

THE OCTAGON NEWS



Volume XLII No. 7

May 2015

British Transportation Museum
Car of the Month Returns



From the President

Terry Looft

News letter time again, where has the summer gone? We are just a few weeks away from the big "B" meet in Niagara Falls. It's a tossup if the V8 will be ready for the trip. We are working hard on the project and it is still possible to do. We got the V8 body back from Tom a few days ago. Boy, does he do nice work! Worth the wait, nicest under bonnet I have ever seen. Our work is cut out for us to match the engine and other parts to his work. The engine is back together with new paint, lots of powder coating, cam shaft and lifters. Lots of new seals and gaskets, I'm not sure if it should leak or not. It is a USA engine (no leaks) but the Brits did have their fingers in it. Carole and I connected the engine and gearbox today, it looks great. Tomorrow we start installing the new wiring harness, a job I'm not looking forward to.

As for Carole's MGA and the body shop, I think it's been up-graded to back burner. But I think it is at least on the



Southwestern Ohio Centre -- MG Car Club
P.O. Box 20032, Dabel Branch
Dayton, OH 45420-0032

Club Membership Information

Membership dues for the Southwestern Ohio Centre of the MG Car Club are eighteen (\$18.00) per year, payable during September and October. On January 1st. the names of delinquent members are removed from the roster. See *Carole Looft* for further membership information.

MG Car Club Monthly Meeting

The Southwestern Ohio Centre of the MG Car Club meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month at the Rusty Bucket, 2812 Miamisburg-Centerville Road, 45459, in front of the Dayton Mall, at 7:30pm. The next meeting will be:

Wed, May 27, 2015

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Upcoming MGCC Events

May:

- 2 – Drive your MGA Day
- 23 – Car Show at 2nd Street Market
- 27 – Meeting at Rusty Bucket

Jun:

- 24 – Meeting at Rusty Bucket

Jul:

- 22 – Meeting at Rusty Bucket

See meeting minutes for other area activities!!

stove now. It looks like Tom will be working on it soon. All the parts are here for the restoration and the engine rebuild. We got to the engine at a good time. Even with the piston damage, the bores are perfect and after 150K miles they are still standard size. The crankshaft also is good and will stay at .010” under size from the regrind over 30 years ago. Carole’s new 5 speed conversion is being held hostage by some guy named Vinnie on a dock in NY but I believe all the paper work is in order and we should get the new kit any day.

As always there are interruptions to our work, first being dash replacement and new radio/speaker installed in Leeann’s “B” and topped off with new chrome wire wheels. Ryan’s “B” got a good tune up and going over (thank you Steve Miller). All a labor of love! And there was a week setback to fly to my friends place in Texas. Nice little fly-in and I got to fly some really neat old airplanes. We even got in some wild pig hunting.

That’s the report for this month and I’m sticking to it.



In case you missed it, the following article appeared in Just British, the Online Motoring Magazine.

British Transportation Museum in Ohio

Are you aware of the British Transportation Museum’s efforts to raise funds to buy and refurbish a building? The British Transportation Museum was founded in 1998 by Dick Smith, Mike Edgerton, and Mike Smith as they began to sketch out a museum concept for the education and preservation of British Transportation in America. The Museum is celebrating its 17th Anniversary in 2015.



The British Transportation Museum is an all volunteer non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable educational institution established to collect, preserve, and interpret through exhibits the heritage of British built transportation vehicles utilized in the United States. The focus is to foster learning, appreciation, insight and a useful understanding of the role of British transportation vehicles in American life. This involves the collection and preservation of vehicles, parts, photographs, memorabilia, books and any and all articles that illustrate British modes of transportation and presenting such items in an educational environment. The Museum will reach out to the community with historical programming, exhibits, classes, automotive events and other activities for all ages.

You can check out the BTM via the links above or follow them on Facebook.

Car of the Month...

My 1916 Wurlitzer Player Piano

Steve Markman

This story doesn't really have anything to do with cars, but I thought you'd enjoy it anyway. I've often told people that I'd always wanted an MG TD. Not that I'm especially a car guy, but I just always wanted a TD. Well, there's something else I always wanted: a player piano – not that I love pianos or even know how to play one – I just always wanted one.



Player pianos were made by the tens of thousands in the first three decades of the 20th century. If you wanted music in your house and your wife or daughter didn't know how to play a piano, a player piano was the solution. With the passage of time, people eventually turned to radio and phonographs. Players aren't exactly rare today, but many of the ones that have survived in homes don't work. They're complex to maintain, and expensive to restore. Paper rolls are readily available at antique markets and especially on e-bay, and one company still makes new ones, including many current titles.

