Wyres & Tyres

January 2022

www.memphisbritishcars.org

British Sports Car Club, LTD Memphis, Tennessee

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Triumph Marque Leader	Jon Brody
Lotus Marque Leader	Chris Irving
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Membership Meetings

Coletta's Italian Restaurant
2850 Appling Rd.

Mark your calendar - **Monday,** January 17th

6:00 p.m. if you wish dinner
7:00 p.m. for our program

2022!

Happy New Year!

The BSCC wishes you a healthy, prosperous, and curve-filled road adventures throughout this fresh year.

Monday, January 17th will bring our first membership meeting. We'll meet at Coletta's Italian Restaurant as usual. Our program is still under development, but it will surely be of high interest to everyone.
And, starting a new year means it is time to pay our annual dues. If you haven't changed your British car line up, address, phone number, etc. All you need to do is to mail a $30 check to our treasurer at

BSCC
PO Box 38134
Germantown, TN 38183-0134

Speaking of dues reminds us to renew or become members of the North American MGB Register (NAMGBR), of which the BSCC is an affiliated car club. Individual membership doesn't require ownership of an MGB, but the rewards are worth it anyway – members get quarterly copies of the award-winning MG Driver, a national directory of mechanical assistance sources, invitation to the annual MGB convention, and access to a broad array of membership benefits.

The British Sports Car Club, as an affiliate member club falls under the umbrella insurance coverage offered by NAMGBR during our club's events. We need to maintain eight BSCC memberships in the national group however.

We were down to only five NAMGBR memberships at last count. The insurance coverage, alone, makes it very worthwhile, so please renew your membership in NAMGBR or consider joining – **you can do it by telephoning 800-NAMGBR1, or better yet via**

In addition to her two Nobel Prizes, Marie Curie also won the top Halloween prize for her glowing skeleton costume.

From BSCC Member John Morrison:

Simplify, Then Add Less: For the Pure Joy of Driving

by Ross Bentley

Excerpted from the weekly "Speed Secrets". The writer, Ross Bentley, is a well known driver coach with a 24 Hours of Daytona win. He recently acquired a Lotus Elan and is commenting on how the lack of "nannys" lets him focus on the fundamentals of performance driving.

Last week, I bought a 1969 Lotus Elan S4. For a few months, now, I've been thinking about getting one. One phone call to Sam Smith, the writer (formerly of Road & Track, and currently of Hagerty media), and I was connected with a couple of the country's leading Lotus experts. Sam and these folks are a lot like drug dealers. They couldn't wait to get me addicted to Elan driving. Well, for me, it would be re-addicted. But it is like an addiction.

See, it's impossible to drive a Lotus Elan without having a huge smile on your face. Well, okay, it is possible. In fact, about forty years ago, I owned a 1969 Lotus Elan +2 (this is where the re-addiction comes in), and there were many times when something had just broken, or the rain was seeping in from around the windshield and dripping on to my leg, or the headlights were so dim that I could barely see at night, or… well, let's just say there were times when I didn't smile. But when it (and especially my "new" Elan) is working nicely, it is one of the most fun, enjoyable, satisfying cars to drive, ever.

As I searched for twisty roads to play on over the past few days, as I went "out for a drive," a question kept swirling around inside my head: why is this car so much fun to drive?

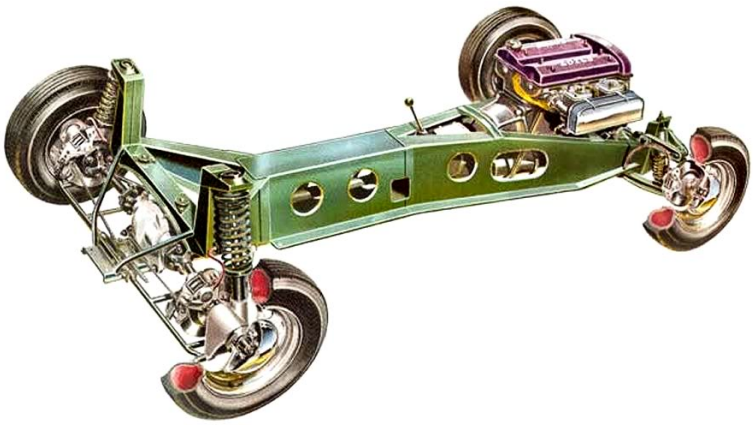
It's pure car. Holding true to Lotus founder,

Colin Chapman's core philosophy of "Simplify, then add lightness," there is not much more than what is absolutely necessary in the Elan. At just over 1500 pounds, it is what's necessary to move quickly and efficiently, nothing more.

