

THE OFF-SIDE UNDO

Volume 25

July 2011



Official Publication of the English Motoring Club of Mississippi

On the web at www.msemc.org

Lotus Kind of Weekend

Braxton MS – A great turn out of folks from as far away as the British Motoring Club of New Orleans joined the EMC for the Lotus weekend at Mike and Alice Glore's down in Braxton. Due the regular threats of summer shower type weather that we've had this year the LBC's at this gathering somewhat limited. Steve and Karen Whitlow made the gathering in their '74 Midget and long distance travelers from the BMCNO Allen and Sue Bradley made the trip up in their '70 MGB. Also appearing with an L (Large) BC were EMC'ers Richard and Brenda Hobbs in their '97 Jag XJ. All of the guys including past visitors to The Barn down in Braxton had a great time hanging out in the garage while another group toured the old home place enjoying a look back at how the area was homesteaded and updated thru the years to modern standards. Mike's most recent acquisition a '64 Lotus Elite has just been returned with fresh body work and paint and Mike is currently in the process of re-assembly. The garage time was sandwiched in the middle was a great meal of Alice's bar-b-que surrounded by a great pot-luck of hors 'drovers, salads, side dishes and desert. A brief meeting was held to discuss plans for the 2011 Brits by the River still on the calendar for September 23 – 24, 2011. Some new ideas were put forth for the 2011 show. Assignments were made and distributed and we'll be getting that info out to the EMC and surrounding clubs during the next few weeks.

Alas, at the close of the day at the Glore's we'd received only a sprinkle of rain. Just to press their luck however I got a call from Steve later in the evening. He and Richard had decided to burn off a few additional calories and on arriving back in Jackson had taken off for a drive down the Trace to Rocky Springs. Steve left a voice mail later in the evening for me indicating that they'd pressed their luck and shortly after their turn around to head home the bottom fell out and all that pent up rain dropped directly on them. Both got the hoods up so were only slightly damp when they arrived home. There's nothing that a good drying out for a couple of days won't cure guys.

Thanks to everyone for attending a great event and to Mike and Alice for hosting our gathering.

Bio: Terry Trovato Past President of the EMC

This bio is a great one that I've heard from Terry. The story was written by Kevin Cooper and first appeared in the May 26, 2002 edition of the Natchez Democrat.

Jamie's car

This 1960 Austin-Healey was in pieces in 2000 when Natchez auto enthusiast Terry Trovato first acquired the car. The car once belonged to one of Trovato's college buddies who passed away in 1996.



Jamie's car pre restoration

Photo Courtesy Terry Trovato

NATCHEZ — The truck came to a screeching halt. Its teenage passengers stared with envy. “Nice ride. What is it?” one asks.

“It’s an Austin-Healey, a 1960 one,” says owner Terry Trovato.

“How much is it worth?” asks the voice from the truck, its owner now almost in full drool.

“A lot,” Trovato says dodging the answer a bit.

“How much would you take for it?” the teen asks.

“Nothing, it’s not for sale,” Trovato answers.

The teens sped away unaware of the amazingly strong bond between the man and the car and the reason he’ll probably never sell this one. British dedication Trovato’s love of British sports cars dates back decades. As a teenager, he drove a 1947 Sunbeam Talbot with right-hand drive. “If you wanted a sports car that was cheap, you got an MG, a Sunbeam or an Austin-Healey,” the 60-year-old Natchez man said. “My first one, a 1960 Austin-Healey ‘bug eye’ Sprite was \$1,975 when it was new.” Through the years, Trovato has been owner of a number of British imports.

But the Austin-Healey has always held a special place in Trovato’s heart, due in no small part to the wonderful college memories he cherishes. KA camaraderie.

The year was 1963 and the country was not yet in the full throes of the struggles that marked the latter half of the 1960s. The parking lot outside the Kappa Alpha fraternity house at the University of Kentucky must have looked like an Austin-Healey sales lot at times. No fewer than seven of the few dozen members drove Austin-Healeys.

