

THE TUCSON BRITISH CAR



REGISTER

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On the Road



May 15 drive south and back via Mission Road. Once again, many participants on a very nice Saturday morning.

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View from the Windscreen

by Ben Cohen

First things first...thanks to all the snowbirds for making those last few drives in April before the migration north. I know you're already missing our first day of 100° on May 13th. Hopefully, we'll be back in full driving mode when you return in the fall.

In reviewing my past month's work on the cars...well, I didn't get as much accomplished, as planned. Those SU carbs on the Elva Courier were not what was supposed to be there on a 1622cc MGA engine. Therefore, the SU rebuild kit I ordered was not correct. So, I had to order 2 new kits, as the H-Type kits are for only 1 carb each. Once all the parts arrived, carbs were removed; the parts that were not replaced were carefully cleaned and polished; and, all gaskets, seals, washers, clevis pins, etc. were reassembled. While the carbs were on the bench, I set float levels, centered the jets, set the mixture at 1.5 turns down and mounted the carbs. Next step was to pump up the fuel to the carbs with the Bendix pump (not the usual manual pump...race car, you know). Any for those who have done this, yes! there was leaking fuel at the lids and banjos. You don't want to over tighten these 55+ year old carbs. Once all was sealed and with fingers crossed, I hit the starter, and, WOW! The car started and set into a nice quiet but overly high idle...say about 1300 rpm. As of tonight, I'm planning to warm the car to operating temp then set the mixture. Once that is done, it'll be time to sync the carbs with the trusty Unisyn and then set the linkage between them. Once I get this satisfactory in the garage, I'll do a little neighborhood test drive to check performance. Hopefully, after all this I'll reconnect the choke mechanism and start driving the Elva more often.

The rest of the month was spent wearing my other TBCR hat – Driving Coordinator. To make my life easier I asked the membership to sign up for a “summer driving” list for emails. This allowed me to create one group for this, so I only need to send one email (normally I send 5 due to address limitations). Hence, we had 3 drives in April. From the turnout at these, I'd say you were all ready and raring to GO! I will try to appease our summer drivers by moving starting and ending points to different areas of town. This way, you'll either have a short drive to the start and longer drive home (or the reverse sometimes). Also, the starting times will be earlier, as the summer heats up. Hope most of you will attend and enjoy the drives.

As for what's doing in my garage for the next weeks, it's doing a little maintenance on the 1964 Lotus Seven, Series 2. This is a “similar” car to the 1962 Lotus Seven, Series 2, but with updates done in the intervening 2 years. The cars were no longer a combination of polished aluminum and painted fiberglass. All body panels were painted the same colors. Also, braking performance was finally improved with Girling front disc brakes. This particular car #1879 was one of six cars produced at the Lotus factory with no engine or gearbox on request of the purchaser. The purchaser in the UK was a Lotus Seven racer who destroyed his 1962 car #14XX in a race, but salvaged the engine and gearbox and other ancillaries. The Historic Lotus Register (HLR) has certified that the engine, gearbox and Weber carburetors all are matching numbers to the wrecked car. So, I guess this is a “hybrid” Lotus.

Continued on page 4.

TBCR In-Person Events

As you may be seeing in emails and can read in this newsletter, TBCR is returning to some traditional events. Tuesday Coffee is back and Ben will keep us on the road.

If you are not getting Ben's emails about drives, you might not have opted into the drives email list. Contact Ben or the editor to remedy that.

Calendar

TBCR Summer Drives

Thursday June 3 – Mt. Lemmon. Ben will be emailing start time and details.

Tuesday Coffee

TBCR British Car Café has returned in person. Every Tuesday at 7am to whenever you want. Watch for the weekly email reminder for location.

8am Zoom Coffee will continue for a transition period.

Tucson Classics Car Show

October 16, 2021 Registration is open: <http://www.RotaryTCCS.com>

Other Arizona British Car Events

Triumphfest October 14-17 Flagstaff. This is an annual regional event held in CA, Nevada or AZ. It includes all Triumph cars. It is the same weekend as the Tucson Classics.

British Wheels on the Green Sunday November 7 Peoria. Organized by the Arizona MG Club. All Marques are invited and judged. Registration is not yet open. Check azmgclub.org/british-wheels-on-the-green/ for updates.



Welcome Our New Members

We gained 5 new members in May. All new members will have name tags. Take time to welcome them to our events. We now have 140 members. –*Dave Germain, Treasurer*

Tristan Lee is in South Central Tucson and drives a Red 1990 Mayfair Mini Cooper.

Rich Marschner and Wiley Cornell are in central Tucson with a 1959 Jaguar XK-150 OTS.

Bill and Cynthia VerDuin are in North Central Tucson with several German cars, but no British cars, as of yet.

Brian & Brenda Hunter are also in North Central Tucson and have a green 1980 MGB.

Tim & Mariann O'Keefe live in Oro Valley and are looking for a British Car.

