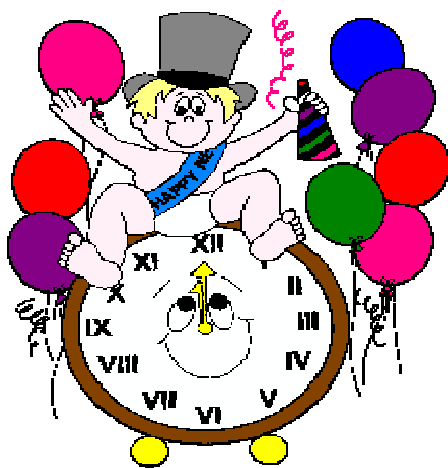


# British Motor Club of Utah

www.britishmotorclub.org

JANUARY 2006

Volume 18 Number 4



## A New Year's Message From Your Board of Governors

As we enter a new year, it's appropriate to pause and give thanks to all the volunteers who helped make 2005 a great year for the British Motor Club of Utah.

Special recognition goes to all those who led events or played Concert Master to some event's Music Director. These include: Mark Bradakis, Larry Bishop, Mary Bishop, Suzanne Bishop, Ben Chou, Joe Chou, Bill Davis, Larry Farrington, Rob Green, John Hermance, Floyd Inman, Mitch Johnson, Duff Lawson, Nathan Massie, Dave Maxwell, Clayton Merchant, Diane Pivrotto, John Progress, and Bruce Schilling — plus many other Unsung Hero(ine)s too numerous to list!

I add my personal gratitude for the Governors who have loyally served the General this year: Larry Bishop, Floyd Inman, Mitch Johnson, Pugs Pivrotto, Bruce Schilling, and Marty Van Nood.  
—Gary Lindstrom

## All You'll Need To Know About British Electrical Systems, or J. Jennings Explains "The Prince of Darkness"

This long awaited tech session will be a joint event with the Wasatch Mountain Jaguar Register. J. Jennings (known as Jay) will cover basics of electricity (e.g., whether smoke is carried by the positive or negative lead), the Lucas color code system (shades of grey), common failure points, troubleshooting, and good maintenance practices.

The venue will be the Jennings place of business, Therm Pro, 280 W. Plymouth Ave., So. Salt Lake City, UT 84115, phone 268-9658. Plymouth Avenue is the first east-west street north of 39th South. Approach on Third West.

Make note of the date and time: *Saturday, January 28 at 3pm*, which are different than originally planned (hey, it's all about Lucas, right?).

## Body Shop 101 by Dave Maxwell

Once again there was a fine turn out for Dave Maxwell's tech session on November 19 about body fillers and preparation for painting. Dave covered the proper way to mix and apply body fillers, the correct grit of abrasives to use,

helpful tools, and the surface preparation for primer application. The gremlins turn out to be pin holes and fish eyes, as well as improper abrasive grits. Lots of helpful advice was dispensed, with emphasis on techniques for part time amateurs, as opposed to professionals focused on speed. Demos were performed on pieces from Bob Jahnke's new TR3, which has an interesting history to tell, as revealed by 40-grit archeology. Along the way many questions were answered, both on the day's subject, and on properties, advantages and disadvantages of modern paint systems.

Benefiting from this Vo Tech event were Gary Lindstrom, Brian Elkins, Mark Hoffman, Al Gordon, Dave Maxwell, Roger Dotson, John Progress, Marty Van Nood, Jon Her-



mance, Bob Jahnke, Michael Scoggins, Larry Farrington, Barry Blackett, Allen Brown, Bob Wiseman, Bill McCallum, Lee Brown, and Larry Bishop, plus two others, whose names we couldn't decypher on the sign up sheet: Chris and Ken.

## What Is It About British Cars?

*The English Patient*, by Gary Anderson -  
- *Sports Car Market Magazine*, July 2005

At any car gathering, start the British car jokes and everyone can chime in with at least one favorite: Should you get a termite inspection before buying one? It's not leaking oil, it's marking its territory. If Lucas had made weapons, wars would never have started. We could go on here for many more column inches.

But if British cars are the butt of so many jokes, why would anyone actually want to own one? This is certainly a fair question. And it begs the larger question that

goes to the heart of the collector car hobby: Why does anyone bother owning and driving *any* car made before on-board diagnostics, airbags, crumple zones, and catalytic converters became part of our vocabulary? I can think of two good reasons, and both apply to old cars of any nationality. First and foremost, driving a classic car is about recapturing our youth and realizing adolescent dreams.

Many SCMerS were born soon after World War II, and developed their tastes in cars during the '50s and '60s. At the age when we completed the rite

of passage that was our driver's license test, some of us were in the enviable position of driving one of the cool cars that established us at the top of the teen-age pecking order. Others wound up in the family's hand-me-down station wagon. Either way, each of us has a special fondness for one or two cars from that formative period.

