

THE TUCSON BRITISH CAR



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View from the Windscreen

by Ben Cohen

We survived our January and are preparing for some nice driving weather, albeit probably alone. While this is not what we want, as we get so much enjoyment from our cars traveling in groups, is it really that bad? you stranded. As most of our members know, "every drive is a 'test' drive."



This might be that perfect time to rise to a new comfort level with your car. Find some quiet, nice roads in your neighborhood. Head out there for 30 minutes daily, if you can, listen to the car, feel the brakes, nuance noises, etc. Don't fret just do it.

As I mentioned many years ago in my On the Road newsletter ramblings, I use my 2-5-10 drive system, whenever I take a car out of storage and get it ready for the road. Warm the car to temperature and look it over before heading out...yeah, if there is anything leaking profusely...don't go anywhere until you find the source. Otherwise, drive 2 miles and come home...listen to the car at rest, turn it off and listen to it as it cools, look for leaks, smells (yes! Smells), check those tires. If all looks good, do those 2 miles again, let the car cool and check everything at home. Next, repeat twice at 5 miles and again 10 miles. You'd be quite surprised what you can discover in the short drives that can be easily corrected. Secondly, as you do those corrections and checks at home, you get an idea of what are the proper tools to carry in the boot, passenger seat, etc. that you allow these fixes, if you were say...50 miles from home. Do you need a certain size/type of spanner to get to that generator nut, or a long flat-head screwdriver to adjust a carb or a funnel to put oil in without making a mess. You'll also learn what protective gear you might need to deal with a "hot" fix. Nothing wastes time while letting your car cool, so you can change that fan belt on the road...don't ask me how I know.

So, don't wait until this pandemic is over to find out that the car that is sitting in your garage waiting to have fun is in poor condition. We'll be the ones having fun, while you're rebuilding some part because of lack of use...so go out and enjoy that "view through the windscreen."

PSA: vaccination information for Pima County www.pima.gov/covid19vaccine
Do it!!!

MGB Differences between a Roadster & GT By Pete Williams

I recently was able to acquire a 1973 MGB GT project car to add to my fleet and for both my entertainment as well as the basis for several articles for the TBCR Newsletter. As delivered, the car is in need of general refurbishment and reassembly. The question is: What are some of the differences between the MGB Roadster and Convertible. Aside from the generally obvious - roof / hood, lift gate / boot, windshield and some interior trim differences the two types of cars appear remarkably similar - except for just a couple of things. As I discover them, I will share those differences with you.

The saga begins...



When I initially looked at the car the rubber in the doors - vent window, glass tracks and outside glass wiper were petrified. Upon removing the passenger door glass, tracks & vent window I discovered 2 large holes in the bottom / inside floor of the door. There were other pin holes as well. The options to fix these holes were: repair the holes with welding / fiberglass and so forth or replace the door. By fortunate circumstances, I had 2 new, unused doors which came to me as part of a package deal with the 1969 Roadster which became my MGB trailer. (See last year's TBCR Newsletters.)

Because there a few differences between the two types of cars, I researched the issue in the Moss catalog. It showed 2 different part numbers for the door (roadster & GT). I decided to dismount the old door and try out the new door to see how close it was. The difference is the upper back corner where the skin rolls inboard to be equal with the inner panel.

So, the door wouldn't fit - without some modifications.

Next, I measured the external skin panels (between the car types) to see if the length and height dimensions were the same. They were. I examined the GT door top and found there was a "cut out" where the door meets the B post. I examined the unused Roadster door. If I carefully made a notch (Picts 2 & 3) the door would fit, match up with the body lines and properly close. I primed the resulting notch. I'll add a dab of filler (or epoxy) in the seam where skin curves back. (Pict 3) There is a chrome piece - unique to the GT that is riveted to that area. I'll add that later.

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Club News and Notes

Annual Meeting

21 members attended what President Ben called “the first and we hope last Zoom annual meeting”. Being limited to 40 minutes, board members deferred to the president and treasurer to give reports.