In case you're not aware of what a Lotus Elan is, well, it's simple and light. It has a steel backbone chassis, with a fully fiberglass body hung over top and around. It's powered by a Lotus-Ford twin cam 1600cc engine, has four-wheel disc brakes, and a 4-speed gearbox (with the most perfect feeling when you shift – a direct, precise, mechanical click with each shift, up or down).

Rarely have I felt as connected to a car and the road as when I drive the Elan. Gordon Murray, the famed Formula One car designer and chief designer of the McLaren F1 road car, once said that he regretted never being able to replicate the feel and connection that the Lotus Elan has through its simple, direct steering system.

The Lotus Elan is all about driving. That's its purpose in life. To paraphrase Colin Chapman, then, "Simplify, then add less" came to mind while driving it. And that's a big part of the joy of driving the Elan: it encourages simple and efficient driving.



There are times when I hear drivers talking about this driving technique, and that skill, and this line, and that setup change… and I just want to say, “Keep it simple. Feel the car, feel the road/track, do as little as possible with the controls.”

As I drove the Elan, I was connecting with the basics: braking, turning the steering wheel, applying the throttle, shifting gears. Doing as little as possible, as smoothly as possible, and what I was doing was done with as little effort as possible. “Simplify, then add less.”

“Out for a drive” is a thing. I know you get the “driving on a track” thing, but the “out for a drive” on the road may be something you’ve not done, or even thought about for quite some time. I encourage you to rethink that. I encourage you to go “out for a drive” simply to enjoy driving. To focus only on driving, and nothing else.

Flowing through a series of lefts and rights, ups and downs, through a tree-lined ribbon of roadway, I looked towards the tops of the trees, noting the cuts in the view of the sky above to predict which way the road twisted up ahead - a basic guideline of reading the road.

I focused on my smooth, quick, firm brake application; a perfect rev match on well-timed heel and toe downshifts; smooth easing off the brakes while arcing the steering wheel in; unwinding the wheel while feeding in the throttle; feeling for any yaw or lack of yaw; noting which tires have the most and least load of them. Even at street-legal speeds, I’m engaged with my driving.

The Elan makes driving joyful because it’s simple. It’s pure. There is no electronic trickery where yaw angles are compared to wheel speeds, individual brakes are activated without the driver’s foot going anywhere near the brake pedal, engine timing and throttle control managed by a computer that knows it’s smarter and a better “driver” than the human sitting behind the steering wheel. Not only is there no ABS, traction and stability control, nor any other form of driver “nannies,” but I now have a rolled-up piece of paper about 14 by 20 inches with the entire wiring diagram for the Elan on it. Yes, every single wire drawn out on one page. No computer code needed. (Of course, the electrical components were made by Lucas in the 60’s, and every Elan ever made was hand-built, so whether Thomas on the assembly line looked at the wiring diagram and ran the wires exactly where Clive did is a mystery!)

Before I begin to sound too much like an old fuddy-duddy, it’s not that the Elan is a better car than anything we have on the road today. It’s not. But the one thing that it does better than just about any car on the road today is that, as a driver, you can’t help but be engaged with the act of driving, be connected with the car and the road. It’s simple, and in being that way, it encourages the driver to focus on the basics of driving.

Not surprisingly, talking on a cell phone is not something easily done in an Elan. First, there’s no Bluetooth to connect it for hands-free calling, but more importantly, there’s no want to do that! The only conversation going on is between my Elan and me. So, if you ever call me when I’m "out for a drive," I won’t be answering! I'm on the other line with my Elan.

Once again, I was reminded that the super-trick, advanced stuff that the very best drivers in the world do is simply doing the basics better. That’s simple. And there’s tremendous joy in doing the basics better, if you don’t let everything else get in the way.

As anyone who knows me knows, the reason I love to race is for the competition. The head-to-head, wheel-to-wheel battles are

what make it fun for me. And yet, driving the Elan is almost as far from that as it could possibly be. Or maybe not. The difference is that the competition is inside me, to drive as well as I can, enjoying the road with my newfound friend, the Elan.

When was the last time you went for a drive on the road and just thought one hundred percent about driving? Whether you drive a Lotus Elan or a Chevy Suburban, I encourage you to unplug from social media, your phone, and everything else in your world, if even just for an hour a week, and go “out for a drive.” And when you do, focus solely on the act of driving. Be aware of every single input you give your car, and every output it gives back. It’s a two-way conversation. If you’re like many people, truly listening to someone speak and taking in what they’re saying without beginning to form your response is difficult. Add in the thousands of messages and influences we’re bombarded with daily, staying focused on the simple stuff and the joy that comes with it is not easy. Using “out for a drive” as a way to clear your head, as a form of meditation, and as a way to improve your conversational skills is a good thing.

