

# Wires & Tyres

## The Ides of March 2021



[www.memphisbritishcars.org](http://www.memphisbritishcars.org)

British Sports Car Club, LTD Memphis, Tennessee

### BSCC Officers 2020-2021

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V. President  
Treasurer  
Austin Healey Marque Leader  
Empire Marque Leader  
Jaguar Marque Leader  
MG Marque Leader  
Triumph Marque Leader  
Lotus Marque Leader  
Secretary

Terry Roberts  
Jeb Blanchard  
Jerry Farrar  
Jim Hofer  
Tom Wilson  
Dave White  
Paul Burdette  
Jon Brody  
Chris Irving  
Jim Duke

### 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!!!



### Out For A Sunday Drive

Sunday, March 14, 2021 – the BSCC broke out of its ten-month slumber for an afternoon's drive through the springtime countryside along winding and hilly roads. A collection of fourteen member cars gathered at the Greenbelt Park on Mud Island, then headed northward to the Shelby Forest General Store via Island Drive, 2nd Street, Thomas St., Watkins St., and Benjestown Rd.



We took a left turn onto Bluff Rd. at the General Store and followed that curvy road down to Locke Rd where we took a right turning. But, as often the case when your editor is leading the way sans navigator, we missed our turn onto River Bluff Rd., and had to adopt dead reckoning to seek our planned destination – the gazebo in the Munford City Park.

Through a brilliant series of navigation decisions, and resorting to using about one mile of the divided lanes of U.S. Highway 51, we made it. Though, we arrived with one fewer cars than had set out.

Maybe in honor of the Jaguar E-Type's 60th anniversary, that marque dominated participants. There were two MGAs, two MGBs, two Porsches, one Lexus. The Jags consisted of two E-Types, one XJS, two XK-8s, one XKR, and one F-Type.

Another birthday anniversary coincided with our drive – Dave White was celebrating his 39th (?) birthday, and the thoughtful Rebecca Blanchard provided a collection of



tasty home-made cookies in lieu of a candle lit cake. Dave graciously shared his bounty among the multitude.

To summarize the BSCC enjoyed a wonderful, if long awaited commemoration of early spring. Delightful top-down weather, tree-lined winding roads, bucolic countryside, and the renewal of collegial love of British cars after a, too-long hibernation. The drive was so nice we were all left asking, "What's next?"









## 60th Anniversary

An E-Type (XK-E) Jaguar is the vintage British car that every classic aficionado craves. Beautiful body lines, a distinctive long bonnet, and impressive performance are only a handful of reasons the E-Type remains so iconic.

Since its first appearance was at the Geneva Motor Show in 1961, the E-Type is celebrating a



60th anniversary on March 15, 2021. Most cars don't honor birthdays, but the E-Type isn't your average car. Automobile lovers, world-wide are marking the anniversary in style.

To appreciate why such tribute is made for the 60th anniversary, we need to recall the arrival of the E-Type. Though it was set to be unveiled at the Geneva show, Jaguar wanted to hide from public viewing until the very last minute. Their secrecy was so secure that the show car only arrived 20 minutes before the public doors were to open on the Motor Show. And, to further hide from prying eyes, the car was driven the 700 miles from Coventry direct to Geneva by a Jaguar volunteer employee. No overnight stays, just hit the road and don't stop until you're there 20 minutes before unveiling.

If that headlong drive wasn't feat enough, Sir William Lyons, Jaguar head, ordered another staff member to repeat the drive the next day. Jaguar had encountered such demand for orders that a second car was needed to take potential buyers for a drive. So the second E-Type was hot

footed over, arriving just eleven hours after the first.

The Swiss press lauded the E-Type as the "sensation" of the Geneva International Motor Show. On the show's second day, Lyons



said, "I cannot give any accurate figures at the moment because many dealers ordered the car unseen, while their orders have been coming in since the car was introduced to the public yesterday."

The first personal sale was to M. Jacques Charrier, husband of Brigitte Bardot, the French filmstar. He flew to Geneva from Rome yesterday to test the 150 mph car.

Jaguar is releasing six pairs of a limited edition of E-Types in honor the 60th Anniversary. You'll have to be rich, lucky, and fast to grab these up, though. First, you must buy a pair, coupe and convertible (you can't buy just one!), pricing is reputed to be north of \$700,000, and with just six pairs on offer, only luck can get you in the hunt.