At an MG Car Club meeting about four years ago I was chatting with Terry Looft. He was in the final stages of finishing his basement and had one corner to go. But he had a problem. There was this player piano sitting there. He'd bought it about ten years earlier intending to restore it. He'd started, having disassembled it and refinished the case. For some unknown reason his interest turned (or returned) to restoring cars and he never got around to rebuilding the various mechanism's that make the piano work. "I'd give that thing away if I could ever find someone dumb enough to take it in this condition." Enough said about how it quickly changed owners. Terry and Carole even delivered it to my house.

The piano sat in my garage for a few weeks while I scratched my head trying to figure out how to get it into my basement. I finally bit the bullet and hired a piano mover. Five guys who looked like former

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NFL players came out, lifted it on to a special skid, and in fifteen minutes had it in my basement and were gone. The first \$250 expense.

Terry and Carole seriously intended to restore the piano; many of the smaller parts were in bags or boxes and labeled. They even had bags and bags of replacement parts. Terry assured me all the original parts were there. The down side was that he hadn't taken any pictures as he disassembled the parts, since he'd intended to put it all back together soon, anyways. So, here I had this big jigsaw puzzle, with no idea of what went where, what worked, or even what it was supposed to look like or function if it worked.

I found a piano repairman in Xenia who worked on players. He told me that while Wurlitzer was best known for its big theater organs, their pianos were more middle-of-the-road, sort of the Chevrolet of pianos. He looked up the serial number in a reference book and determined that it was built in 1916. Written in pencil on the cast iron harp was the name H. Shaffer and the date 11/9/27. He told me that it was common practice for repairman and tuners to do that when they worked on a piano.

The piano sat in my basement for another two years until it finally surfaced at the top of my project list. A player essentially is a standard piano with the player action (the mechanism that reads the holes on a paper roll and actuates a small bellows to lift each hammer on the piano action), and a foot-operated pump to produce the vacuum that drives the player action. The player action appeared to be the most complex assembly, and in the worst shape. It had eighty-eight bellows, one for each key, and the fabric was falling apart on about half of them. I decided to tackle this part first.

I looked on the internet for a source of information and materials and stumbled upon a place in Cincinnati called the Player Piano Shop. I gave them a call, then put the player action in the car and drove it to Cincinnati for a consultation. The owner turned out to be someone who loved player pianos as much as most of us love our MGs. His name is Steve Galinger. He's been in the business for about forty years, learned it from the previous owner of the shop, and to make it short, knows every detail of every brand of player piano ever made (there were dozens and dozens of them). Walking into his shop is like walking into an old-time store: sagging wood floors, peeling paint and wallpaper, piano parts stacked everywhere, drawer after drawer of small parts (both salvaged originals and modern replacement items), and not a computer monitor in sight. The most modern item there is a Princess phone, but no answering machine attached to it.

Steve looked over the player action and said that the fabric on all eighty-eight bellows needed replacement. He removed one, showed me how to do it, and then gave me enough rubberized fabric to do the remaining eighty-seven bellows. I spent over two hours there and Steve just couldn't stop talking about player pianos and how happy he was to have met someone else interested in rebuilding one. We quickly became friends. It took me about three months to remove, recover, and reassemble the eighty-eight bellows and remove and overhaul the valve that went with each one. I then spent another few weeks recovering the bellows on the tracking mechanism (which keeps the paper roll centered) and the vacuum motor that drives the paper roll.

The next step was the piano action, which consists of (you guessed it) eighty-eight hammers and the articulating mechanism for each that causes the hammers to strike and instantly pull away from the string. As an experienced woodworker, I can attest that these pieces were the most beautifully made wood pieces I'd ever seen. Those piano makers from long ago knew how to select just the right type and piece of wood with the right grain to give strength to last for centuries (I found only two pieces with slight cracks, which I repaired. Btw – these are made of plastic on most new pianos today). I removed each mechanism, cleaned it, and sanded smooth the felt tip on each hammer. After reassembly, I placed the piano action into the piano. I then took the keys, cleaned them, and installed them after having Steve

replace the ivory key tops on about a dozen of them (btw – it's illegal to buy or sell ivory, so you have to salvage the tops from old pianos).

Next, I installed the player action and moved on to the pump, which consists of two large bellows with leather flapper valves and two spring-loaded bellows that serve as reservoirs and to smoothen out pulsation from the pump. Again, Steve gave me the correct bellow cloth and leather. These bellows were big, but the process for covering them was the same.

