

THE TUCSON BRITISH CAR



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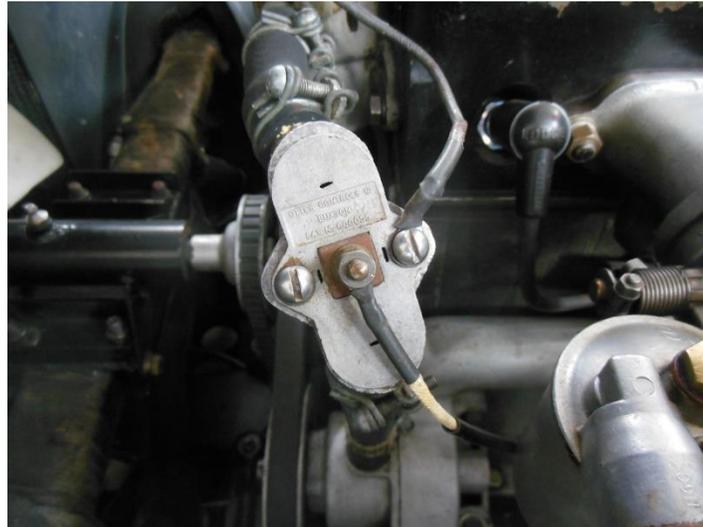
View from the Windscreen

by Ben Cohen

It was another quiet month of “lone-wolf” drives and prepping cars for the future. I mentioned in January that the members of the Board will be sharing an article in the newsletter each month. So, as a member, why not try to do the same. Our very own “Perry White” (aka John Mead) would love to give you that 15 minutes of fame for your trouble. Peek ahead and see what our VP Geo Hahn has to say this month.

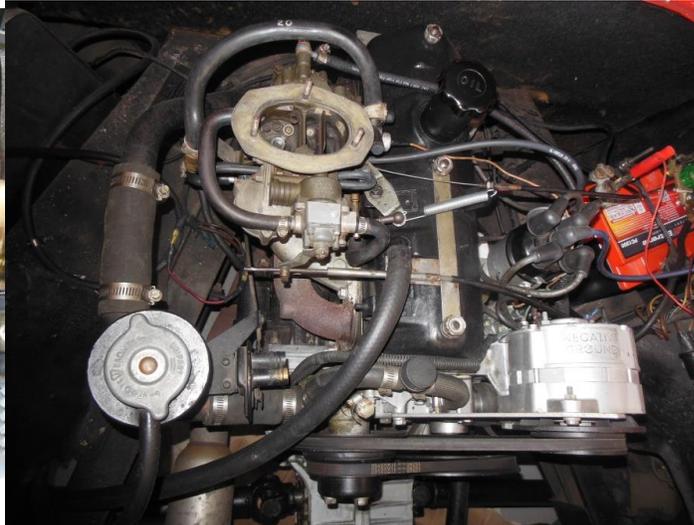


As for prepping the cars here at Casa Bujia Segunda's mews, time was split between carburation issues on the AC Ace and returning the Lotus Europa to original specs. The AC had issues with the thermo SU carb used for starting (instead of a traditional manual choke). The device is controlled by an “Otter”



switch that energizes the solenoid in the carb when the engine is cold (under 120° F). At first glance there seemed to be current flowing, which usually means the fragile Otter switch failed. Many owners simply replace them with a toggle switch for manual control and hope to remember to shut off the thermo carb when the engine is warm (note: many forget and foul plugs 3 & 4). While I was lucky and the switch was functional, the apparent problem was simply the connections to the thermo carb. While the special Lucas 60° angle connectors

are no longer available, I fabricated some that look decent and more importantly work. Problem solved. Car starts properly, thermo carb disengages at about 120° and she runs fine. While playing with the triple SU carbs, the domes were removed and cleaned, pistons cleaned and needles reset and float chambers cleaned and floats replaced with new ethanol resistant ones. By mid-February I had put about 220 miles on the AC running here and there and down and back to Sonoita. Heavenly!



