



Smoke in the Wires

Monthly Musings of the Panhandle British Car Association

HOT!

Late Breaking Event

Friend of the club, Kevin Curran of the English Motoring Club of Mississippi passed away last Sunday and is being interred at Fort Barrancas National Cemetery on October 18th. We are rendezvousing in our British cars to join other cars in the procession that morning somewhere near the Pensacola Bridge. Details are continuing to develop, so please watch your e-mail for additional information.

Once again

the fall colors season is upon us. For the second season in a row, I have no classics on the road to drive up to my favorite area of Tennessee for the dramatic scenery and twisty roads. Still, the weather is particularly nice today. I'm writing this as the Dog Days Rally is underway. I haven't made much for events at all lately and was going to do the rally. Alas, my navigator was lost to a Boy Scout service project. I'm sure it was a great event as the weather has been anything but dog days.

I actually made it out with the motorcycle for the first time since May. This was only the third time I've

driven it across the Three-Mile Bridge. As expected, it is now hard-broken once again and not likely to return to the road soon. I've had to break down and buy new carburetors as the old ones are warped, corroded, and irreparably leaky. A British carburetor



Heading out on a misadventure that's sure to end in broken equipment

that leaks fuel we expect and often tolerate when we shouldn't. Leaky of air, no one can abide with as there is no enjoyment in a vehicle that refuses to idle. The oil pressure problem continues to elude me as well. It's time to go back to worrying over the Jag.

This past week I took an online survey from Hagerty about the state of our hobby. Several questions concerned threats to our hobby and some of the more interesting choices were: declining interest among youth to include the loss of new skilled craftsman, legislation, and environmental-driven



Leak-o-matic British carburetor



changes in available materials, notably changing oil formulations. I think as we set an agenda for 2014 as a club, we do need to focus on events and approaches that promote interest in our cars and their enjoyment outside our typical red cars and blue pills demographic.

I'm not aware of any legislation intended to impact our hobby adversely, in fact, Florida does better than most in protecting classic cars. The unintended consequences of changes in fuels, coolants and oils do affect us. I will not get into the fuels issue except to say that non-blended fuels are still out there for a premium price. As for oil, that matter is still raging. It's hard to sort out the truth from the extremists. In some corners you hear tales of no impact, in others you might think that the loss of zinc in standard oil and the calamity that surely follows was predicted in the Mayan calendar. Hopefully the truth lies somewhere in-between. I can tell you that I ran Castrol 20W50 for ten not-so-gentle years in my E-Type. Guess what? The same cams are going back in because they had no wear. What does that prove? Not a thing except that an E-Type has hard enough cams and tappets to use Castrol. I'll be using a high-zinc running-in oil when I put it on the road because the benefits are proven. The end result is that our hobby continues. By that I mean that it continues to be more expensive as our cars require more and more specialized products to thrive.

Continuing the theme of new and expensive, I've decided to complete my E-Type rebuild using Evans Waterless Coolant. I won't lie, I've sunk a small fortune into the welding required to bring my aluminum head and iron block back up to scratch due to corrosion in the water galleries. In my view, the cost of waterless coolant is easily offset by the benefits gained in corrosion prevention and reduced stress on the cooling system brought on by the high boiling point of this coolant. The largely propylene and ethylene glycol content of the coolant leaves no reactive chemicals in the system to enable corrosion. With traditional coolant we have to pressurize the cooling system to artificially raise the boiling point, since boiling liquids can't convey the heat away from the engine. The waterless coolant has a boiling point of 375 degrees Fahrenheit, well beyond the normal range of our engines. In short, you could leave the cap off the radiator because the system operates at zero psi. Now that won't fix a car with real cooling system problems, the high boiling point only masks it or delays the onset of symptoms. Good attention to the gauges is essential since you won't get venting through the cap. I'll let you know how it goes.

Until next time . . .

Marc Cherry

Editor

MISSING THE MARQUE

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

"Mais ou sont les neiges d'antan?"

