

# North West Alabama British Sports Car & Motoring Club

## Monthly News Letter

### Presidents Notes

Spring has finally arrived. Tops are down and the Shoals British Cars are ready to cruise the roads of the South. Drive outs are being planned and British Car Clubs are scheduling shows.

The “Car Club Emblem” was finalized in the May 13th meeting. It will be available the beginning of September.

The initial cost (including art set up) will be \$20 per emblem. With 44% membership in attendance the decision was made to sell each car emblem to club members for \$25. A higher price will be determined for the car show in Oct at a future meeting. There is a \$500 deposit required to begin the making of the emblems. By members pre paying for their emblems we can meet this obligation without going into our treasury. At the meeting 8 members prepaid amounting to \$200. Please forward your check to James Hester, 270 Otto’s Pond Rd, Russellville, AL 35653.

Thank you in advance for your help.

National British Car Week” is May 24-31. The club will have a drive out to “Jack Daniels Distillery” on Saturday May 31st. Jim McCoy is coordinating the drive out. The suggestion was to have lunch at Miss Mary Bobo’s Boarding House. However, when I called they have no

weekends available until Sept. We will provide drive out meeting where and time next week.

Terry Geiger has created the Club Web site ([www.ShoalsBritishCars.org](http://www.ShoalsBritishCars.org)). It now has a calendar of events (car shows, drive outs), a section with the monthly Newsletters posted for reference, and a section created for the Club’s Oct Car Show. Currently the application is the only information posted, but it will expand, as we get closer to Oct. Currently there has been 371 inquires on the Web Site.



### Thumbnail of the month Terry Geiger’s beautiful TR 6

It has come to my attention that some members who receive the Newsletter by e-mail, cannot get to the Newsletter. Some e-mail providers do not allow attachments as large as our

newsletter and some club members do not have the ability to print. If you have not been able to get to the newsletters please notify me. We will put you on the list for USPS. Provide to me the newsletter months you have not received and I will forward you copies. Good driving and hope to see you May 31<sup>st</sup> to celebrate British Car Week.

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President

### Club officers

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# North West Alabama British Sports Car & Motoring Club Monthly News Letter

## Upcoming Events

Here is a list of Events for the upcoming year. If you know of anything that should be added or if you need more information concerning a particular event, please email Terry Geiger at [tgeiger@aitinc.com](mailto:tgeiger@aitinc.com).

May 24	Eurofest at "The Factory", Franklin, TN <a href="http://www.eurofestnashville.com/">http://www.eurofestnashville.com/</a>
May 24-Jun 1	
May 31	Drive out to Lynchburg, TN Tour of Jack Daniel's Distillery and Lunch in Lynchburg.
Jun 15	Father's Day Car Show. Decatur, AL Cars go in Thurs 9pm in the mall and come back out Sun 5 pm.
Jun 19-22	<a href="#">MG National</a> . St Louis, MO
Jun 30	Great American Race in Florence, 9am-3pm <a href="http://www.greTRACE.com/">http://www.greTRACE.com/</a>
Jul 12	Drive Out in Russellville area (James Hester)
Jul 19	Car Show, Redstone Arsenal - email <a href="mailto:Thomas.perkins@se.amedd.army.mil">Thomas.perkins@se.amedd.army.mil</a>
Oct 24-25	<a href="#">7th Annual British Renaissance Faire Show</a> - The annual fall show put on by the members of our club

### Editors note

Since taking over the newsletter, I have slowly been evolving a format for the newsletter. This month's letter is beginning to take on some concepts that I feel is necessary to provide consistency and continuity. As we are publishing the letter to the "web", it is an image of our club and its membership. Therefore, I'd welcome comments and suggestions, from the entire membership group (when its finalized and you don't like it, it's because you didn't participate).

We are planning on getting the newsletter out by the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month at the latest. To do this it's essential to have any information/stories/at least one week in advance. However, any late breaking stories can be put in right up to the last minute.

The thumbnail sketches from a recent unscientific poll indicates the majority of people like the concept, But I'm getting no volunteers (we must have a lot of shrinking violets amongst our membership).

