 to \$7.00. Grinding valves and cleaning carbon can be done for \$3.00 to \$4.00. A set of four new pistons and rings cost only \$7.00. For a labor charge of \$20 to \$25.00 you can have your motor and transmission completely overhauled. Parts are extra.
 Very truly yours,
 C. R. GLEASON CO.
 Bottineau, N. Dak.

Congratulations, Rick!

“My car, Lady Victoria, was featured as the car of the week for the MG Car Club-World Wide Club over in the UK. A bit of bragging, I know, but very proud of the ‘Old Girl.’ She’s 36 years old and still going strong!”

Rick Dynesius



PJ's, "Lady Victoria"

Car of the week: Introducing Rick Dynesius' 1977 MGB

John Watson and his wife Gill, have been long time friends since we met at Indy 96 and have travelled together extensively, both in the UK as well as in America. John Venables once lent me his 1973 MGB on a visit to Abingdon so that I could drive make the Abingdon Drive and attend the annual MGCC dinner also in Abingdon. I have owned a 1977 MGB and a 1961 MGA but “Vicky” has been my favorite all along. I live in a climate where I drive my MG 12 months a year but avoid the salt and snow during the summer if the weather is nasty. Best regards from North Carolina, *Rick Dynesius*

Rick's Note: Several corrections, Lady Victoria was listed as a 1977 MGB however; she is a 1973 MGB. The first MGB I owned was a 1977 and that is what the MG Registry has my membership listed under. In addition, they indicated salt on the roads in the summer, should have said winter. Oh well, it is the spirit that counts.

APPALACHIAN MOONSHINE RALLY



Moonshine Rally May 2, 2009

Starts from beautiful
downtown Elkin, NC

First car off at 12:30 PM

Cars will be released
from the starting line in
30 second intervals



Don't blame your
wife if you can't
follow instructions

Well, it's that time of year again!



“Eloise! This feller says he's 'a gent named Iris', and he wants to talk to us about Texas!”

Join a



Car Club

Remember



June 14, 2009,
Frank Liske Park,
Concord, North Carolina

(Hosted by the Carolinas Austin-Healey Club)

Baronet dies at 81

By ROBERT BARR, Associated Press Writer

Why does weird stuff turn up in the Lugnut you ask? Well, there are places I want to visit and people I want to meet or wish I had met along the way. Sir Reresby Sitwell was definitely one of those people! Read on.

LONDON -- Sir Sacheverell Reresby Sitwell, who restored the stately home of his famously eccentric family to its former glory, has died at age 81 in a London hospital following a short illness.

In 1965, Reresby Sitwell inherited Renishaw Hall in Derbyshire, the family seat since 1625. At the time, the rambling three-story, battlemented house near Chesterfield had neither central heating nor electricity, so Sitwell and his wife Penelope were said to retreat to the warmth of their car after breakfast.

The couple restored the house as well as the Italianate garden laid out by his grandfather in 1895. The garden's attractions

now include the National Collection of Yuccas and boasted a vineyard, which was once certified as the most northerly in the world.

"His greatest legacy would be the revival of Renishaw Hall, but along with his brother Osbert and sister Edith, they were famed for their literary talent and their quirks.

The trio's oddity no doubt was influenced by their father, George Reresby's grandfather--who delighted in telling guests: "I must ask anyone entering the house never to contradict me or differ from me in any way, as it interferes with the functioning of my gastric juices and prevents my sleeping at night." George Sitwell dined alone, in full evening dress, exclusively on a diet of roast chicken; he invented a revolver for shooting wasps, and wrote a book on "The History of the Fork."

Despite his undistinguished achievements at Eton, Reresby Sitwell won a scholarship to study medieval history at King's College, Cambridge. He soon changed his field of study to


economics, then modern languages, then English literature before leaving university without a degree.

He met his future wife when both were working in the antiques department of Fortnum & Mason in London. They married in 1952 despite the opposition of Sitwell's mother, Georgia, who discouraged friends from sending wedding presents or inviting the couple into their homes.

Reresby Sitwell's interests included his collection of odd memorabilia from World War II including Field Marshal Montgomery's pajamas, Benito Mussolini's cigarette case, Adolf Hitler's pocket diary and Eva Braun's nightdress, embroidered with tiny swastikas.