OK, so it's a bit obscure, but fans of the medieval poet, Francois Villon, will recall this line form the thief, convict, rogue, and magnificent vagabond poet as he asks the perennial question, "Where are the snows of yesteryear?" Indeed, where

are all those past years, dim memories, fleeting images, and half-remembered illusions we all have as we move through life, especially as we enter our September years?

And what are such ruminations doing in a sports car article, your loyal correspondent is sure

you are asking yourself now? What nerve this fellow has to quote poetry in a publication dedicated to recounting all things British motoring? YLC is coming to that. Be patient.

YLC is on his way later in the month to Road Atlanta for the 2013 Atlanta Historic Races, which, for at least part of the billing, will feature the cars from the 1950's, 60's, and 70's, cars such as the early Corvettes, Maseratis, ,Porches, Elvas, Cunningham, Ferraris, Cobras, Cooper-Climaxes and maybe even a few of the cars we could actually afford to own; the MGAs, Renaults, Hillmans, TR 4s, Singers, Sunbeams, and the likes. This event draws quite a few seasoned drivers, perhaps even some from those eras, as they compete in what we all hope will not be a do or die competition.

The mere thought of seeing these cars again in competition caused YLC to dial back to those early years when he labored mightily to come up with the gate fare at places like Sebring, Summit Point, Venice, Florida (yes, little Venice had a brief heyday of racing back in the late 40's, 50's and early 60's, held at the old airfield outside town, as were so many of the early races), and Tampa, where entry fees for racers were not astronomical as they are today, where safety equipment was rudimentary, rules far more casual, and where the whole experience had a certain amateur flavor to it, as drivers sometimes showed up in their daily transportation, tricked out for competition, with a minimum of spare parts, no pit crew, and often only one set of tires, those on the car.

That's not to suggest there were no professional drivers and high-end cars present in those halcyon days of racing. Places like Sebring and Riverside attracted drivers and cars from all over the world, with luminaries like Sterling Moss, Juan Manuel Fangio, Jack Brabham, Phil Hill, Wolfgang von Trip, and Innes Ireland competing. But usually not for princely prize monies. For example, at the 1959 United States Grand Prix, winner Bruce McLaren in his Cooper-Climax won \$6000, plus several acres of land adjoining Sebring Lake (likely swampy, as was much of the Florida land being sold at that time.)

YLC was lucky enough to have a fraternity brother working for the Tennessean Magazine during those heady times and after a bit, Norman wrangled for him a part-time job (paid for in seed corn), which allowed us both to go to some of the races as journalists. Admittedly, YLC was flying under false colors, but that little badge and a highly visible Speed Graflex got us into the paddock area, the pits, and the refreshment tents. So much better than going as another of the groundlings, peering over barricades. We were allowed to get up close to the cars, talk to the drivers, swill beer and eat sandwiches in the news tent, and wander in places where we surely had no business. It was wonderful. Still in his files, YLC has some photos he snapped of Phil Hill, Sterling Moss, and the movie star handsome Maurice Trintignant (brother to actor Jean Louis Trintignant, star of "A Man and A Woman", a great car film which features that beautiful Ford GT40). Most of YLC's photos had a certain shaky quality to them, but, for whatever reason, these are great.

Those lost days can be momentarily glimpsed again at these Historic Races, and it is a fond hope that, for a moment at least, the smell of castor oil and gasoline will waft over those remembered airfield courses and it will again be days when we thought the roar of those engines would never end.

Back to the future, and an update on recent and future happenings

Recent

August 24-Saturday-Drive and Lunch at the Derailed Diner. Tom Schmitz organized an excellent drive through great terrain from Pensacola to the Derailed Diner near Robertsdale so about eight British cars and their occupants could take advantage of the invitation by our good friends at Mardi Gras MG Club (MGMGC) to join them on a beautiful, if overcast, Saturday. The Derailed Diner is a special place, with memorabilia about almost everything and great food. Thanks, MGMGC, for a great time.

September 6- Friday-Parade at Pensacola Christian College. PBCA was invited to be part of the parade with a British theme marking the opening of Rush Week at PCC. The evening event enjoyed beautiful weather as about nine LBCs from PBCA drove through campus to the cheers of students, who showed themselves to be delightful to talk with as they took obvious delight in viewing cars which for many of them were completely foreign. Thanks, PCC, for a fun time that ended with many of us meeting at Ruby Tuesday's for a late supper.

