Wyres & Tyres

www.memphisbritishcars.org

The British Sports Car Club, LTD - Memphis, Tennessee

October, 2020

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Jim Duke	Secretary

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

For Now, write TBD on all calendar pages!!!

Updates and News

One of the more enjoyable things the BSCC has done during the pandemic is parading our vehicles through various retirement homes, giving a shout-out to our senior citizens who really need a break in the monotony of their isolation. It's always a great feeling to have our hobby appreciated by others, but even better to be able to give our appreciation back.

The latest of these drive-by parades was Saturday afternoon, Sept. 26th at Trezvant Manor on north Highland in Memphis.

Bob Watkins organized the drive-by and brought his Bricklin out. Bob's Bricklin was joined by Jerry Farrar's MGB, Dexter Witte's TR-6, Dave & Anne Brand's AH Sprite, Bob & Mary Martin's Morgan +4, and Terry & Sandy Robert's MGB. Bob & Judith Craig brought out a classic 1950s Ford PU and we had a beautiful 64 Chevrolet SS in attendance as well.

Three trips around the Trezvant block made for a nice 'feel good' parade for both spectators and participants. Plus, it was a nice excuse to exercise our British iron.

We had a brief pictorial quiz in the last issue of W&T. Sadly the response with guesses or identification of the pictured objects was loudly underwhelming. Only one reader ventured to identify the British car parts, and that reader only got one of the five spot-on, but was close with two others. So, if we give full credit to 'close enough', Jeff Meredith got a 60% score.

Here are the correct answers (make note, they might appear again on the class final!)

The item pictured is an oil level indicator float from a 1936 Rolls Royce V-12 engine. Shocking no one got this right!

This is a 'finisher' for the rubber seal for the door opening in an MGB.

Part of the carburettor linkage for an SU on many British cars.

This is a fender washer for MGB front wings.

Shown, above is a fulcrum or trunnion bolt that holds an MGB front shock absorber to the swivel axle.

Finally, shown here are flywheel locking

washers?

Jeff will be awarded one of our dwindling supply of big fuzzy dice for his semi-accurate response.

One of the favorite automobile books mentioned in a recent W&T has been discovered lurking in the Roadster Factory's inventory. Titled, 'The Red Car', this book is credited with leading many unsuspecting young males into a lifelong addiction to open cars of the British persuasion.

While a paperback and a facsimile printing of the original, it only costs about $10 rather than the lofty $350+ one of the original copies brings.

www.the-roadster-factory.com

Remember Mood rings?

Well, I lost mine the other day.

Not sure how I feel about that.

On All Three Wheels

A memorable episode of the long-running BBC TV show Top Gear began with host Jeremy Clarkson seated in a small red sedan (saloon car for you sticklers). He's wearing the seatbelt and a helmet. With Clarkson's voice-over commentary, the car moves down a short driveway, then turns left onto the street. Immediately, the car tipped over onto its right side and slid to a stop. That trapped Clarkson until helpful passers-by stopped to tip the car back onto its three wheels.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQh56geU0X8

Thus, Top Gear introduces viewers to the odd world of British three-wheel motorcars. The Brits were not the only or first to take the three wheeled route. Patented in 1886, Karl Benz's Patent Motor-Wagen, the very first workable car just had three wheels. Three wheel vehicles, often called 'cycle cars' were fairly common in the automotive early days, but a fourth wheel quickly became standard equipment.

Some British car companies seemed to hear a different drum and kept producing three-wheeled cars long after others had switched to four. There were several reasons three-wheel cars remained popular in Britain. Mostly it boiled down to cost. Lightweight three wheel cars were cheap to make, thus they offered a chance for Britain's working class to gain mobility at a price within their reach. Under Britain's steep tax rules, three-wheel vehicles were classified as cycles and taxed much less than their four-wheel counterparts.

Gasoline, or petrol, was and remains costly in Britain averaging more than $5.60 per gallon at time of this writing. The small engines powering lightweight three-wheel vehicles offered superior gas mileage compared to the four-wheel competition. For example, the 750cc to 850 cc engine powering the Reliant Robin tipped over by Jeremy Clarkson could get 70 MPG to 85 MPG!

