

# Wires & Tyres

## May 2021



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

British Sports Car Club, LTD Memphis, Tennessee

### BSCC Officers 2020-2021

President	Terry Roberts
V. President	Jeb Blanchard
Treasurer	Jerry Farrar
Austin Healey Marque Leader	Jim Hofer
Empire Marque Leader	Tom Wilson
Jaguar Marque Leader	Dave White
MG Marque Leader	Paul Burdette
Triumph Marque Leader	Jon Brody
Lotus Marque Leader	Chris Irving
Secretary	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 - **Monday, May 17**  
**Monday, June 21**



Our first membership meeting since February last year was on April 19th, and much to our surprise we had good attendance. Heads went uncounted but at least 50 persons braved the mild spring weather to venture out – the nation's quest to quell the Covid-19 spread seems to be working.



Along with our usual tom foolery to open the meeting, President Terry Roberts announced three new members have recently joined. Great news, that puts us to 75 active members.

Also announced was the upcoming drive to de terra vineyard and winery near Sommerville, and a June 12 date for the Redbirds game – stay tuned for later information on that fun happening.

Finally, watch out, the homicide squad may be coming for you if you murder your crepe myrtles!!!



# de Terra Winery Drive

*Carolyn Shepard*

Thanks to Terry Roberts for organizing a fun event to de Terra Vineyard and Winery on Sunday, April 25th.

Driving past fields of daisies, viewing farmland awaiting the plow, an occasional rural cemetery and trailer home while snaking along Hwy 64 through Somerville on a beautiful, sunny day had all the tops down and wind in our faces.

The wine was spectacular and the accompanying lecture informed us all about the regulation and taxes that surround just one glass of wine.

Thank you to Jerry Peltz, our vintner, wine connoisseur and one-man show. Such a dedicated worker and sole employee!

Enjoy these photos of our members and their cars - we are all grateful to be back to driving and car events.





















# Falling in Awe with British Cars – Part II

by Jim Gallagher

We left our adventurers at the end of their trip from Houston to Dallas in the just acquired MGB. Now for the fun part -

The work to make the MG roadworthy began one Saturday morning and continued many weekends afterward. The first task was to repair or replace the steering wheel. The wood rim was badly weathered and could not be held in the normal way without injuring the driver's hands. Although Diana was not yet in love with the car, she saw the wooden wheel as a positive.

She took on the task of restoring it. She first tried sanding, but just sanding was not resolving the damage. Her father suggested that we try linseed oil. He said that they used it on the farm to recondition wooden handles on tools. Because it was so thin, it was difficult to apply to the wood and keep it there long enough to have any benefit. Diana's solution was to soak an old cloth baby diaper in the oil, wrap it around the wheel, and wrap that with plastic wrap. It would stay in place all week. On the next Saturday, she would unwrap it, work on the wood some more, and wrap it up again for another week. We soon found that Rex's solution was an excellent way to rehabilitate the wheel. Thirty plus years later, the same wheel is still in place and working well.

We quickly discovered Moss Motors. They became our ally in restoration and a consistent bill every month.

The exhaust system from the manifold to the rear bumper had to be replaced. Without a lift and cutting torch, the removal was difficult. Getting the new one back in was even more of a challenge. We came to find out, many years later, that one of the problems was that we did not have the right parts. It was close, and we managed to get it in, get it tight and get it well supported. That took an entire weekend by itself.

The next major task to make the car roadworthy was to replace the top. The top was needed for shade in the Dallas sun as well as security to close the car up. We made the decision that we should not skimp - we wanted the best that we could find and afford. We also chose change to a whiter top for its ability to reflect the heat. The choice of replacing the header or reusing the original seemed to be an easy one. We could take the old one off and reuse it. How difficult could it be?

The top arrived and we assessed what we had



and how the process should work. We removed the old, black roof and happily tossed it out. This is the point where we learned just how difficult it is to install new fabric in an old header. We struggled using every possible tool



we could find to get it in. Once we installed the old header on the new roof, we learned about stretching the fabric to get it

to reach all of its attachment points. That took many hours over several days to get the top to the point where it would close. The same top is still on the





car, but showing its more than 30 years of wear. The next time, we are going to buy one



with a header already attached. The MG has taught us many valuable lessons.