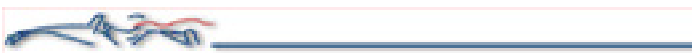
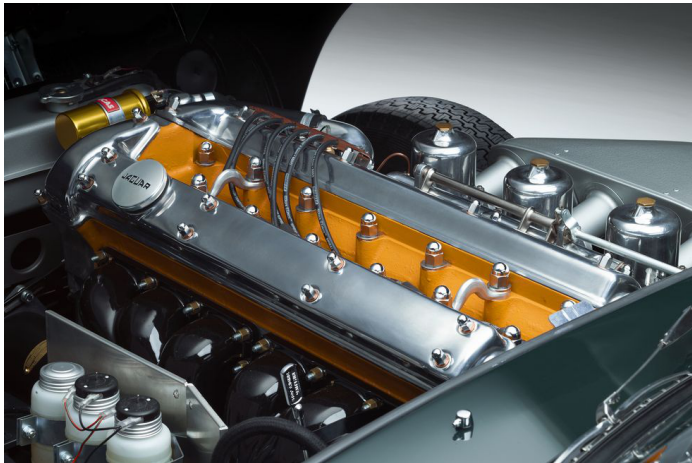


The coupe will come only in 'Flat Out Grey',





and the roadster in 'Drop Everything Green'. The colors were picked for both their classic shade, and named in tribute to those first two cars hustled over to Geneva in 1961.



## Adventures on a BSA Golden Flash motorcycle

It might have tried to kill me, but never failed to run.

*Wil Wing*

Uncle Sam transferred me from California to Cape Cod, Mass, in 1955. I liked that a lot, partly because my folks lived in New Jersey and I could visit occasionally – if I had some transportation. Buddies at the base gave me a lift to NYC a few times, within hitchhiking distance of home, but that wasn't a very good solution. Incidentally, in those days wearing your uniform was effective in getting rides.

My younger brother knew a guy who was trying to sell his BSA Golden Flash. This was a typical British vertical twin of the time, with a 650 cc engine and a single carb, the 'cooking version'. I've forgotten, but think it was a 1952 model or perhaps a year or two older. But it ran fine and I bought it. In addition to enjoying exploring Cape Cod that spring and summer, I commuted home six times, or so. It was about a 5 ½ hour trip by motorcycle and 6 hours by car in those pre-Interstate days. The bike always started and provided reliable transportation. But if I was the superstitious type, I might have thought the bike didn't like me very much. Here are a few examples:

Although I could afford the bike, I felt I lacked enough cash for new tires and tubes. That was kind of dumb. I don't know how many times I had flat tires on patched tubes, but it was too often. You understand this isn't like

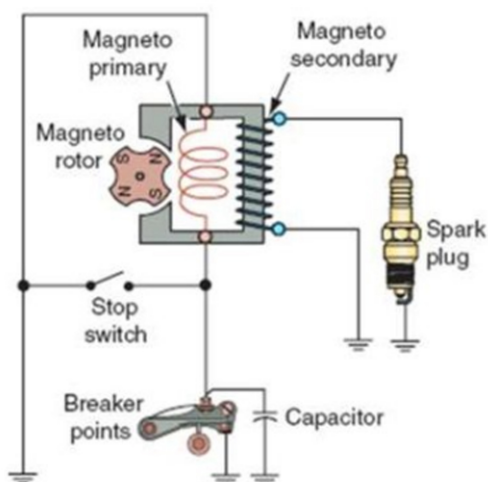


a flat tire on a car... when the rear inner tube



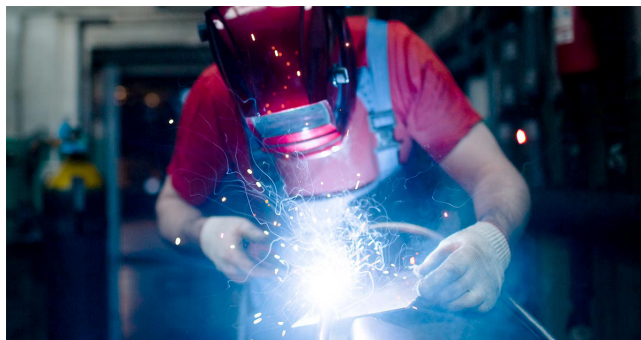
returning to base during rainy weather. My Army surplus tank goggles were badly steamed up and I was seeing the road through a few oil dots on the lens. I always crossed to New York via the Geo. Washington Bridge and knew I could find momentary shelter under the bridge before continuing up the Saw Mill River Parkway. Nearly blind, I angled off the road under the bridge where there were always guys standing, trying to hitch a ride. Except I didn't see the curb, and tumbled butt over tea kettle into nasty grit. Embarrassing! I bent the front brake lever but the only real problem was hours of itching from grit in my clothes. A different rainy ride was more serious.

