



# Smoke in the Wires

## Monthly Musings of the Panhandle British Car Association

July is here. We're halfway through the year already. Can you believe that next month begins the *Brits on the Bay* planning cycle anew? Despite the quiet of the summer, there is always something in the works.

As I write this, I find myself out on the road making our yearly pilgrimage to see our family, which involves driving two days to Nebraska. Although it is great to see everyone, I have to admit that my mind wanders to what I could be doing on my car, motorcycle, or the myriad other projects I have if only we'd opted for a "staycation". My wife puts a stop to that by mentioning the garage cleaning I could have accomplished if we had stayed home. Even so, time away from a project is not a bad thing. In my case, it lets me look at the way ahead and readjust priorities and the order of attack. I am still restoring subassemblies for the Jaguar before taking on the block rebuild or the frame/firewall repaint. I may move up the block reassembly and engine build up, but I don't want a dry engine hanging around for long and developing leaks. Likewise, I'm loath to paint and bolt together the frames until everything else is done. I have to confess that I really am enjoying the boon in available workspace in the garage as the Jaguar is only 2/3rds of its full length right now.

Further in to this edition of *Smoke in the Wires*, you'll find the write up on my home electroplating system. Getting up to speed with this has held up the Jaguar rebuild a little bit, but now I'm able to make a regular assembly line out of parts plating and am getting better with each run. I've had a zinc kit for years, and it always seemed to take a lot of work for

mediocre results. This is not so with a professional nickel and copper kit. It is transforming my firewall forward restoration.

I'm pleased to announce that this year's Christmas party will be at the Crown Plaza in Pensacola. That is located in the historic rail depot with the attached hotel, just north of the civic center. Further details and menu choices are forthcoming, but I can say that we have arranged a special \$90 rate for any members wishing to stay overnight.

Did you make it out to the July meeting at the Aloha Grill in east Gulf Breeze? Traditionally, we haven't had a July meeting, but we decided to try it but with a twist. Please let us know what you thought of the alternate meeting as we try and change things up now and then.

*Marc Cherry*

*Editor*



# MISSING THE MARQUE

This Month's *The British Line* submission for *The Marque* by Richard Lewis

## Stretching Our Sinews

PBCA has done it all. We have held rallies, picnics, pig roasts, "slow races", holiday parties, meetings, tech sessions, destination drives, chili cook offs, car shows, participation in others car show, progressive dinners—well, you get the idea. And the vast majority has been very popular and well-attended. And we intend to continue to do most of them in the future.

Because of the popularity of most of these events, we have decided to ratchet up their number and variety each month by adding some additional ideas (That's what you get when you practice democracy and let others have a voice. Whatever happened to good, old-fashioned autocratic rule, one wonders?). We have some members who seem filled with suggestions and, darn it, most of them are very good ("Now, why didn't I think of that", you may be hearing in the background).

One of our recent events has been a night on the town, initiated by Secretary Therese Hemmert. (Oh, the energy of these young whippersnappers!) We have recently gone, as a group, to some of the very fine restaurants in the Pensacola area, such as Jockos, The Melting Pot, Hemmingway's, and, last Friday night, to the Global Grill. All great restaurants selected and organized by Theresa. Suddenly, folks are clamoring for more, and we have decided to make it a monthly event.

Our chili cook off has been a hit. Why then not add a driving event that includes lunch and a pie and cake contest? Yes, a pie and cake contest! You might think this a lunatic idea, as you guess that most of our especially male members are culinarily challenged, but faith is solid that they will cleanse their hands of all that axel grease long enough to roll out that dough and add just the right amount of rhubarb to their strawberry mixture.

The dinners have been a hit, so we intend to try out an occasional breakfast. We'll have to learn whether some slugs are willing to separate from the sheets early enough to show up, but all of life is an experiment. We'll discover if the inducement of Mama's Place's Cajun cooking is strong enough for this first one.