The concept of two carbs with dash pots that needed to be balanced was also new to us. We ordered all the tools we thought we'd need from Moss. For those of you who have done this frequently, it is probably no more difficult than checking the oil. For us rookies, it was complex. Oh yeah, and just like everything else we had encountered, time consuming. I felt like it was critical to the efficient running of the car, so I was very careful about how far I would adjust it at any one time.

Over the years, we have tackled one problem after another. To be honest, there were years that the car was not running at all and even more that it was not road trustworthy. It was while attending the 16th Annual Brits in the Ozarks, that the bug bit us again and we became determined to get the B back on the road. We did what we could and the car did make it to the show the following year, but was still not reliable for more than a short jaunt. We did those repairs that we could and then relied on those with better skills to make the final repairs.

The latest problem seemed to be in the ignition. We questioned if the distributor was shorting out? Diana thought so. It was back to Moss Motors for a new coil and distributor. When they arrived, our friend and fellow BI Cub member, Frankie Addington



offered to come over and help us install them. We were able to get the car to start. By using our eyes and ears, we adjusted the distributor to what appeared to be a very close adjustment. It was set as best as we could, but still did not seem to be running perfectly.

We really needed tools that we did not have to finalize the settings. However, our efforts were a success. The B ran for an hour without stalling and so far the problem had been cured. The ignition replacement and a combination of the other measures got us going

I became aware of a mechanic near West Fork who was capable of working on British cars. I asked him to take a look at the car. I showed up at J & M Auto Repair and Diagnostics, and met Jason Aungenett. I was impressed with his at-home shop, the tools he had available and his skills. He checked the new distributor and made a very minor adjustment. Jason said that Frankie had it set just a hair off the optimal setting. Even so, it seemed to be running roughly.

Jason got his thermal imaging camera and checked the engine. What he found was the second and third cylinder were not working. He took the second spark plug out and connected his compressor to the plug port. After setting that cylinder to full compression, he then when to the rear of the car. He had me hold my hand at the exhaust pipe where air was blowing out. He announced that the valves are not closing and the car was running on only two cylinders.

He did a valve job with stainless steel valves, an exhaust system, and other repairs, and the B is now running better than it has since the engine was rebuilt - at least until the next opportunity for improvement.

Now that the '74-1/2 MGB is running well, what do we do? We did what all car enthusiasts do; we bought another car. The British Iron list carried a message from one of our members. He has a friend who wanted to sell her British car. Remember my trip to Oklahoma City with



my friend, Eric, just to see the new Jaguar V-12 some 45 years ago? At that point, just looking was the only thing in my college student budget.

Fortunately, those lean times are behind me. Looking was simply not satisfying enough. This was an ice blue 1990 Jaguar XJ-S convertible - with a V-12 engine! The first test drive only



added to the attraction. We are admittedly not great mechanics. We learned important lessons with the MGB and so we consulted an expert. I asked Jason, our mechanic, to tell me about the car in general. His first response was to ask himself aloud, "What can I say about this car to keep you from buying it?"... "No, on second thought," he said, "I have children who need to go to school. You should buy this car. I need the ongoing work."

Jason warned me that working on this car would be difficult and expensive. He said replacing an alternator on a normal car could cost \$200 - \$400. The Jag would be about \$1,000. The price is directly tied to that beautiful, tightly packed V12 engine. "You can't slide your hand between the fender and the engine."

It is a 30 year-old automobile with very low mileage. It was beautiful and although we had no need for another car, we negotiated, accepted the reality that minor repairs were needed, committed the cash, and brought home

the Big Cat. Owning a British car has nothing to do with need, it is about desire and love.

When Jason looked at the car the first time he found problems with the fuel injectors, the exhaust system, and a problem with the automatic system for raising the top that we already knew about. Into the shop it went and it left West Fork in even better shape for the time and money spent.

But it is a British car. Months later in our garage, I was checking under the bonnet, and the bonnet release cable broke. I called Hagerty to tow it to the shop. They sent a flat bed truck to pick it up. The driver insisted that the bonnet must be strapped down. I pointed out that the bonnet hinged in the front, but the driver insisted that he would not tow it without the strap. He applied the strap incorrectly and damaged the bonnet. He managed to flatten the lateral camber out of

the metal preventing it from closing. The centerline hit the firewall leaving the corners, where the latches are, elevated.

