

THE TUCSON BRITISH CAR



# REGISTER

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Technical tips are for informational purposes only.

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## An Old Friend -- *Revisited* by Craig House

As events happen in our busy lives, sometimes we look back on a fond relationship that brings constant smiles of memories. This story star is a 1953 (titled Jan '54) Austin Healey 100. An unassuming old tan car in excellent condition when we purchased it while living in MS in 1983 from the original owner, a fellow who bought it with a \$100 deposit check to the Donald Healey Automotive company in mid-'53. When we took possession of the car, I realized it was special, and that he had maintained it in original condition for those 30 years and hadn't tossed out anything . . . . original pre-production book-bound Drivers manual & Shop manual, single-piece Perspex pop-in side windows, floor & boot coverings he had stored, even a draft drawing from Donald's engineers detailing how to "un-blank" the stump-puller first gear (which he did!).



These first cars (body #924) were quirky with a number of body & mechanical aspects being changed over the first 2 years of production. One most obvious missing feature was a large plate behind the wide grill, added later to "hide" the obvious lack of anything viewable from left-to-right when looking through the 48-spoke front wheels – the "shark fin"! That was added to cars built after Donald one day noticed this seemingly weak aspect of the cars going down the assembly line.

Another unique feature I discovered later was the story behind the color – not tan, but “Coronet Cream”, a special rose-tan paint commissioned for the crowning of Queen Elizabeth in 1953! After all, Donald WAS a Brit through and through. Only 600 BN1 1953 cars got that color, ours with a rich navy interior and hood material. We bought the car knowing that our 1967 big Healey was in dire need of a complete restoration on another frame . . . another story . . . The '53 Healey became our go-to fun auto for our time in MS and later Portland OR. Like all of your Brit steeds, the stories it could tell! Once show-goers began to understand and appreciate the “unmolested survivors”, it garnered a lot of praise, even trophy-ing over a 100S that was known to the Portland crowd when first shown!



*Continued on page 4*

## Events Calendar

Recent news from the Rotary Club of Tucson....  
**The Tucson Classics Car Show** is accepting registrations.

*SATURDAY* October 17th, 2020 Gregory School  
3231 N. Craycroft Rd., Tucson, AZ 85712

Enter online at  
<http://www.RotaryTCCS.com>

### **TBCR Drives and BritCar Café**

TBCR events will resume when possible. Watch the *Register* and email announcements.

**TBCR Garage Tour** originally scheduled for March will be held in the fall.

**TBCR Phantom Car Show** This is an early June event so maybe, maybe not. Watch for emails from Ben.

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Photos:  
Craig and Jane, Jeff

## Club News and Notes

### Regalia Sales on Hold till October

Due to the closures, social distancing, etc. the TBCR Regalia will be closed until mid-October. Even if we took your order today we couldn't get custom embroidery done and delivered to you in the amount of time remaining before my snowbird gig is up.

Be sure to think about what you want to order and place your order in mid-October. Thank you for being patient and understanding.

We hope you and your family are healthy and come through these extraordinary times safely.

--Pete Williams, TBCR Regalia Chairman

## **An Old Friend *continued***

After 28 years of sweet ownership, and just having spent a fortune on the '67 restoration, we felt the need to send it to a good home. Our rebuilder knew a gent near Amsterdam who was just building up the only Healey Museum, dedicated to ALL of Donald's work going back to the '40s. . . . Yes, he said, I'd LOVE to have one of the first big Healeys in my collection! A deal was struck and the car shipped to Holland while we made our way to retirement in Arizona.



We have visited the museum twice, once actually getting to drive it on the back-roads of Holland villages. The docent on that outing wasn't sure how to start it, but with a fresh charge and my deft memory he fired right up. On our second visit, Hans (van de Kirkof) the owner took us and a couple travelling with us to lunch in the village and we had a wonderful afternoon viewing and discussing the museum contents as well as Hans' Healey racing career & stories. Old Friend, I hope we can revisit you someday soon again!

Info on the museum . . . . [www.healeymuseum.nl](http://www.healeymuseum.nl)



A little more eye candy from Craig's story.