Treasurer: Dave Germain reported 134 members as of 12/31/20, which compares with 130 to 140 in recent years. Income exceeded expenses last year and the check book is in fine shape (not many expenses of course). Dave also discussed the recent member survey (see article below).

Events: Ben commented that the board will wait till the end of the first quarter before considering any drives. In the meantime, he urged members to drive their cars and use the directory to invite one or two members to get in their cars and join in a drive.

Ben stressed that these times offer opportunities to work on our cars and drive. *“Be ready when we’re ready!”*

TBCR Annual Awards: Presented by George Hahn

John Mead received the *Founders Trophy*.

Steve and Nancy Hosmer received the *Anton Westgard Pathfinder Award*.

George and Ben described the history of these recognitions, which may be the topic of a short article someday.

Survey: Restarting TBCR Activities After COVID

By Dave Germain

Thanks to all who participated for your input and suggestions on the Activities After COVID Survey we sent out in January to members. We got 59 replies of 141 sent out. That is actually a good return rate. We asked for the emails only to limit input to TBCR members. The list of questions was long covering Current COVID time, and periodic “Normal” activities in four sections. I will cover the “COVID time” last and focus first on what members say we should look like after the pandemic. The text input was passed on to the board.

Regular Weekly and Monthly Events. One weekly and two monthly events.

- Coffee at the Starbucks at Swan and Grant - Tuesdays, about 7 AM to 10:30 AM
- BLAT Drive - 1st Wednesday of the month, morning, 1 to 1 1/2 hr. drives with a stop for lunch or breakfast (depending on weather and sunrise). BLAT is not an acronym but rather it is the sound a Little British Car makes when the gas pedal is pressed briefly.
- 2nd Saturday Drive - AM 1 to 1 1/2 hr. drives with a stop for lunch or breakfast (depending on weather and sunrise)

Overall, the weekly coffee and regular monthly events of two drives show a continuing interest, with some input on some different variants to Oro Valley and Green Valley.

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TBCR Board of Directors

PRESIDENT Ben Cohen
rct2bnc@aol.com

VICE PRESIDENT George Hahn
Ahwahnee18@gmail.com

SECRETARY Mike Morales
mikemorales400@gmail.com

TREASURER Dave Germain
dkgermain@aol.com

DRIVING EVENTS Ben Cohen
rct2bnc@aol.com

REGALIA Pete Williams
tbctours@aol.com

NEWSLETTER John Mead
tucsonbritish@gmail.com

WEBSITE Harold Beekhuizen
harold_beekhuizen@msn.com

TBCR Mail Address
(Including Regalia Orders)

Tucson British Car Register
P.O. Box 30997
Tucson, AZ 85751-0997

TBCR Website
<http://www.tucsonbritish.com>

My British Life and the Ones That “Left Home” By Ben Cohen



In early 1970 I arranged to purchase my girlfriend's mother's 14-window VW Van. Yeah, "Hippie Van" comes to mind and that was probably my intent. What happened after that day changed my life (and all those around me), forever. My college buddy Tom's dad worked for MacMillian "ring-free" Oil in NYC. Their marketing forte then was to run race cars to prove the quality of their oil

products...that kept rings moving

freely. Tom's dad received 3 sets of VIP tickets to the Sebring 12 hr. endurance race and sent them to us in Florida where I was studying. So, I suggested we ask our buddy Scott to join us, as he had a "sports car" and was interested. He suggested I ride in the convertible rather than Tom's VW Bug. Well, early on Thursday morning, Scott shows up in a 1967 Austin Healey 3000 full of camping gear and we're "off to the races." After an hour of slogging through congested Miami traffic we get on FL27, known back then as "suicide highway"...3-lane high speed with shared center passing lane. Scott asks, if I'd like to drive and even with limited manual gear box experience, I take the wheel and, so began the slippery slope of British car addiction, craving, withdrawal, buying, selling, dealing...oh, the misery and joy!!!

[picture is the Sunday morning aftermath of 3 days of camping, watching practice, the race, etc.]