Ordinarily, one would replace the part and repaint it. Part of the charm and value of this car is that it has all original parts and original paint. A replacement or repaint would result in diminished value. Hagerty agreed and had the car towed to one of its select body shops in Guthrie, OK - Tim's Body Worx. They looked at photos and heard the history of the damage. They decided that they could fix it safely. Although the bonnet is fixed - without replacement or repaint - it is getting a few more restoration type repairs. We are hoping to get it back soon.

Our garage is now home to a 1974-1/2 MGB and a 1990 Jaguar XJ-S. We are hoping to show both in the next British Iron Car Show.





## From Wil Wing

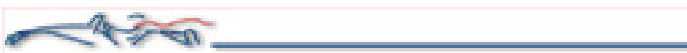
Question: An easy one - you finished a major project on your Brit car; engine is back in, the battery is fully charged and you're ready to try starting it up. You turn the key to start the engine, but nothing happens, even after several tries. You get out of the driver's seat and look at the engine, wondering what is wrong.

Then you notice that the choke cable is smoking! What is wrong?

Answer: That incident actually happened to us in our first business in about 1960. An English mechanic that my partner had hired walked past and said, "You've forgotten the earthing strap!" Quite right.

The starter motor draws a terrific amperage load from the battery; much more than any other electrical component (on gasoline engined cars). Electrical devices only work if there is a complete circuit from the battery to the device and then back to the battery. If, for instance you had a nice heavy ground strap from the battery to the chassis, you wouldn't have to worry about the headlights being bright enough. But if the engine is only grounded by the choke cable – by the outer sheath at the dashboard and the cable and sheath connected to the carburetor choke - the grounding is completely inadequate for the load of a starter motor.

Those nice heavy plated copper woven cables with the exposed wires need to connect the battery to the chassis and also the chassis to the engine, usually to the bell housing near the starter motor. But sometimes they are pushed out of sight when pulling an engine and are then forgotten.



Why are all dumb blonde jokes one-liners?

So men can remember them.

My granddad had the heart of a lion and a lifetime ban from London Zoo.

## Natchez Euro Fest 2021!

Offer Dave White a round of applause - he took his XJS Jaguar to the Natchez Euro Fest and came home a winner! Al and Dale Ross also carried the BSCC flag to what is becoming a premier automotive gathering with entrants representing Italy, Germany, France, and England in a beautiful and historic spot.



Natchez – a place with abundant and colorful history which was begun by French colonists before 1720 along a narrow stretch of land between the Mississippi River and the overlooking bluffs. Early on, frequented by gamblers, river pirates, thugs, and prostitutes, the small town became a convenient landing for river traffic headed to and from New Orleans.

Wealthy plantation owners later built showcase mansions along the bluffs whose heights allowed oversight of their estates to the south and in Louisiana across the river. While the genteel local aristocracy enjoyed the rarified culture atop the bluffs, the old town continued its seedy rough and tumble existence 'below the hill'.

Organizers of this year's Euro Fest struggled hard to find a workable date amidst COVID-19, frequent bouts with stormy weather, and altering venues. A last moment change of date to April 18 proved an outstanding winner. Here's what the hosts had to say, "After two



rescheduling episodes, we finally had a beautiful day for a most enjoyable event. Great new venue along Broadway St. in downtown

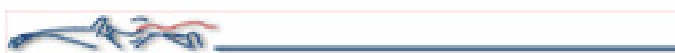


Natchez a strong mix of entries, including motorcycles, an 8 plane formation air show, and finally weather that could not have been better. The change of venue to pavement and to randomly park the field, as opposed to class parking, seemed to create a lot more interaction between owners and spectators.”



Viewing photos from the 'Fest encourages this correspondent to make calendar changes to get next year's edition, April 22-23, 2022 engraved on our agenda.

## Admiring Glances



Wyres & Tyres is a publication of the  
British Sports Car Club, LTD  
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My friend asked me to help him round up his 37 sheep.

I said "40".