— continued on p. 3

## Interesting Things That No One Cares About:

### The Word "Gringo"

The rather improbable saga of the origins of the word "gringo" has it that the term began during the Mexican-American War (1846-48), when Mexicans supposedly overheard American soldiers continually singing either "[Green Grow the Lillacs](#)" or "[Green Grow the Rushes, O](#)" (a song based upon a Robert Burns poem). The Spanish-speaking Mexicans began referring derisively to the Americans as "green grows" (rendered phonetically in Spanish as gringos), which soon became a pejorative Spanish-language term for "foreigners" (particularly Americans).

Other versions of this etymological legend attribute the singing to Irish Legion volunteers serving in Simon Bolivar's army during [Venezuela's](#) war for independence from Spain in the early 19th century, "cowboys in south Texas," or American troops attempting to track down [Pancho Villa](#) in Mexico in 1916-17.

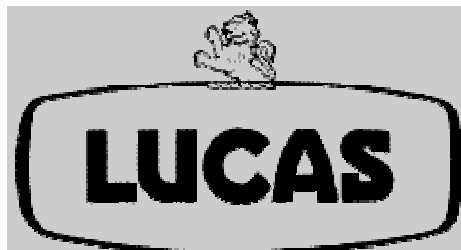
All of these charming explanations have chronology working against them. Although the first recorded use of "gringo" in English dates from 1849 (when John Woodhouse Audubon, the son of the famous nature artist, wrote that "We were hooted and shouted at as we passed through, and called "Gringoes"), the word was known in Spanish well before

the Mexican-American War. According to Rawson, the *Diccionario Castellano* of 1787 noted that in Malaga "foreigners who have a certain type of accent which keeps them from speaking Spanish easily and naturally" were referred to as gringos, and the same term was used in Madrid, particularly for the Irish.

The true origin of gringo is most likely that it came from griego, the Spanish word for "Greek." In Spanish, as in English, something difficult or impossible to understand is referred to as being Greek: We say "It's Greek to me," just as in Spanish an incomprehensible person is said to hablar en griego (i.e., "speak in Greek"). The English version of the proverb shows up in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (1599), when Casca, one of the conspirators against Caesar, proclaims:

Nay, an I tell you that, I'll ne'er look you i' the face again; but those that understood him smiled at one another and shook their heads; but for mine own part, it was Greek to me.

The same phrase was also used (at about the same time) by another Elizabethan playwright, Thomas Dekker, but its origins are much older: it comes from the Medieval Latin proverb



### *The Lucas Calendar*

This calendar works about as well as its namesake, so use it with care. All events are subject to change. Check our web site for the latest information.

**January 28, 2006, 3pm:** Tech Session: J Jennings Explains Lucas — See article Page 1

**February, 2006:** Annual Pot Luck and Business Meeting

Graecum est; non potest legi (i.e., "It is Greek; it cannot be read"). It is certainly possible (and even likely) that the Mexican-American War precipitated the introduction of the Spanish word gringo into the English language, but the word itself antedates that conflict by at least sixty years and had nothing to do with singing soldiers, American or otherwise.



Must Be California! ! !

— continued from p. 2

It might be a car that made us feel everything was possible. Or perhaps it's a car that we thought would convince a special girl to go with us to the prom. Whatever memories or dreams it rekindles, owning that car now is a means to reach out and touch our past.

The second reason is that a classic car can turn our garage into a time machine. Just by picking up a wrench or test light, we can escape the 21st century and go back to a simpler time that had clearly understood rules and relationships.

Twist the distributor of an MGB with the car running, and a stuttering exhaust can be turned into a sweet, smooth chord. Flick a toggle switch on an E-type, and the electrical current can be followed the length of a wire, from component to component, with a simple bulb and two wire leads. In those predictable mechanical and electrical relationships, we can make a tangible connection to a period when right and wrong, good and evil, seemed as easy to understand as a timing adjustment or an electrical circuit. I can imagine you nodding your head in agreement, though still wondering, "Why British?"

A love of British cars usually grows out

of a wish to connect to a culture and history that is different from, though closely intertwined with, our own. British cars, more than Italian, German or Japanese, are our excuse to appreciate the wisdom of the statement, "We are two cultures separated by a common language."

While it's good fun to pepper our conversation with words like "boot," "bonnet," "gudgeon pin," "baulking ring," and "spanner," owning a British car also makes a statement about us as individuals. In our high school days, we might not have been first to be chosen for gym class football games and probably didn't date the cheerleaders. We didn't hang out on the side of the parking lot with the owners of hot rods or muscle cars, guys who had packs of Camels tucked into rolled-up T-shirt sleeves. Instead, we sought out our own kind among the MGA and Triumph owners, the skeptics and non-conformists of that era, and are still happiest among this group.