When I graduated and returned to Connecticut for the summer, I informed my girlfriend's mother I would take a pass on the van. I spent 4 weeks searching for a used Austin-Healey 3000 – drove 14 cars! Once again my buddy Tom found one in Darien owned by a young mechanic. After a test drive, where the heater hose burst and some negotiating, the "metal-flake green", side exhaust AH was MINE! (with new heater hoses). Fast forward over 50 years and that first purchase is still in my garage and not running, as many of you have seen over the years. Yes, excuses abound, but it will rise like a Phoenix (without the flames I hope) in the near future. Where does the story go from here? I've bought 25 British cars over the years and only sold 7. I did once go to the dark side and owned a 1957 Alfa Romeo Spyder Veloce, but have stayed with my initial love of all that is British. Maybe not rational, but certainly defined my semi- adulthood. Maybe the way to make this story into two or more additions to the newsletter, I'll just list those that are no longer in the garage.

Early on in 1971 and later in 1977 I acquired MGBs. Both cars were very early 1963 and 1962 versions with 3-bearing engines. The first one was light blue that rubbed off in a chalky manner when you brushed the car and the later a light yellow.

Also, before leaving Florida for grad school in Ohio, I sold the blue MGB and acquired a mongrel 1964 Austin-Healey 3000 with a 1967 engine. The car had rusty fenders replaced with good used parts but a mix of red/white/blue panels. I invested \$90 in a quick local paint job that needed the red panels painted 3 times, as the paint was so thin. I used this AH for 4 years at school, while storing my original 1966 nearby. Before moving on to my first job I sold the mongrel AH to a banker in Parkersburg, WV. (not sure if it's still around). Five years later I still had the 1966 AH and the 1962 MGB and we were off to Modesto, CA. During these school and first job years I did finally acquire Honda Civic daily driver (again being able to store the 1966 AH).



Over the next decade I left the yellow MGB in CA, moved to Delaware for a few years and finally settled in Tucson with 2 family Acuras and the 1966 AH. Since arriving here, I found that those southwest British cars are so much better than ones from other areas that they become irresistible. Once I built an ample garage I acquired 2 local 1960 Bugeye Sprites and a 1962 Mini Cooper. Great weather, roads and all

year driving!...again, what more could you want. Well, I guess, more cars. As I sunk deeper into my "habit" it was Lotus cars, Jaguar, more Austin-Healeys, and rarities like Elva, AC and Triumph Italia 2000...Yes, I was hooked.

Most of the cars are still in the collection and driven in groups as often as possible. Only a few have left, albeit mostly to support the acquisition of new ones. So, where are those that went away? The two pictured Bugeyes were traded for the Elva Courier Mk1. The metallic aubergine 2005 Lotus Elise left after 9 years as partial payment for the 1960 Triumph Italia 2000 (which was a good move for me, as the Italia is amazing). I tried to use the 1962 Mini Cooper but the dealer said they were..."too common." The above mentioned mongrel 1960 Austin-Healey 3000 (not a good buy at the time, but did it mostly to save it) was swapped directly for another, better BRG 1960 Austin-Healey 3000 BN7 and is one of my long distance drivers. It was my "go-to" car for many years of driving the B.E.A.T. out of Phoenix. I guess the moral of my story is high appreciation for what came from England in its heyday of sports car production. I feel lucky find those cars that speak to me in style, function and quirkiness.



Because each of our Board members will be writing something this year for the newsletter, I'll leave this story to continue and show you some of the others that for the moment are...keepers. While we always say we'll never sell that one, I guess everything in life has its price. See you all on the road.

--Ben

Member Chat Paul and Jean Coache

Hello everyone.

We hope everyone is doing well. We recently moved to Quail Creek in Green Valley. That puts us much further away from the main group. That being said, we, have taken the Midget out a few times and have explored roads we haven't driven before. I know there's members in Green Valley. If anyone is interested in going for a drive somewhere, sometime please let me know. It's more fun to have company on random drives. We'd wear masks when out of the car and distance as well.

Dave and Julie joined us on a nice drive up to Madera Canyon and then to the Mission. We had lunch, COVID was low then, at Karichimaka on Mission Road, on the outside patio before heading home. It was a great day for a drive.