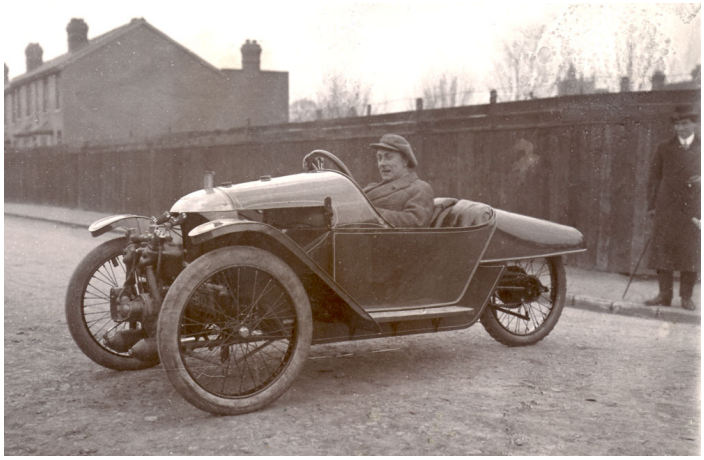
In sum, lightweight three-wheel vehicles were cheap to buy, cheap to get on the road, and cheap to operate.

Let's take a glance at some more common three-wheeled British cars—

Probably most commonly known is the -

Morgan -

H.F.S. Morgan's first car design was a single-seat three-wheeled runabout, which he built for his personal use in 1908. Power went to the single rear wheel while two front wheels handled steering. Morgan soon recognized that a two seats would be more in demand, so he introduced and displayed his two-seater at the 1911 Motor Cycle Show, adding a bonnet, windscreen, wheel steering, and crank starting; Harrod's department store took up an agency in London with a selling price of £65. Morgan thus



became the only car ever to appear in a shop window at Harrods.

Three-wheel Morgans continued in production in various configurations until 1952, after which they made only four wheeled cars. Then, after a hiatus of nearly 50 years, Morgan announced the rebirth of the three-wheeler in 2011. U.S. sales of the new iteration began in 2012.

Reliant Robin –

When the Raleigh Bicycle Company stopped making three-wheeled vehicles in 1934, their manager, T. L. Williams, and a colleague, E. S. Thompson, felt that the days of lightweight three-wheelers were not over. They built their own vehicle in Williams's Tamworth, England back yard. Their home-built design closely resembled Raleigh's Karryall van, and they licensed the prototype in January 1935. With the motorcycle front end mounted in the open, in front of the bulkhead, it was essentially a motorcycle fitted with a box body.

Reliant continued producing the Karryall replica through 1973 when they introduced the Robin, a small three-wheeled, fiberglass bodied car. It is the second most popular fibre-glass car in history, with Reliant being the second-biggest UK-owned car manufacturer for a time. The Robin was the culmination of Reliant's three-wheel vehicle history. The original Robin ceased production in 1982, but Reliant again started making them in 1989. A big facelift occurred in 1999 and included optional diesel or electric engine. Reliant finally stopped making the Robin in 2000, but B&N Plastics gained production rights and started making Robins in 2001. The effort failed in 2002 after they produced only 40 cars.

Birmingham Small Arms (BSA) Runabout

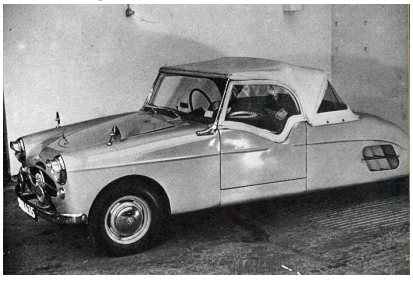
BSA intermittently made automobiles beginning in 1907. They produced a variety of small and medium size cars without notable success and seemed to have switched management frequently. They introduced their first 3-wheel car in 1929 and continued producing both car and van body styles until 1935.

All BSA car production stopped in 1940 due to WWII.

BSA patterned their runabouts more like Morgans, with a single driving wheel in the rear and two front wheels handling steering.

Powerdrive —

The Powerdrive was a short-lived three-wheeled microcar with a rear-mounted 322 cc, two stroke, two-cylinder engine. David Gottlieb, formerly with Allard, designed the car aiming to exploit the lower tax rate applied to three-wheeled vehicles. The Powerdrive



was larger than other cars in this class, with full-size 13-inch wheels and luggage space at both the front and rear. The car's design and styling attracted much praise at its launch at the Dorchester Hotel in London in July 1955. Powerdrive LTD only managed a two-year production run, folding in 1957.

AC -

Yes, the storied maker of the Ace, the Aceca, and the Greyhound, briefly (1953 through 1955) made 3-wheel cars. The AC Petite was a three-wheeled British microcar with a rear-mounted 350 cc single cylinder, two-stroke engine. The

Petite offered a single bench seat for two adults and a claimed 60 mpg There were two versions of the car. The car was fitted with two sizes of wheels, 18-inch rear and 8-inch front in 1953 and 1954. Twelve-inch wheels were equipped all around in 1955. Like Reliant, the AC had two rear wheels driving the car with a single wheel in front. Around 4,000 AC Petites were sold.

