



Bonnet To Boot

Paradise British Car Club



March/April 2021 Issue

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March/April News

The big news is that Covid restrictions are diminishing. Santa Barbara County has moved to the Orange Tier and hopefully SLO County will soon move to the Orange as well. This is important to us as it should allow us to do more together as a club. Hurray!

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Upcoming Events:

- 4/24 Pozo Run Paradise British Car Club Drive
- 5/28-30 West Coast Kustoms Santa Maria Car Show

Pozo Run This Saturday!

We will gather at the Doughnut and Madonna as is our custom-- we have built in a sufficient layover at Madonna, for a "refreshment" stop and a little tire kicking. Likely stop at the Santa Margarita park as well as its convenient, then head on to POZO. After lunch etc.-- circle back through the country side on River Road and back to SLO with the same stop option(s).

SM. Gather at the Doughnut, Clark and Bradley--9:45 depart for SLO
SLO: Gather--10:45
Depart for POZO 11:30

Note-- if you want to join the drive from North of the Grade you can connect with us at the Santa Margarita exit car pool lot-- or the Santa Margarita park.

The drive is of course dependent upon the weather!

No RSVP is required however if you would like to let event coordinator Ken Palmer at kencaroldpalmer@sbcglobal.net it will help with planning.

SAVE THESE DATES!

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2021

Once again the Trilogy, Monarch Dunes Car Show will take place on the golf course with "selected" vehicles on display. The show is by invitation and about 100 cars have been invited to return this year. The organizers are hoping for 150-200 cars so if you are interested in displaying your classic car you must apply by sending photos of your car to the "selection committee" for a decision to be made regarding whether your car can be shown. The entry fee is \$35.00 and all proceeds this year go the Food Basket, a non profit food program for the needy in the Nipomo area. It would be a great advertisement for our club to have several of our cars in the show. Please consider entering. There is no charge to the public for admission. The event runs 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

SUNDAY, October 3, 2021

The 30th Annual British Car Show sponsored by the Central Coast British Car Club has been cancelled for this Summer due to Covid **BUT** has been re-scheduled for the Fall. Mark your calendar now for **Sunday, October 3rd**.

This club puts on a great show, held on the grass at the Oxnard Harbor Park, right next to the harbor. There are always food trucks at the site and there are also restaurants and shops nearby within a few hundred yards walking distance. The location, in Ventura County is close enough to bring many beautiful cars up from the L.A. area as well as points north in Santa Barbara Co.

Members of our club have visited this show on numerous occasions and it is always nice to support another regional British club in our area with our attendance. There are hotels in the area if you want to drive down the night before, or it's necessary to be on the road by 6:00 A.M. for about a two-hour drive to get to the location, and park by the time the show starts at 9:00 A.M.

They have great T-shirts for sale and have always had nice award trophies for the popular vote show. Plan on attending!

From Event Chair Ken Palmer

The Club Board recently probably Club events for the remainder of 2021. A quick summary-- details to follow: Aug. Queens English, VanNuys, and summer party here at home. Sept. Monarch Dunes Car Show, Oct: British Car Show-- Channel Islands. Nov. Cambria Scare crow festival. Dec. Christmas party.-- January annual Business meeting.

You will note that May June and July are "unscheduled". In other words we are out of Ideas! Any thoughts, suggestions-- or better yet anyone who would coordinate/arrange some sort of get together/drive for us.

We have had good turn outs and good fun under difficult circumstances these last few months--- with the promise of more fun down the road. Send a note or give me a call (805-544-6516) with your thoughts.

Cheers, Ken

Technical Help

Is there a source for technical assistance for your particular marque? I ask because I've received a lot of help with various challenges that I have faced will working on my E-Type this past year from member of the Jag-Lovers forum and hopefully there are similar sources for the other marques as well. If you are aware of any of those resources please email them to me at abcycling@aol.com so that I can pass the info along!

THE STORY OF EARL (this time with photos!)

1961 Morris Minor 2 Door Saloon

By Keith Smith

PART 1

This is the story of the restoration (or more correctly the rebuilding) of our 1961 Morris Minor. This is a fairly long story because the rebuilding has been taking place for about 3 years and a lot of modifications to the car have been done.

The story starts at Engine Tech, a machine shop in Santa Maria. I was having an engine rebuilt for the Bug Eye Sprite. When I entered the shop, Ron and Curtis were glued to the desktop computer watching a video of a modified Mini Cooper. The engine in the Mini was an original block but had been machined to accept a cylinder head from a BMW K1200 (a twin overhead cam, 4 valve per cylinder motorcycle). The result was a Mini Cooper with about 130 horsepower.