With the pump finished, I installed it, hooked up the new rubber tubing, then sorted out the pieces for the pedals and determined where they went. Steve came up from Cincinnati and did some adjustments to make sure everything was tweaked just right. As soon as this was done, I inserted a roll (I'd been buying them on eBay for about a year, and had a nice collection of mostly 1920s, 30s, and 40s music). It sounded awful, but definitely was recognizable as Chattanooga Cho Cho (what should I have expected for a piano that probably hadn't been tuned for at least two decades and had been moved who knows how many times?).

I worked on it for another month or so, sorting out the final small pieces and the remaining pieces of the case, then had the piano tuned. What can I say? Pure pleasure, just as much fun as driving my MG TD (but no concern for breaking down on a lonely country road).

Note – Throughout this effort, I tried to make as correct a restoration as possible. All screws that had to be replaced were replaced with ones with slotted heads, which are getting hard to find, and in general don't seem to have quite the same shape on the head nor the same plating (Menards had the best selection, though). While the original used only hot melt hide glue, I gave in to modern convenience and used liquid hide glue, the modern alternative (although Terry left me a bag of hide glue powder). In gluing the bellows, I used Titebond III, per recommendation by Steve Galinger, as it is easier to use, less messy, and is resistant to the long-term effects of humidity. For the little bit of surface finishing that I did, I lacquered with Deft, the modern version of cellulose nitrate, which is what was used back then (Use only in a well-ventilated work area, as the fumes will knock you out – don't ask how I know that.).

Long-Lost Cord Found After a Half Century

Gary Gastelu
FoxNews.com

It's the car that saved a car company a half-century ago, and it may help keep it running today.

Glenn Pray, a high school shop teacher from Tulsa, Okla., got the wild idea in 1960 that he'd buy the remains of defunct automaker Auburn-Cord-Duesenberg.

To get enough money to pay for it, he had to sell his pride and joy:



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the 1937 Cord 812 Supercharged Convertible Phaeton that he'd restored and that was considered to be the best Cord in the world.

He sold it to local TV station owner and car collector Jimmy Leake for \$8,000, reportedly the highest price ever paid for the model at the time. But Leake didn't hold on to it for very long; he sold it in 1962.

Pray, who was busy reviving his new company, lost track of it after that. He built around 350 modernized Cords, but he never forgot about the one that made it all happen.

In 1968, with the help of fellow Cord fanatics, he tried to track it down, but to no avail. For all anyone knew, it wasn't even in the country anymore.

Flash forward to last year. Glenn died in 2011 and his son, Doug, is running the company, focusing on selling parts and restoring Cords, both originals and the one's his Father built. It's been featured on an episode of the popular TV program "American Pickers."

One day Glenn gets a call from a man in Michigan who says he has a dusty old Cord that was picked up at an estate sale in 1965. It's been sitting in a dirt floor barn, untouched, for 45 years, and he wants to know if Doug is interested, figuring the car will go to better use in his hands.

Pray says the more the man described it, the more it sounded like his dad's lost car. After checking the records, it turned out that it was, so he hopped in his truck, drove to Michigan and paid six figures to buy it. The seller told him it was the biggest check he'd ever seen.

Now that it's back in Tulsa, the Cord is running again, but the car Doug remembers having to take his shoes off before climbing inside when he was a child largely remains in the condition that it was found, another restoration deemed too expensive to undertake.

Doug says folks have been stopping by to see the "Lost Cord," but his family has made the tough decision to sell the car once again and to reinvest part of the proceeds back into the company. It'll be offered at the Leake Collector Car Show & Auction, run by the descendants of Jimmy Leake, in Tulsa in June.

There's no telling what this unique piece of history will go for, but similar cars often sell for over a quarter-million dollars. It could be worth even more than that to Pray, since he figures whoever buys it will likely hire him to oversee any restoration work.

And this time, he plans to keep track of it. In fact, he says, maybe one day he'll buy it back again.



