

British Motor Club of Utah

December 1997

Volume 10 Number 5

No Event in December

As usual, there is no event scheduled in December. All of the people who help keep the BMCU moving and see that this newsletter gets out on a somewhat regular basis wish you a happy holiday season.

The next event will likely be a tech session on front suspensions and steering. This is tentatively scheduled for January 24. The site is yet to be determined.

Electrical Questions?

Mark and Mike Morgan gave an excellent discussion of British car electrical systems, talking about colour coding, grounding problems, batteries, charging systems, starters, and fault finding. Mike also described a session he attended with both representatives of BMC and Lucas. When someone at that session asked why we have so many electrical problems, the Lucas man said it was due to BMC's specifications and the BMC man said it was Lucas' design and manufacturing. That certainly clears that up.

Mike and Mark demonstrated how to determine electrical faults in the battery and charging system using shop grade equipment and also with the small multimeters that most of us own (or should own). Regulators (or perhaps more correctly, the control boxes) were discussed. These occur only on generator equipped cars, and are very poorly

understood by most owners it seems (including the editor) and thus, often times, are blamed for electrical charging problems.

In the simplest language, the regulator has two functions: first the cut-out prevents the battery from discharging back through the generator when the car is not running. Second, the voltage regulator does just this by a make and break control—it limits the generator field voltage to control generator output voltage.

If your car is not charging, the first action is to check the generator output.

Disconnect the two leads and connect a wire between the two terminals, between the wire (or one of the terminals) connect one lead of a voltmeter, then ground the other voltmeter lead. Start the engine and increase the RPM slowly. The voltage should rise with the RPM, but don't exceed 15 volts or so or risk frying the generator. If the voltage does increase with RPM, then the charging problem is in the wiring or regulator. Don't blame the regulator without carrying out this test first. Alternators are more difficult to access so read your manual.

Spending an informative Saturday morning were: Joe Martinez, Bill Walton, Gary Villella, Rex Neibar, Mike Odernheimer, A.C. Gordon, Doug Borga, Edwin Barker, York Powell, Mark Bradakis, Barry Blackett, Scott Kimbrough, Mike Morgan, Mark Morgan, Wendy Morgan, and Bill Van Moorhem.

The Laws for British Sports Cars

By Don Hayward and the American MGB Association Octagon

Most of us are familiar with the physical laws thought up by Isaac Newton, the guy who invented gravity. He said things like "For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction," and "If you sit under a tree long enough, an apple will eventually fall on your head, provided you are sitting under an apple tree."

Isaac was considered very intelligent and was eventually responsible for the invention of calculus, which was a new kind of math for people who thought math wasn't already hard enough. He is also the reason why, even today, people who work in apple orchards often wear large protective hats.

Newton's Laws made sense for hundreds of years and everybody believed them - right up to the time when British sports cars were invented, at which point it was realized that a whole new bunch of laws were needed.

Hint for the Month: What is the function of the rod that runs vertically on the inside of the windshield on MGBs and Midgets? Does it just provide a mount for the rear view mirror? No....this rod helps carry the wind loads exerted on the windshield frame when the convertible top (hood) is up. The wind loads try to lift the top and can pull the frame away from the windshield glass.

Many distinguished scientists have labored their entire lives to try and figure out why British autos never seem to obey any scientific laws known to man. These eminent scientists, with names like Morris, Healey, Leyland, and MOWAG, shook the international scientific community when they published their new theory of mechanical behavior titled "The Laws for British Sports cars." Many people are not familiar with the six major laws—they are listed below with a brief explanation of each:

1. Law of Peculiar Random Nomenclature.

"The name of a British Sports Car (B.S.C.) shall consist primarily of letters and numbers, with said letters and numbers chosen in random fashion so that the resultant vehicle name is wholly devoid of meaning."

This law explains why B.S.C.s have spectacularly bad names, such as XKE, or, worse yet, MGBGT.

2. Law of Cryptic Instructions.

"Any book, manual, pamphlet or test dealing with the repair, maintenance, or restoration of a B.S.C. shall be written so that at least every fourth word shall be unknown to the average reader. In the event that any portion of the text shall be understandable, the information contained therein shall be incorrect."

Most people are familiar with this law. Here is an excerpt from page 132 of the MGA shop manual: "Before rebushing the lower grunion banjos, you must remove the bonnet fascia and undo the A-Arm with a #3 spanner." All attempts to publish an English-language version of this manual have failed.

3. Law of Confounding Drivers of B.S.C.s in Places Other Than The British Isles.

"Whenever possible, names of B.S.C. components in particular and automotive/driving terms in general shall

be chosen so as to confuse non-British drivers; when possible, words chosen shall be used in other countries to identify entirely different components; when possible, priority shall be given to words having entirely different meanings in largest nations first (viz.: U.S.A.)."

This law explains why B.S.C.s have bonnets, boots, spanners, and squabs, and especially why they also have hoods, valves, and drive shafts.

4. Love of Hardship Law.

"The more a B.S.C. malfunctions, breaks, and/or falls apart, the more endearing it becomes to the owner."

You buy a B.S.C. You have had it a year and half and have replaced every item on the car at least twice; when the engine is started, it sounds as if someone has thrown a handful of ball bearings into a blender.

When, however, someone offers to buy it, you refuse because "it is like a member of the family," and besides, "it is such fun to drive a B.S.C." (B.S.C. owners often stare into space and smile a lot. This is referred to as the 'Foolish Person Syndrome'.)

Continued next month.