Bond Bug –

Was made by Reliant after they bought out Bond Motors. The distinctive styling of the Bond Bug helped it gain widespread appeal. Available only in an orange color (other than five cars made in white for a special advertising event), the Bond Bug's wedge shape

with lift-up canopy entry, and a low seating position suggested it would be fun to drive.

Offered with front engine, the Bond Bug adopted the Reliant standard of one front wheel with two driving wheels at the rear. Although the Bond Bug had a short life, 1970 to 1974, it has a dedicated following yet today.

Scammell Scarab –

Rather than a passenger car, the Scammell Scarab was a British 3-wheeled truck tractor produced by Scammell between 1948 and 1967. These small trucks were built to fill the need to

replace horses to pull local railway delivery wagons. Scammell made about 30,000 of the small tractors in various iterations during the nearly 20-year life.

Peel P50 –

The Peel P50 was a three-wheeled microcar manufactured in 1963 and 1964 by the Manx Peel Engineering Company on the Isle of Man, retailed for £199 when new and currently holds the record for the smallest-ever automobile to go into production. The company produced 50 P50s and only 27 are known to still exist, one of which was sold for a whopping $176,000 at

a Sotheby's auction in March 2016.

It was designed as a city car and was advertised as capable of seating "one adult and a shopping bag." The vehicle's only door was on its left side, and equipment included a single windscreen wiper, and only one headlight The prototype for this model was referred to as the Peel P55 Saloon Scooter having one front wheel and 2 rear wheels - the opposite way round from the production Peel P50. In 2010 and 2011, the Peel P50 returned to production in gas and EV models.

We'll close out three wheeling where we started, with Jeremy Clarkson and Top Gear shenanigans. Check out -

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dJfSS0ZXYdo

Where we see Jeremy take a P50 to work, including through the revolving door, up the elevator, and down the BBC office hallways.

An Irishman went into a bar, and he had a parrot on his shoulder.

The bartender asks, "Where'd you get that?"

The parrot replied, "In Ireland, they've got thousands of them."

THE PATRON SAINT OF MINIS

Deborah King - English Motoring Club of Arkansas

Sir Alexander Arnold Constantine Issigonis CBE FRS RDI (18 November 1906 – 2 October 1988)

If you haven't heard of Alec Issigonis, sit back and take a few minutes to learn about him. He is, after all, the patron saint of the classic Mini! Born in Greece just after the turn of the 20th century, Issigonis is credited with the design of the Mini, and the innovation of the trademark transverse front engine, front wheel drive, and "wheels at the corners of the box" combination that works so well.

Trained as an engineer in London (where he flunked his math exams three times!), Issigonis began work at Humber, and also raced an Austin Seven. After redesigning part of the suspension on his Austin race car, he began working for Austin.

By the mid '30s, Issigonis continued work on suspension design, this time for Morris. Continuing with Morris through World War II, he ultimately began working on the postwar Morris Minor. Morris and Austin merged into BMC in 1952, and Issigonis continued working on medium to large size family cars.

The Suez crisis in 1956 resulted in fuel rationing in England, though, and Issigonis was

reassigned to quickly bring a small commuter car to market.

In 1959, the Morris Mini Minor and Austin Seven were launched, soon to be known as the Austin Mini.

(*As an aside, I've seen a 1959 Mini at MINIs In The Ozarks (MITO), reportedly the oldest Mini in the United States.)*

The first Mini had a revolutionary suspension and transverse front engine, and front wheel drive layout that allowed a remarkable 80% of the car's floor pan to be devoted to passengers and cargo. The same layout, with a very similar

appearance, endured from 1959 until 2000, using factory engines ranging from 850cc to 1275cc.

The car was produced in a number of countries, ranging from the UK to Italy (where it was licensed as the Innocenti), to Australia. With a center instrument cluster, the Mini could easily be produced as either right or left hand drive, and conversions are common. In addition to the "standard" 2 door, 4 seat model such as the 1959 Morris Mini Minor pictured above, it was also made in a slightly longer form with twin rear doors, called the Clubman, as well as a panel van, pick-up truck, and even an open Jeep-like car called the Mini Moke.

Mokes these days command a premium price on the collector's market. In addition, the Wolseley Hornet and Riley Elf variations were built, although they had a bit larger boot and an upright grill. Nearly 5.4 MILLION Minis in all versions were produced overall.

Today's MINI, now redesigned and sold by BMW, retains the general layout of the classic Mini, although stiffer crash safety, pedestrian impact protection, pollution laws and consumer demand have greatly affected the design.