September 7-Saturday-Emerald Coast Car Show, Niceville, Fl. This all car charity show, sponsored by Playground Corvette Club, Panhandle Cruisers, and the Northwest Florida Model A & T Club, invites cars from all over Northwest Florida. It includes a well-organized British class which attracted a good turnout of British cars from PBCA.

September 14-Saturday. Dinner at the Wash House, 17111 Scenic Highway 98, Point Clear, Al. Continuing our very popular dinner outings, PBCA members and friends met at the Wash House at 6:30 pm for another evening of fellowship. Theresa Hemmert has become our organizer for all the dinners and breakfasts we are attempting to do on a monthly basis. Thanks, Theresa, for your good work.

September 11-Wednesday-PBCA Executive Board Meeting, 6:00 pm at Sonny's BBQ on Navy Boulevard, Pensacola. We will continued to plan for future events, with special emphasis on the upcoming "Brits on the Bay" show, which we expect to exceed all expectations as we mark our 22nd effort to make this the premier car show for Northwest Florida.

September 16-Monday-Regular PBCA Meeting, Sonny's BBQ, Navy Boulevard-6:pm. The business meeting included further planning for "Brits on the Bay", followed by Mike Darby's long-awaited recounting of his thousands mile trip out west in his MGA, in the company of his lovely daughter. Trials, triumphs, and tribulations!

September 20-21-Friday/Saturday-"Brits on the River" Car Show in Natchez, Ms. Not only is it a great show, but Natchez is an additional treat.

September 28- Dog Days Rally- Saturday, 10:00 am. Starting at the Humane Society of Pensacola, this event, organized by Rich and Darla Willows, benefited our animal friends at the Humane Society.

October 5-Saturday-SABCC Annual Ice Cream Social, Daphne, Al.-2:00 pm. Richard and Donna Cunningham again openng the fabled Garagmahal to friends from PBCA and MGMG for what has proven to be an event to bedazzle the gastronome.

Upcoming:

October 9-13- Classic at Calloway Gardens, Ga. This MG focused event invites all MG T Series and all other MGs and all British cars. This is a big one, especially for all fans of MGs, in a beautiful setting.

October 12-Henry Hensel's Annual Halloween Costume Party. Held amidst Henry's fabulous collection of almost everything, you will want to come in costume. BYOB and a dish to share will be welcome. Show up for a scary night. (PBCA members only, please).

October 16-Wednesday. PBCA Executive Board Meeting-6:00 pm—Sonny's BBQ

October 17-Thursday. Show Committee Meeting-12:00 noon—Seville Quarter. As the time grows nearer, planning for "Brits on the Bay" will loom large at the meeting, as we try to finalize some issues. This is an important meeting and all Executive Board and Show Committee members are urged to attend. The Seville staff said "Pleeeeeeasssse drive your Brit cars".

October 19- Saturday-PBCA Drive and Bonfire at the home of Risa and Bob Manske in Milton. The event will start with a drive beginning at 4:00 pm and continue with a bonfire and cookout at the Manske's. A good driving event at a beautiful time of year and lots of fun at the bonfire.

October 19- Saturday-Navarre Car Show. Registration from 8-12 with awards at 4: 00 pm. Two British classes.

October 21- PBCA Regular Meeting- 7:00 pm
at Sonny's BBQ in Pensacola on Navy Boulevard.
Business meeting with continued planning for "Brits
on the Bay", followed by a Top Gear video from Bob
Manske.

Until next time- and do you really know where your
keys

PBCA Officers for 2013:

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

Smoke in the Wires is a publication of the Panhandle British Car Association
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TOOL OF THE MONTH

By Marc Cherry

My recent foray into the vintage motorcycle realm has shown me a couple of products with outstanding applications for our cars, but these gems are almost unknown in the classic car world. Both of these have come to me via Dink at D & D Cycles in Pensacola, one of our show sponsors. After finally assembling my BSA, I knew I needed oil for the chain and that WD-40 was not the answer. As I had been out of motorcycling for twenty-some years, I asked Dink for a recommendation. He recommended Castrol Chain Wax. After I had waxed the BSA chain, I quickly saw that there were so many more uses for this product.