As an inducement, please include a picture of your current "pride & joy". This picture would be used as part of the front page formatting. **Here's a chance to have your baby make the front-page news.**

(See front page front and center this months Thumbnail)

Terry Geiger who has more than enough on his plate with the web site has provided this months "Thumbnail"  
Thanks Terry

Also, I know there's a major "funny story" out there that's just bursting to be told. Again I'm getting no response. Please I need a little help from my friends.

As I have no volunteers for this month, I'll include in this months letter, one of my most memorable events that I hope you find humorous.

I'd also like to ask for suggestions on a title for our newsletter. My own favorite would be "**Big End News**". For those unfamiliar with English autoeese the term "big end" refers to the crankshaft main bearings.

# North West Alabama British Sports Car & Motoring Club

## Monthly News Letter

This month's humorous story by Windsor Davies entitled  
**Round and Round we go**

This story needs a little groundwork to fully appreciate:

One: the car and its characteristics,

Two: the place and the era.

In addition, some appreciation of how an "old time"

"British Bobby" worked would help.

The story goes back to about 1955, when I owned my first "sports car". The car, a 1935 BSA Scout (yes BSA the famous motor cycle manufacturer) (BSA, Birmingham Small Arms) did make cars in their early days). It was a front wheel drive, water cooled (but no fan), front cable, back rod actuated brakes. The car was a four seater, however, depending on the weight of the rear seat passengers, these brake rods had to be adjusted (with occupants in place), as any weight in the rear deflected the chassis downwards pulling the rear brakes on. In addition, just before leaving on a trip to Devon and Cornwall, the **air horn** suddenly became activated. On investigating the cause, it was found; the spring that controlled the contact for the horn had broken, a sturdy rubber band was found and the problem was solved.

The place: Bristol, Somerset, England. As this was less than a decade after World War II, Bristol whose docks during the war had been a prime target for the German bombers was rebuilding. In the bombing raids the town center had been completely demolished. During this time family homes were the top priority and such things as Civic Centers and Government buildings were low on the list. The "Town & Country Planning Commission" had designated the center of Bristol for local government buildings. The entire derelict bombed out area had been demolished and all the rubble etc. had been pushed into the center of the town forming a gigantic circle. This rubble formed a mega size Roundabout. From this circular pile of debris, approx six main roads converged into complete chaos (for the out of Towner as no signs were posted).

The month was July and a rare bit of hot weather for that part of the world provided the ideal setting for the story. As I came heading south from Gloucester into Bristol it was approx. five o'clock in the evening and we were driving past Filton Aircraft Factory (where besides Aircraft, they built the wonderful Bristol automobile).

At that time everyone rode bikes and as I came up to the works entrance, the plant let out (approx. 3,000 workers at that time). With the top down on the little BSA, with a very good-looking girl besides me, I became a target for a deal of good-natured ribbing. However, while the ribbing

was good-natured, it slowed our progress to a crawl. Which in the heat gave little help to the BSA's cooling system. Down the hill we came in this cavalcade of bicycles with their cheering riders, into the gigantic pile of rubble. Once on this roundabout with all the bicycles, plus a very terrified companion, we became locked in a sea of bikes, lorries and all forms of rush hour traffic. We must have gone around this circle at least three times trying to figure out which road we wanted to exit on. Finally the bikes thinned and I bolted for the nearest exit, only to be confronted by the biggest "Bobby" I had ever seen, with hand held high, he sternly stopped my progress. As I skidded to a halt, the rubber band broke on the horn circuit, the radiator boiled over in a gigantic cloud of steam, to the resounding cheers of what was left of my bicycle entourage. I could see visions of this huge "bobby" lifting the poor little BSA and its occupants and hurtling us from that intersection. The Bobby grew very red in the face (which made me feel the worse was about to happen), he held both hands up stopping all traffic in every direction, to double over to hold his sides, as he was laughing so hard. Finally he got himself in control and came over with all the pomp and circumstance that old time Bobbies had been trained in, only to approach the car and again lose control of himself, doubling over again in huge thunderous roars of laughter. It took a good minute or two for him to regain control, then trying so hard to put on a stern face lean over the car and say "Lad I think you had better get out and help me push this piece of junk off the road". Remember how finicky the brakes were, well this kind gentleman pushed down on the rear of the car, this weight was enough to activate the rear brakes and they locked, the car refusing to budge. I tried hard to explain to the officer it would be better if I pushed the car alone. Of course a big man like this was not going to let a little car and a little guy get the better of him, so he pushed harder and the brakes locked even more. Finally he ran out of breath and stood up taking the weight off the rear end, with that I pushed the car forward at a merry little pace. Remember the sea of bikes and riders. They too had stopped to watch the little car with the blowing horn, the steam gushing from its radiator and the big cop (about 22 stone (330lbs) who couldn't move the car but the little 10 stone (140 lbs) driver could move it easily. A mighty roar went up as I moved the car to the verge, these cheers went on for quite some time and fortunately for me the Bobby had again burst into wave after wave of tremendous body shaking laughter.