Jean and I took a ride West on Continental road from La Canada and came out to Duval Mine Road. That was a nice late afternoon drive and no traffic.

Now that COVID is ramped again according to the news we'll be extra careful. It'll be just drive to some destination and go back home.

My contact information is;

PCSplinters@yahoo.com

520-954-0746 text or call

MGB Differences between a Roadster & GT *Continued*



The final picture shows the door in place & closed. The vent window fits properly and with some fitting and fettling the gaps should be pretty good.

I'm Glad I had a spare door I could experiment with. Because the door is only primed, I'll have the interior & exterior of the door painted when the time comes for that. So, if you have a damaged GT door and only have access to Roadster doors, they can be made to fit.

The driver's door is fine. (See You tube for a very nice "MGB vent window removal" tutorial.)

The Roadster and GT front fenders also have different part numbers. From what I'm told, the fenders are a touch longer on the GT. I haven't had to experiment to see what the difference is, nor do I need to replace the ones on the GT.

Survey *Continued*

Regular Annual Events. Events that are normally club events each year.

- Annual Meeting - 2nd Saturday in January a short annual business meeting, sometimes with a drive and/or breakfast.
- Santa Cruz Car Nuts Tubac Car Show - January -We meet and drive down together staying off the freeway as much as possible.
- Tour de Garages - 4th Saturday, March - Morning tour beginning for coffee, then visits to various car collections, museums, or service shops, ending with club provided pizza lunch.
- DM 50 Car Show - April - sponsored by the DM 50 to benefit the airmen on the base – comes with lunch and beer, we normally drive in together
- Phantom Car Show (for British Car Week) - June - a very non-traditional car show. We all meet (usually at Park Mall Parking) and park our cars together, club provides refreshments – in the AM and done before it is hot.
- Mad Dogs and Englishmen - August, because only mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the noon day sun. This is possible in three versions: 100 miles at 100 degrees drive with gelato paid by the club, a shorter drive with gelato paid by the club or just meet for gelato paid by the club
- Rotary Tucson Classics Car Show (Gregory School) - October - We have historically entered enough cars to be featured in a whole row and drive in together from a meeting point.
- British Wheels on the Green - Early November - This is an Arizona MG Club Event in Peoria, AZ held on Sunday in a nice setting. We have had a drive together on Saturday, stay overnight Saturday and return when the show ends at noon on Sunday to allow a drive back.
- November Hot Dog Run – the Saturday after Thanksgiving (an hour Drive, Sonoran Hot Dogs on the club and club officer elections).
- Holiday Luncheon - early in December social event at a local restaurant.

These regular annual events have high interest. The only variant may be a different format for the August Mad Dogs and Englishmen, with less interest in 100 miles at 100 degrees and more interest in the gelato stop

Possible events. These are events that we have done but not every year, or possible new events. Of the listed events, several showed considerable interest. First, we need a chair person for each event.

- Catered Picnic or BBQ
- Additional Car Shows,
- Tech Session or Technical Talk
- Auto Museum Tour
- Shop Work Day

Now, during COVID. We will continue the “Zoom” coffee for the near future. The web site and newsletter are always up to date on activities.

There were as many “re-start events now” answers as “be careful and don’t take risk” answers. This mirrors the current public debates. The board will review where we are as a community and governmental restrictions after the first quarter. There is a possible liability on the part of TBCR if we have a problem during governmental restrictions.

This does not preclude members from getting together for “Non-Club” coffee or drives. If you want to chair a non-club event, your directory has addresses, car types and emails for members. We all know we are a car club, not a Zoom club.

If you have questions or want to participate in or chair an event, please contact me at dkgermain@aol.com or any member of the board, our email links are on the web site.



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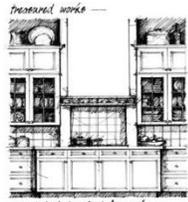
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Haight Ashbury Trading Co LLC.
 haightashburyllc@gmail.com
 Instagram #haightashburytrading
 101 W 6th St. Studio D, Tucson AZ 85701
 Bus # 520-789-5173
 Cell # 253-314-4578