The chain wax sprays on as a thin liquid, much the same consistency as any of the popular penetrating oils. Very quickly, this dries to leave a tacky, but not sticky, layer of dense synthetic wax with a consistency somewhere between axle grease and the wax your mother-in-law should be using to remove her moustache. When dry, it has excellent lubricative properties. As you might imagine this very property would make it a better choice than WD-40 for a lot of jobs because it doesn't evaporate and dry in a few weeks like most penetrating oils. The only downside besides the higher cost is that the chain wax, though pleasant-smelling, lacks the pure testosterone-in-a-can smell that WD-40 has.

The few actual Brits in our club may be familiar with Waxoil or other European cavity wax products to combat rust inside frames, body panels, and other out of sight areas that are prone to rust. Remember, most British (and Italian) manufacturers only painted the metal you could see. These DIY products were never as in-vogue here in the US as we preferred having minimum wage teens drill hundreds of holes in our cars to promote water ingress all in the name of Ziebarting our cars. DIY products were limited to spray-on asphalt undercoating. I believe that spray-on synthetic wax is the 21st century solution for rusted bolt prevention and inner body protection.

As I progress in the reassembly of my car, I'm cognizant of the time and money spent on new paint, fasteners, and in re-plating parts. I know I've found my answer to treating body cavities and bolt threads during this rebuild. Even now,

I'm protecting bearing surfaces like the spindle shafts with chain wax while they await reassembly.

There are other uses too. Typically I spray my wife's garden tools down with WD-40 after I



sharpen them. Now I'm using the chain wax for the job as it stays longer and is tougher to rub away under heavy use. I also use the chain wax for waterproofing. I have a Barbour rain coat made from English oil cloth. Sure, there are modern waterproof fabrics, but there's no substitute for a properly worn-in oil cloth coat—my favorite choice for open-top motoring during



cold weather. I also used the chain wax to waterproof a small cloth bag I wanted to use for a

tool kit on the BSA. The end result looks, feels, and repels water like my old oil cloth coat.

Apparently Castrol Chain Wax also does a fine job on motorcycle chains, unfortunately, my chain hasn't had much opportunity to prove itself in

that capacity. I've only driven less than 75 miles with my BSA. Still, it's another product that may find its best applications when used NOT in accordance with instructions. Get a can for yourself and start experimenting today.

Distractions

HIDE YOUR UGLY MODERN BATTERY WITH THE TAR TOPPER

By Marc Cherry

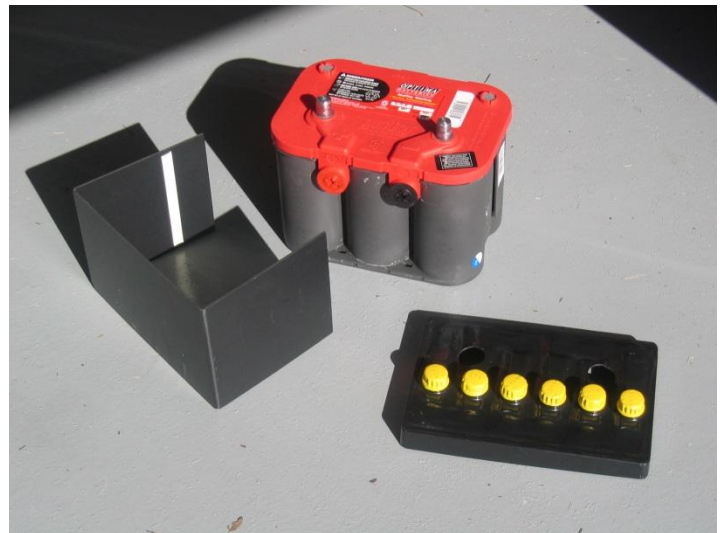
You've worked hard to tidy up everything under the bonnet. You've spent hours painting, buffing, rewiring and eliminating the zip ties to show off your baby. Your eyes glide over the shiny bits of metal and period-correct plumbing until they hang up on that damn battery. The whole time machine effect is lost to the brashness of the Interstate Battery logo or the bright red of your Optima. Yes, they are infinitely better than original batteries, but they despoil the harmony emanating from your gleaming SU carbs. You know the solution, but cannot bring yourself to bite the bullet.