Left Over Parts

January is post card month. We will enclose a post card with the January newsletter. If you want to remain on the mailing list, and continue receiving this newsletter, you must complete and return the post card. Since the BMCU doesn't have dues, this is the way we prune our mailing list every year to eliminate the people who have sold their cars, are just not interested or have moved out of the area. Watch for the post card and return it right away. A common complaint we hear in May or June is, "Why am I not getting a newsletter anymore?" The answer is frequently that they forgot to return the post card.

The Lucas Calendar

This calendar works about as well as its namesake, so use it with care. Club events have **bold** dates. The others you may find interesting. All events are subject to change.

January 24. Tech Session.

February 7. Pot Luck Dinner.

June 20. British Field Day.

Thanks again to Jim "Pugs" Pivrotto for copying the November newsletter.

Timing on the newsletter always get fouled up during the holidays. We will try to get it out on time, near the first of the month, but it will likely be late.

More on Grill Badges!! Duff Lawson (487-5192) has talked with Marty Van Nood, Chancellor of the Exchequer, about the grill badges. Marty feels we have the funds to proceed with getting the set-up done and a new source of grill badges established. Duff had been talking to one source, but he has also discovered that Triple C Motor Accessories—you must have one of their catalogs—also does grill badges and was going to contact them. I have not heard the outcome of his contact with Triple C. We should be very close to "a go" on the grill badges.

About this time of the year the editor polls the people who do a lot of the club business to see if they want to continue doing it for another year. Most do. The editor has been asking himself that question, too. Next year will be his tenth year of writing the newsletter. Perhaps it is time for someone new to take over.

More fun

I couldn't find anything that had to do with holidays, Christmas, or New Year's, so you get these fun items instead—Nathan.

Credits: these two items were stolen from the Scions of Lucas (SOL) web site. They got them from someone else.

How cold is it?

By Don Haugen

60° F
Californians put on their sweaters, if they can find one in their wardrobe.

50° F
Miami residents turn up the heat.

40° F
You can see your breath. Californians shiver uncontrollably. Minnesotans go swimming.

35° F
Italian cars won't start.

32° F
Water freezes.

30° F
You plan your vacation to Australia. Minnesotans put on T-shirts. Politicians began to worry about the homeless. English cars won't start.

25° F
Boston water freezes. Californians weep pitifully. Minnesotans eat ice cream. Canadians go swimming.

20° F
You can hear your breath. Politicians began to talk about the homeless. New York City water freezes. Miami residents plan vacation farther south.

15° F
French cars won't start. You plan a vacation to Mexico. Your cat insists upon sleeping in bed with you.

10° F
Too cold to ski. You need jumper cables to get the car going.

5° F
You plan your vacation to Houston. American cars won't start.

0° F
Alaskans put on T-shirts. Too cold to skate.

-10° F
German cars won't start. Eyes freeze shut when you blink them.

-15° F
You can cut your breath and use it to build an igloo. Arkansans stick tongue to metal objects. Miami residents cease to exist.

-20° F
Cat insists upon sleeping in your pajamas with you. Politicians actually do something about the homeless. Minnesotans shovel snow off roof. Japanese cars won't start.

-25° F
Too cold to think. You need jumper cables to get the driver going.

-30° F
You plan a two-week hot bath. The mighty Monogahela freezes. Swedish cars won't start.

-40° F
Californians disappear. Minnesotans button top button. Canadians put on sweater. You cat helps you plan your trip south.

-50° F
Congressional hot air freezes. Alaskans close bathroom window.

-80° F
Hell freezes over. Polar bears move south.

-90° F
Lawyers put their hands in their own pockets.

How to interpret antique car ads

"Rare model"
Means they didn't like them when new, either.

"Older restoration"
Means you can't tell it's been restored.

"Needs engine work"
It's been frozen for 30 years.

"Uses no oil"
It just throws it out.

"No rust"
The body and fenders are missing.

"Rough"
Too bad to lie about.

"One owner"
He (she) has never been able to sell it.

"No time to complete"
Can't find the parts anywhere.

"Needs interior"
The seats are gone.

"Rebuilt engine"
The owner put in new spark plugs.

"May run"
...but never has yet.

"Low mileage"
Third time around on the odometer.

"29 coats of handrubbed paint"
Needed that much to cover up the rust.

"Clean"
It sat in the rain yesterday.

"Prize winner"
Won the hard luck trophy 3 years now.

"Stored 25 years"
Under a tree.

"Easy restoration"
The parts will come off in your hands.

Autojumble

Storage space for rent, with the right phone number this time. Store your car at a Sugarhouse location. \$75 per month. Contact Dean Lowe at 553-9056.

Recently acquired a truck load of TR4 and TR6 parts. Sell/swap for other TR3 or MG parts I need worse. Send a long SASE for list or call Charlie Woodward, P.O. Box 91, Victor, ID 83455, 208-787-2495, e-mail: 102374.3534@compuserve.com

From the Exchequer

Balance as of 10/25/97	\$1614.34
Interest	+\$2.47
Newsletter Postage	-\$61.92
Donations	+\$150.00
Balance as of 11/25/97	\$1704.89

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This Newsletter is published by the British Motor Club of Utah, Ltd., a non-profit corporation of British automobile owners. The group holds monthly events such as drives, picnics, technical sessions, and more. We welcome owners (or potential owners) of British cars, in any condition, to the group. Membership is free, but we ask for a donation at events to support the Newsletter and other activities. If you would like to join the group, send your name, address, and a list of British cars owned to Bruce Schilling, 917 East Mill creek Way, Salt Lake City, Utah 84106 or call Bruce at (801) 486-0425.

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