Since the Air Defense Command provided around-the-clock early warning radar off both coasts during the 'Cold War' years, we flew crazy hours, usually 10 hours, eight on station, and four missions or so before a three-day break. During a break, without actual leave, I decided to shoot home for a day. I was at a party, moderately drunk, when my assistant crew chief of radar personnel called my house to warn me that we had an unscheduled flight the next



morning. My mother had my contact phone number. I started back to base after 11:00 PM, but this time it wasn't just rain; it was a full blown 'Nor'easter' hurricane with trees down across the road and some high voltage wires dancing and sparking in my path. I sobered up quickly. By about 3:00 AM I was crossing from Connecticut to Rhode Island and all my lights went out. At that point I was mostly out of the storm and there was occasional moonlight between the clouds. I carried a full set of Whitworth wrenches in the saddle bags, but it was too dark to see anything. No matter, the magneto was reliable and I kept going, navigating by moonlight. I got back to my base I found that the flight was canceled! Daylight revealed that my battery case had fractured from vibration and the battery fell out! It was hanging from one small wire a few inches above the ground; no starter motor, so no heavy cables. An easy fix, but thank goodness for magnetos.

I've saved the best for last. Vibration was always the main problem and after a few months my bike would stall when I braked, if the gas tank was full. I could smell gas and discovered that the tank split open at the front top. Braking would cause gasoline to slosh out, run down the frame tube and get into the magneto primary wiring, shorting it out. This happened several times and I temporarily avoided filling the tank all the way up. Do you consider it dangerous, riding around with four gallons of gasoline between your legs and stopping the engine by wetting the magneto with gas? Yeah, me too. I remembered a sign for 'Welding and Brazing' in Rhode Island and that was the most





memorable and strange of my BSA experiences.

The shop was on a small farm and the owner had his welding shop in the barn. After I helped remove the tank he was able to braze the open seam, after flushing with water several times. While he was working, his 10 or 11 years old daughter asked me lots of questions. She was quite thin but I'd guess she would grow up to be an attractive girl. She wanted to know all about what I did in the Air Force, where I lived, etc. I didn't mind talking to her while waiting. Out of the blue she said, "Would you marry me?" What! Her father didn't say anything, but just shook his head and kept working. I stammered something about being way too old for her. Her response was "You could wait for me." Yikes! I didn't consider myself any prize and wondered if she was unusually romantic at that age or whether there was something very wrong with her home life that made her want to escape. I still wonder about that.

By late fall I was freezing. Giddy with the extra pay of making Staff Sergeant, I bought a new 1956 Ford Victoria. I sold the BSA, but later heard that it went up in flames. I guess the gas tank split open again. Damned vibration.

But it was reliable for me.



## Spending COVID Time

I don't know about you, but your editor has spend all this down time reading, doing genealogy, writing a little, and generally wasting time. Others have worked on their cars, done landscaping, or other home projects.

Joe Reed has done a LOT of reading. His non-fiction reading has been focused on cars, British cars, MGs in particular. He offers the flowing brief reviews as a semi-learned guide for our use.

## Made in Abingdon: Echoes from the shop floor

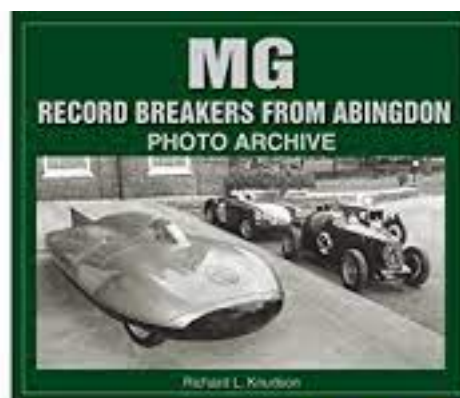
(Bob Frampton)

Unlike most of the MG related books in my collection, the focus of this one is not about the cars, or the history of the marque. It's about the people, the ones who were employed at the factory in Abingdon. The author gathered these stories from the workers themselves and compiled them into a book that gives you a window into what life was like for them at the Abingdon factory, and in the town of Abingdon itself. It's interesting to see how much MG meant to the workers and, in fact, to the entire town.

