

Wyres & Tyres

April 2023



www.memphisbritishcars.org
British Sports Car Club, LTD
Memphis, TN



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<i>Triumph Marque Leader</i>	<i>Jon Brody</i>
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<i>Club Historian</i>	<i>Carolyn Shepard</i>
<i>Webmaster</i>	<i>Chebik Kehouk</i>

Membership Meetings

*Coletta's Italian Restaurant
2850 Appling Road*

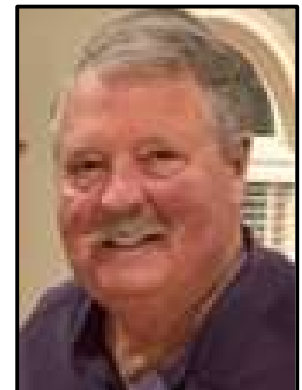
*Mark Your Calendar—
Monday, April 17th; 6:00 p.m. for dinner—
7:00 p.m. for our program*

Taco Tuesday—TBA

Above artwork – "120's First Alpine", by Alan Fearnley, used by consent.

FROM THE PRESIDENT—

A special thank you to Chris Irving for organizing our April 1st Poker run throughout Fayette County. Participation was great and everyone had a good time. Winning poker hand with a full house was Grady Frisby, from the Memphis Old Time Car Club, who won cash and a wooden replica of a car piston crafted by Chris. Looking forward to the Poker run scheduled for 6/15/23 with the MGA show.



Our meeting presenter for April will be automotive writer Dr. James William (Bill) Howell, and Paul has lined up two interesting guests for May and June. The May guest is a high end sports car mechanic that is opening a new garage /shop in Memphis. Details will be announced at the meeting. June will be Jon Cave who has the Cars on Main car show in downtown Memphis with many exotic cars on display.

Getting closer to the June MGA show and the shows schedule of events has been emailed to all members. Also, the list of Committee chair persons has been sent to all members, and copies will be available at our membership meetings.

Our EURO show is scheduled for 9/23/23 at Youth Villages. Please contact Jim Hofer (Show Chair) or any of the Committee chair persons to volunteer. Registration is Steve Feltman, Trophies, David White, Gift Bags, Al Ross, & Promotion, Paul Burdette. Also, Paul has created a special show flyer that will be distributed to all members to promote our show.

Planning more driving events post MGA Show.

Happy motoring,

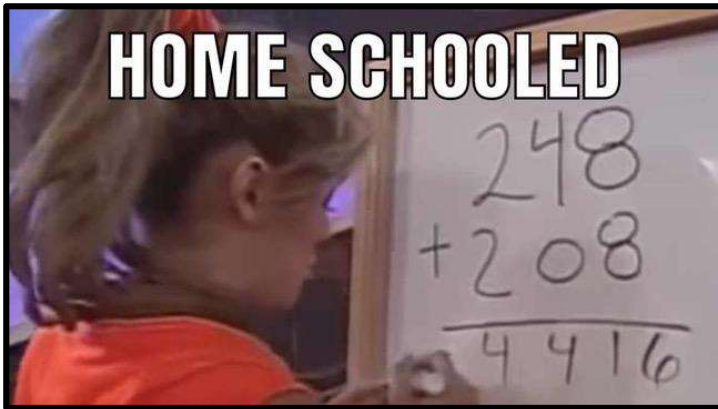
Al



THE BSSC POKER RUN—APRIL 1ST

*We had quite a turnout for the April 1st Poker Run, including a couple of guests from the Memphis Old Time Car Club. Naturally, it was one of their interlopers, Grady Frisby, who wound up with the best hand!
A great time was had by all, and it served as a prequel to the Poker run for our NAMGAR show.
Thanks to everyone who turned out!!!*





It's my wife's birthday tomorrow, she's been leaving jewellery catalogues all over the house, so I've bought her a magazine rack.

