

# THE OFF-SIDE UNDO

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## Cooler Days

*Ridgeland MS* – Seems often that we wish for something a little warmer, that's me, not much of a cold weather person or we wish for something a little cooler, that's me recently. I've commented to more than one person within listening range that we got dog days right at the beginning of summer. Yes, it's going to be a long hot one. Despite the heat the EMC continues to fix repair and drive our four wheeled friends.

This edition of the OSU will be something of a departure. You'll not have to listen to my ramblings as much. That's a good thing for all involved. I appreciate the contribution from Steve Whitlow. Steve is a long time MG Midget owner and enthusiast in the Jackson area. If you haven't had a chance to see his Midget you're missing one of the few, three that are currently owned by members. Steve owns two of the three, having one in the garage that he's reassembling. Steve, Karen and Meghan are recent additions to the ranks of the EMC. Steve submitted an article on the May 14, 2011 EMC Picnic. The weather was cooler, a little moist but I think we could all use a little bit of that in the middle of the premature dog days.

EMC president Charles Durning made a couple of recommendations at the start of his tenure as president:

First, I would like to see some bio's on our members. We have some fascinating folks in our membership and here is the opportunity to brag. Tell us about your Brit cars and how you became infected with the disease of Brit car ownership. Let us know about your projects successes, failures, and solutions. Pictures are welcomed and encouraged.

Charlie's one ahead of everyone submitting his bio which will outline some very adventurous times of our high flying president.

Second on Charlie's request list was awards to be presented at the annual January kick off meeting. Those awards will be contrived by any member, for anything, to anyone. An award can be a one time for a specific reason, it can be an annual award, or it can be a perpetual award that is passed from member to member each year. An award can be for, but not limited to, an embarrassing moment, a rousing success, a completed restoration, a restoration that has yet to be

completed, for the strangest car, the best outing, the best hat at an outing, the greatest cloud of smoke from a standing start, the most spectacular breakdown on an outing, the best solution to a perplexing problem, or the person who best personifies the British car ownership experience. The sky is the limit. We have a year to make this happen so I hope to see some fun, interesting, well deserved, and humorous awards given out next January.

At this point the EMC is about one half - way thru the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year. There has been some award winning times during the first six months of 2011, some at EMC gatherings and others perhaps in the privacy of your own garage or out on the open road. We hope that you can join us during the second half of the year for an EMC outing and while your at will take some notes surely everyone with be an award winner at the January gathering. And besides you can get a very neat 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary decal! These are available to all for the asking.

### **The EMC Picnic**

*Jeff Busby Park MS* - May 14, 2011 the weather forecast had promised clear skies and seventy-five degrees, a welcome relief from the near nineties we suffered through all week. Yes, perfect weather for the EMC's annual picnic. The cool weather promised, by Mississippi standards any way, turned out to be closer to proper English weather than any us bargained for with a high closer to sixty under breezy overcast skies with an occasional light mist thrown in for good measure. We only saw our shadows once for a fleeting moment when the sun broke through. Alas, the all-conquering clouds, much like the scene in *The Perfect Storm* right before the weather turned really nasty, quickly swallowed up the blue skies. Fortunately there was no rogue wave to swallow us up on the Natchez Trace north of Kosciusko.

Never the less, five hardy families met for the seventy-eight mile trip up the Natchez Trace to Jeff Busby Park. Long time members; Mike and Alice Glore in their Lotus, Pat and Barbara Cashman in their 1974 TR6 they've owned since it was new were joined by new members; Richard Hobbs in his MGB, Skip and Linda Warren in their modern MINI Cooper S convertible and the Whitlows in our Midget.

Several of us opted to drop the tops. We were actually fairly cozy with the heater going and the windows rolled up. I like to think of this as *alfresco driving* although I think the term actually applies to outdoor dining.

North of French Camp we began to enter the hills of North Mississippi which is really pretty countryside. Since Karen and I had previously camped at Jeff Busby years ago, we led the group to the top of Little Mountain which at 594 feet is one of the highest points in the state and offers a rare, almost 360 degree view of the surrounding countryside all the way to the horizon, which is a big deal as views go in Mississippi.

