

Wyrres & Tyres



www.memphisbritishcars.org

The British Sports Car Club, LTD - Memphis, Tennessee

Late July, 2020



My First Drag Race

Terry Roberts

The day I turned 16, I went to the County Driver license bureau to get my Kentucky drivers license. I had been practicing for 6 months since I got my learner's permit driving my parent's car (a 1954 Buick Special) and studying the state driver manual. I aced the test and was the proud recipient of an official Kentucky driver's license. The driver's test happened on a Wednesday so I asked to borrow the family car that coming Friday night.

Friday night arrived and I drove the car to the high school basketball game. After the game all the students went to the high school canteen to socialize – dancing, have a coke and meet

girls!

Later when the canteen closed, my buddy and I decided to drive over to the local Big Boy Hamburger joint and checkout the action. My buddy had his car and I had mine so we followed each other to the joint. We were on a 4 lane highway next to each other stopped at a stoplight just about a block from the hamburger joint. When the stoplight turned green, we looked at each other and started a drag race!

We both popped the clutch, laid a patch with our tires and it was very exciting until we heard a siren. Unfortunately it was nighttime and dark, and we had not noticed the police car right behind us at the stoplight. The police took us to the (continued)



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station and called our parents. I didn't actually get a ticket but my father locked my driver's license up for 30 days, so my driving career was over for a while.

The next weekend my cousin and I had to walk home from the canteen (about 4 miles). It was January and the temperature was freezing! My cousin cussed me all the way home. It was a

Membership Meetings

Coletta's Italian Restaurant, 2850 Appling Rd.

3rd Monday of each month
6:00 p.m. if you wish dinner;
7:00 p.m. for our program

Mark your calendar

July 20th - CANCELLED Ugh! When will it end?

August 17th, 2020 ??????

September 21st, 2020

long time before I did any drag racing again!



What is so dern special about sports cars?

Eespecially old British sports cars? By and large, they are not powerful, fast, or comfortable, and our older ones are sometimes downright unreliable.

If you're not willing to replace a broken water pump in boiling summer heat alongside I-40 on the down grade from the Cumberland Plateau maybe you ought to be driving a Honda instead of an MG.

A surprise roadside repair might sound awful, but

to the prepared (make that the experienced LBC driver) such adventure gives us a chance to live up to Red Green's motto – "If you can't be handsome, at least be handy." And, it offers a chance to test our MacGyver and mechanical skills in the real world.

Fortunately, our classic LBCs are generally simple to work on and experienced drivers know which parts are more likely to fail on the road, so we carry spares, a small set of tools, and maybe a repair manual.

Imagined ease of repair isn't the lure that draws us to old or classic sports cars, though. Nor is ease of driving nor on-road safety. More

modern automobiles are faster and handle better; they are more reliable, more comfortable, cleaner, safer, more economical, and often cheaper to buy, too. Basically, they're better in just about every way.

A classic sports car is more than just a car; being behind the wheel of a classic sports car fosters a connection between human and machine. Driving a vintage sports car keeps your focus on the real world, where all the cool stuff happens.

You don't just get in a classic, turn the key, and go like you would in a modern car. Driving a vintage LBC demands your attention and rewards that attention by making it abundantly clear that an automobile is a machine. The classic sports car gives the driver enough feedback that you become an extension of the machine. You give it input and get back an unfiltered response to yield a real experience that a modern car just can't match.

The LBC driver is integral to the machine. From adjusting fuel - air mixture via a manual choke at the start, to manually changing gears and controlling power to the wheels via the clutch. it all needs to be done in a way that gets the best



out of the engine and transmission.

