

English Motoring Club

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"A gentleman does not motor about after dark." -- Joseph Lucas, attrib.

Frolicking with the EMC at the seaside

by Renee Cole
EMC Special Correspondent

PENSACOLA, FL. -- Combine a gentle ocean breeze, a warm spring day, glorious sunshine, the occasional drifting cloud, a giant beach ball, 118 exquisite vintage British cars, and a crowd of British car enthusiasts and what do you have?

Right-o! The 9th Annual Panhandle British Car Association Beach Bash, held recently under Pensacola Beach's giant water tower! Hats off to the PBCA for again producing an outstanding, well-organized, successful show. It's always a pleasure to mingle with old friends Tom Schmitz and Bob Benson and make new acquaintances.

Thankfully, John Turbeville and his crowd-pleasing 1980 Persian Aqua TR8 and Shane Causey in his 1980 TR7 came through as the English Motoring Club's representatives of the Featured Marque -- "The Wedges" (TR7s and TR8s).

Motoring from Jackson, Miss., to Pensacola, Fla., was touch-and-go for John, but with the skill of an *ad hoc* parking lot repair team, he arrived the night before (albeit late), and the car even started the next morning!

Shane is to be congratulated for capturing second place in the TR7 Class.

EMC's First Lady, Merideth Trovato, entered her *Get Smart* red 1967 Sunbeam Alpine (fitted with a fox in the boot) in the Empire Class. Only a few cars away was the EMC's grand duchess, the 1966 Vanden Plas Princess Limousine, complete with a rose in the bud vase, owned by Pat and Barbara Cashman, which garnered a first in the Britannia Closed Car Class. (I still think it might have been "Lurline's" [Barbara's alter ego] orange shoes, giant orange hat and tropical print outfit which swayed the judges!)

Here's a tip for those of you who own more than one British car. If you're trying to decide which vehicle to take to a



Left to right: The Trovatos, Cashmans, Toney's, Renee, Florence, John Turbeville and John Simmers. The Cashmans' Princess is in the background. Photos courtesy EMC

show, and you think it might be a *hot* day, take the biggest one. It will provide you with the most shade! If the car is large enough, the rest of the motoring club can join you behind its giant shadow! The Vanden Plas Princess filled this bill!

Truly an unusual, one-of-a-kind car was the yellow 1970 MG Midget-powered Arkley shown by Robert Holland, which was awarded second place in the Austin-Healey Sprite/MG Midget Class. Congratulations!

As one ventured along past the vehicles, one couldn't help but notice John and Florence Simmers' well-traveled, multi-award-winning black 1969 MGC GT, which took first place in the MGC/MGC GT category. John was there throughout the show, but where was Florence? *Hmmm...*

And not far from the MGC grouping was David and Tammy Toney's absolutely spectacular 1957 MGA 1600, making its debut showing after a four-year frame-off restoration. David, with assistance from family members, has done an outstanding job; his attention to detail (including the delectable Old English White paint) has made this a truly exquisite vintage car! Congrats, David!

David received a second in class amidst stiff competition, and was bested only by the Best of Show winner, an MGA coupe.

Further up the line, nestled amongst a colorful array of entries, was this reporter's Glacier White 1976 MGB.

As always, I was amazed at the pristine condition of the beautiful cars that made their appearance at the show. They're driven, too! It is always a delight to chat with the owners and glean some tips.

Perhaps the greatest adventure for me (besides driving to the show!) is the self-appointed task of finding at least one car which I've never seen before. This show afforded this unabashed gawker several marques to choose from!

In addition to the viewing of the vehicles, I really enjoyed the "fun" awards and contests! I tried hard to win the K&N filters (I could *really* use them on my MGA). Alas, the youngster chosen to draw the raffle tickets did not pick my number.

The valve cover races are always a hoot, but the "award" I liked best is the

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"greybeard" prize for the person who can total the highest number by combining his or her own age plus the age of his or her car! I didn't bother adding up my total since both of us (car and driver) are younger in comparison to some of the others present, but it's always entertaining to watch other entrants compute and tally their scores.

We can't forget our beloved Florence — where was she? Ponder this, what would a British car show on one of Florida's whitest beaches be without someone to man (woman) them? It was a sacrificial act, but someone had to do it. Thanks, Florence! You're a lifesaver! Yes, sunscreen works!

At the end of the day, it was great eavesdropping on two EMC members as they tried to decide which route to take to get home — some 375 miles to the Magnolia State:

"Well, we can go south and get out on the Interstate, or we can continue along the scenic highway which passes through a number of towns and take a portion of the Interstate."