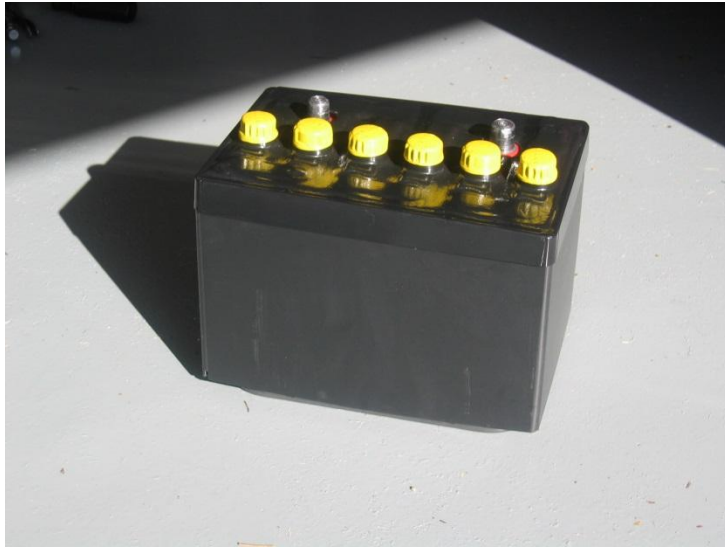
Moss asks a princely \$329 for their tar top battery. Ouch! You might think that is the price for nostalgia, but nostalgia is the act of dusting off the past and presenting it as better than it actually was--too true in this case. For \$329 you may get a shot at a 100 point concours car, but you will get a low-capacity, fast-discharging, leak-prone monster that could eat through your bodywork and compromises your ability to drive in modern traffic. There has to be a better way for those of us who cannot or just do not want to afford a genuine tar top battery.

For the rest of us, there is the Tar Topper. For a mere \$27.50 (plus \$5.00 for a LUCAS sticker), you get a clever disguise for an Optima battery. You will pay slightly less to cover your standard Group 24 battery. I will say that fully installed, this does not look like a proper Lucas tar top battery with the lead jumpers on top.

However, It does look like a proper vintage battery and your eyes no longer are drawn instantly to a distracting incorrect battery.

For me, I still run a positive-earth generator charging system in my car. I feel that I really need the deep-cycle Optima on board to allow that system to cope with modern driving conditions, frequently requiring the cooling fan, headlights for safety, etc. The Optima especially helps when the car spends a lot of time at idle where a generator cannot produce current like an alternator can. I love my Optima, but hate the Star Trek look in my Project Mercury era car. I jumped at the chance to change the look.





The Tar Topper kit comes with a thermo-plastic top with painted filler caps that slips over the top of your battery exposing only the terminals. I still painted the areas around the terminals of my battery black before installing the cover to ensure no red showed through. Optima owners get a three-sided cover that hides the distinct cylinders that give Optimas their distinct (distinctly wrong) look. If you have a Group 24 battery, you'll have to remove the side stickers or paint the whole thing black to complete the disguise. If you please, a LUCAS sticker completes the look.

For my application in an E-Type, the battery looked and fit great sitting in place with the cover installed. That changed when I tried to install the correct battery hold down as required for track and slalom events. I kept the side cover unchanged, but had to cut the edges off of the top cover to get it to fit inside the battery hold down. Despite having to butcher my Tar Topper kit, the whole thing really looks like old Bill Lyons meant for it to look.

In the end, I have a high-capacity battery tucked away under my bonnet that allows me to do peace-of-mind motoring in modern traffic, without it screaming for attention when I open the bonnet. Over the years, the Tar Topper conversion has drawn a lot of favorable comments from judges and observers who were fooled at first glance. The Tar Topper represents an excellent upgrade for not much outlay. Find them at <http://www.tartopper.com>.