Classifieds

Free classified policy: *We are happy to run your auto-related ad for three months free of charge, but may cut older and non-MG related ads as space requires. Please contact the editor when your item sells or if you wish to continue the ad for an additional three months.*

For Sale: 1951 MG TD. Complete engine rebuild two years ago. New leather interior, newer top, ivory exterior with green leather interior. RH drive. Excellent curtains. \$15,800. Bob, 937-286-2501. (Mar 15)

For Sale: 1977 MGB. New paint and body work completed in 2014. British racing green. Original spoked wheels. New replacement chrome bumpers. Newer interior and carpet. Replaced windshield. This car has been garaged and hasn't seen inclement weather since purchased in 1998! We're moving and looking for a good home for this beauty. 29,300 miles. \$15,000, but negotiable. Contact Christopher Gulliford, chrisgulliford@woh.rr.com, or 937-554-7801. (Mar 15)

For Sale: 1978 MGB. Yellow, original 45,600 miles, great condition, good driver, boot and Tonneau cover, Rostyle wheels professionally reconditioned, all replacement keys, newer tires, British Motor Certification. This car has been stored in a garage or in a climate controlled facility. Tuned up yearly the past 10 years at MG Automotive. Located in Kettering. Asking 7500.00. Call Cheryl Ross (MGCCSWOC member) 937-499-0080, or cheryross8344@aol.com. (Feb 15)

MG Car Club Minutes, April Meeting

Sam Hodges

MGCC April 2015 meeting called to order at 7:32...

As the windows behind Terry are being closed, President Looft, "I think we're being too noisy for them..."

Dave Gribler calls Terry's phone. Terry, "That was an official phone call wishing us happy, whatever, and the McCann's wish us well, as well."

Terry continued, "I was kind of premature on the Tune-Up Clinic. We had a heck of a turnout. I wish Eddie was here so we could thank him for the coffee and donuts." Skip, "I took care of the donuts and Mimi took care of everything else." Dick Smith, "We got the clutch master cylinder done and the next day I drove the car but was having issue with the 3rd gear shift, then I remembered that Steve drove the car. I moved the seat up one notch and it worked just fine after that." President Looft, "Charlie got the air replaced in his tires. The Summer air is now in. Did you keep the winter air so you can put it back in later?" Bob Farrell, "There were 4 of us there until 1:30."

Terry, "Anyone do the drive down to Milford (referring to the Annual All-Car Cruise-In held in Milford)? I didn't think so."

Terry, "MGA update. Skip still has a shot at this." Skip, "Not really..." Terry, "Both the MGA & V8 bodies are at the body shop and haven't been touched in a month and a half. If you see some wrecked car on the road, it'll probably be back on the road before the MGA. Oh well, that's how it goes when you use

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a regular body. In detailing the engine, there was discovered a burnt piston in the No.3 cylinder. It's now at the machine shop and were waiting on the final report.

Vice President's Report. V.P. Sam Hodges, "I discovered that my '77 MGB has developed the ability to start itself. I went out to the garage to start it and it wasn't doing anything. I turned the key and got nothing. Then, when I turned the key off and removed it from the ignition, the starter engaged and started trying to start the car. Luckily, it was in neutral. Not knowing what was going on, I stuck the key back in and turned it. THIS made the starter disengage and stop." Terry Looft, "Check the starter relay. Something similar happened to Ryan's MGB at Indy in 1996. He got out of the car and said that it wouldn't turn off. I went under the hood and started jiggling wires and all of a sudden the car started up and proceeded to mount the just restored chrome bumper parked right in front of it. Boy, was that guy not happy. Turned out to be the starter relay."

Minutes were next. Skip Peterson moved to accept the Minutes as reported. Steve Powell seconded. Minutes approved.

Treasurer's Report. Ron Parks has the update. "Dave's in Key West, but the money that's left is here. The MGCC had total expenses of: Newsletter postage (\$35.00) + Website Fees (\$68.05) + UPS Store (\$377.75) equals a total loss to the MGCC of \$480.80. The MGCC had gains from Regalia (\$18.00) + Interest gains (\$0.01) for a total gain to the MGCC of (\$18.01). Total loss to the MGCC was \$462.79 that when subtracted from our beginning balance of \$4,273.55 leaves the MGCC with an ending balance of \$3,810.12 in the primary checking account. Gumball cash-on-hand was \$60.00 after payment of the March Gumball Rallye. The Savings account currently has \$379.00. Linda Wolfe motioned to accept the Treasurer's Report. John Wolfe seconded. Treasurer's Report approved.

Ron Parks, "We got an insurance bill here. Should we send it to Steve Zeno?" Linda Wolfe, "We also got an update for the MotherClub Membership renewal that has to go to the Treasurer.

Terry, "Since Eddie's not here, do we even have to vote on anything?" Jennifer P., "Where is Eddie?"

Membership with Carole Looft, "We had 1 renewal so were at 89. We also have a couple of birthdays this month. Dave Estell, Jeanie Youngblood." Bob Farrell, "My oldest grandson turn 21 today and my second youngest turns 2 tomorrow... and they're half brothers."