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## TBCR Rescue

An update from last month's article. This is what the Mark IX looked like after a car wash. Talk about a diamond in the rough! Well done Jeff. We look forward to seeing more of this stately saloon.



# From the Archives *The Beginning of Tucson MG-T Register*

This is a history written by Bob Walker and published in the June 1998 *Desert Octagon* (now the *Register*). It looks back at the founding of the Tucson MG-T Register in 1982.

## DESERT OCTAGON

Advertising in the Desert Octagon		
Business Advertisements	6 Issues	12 Issues
1/8 page (2-7/16 x 3-3/4 in.)	\$25	\$40
1/4 page (4-7/8 x 3-3/4 in.)	\$45	\$75
Half page (4-7/8 X 7-1/2 in.)	Interior	\$80
	Address page	\$90
	\$140	\$160

Full page inserts (Customer furnished) - \$10 per issue. Inserts can be either black & white or color. Inserts must be provided to the Editor by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month

CLASSIC-fied advertisements are free to members of the Tucson MG-T Register and are limited to 2-runs per ad. CLASSIC-fied advertisements are limited to the private sale of personal vehicles, parts, regalia and British automobilia. Commercial-for-profit advertisements are not free. Each advertisement is limited to 4 lines.

CLASSIC-fied advertisements for non-members are \$15 per a 3-issue run and conform to the above requirements.

For further information contact the Editor at (520)825-1068.

### IN THE BEGINNING . . .

by Bob Walker

Early in 1982, a red TD and a green TF occasionally passed each other while their drivers navigated in opposite directions to their work places - Bob Morrison in his TD to Burr Brown's and Jim Abbott in his TF to the UofA. Waves were exchanged until one day they stopped to meet. Names, addresses and phone numbers were exchanged. Jim had recently moved to Tucson from California where he had been active in a local MG club as well as a member of the New England MGT Register. After some phone conversations, Abbott and Morrison decided to attempt formation of an MG "T" club in Tucson. Abbott contacted the New England MGT Register and requested them to furnish a listing of members in the Tucson area for the purpose of establishing a club. Such a listing was supplied and Jim proceeded to contact each person by phone or postal card. Two or three preliminary meetings were held in a Fort Lowell Park building. Once it was decided that enough interest was there, the first official organizational meeting was held at Fort Lowell on March 1, 1982.

Bob Morrison took direction of our group and Jim Abbott published our first newsletter in March 1982. Our first driving event was to Picacho Peak in April to view the wild flower display and enjoy a picnic lunch. No meetings were held in June, July or August. Meetings resumed in September and were held once a month in different eating establishments around Tucson. Official elections were held in November to choose our first group of officers for the year 1983 - Bob Morrison, president; Bob Walker, vice president; Jeff Lilley, secretary; Ernie Nelson, treasurer; Jim Abbott, newsletter editor; and John Oder, member-at-large. The club began with 22 chartered "T" owners as members. Three of this group are still members today: Lilley, Nelson and Walker.

At this time it was decided to hold meetings in members homes and a schedule of volunteers was established. For sometime a meeting, driving event and tech session was held each month. Tech sessions were held to help owners whose T's were ill to get their cars on the road again. This also applied to assisting owners whose T's were under restoration, of which there were several, to get them completed and driveable.

A committee was formed to draft operating by-laws for the club. Jim Abbott was able to furnish copies of by-laws from other clubs for the committee to examine. The original by-laws were completed, approved and promulgated to the membership in November 1982. The indicated purpose of the club was "To provide restoration, preservation, maintenance, display, use and enjoyment of the T series and earlier vintage MGs."

Several proposals were considered for the club's official title. Chosen was "Tucson MG-T Register." Our club "artist", Bill Klesert, designed the logo and masthead for the newsletter. From the approved logo, Ethel Walker made up the banner which was to be displayed at all club meetings.

We established contact with the Roadrunners MG Club of Phoenix and participated in driving events with them in Phoenix and Tucson. Several rallies were put on by members of the Tucson club.