It’s taken an old Lotus Elan to remind me of the pure joy that comes from going out for a drive.

- Ross Bentley

I'd been out drinking, and knew I'd had way too much to drive my car safely.

I knew there was a breath testing checkpoint between the bar and my place, so I decided to take a bus. Sure enough, when the bus reached the checkpoint we were waved through.

This morning though when I woke up, hungover as never before, there was a damn bus on my lawn and I don't know what the hell is going on

TVR - What's That All About?

Last month Chris Irving gave us an excellent description of replacing the dashboard fascia in his 1993 TVR Chimaera.

Afterward, a quiet voice asked, “What’s a Chimaera? And, what’s a TVR anyway?”

Here’s the start of a long-winded answer -

TVR is a British car / company with a long but on-again/off-again existence. TVR makes lightweight sports cars with powerful engines and was, at one time, the world’s third-largest specialized sports car builder.

It’s name, ‘TVR’, came from the name of the company's founder and first owner, Trevor Wilkinson – TreVoR. In 1948, Wilkinson began his business in Blackpool as a garage offering car repair along with mechanical engineering projects.

In 1949, TVR built its first original automobile. It had a Hotchkiss-style rear suspension using the rear axle from a Morris 8 and an independent trailing-arm front suspension. The engine was from a 1936 Ford van, tuned to 35 hp. Perhaps as an omen of a rocky future, the car was crashed by Les Dale (note: not our Les Dale!) who had been hired to create the initial bodywork.

After repairs, the aluminum body was painted BRG. Although not considered aesthetically appealing, it was functional. The first successful test drive was on the runway of Squires Gate Airport in 1949. That car was sold to Wilkinson’s cousin for £325 later that year. TVR number one was subsequently crashed and salvaged for parts.

TVR No. 2 began with the same chassis design, using the rear suspension Morris Eight, as well as the same side-valve Ford engine. However, the front suspension design was changed to use wishbone control arms and a single transverse leaf spring.

The body was again constructed by Les Dale, and it was similar in appearance to the first car. A Blackpool auto enthusiast bought the car for use in competition, and eventually registered it for road use in 1952.

After the sale of the Number Two car, TVR began work on Number Three, which again used the same chassis and suspension design. Instead of a Ford engine, a1200 cc 40 hp four-cylinder engine from an Austin A40 was installed. This car was painted yellow, and in contrast to the rounded bodywork of the first and second cars, it was styled with a blunt nose and a squarish vertical panel as the grille. Driven by Wilkinson in a number of car club events in 1952 and 1953, the car was quick enough to earn several awards.

In 1953 Wilkinson and his business partner Jack Pickard designed the TVR Sports Saloon using components from an Austin A40, and supplied to customers in kit form. Different body styles and engines were used and no two Sports Saloons were the same. In 1955 a semi space frame chassis was designed, providing a lower seating position and all-round independent suspension. In 1956 the first TVR arrived in the United States and was fitted with a Coventry Climax FWA engine and aluminum body.

Trevor Wilkinson's concept of a light body on a tubular chassis, front engine, rear wheel drive, with close attention paid to increase performance, created TVR's DNA which is still followed to this day.

The TVR Open Sports and TVR Coupe followed and after a suggestion from Ray Saidel, who was racing and trying to sell the cars in the United States, a fast back design was introduced in 1958 - and eventually became known as the Grantura. The Grantura had a fastback-style body over the existing chassis. Engine options included the Ford side valve (normally aspirated or supercharged), the Ford 105E OHV unit, two different Coventry Climax units, or MGA's BMC B-series. The interior of the Grantura was cramped. Short doors and 17" steering wheel make it difficult to enter and exit the car.

The TVR factory sent the first Grantura cars to Ray Saidel in the United States, where they would be sold as the "Jomar Coupe" or the "Jomar Gran Turismo Coupe", depending on which engine fitted. Some of these cars carried both the "Jomar" and "TVR" badging on the nose.

A 1958 ad from Saidel offered two models. The Jomar Mk2 was listed as, “only 930 lbs and "Outhandles Everything." The second model was the Jomar Coupe, a 1.7 L. fixed-head sports car. The JOMAR COUPE is the result of a joint Anglo-American project. The firm of T.V.R. Engineering of Blackpool, England is responsible for the basic-designing and building of the JOMAR chassis upon which in 1956 and 1957 Saidel Sports-Racing cars of New Hampshire (US), using aluminum bodies of their own design carried out extensive research and

development. Through the efforts of both concerns the successful MK2 was evolved.