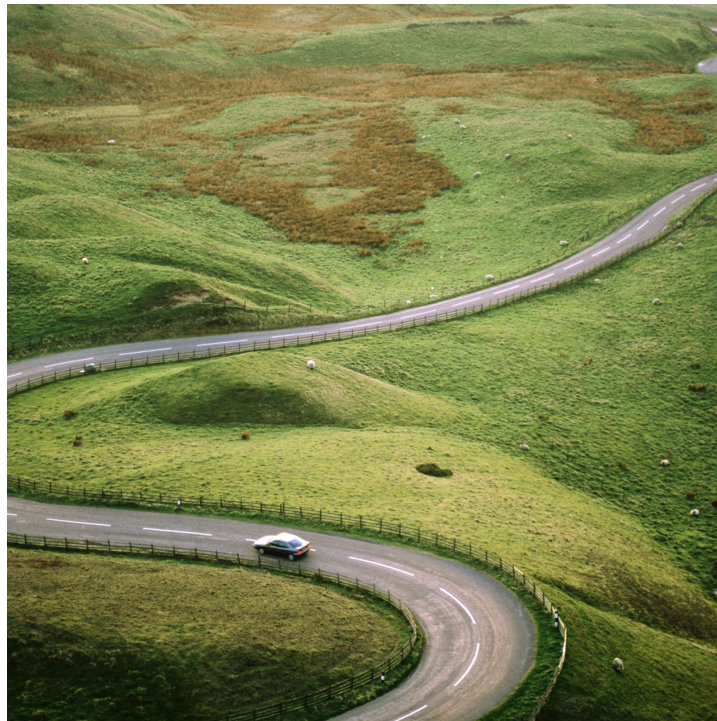
Once underway, you won't find driver aids in classic cars, you are forced to become a better driver or you'll crash. You need to learn threshold braking, throttle control and how to correct understeer and oversteer. You learn to anticipate which gear you'll need to select in each situation. That's because there are no driver aids in classic cars to save your rear if you mess up. It's just you and the car, with each entity requiring respect from the other. We want complete control of the car, even if it kills us, so there are no airbags in here, we die like men.

Modern cars tend to isolate the driver from the driving experience with sound insulation, vague and numb steering, and shielding the driver from driving dynamics. They have things like traction control, stability control and anti lock brakes. Some even pipe faux exhaust sound in via the stereo.

Classic LBCs offer no insulating filter. You have neither power steering, nor power brakes or clutch. There's little to no sound insulation and no computers spying over our shoulders. Driving a classic car is the purest form of driving,



Some people argue that our old cars embody the soul and the passion of the automobile. The raw, unadulterated experience of driving an old sports car is what creates an emotional bond between man and machine, and according to some, that bond can't be created when there are so many



computers helping you guide the car down the road.

Don't get me wrong, I love that modern technology is constantly pushing automotive limits. I want my daily driver to start every morning and get me where I need to be quickly, comfortably, and safely. There is not only a place for, but a big need for that kind of single purpose machine. But, that's not really driving, it is just transporting this body from point A to point B. For daily use old British cars, quoting James May, are "rubbish, if they were any good they'd still be made."

To James May, I say, "Poppycock!" There's no better way to start a workday than to



commute in an open topped LBC. You invariably arrive with a smile on your face which helps make for a successful day's work. Then, outside the demands of the work-a-day world, the classic British sports car fulfills the human need for transportation, and beauty, along with the often thrilling experience of being one with the machine.



You're more likely to get a computer virus from visiting religious sites than porn sites.

Adjustable Oil Pressure Relief Valve

Carl Gwyn, Sacramento Valley MG Car Club, courtesy of MGB Driver

Ever since I rebuilt my engine, I've not been happy with the oil pressure. It would always run about 50 psi when warm at 3000 rpm and dip to 20 psi at idle (850 rpm). However, there are occasions when I'm driving during the summer when the temperature is over 100 degrees (F) and the engine is getting very warm, that the pressure drops a little below 50 psi while cruising along the freeway.



This makes me a little nervous even though I've been assured by reliable sources that the pressure is still adequate. I just don't like running at the minimum of specifications. I always think that if something were to happen, I'd like just a little more of a margin for error.

This being the case, I thought I would look into how I might be able to raise the pressure to its before-rebuild value of 65 psi – 75 psi.

My first steps were to look at the diagram in the manual and watch John Twist's video on YouTube

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a7mVVvWnR34&list=P LCFB510794339861C&index=7.>)

From those two sources, I assumed the problem could lie with the oil pressure relief valve. I arrived at this decision because when I rebuilt the engine I had replaced all the bearings, rebuilt the

wrench. My good friend Doug Peterson knows his way around Minis and machine shops, so I asked for his help. This turned out to be a wise decision on my part in more ways than one.