“Fred DeSanto and Barney Sutton had 100-6s, and Jim May, William Wood, Charlie McGuire, Jamie Taylor and I had 3000s,” Trovato said. “Seven Austin-Healeys. Four of them black, two with factory hardtops .

“We’d just go every place. We’d ride around, have a picnic.”

Separate ways

As is often the case the friends began drifting apart after graduation. “As we graduated one-by-one and went our separate ways, our daily-driver Healeys became more undependable and troublesome,” Trovato said. “Each of us, save one, slowly sold or traded away our once-prized pieces of British engineering. “Only Jamie Taylor saved his ... a 1960 Austin-Healey 3000, black exterior with red interior.” After graduation, Taylor became a farmer working the family’s Georgetown, Ky., farm in the heart of bluegrass country. There he raised cattle, corn, soybeans and tobacco. Sometime during 1976, Taylor retired his Austin-Healey, driving it into a shed on the farm. “And there it sat for the next 20 years,” Trovato said. In the 1980s, during a fraternity reunion party held at Taylor’s farm, Trovato caught a glimpse of the old retired automobile. “Jamie had grabbed my arm and said ‘Trovato ... come here and see my old Healey,’” Trovato recalled. “We opened the shed door and there it sadly sat, with four flat tires and covered with dust. ‘I’m going to get it restored one day,’ he added. But, working as hard as he did every day at the farm, he just never got around to it.” Years later, in 1996, while working at the farm, Taylor was killed when a piece of equipment he was operating flipped and crushed him. He died instantly.

Finding the past

Taylor’s Austin-Healey was sold a short time later as his wife, Cathy, settled her late husband’s estate. And Trovato never gave the car much thought after that until he was tinkering around on the Internet in 2000. “I started casually surfing the net under the heading ‘Austin-Healey,’ thinking of all of the great fun I had with my college car,” Trovato said. “There on one of the British car classified sites was listed ‘1960 Austin-Healey 3000, black with red interior, Harrodsburg, Kentucky.’” Trovato quickly realized that Harrodsburg was close in proximity to Georgetown. “I called the guy up and he had the serial number in the ad,” Trovato said. “I called Cathy and asked ‘Whatever happened to Jamie’s Austin-Healey?’” She related the story of the sale and found the vehicle identification number (VIN) of the car. “It was a perfect match,” Trovato said. “I thought ‘Oh my God, I found Jamie’s car.’ To find his, it was just wonderful.” “My wife (Merideth) is a doll,” he said. “I told her and she said, ‘go get it.’”

The restoration

Trovato purchased the car, a 1960 Austin-Healy 3000 with a 6- cylinder and a 4-speed with an electric overdrive. It was in pieces and needed a complete restoration that was just finished in March.

Trovato used local car experts to oversee the restoration. “I kept as much original as I possible could keep,” he said about the restoration. Despite being 42 years old, the Austin-Healey has just more than 54,000 miles. The low mileage is simply due to the fact that it sat idle for nearly a quarter of a century. And typical of British cars, it is stripped down and built for speed, made with a good deal of aluminum and no amenities that would create additional weight such as a

radio. “It makes so much racket you couldn’t hear one anyway,” Trovato said. “It’s fast.” Interestingly, during the restoration, Trovato found a unique piece of Kentucky history that hints at the car’s history prior to Taylor’s ownership. “While the car was undergoing restoration, an unused vintage Keeneland Club parking sticker bearing “No. 5” was found crammed behind the instrument panel,” Trovato said, explaining that Keeneland Racecourse is located on the outskirts of Lexington, Ky. The exclusive club only assigns such low numbers to important personages in racing, Trovato said. Although it cannot be confirmed, Trovato believes the sticker, and the car, were owned by the late Gene Markey, previous owner of the world-famous Calumet Farm.



