

BRITISH MOTOR CLUB OF UTAH

OCTOBER NEWSLETTER 1989

Volume 2, Issue 3

UPCOMING EVENTS

The club event for October will be a run up Little Cottonwood Canyon to the Octoberfest at Snowbird on Sunday October 8. Meet at Sugarhouse Park, 13th East and 21st South, (on the road parallel to 21st South) at 11:00 AM. Contact Duff (487-5192) for more information. The originally planned rally with the SCCA still does not have a firm date at this time. We also got asked to go with the Healey Club on their Fall Color tour but the information was too late to get the newsletter out.

On November 4, we are planning to meet with Roy Beal, "Mr. British," for a technical session on winterizing your car. Roy is an excellent British car mechanic and the discussions often extend far beyond the topic of the day. If you work on your own car you don't want to miss this one and if you don't you had better meet Roy.

We are not scheduling an event for December. Happy holidays!

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS

The 6th Vintage Car Race was held at Steamboat Springs, CO September 2 and 3 and the biggest and best yet. There were 179 cars entered in the racing with the majority being English: MGs, TRs, Healeys, ACs, Morgans, Lotus, Coopers, TVRs, Sunbeams and more. There were also a bunch of Alfas, two Bugattis, two gull wing Mercedes and many many more. The concours this year featured English cars and brought out some great cars including a '38 (?) MG-SA, a BIG touring car of that era. The last thing you would think of is MG if you see it.

While tinkering with my "A" (and trying to get it run on Saturday) Richard Fritz asked if he could help since he was an MG owner. We had a short conversation and I learned that he is involved with the Rocky Mountain Section of the MG Owner's Club. He told me about the British Car rally that they hold to Glennwood Springs from Denver in June. To shorten up a long story we were invited to attend. This would be great but Glennwood Springs is about 300 miles from Salt Lake. Perhaps we need to discuss this sometime to see if there is any interest.

Attending from the club were John, Beth, Julie and I.

THE PUB RUN

Nine British cars and one adopted British car along with nineteen people showed up for the September dinner run to the Wasatch Brew Pub in Park City. This included nine people who had not been out with us before. Great to see you! After the usual peering under hoods and swapping of stories Duff got us moving toward Park City. The two MG TDs lead the way at a stately pace up Parley's Canyon and into Park City. Kees discovered that a contractor had roped off a space in the parking lot for us to park in and about half the group used this. The brew pub had reserved a set of tables for us and we sampled some great beer and had some good food. The service was not up the level of the beer, however. One idea that came up was to stop here after the East Canyon run next year to take the tour of the brewery and get supper. Three Cheers are due Duff for this suggestion and for making the arrangements.

Attending were Gary, Sandy, Bob, Mary, Bruce, Diane, Mark, Karen, Steve, MaryAnn, Duff, John, Beth, Kees, Beckie, Dell, Donni, Julie and I. The most asked question was were is TC Annie?

BRITISH CARS AND COMPUTERS -- Mark Bradakis

I know most of the Salt Lake autocrossers have seen my ragged old red TR4 at many events. But how many of these people are aware that this same car is known around the world as the Rust Rocket? The tales of victory and defeat (you can guess which is more common!) for this car, as well as many other cars and their drivers are shared with motorsports and British car enthusiasts in California, New Mexico, Chicago, Boston and even back in England!

As one might expect these days, this widespread bench racing takes place with the help of computers. With a complex system of interconnected networks, both participants in various forms of motor sports and those who choose to only spectate can carry on discussions of the latest SCCA rules proposals, recent Formula 1 events, what's happening in NASCAR or even keep up with karting.

The most ubiquitous form of autosports related discussion is done on a system known as USENET. This is a collection of electronic discussion groups divided up into various major categories, such as "comp" for computers, "soc" for social discussions and the always popular "rec" groups for various forms of recreation topics. USENET started a number of years ago as a means for a handful of computer wizards to stay in touch with each other, keeping abreast of the latest developments at locations around the country. Now there are thousands of sites around the world reading news, and some estimate there are hundreds of thousands who read it.