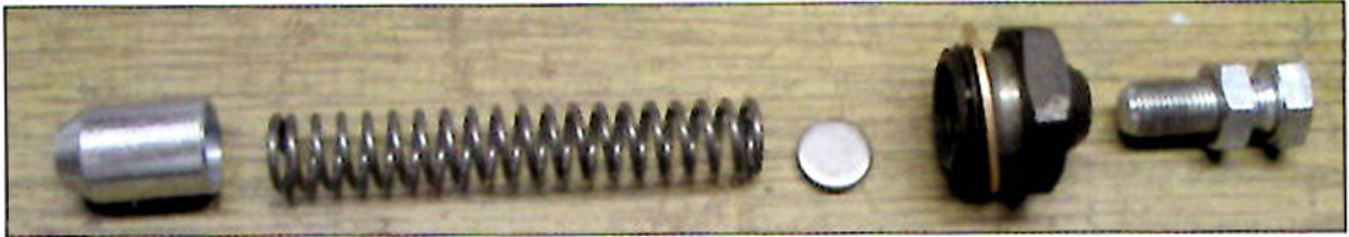


Figure 1 - Exploded view of altered / adjustable relief valve.



Figure 2 - assembled valve

oil pump, and also had the rocker arm assembly reworked. I just could not see that I was losing that much pressure from bearings. I did remember that when I disassembled the engine there was no packing in the pressure relief valve so I didn't put anything in upon reassembly. Replacing the relief valve and adding packing would be the simplest place to begin. If there was no change, it would be time to look deeper; something I didn't want to even think about.

I ordered a new pressure relief valve, spring, packing, and washer. Upon receipt of the parts I got my pre-project counseling from Lawrie Alexander, which proved to be invaluable as always. The major warning he gave me was that once out, the valve is rather difficult to get back in because of the pressure required to compress the spring while trying to twist the cap and start the threads. I'd heard previously that it is a good idea to make this a two-person job with one person compressing the spring while the other turned the

Generally, the pressure relief springs pushes the valve into place and maintains oil pressure at the recommended specification. The force on the valve can be increased by adding 'packing', which is usually done by placing washers between the spring and the valve, or between the spring and the cap. More packing means more pressure on the valve and oil pressure should rise as long as there is not excessive loss from the bearings.

One major problem in doing this job is deciding how much packing to put in. Too much, and oil pressure is too high. Too little, and the pressure remains too low.

Changing the amount of packing requires removal of the cap and suffering the pains of putting it back in. Doug recommended we try a solution he had used in racing Minis would allow me to adjust the pressure on the spring, hence allowing me to adjust the overall oil

pressure.

To do this, a hole is drilled through the cap and tapped for a 3/8" fine thread bolt. The packing from Moss, a solid round metal blank, was placed between the spring and the 3/8" bolt (see figures 1 and 2). Since Doug offered to make this set-up from an extra cap he had at home, my answer was an enthusiastic "YES"!

With the custom cap in hand, we jacked the car up and set it on jack stands. Access to the cap from underneath was ok, so it was soon removed. The old valve had to be fished out with a magnet, but that wasn't too bad. We put the new valve and spring back in, stuck the packing into the cap with some grease and began to get frustrated trying to get the custom cap back in. Doug suggested we try starting the cap without the spring in place so we could see just where the threads would catch. With that spot marked, it would take a minimum amount of turning to get it started. While this approach was very helpful, we just couldn't get the threads to catch.

So, I removed the carburetors and with Doug reaching down from above with a socket to turn the cap and me below guiding the cap into the hole and holding the socket so the ratchet could catch, we finally got it started.

After all that I was happy we wouldn't have to remove it again to add or remove packing. We threaded the 3/8" bolt in and felt it make contact with the spring. A couple of turns on the bolt against the spring, carburetors back in place, and we were ready to start the engine (figure 3).

The oil pressure immediately went to 58 psi on starting the engine cold. One additional turn on the bolt increased oil pressure to about 65 psi. That's where we locked it in place with the jam nut. I let the engine warm to normal temperature and now the oil pressure is about 53 psi at idle (850 rpm) and right around 70 psi at 3000 rpm.