After the appropriate amount of 'oohing and aahing' we head down to the picnic area to seek shelter from the chill wind and of course, to eat lunch. I really enjoyed getting to know everyone

as Karen and I only joined the club in January although we've owned a Midget since the mid-seventies. One thing is certain, after listening to Mike Glore's hilarious recount of his struggles



Considered proper attire while motoring in an LBC

Photo Courtesy EMC

with wildlife invading his home –which by the way gets my vote for a James Bond hideaway; Man has definitely not conquered Nature in Braxton Mississippi!

I think I can speak for the group and say a great time was had by one and all.

Steve Whitlow

### **EMC's Drive Thru History**

**McComb MS** - On June 11, 2011 the EMC was happy to have members of the British Motoring Club of New Orleans join us for the 2011 edition of The Drive Thru History. Over thirty folks started the day meeting in McComb for an over the top good old round table meal at the Dinner Bell. After a short break to let the food settle we traveled over to visit the McComb Rail Road Museum. Mr. Bobby Bellipanni provided a full staff to show everyone thru the museum including opening the caboose for everyone's inspection. We also learned why McComb was

considered a big rail town into the 1980's. We then headed off to Liberty MS for a brief stop to toast one of the great cross state personalities from the 1800's Dr. Tichenor.



EMC – BMCNO join forces in Centerville MS

Photo Courtesy Rick Huber

Departing Liberty the convoy of LBC's continued west arriving at The Camp Van Dorn Museum in Centerville for a stop. The history of the WWII camp was brought to life by the resident keeper of the museum Patricia who narrated the history of the camp and the development of the museum. The museum was a great stop on our DTH. We did note some darker clouds building off to the west as we continue our trail west.

The next stop was Rosemont Plantation near Woodville MS. Ginny welcomed us onto the property, inviting us to park around back near the childhood home of Jefferson Davis. Ginny provided us with cool refreshments and a tour of the home and cooking building. Her knowledge of the property and heritage is superb and really gave everyone a sense of the history associated to it. Everyone had a great visit. Under the cover of the wide porches of Rosemont those darker clouds that we'd watched off to the west turned heavy and loud. Under the porches we were able to enjoy the rain and listen to the fireworks. Sometimes it pays to be as fast as a Mississippi Minute, I'd hate to have been caught out in it in Ole Red.



After the weather had cleared a bit some of the folks from the New Orleans area headed off toward home while a few of us continued thru Woodville and on up for the overnight stay in Natchez.

The EMC and BMCNO would like to thank the folks at each of our stops for the warm welcome and education that we received during the 2011 Drive Thru History. Each of you made for a special day for us.



EMC – BMCNO members Drive Thru History 2011

Photo Courtesy Rick Huber

### **Bio: Charles Durning 2011 President of the English Motoring Club**

Earlier this year I suggested that members of EMC submit a bio for the newsletter. Since the excitement in my life has settled down a bit I decided to take the lead. I'll take this space to explain how I came to appreciate Brit cars and perhaps brag a bit.

I suppose the affliction that I have is all my dad's fault. After serving his time in the Army Air Corps during WWII he came home with a new appreciation for cars not often seen in North America. Though he originally wanted a MGTC a growing family and getting settled in life after the war dictated that he wait a few years to get his dream car. In 1953 he was finally able to

realize his dream and purchased a new MGTD. He loved that car. It was common for the entire family to pile into the car for a ride in the country. Now keep in mind at that time my parents had 4 children.

The usual seating arrangement was dad in the driver's seat, mom riding shotgun, my 2 older sisters and older brother in the space behind the seats and I would be perched on pillow placed over the parking brake. When my younger brother came along, in '54, he sat on mom's lap.



That's me on the spare tire.

I too loved that car. I would go out in the garage and spend hours just sitting in the car and taking in all of the details of the English craftsmanship and the smells of leather and leaking oils. As time went by dad had a love/hate relationship with the MG. Eventually the MG was traded off for a used '61 Rambler American. Though that was the end of sporty cars for dad that was the beginning for me.

In '58 our family was displaced by President Eisenhower's interstate highway brainchild. Though the old neighborhood had some interesting cars the new neighborhood had even better cars. The realtor 2 doors up had a Mercedes 300SL and an Alfa Spider, the pharmacist across the street had a Morris Minor and a Karman Ghia, the rocket scientist, down the street, had a yard full of big Healey's, and there was a fellow who had a Jag XK120 that was never off of the wood blocks. I don't think that the Jag ever ran. Whenever any of those cars had their hood up, I was there to "help".