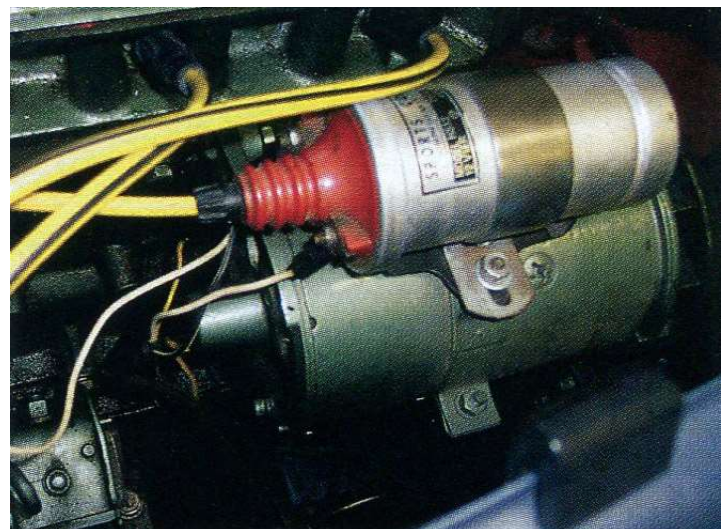
Note—the above is NOT incorrect— this is the way British spell “jewelry” & “catalog”

Going Negative

(This article originally appeared in the January 2004 issue of Classic Motorsports magazine)

Story by Paul Kile

In addition to their own particular brand of charm, many British classics also possess something else unique: a positive— ground electrical ‘system. While nearly all modern vehicles have electrical systems that ground the negative battery terminal to the frame, older British cars use a positive ground system, causing problems for owners trying to install modern electrical accessories such as audio systems, CB radios or cell phone chargers.



You could install a power inverter and electrically isolate the modern electronics from the car's chassis, but this is complicated and risky. A better option is to convert your car to negative ground. Then you can easily install your new accessories. You'll also be one step closer to swapping your generator to a modern alternator, providing the extra power you may need.

The process is relatively easy: Simply disconnect the battery terminals, switch any affected electrical components to negative ground, re-polarize the generator, and reconnect the battery terminals in the opposite direction.

Most electrical items on the car are unaffected by polarity changes. Lighting systems, diaphragm—style horns, turn signals, cigar lighters and starters will work just fine on either positive or negative ground. However, there are a few other things that need to be checked before making the switch.

Electric Fuel Pumps *If your car uses an SU electric fuel pump, it will be affected by the polarity change. Older SU pumps use an internal capacitor to limit arcing across the points, and these capacitors were set up for either positive or negative ground. These pumps will work for awhile with their polarity swapped, but the points will burn out after a few thousand miles of driving.*

Later SU pumps feature a zener diode across the points, and while this setup does a much better job of protecting the points from arcing, the pump still will not tolerate reversed polarity. If you have one of these later pumps (identified by a cylindrical bulge on the plastic end cap of the pump), reversing the polarity will immediately fry the diode and cause the pump to stop working.

One remedy is to disassemble the pump and reverse the leads of the diode to prevent

this from happening. However, since fuel pumps seem to go bad more than any other component, this is a good excuse to buy and install a new pump that is designed for negative ground. Then, since a spare fuel pump is always useful, convert the old pump and put it into your spare parts bag.

Ignition Coils *Most ignition coils will work under reversed polarity, but the spark output will drop by 15 to 20 percent. This may not be a problem in temperate climates, but it could cause hard starting and misfiring in cold weather.*

The easy solution is to reverse the wires to the primary connections on the top of the coil these are usually identified by “+” and “-” or “CB” and “SW.” This will only work with points—type ignition systems.

An older—type electronic ignition that was designed for positive ground (like a capacitive discharge module or Piranha or Lumenition optical trigger) will fry if switched to negative ground. You'll need to replace your old ignition system with one designed for negative ground.

Radios *Most likely, you are switching the car to negative ground so you can install modern audio equipment. If you decide to keep the original radio, you must reverse the input to negative ground.*

Many older radios that are compatible with positive ground have a slide switch or a reversible plug on the case that will switch the unit from positive to negative ground, without requiring any external wiring changes. Don't forget to make this change before reversing the battery connections, or you will destroy the radio.

Dash Gauges and Tachometers *Some types of dash instruments, such as electric fuel and temperature gauges, will be affected by polarity changes. Others will not mind the swap, and determining whether or not the gauge will mind is relatively easy. If the gauges are of the thermal element type—these move up slowly when the key is turned on—they should not be affected by reverse polarity.*

If the gauges respond quickly when the key is turned on, like the fuel gauge in an MGA, the connections on the back of the piece will need to be reversed. (If your gauges peg down toward the left when you turn the key to the on position, this is a sure sign that you forgot to reverse the wiring.)