Still, by October 1958 TVR was in deep financial straits; the factory had completed as few as ten cars, and orders from the United States had almost petered out. All this was of little concern to TVR director and financier Fred Thomas, as he had seems to have intended to close TVR and use the failure as a tax write-off for his own engineering firm.

Instead, the TVR directors dissolved the company and re-organized as Layton Sports Cars Ltd. In February 1959, a sister company was formed under the name Grantura Engineering Ltd. to avoid UK taxes since the cars were still being sold as kits and the tax wasn't applied to kit cars that were purchased from a different company than that which supplied the mechanical components.

The U.S. relationship with Ray Saidel collapsed in May 1959 when Saidel walked out of purchase negotiations and made it clear that he felt TVR's sales expectations to be extremely unrealistic. By July 1959, the financial situation at TVR was again shaky; there were inconsistencies in pricing and in recordkeeping, while stocks of components were not being properly managed.

In an attempt to re-establish a distributor network in the United States, TVR accepted an order for two cars from Washington D.C.'s Continental Motors, who was also the North American distributor for the Elva Courier. Unfortunately, TVR had to have the cars returned to the UK when Continental Motors was shut down after its owner was convicted and jailed for defrauding his bank.

In November of 1959 John Thurner came to TVR from Rolls-Royce and was named Technical Director. Thurner's experience and enthusiasm were hoped to help the company improve the Grantura and to streamline production, and he was given full control of Grantura development. This raised the ire of Wilkinson, who regarded Thurner as a professional competitor and who felt that he was being undermined by the company he originally created.

By the middle of 1960, the factory had forty-three workers, the Grantura Mk1 production run was ending after a total of 100 cars produced, and the Mk2 body shell design was nearly ready. TVR had multiple UK distributors selling cars. During the Summer, Keith Aitchison and Bryan Hopton showed interest in investing in TVR. The company tried cement their interest by providing a Climax-powered Grantura Mk2 to the two men for a drive to the Monza race in Italy. Parts of the exhaust system fell off the car on two separate occasions during the drive to Italy, but the two men were still impressed with the car's performance.

In September of the same year, the Aitchison-Hopton pair bought a controlling interest of TVR. Before the end of the year, Hopton had appointed himself as chairman and renamed Layton Sport Cars to TVR Cars Ltd. Between September 1961 and February 1962, the number of orders for cars had been doubled, and most of the stock of finished cars had been sold.

In January 1962, the company made plans to enter international racing. In March, they entered three Grantura Mk2As in the 12 Hours of Sebring. The lightweight cars were prepared by chief mechanic David Hives and competition mechanic Bob Hallett, sadly only one of them would actually finish the race. TVR directors began to doubt the new leadership when they saw Bryan Hopton's tendency to overextend the company's finances in motor racing, as well as on indulgences such as luxury transport and hotels. This ill-fated race outing at Sebring was the last in a series of events that led to the departure of Trevor Wilkinson, whose resignation was accepted by the board of directors on 5 April 1962.

By late 1962, the company was again sinking in red ink. The Mk3 Grantura had been

introduced later than expected, two of the home market distributors had gone out of business, the Canadian government had imposed a 10% duty on cars imported from the United Kingdom, and the company discontinued its relationship with the US importer, because he failed to pay for his orders. Factory workers were all laid off in October 1962, and TVR Cars Ltd. moved into receivership. Much of its equipment, including body molds, was moved to secure storage.

Fortunately for the future of TVR, its associated company, Grantura Engineering Ltd., was still in business. Bernard Williams was able to convince the receivers of TVR Cars Ltd. to allow access to the body molds as well as some partly finished body shells, and several cars were completed in late 1963 and early in 1964. Keith Aitchison again became involved with the company in spring 1963, and remained as marketing and sales director for the following two years. Many of the factory workers and some of the directors were persistent, staying with the company in an attempt to return TVR to profitability.

After re-establishing a distributor partnership with TVR, the American Dick Monnich visited Blackpool and informed the directors that one of his colleagues, Jack Griffith, was a Ford dealer, who had been experimenting with installing a

Ford 289 V8 engine in a Grantura Mk3 chassis. This car would ultimately become known as the Griffith Series 200.