As for the Lotus Europa, this is the 1971 acquired from the Petersen Foundation Museum in LA. While in their collection, they decided (like many Europa-files) that a Weber carb makes a car faster, better, sleeker, smarter...whatever!!! As many of you know, there are modern improvements that do make cars better, more efficient, safer, "cooler" looking, etc. However, I'm more of the dodo bird when it comes to these changes. I seek out original parts, if I can; even Lucas ones that are correctly dated for my cars or ones that were available 3-6 years later when someone might be replacing an original part with another original part. So, last October I started searching the internet...e-Bay, Facebook groups and specialty suppliers for everything I needed to reset my intake system to version 0.0. By Christmas I had an original Solex 28/32 S9 carb that was from a car 5 VIN numbers from mine. It had been removed at the dealership, packed in a box and that car prepped to race. All this was from a nice guy in Pennsylvania. Thanks to TBCR member Marv James, he called a friend in San Diego who was a Renault collector (early Europas used an R16 Renault non-cross flow engine) who put me in touch with the parts guru for R16 engines in the hill country of Texas. In the end I had a proper air cleaner unit, all the pollution control plumbing for the car and a new French mechanical fuel pump. The whole project came together with a contact down under near Sydney who had the correct linkage



and original choke cable mechanism including all the mounting hardware. So, add a month for the holidays, family issues, making space in an overstuffed garage and you can see the results. Almost picture perfect when compared to the auto showpictures of the Europas in 1971. So, "how does it drive" you might ask after a so-called neutered Weber operation? Well...different. Both are 2 barrel systems. The Weber was definitely a bit quicker off the line but bogged down a bit from 3rd to 4th acceleration runs. The Solex however, out paces the Weber in this range by an estimated 20% (YRMV).

So, that's all from here. Why not let us know what's doing in your garage. Help make your newsletter the focus of TBCR, while we wait to resume what we do best...drive!

Thanks,
Ben

...and more project updates next month!

Club News and Notes

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Here's a picture of the TBCR annual meeting. Let's hope we don't have another one quite like this!

That's the Founders Trophy, brought out from the secret TBCR vault.



TBCR Has not resumed drives, but President Ben has urged us to get our cars on the road, including asking neighbor LBC drivers to join in. So get out and keep 'em rolling. This is Jim, Pete and Libbie on a Sunday drive in the foothills.

Tuesday Zoom Coffee

TBCR has not resumed in-person coffee, but the next best thing is on Zoom. Every Tuesday at 8am. Watch for the weekly email reminder or contact the Editor.

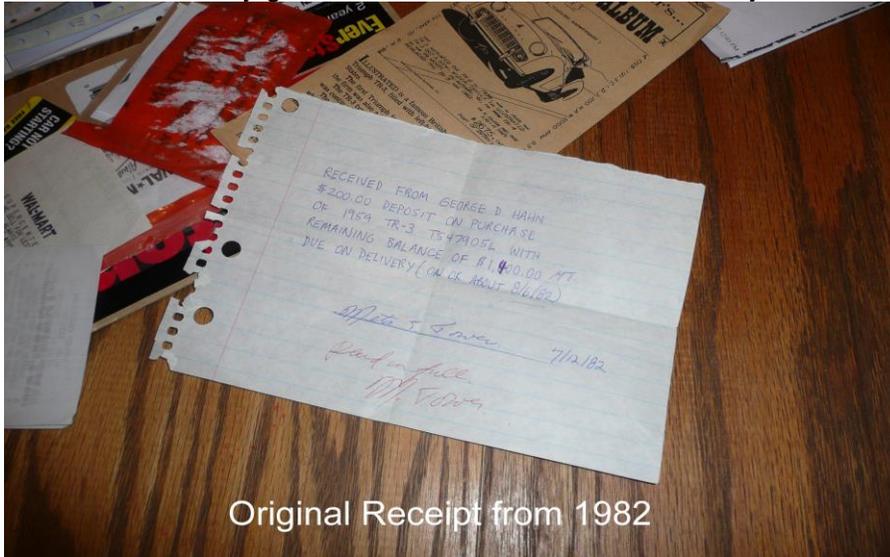
My LBC Journey By George Hahn

When I think about the British cars I have owned it occurs to me that I never went looking for one – instead they mostly seem to find me.

I had a couple of really sad looking cars in my youth (a TR3A and an E-Type) but serious ownership began for my wife and me when we spotted a 59 TR3A with a for sale sign sitting in a cornfield off of State Highway 39 in southern Indiana. We were on our way to a week at Lincoln Lake in the days before cell phones so all I could do was write down the number and wait until I was home to call the owner.

That proved to be difficult as she was an elusive sort apparently avoiding someone, so all phone communication had to be worked through her young daughters who were trained to screen callers and inform them that their mother had been missing for several weeks – then she would call me right back.

The deal eventually got done in the corner booth at a Dairy Queen on Highway 67.