To this day I can close my eyes and remember this scene so vividly. So if your ever in Bristol and you visit what is now the civic center, remember this story and maybe those waves of laughter from the Bobby can still be heard reverberating through this area that over fifty years ago was a veritable wasteland.

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### Thumbnail of the month Donated by Terry Geiger

#### Terry's coming of age in the Great Pumpkin

When I was 14, my Dad and I went and looked at my future car: A '66 Sunbeam Alpine that had the misfortune of occupying a cow pasture in Cloverdale.

The car was a parts car for a running car the owner was keeping. If you've ever owned a Sunbeam you will understand the need to have a parts car, as we were soon to learn.

The engine and transmission was missing, along with the dash and seats, but the body was sound and straight and the price was an affordable \$150. We shooed the cows away and loaded the car onto a borrowed trailer. Much to the dismay of my mother, we hauled the little 2-seater home.

Money was scarce, so parts were scrounged from wherever and whatever; and many different sources provided the materials to allow the car to take shape.

An original engine and transmission was located, we made some seats to fit from a Ford. An Opel GT provided gauges. The missing electrics were scrounged from a '57 Tempest.

The car was then painted '66 Ford Poppy Red. Or it was supposed to be Red. The car actually turned out a sort of a hideous orange colour and was nicknamed "**The Great Pumpkin**" (after the Charlie Brown's Halloween character) by a member of the Brooks family. I suspect my Dad picked the colour to make me so conspicuous that it would be difficult for me to be "somewhere" or be "doing" something, I wasn't supposed to be. The statement, "That must have been someone else's orange Sunbeam racing through town" was not believable when spoken to my Dad.

Thirteen years, 2 engines and one differential later, I found the Alpine to be in need of a complete renovation. Diane and I had borrowed Bob Brooks' '74 TR6 as the "getaway" car for our wedding and we fell in love with the car. Less than a year later,

The car was ours and the Sunbeam had been sold to a gentleman in New Orleans as a father/daughter project.

The Triumph has been a wonderful car and is so much fun to drive. The fully independent suspension causes the car to really hug the road and the sound of the six-cylinder engine is glorious. I use this car as my daily driver and I get a lot of comments during my daily travels.

My job sometimes requires me to go to businesses in the area and I always get a lot of smiles and waves as I run around town. I'm headed to LA (Leighton, Alabama) tomorrow so I'm curious to see what kind of reaction I'll get when I roll into the small Colbert county town.

I have been through nearly all of the mechanicals and the car is very sound mechanically. I've added dual Weber carburetors and electronic ignition to reduce the everyday maintenance and increase reliability. I've also upgraded the electrical system to use a GM alternator (bright lights, even at idle) and a gear reduction high torque starter. All original components have been saved and the car can be retrofitted to original components with little effort. I purchased a hard top from Cameron Kay which has made the winters much more tolerable. I've recently acquired a factory a/c unit from Marvin Gruber and hope to have the unit functioning before it gets too hot. Short-term future projects include a dash replacement and an overdrive transmission conversion. Long-term future project is a frame off structural and cosmetic renovation of the body and frame.

