

British Motor Club of Utah

January 1998

Volume 10 Number 6

Return Your Postcard!!

If you want to remain on the BMCU mailing list and continue receiving this newsletter, you must complete and return the enclosed postcard. The BMCU does this every year in January to eliminate anyone who does not want to receive the newsletter and to update our list of names, addresses, phone numbers and cars.

This year we are adding a request for an e-mail address, if you have one. If a significant part of the membership has access to e-mail, we may try to use it for last minute news. The newsletter will continue to be in print, and delivered through the U.S. Mail. We also ask you for a work phone number; this is certainly optional, but is useful at times. Since Utah is becoming a two area code state, we would like to have your area code, too. We continue to talk about making a mailing list available to our members and may actually do something about it in 1998, so don't record any information you don't want on the list, or, at least, tell us if you don't want it on a published list.

Many people who have not been active in the club, but want to stay on the membership list, take the postcard season as an opportunity to send us a donation. We certainly won't object if you would like to do so. Make a check to the BMCU and enclose it in an envelope with your post card. We will call upon MOWOG and the spirit of Lucas to bless you. Some people also enclose letters telling us about themselves and their car(s), both past and present. We certainly love these letters and excerpts sometimes make it to the newsletter. Keep those letters flowing.

If by the normal operating procedure of the BMCU this newsletter does not contain a postcard, we would appreciate a note with your name, partner/spouse's name, address, nine digit zipcode, phone numbers, both home and work, with area codes, a list of the British cars you currently own, and your e-mail address, if you have one. Send all of this to Bruce Schilling, 917 East Millcreek Way, Salt Lake City, 84106. A note is best as it is less likely to get lost, but if you must you can call Bruce at 801-486-0425 or e-mail at partsmaster@sisna.com.

Return the postcard now. The March newsletter will only go out to those on the updated mailing list.

Steering and Wheels

Does the steering wheel shake when you are driving? Is this the result of out of balance wheels or an indication of a more significant problem? Can you fix it or do you need professional care? We hope to cover these issues in the January Tech Session. This session will cover front suspensions and steering. Roy Beale will be doing this session for us on **Saturday, January 24, beginning at 10:00 AM**. The session will be in Room 2160 of the Merrill Engineering Building at the University of Utah. Clearly this will be a pencil and paper session as we don't want to take the suspension off a car. Roy will likely bring some parts along and we will talk about this very important portion of your car.

To get to the Merrill Engineering building,

head east up 100 South in Salt Lake. After you pass 1300 East and University Avenue, you will be climbing a steep hill. Continuing on after a stop light, you will have to turn left, to the north, there are no options. Just after making this left turn, Merrill Engineering Building will be the black glass building on your right. Continue along this road which slowly swings right, to the east. Just as you end up pointing east there is a driveway into a parking lot to the right. This is the first right after you have to make the turn to left and to the north of the building. Enter this parking lot and park. Permits are not required on Saturday. Enter the building at the northwest corner; you will be on the second floor. Walk south down the hall and watch for signs.

The Laws for British Sports Cars

By Don Hayward and the American MGB Association Octagon.

If you remember, last month we discussed four of the six newly discovered physical laws that apply to B.S.C.s (British Sports Cars). Two more remain.

5. Law of Non-Functional Attributes.

"All B.S.C.s, regardless of condition or age, shall have at least one system or sub-system of components which is entirely nonfunctional and cannot be repaired except on a semi-permanent or semi-functional basis."

This law can be explained in two words: "Lucas Electrics."

6. Recently Discovered Component Failure Law.

"Any component of a B.S.C. which is entirely unknown to the owner shall function perfectly until such time as the owner becomes aware of the component's existence, at which time it shall instantly fail."

Case in point: I have owned a rather natty MGB for six years. I never knew there was such a thing as a 'gulp valve' until I saw new ones offered for sale by Moss Motors. The next day the gulp valve fell off the engine and was run over by a truck.

I did not know what the gulp valve gulps, nor did I care to know, since it would likely be messy and dangerous, but I figured to buy a new one and install it myself. One look at the shop manual and I decided to have someone else install it (see Law of Cryptic Instructions given last month.)

While driving the car to the local repair establishment, I noticed that the engine was performing just as well as it ever did, and that the loss of the mysterious gulp valve had not had any effect on its behavior. I chalked this up to the Non-Functional Attributes Law, which meant that the gulp valve probably wasn't gulping anything anyway, and decided not to replace it after all.

Three days later the engine had no more oil in it and promptly seized into a solid mass of metal. The tow truck operator, being ignorant of the Love of Hardship Law, offered to take the MGB off my hands for \$100.00. I just smiled and stared off into space.

Left Over Parts

The next GoF-West will be in Monterey, July 5-9. If you have any interests in going make reservations now. Hotel space is limited and you can always cancel. The editor, and the rest of the GoF crew have reservation and registration information. It is not clear who will be going in '98 but I am sure several people will make the drive. Highway 50 across Nevada will likely be the route and the loneliest road in the country is a great MG road. The towns are full of interesting shops and characters and the prices are right. GoF West is the annual gathering of MG T-series owners, but all MG owners are welcome. '98 will be the 26th event. The '99 GoF will be in Vancouver. British Columbia, Canada. I am sure this will be a popular event, so get those cars ready.