Original Receipt from 1982

We enjoyed that Triumph for the next 37 years in Indiana, California and finally Arizona. It saw long road-trips and countless local TBCR events often with celebrity passengers (Chester & Gordo) on board.



We were a one-LBC family until 2001 when I saw a TR4 on eBay that was going down for the third time without any bids. It seemed that potential buyers were put off by it being for sale on an island in the Pacific Ocean.



As the auction was ending I found myself in a cabin on Mt Lemmon with only a rotary phone, no internet access – but made a last minute decision try for it by calling TBCR member Scott M and having him place a bid for me. Minutes later... I owned a second Triumph.

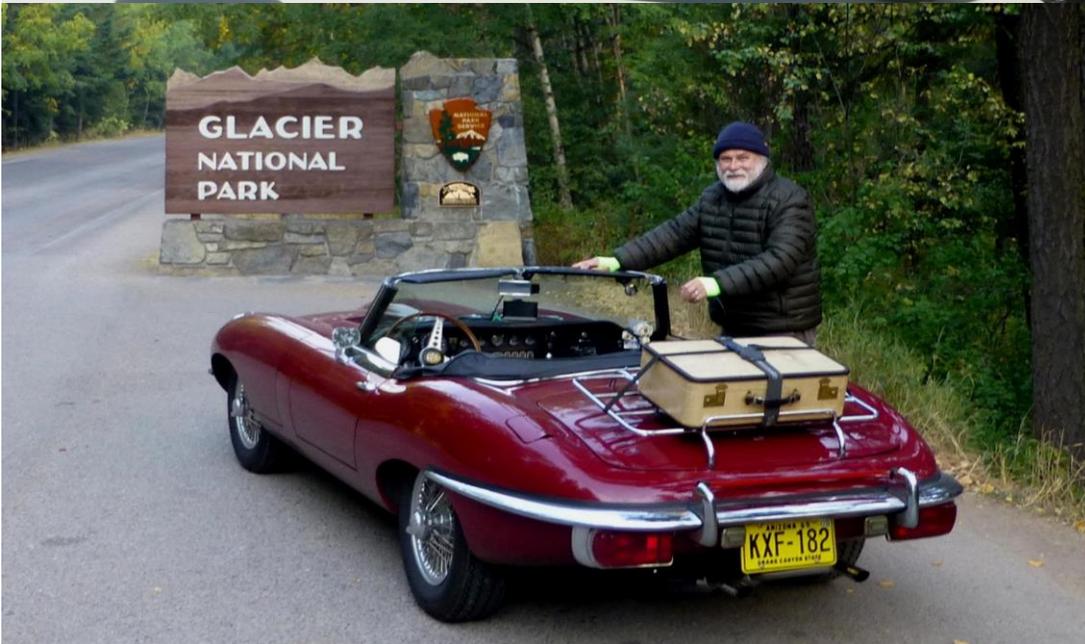


Driven to a port, placed into a container, loaded on a barge, barge towed to Honolulu, by ship to San Diego and finally by car hauler to Oro Valley – it took a few weeks to get to me.

Like the TR3A, the TR4 was a frequent presence on the TBCR drives and also week-long Roadrunner adventures around the Southwest.

That could have been the end of the story but for a conversation I had at the 2012 JCNA Concours at St Philips Plaza. My wife commented how much she like Fred S's yellow E-Type coupe and I said 'Well it is the only Jaguar that I would want that I could also afford'. Her reply 'Then maybe you should get one' was all I needed to hear.

Violating all common sense and wisdom (pre-purchase inspection, know about the seller, don't buy the first one you see, never buy sight-unseen) I immediately purchased a Regency Red OTS via eBay. A couple of weeks later I drove it for the first time.



Some refreshing led to an engine rebuild and a respray then 40,000 miles since that day, attesting to this car being my go-to ride for long tours.

In 2019 we sold the TR3A on Bring a Trailer as it began to seem sensible to get down to just two British cars. But 'sensible' wasn't really me and in the midst of the pandemic a local E-Type popped up in my neighborhood that looked like a good COVID project to keep me busy in a time of limited driving opportunities.



With a hardtop, air conditioning and power steering, this was a bit different from what I was used to from an LBC – but the plan is to make it our summer car. Once again, everything comes apart to be refreshed and renewed.



It looks to be an 8 month project which ought to be just about right for post-pandemic driving. When that day finally comes – we'll see you on the road.



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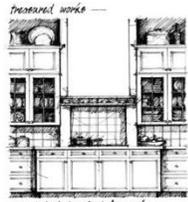
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