I thought about that modified engine while completing the rebuild of the Bug Eye engine. I measured and remeasured the dimensions of the twin cam engine (from pictures on the internet), but it would not fit under the hood of the Bug Eye due to the additional height of the overhead cams. But, Hey, the Morris Minor has the same engine and there is plenty of room under the hood. The idea of building a 1275 cc A series engine with a twin cam head and installing it in a Morris Minor was born!

I started searching the internet for a 1275 cc A series engine and found one in Modesto. More searching on the internet revealed that a company in England named Component Specialists makes and puts together a package of parts to make the mating of the BMC block and BMW head much easier. (The guy that actually figured out the parts and modifications needed to mate the two units lives in Seattle, WA). Component Specialists makes a much more refined package than the original conversion, but the extent of the modifications to both the block and head are astounding. Every hole in the deck surface of the block needs to be plugged. The deck then needed to be milled flat. Then new holes were drilled for studs and water passages that match the cylinder head.

Modifications to the cylinder head include welding up and machining off the front of the head. The BMW bath chain drive to drive the cam shafts, where the uses an exposed rubber cog belt. All of the cog pulleys system were included in the Component Specialists Sounds reasonably straight forward, but at every turn, bracket, cover, brace, fluid port, etc. needed to be fabricated from scratch.



oil drain holes, utilized an oil modified head and cam drive package. some special modified or

The whole process of the engine build took about a year to complete - Mind you, my productivity since retirement has plummeted, plus the priority of the engine build ranked below fishing, vacations, visiting grand-children, and just about anything else you could think of.



Meanwhile, I started looking for a Morris Minor to install the new engine into. I found a nice candidate in Santa Barbara - a 1961 two door saloon with a fairly straight body. I borrowed Ken Palmer's car trailer and hauled it home although it probably would have made it under its own power. It turned out to be a car made for the UK market that someone imported into the US at a later date. It was right hand drive and came with slightly different lighting than export models. A quick trip around the block convinced me that a much-needed modification was a conversion to left hand drive.



As Cheryl and I would talk about the car and what modifications I planned to do, we referred to the car as the 'morris.' Since we already have the Morris Traveller, we started getting the two cars confused with each other. To remedy the situation, we named the new Morris 'Earl' because it was then painted grey. We thought of Earl Grey tea. So, the new Morris officially became known as 'Earl.'

Next, the task of totally dismantling the car began. I started removing everything that was removable and bagging and tagging all of the smaller items. It turned out that the car had been undercoated. Sandblasting doesn't do a good job of removing undercoating because the sand just bounces off of the rubberized coating. Rather than spending days laying under the car scraping and having paint remover dripping down on me, I chose to haul the Morris body down to Los Angeles and have it dipped in a caustic and then acid tank. The result was a bare metal body that I needed to haul home and immediately primer coat to prevent rusting. I spent several months cutting out and replacing numerous metal patches where rust had left the areas looking like a doily.

The front subframe was riddled with holes and had to be replaced. Next came some major modifications to the suspension. The original front suspension on a Morris of a torsion bar sprung lower swing arm with a radius rod upper swing arm that also functions as a damper. The suspension geometry is not adjustable, plus, for decent handling, is over-sprung with not enough shock absorption. A company in England makes a coil over conversion kit, so I torched off the front suspension, and replaced it with modern components. I also installed adjustable tubular shocks in the rear. After all of the weld repairs and modifications were made, I made a corner of our garage into a paint booth. I then



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proceeded to undercoat, prime, and paint the underside of the car, backside of the removable body panels, the door jambs, engine bay, and interior of the car.



I then made arrangements with a painter in Visalia and hauled Earl to the paint shop. While the body was gone, I took the opportunity to sort through my piles of parts and organize them into groups that 1) needed zinc plating (bolts, nuts, washers, and small brackets), 2) needed to be powder coated (rear diff, motor mounts, wheels, and large brackets), or 3) needed to be cleaned, straightened, and spray painted (body color, black, or silver). I also took the time to rebuild and modify a Datsun 5 speed transmission to mount to the new engine. A fully synchromesh 5 speed (overdrive 5th gear) makes the car a lot nicer for a highway cruiser.