Anybody know when the VTR convention and Triumphest are scheduled?

Many thanks again to Jim "Pugs" Pivrotto for copying the December newsletter.

Timing on the newsletters 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. December was certainly late, but we hope January makes it out on time. Since the Pot-Luck is early in February, we definitely need to get that one out early. Just as insurance, the February event will be the annual Pot-Luck Dinner and Business Meeting. It will be held at *St. Mark's Cathedral, 231 East 100 South, in Salt Lake, beginning at 6:00 on Saturday February 7*. Mark and Karen Bradakis will keep a list of who is bringing what, so we don't end up with all mashed potatoes and no ice cream. Give them a call at 801-364-3251 to let them know that you will be bringing. We definitely would like each person or couple to bring something for the dinner. If your cooking skills are poor, we can always use soft drinks, rolls, ice cream, paper plates and such. Bring enough for at least eight people. Also bring along photos, videos,

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. Call Bill Van Moorhem, 801-582-9223, for info.

February 7. Pot Luck Dinner.

June 20. British Field Day.

July 5-9. GoF West in Monterey, CA.

July 8-12. 7th Annual North American MGB Register Convention. Hagerstown, MD.

September 4-7. The Annual Steamboat Springs Vintage Race.

slides or whatever of your car(s) and other British cars.

More on Grill Badges!! We are slowly progressing on grill badges. We are getting some copies of the grill badge logo to send out for bids.

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.

Want to get involved in running the BMCU? The annual business meeting will be part of the Pot-Luck Dinner on February 7. At that meeting we will elect the Board of Governors for 1998. To be on the ballot as a potential board member, you need to be nominated at the meeting. You may nominate yourself or anyone else. Board members make any decisions that the BMCU needs during the year, since the February meeting is the only business meeting of the year. This position normally requires talking on the phone a couple of

mes during the year, not too much hardship, but the pay isn't great either. Also we will be pleased to accept volunteers for nearly anything that needs to be done.

The Editor has been reading a book about the history of MG, *MG: The Untold Story* by David Knowles. There are many, many books that tell the history of MG from the early days in the 20's to the closing of the Abingdon plant in 1980. Most are somewhat superficial and most of these books seem to tell the same story. Knowles' book is clearly different. It follows the history of MG from the Morris Garages days to the '90's, but is full of comments that had to be collected from people that worked at Abingdon, or the earlier plants. Because of this, the prewar days are not described in the detail of the post-war era, but if you want to know what was going on at Abingdon following the Second World War, I have seen nothing that describes it better. There are photos of many of the prototypes that were investigated and led to the MGA, MGB, MGC and Midget and were proposed to replace them. It includes details of the corporate infighting that was occurring and the story of the attempt by a group to purchase the MG name and Abingdon plant as it was about to be closed. Want to know why and how the

black bumpers were designed and by whom? Knowles tells you. Quite an interesting book, but mainly for the person who is familiar with MG history and wants to know more. The book is available from Classic Motor Books, 1-800-826-6600, for \$39.95.

Did you know that you can use old Utah license plates on your car? Most people use plates corresponding to the year that the car was manufactured. This procedure replaces current plates, not Horseless Carriage, Vintage or whatever plates. The fees have to be paid annually but there is no limit on the usage of the car. Interested? Where can you get 1957 Utah plates for your MGA? There are many dealers who sell old, used license plates. The best known in Utah seems to be John Dodge, 1421 North 640 West, West Bountiful, 801-298-0562. Give him a call. Having seen some of his collection, I bet he has what you need. Take note that the plates have to be in good condition and I don't believe they can be refinished. Be sure that the plates will be acceptable to the state Tax Commission before buying them.

As a footnote, John told me that there were two years when Utah did not have front licenses. One was 1952—check out the editor's TD. I can't recall what the other year was. Anybody know?

Hint for the Month

There are many jokes about the Lucas electrics and how everything that was produced by Lucas is worthless. But Lucas got one thing very, very right: the color coding used on car wiring. This scheme clearly indicates the function of a wire by the main wire color:

Brown: Battery and generator circuit
White: Ignition circuit
Blue: Headlights
Red: Side and tail lights
Green: Ancillary circuits fed through the ignition switch, but protected by a fuse.
Purple: Ancillary circuits NOT wired through the ignition switch, but protected by a fuse.
Black: Earth (ground) connections.

Tracer colors are used to differentiate wires of the same basic color.

Wires in these colors can be obtained from parts dealers, although purple can be a bit hard to find. If you must replace a wire, using the original color will save you problems in the future. Wires with tracer colors on them are difficult, if not impossible to find. I add a piece of colored electrical tape or a permanent felt tip pen mark on both ends of any wire I replace to indicate the tracer color. When I have to reinstall a fender and go to hook up the wiring, it is then clear that the red with white wires should be connected together, and the black wires and so forth. Lucas really did get this right, but then my turn signal switch never has worked right, ...





From the Exchequer

Balance as of 11/25/97	\$1704.89
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Board of Governors: Mark Bradakis, Governor General; Joe Martinez, 255-8326; Bill Davis, 364-1816; Marty Van Nood.

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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.

Happy
New Year!

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