Eventually I earned enough money with my paper route to purchase a '55 VW Bug. Though I drove that car far and wide it just wasn't me. Eventually the VW was traded off for a '64 Alfa Romeo Giulia Spider Veloce. Though I liked the "chick magnet" aspect of the Alfa, the Alfa required skills that I did not possess at that time. When the Alfa got sick it was sold to an Alfa collector and was replaced by a 998 Austin Mini Cooper. Now that was a car.

My relationship with Brit cars could best be described as a love/hate relationship. That relationship even went so far as to defile certain makes that are considered as sacred these days. On one occasion a buddy and I put a Nail Head Buick engine coupled to a Ford truck trans in a raggedy Healey 100. It was an abomination. On another occasion we stripped the body of a Healey 100-6, hauled the engine, trans, and body to the dump, implanted a '53 Ford flat head engine and auto trans and made it a dune buggy. The wire wheels proved to be a challenge. I ended up cutting all of the spokes with a torch and then welding the remaining hubs into some Ford truck wheels that I had widened in metal shop. That car was fun in the desert.

The experiment that got me shunned by the local Jag club is when a buddy and I transplanted a junkyard 260 Ford engine, using a J.C. Whitney trans adapter, into a '62 XKE. In my defense the previous owner had run the car head on into a power pole. During the aftermath of the collision the engine spun all of the rod bearings. The car was headed to the crusher. The junkyard sold the car complete with another bonnet. Unfortunately the bonnet didn't fit and had gained twice its weight in Bondo. We reasoned that the added weight in Bondo would offset the weight that we lost by getting rid of the Jag's iron ingot engine so the car could maintain its factory balance. The Jag looked ok from 100 yards and ran great with its robust American power.

I actually left most of my other Brit cars as the factory intended. However, I did have dreams of an engine transplant in my TR6.

Not all of my cars were Brit cars. At one time Datsun Fairlady Roadsters, some Fiats, late '30's Fords, a Cortina, a Chev powered Toyota Landcruiser, 3 cylinder 2 stroke Saabs, various dune buggies, and finally my '82 Alfa, that we all knew and loved, passed through my hands at one time or another.

I did go off on some motoring tangents. I took up "Jeep'n" in my Chev powered Landcruiser for 24 years. That one was a faithful beast that went through several transformations. In its final configuration, it had power steering from a Pontiac, Hydrobooster from a Ford Grenada, master cylinder from a Ford truck, a Turbohydro 350 auto trans, a narrowed Bronco rear end with a Detroit locker diff, and an "adapted" Detroit locker in the front diff. That thing was a rock crawling animal. Though it was rolled a couple of times it was always faithful.





I also spent some time driving sprint cars in Phoenix and Tucson, learned how to fly, and became a proficient water skier. Never did well in the sprints but I sure had a good time and got to hang around with some interesting fellows. I shook hands with “little’ Al Unser when he was a snout nosed kid making the rest of us look silly, banged wheels with JJ Yeley’s dad “Cactus” Jack, and watched several other kids who became Indy car greats and not so greats grow up in the pits.



The yellow car is my Stapp sprinter. The blue #1 is JackYeley’s midget on which J.J. cut his teeth. And me in my trimmer days.





All that was fun until I was introduced to flying. After that all of my other toys had to go. Flying became an obsession that I gladly gave up so we could move to Mississippi. No regrets. This is a pic of Sherilyn and me with my favorite “flying pickup truck”.



For those who want to know the “flying pickup truck” is a 1967 Cessna C182, 235hp with a “full” Robertson STOL kit. That aircraft could fly 4 fat folks into and out of any airport that we could find.

Well I’ve come full circle and now have my 1958 MG Magnette rat rod. This one will be a project. We’ll see where it goes. The next decision is shall I restore or repower with a modern Jap engine, HMMMMM.

OK I spilled my guts now it’s your turn.