We have also decided to enhance the quality of some of our holiday events and first on the list is our Christmas Party. Our old location is becoming a little thread-bare, so we are looking for a new venue, and some greater amenities. While our plans are still aborning, we have tossed around some ideas that sound very promising. More on that subject as events crystallize.

You see the drift. Our organization is, we are happy to report, a vigorous one that makes a great deal of difference to many of our members, and we want to keep it that way, and make it even better. We may trip and fall over a few items, but the direction is onward and upward. Like sharks, we have to keep moving in order to survive and prosper. We will do so.

That's all in the near future. Let's talk about some events of the recent past.

## Recent

June 21-Driving Tour to Sweet Home Cheese Shop and lunch at Big Daddy's. A beautiful day welcomed about ten PBCA cars gathered at the defunct Lillian Shopping Center's parking lot for a beautiful drive to the Cheese Shop, site of the most spectacular cheeses you will see in these environs. We met a few members from Marti Gras MG, but turn-out for this normally popular event was light. The drive to Big Daddy's restaurant on the Fish River was equally delightful and well worth the distance. A great event enjoyed by those who were able to show up.

July 12-What we now plan to have as a monthly event, our restaurant outings, continued with a great visit to the Global Grill in downtown Pensacola. A full crowd of about twenty-two diners enjoyed the very fine cuisine available at the Grill. Thanks to Therese Hemmert for her organizing the whole thing. What's next? News is forthcoming.

## Upcoming

July 21- 12 pm. The seventeenth annual Pig Roast gives PBCA an opportunity to return the hospitality of the Marti Gras MG and South Alabama British Car Club, as well as other friends, that is always

extended to PBCA, when the Schmitzs, at their beautiful home near Lillian, graciously host this great event. Everyone brings sides and desserts to go with the guest of honor, who arrives about 2: p.m., to general acclaim.

July 29-Hadji Temple Car Show- Registration at 8:00 a.m. and the show begins at 11:00 a.m. Numerous marques will be represented, with lots of British cars, if the past is any judge. Also, some very fine American cars will be on display. Lots of fun.

August 4- 8:00 a.m.-Breakfast at Mama's Place-6550 Caroline Street, Milton. Mama's Cajun cooking is a treat, with her Cajun potatoes extraordinaire. Get up early enough to join us as we give this a try.

August 14-6:00 p.m.-Executive Board Meeting at Sonny's on Navy Boulevard. All are invited as we continue to make future plans.

August 17- 10:00 a.m. - Driving Event, Lunch, and Pie and Cake Judging Contest. Beginning and ending at the Bagdad Museum at 4512 Church Street, a still-to-be decided course will take drivers through historic

Bagdad and down some back roads of Garcon Point and then back to the Museum for a light lunch and a pie and cake judging and eating contest. Five dollar entry fee and all proceeds will go to the Museum, which tells the history of this important 19th and 20th century industrial site, home of the largest producer of yellow pine lumber at the time. Ratchet up your baking skills for this one.

August 19- PBCA Regular Meeting- 6:00 p.m. at Sonny's on Navy Boulevard. Business and fun as usual and a good program by Tom Schmitz.

August 24-Our friends at Marti Gras MG will host a drive and lunch at the Derail Diner, I-10 and Wilcox Exit. This promises to be a great drive and lunch at a unique diner, so show up if possible. More details as they become available.

Until next month, don't mistake brake fluid for cough syrup again!