## MG Records Breakers from Abingdon Photo Archive

(Richard Knudson)

Although the title correctly states that this book is a "photo archive" the author does a



commendable job of explaining how each of the MG record breakers were developed and raced, as well as giving insight into the men involved. Covered in quite a bit of detail are EX120, EX127, EX135, EX179 and EX181.

## The MG Collection: Post-War Models

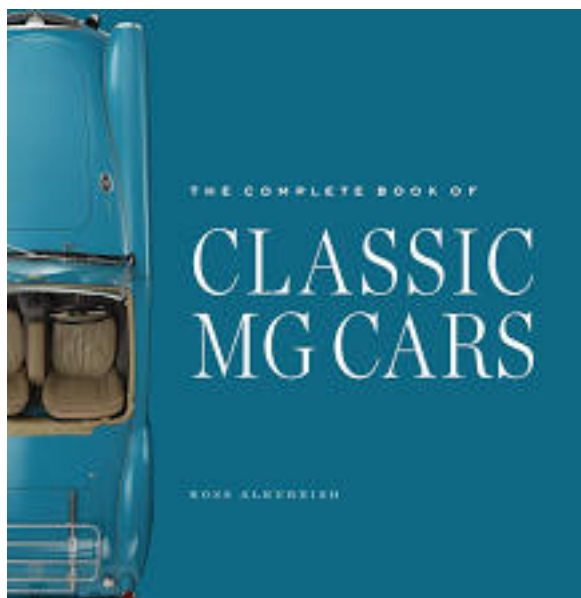
(Richard Monk)

While this book contains some large, beautiful photographs of many of the various MG models from the TC and Y-Type all the way to the RV8 and MGF, a considerable amount of the text is repetitive. For example, much of the text in the sections on the various MGA models (1500, 1600, 1600 Deluxe and Twin Cam) is simply repeating the history and details of the MGA in general,



and only adds the specifics to the particular model being discussed at the end of the page. Nevertheless, the large photos – many of them 11” x 16” spanning two pages – make the book worthwhile.

### **The Complete Book of Classic MG Cars** (Ross Alkureishi)



This is a large format book covering MG history from the very beginning up until the purchase by Nanning in 2005. Many beautiful photos are contained in the book but, unfortunately, quite a few of them are of cars somewhat “personalized” by the owners instead of factory original specimens. There are also many historic photos as well as images of factory advertisements and brochures from the early days. The text, while relatively complete, does contain a few errors, but not enough to detract from the overall message.

### **Faster** (Neal Bascomb)

The book’s subtitle describes this story best: “How a Jewish Driver, an American Heiress, and a Legendary Car Beat Hitler’s Best.” A very detailed historical account of auto racing leading up to World War II vividly takes you back to those days and introduces you to

René Dreyfus (the driver), Lucy Schell (the heiress who was also an accomplished racer) and the Delahaye race car that was to bring them together. The story spans many years and covers not only the happenings around the race scene at the time, but also interweaves an important insight into the European politics prior to the war and how the Germans used racing for their political purposes.

### **Fast Lines** (Pete Lyons)



Automotive writer Pete Lyons put together this book which consists of his 55 favorite columns he wrote for Vintage Racecar magazine. He provides a behind-the-scenes insight rarely seen when it comes to the most famous drivers, cars and events. This “insider” view gives the reader a more complete perspective than one usually gets from the mainstream automotive press.

### **Driven by Desire, The Desiré Wilson Story** (Alan Wilson)

You likely have heard of Danica Patrick. You may have heard of Janet Guthrie and Pat Moss. You may have even heard of Donna



Mae Mims. Even so, you likely have not heard of Desiré Wilson, a South African lady racer who competed against the best male racers and just may be the most successful female racing driver of all. She won a Formula One race, although not



a points championship race. She competed in a multitude of racing cars over her career and routinely beat the men even though she was almost always driving inferior cars. While the story highlights her many successes, it also drives home just how very difficult it was (and still is) to get a ride with a competitive team at the highest levels of motorsport....and how that difficulty is multiplied if you just happen to be female.

