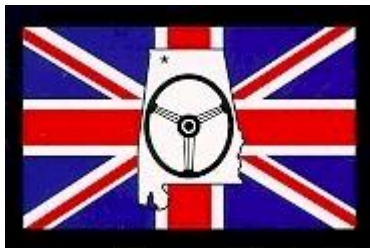


North West Alabama British Sports Car & Motoring Club

Monthly News Letter



May 2003

Well spring has finally sprung, however, with the spring comes tornado season and what a season we're having, hope everyone has lived through it safe & sound.

When I took over the newsletter I offered suggestions on making the newsletter a more informative and amusement source. Some of our members have risen to the challenge and this month we have a very nice 'thumbnail sketch, an account of the "engine rebuild from hell", an update on a members own "pride & joy" and my piece of British automobile history. I would like to propose in the amusing story category, at years end, we vote on the most amusing story of the year. I will donate a suitable "trophy" for the winner.

If possible again I'd like to solicit these stories and thumbnail sketches to get a number in the pipeline to make it easy on myself, so I can work on these to a

Now for our amusing story of the month which I'll title "Engine rebuild from hell"

Larry's British Cars

My first British car was a 1953 MG TD. I bought it in the fall of 1965 and it was a serious blue smoke generator. The combined ignition/light switch was missing and you just twisted the appropriate wires together to get the function you wanted. The tach was also missing, but the hole was neatly filled with a wind-up Big Ben clock, complete with its nice trim ring. Nevertheless, the car got me back and forth to work until the next summer when the left rear axle broke. I found a cheap replacement from J.C. Whitney, but the threads were some unknown

point where all I have to do is cut & paste the stories into the newsletter. So please give it some thought and work on your "thumbnail and amusing story and send it too me.

A local event some maybe interested in is the **Florence Wagon Festival Car show**
Place McFarland Park (if its not underwater)
Time: 8:00 am till 4:00 pm
Date May 17, 2003
Registration 8:00 till 12 noon
Registration fee \$15.00
Judging 12:00 noon till 3: 00 pm
Awards 4:00 pm
More info contact Ricky Springer 256-229-5534

Have not heard anymore on the "Great Race" other than it is officially on. Let's see if we can get some more details of this great event and how deeply we can become involved, as it will be as we term in Britain "a great day's outing".

size (at least in Hartselle) and I had to take it to a machine shop to get it re-threaded.

After replacing the axle, I pulled the head to see how bad the motor internals really were. It was so bad there were places in the pistons where there was no metal separating the ring grooves, plus, the top of the pistons had .050 stamped on them, which to this day, I still don't understand. That meant a major engine rebuild that would be way way beyond my capabilities, and after searching extensively for an affordable source; I found a place in Madisonville, TN. With help from a cousin, a friend, and my new spouse, we towed the car 225 miles from Hartselle, AL to Madisonville with a not very long chain. It took two times for the guy to get the rebuild right, and the four trips back and forth to Madisonville for that process involved some painful and amusing incidents.

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I sold the TD in the fall of 1967, and it was over five years before I owned another British car, which was a 1961 MGA in very nice condition. After about a year and 20,000 miles or so commuting between Hartselle and Huntsville, I sold the MGA, and it was over ten years before my third British car, which was a 1971 TR-6. I kept it for several years and eventually sold it to Cameron Kay. Around 1993, I bought a 1976 MG Midget for my stepdaughter and she drove it for a year or so and sold it to the dad of one of her friends, and I bought a 1970 Midget as a replacement.

In the early to mid nineteen nineties, my interest in British cars became somewhat of an obsession. I bought a 1963 TR-4 and a 1964 MGB from Marvin Gruber. I bought a 1955 MGA and a 1966 MGB from a dealer in Sumiton (between Jasper and Birmingham), based on an ad in the Alabama Auto Trader. I bought a 1965 TR-4A in Hackleburg, based on a succession of ads in the Times Daily and the Courier Journal.

My stepdaughter graduated from high school and moved away, so I traded her Midget for a 1968 MGB-GT with a 1977 engine, and finally, I bought a 1970 TR-6 from Jim Morrison. After keeping that TR-6 for a year or so, I sold it to Cameron Kay.

I still have the 1955 MGA, 1963 TR-4, 1964 MGB, 1965 TR-4A, 1966 MGB, and 1968 MGB-GT. Anybody want to buy a car???? Have I got a deal for you!!!!!!

Thanks Larry you're a fountain of information

Technical update on Jim McCoy's 52 MG TD (Pictured in my first newsletter)

Jim's beautiful TD is back on the road after replacing it's rear end with MGB rear end gears, which is a 3.9 to one ratio, thanks to Chris Katichus he made them match perfectly.

The car rolls along at 3,500 RPM at 65 MPH, taking all the local hills at an easy forth gear. Jim is ecstatic about its increased performance.