*Richard Lewis*

President

### **PBCA Officers for 2013:**

|                                |                        |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>President</b>               | <b>Richard Lewis</b>   |
| <b>Vice President</b>          | <b>Tom Matsoukas</b>   |
| <b>Vice President</b>          | <b>Marc Cherry</b>     |
| <b>Secretary</b>               | <b>Therese Hemmert</b> |
| <b>Treasurer</b>               | <b>Tom Schmitz</b>     |
| <b>Newsletter Editor</b>       | <b>Richard Lewis</b>   |
| <b>Club Regalia</b>            | <b>Mickey Kay</b>      |
| <b>Technical Advisor</b>       | <b>Mike Darby</b>      |
| <b>Webmaster</b>               | <b>Mike A. Japp</b>    |
| <b>Show Committee Chairman</b> | <b>Bob Henson</b>      |
| <b>Show Committee Chairman</b> | <b>Tom Schmitz</b>     |

*Smoke in the Wires* is a publication of the Panhandle British Car Association  
Contact Marc Cherry [redshirt98@att.net](mailto:redshirt98@att.net) for questions or submissions

## Minutes from the July 11 Executive Committee Meeting. Please review and forward commentary

### Recent Events:

Cheese Tour: not a good turn out, perhaps the reason why is because Big Daddy's is too far. New restaurant recommendation was the Derailed Diner. Turnout may not be very good because there are only so many times you can see a tiny cheese shop surrounded by chickens. Tabled until next year's calendar is created.

### Great Race:

No one from our club was able to attend. No follow-up email, but feedback was not positive.

### Upcoming Events:

Friday July 12 Global Grill Organized by T Hemmert event is fully booked.

Monday July 15 is General Meeting at Papa Nalu Aloha Grill

Sunday July 21 is annual multi club pig roast

Therese Hemmert presented new ideas for summer and fall, they were a pie and cake baking contest with a light lunch at the Bagdad Museum, dinner and movie at the Imogene Historical Theater in downtown Milton, bonfire at the Manske house.

Ideas were well received but Tom Schmitz asked how they were related to British cars and suggested adding driving routes.

### Calendar as of now:

July 27 Hadji Temple Show

August 4 Mamas in Milton for breakfast 8:00 am

August 14 Executive Meeting

August 17 Pie Cake Contest Bagdad Museum Light lunch served. Arrive at 10 in the morning for a small driving tour of Bagdad.

Dinner at Grand in Point Clear date TBA

Sept 7 Fort Walton Show

Sept 14 lunch and movie Imogene Theater Lunch starts at noon

Sept 20-21 Natchez Show

Oct 5 Ice Cream Social

Oct 10-12 Calloway Gardens

Oct 16 Exc. Meeting

Oct 19 Bonfire at Manske's 4:30

Oct 21 General Meeting

Oct 25-26 Fairhope Show

Oct 26 Marine Core Car Show

November Crab Boil Manske House Nov 15

Nov 9 Chumuckla Event

Nov 11 Exc. Meeting for car show

Nov 16 meeting for next year's calendar

Nov 23 driving event noon

\*progressive dinner on hold

\* Moving ahead with Christmas Party, new location will be Pensacola Grand Hotel. Party to be organized by T Hemmert.

Meeting adjourned

# TOOL OF THE MONTH

By Marc Cherry

## Electroplating Kit

The Jaguar's engine rebuild has suffered what we in the military call 'mission creep'. I have expanded the rebuild to include a complete refurbishment of everything on the firewall and forward. As I contemplated the front suspension finish, I realized that the only way to come close to the original finish was to metal plate the parts. With true cadmium not available, zinc not durable enough, and chrome just a little too west coast rapper, I settled on nickel plating. Nickel seems to be the most common choice among Jag restorers. As I looked around, I realized I could buy an electroplating kit for the cost of paying someone else to do the work. Not only would I keep one more job in-house, I would be able to plate scores of other items.

With this thin justification in mind, I grabbed my credit card and set to shopping the internet. The serious name in home plating and anodizing kits is Caswell. I familiarized myself with their kits to determine what type and capacity I needed. I settled on a dual kit offering 4.5 gallons of capacity in acid copper plating and nickel plating, with a special bulk degreaser. To this I added a zincating solution that would allow me to copper plate aluminum. So, why copper and nickel? What's the zincating for? In every application I had in mind, the final result was a nickel finish. The path to that finish would vary widely depending on the surface I was plating.