Sitwell is survived by his wife and their daughter, Alexandra. A funeral service was planned for April 20 at St. Peter and St. Paul Parish Church, in Eckington, near Renishaw Hall.






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Congratulations Tyrone

The following article was originally published March 18th, 2009 in *VeloceToday*. It has been edited and reformatted for the Club newsletter *dj*



Tyrone Stoner's Italia, number 195, one of three Italias owned by the author. Photo courtesy of Collectible Automobile magazine

The Triumph Italia/Italia 2000 GT

By L. Tyrone Stoner

What "Wacky" Arnott and Bertone did for Bristol and MG, and what Zagato would do for Aston Martin, Italian entrepreneur Salvatore Ruffino figured he could do for the Triumph TR3; modernize and Italianize.

By 1958, the aging TR3, introduced in 1953 as the TR2, was in need of something. It was almost a traditional British upright, with cut down doors, no windows, and a top which defied raising particularly in the rain. But at its heart was a sturdy, truck-like 2.0 liter four capable of accelerating away from many of its contemporaries. The improved TR3 came in 1956 with a smiley face grille replacing the square inlet of the earlier model. Ruffino envisioned an Italia-styled body with dependable mechanicals, thus came the expression used later for advertising, "Italian artistry and

The Triumph Italia is one of the best looking Anglo-Italian creations ever, and they are extremely rare.

If you'd like to see them in person, the 50th Anniversary celebration will be held at the Shelton Vineyard, Dobson, North Carolina, April 17-19, 2009. (Check the PBMC website for more details.)

British craftsmanship have come together and produced this new superlative Italia 2000 Coupe".



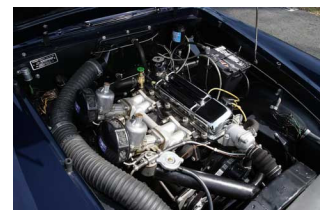
Italia interior is more luxurious than the standard Triumph. Photo courtesy of Collectible Automobile magazine.

After a verbal agreement with Standard-Triumph to supply TR3 chassis and mechanical components, there was an agreement to place one Triumph Italia in each of the established 720 Triumph dealerships worldwide. It was thought 1,000 cars were to be built right from the start. Dealers could sell from the display model. This sounded like a smart move and Ruffino cast about for an Italian coachbuilder.

Ruffino spoke with a number of reputable coachbuilders at that time, even people like Zagato, but came up empty. A friend

then suggested Giovanni Michelotti, a superb stylist who had opened his own studio in 1947.

Michelotti submitted sketches and Ruffino was pleased. Michelotti suggested using Vignale as a possible builder. It seems they have been working together on previous projects. Alfredo Vignale had the time, and space and the cost must have been in the ballpark. A deal was struck between the three to start making the Italia.



The 2.1 liter four cylinder Triumph engine put out plenty of torque and good power. Photo courtesy of Collectible Automobile magazine.

Vignale started production mid-year, 1959, making only a few changes to the prototypes. The biggest change was no longer using the "sloop-nose" front end with the covered headlights from the first prototype. A more conventional design, borrowed

from the Maserati 3500 GT, was adopted from a car that Vignale already had in production. Most coach-built cars at that time were made from aluminum, but the Italias were to be made of steel. The prototypes have aluminum panels in places. At one point in time Ruffino, unhappy with the final assembly quality control, used his own employees to do the work in the final stages of assembling the Italias. His men worked on the cars inside the Vignale plant. It was at this time that the front fender lights started appearing on the Italias.



Michelotti's TR4, at right, used many styling motifs from the Italia.

The TR4 would mean the end of the delightful Italia.

The Triumph Italia 2000 Gran Turismo Coupe, by complete description, is more commonly referred to as the Triumph Italia or the Italia 2000 GT. The first cars wore Triumph Italia scripts and the latter wore Italia 2000 scripts. Many trim parts and mechanicals were borrowed from various parts bins of other manufacturers, such as: Triumph, Ferrari, Lancia, Maserati, Lamborghini, Fiat and the Alfa Romeo. Some pieces were made in house at Vignale, one example being the exterior door handles.

Shortly after Leyland Motor took over the operations at Standard-Triumph, Triumph

support was soon pulled. Competition for the up-coming TR4, introduced in 1962 as the replacement for the TR3, was at risk. The TR4 was designed by the very same designer that designed the Italia, Giovanni Michelotti, who financially would no doubt be better served by aligning with the larger company. And to be sure, the TR4 has design areas borrowed right from the Italia: bulge in the hood, the step-up at rear of door skins, roll-up windows and similar tail light housings.