My experience with British cars has been very rewarding and a large part of the credit is due to club members who have helped me along the way with everything from technical assistance, encouragement, and a supply of parts to keep my LBC (little British car) on the road. Thanks to all the members for making my British car experience a rich one.

#### Editors note.

Thanks Terry: a great story, it sets the standards for this segment of our newsletter. Now lets see if the rest of the membership can furnish some stories to equal this one?

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## Monthly News Letter

### Little Known Facts The Lotus Seven



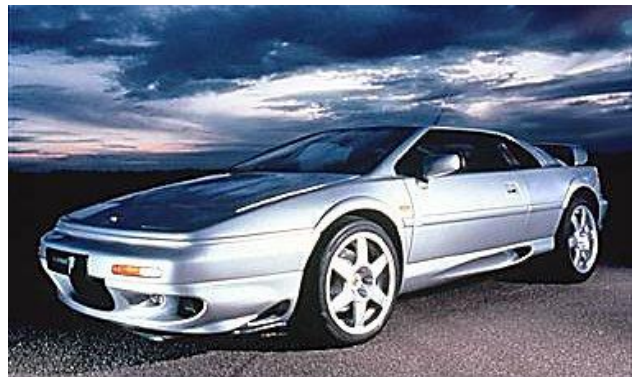
This month the automobile we feature is the Lotus, specifically the car that was popularly known as the **Lotus Seven**. Like our last months featured car it is the brainchild of another automobile genius, in this case Colin Chapman.

The car started out in the mid fifties as a “kit car” (and can still be purchased as a “Kit Car”). One of the reasons for this was Britain’s tax laws excluded “Kit Cars” from the high rate of purchase tax. (A kit Lotus approx 550 pounds and a fully built Lotus went for 1,000 pounds). This law changed and nearly saw the death of the little car. From memory, the first one I saw in the flesh, was powered by a little Ford 1172-side valve engine fitted with SU carburetors. Not exactly the awe inspiring engines now fitted to the current generation of the Super Seven. If I remember correctly, these first cars sold for about 550 pounds, exact purchasing price was determined by with such mundane things as a windshield, a top etc. Current model prices range from 15,000 pounds (\$24,000) to 27,000 pounds (\$43,000).

The chassis was built from special steel tubing, aluminum bodied and available standard production auto parts used for the mechanicals. Thus a long line of different mechanical parts over the years for the car. Parts manufacturers ranged from Standard (a la Morgan), Ford and Austin (Nash Metropolitan) depending on their availability.

These little cars were built for the pure amateur car enthusiast, to have fun building, then going on to whip the traditional cars in the local club racing/sprint/hill climb circuits. They were designed to give a very favorable power to weight ratio with very good acceleration and superior handling. These little cars lived up to their designer’s vision and were extremely successful. Mr. Chapman himself went onto to becoming the leading designer of racecars,

engines and general overall maestro of the automobile racing business. Over the years Lotus, under the leadership of Colin Chapman evolved into one of the premier performance cars in the world, the parent company marketing a high-end car that rivals Porsche, Ferrari and Jaguar. However, we will highlight the original Lotus Seven



and its development in this article. While the little car was famous to the automobile aficionado’s, the general public was unaware of the car until it was featured in the TV series the “Prisoner” and the order book surged.

The curious thing about the car was that it was used as a cash flow vehicle and was treated as a necessary evil by the company, rather than the main stay of the company, as Lotus evolved into the dynamic force it currently is. Many times the little car seemed about to be exterminated, however, circumstances always led to its continued production. In the early 70’s Lotus Cars passed its Lotus seven-production equipment onto Caterham Cars, under the leadership of Graham Nearn. Here the car finally became the breadwinner and as such was given the 100% support of the company.

These little cars like “The Morgan”, has developed a fantastic following, with car clubs all over the world. Currently the car is marketed under the name of Caterham Super Seven, and such it is still selling strongly and can be purchased in a number forms. The least expensive a virtual “knock off of the original to a high tech version with all the power and handling of a modern sports car. Long may the Lotus Seven (Caterham Seven) enjoy a long and illustrious life? Another enigma of the motoring world, its only existence justified by the undying love of automobile.