The new ones are bigger, look different, and certainly drive different. They're also considerably more reliable…but there's nothing like driving a bit of history, as I remind myself every time something breaks!

250 lbs here on Earth is 94.5 lbs on Mercury. So, I'm not fat. I'm just not on the right planet.

Skinners Union Carburettors

By Michael E Ware

There can be few old car enthusiasts who have not experienced a car which was fitted with a one or more S.U. carburetters. In a recently published book, "Skinner's Union", author Michael Harvey has very cleverly combined the social and technical history behind this style of carburettor. The social side being the Skinner family and their racing and other exploits with a series of homemade specials.

Originally designed by Herbert Skinner and produced by his younger brother Carl Skinner, the SU carburetter has with continuous development, remained in production since 1908. The SU history starts the Skinner family

and their involvement with the large national footwear company of Lilley and Skinner Ltd. The shoe company's success generated the family wealth, which helped to keep the SU Company afloat during the loss-making years 1919-1926 before SU was purchased by William Morris.

Carl Skinner continued to manage the SU Company under Morris. With access to Morris components and suppliers, he arranged for two fast road going "specials" to be built, which initially he used as his own company transport. He also had two racing "specials" built for his son Peter and daughter Barbara, which they successfully campaigned in hill climbs and sprints during the 1930's. Barbara Skinner married John Bolster but was tragically killed early in the war, otherwise I am sure she would have continued racing post-war, and may have become better known

During the Second World War the SU Company produced aero-carburetters for the Rolls-Royce Merlin and Napier Sabre engines, which powered many of the RAF's aircraft. Every Hurricane and Spitfire in action during the Battle of Britain in 1940 used a twin-barrel SU AVT aero-carburetter.

The Company's link with the Skinner brothers came to an end with Carl's retirement in 1947. Still, SU continued to prosper under BMC after Morris and Austin had merged in 1952, but started to decline in 1975, during the turbulent era of nationalized British Leyland. The last of

their KIF series of carburetter for the Rover Metro came off the SU production line in 1994, and the plant finally closed in 1999.

However, the closure of the factory was not the end of SU carburetter and fuel pump production. During the 1980's. Burlen Fuel Systems Ltd who was the SU agent in Salisbury negotiated an agreement with the company to supply SU carburetters, fuel pumps and spares, for after-market applications. This eventually led to Burlen purchasing the tooling, jigs and stock, and acquiring the Intellectual Property Rights and SU trade mark; enabling them to continue to manufacture SU carburetters and fuel pumps for the vintage, historic and classic car markets today.

You can shop for carburetors, parts, and even logo clothing at http://sucarb.co.uk/.

SU Tpes:

SU Carburetters were supplied in several throat sizes in both Imperial (inch) and metric (millimeter) measurement.

The carburetor identification is made by letter prefix which indicates the float type:

"H": in which the float bowl has an arm cast into its base, which mounts to the bottom of the carburetor with a hollow bolt or banjo fitting. Fuel passes through the arm into the carburetor body. The bolt attaches to the carburetor body just behind the main jet assembly.

"HD": the float bowl mounts with its arm fastening directly below, and concentric with, the main jet. The arm has a flange that fastens with 4 screws to the bottom of the carburetor, and sealed with a rubber diaphragm integral with the main jet.

"HS": the float bowl is rigidly mounted to the carburetor body, but fuel is transferred by a separate external flexible line.

"HIF": the float bowl is horizontal and integral (hence the name).

"HV", "OM" and "KIF" types also exist but were less commonly employed.

The Imperial sizes include 1-1/8", 1-1/4", 1-1/2", 1-3/4", 1-7/8", and 2", although not every type (H, HD, HS, HIF) was offered in every size.

There were also H models made in 2-1/4" and 2-1/2", now obsolete. Special purpose-built carburetors (Norman) were made as large as 3".

To determine the throat size from the serial number: If the final number (after one, two or three letters, beginning with H) has 1 digit, multiply this number by 1/8", then add 1". For example, if the serial number is HS6, the final number is 6: 6/8 = 3/4", add 1, total is 1-3/4", etc.

If the final number has 2 digits, it is the throat size in mm. For example, if the serial number is HIF38, the final number is 38, size is 38 mm etc.

The following is an important personal safety tip : When chased by a dangerous wild animal such as a bear or lion, remain calm and throw yourself on the ground for more than five-seconds.

That way, the five-second rule kicks in and they can't eat you!

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P.O. Box 38134, Germantown, TN 38183-0134

www.memphisbritishcars.org

Contact the editor via dukemeteo@gmail.com

How many BSCC members, or their cars, can you identify in this old photo from a driving event in 2002?