The Founder's Trophy was developed and donated to the club by Bob and Ethel Walker to encourage and recognize full participation by the membership in all club events. Points were to be awarded for meeting attendance, participation in driving events, driving Ts to meetings, etc. The person, excluding elected officials, who accumulated the most points would be awarded the trophy at the December meeting and would retain it the following year. The recipient's name would be recorded on a brass plate attached to the plaque.

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Our first effort at a GoF was undertaken in 1985. It was held in Rio Rico, Arizona and was titled "Roadrunner's Wild West Roundup '85." All clubs in the Southwest were invited to attend. This was quite an undertaking for our young club, however, members put their hearts and souls into the event and it was an outstanding success. Barbara Addison and her committee did an excellent job of putting this event together - from car show through awards and banquet. Car display and judging was done by members of the Phoenix Roadrunners Club. Beautiful copper octagonals on walnut base plaques, with artwork by the talented Bill Klesert, were awarded to the first three cars in each category as well as "Best of Show." Door and other prizes solicited from and donated by various MG companies were also awarded.

With the passage of time, people's interests and goals change - they relocate and others take their places. Our club has endured many changes and have made others in order to adapt and survive. In growing, we have taken the good of the past and combined it with new ideas and direction creating a more durable and interesting car club - one that members can be proud of.

**Charter members:**

Jim Abbott	Mark Meek
Bill and Barbara Addison	Bob and Kathy Morrison
Bruce and Virginia Diamond	Ernie and Barbara Nelson
Bert Engle	John and Emma Oder
Dwight Gibbs	Jean Oder
Art and Ann King	Jim and Ann Sibley
Bill and Bev Klesert	Bob and Ethel Walker
Jeff and Cathy Lilley	Alan Collier
Joe Lilley	Jerry and Toni Giordano
Steve McClain	Wes and Phyllis Rhodes
Mac and Judith Summer	

**Past presidents were:**

1982-1983	Bob Morrison
1984	Jim Abbott
1985	Bob Walker
1986	Barbara Addison

**THOUGHT YOU'D NEVER ASK . . .**

by Dick Morley

Aircraft engines in automobiles? For sure - as far back as 1910, one of the Winton cars used a Curtiss Type E, V8, watercooled airplane engine rated at 50 HP. Curtiss himself used a similar engine, upgraded to 80 HP, in his motorcycle which he set a land speed record in 1906 of 135 MPH. After World War I, the Curtiss OX-5 engine was used in several luxury cars, namely the Phianna built in Dayton, Ohio. The OX-5, also a V8, watercooled, 90 HP engine, was readily available from government surplus at reasonable cost. It was used in the JN series *Jenny*. It had almost every disadvantage going for it - too heavy - too slow - too big - too high fuel consumption.



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Inversely, many automobile engines were used in airplanes. One of the first was built by Wiley Post using a Ford Model A engine in the late 1920's. This biplane flew very well, however, the cooling system became a problem and the engine overheated most dangerously. Later, in the middle '30's, a Plymouth engine was tried and also a Ford "60" V8 in light airplanes.

The Allison Brothers of Indiana developed a powerful liquid cooled engine for "Indy 500" race cars. General Motors bought Allison and refined and developed this engine for airplane use. It powered the famous Curtiss P-40 and Lockheed's P-38.

Unlimited racing boats used the Packard version of the Rolls-Royce *Merlin* - same as used on the Spitfire and P-51. Band leader Guy Lombardo used this engine in his championship hydroplane racing boat. The famous PT, the Navy's torpedo carrying high speed patrol boat, used two Allison airplane engines. The land speed record recently set by the British, a mild 754 MPH, using a vehicle with an aircraft jet engine with after burner. Whoa!

When confronted by a difficult problem you can solve it by asking the question, "How would the Lone Ranger handle this?"

One month after this article was published, the club president announced a big change. Watch for this in the June *Register*. I bet you can't wait!



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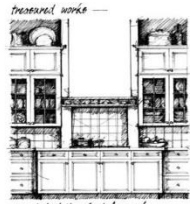
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