TBCR Board of Directors

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rct2bnc@aol.com

VICE PRESIDENT George Hahn
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SECRETARY Mike Morales
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NEWSLETTER John Mead
tucsonbritish@gmail.com

WEBSITE Harold Beekhuizen
harold_beekhuizen@msn.com

TBCR Mail Address
(Including Regalia Orders)

Tucson British Car Register
P.O. Box 30997
Tucson, AZ 85751-0997

TBCR Website
<http://www.tucsonbritish.com>

View from the Windscreen *continued from page 2*



Thus #1879 will get a valve adjustment, tune-up, timing and a badly needed new battery and battery hold-down system. As I have mentioned in previous letters this year, I am converting most of my cars to AGM type batteries...in my case Odyssey brand. The one pictured here is a pc925. It is very small: about 4.5"x4.5"x5.5" yet is rated 380CCA. However, when measured under a load I see almost 600CCA. That's way more than enough to crank this 1500 cc Cosworth Ford engine for maybe an hour or two!!! Another feature I like in these batteries (besides no acid to leak) is the solid brass terminal posts. Note if you choose to purchase one, be sure to get one with "posts" or order the set of posts that are available. I do both on Amazon and save about 30% over the retail prices. Although the fittings are metric (all hardware provided), you can see on the close-up that you



can use a flat washer and bolt to secure your cable ends to the terminal and not have to solely rely on the clamping force of the lead wire terminus...very solid. What also worked well was for period correct Lucas "helmet" terminals I drilled the screw hole to the bolts diameter and was able to use the washer/bolt combo to secure the lead in the same way as with a conventional cable clamp.

That's all for this month; so, why don't you tell us what's going on in your British car life. Please submit some content to our newsletter editor and see you name in print!

Life is good when viewed through the windscreen!

Ben

My MGA by Dave Germain (Board Member Profile)



This is the story of Abby, my 1957 MGA. She was named Abby because she was born in Abdingdon, United Kingdom. And she is part MGA and part MGB. It was a long, winding and bumpy road to Tucson. In 2016, I admitted that my MGB V8 project was stalled for a lot of reasons and I wanted to have a LBC (Little British Car) to drive around while the B was in progress. I looked in various places on-line from the MGA Register to Bring A Trailer to eBay. After several months, I saw a non-standard car that caught my eye. After 2 rounds on eBay, she had not sold and I called the owner. He would not tell me a price and I bid on the 3rd round just lower than the previous highest and won.

In May 2016, my wife and I went to Oregon to take a look. I drove her, talked to the shop that did the work, made a deal and shipped the new car down here. Well, Abby was in fact, parts of 3 cars with a lot of mods.



- Built 19-20 Dec 1956 (at least the current number), Complete body off restoration 2014
- 5 Main MGB engine, bored .30 over (1900cc)
- 11:1 Pistons (way too high for our bad gas)
- Cross flow head
- S6 (1.75") SU Carburetors
- Street performance cam
- Petronix Ignition
- Header with stainless steel exhaust
- Front disc brakes (MGB)

- Minator Knock off wheels (175/60R15 tires)
- Removable Roll Bar
- 5 speed English Ford transmission, MGB Rear Axle (3.909)
- New Wiring, negative ground
- LED Tail lamps and 3rd Brake Light (but still not wired correctly)

Abby does not have a top – so she stays in the day it rains in Tucson. The heater does work for early starts like the drive to Tubac in January.

The first time out – the spring in the right rear brake broke and I tried out the road service. Since I am no longer much of a mechanic, the famous Earnie then went over the entire car and we were off.

After driving for a bit, I found some things I wanted different. The bump steer was annoying on the miserable Pima County and Tucson roads. I replaced the super big 205 tires with 170s and then finally got the alignment sorted. The previous owner was tall and cut the driver’s seat padding – that was replaced. With the number of SUV drivers who cannot see a red car, I would now like to install a shoulder belt.



And one last mod. It is hot in the summer in Tucson. I found this “Bimini” top at the MG 2016 gathering in Louisville...Good sunshade and great airflow. Just staying out of the direct sun is great. (Available for MGs and TRs.)

Oh! If you are driving with me know that the speedometer is still very wrong after 2 rebuilds. You may or may not be at the legal speed. The GPS vibrates off the dash or windshield so the speedo is next.

Abby is not a concours car or major show winner. Numbers only match the registration. She is a great car, fun to drive and gets driven at least once a week. I have not yet renamed our street Abby Lane.

Brit Car Café: Saying Goodbye to Grant & Swan

After 14 years of weekly British cars (COVID era not withstanding) the Grant & Swan Starbucks has closed. While the traffic was heavy and the parking lot could be dodgy, the old Starbucks was always there for us. For log-time members the years of Brit Café was a source of pride and wonder. For new-comers it was often the first time to see club members and their cars. I remember my first encounter when I was visiting on a house-hunting trip. Not only did I meet Geo, whom I knew of through Triumph forums, but I got acquainted with a group in a town where I really knew nobody. It was a great start, and I’ve looked forward to Tuesday mornings ever since.

We will be shopping around for a new location so don’t be discouraged if we get you a little disoriented with where we are. You can always contact any of the directors or me the editor.

I will also continue the Tuesday Zoom meeting at 8am for as long as there’s interest (yours and mine).


See you Tuesday morning,
John, AKA the Ed



The drive commenced at the familiar Mega Circle K on Palo Verde and I-10. We aimed south, eventually following Nogales Highway. The long drive back on Mission Road was mostly empty, except for a bike race event that at times occupied both lanes. Everyone was focused on driving and I didn't get any driving pics. You will have to get on Mission Road and see it for yourself – it is well worth the effort.

The McLaren was not on the drive, but was spotted by Libbie.





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Tucson British Car Register
PO Box 30997
Tucson, AZ 85751-0997