Under the "rec" heading there is a subgroup called "rec.autos" which consists of a lot of debating on things like the national speed limit, radar detectors, left lane hogs and such. One of the problems of having such a free and uncontrolled forum is the amount of drivel generated. As an example, some innocent reader may pose a question wondering which radar detector is the best, and before the keyboard cools there will be dozens of replies berating him for being an evil speed demon with a flagrant disregard for fellow motorists. Luckily not all the newsgroups are like that. There are two which I follow quite regularly. The first, "rec.autos.tech," is similar but has a smaller active core of folks who post, and the noise content is much lower.

Subjects such as "What do the numbers on the tires mean?" and "How often should I change the oil in my Rochdale Olympic?" frequently appear, and usually the person who originally posted the query will eventually get a good, correct answer.

The best of the three auto groups is the one known as "rec.autos.sport". It is here where I occasionally send in a quick wrapup of events describing the success or failures of Team Fat, or where someone may have a question on whether such and such a modification is legal in Street Prepared, or where some person may tell of their latest exploits in the SCCA Pro Solo. This group has a dedicated autocross contingent, a number of folks who keep us all informed of the latest development in Formula one and a good share of NASCAR fans back east. Quite entertaining, probably TOO entertaining in my boss's eye!

Another means of communication through computers is electronic mail. Not only do enthusiasts send personal messages to each other, there are also mailing lists bringing together those with common interests. Driving an old Triumph I am naturally a member of the British cars mailing list, currently a group of about 100 or so people who have, used to have or want to have a British car.

Folks on the list represent all the popular makes of British sports machines, with about 40 Triumphs, 20 MGs, including an early PA, Rover, Lotus, Bentley, a scattering of Jaguars and the odd Healy or two.

I've used the list for both getting and sending out information and tech tips, selling parts to folks in California, Boston and even a pair of wire wheels to a guy in Canada. Lots of fun and rather educational, even if trying to debug a TR6 with a triple sidedraft setup is difficult when the car is in California and I've never even heard it run!

Editors Note: Those of you into such things can reach Mark through email at mjb@hoosier.utah.edu. He will be glad to add you to the British Car list.

THE LUCAS CALENDER

This calender works about as well as its namesake. Use it with care.

- Oct. 1 Autocross at Hill AFB. Begins about 10:00. You may have to convince the guard that you need to get in. Be Confident. Contact Mark Bradakis, 364-3251(h) or 581-8866(w) for info.
- Oct. 1 Bonneville Healey Club Fall Color Tour. Contact Duff (487-5192) for info.
- Oct. 3 Crown Burger Cruise Night, 2684 S. 3200 W., begins about 6:00 till ?? Hamburgers and great old cars. Lots of rods and customs.
- Oct. 7 KRSP Cruise Night, at an Eat-a-Burger, call or listen to KRSP for the exact location. More burgers and cars.
- Oct 8 **Club run to Snowbird for Octoberfest. Meet in Sugarhouse Park at 11:00 AM. Contact Duff for information 487-5192.**
- Oct. 8 Autocross at Woods Cross High School. See Oct. 1.
- Oct. 15 Autocross at Hill AFB. See Oct. 1.
- Oct. 22 SCCA Rally?? Contact Duff (487-5192) for info.
- Nov. 4 **Technical Session-Winterizing your car. Club event for Nov.**

TIDBITS

Anybody know of a TR-8 for sale? Rich (250-4928) knows somebody who wants one.

Duff (487-5192) is looking for a '67 or older Spitfire.