In counting the ways that we appreciate our Jensens, MGs and other British cars, we never forget the satisfaction that comes from surmounting adversity. We're willing to endure wet knees and

## Autojumble

MGB Hard top for sale, contact Mark Brada-kis, 801-364-3251.

Looking for a 15" rim for a 52 MG-TD.

Contact Bob @ 882-7974 or e-mail bobbyv52@msn.com<mailto:bobbyv52@msn.com>

1977 MG Midget \$1750.00 Starts but stuck in gear. Have done a lot of work but lots left. has new tires, new shocks, rebuilt carb, new springs, new tranie master cylinder and more. Hard Top also available extra. email: [cougarmark@olsen.org](mailto:cougarmark@olsen.org)

cold ears in our Bug Eyes if the weather turns bad. We're confident that a smart rap on the bulkhead behind the seat of our Healey 3000's will spur a recalcitrant fuel pump back into action. We know we can drive all day long in our Morgans, seated just two inches above a plywood floorboard mounted on a suspension system that was invented by the Celts. And we're proud of our achievement when we actually reach our destination.

But at a deeper level, our love of British cars grows out of an appreciation for the traditions and lifestyle of England.

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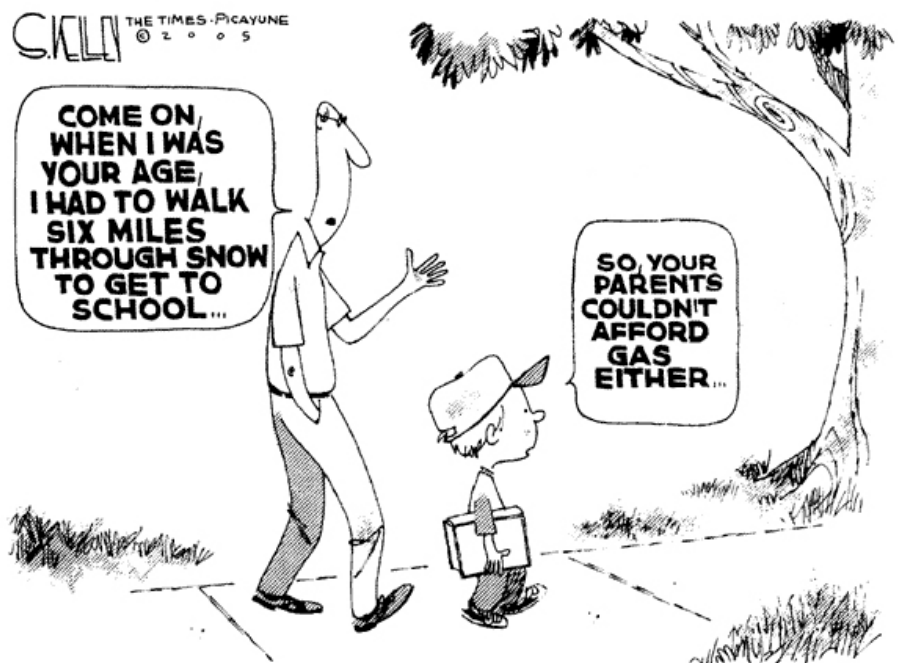
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— continued from p. 3

Our cars came from a country that survived a first world war that stole its best and brightest, and a second that devastated its major cities and pushed its population into underground shelters, night after siren-wailing night.

Yes, it's a culture that occasionally suffered from a curmudgeonly refusal to fully embrace the industrial age it invented. But it's also one that found strength in its history, its small villages with centuries-old stone walls, its stoic stiff-upper-lip attitude, and its heroes. Every time we slide behind the banjo-spoke wheel, pull on the string-back gloves, tighten the soft cap on our head, pull out the choke and push the starter button on an XK 120, we become viscerally linked to Sterling Moss, Jimmy Clark, Graham Hill, Pat Moss, and the Morley twins in their D-type, Healeys, Minis, and Cortinas.

Our car may have a smell of moldy carpet, old leather, burned Castrol, and leaking radiator fluid. Or it may be as fresh and shiny as a complete restoration can

## Exchequer Report

As of December 26, 2005

Beginning balance  
(from last report) **\$1,767.88**

### Income:

Interest	\$ .37
	<b>\$1,768.25</b>

### Expenses:

Newsletter Expense	\$ 379.00
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Ending balance	<b>\$1,389.25</b>
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make it. But underneath the walnut, wool and leather hides, and behind the anemic headlamps, there is a history and tradition with which we identify as we steer down our favorite back roads, tweed cap firmly affixed, spare can of oil tucked into the boot and a few extra fuses tossed into the glovebox for good measure.

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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 to Bruce's email address shown above. Check us out on the web!

[www.britishmotorclub.org](http://www.britishmotorclub.org)

## British Motor Club of Utah

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