Primarily, nickel plates well over steel and copper pieces. The nickel solution just blackens, blotches, or destroys everything else.



Carburetor parts undergoing nickel plating during one of my first attempts.

That means everything else needs to get 'flashed' in copper first. Naturally, that isn't straight forward either. Zinc surfaces get plated directly, but aluminum and other alloys need to be dipped in a zincate solution that effectively cold galvanizes the metal. Because aluminum instantly oxidizes, this oxidation layer prevents effective plating. The act of zincating replaces the oxidation with a layer of zinc. During the copper plating process, the zinc is removed and replaced by copper, leaving the surface ready for nickel plating. Copper makes an ideal substrate for nickel by performing much as Bondo does for paint. The



**Fresh out of the plating solution. Notice that several parts are dull. This was due to poor surface preparation. Most of this batch had to be plated again. Even some of the shiny parts had to be redone as they were prone to flaking.**

copper is easily shaped and polished. The copper can be applied as a heavy plate and sanded to remove imperfections. Of course if you need to make fine repairs to steel, then you have to apply a 'strike' coat of nickel first before laying down the heavier copper plate. The final nickel plate can only be as shiny as the metal underneath. That is why all 'show chrome' or 'triple chrome' finishes have a copper layer as their base.

My shopping was done and the kit finally arrived. Quite clearly this was going to be somewhat of a storage space hog, comprising of three 5.5 gallon buckets, circulation pumps, heaters, anodes, and a sizable

volume of chemicals. To build up the kit, I needed a significant power supply and 32 ounces of battery acid. The acid is used to make the flash copper solution. Some parts of this system are very forgiving and others are not. The nickel is not too particular about the temperature, but the degreaser and the copper solution need to be pretty hot.

Copper plates best around 110 degrees F. I shopped around for my power supply and got the finest Chinese one from Amazon for a fraction of what I would have paid Caswell for a similar item. There is a significant amount of math calculations involved as you need a fairly accurate estimation of the surface area being plated in order to set the appropriate current.

Both copper and nickel plate at around 0.1 amps per square inch. Copper deposits very rapidly, achieving a suitable plate within 15 minutes for most applications.



**Victory! These are just cloudy enough to not look chromed or overdone once they are in place. This batch is ready to go back on the carburetor.**

If you run the amps too high, you get a rough finish and possibly nodules of copper forming on the surface. Nickel has to plate for 60 to 90 minutes to lay down a thickness suitable for an item that will be exposed to the elements. Plate nickel at high amps and it becomes cloudy with possible black streaks.

So far, I've been taking baby steps and building my skills on small and non-cosmetic parts before plating the suspension components.

My subjects have been the small fittings, fasteners, and brackets associated with the carburetor rebuilds. The first carb took three weeks to rebuild. This was mostly due to having to replate several parts, multiple times. I initially started by copper plating everything without realizing that copper over bare steel was a no go. The end result was a splotchy finish that flaked and peeled. By the time the second carburetor came through the rebuild process, it took only a week as I triaged my parts



better, sending only a select few through the copper process. A more meticulous degreasing and surface preparation process all but eliminated the cloudy or streaky plating. None of the parts wanted to peel. In the end, only two parts had to be replated. With any luck, the final carb will be even faster.

**The plated parts back on the carburetor (The dash pot is polished not plated). Can you spot a previous Tool of the Month here?**

So what is next? I'll continue plating larger components until I get the suspension done. I have several aluminum pieces for other projects that I want to plate, so I'll have to get proficient on zincating. Finally, I will probably add chrome plating to my kit. More correctly, I will add a process called Reprochrome. This tungsten/cobalt alloy process replicates the color, hardness, and durability of chrome with much less lethal chemicals, while using a fraction of the massive power requirements of real chrome. Watch this space for updates.