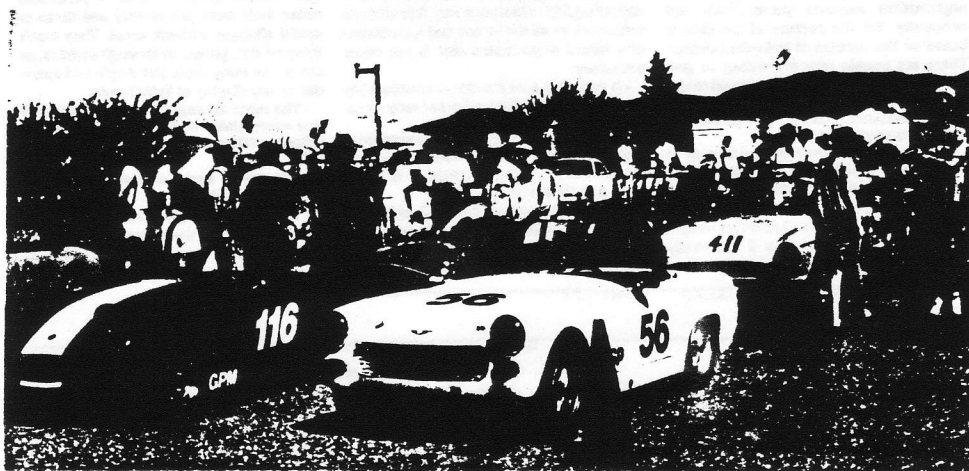
I hear that Kees 268-9700(W) is going to sell some of his A's and B's and a Bugeye Sprite without an engine.

If you are looking for that strange unobtainable part let us know and we will make a note of it here. Maybe somebody has two.

Sixty seven copies of the September newsletter were sent out (80 were printed). Total cost for the September newsletter was \$43.21 (64 1/2 cents per copy distributed). This will be reduced somewhat in the future as I learn some cost saving tricks. Any donations of the use of a free or less then 5 cents per copy Xerox machine and of envelopes would be very helpful, we need people to fold, staple and stuff envelopes too. Newsletter donations at the September event were \$27. If you can help call Bill at 582-9223 (H) or 581-7687 (W).

The next KRSP cruise night is Saturday Afternoon Oct. 7 lets see if we can get a British contingent out for it.

Page 6 is a copy of an article from the Moss Motors Newsletter of about Fall '88. It describes the way a British Car club is run in Iowa and appears to be very similar to our approach.



Starting grid for small bore at Steamboat.



On the track.

Stretched nearly the full block was a solid rank of British cars carefully backed into place as though ready for Le Mans. It was a good cross-section: Healeys, most of the post-war MGs, Jags and Triumphs, Mini-Coopers and a few pre-war cars. Not bad for an Iowa, two-weather day in early April.

As I watched more people arrive my thoughts were drawn back to our first tentative newsletter five summers before. It said, "The first meeting was a success. Nearly two

editor of our newsletter.

That nucleus group will have some turn-over from event to event and from year to year, but it won't be much. There will always be a hard-core of people who are committed to keeping the group going. Anyone can join it if they are willing to contribute. Our group has only two titled and long-term positions, both staffed by volunteers: the editor and the treasurer.

How is it possible to avoid an organiza-

people but you'll find one. And the rest of the club will be supportive because they'll realize how important it is.

Newsletters should be informal and folksy. The purpose of the club is to drive cars and have fun. Newsletters and editors should be punished for taking themselves seriously. If you're looking for a model, try to find a copy of the Vintage Sports Car Club Quarterly from Great Britain; they've got the right light touch.

Newsletters hold the interest of...

People

People are the critical ingredient. Otherwise there wouldn't be a club. But people in a British Car Club are an ever-changing variable. They came together because they like British cars, but they all don't like British cars in exactly the same way.

The fact that they like British cars is an advantage. On the whole they are really a decent bunch of roaring individualists who have a wide range of interests both in their cars and in their other lives. Recognize this or be prepared to have a very small group. The lack of a formal organization makes it easier to mold some of these typical types together:

- People who hate belonging to clubs and organizations of all types but find that the British Car Club is somehow fun and appealing. There's a lot of untapped leadership and talent to be found in this group. Maybe even a newsletter editor.

- The rabid marque enthusiast who can spot a non-original fitting at 50 yards and quote their marque's history and dates of model changes without notes. They won't drive on dirt, gravel, or through puddles, or appear on rainy days. But they'll add splendor to any display of British cars.