The road test was excellent. I took the B on a 60

mile trip and oil pressure never dropped below 70 PSI while on the freeway, and remained at 40 psi at idle. And I couldn't see any leakage from the new adjusting bolt.

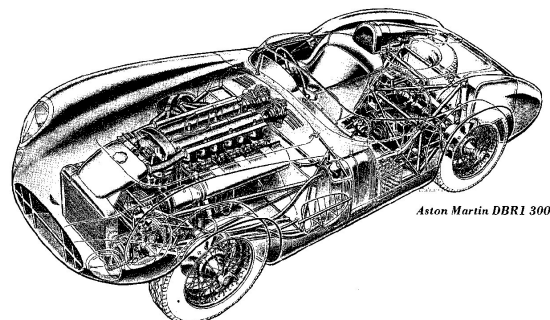
I am ecstatic to now have oil pressure at the upper end of the specifications for a change.



Figure 3 Adjustable Pressure Valve in Place

Needless to say, this would not be a solution for a worn engine in need of overhaul.

Thanks to Lawrie Anderson for his counsel, and to Doug Peterson for his guidance and help on this project. Without them, I'd be under the car lying in a puddle of oil saying dark things.



Working on Your Own LBC

Richard Lewis

Panhandle British Car Association

Most of us who love LBC's have a long, and sometimes sordid, history with them, akin to taking up with a girlfriend whom you know will break your heart, but one's good judgment is overcome by a passionate, lustful craving that cannot simply be resisted.

Your loyal correspondent (YLC forthwith) is certainly no exception. His love affair began with a 1953 TR 2, a luscious, sensual creature whose



hroaty engine's siren song still resounded, even if, like Ulysses, one stuffed one's ears with wax. Without the knowledge of parents, YLC withdrew cash from his college fund (a minuscule hoard, as it was) in order to purchase the wench. Ah, what delight, despite the parental disapproval! Never had he felt as fulfilled as on that first drive behind that throbbing powerhouse of an engine (in reality, a repurposed tractor mover).

That thrill lasted most of those last college years, until a stoplight and a Buick, guided by a charming septuagenarian who no doubt had her mind on Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetal Tonic, drove the stake into the heart of that gorgeous voluptuary, albeit from the rear end. Dependable and steady, the TR 2 had required a minimum of maintenance, and YLC was fortunate enough to be fathered by an enormously gifted aircraft mechanic, who, during school breaks, did everything of any magnitude to the car, while his son spent any available spare time with water skiing, beach going, and, yes, honesty forces him to admit, girls.

As a consequence, beyond learning how to change a tire, and even an occasional spark plug, YLC learned almost nothing of mechanics, even when in the presence of a master. Not only is youth wasted on the young, but so are brains.

However, soon marriage and a job required some kind of transportation and, combined with an insurance settlement and a wife who had been far more prudent than he in saving her summer job cash, plus time payments, all yielded up a brand-new 1959 TR 3A. Red, with a white top, enormous whitewalls, and red leather interior with white piping, made it a feast to look upon. So one arises to Asgard, Nirvana, Paradise, and all other places of ecstatic joy. What a lovely vision upon which to look! Sturdy as she was, after a time, YLC decided he needed to do the manly thing and learn a thing or two about how to take care of this beauty. Having put a few thousand miles on it by driving back and forth to graduate school, he decided to clean the carburetors.

Therefore, he unbuckled them from the engine and decided to take them apart for a cleaning. Will youth never learn prudence and judgment? It requires no great insight to realize that this



was going to end badly, and it did. When it was time to leave with She Who Must Be Obeyed for a long awaited trip upon which she had

looked with anticipation, the TR 3 was mortally wounded.

Realizing that he had played out his hand, even over-played it, YLC went begging, with the carbs in a paper sack, to the Triumph dealership for help in avoiding what was likely to be an explosion of volcanic fury. Saints that they were, they had her up and running the next morning, even refusing the bribe YLC had offered at the beginning of the negotiations. Surely their reward will be in heaven.