All of the small items (heater, wiper motor, etc.) were dismantled, cleaned, and re-assembled. Ready to pick up and haul the car back from the painter. Now, the reassembly begins. It's fun bolting on all those nice, shiny, clean parts. Since the engine will have close to three times the original power, upgrading the brakes seemed necessary - Oh Boy- more time standing in front of the lathe making more adapters - Wilwood calipers in the front and Nissan disc brakes in the rear (not Wilwood in the rear because I needed an integral emergency brake in the rear). Also, since the rear axles were marginal for their original use, and upgrade was needed - new forged steel axles, plus double bearing hubs to hold everything in place. Next, a brake booster was installed since disc brakes require higher hydraulic pressure and I don't want too high of pedal pressure - This change caused additional problems unknown until engine tuning began - more details ahead.

Do We Want to Host "North/South Meet" in 2022?

As your "activities" guy, the board asked me to send out a note regarding the desirability/feasibility of hosting a North/South meet in 2022. As I expect many of you remember, we hosted such an event for number of years, every other year. Historically the "event" has been held on a weekend-- with the club hosting a welcome Fri evening, a car show and rally/drive Sat. and an awards banquet Sat. night. Although it began life in the 70s as an MG affair it has been an all British get together for 30+ years.

The last meet we hosted was 2016 with the host hotel being the Sea Crest, and the car show Biddle Park. We planned a 2018 meet but as a result of host Hotel complications', timing, and a shortfall of "organizational energy" that Fizzled out!

These get togethers were always very popular-- typically with 100 plus cars representing the full Brit car spectrum. They were good fun, but also required a substantial time and effort commitment in planning and execution. If we are to do some sort of get to gather on this scale in 2022, we would need to start the planning process this spring, and we would need half dozen people to assume various planning responsibilities and commit to shepherding the event (what ever form it may take) to fruition. Then, the "event" itself would require additional people power for the nuts and bolts---, registration, any hosted events, car show etc. etc etc.

Soooo--we would like to get:

1. A sense of the clubs interest in exploring some version of a 2022 event.
2. Response from those of you who would consider committing to the time and effort required for planning and execution if we move ahead.

Feedback? Send a note to Jim or me, call, or corner us, or any of the board members when you see us.



WHAT'S IN YOUR TANK?

Bob Ikola and Jim Bull

Forget about the credit card commercial which asks the question; "What's in your wallet"? For owners of old collector cars, the correct question to ask is, "What's in your tank?"

Jim recently purchased a British "rescue" vehicle or commonly called a "barn find" (a 1959 Austin A-55 saloon) which had not been driven for 43 years.

Jim's friend, MGB owner and mechanic extraordinaire, Bob Ikola, volunteered to help get this car running again and some severe problems on this vehicle were discovered which relate to old fuel and the new ethanol fuels now in use in the U.S.. For the benefit of our club members we are happy to share our findings.

JIM'S RESEARCH:

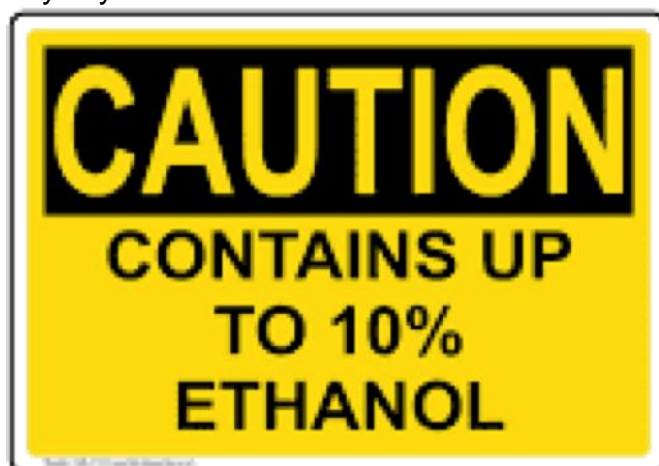
Ninety-seven percent of all gasoline sold today in the U.S. contains an organic chemical compound called ETHANOL, which is what chemists call a "simple" alcohol. Ethanol is, of course, flammable and volatile, and is placed into our gasoline as the cheapest form of a non-petroleum product used as a gasoline additive and is considered a "renewable energy resource."

It is currently used in the U.S. at a 10%-15% ratio in gasoline but was used as a 100% bio-fuel for the first time in 1978 to operate a Fiat in Brazil. Brazil uses the highest level of flex fuel vehicles in the world, which can operate at 75-100% non-petroleum fueled vehicles.