Two rare Anglo-Italian hybrids—numbers 197 at left, and Stoner's 195.

This was no doubt very unsettling to Ruffino. His dream was quickly disappearing. With the Leyland Motor support gone, and the TR4 selling for a lower price compared to the \$5000 dollar pricing of the Italia, things soon came to an end. Standard-Triumph continued supplying a few chassis that finished off the 329 Italias that were built—way short of the 1,000 plus. These chassis were of the first batch of the TR3B cars, with the prefix TSF. Only TSF chassis, (no TCF chassis) were sent at the end of the Italia run. In fact, the last thirty TSF chassis, TSF 501-TSF 530, were all shipped to Italy, where they were turned into Italia 2000s.

Today, there are many examples of this unique and beautiful car. The exact number

keeps changing, as they become more publicized and more are located.

“My Three Sons” I own three Triumph Italias, #195, #322 and # 326. The #195 car is a frame off restoration that only has 400 plus miles on the speedometer since the restoration was finished. The other two Italias are works in progress—which means we are still looking for additional parts.

Italia number one: TSF 530 / #326.

An Italia was being displayed at a local show some twenty years ago and I immediately fell in love with those sleek lines. I was later told of an Italia for sale in Virginia by a fellow that was known to be “lucky” in the art of locating these cars. He had found an Italia abandoned in a salvage yard and bought it. I almost lost the car, because it was more profitable for the owner to part the car out, than to sell as a whole. After some major parts were sold off I received a call. He had decided to sell what was left of the car to me. We negotiated a new deal and I now owned an Italia.



A grim “as found” photo of 326. It has since found a new home and has a roof over its head.

The interesting thing about this car is that it was sitting on the last known TR3B chassis to have been sent to Italy to be bodied as an Italia, TSF 530 LCOO. Bodies and chassis were

not kept in any order and this is why my TSF 530 chassis has the 326 body instead of the last body #329. This is a picture of the car, located in the salvage yard. It is still pretty much the same condition, except for many parts that I have found over the years to assist in the rebuild. Note: When seeing the LCOO at the end of the commission numbers of an Italia, it means Left-hand drive, Chassis only and overdrive gearbox.

Italia number two: 322

A good friend of mine, Jamie Palmer who owns the first Italia I ever saw, was also the owner of the #322 car. This car came from Florida and had been listed "for sale" in Hemmings News, when Jamie ran across the ad. The Italia was in Henderson, NC and soon found itself in a new storage facility in Mooresville, NC. Since this purchase the #322 and #326 Italias are in a building and both are waiting restoration parts.



Italias were all steel bodies, and while sturdy, tend to rust when left outdoors. Stoner hopes to rebuild both cars.

Italia number three: 195

Arriving at the Vintage Triumph Registry's Jeckel Island Show a few years ago, I was surprised to see the nicest Italia I've ever seen. It was a just finished, frame-up restoration of a dark blue example. I have to admit, I spent all my time next to this car, studying every part on it. The owner and his two friends had just finished the car in time to get it to its first show. The "Three Musketeers," as their close friends called them, were ever so eager to talk about their new car. They had worked on many projects in the past (restoring each other's cars), but the Italia was now complete and it walked away with the top award "Best of Show." Everyone was happy.



The Italia draws crowds at car show due to its rarity. Stoner's number 195 with another Italia, number 195 in red.

Months later I was on a shuttle bus headed for the "Amelia Island Concours" show area when I happened to strike up a conversation with two

gentlemen sitting nearby. My Italia t-shirt caught their attention and we began talking. Their long-time friend had recently passed away so his wife had an Italia for sale. We soon realized we all knew each other from the fall past, at the Jeckel Island Show. After a period of roughly a year, I bought the Italia of my dreams, # 195.



Stoner and his wife with Italia 195 at Shelton Vineyard.

The car to date has clocked less than 500 miles since the Florida restoration. The car was only missing a few obtainable parts and is looking even nicer today.

Tyrone

This article was published by *VeloceToday*, March 18th. You can read the original article at <http://www.velocetoday.com/archives/2171>

Tyrone Stoner can be reached at tstoner@mac.com.



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