Fast forward to several years in the future, and even after some similar mechanical mishaps, YLC decided, in the interest of a father-son project, to purchase a very weary AC Sprite parked, no doubt for several months, on a side street in D. C. for the princely sum of \$250. Trailering it home to Frederick, Md., and starting



to work on it in the tiny space allotted to us by She Who Must Be Obeyed, we soon had it reduced to tiny piles of what soon became unknown pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, having failed to label them properly.

Fortunately, son Tony inherited what had skipped a generation, his grandfather's mechanical talents, and, by hiring out only about half the work, we actually made the car run. And surprisingly enough, it even looked pretty darned good, at least to us. Having spent only about ten grand on what we could have bought for about two, we had a working sports car. Eureka!

And we had fun.

Subsequent years have seen similar episodes of bad judgment, including horribly expensive tussles with a Saab Sonnet, another TR 3, and a Spitfire GT 6, by a person who is almost unencumbered with natural mechanical talent, but who still enjoys working on LBC's, even if he has to do it three times in order to get it right once.

No doubt, as one ages, he is sometimes less willing to climb under cars only to get a squirt of oil in the eye, or stick his hand into a greasy, filthy engine bay to get a knuckle skinned by a slipping wrench, but there is still a thrill in having done it yourself, and not always turning it over to some fellow who you know knows so much more than you do, and sometimes let you know that.



"I started repairing my car myself when it became quite clear that I should let you guys handle it."

That thrill when the engine actually starts, and sings like a mezzo-soprano, or the brakes stop screaming like a banshee, and we did it, keeps us coming back for more.

Movie rights for The Terminator sold for \$1.

Technical Corner

MG Final Drive Ratios

Koby Millio (Israeli Classic Car Club)

courtesy of MGB Driver

Here is a chart that shows the final drive ratio for the MGA, MGB, MGB with overdrive, the MGC, and the MGC with Overdrive. It shows the huge benefit of installing an overdrive transmission in an MGB.

For the MGC they had different ratios for overdrive and non-overdrive cars so the effect of the overdrive is less apparent, but on the MGB it is large – in order to cruise at 66 mph in a non-overdrive car you'll need more than 3700 RPM, while in an overdrive car you'll only need 3,000 RPM.

In an MGA, with its 4.3 final drive ratio, it is even more apparent, but the solution is a Ford T9 transmission conversion since an MGB overdrive transmission won't fit without frame modifications.

MODEL	FINAL DRIVE	SPEED (mph) at 1000 RPM	SPEED (mph) at 3000 RPM	SPEED (kph) at 3000 RPM
AT				
MGA 1500 & 1600	4.3	17	51	8.6
MGA 1600 Mk2	4.1	17.3	51.9	83.0
MGB	3.9	17.9	53.7	85.9
MGB + O/D	3.9	22.2	66.6	106.6
MGC (1968)	3.07	24.1	72.3	115.7
MGC (1968) + O/D	3.307	27	81	129.6
MGC (1969)	3.307	22.1	66.3	106.1
MGC (1969) + O/D	3.7	24	72	115.2



Wants N Gots

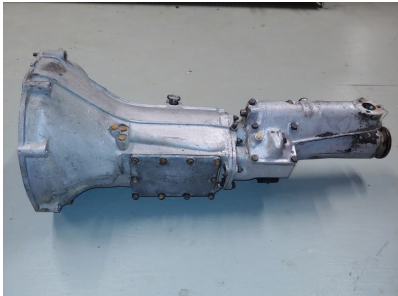
With the Coronavirus pandemic still raging, we're supposed to wear a mask to help limit spreading the disease. Kim Shepard, with Carolyn's help is still selling bespoke masks. You can choose your fabric and whether the mask has elastic or ties. At \$8 each, they come with a metal nose wire and a pocket for a filter



Text Kim at (901) 283-6762.

FREE ... FREE ... FREE ... FREE ... FREE

John Morrison sadly needs to reclaim garage space from when he replaced the 4-Speed



transmission in his MGB-GT. It is a good, solid example of the basically bullet-proof MG all-synchro gearbox – Starting in 1968 MG installed the transmission designed to handle power from the MG-C, hence it is a universally sturdy component.

Maybe John will share one of wonderful homebrewed beers with you.

FREE @ (901) 489-9828



All polar bears are left-handed.

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