Terry with Jamie’s car Photo Courtesy Kevin Cooper / The Natchez Democrat

Triumph Gives Up Engine and Tranny

by John Turbeville

Clinton MS - June 2011 - The day had arrived to pull the engine and transmission from my 1969 TR6. Hood, fenders, bumper, and other various parts had already been removed in anticipation of a frame off restoration. I called our car club guru on TR6’s, Keith Anderson, for his expertise with this marque’s engine and previous pull jobs –that way if anything went wrong it would be Keith’s fault. He arrived on Saturday afternoon with the temps pushing 96 degrees –I’m sure the heat index was well over 100 degrees. I’m so thankful I had a/c installed in the shop because we could not have stood it long without it.

I had no idea it would take so long to do this job. I’d helped club members Jim Enzman and Gene Johnston with their MG engine pulls before, but by the time I’d arrived on the scene they had almost all the prep work completed. Keith was on site for about 8 hours –granted we did have lots of conversations and several adult beverages of the Coors flavor during the process. We had

the engine hooked up to the hoist and began pulling but it simply would not come free. We jacked up the front of the car, we jacked up the rear of the car, we removed more of the steering mechanism for clearance, we lowered the front of the car, we lowered the rear of the car, we pulled and twisted and jerked, then finally Keith noticed we'd never removed the shifter knob nor the transmission tunnel which is where one would access the remaining transmission mount bolts...like I said, if anything goes wrong it is Keith's fault! The engine finally cleared the car and is resting comfortably on the shop floor awaiting a rebuild. Keith and I proceeded to Newk's for dinner and called it a day. This engine pull was so much fun and I can't think of anything I'd rather been doing on a Saturday afternoon. I'd say it was a job well done and I'm deep in debt to Keith for spending his day with me working on this project.



Out with the old



Photos Courtesy John Turbeville

Other Exhaust Rattles

The EMC continues to pick up new members. During July Ian Clarke from Jackson joined the EMC. There's no LBC indicated currently but if he's willing we're looking. Welcome to the EMC Ian. Hope that you can join us soon.

I've spent a few hours with Steve Whitlow working on his '76 Midget project. When Steve called in a panic over the toils of door re-assembly he was correct that the job required more than one set of hands. A couple of hours over a two day period and the doors were mostly assembled. Steve indicates that he'll give up the '76 and keep the '74. That looks to me as though it will be a tough choice. Both are equally appealing to the eyes.

A recognizance of five cars and drivers departed from points as far south as Lake Charles LA and as far east as Mt Olive MS and rendezvous in Hot Springs on June 22, 2011 for five days of driving blitz in the Ozarks. Lots of mileage was run up under very balmy skies but the rain was

minimal as were displaced car parts. If you get the opportunity to make a trip up that way let me know. I'll do my best to keep up.



Five LBC's resting in the Ozarks

Photo Courtesy Clay Johnston

That's it for this edition of the OSU. We hope that you are enjoying your little British car. The weather has turned quite warm in the south. While in the Ozarks we found that a nice size towel wrapped around a sizeable quantity of ice and tucked around your collar made the driving quite pleasant. Lots of water please! Enjoy your LBC this summer. Fall can't be too far off.

Happy Motoring from the EMC.

Calendar of Events

August 20, 2011 – EMC Tech Session II / Brandon MS

There's enough room and AC for everyone at David and Jo Ann's place. Come on over, the atmosphere is great. David's got lots going on in his garage and it's always of interest so bring some of that along with a dish and enjoy the fun. Lunch starts at 12:00pm. Details: David / Jo Ann Bailey (601)992-8566

September 23 – 24, 2011 – EMC Brits By The River / Vidalia LA

Join the EMC along the banks of the Mississippi River for the 2010 Brits By The River. The show is a laid back affair with a party on Friday night including food and a great

view of Old Man River so come join us for the hospitality room. We're working on a new hotel and show location on the east side of The Big Muddy so stay tuned. Details: John Turbeville (601)940-5288, Gene Johnston (601)607-7021

October 8, 2011 – Renaissance Euro Fest Car Show / Ridgeland MS

Last year was the second for this show located state center. The cars were great and the crowds and participants alike all enjoyed it so it's back on the calendar for 2011. Make plans to attend. You'll see some cars that you don't get a chance to enjoy every day. Additional details to follow. Details: www.renaissanceatcolonypark.com