### **Closing Speed – The Unabridged Edition** (Ted West)

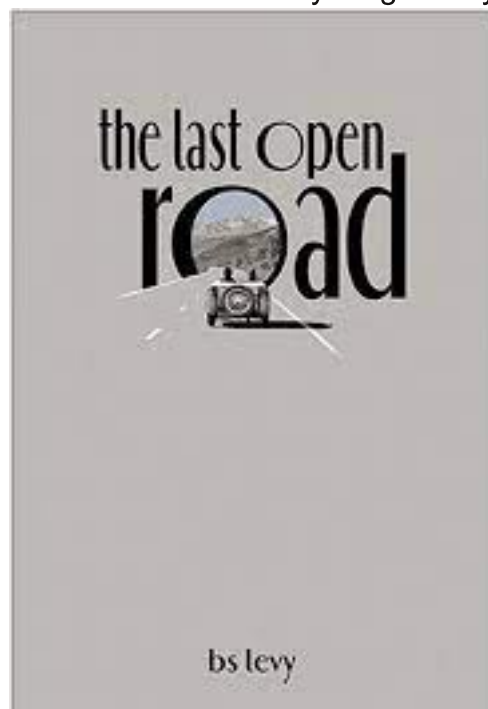
Closing Speed is a fast paced fictional account depicting the personalities – and conflicts – within the highest levels of auto racing. This book interweaves fact and fiction, making the stories completely believable. As you get to know the men involved (and the women involved with the men) it's fascinating to follow their interaction with each other as they strive to reach their goals.

### **A Potside Companion** (B.S. Levy)

Burt Levy has led quite a life as a writer, racing driver and a few other occupations when he was younger. The Potside Companion is a collection of 28 true(?) stories about the experiences Levy has had along the way. They are all short enough to be read during the time one might spend using the facilities – thus the name of the book!

### **The Last Open Road Series** (B.S. Levy)

This series of books by Levy is probably the best known and most successful automobile racing collection of all time. The first 4 books of the series follow a young Buddy Palumbo



through the transformation of a wide eyed teenager falling in love with cars, racing... and Julie. These first four books are told from the firsthand perspective of Buddy, and the writer skillfully merges fiction with fact as Buddy recounts his experiences from the early 1950s through the early 1960s. He loves sports cars and racing but realizes that his talent (and his budget) means that he will become part of the sport as a mechanic



instead of as a driver. Throughout the series you'll come to know and love the entire cast of characters made to seem so very realistic by the writer. These are the first four books of the series:

**The Last Open Road**  
**Montezuma's Ferrari**  
**The Fabulous Trashwagon**  
**Toly's Ghost**

The continuation of the series (two volumes thus far with a third and final volume promised) changes somewhat as the story now is told by automotive journalist Henry Lyons. Buddy Palumbo has now settled into a more "mature" life of running his dealership and taking care of his family so his appearance in this series is limited to a couple of brief mentions. This part of the series begins in the early 60s as Ford's interest in competing directly with Ferrari begins to sprout and grow. You'll soon get used to the fact that "Fairlane Motors" is merely a euphemism for "Ford Motor Company." Obviously, the author didn't want to experience a legal battle with Ford since some of the depictions of the company, some of the family members and company employees is less that flattering. Book II ends prior to Ford's domination at LeMans, so it's a give that Book III, when it is released, will cover that period. These are the two volumes available at this time:

**The 200mph Steamroller Book One:  
Red Reign**  
**The 200mph Steamroller Book II: The  
Italian Job**



## Horse vs. Automobile

**BEFORE** you discard your horse and buy an auto it is well to think of the cost.

Figure how much you spend for harness and then think of what new tires amount to.

Figure up what it takes to feed Dobbin in a year and then think of gasoline, repairs and storage charges.

Dobbin is worth what you paid for him two years ago, where's the man with an auto that can say the same?

Come in and get a new harness instead of a new car and remember that Dobbin will take you through snow and mud as well as on good roads and that his carburetor is never out of order.

**Ed. Klein**

732 Massachusetts Street

A priest and a rabbit walk into a blood clinic.  
The priest says "I think I'm a type-a."  
The rabbit says "I think I'm a typo."

How do you think the unthinkable?

With an ithberg.

## Wants N Gots

Steve Harvey is seeking a front, left-hand fender for a 1972 MGB. If you have one or can point him to one, call - (901) 848-8122.

Frank Vento is seeking a hard top for a series III Jaguar E-Type. If there's one taking up space in your garage, or you can suggest a source - [fvento@gmail.com](mailto:fvento@gmail.com)



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