

# THE OFF-SIDE UNDO

English Motoring Club of Mississippi  
Vicksburg, Mississippi

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‘A gentleman does not motor about after dark.’ —Joseph Lucas

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## A Day in Vicksburg

by Gene Johnston

It started out innocently enough until we missed a turn... Two real LBCs, an MG and a McLaren, along with a supporting cast, a Corvette and a BMW, along with one pick-up vehicle, an SUV, departed the Visitors Center in Clinton, Miss., headed on the back roads to Vicksburg. We were just about on time and were on the correct heading until we passed the right turn for Vicksburg. By the time your mis-guided compass leader realized he'd missed the turn the merry gang were a "fur piece" down the road. Rather than be embarrassed by a U-turn maneuver we continued south on the Natchez Trace until we reached the community of Port Gibson and made the right turn over to Hwy. 61 and headed north. Yes, that is Hwy. 61 made famous in blues tunes, and there's bound to be a tune about getting lost or losing something out on Hwy. 61. The party was already underway when we arrived at Pat and Barbara Cashman's garage, bringing the total attendance to twenty-four. The party had already broken into two groups, with those that wanted warmth (it was 60° in the luncheon area) and those that didn't (it was approximately 50° out in the shop). For now, I'll focus on the those that were braving the cold. In the interior of Joe Speetjen's Morgan was Brian Anderson, and peering along the firewall area was Clay Johnston.



McLaren and other treasures in the Cashman shop.



**Joe Speetjen's Morgan. Photos courtesy EMC**

Joe had driven down from Madison with a malfunctioning fresh air/heater vent control, and these two were using all sorts of tools to poke and prod at various attachments to free the vent control mechanism. Other attendees were milling about, offering opinions and a little moral support. You can only get so many big American hands into the small areas of a Morgan. I could tell it was not to be rectified prior to lunch and wandered about Pat and Barbara's collections of cars.

When the dinner bell rang, I made sure that I was close to a seat. Do you recall musical chairs? Yep, it looked a bit like that as everyone jumped into the food line and began the search for a seat. A good hour was spent in spinning yarns and telling belly slappers while consuming some great grub. Thanks, Barbara, for the red beans and rice, a perfect meal for a cool garage day. Then, back to work! Those that were in pursuit of cool returned to The Morgan to applaud Brian and Clay as they fooled those pesky vent control gremlins and resolved the issue. Yeah! Next on the honey-do list was replacing the emergency brake cable on Pat's Rover 3500. As is often the case the disassembly went smoothly, with several of the cool crew jumping in to lend a hand. The only major issue was the cool crew that performed the disassembly lost attention and wandered away, requiring a replacement crew to step in and, with a lot of head scratching, try to figure out the order of reassembly of the various fat and serrated washers, nuts and grommets, and how in the heck to replace the brake mechanism boot cover without pulling the console area (which I'm sure was the procedure that the factory had intended). Being that we didn't have an instruction manual it really didn't matter anyway. With sufficient determination we were

successful in getting everything back in its proper order. Another win was declared, and everyone left in a very upbeat mood. Two challenges and two wins! Thanks, Pat and Barbara, for hosting our February gathering. Let us know when you would like a revisit from this band of mechanical misadventures!

## The Lucas gods smiled on me today!

by Richard Greene

A couple of weeks ago I did my usual spring service on the Lotus Elise —oil change, brake flush and radiator flush. During the oil change procedure, you have to remove the under-tray in the back of the car. It was then that I discovered that the front and rear motor mount inserts had disambiguated. The actual motor mounts were still intact and only the add-on inserts were destroyed. No other damage was done. The inserts were added when the supercharger was installed to counter the added thrust of the supercharger. Anyway, I replaced the inserts and did all the other procedures at that time. I buttoned up the car and took it for a short spin to make sure there were no leaks or problems. After returning from the drive, I detected quite a bit of oil on the under-tray from a leak. I put the car up on stands and removed the under-tray to ascertain where the leak was. Oil was all over the rear engine and tray. My first impression was that my



The writer's Elise. Photo by Richard Greene

driver's side axle was leaking at the transfer case seal. I figured that I might have disturbed the seal when replacing the motor mount inserts, as I had to raise the engine slightly to remove the motor mounts. (I thought I was extra careful supporting the engine during this to prevent any more problems.) I cleaned up the oil mess from the engine, tray and axles. I again buttoned up the car and drove it around the block a couple of times. I parked it for the night and went to the manuals and my book of maintenance tips to formalize myself on what it would take to replace the seal. I knew that the axle needed to be removed to get to the seal. I had removed the axles before when I switched out engine about eight years ago, but I never replaced the seals and was hoping it could be done without removing the transmission. It seemed doable, and I looked into

tracking down a new seal and circlip. I was able to cross-reference the seal to a Toyota part number and thought that the extra cost over an aftermarket seal was worth the money. I planned to head out to the Toyota dealer Monday and get the part for a Tuesday install (the weather for Tuesday was projected to be warm). As was my luck, Monday was Presidents' Day and the parts department was closed. Tuesday morning, I decided that I would remove the old seal before heading out to the Toyota dealer — that way I would have the old seal to check that I got the right one. The '05 Elise was sold with two different transmissions, a C60 and a C64. On the Lotus Forum, there is some that say they are the same with only the gear ratios different. Others claim that they are different in other ways. Having the old part in hand would assure me that I am getting the right one. So up on the jacks stand again, and I removed the under-tray. To my surprise, the oil residue was much less and not anywhere near the axle seals. It was leaking out of the oil pan drain plug! I had installed a new crush washer on the plug but must have not tightened it enough. Not the axle seals at all. I tightened the plug and reinstalled the under-tray and will be back on the road. The gods were smiling on me, for a change.