The Griffith prototype was completed In October 1963.The acceleration of the car exceeded expectations, although the brakes and chassis had been left unmodified and, by all accounts, were woefully inadequate when matched with the large engine. In short

Griffith 200

order, David Hives at the TVR factory built a second prototype that was better developed and better finished, as well as three engine-less cars destined for Griffith's business in New York. In March 1964, David Hives went to Long Island to help set up the production line with George Clark. Hives helped build the "tartan car" that was displayed at the International Automobile Show in New York. After this, the Griffith factory established on Long Island began completing cars from engine-less cars imported from the TVR factory.

Griffith production required the TVR factory to build cars at a greater pace than ever before. Increased workload combined with new management with strict enforcement of order and workday schedule diminished workforce enthusiasm.

Reliability problems and customer complaints began to mount through 1964. In 1964, a dock strike in the US severely restricted Jack Griffith's ability to import cars. Griffith was

then unable to meet his financial obligation to Ford, which stopped supplying drive train components. Ties with TVR were also then severed, and the already-struggling TVR was no longer able to continue. In September 1964, a director meeting was held at TVR, and it was announced that the company would be stopping production and closing the factory. TVR went into liquidation in November of that year.

In late 1965, Arthur Lilley and his son Martin Lilley purchased the assets of and formed TVR Engineering Ltd in November 1965, with Arthur as chairman. David Hives came back as General Manager and Senior Designs and Development Engineer. Two years later, Hines went to America to talk to Gerry Sagerman about the importation of TVRs. This ultimately resulted in Sagerman establishing TVR Cars of America.

TVR had no outstanding orders to fulfill, and significant outstanding debts towards suppliers. Additionally, members of previous unhappy work force had apparently stolen parts and damaged machinery out of spite when they were laid off. In the final days of 1965 and into early 1966, the new workforce gained confidence in management and the factory began to ramp up production of the Mk3 1800S. During the period, some partially finished cars were delivered as kits to the Barnet Motor Co. car dealer business, where they were finished.

Meanwhile, the TVR gained publicity following significant success in racing a factory-prepared Griffith. In America, Gerry Sagerman lamented the damage done to the TVR reputation in the US by the poor build quality and reliability of Jack Griffith's cars. After meeting the Lilleys, Sagerman agreed to be involved in importing TVRs to the US. In April 1967, he opened a small showroom and garage in Lynbrook, Long Island, and began importing TVRs as a full-time activity.

We'll finish this deep dive into TVR in the next issue of Wyres & Tyres, so stay tuned.

Researchers for the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority found over 200 dead crows near greater Boston recently, and there was concern that they may have died from Covid 19.

A Bird Pathologist examined the remains of all the crows, and, to everyone's relief, confirmed the problem was definitely NOT Avian Flu.

The cause of death appeared to be vehicular impacts.

However, during the detailed analysis it was

noted that varying colors of paints appeared on the bird's beaks and claws.

By analyzing these paint residues it was determined that 98% of the crows had been killed by impact with trucks, while only 2% were killed by an impact with a car.

MTA then hired an Ornithological Behaviorist to determine if there was a cause for the disproportionate percentages of truck kills versus car kills.

The Ornithological Behaviorist very quickly concluded the cause: when crows eat road kill, they always have a lookout crow in a nearby tree to warn of impending danger.

They discovered that while all the lookout crows could shout "Cah", not a single one could shout "Truck."

Absolutely amazing!

Wants N Gots

1982 MASERATI QUATTROPORTE –
FROM THE TUPELO AUTOMOBILE MUSEUM

4,930cc DOHC V8 Engine--4 Weber Carburetors
280bhp at 5,600rpm
Automatic Transmission
4-Wheel Independent Suspension
4-Wheel Disc Brakes
*Wonderful condition inside and out
*Easy access into the famed Italian marque
Recent Service and maintenance records.
Must sell quickly to settle estate! All offers considered! **Andy Cates** 901-237-7770

William Schoonover offers his 1978 MGB roadster. He says I will never be able to drive again due to a traumatic accident. So, I need to sell it.

Should be a easy to get back on the road project. It was running when I parked it to replace the brake master cylinder.

William Schoonover
$1500
ws229857@gmail.com

J. Stansill Covington says, " it is time for me to part with my TD. It is a driver – not a show car.

Do you know of anyone who might be interested? It has a new stainless steel fuel tank."
jcovingt@uthsc.edu
901.448.8609

Josie Howser has on offer a one owner Jaguar XJS V-12, purchased new in 1991, beautiful looking, all original. Approximately 72,000+ miles. Contact Josie Howser 901-581-8543. We're told she is open to all bids.

Charles Rye (901-849-4926 / franklinflyer@yahoo.com), says his cousin is looking for an Austin Healey 3000 to buy for her husband.

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