ETHANOL is produced in a fermentation process which converts simple sugars such as glucose, fructose, and sucrose into ethanol via a yeast process known as ethylene hydration. Ethanol has other uses besides a gas additive, such as an antiseptic, disinfectants, and other chemical uses.

Ethanol, as used in gasoline, is also called ethyl alcohol, grain alcohol, or drinking alcohol. Yep, this is the old "rot gut", "moon shine" stuff of prohibition days, with the majority of fuel based ethanol being produced from corn, i.e. "corn mash"! Ethanol used for gasoline has an additive placed into it to make it unfit for use as a beverage or in a beverage!

Organic substances grown for ethanol production include hemp, corn, potatoes, cassava, and sugarcane. What's cassava anyway?



It takes one bushel of corn to produce 2.8 gallons of ethanol fuel. Ethanol is now blended into 97% of all gasoline used in the U.S. and it constitutes 10% of our total fuel supply. The ethanol industry has had a 370% growth in the past 30 years.

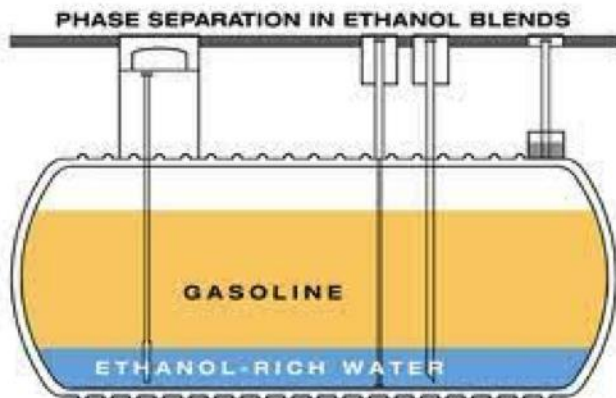
Last year ethanol displaced 462 million barrels of oil, which is more oil than we imported from Saudi Arabia, and which added 44 billion dollars to our economy.

Wow-that's pretty amazing, so what's bad about ethanol? Well, ethanol has increased the price of food, but that's not really the point of this article. The point for collectors of old cars is that ethanol has the ability to form hydrogen bonds with water. That's bad!

BOB'S RESEARCH:

A 10% blend of ethanol in modern gasoline will allow 3.8 teaspoons of water per gallon to be

absorbed before it begins to separate out. At this point it will “puddle” in your fuel delivery system causing rust inside a steel tank. It actually causes rust before separation but not as bad.



This water will not evaporate easily because it is generally not exposed to air as it is surrounded by the gasoline. This means a steel tank in an older classic car will rust from the inside out before you know what is happening.

Your steel fuel lines will also rust from the inside out with our current fuels because of water absorbed into gasoline as a result of added ethanol.

The problem is worse for a “collector” of old cars because the ethanol based fuel starts to “go bad” after only 30-45 days. Old gas has more time to absorb water and reach full saturation and a partially filled tank provides a larger supply of water from the greater amount of air within the tank.

Older pre smog cars also had an “open” to the atmosphere fuel system known as a vented system.

Today, modern cars have a closed system to prevent gasoline vapors from entering the air outside the vehicle system. If you leave your gas cap off after filling your tank and you fail to notice the warning light on your dash telling you to “check” your system, the computer will require after a certain time period that you take your vehicle in for service to have the computer system re-set. This could cost you over \$100.00! Don’t leave the gas cap off your modern car when you fill up!

Modern cars today use stainless steel fuel tanks or have plastic tanks capable of withstanding damage from ethanol based fuels. Fuel lines are stainless also, thus modern cars don’t have rust related issues from ethanol. Replacement fuel lines are copper nickel unless you purchase a pre bent factory replacement fuel line.

Old vehicle hobbyists know that bending a modern stainless fuel line replacement is nearly impossible unless you obtain an expensive special bending tool.

Moss Motors, as well as other vendors, sell copper-nickel fuel replacement lines. These lines are DOT (U.S. Dept. of Transportation) approved so you know they are safe. Old style steel fuel lines are no longer approved or considered safe with modern fuels.

The danger here is, of course, that rust inside fuel lines cannot be inspected and inspecting your tank takes some real work.

It is interesting that old cars never had much fuel related problems because fuel lacked ethanol and fuel did not absorb water as it now does.