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Little Known facts of British Automobiles

This month we'll feature an automobile, which exemplifies the British Sports Car, a car whose design is over thirty years old and defies all laws of both the automobile and the business world. The Morgan, call it old-fashioned, call it impractical but despite its drawbacks has new car waiting list of over a year with normal purchasing procedures.



Car fanatics traveling to Britain should plan on visiting the factory in Malvern in the Chiltern Hills (this area alone would be worth the time). Plant tours are a regular feature, however, **PLAN WELL IN ADVANCE** as these tours are by appointment only and in they are very heavy demand. The company has the distinction of being owned by one family since its inception right up to the present day

The Morgan was born in 1913, (the brainchild of a son of a clergyman) Mr. H.F.S. Morgan, who began his early training as a draughtsman with the GWR railways (Great Western Railways). Whilst making a modest contribution to the history of steam, his natural tendencies led him to the automobile, he left GWR in 1906 to open a garage where he ran a most successful bus service with a 15 seat modified 10 hp. Wolseley

In due course his natural engineering nature and penchant for the automobile began to fulfill itself and a little three-wheeler was designed.

With very little facility for machine work in his garage he gratefully received help from Mr. Stephen Peach (the grandson of the designer of the "Rocket", Britain's first official Steam locomotive).

The first design was successful due to its rigid light frame and independent front suspension. It had an unusual power to weight ratio for that time, being of 90-brake horse per ton, this enabled the little vehicle to accelerate as fast as any being produced at that time.

The original Morgan was a three-wheeler powered by a 7 hp two cylinder Peugeot mounted in a lightweight tubular chassis. The Morgan made its first public appearance at the Olympia Motor show in 1910 when two, three wheelers, both single seater's with a 8hp twin and a 4 single cylinder J.A.P. engines, it secured some orders but it soon became apparent that for the vehicles to become popular they would have to become two seater's.

While the two-seater was being prepared for the Auto show it was entered in the London to Exeter to London reliability Trial. Gaining a gold medal, the highest possible award. These were fitted with an eight hp engine and another interesting feature was they attracted the interest of the managing director of the famous British Store, "Harrods of London" and as a result appeared in the shop window of this famous store, the only automobile to ever have been displayed by Harrods.

Throughout the subsequent years the little three-wheeler's enjoyed much popularity and broke into the racing circuits with much success. Entering such prestigious races as the French

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Grand prix at Amiens and winning against some very formidable completion from many continental four-wheelers.

The car went its merry way for about another twenty-two years before a four-wheel version was produced and marketed as a family runabout. Reaching a production of fifty cars a week. This made Morgan one of the largest British Car makers of that era

In 1925 the three-wheeled version was still competing and having success after success and was in fact so fast that at Brooklands it was required to start a lap behind four-wheeled cars in the same class.

In 1936 a prototype four-wheeler was exhibited in the London and Paris Exhibitions. The new model was called Morgan Four-Four, to differentiate it from the three-wheeler's having four wheels and a four-cylinder engine

In 1937 a special few sports models were built for racing fitted with 1098 cc Coventry Climax engine developing 42 bhp with a balanced crankshaft. In 1938 the Coventry Climax was replaced with a 9 hp side valve Standard engine linked to a Moss Gearbox connected by a short propeller shaft to a 5-1 rear axle. The chassis were fitted with "rod & cable" 8" diameter Girling brakes.

Morgan continued to produce the three-wheelers; with the advent of World War II the factory reverted to products for the armed forces, one of its main projects being the development of in-flight refueling.

In 1947 the production of the four-four was restarted and the little car fitted with the special 1267 cc Standard engine. A little later this engine was replaced by the 1.8 liter Vanguard engine that gave it a much-increased performance.

The car continued development over the years and in 1956 the TR3 engine was fitted, increasing the power to 100 bhp.

The combination of the lightweight aluminum body and the powerful engine. These models were extremely fast, capable of covering the standard quarter mile in 16 seconds.

Plus fours won many production sports car races; particularly in the USA where they dominated SCCS class D for many years.

Well into 60's and 70's these cars were dominant in many local clubs racing events. In 1980 it won the Class H US National Championship.

In the only twenty four hour race held in Britain in 1980 it was prominent covering the greatest distance by a single car entry.

The early 90's the Ford engine was updated with the 16 valve Zetec.

A BBC program entitled "Troubleshooter" caused quite a stir where a case was laid out that Morgan's business practices were not too sound and was swiftly heading to the proverbial "scrap heap" caused quite a lot of consternation, however, the outcome the outcome was a tremendous surge in orders that accounts for even today's backlog of orders.

So we have a car designed in the thirties (the overall shape is classical thirties design) still owned by the same family. Producing about eleven cars a week, an output not much greater than prior to WWII, with lightweight chassis, an aluminum body mounted on a wooden frame still selling strong and with a following that many find unbelievable. There are over 3,000 Morgan Car Clubs throughout the world, a saying coined here in the States is "A Morgan maybe totaled but will never be thrown away".

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Above a wonderful example of one of these original “TRIKES”



“with its “guts torn out”