- The rabid driving enthusiast who thinks that every club event ought to be a crash helmet gymkhana or a time-speed-distance rally.

- The purely social semi-enthusiast who fills out the ranks.

- The mass of people whose only proof of existence is that their dues are faithfully paid and their newsletters are never re-

continued on page 4

Club Corner

Thoughts on Starting and Keeping a British Car Club Active and Successful By Dick Hankinson

dozen cars showed up." The nice thing is that most of them were still here five seasons later. We must have been doing something right.

I tried to put my finger on the specific things that we had done to be successful. As I thought I began to ask myself, did we make the club grow or did we allow it to grow?

It was definitely the latter. Here are some of the things we discovered that allowed our club to grow.

Avoid Organization

Focus on the difference between getting organized and having an organization.

The process of organization diverts attention for the reason we exist: to drive British cars and to have fun doing it. Formal organization assumes permanence and continuity. Yet the success of the club is based on the success of individual events. There are people who are willing to give 200% for a single effort but who would refuse the commitment that is implied by an office in an organization. Don't stifle incentive with an organization chart.

A group has to have a few spark plugs to draw people together the first time. Those spark plugs are the beginning of a nucleus which consists of people who have said, "I could help do..." There isn't room for people who say, "It would be better if somebody would do..." That's how I became the first

editor. Allow people who want to see the club succeed become leaders without the impediments of bureaucracy and elections. And, instead of officers have a good...

Newsletter

I watched the newsletter and the club grow together. I placed major emphasis upon the newsletter because I have seen what it can do.

- It tells people the what, where and when about the next event.

- It tells people how much fun (artistic license is allowed) the last event was, who won and "aren't you sorry that you weren't there."

- It makes you look like an established, solid, active organization even while you're still struggling to find your way. It provides a substitute for all the facade and appearance of a formal organization that is not really necessary.

- It provides a continuity of membership even for those people who are only occasional attendees.

- It justifies charging dues, especially from those who rarely come. No dues, no newsletter. Dues support club activities. A newsletter is a profit center.

A newsletter sounds like a tall order, but I promise you that there will be somebody in your group who will sincerely enjoy writing a newsletter. You may have to ask a few

ity. We encourage pairs of event leaders. We try to team someone who's never run a specific type of event with someone who already has. That way we expand our leadership base.

We try to provide something for every taste.

- Opening social gathering and lunch at the local pub which just happens to have British beer and draft.

- A informal fun rally to encourage first-time participants to find out that rallying is fun.

- A gymkhana with more emphasis on teamwork than on autocrossing.

- A serious time-speed distance rally.

- An Annual All British Car Show which attracts more than 60 cars and a large all day crowd.

- A fun run in the country.

In between we get invited to display cars at various events. All of a sudden driving British cars is socially acceptable and a gathering draws crowds full of nostalgia for cars they used to own or wished they had.

People don't think of Iowa as being British sports car country. We're a long way from either coast and the winter seems extra long without the chance for hood-down motor-ing. But, adhering to these principles, which we frankly didn't understand as we discovered them, has made our group a success and has attracted more British cars to our group than we ever thought existed in central Iowa.

Remember, forget organizations. Communicate instead. Create an environment where people can participate and lead from their very first meeting. Provide something for all interests and don't cry over the people who never show up.

Try it, pretty soon you'll have to start wearing name tags. We have.

Dick will receive a Moss gift certificate for his contribution

Club Corner, continued

turned because of "no forwarding address."

The last group should be nurtured. Never think that mailing their newsletter is a nuisance. Don't feel guilty about spending their dues money to support club events. They feel that the newsletter and their non-participation is worth the price of dues. In that way they help keep the club going. Some of them may eventually show up, along with the other types as long as there is a...

Wide variety of Events

Our event year starts in February with our Christmas Party (we use a Lucas calendar) and Spring Planning Session.

All events are defined and volunteers accept responsibility.

FROM THE MOSS MOTORS
NEWSLETTER.