"Which has better access to parts stores?"

[They exchange knowing glances.]

"Right! We better take the scenic highway!"

Sound familiar?

4th Annual "Drive through History" enjoyable and educational

JACKSON, MS. — Early morning picture-perfect skies and pleasant temperatures combined to usher in the English Motoring Club's 4th Annual "Drive through History," which was scheduled as a educational visit to points of interest in central Mississippi.

The event was formulated and led by Tour and Rallymaster supreme John Simmers, with able assistance from his wife, Florence. The Simmers were in their 1969 MGC GT. On hand to participate were the Adams Family (Al and Debbie in a 1960 Austin-Healey Sprite, and son Ray and wife Stephanie in a 1960 Austin-Healey 3000); Pat and Barbara Cashman, 1963 Jaguar E-type fixed head coupe; Joe Speetjens (later joined by wife, Cynthia), 1995 Morgan Plus 8; John Turbeville and Renee Cole, in John's 1977 MGB; Keith Anderson, 1959 Rover 90 P4 saloon; Dan and Carolyn Gilchrist, 1974 TR6; Barry and Patricia Schmidt, 1979 TR7; Shane Causey, 1980 TR7; Terry and Merideth Trovato, 1967 Sunbeam Alpine roadster; Ed and Kay Alderman, representing Germany in a BMW 318i; and Wilbert and Jean Easom, Dennis and Mary Katherine Lofton, and J. T. and Audrey Seale, representing the U.S. in assorted domestic transportation.

First stop was the Casey Jones Railroad Museum in Vaughn, Miss., near the site of Casey's untimely death on April 19, 1900. Casey was at the helm of a passenger train that night and was attempting to "make up time" when he accidentally broadsided a freight train that had broken down and was aligned perpendicular across his path. Instructing the fireman to "jump for his life," Casey stayed with his engine as it plowed into a grain car and flipped over. An engine similar to the one Casey had engineered that fateful night was parked in the yard for all to see, and much Casey Jones memorabilia was displayed in the museum.

Departing the railroad museum, the group headed toward the only surviving Petrified Forest in the entire eastern half of the United States at Flora, Miss. The 20-minute walking tour of the lush Forest and its artifacts was fascinating. Early scientific studies indicate many of the ancient petrified trees, weighing thousands of pounds and found in the Forest, were probably deposited there as driftwood by a prehistoric river millions of years ago. It was a charming walk through literally ancient history.

Motoring from the Petrified Forest the entourage arrived at the outskirts of Canton, Miss., which is now billing itself as the city of "Lights, Camera and Action," since it was transformed into "Clanton" in the John Grisham-inspired movie *A Time to Kill*. There were no stops planned, but the group got to motor down the street and past the buildings which were used in the film. Then it was off to the Ridgeland Craft Center on the beautiful Natchez Trace Parkway, where a Native-American woman cheerfully demonstrated beadwork. Much to see, and purchase as well.

At the Craft Center the group was joined by John Lange in his 1949 MG TC EXU. From there the entourage journeyed a short distance to the Confederate Air Force hangar at Jackson's general aviation facility. Of course, our Boys in Gray had no real air force during the Late Unpleasantness. However, sometime during the post-World War II era, a Louisiana cropduster, after making a run and landing, decided to scribble with his finger into the dust on his plane's fuselage "Confederate Air Force." And from those humble beginnings sprang an organization with multiple chapters located at airports throughout the South. Today, the Confederate Air Force maintains a "Ghost Squadron" which totals approximately 130 World War II vintage aircraft spread throughout its various locations.

Proudly parked in the hangar of the Jackson facility for the EMC group to view was a superb World War II-vintage twin-engined U.S. Navy Beechcraft personnel transport plane, painted in authentic colors and insignia, which took the Jackson CAF Chapter some 10 years to restore. EMC members got to "climb aboard," check out the cockpit and passenger compartments, and converse with the aviators who maintain the plane. A large collection of World War II insignia and flags also were on display.

Bidding the CAF a fond *adieu*, the group headed toward its final stop, Doc Harry's Restaurant in quaint Madison, Miss., for rest and relaxation.

A special EMC "thank you" to all who made this event a success: John and Florence Simmers for arranging and leading the tour; Al and Debbie Adams for providing the wonderful brunch enjoyed during the first stop; and Pat and Barbara Cashman for designing and having on hand for sale to members fabulous "English Motoring Club/Drive through History" magnetic rallye badges.