Terry Looft, "We don't have Eddie so we don't have any idea what's going on in Activities." Skip, I received a letter at home addressed to

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me and the MGCC from the Enon Police Dept. I was worried that it was over that traffic cam issue... Turns out that they're having a car show Sunday Aug. 23rd proceeds to benefit needy children."

Terry, "There's another show in Lebanon Saturday, July 11th. They're sponsoring a 70's, 80's & 90's festival. It might be something interesting to do. South Street Broadway, Mechanic & Cherry Streets are where the show will be. Cars will be safely parked about a block from the stage, and the beer... why do the cars have to be away from the beer?"

Linda, "I received the info about Papas Little Blue Car, a children's book that was written by Steven Mitchell, an MGA owner. If its something you're interested in it's available on Amazon.com.

Sunshine Committee. Carole, "George is home and in therapy. We expect to see him in Grand Rapids."

Steve Powell, D&D Restorations is having an open house in Covington, Ohio on May 16th. Proceeds to benefit Fisher House.

Newsletter. Steve's not here but we all got it.

Website. John Scocozzo, "Not much new, other than some new photos from past events." Skip, "The links have been fixed so that we can find other stuff and they can find us."

Jennifer Peterson, "I just called Eddie and he's at home sick." Skip, "Well that's something for the Sunshine Committee."

Terry, "That concludes reports. How about a beer break?"

Beer Break called at 7:57.

Back from Brake at 8:08.

Terry, "We need to get this over with because some people drove British cars and need to get home before dark."

Old Business. Louie's not here.

Terry, "Coversheets? Ron? Is that still old business?" Ron, "No, it's current business, They're here."

Terry, "Grille Badges." Skip, "I still need to talk to Rallye about that." Steve Veris, "Just make sure that the nuts aren't the quick release model like the old ones." Skip, "So Mary, how tight are the nuts?" Terry, "Might not want to ask her that. Just use your own judgement. Better yet, just use good judgement." Skip, "Thanks Terry." Terry, "You could have had this job..." Skip, "Just keep banging the pole..."

Terry continued, "Since you've got the floor, BCD?" Skip, "We've already got 19 registrations. This online thing is working very well. The Sunbeam/Alpine crew will be there. We could potentially have another 50 cars. They're going to be part of our show, but they'll also judge their own event-within-an-event."

New business. Terry, "Don't everyone speak up all at one. Now Bob's got nothing to say." Bob F., "Damn right."

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Terry, "How about doing a Fall winterization clinic? We have the shop and the lift in the workshop in Wilmington. We could do oil changes and put the winter air back in the tires... Charlie, you did keep the old air right?"

Tech Tips. John Scocozzo, "I've got a windshield replacement tool kit that I created after replacing the windshield. Getting it apart wasn't that hard. It's all aluminum except for the 2 steel parts on the bottom of the windshield that rust solid. My kit includes: ratcheting 9/16, leather gloves, soapy solution, small awl, C-Clamp, long pole clamp, small mirror, and, the most important part, a piece of rope." Skip, "So, how long did it take?" It took 4 hours to redo the the rubber around the windshield. the whole thing took a couple of days over a couple weekends." Mike Edgerton, "So, how much would you charge to do that?" Terry, "We took one to a glass shop. After we got it back, they told us to never come back." Sam H., "I know that unless you have the screws at the right length/depth, it's real easy to shatter a windshield when you put the frame back together."

Skip, "There's an interesting Facebook page, '10k miles in an MGB'. He's going 10K over the country during the next three months. Might want to follow for an interesting read."

Terry, "We needed to paint the MGA frame but wanted to plug the holes prior to painting to keep the threads from getting bugged. We discovered golf tees work great for plugging the holes and they come right back out."

For Sale. Steve Powell, "Judy Moore's MGA is still for sale." See Steve for details.

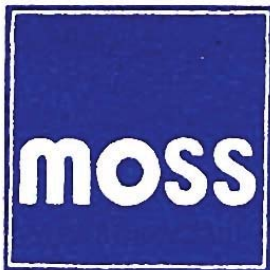
May 27th is the next meeting.

Gumball Rallye was won by Ron Parks.

Mike Edgerton motioned to adjourn. Linda Wolfe seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:42.

The logo for MiniMania, featuring the word "MiniMania" in a stylized, bold, sans-serif font. The "M" is particularly large and has a unique, blocky design.The logo for MG AUTOMOTIVE, with "MG" in a large, bold, blue font and "AUTOMOTIVE" in a smaller, bold, blue font below it.

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