Solutions for the “ethanol problem” might exist for some “lucky” car collectors. MGB owners for example, own a vehicle with over a half million copies manufactured. Replacement fuel tanks are available from Moss Motors, which has the factory “original” style tank, an extended range “touring” tank with greater capacity, and a stainless model. Cars with large production numbers may have a replacement tank available for purchase.

Owners of more rare vehicles may have NO OPTION to purchase a re-manufactured fuel tank for your classic car.



SUGGESTIONS FOR OWNERS OF CLASSIC CARS:

Here are a few suggestions for the classic car collector faced with ethanol fuel issues:

- 1) If you only drive your classic car in the Spring, Summer and Fall, DRAIN the tank when you place your vehicle into long term storage.
- 2) Remove your original steel tank, remove the sending unit, and inspect the tank for rust. Clean with a tank cleaning compound and possibly treat with a coating to prevent further rust damage. Moss Motors has products available to clean, etch, and coat your tank.
- 3) Replace old and original steel fuel lines with new copper-nickel fuel lines.
- 4) Be sure to install the best quality fuel filter in your classic vehicle. A "billet" style filter can be disassembled for cleaning and contains a metal screen, rather than a filament, which will allow you see rust particles or debris in your fuel supply.
- 5) Use fuel additives: Moss Motors has the below listed products or a neighborhood auto parts store may carry such products.

Suggested options include:

Store-N-Start, an additive which prevents deposits from forming in fuel lines and carburetors.

E-ZORB, emulsifies water in your fuel tank and mixes water and ethanol back into the fuel.

PEP, a fuel treatment formulated to prevent sludge, resin deposits, and gum from forming in your fuel system.

WATER PROBE INDICATOR, using a dip stick which will pass all the way to the bottom of your tank you apply the indicator to the tip of the probe. The Indicator will turn red to show the level of water in your tank.

While on gas additives one more comment would be in order. Modern 87 octane fuel is not

recommended for old British cars. They won't run on that stuff. Sports cars especially were manufactured with higher compression engines than the sedan, oops, "saloon" counterparts in the British car industry.

It was common in the '60's to have 10 to 1 compression ratios and these cars were made to operate on high octane fuel, which was available in the 100+ octane range at that time. A 91 octane fuel is all that is available now but should not be used in our old cars.

Your car may not run as well as it should even on 91 octane. An "octane booster" may help. Don't purchase a bottle that simply says "Octane Booster" on the label because you don't know what you are buying. Purchase a product either called "104 Octane Boost" or "108 Octane Boost", both by the same company.

Yes, it's more expensive for fuel and the additive but these cars are only Sunday drivers anyway and worth a little expense to have them run the way they were meant to run.





PRETTY AS A PEACOCK

Wednesday, March 31st was our monthly outing for March and it has received a “four star” rating out of five! How does a club event get a star? Well, if we travel in our old classic cars on a real scenic rural road that constitutes a star. We always try to do this. Both the San Luis Obispo Co. group and the Santa Barbara Co. group stayed on the less travelled two lane roads to our destination and in busy and populated California that is not always easy to do.



Second, we always have a meal planned during an outing, so we are guaranteed at least a one star rating for any given month! As has been our Covid practice we brought our own picnic lunch. The facility had at least a dozen nice, clean picnic tables with accompanying umbrellas for us at no charge, right next to a green oak studded hill and this definitely qualifies for the meal star category.

Third, time spent with friends new and old provides another star. Some of our events, such as guided tours and the like don't always guarantee us time for visiting and socialization. Everyone had such a good time visiting that they didn't seem to want to leave. Good socialization time at an event causes people to enjoy themselves, hence our



third star.

A fourth star is not easy for our club to provide because the fourth star is the weather. We can't always guarantee a perfect weather day but this outing was really great for open car driving, outside dining, and visiting. Fourth star.



What constitutes a “fifth star”? Well, that has to be a very special event, such as an over nighter, or to a special location, such as the Peterson Automotive Museum, or for vintage racing, something like that. We don’t always have a five star event, but then who does?

The Peacock Cellar location in Arroyo Grande provided us with plenty of parking and we were able to park our cars together, which is always nice for a group car photo. Wow, we had cars of several decades of vintages represented, with many makes and models, and of all shapes, sizes, and colors. We had old cars

such as a Morris 8 delivery van from the early '30's, a MG TA of about the same vintage, all the way up to a newer Mini and lots of '50's, 60's, '70's in between. a

This family run business has a nice gift shop with a variety of items, even antiques. They had some nice season items for Easter and a lot of patriotic items as well.