Ammeters will still work under reverse polarity, but will show “discharge” instead of “charge.” You can reverse the wiring at the back of the ammeter also, but make sure you do this while the battery is disconnected.

If your car uses an electronic tachometer, this will need to be rewired for negative ground. There are several different types of Smiths tachometers used on British cars, and people who are handy with a soldering iron should have no problem with the job. Your best bet is to search the Internet for “tachometer conversion,” as there are several very good step-by-step instructions available.

If you don't want to risk ruining an expensive gauge, send it to a professional instrument shop, like one of those that advertise in this magazine. They can easily handle the conversion.

Small Motors *Most of the small motors found in the car will work fine with their polarity reversed.*

Wiper motors usually work fine under reverse polarity, but don't forget to remove the wiper arms from the spindles and test the system for proper parking position.

Heater motors, air horn compressors and electric windscreen washer pumps will usually run backward, so you need to reverse their power and ground wires before using them.

The Final Steps *When you're ready to make the actual conversion, you will first need to re—polarize the generator. Generators retain a residual magnetic field in the stator coils. If this field is not reversed when the polarity is switched, the generator will put out a reverse charge to the battery.*

To re-polarize, first disconnect the two wires from the terminals found at the back of the generator. (On most British cars, this will be a large brown wire and a smaller brown—yellow or brown—green wire.)

Before changing the battery connections, you may have to reverse the terminal connectors, since the positive and negative poles on the battery usually have different diameters. Check to make sure that the

size of the terminal connector on the ground connection corresponds to the size of the negative terminal, and if not, change the positive and negative connectors.

Now, hook up the battery terminals in the new negative ground configuration, and re—polarize the generator. Connect a jumper wire to the positive (hot) terminal. Take the other end of the jumper wire and momentarily touch it to the small terminal at the back of the generator. You may see a small spark—this is okay. Now remove the jumper wire, reconnect the wires to the generator, and you are done.

Now you are free to add all sorts of modern audio equipment, cell phone chargers, satellite navigation and DVD players, but don't go too far. After all, you want to retain that classic feel.

GOTS & WANTS—



Hello!

After much debate, I've decided to sell my beloved 1960 Triumph TR3A. This car has won the first place award for Triumphs in the last two BSCC EuroFest shows. This is a fun driving car to take to dinner or cruise around town. I've never gotten far in it without being asked about it and getting admiring looks. I inherited it from my late father a few years ago, and it sat in his garage for about 5 years before that. I trailered it from his home in Florida to my house outside of Memphis in 2019.

It is currently a beautiful pearl white exterior with 15" knock-off wire wheels and chrome bumpers, trim, and

fender-mounted rearview mirrors. Included with it is a removable hard-top, soft top, a tonneau cover, and side curtain windows.

It has the 2.0 liter inline four paired with the four-speed (non-OD) manual transmission. The dual-SU carbs are difficult for me to master, and after being parked over the winter they need some adjustment. I had them professionally rebuilt in 2021 and the car ran like a dream. I had the fuel pump replaced in 2019.

It shows 19,272 on the odometer, but the true mileage is unknown. Like any little British roadster, there's always something to adjust or improve. But it's wonderful just the way it is as well.

I love this car. It looks great and is a lot of fun. It brings me happy memories of my "pops". But it's beyond my mechanical abilities and the time I have for it. It deserves to be tinkered with and run up and down the roads, around curves and over hills. It deserves to be gawked at when stopped at stoplights and have little kids drop their jaws when staring at it.

Similar cars on sites like Bring-A-Trailer have recently fetched from \$19,000-\$28,000. Because this one has a few imperfections, needs a tune-up, and before I pay a listing website, I'm looking for the lower end of that range - I'm asking \$21,000. I've got the title in hand, and I'm hoping someone will be enjoying with their younger family members this spring.



Might you know anyone here in the Memphis area who is interested before I list it online?

David Vondenberger
(941) 284-2053

UPCOMING!!

Sunday,
May 28th ~



BSCC Indy 500 Fish Fry, an annual club event for decades, always one of our best attended gatherings, held by our own Jim Hofer. More details as the date gets closer!

June 12th-16th

GT-48, the annual convention of the [North American MGA Register](#), will be held here in Memphis - with the BSCC serving as the local host club.



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