Charlie

### **Other Exhaust Rattles**

Yep, David Bailey, Dennis Loftin along with Brian and Keith Anderson made the trip The Mitty on over the weekend of April 30, 2011 and indicated they enjoyed the event. Here are notes from Keith:

Saturday the infield was filled with car clubs showing off their prized possessions. There were a lot of cars (220) and about 25 vintage motorcycles as well. One of the vintage grand prix bikes was clocked at 146 mph near the end of the back straight. But none of the vehicles really caught our attention as they had done in the years past, as the past keeps catching up in time. However, the 2008 LeMans winning Audi R8 that ran in the “Historic” field was impressive on the track. The “Historic” class even allowed a couple ’95 Mustangs to run. But the fact that the cars are getting newer was evened out by all the interesting drivers and owners we got to meet. One of the chaps was Phil Wicks who flat tows his Austin Cooper S race car to the track with his Mini Clubman. Phil was one of the mini drivers in the 1969 movie “The Italian Job”, and he had worked as a test and development driver for Lamborghini. He started racing Minis in 1959 and is still racing them competitively today. That is what The Mitty is all about, the people and their love for the cars. Plus the huge free dinner/wine/beer/music party in the paddock Saturday evening. Keith.

Another traveler in the EMC made a trip across the big pond. Mike Marsh made to the big time with a visit to Paris. Here are Mike’s notes:

Ann and I have just returned from Paris, where among other things, we viewed 17 autos from Ralf Lauren's collection at the Musee des Art Decoratifs. The experience was beyond adequate description by me or anyone else for that matter. If 17 of some of the rarest autos in the World wasn't enough, the way the French displayed them with the lighting and platforms, was all so well done that all viewing had to be convinced that they were truly works of art.

As a designer, Lauren is known for his style and elegance and the exhibit delivered these traits

masterfully. "Four of the autos have never before been seen in public: a 1964 Ferrari 250 LM; a 1960 Ferrari 250 GT SWB Berlinetta Scaglietti; a 1956/1958 Jaguar XKSS; and a 1931 Alfa Romeo Monza 8C 2300". Besides a Ferrari GTO and Testa Rossa on display some of the others included a one of a kind Mercedes Benz SSK "Count Trossi" 1930, one of four Bugatti 57S(C) Atlantic Coupe 1938, a 4.5 L Bentley "Blower", a D Type Jaguar, a Mercedes "Gullwing", a Porsche Spyder and five more rare examples.

In addition to the autos, the exhibit featured side rooms with videos of how the exhibit came to be, and one of the restoration process for an Alfa Romeo that won Best of Show at Pebble. The icing on the cake however, was a video of each of the 17 autos with sound track of them starting up, coming to high speed RPMs and then finally at idle while hot. I shut my eyes and drifted away. This show is all over the internet but one site that does it well is [www.justluxe.com](http://www.justluxe.com) should you care to see this outstanding event.

Thanks Keith and Mike for letting us go along for the ride.

Mechanical updates are taking place as we speak. I'm still collecting parts for The GT cleanup and rebuilding. Steve Whitlow's collecting parts to upgrade his Maroon Midget and also getting things assembled on his Midget in the garage. Last weekend John Turbeville and Keith Anderson completed a drive train-ectomy on John's '69 TR-6. John's becoming a real surgeon as he's now expanded from MG's to Triumph's.

After our membership drive we've gathered up sixty-four paying members and families. Thanks everyone from the EMC for remaining with us. And if you have something that you just can't avoid jotting down (your bio?) just drop in the in bin and will get your word out. Please keep an eye for upcoming events on the calendar. We'd like to see everyone before the years out! Pat has a special prize for everyone.

If your missing e-mails or your monthly update of the British Marque please let me know so that we can make appropriate corrections.

Happy Motoring

## **Events Calendar**

### **July 16, 2011 – EMC Lotus Weekend / Braxton MS**

Travel down to the Piney Woods to Mike and Alice's place in the woods. A great trip is in store for the drive down and as well as a great meal and lots of fun and frivolity. Bring a dish and enjoy whiling away a lazy afternoon with the EMC. Lunch starts at 12:00pm. Details: Mike / Alice Glore (504)231-5801

### **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 as 12:00pm. Details: David / Jo Ann Bailey (601)992-8566

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

Due to the flooding along the Mississippi River and specifically in Vidalia the EMC will be evaluating the BBTR show for 2011. Please stay tuned.