

ABCS Newsletter

July 2003

Volume 12 Issue 7



NEXT MEETING – THURSDAY, July 10, 2003 – RUSH STREET GRILL

Minutes of the ABCS Meeting For June 12, 2003

By: Al Bradley

Gael Bright, President, conducted the meeting. 22 Members were in attendance. Now that the incessant rain has concluded, rain, there were several British cars in attendance.

Gael introduced our guest, Juan Dominguez, who owns a 1978 MGB.

Gael noted that the club treasury stood at \$ 837.72 in the checking account and \$ 1,016.48 in the savings account and asked for suggestions on how to expend some of this money. The Board of Directors suggestions included license plates, grille badges, better shirts and reducing the dues to first time members from the \$20 now charged to the standard \$15. Another idea was that the club participates with the Smokey Mountain Jaguar Club in the cost of the car show at the Celtic Festival. The Celtic Festival idea was voted upon and approved up to a total of \$ 150.

Ken Hampton announced that he had found a 1971 or 1972 MGB for sale, if anyone is interested. Carl Floyd reported that the V-8 meet in Townsend, TN had 40 or 50 vehicles and that many cleverly uprated British Cars were there including an MGA with 302 Ford engine [for which the entire car required widening by 6 inches], a TVR with 302 Ford engine and a Jensen-Healey with 350 Chevrolet engine. The cars made

a trip to drive “The Rail of the Dragon” run and there were lots of parties and barbeques for entertainment.

The program this night was a short but informative one given by Eddie Penland on how to static time an MG. This is a very effective way to set the timing on any car and can be performed by a novice with a minimum of equipment. The program was taped for future reference, so anyone who missed this seminar can find the tape and learn from it. Here is the information that was used at the meeting, though:

Technical Tips & Assistance MGB

This is the first of a series of articles on basic tuning techniques to help you maintain your car to original factory specifications. Since the ignition system must be in good order before any other systems, such as the carburetor(s), can be properly adjusted, we will begin with a brief discussion on ignition timing procedures. These instructions assume that the ignition system components (wires, spark plugs, distributor and its parts) are in good workable condition. Ignition Timing Ignition timing refers to the point during the combustion cycle at

which the spark plugs fire, and is expressed in degrees of crankshaft rotation in relation to the top dead center (T.D.C.) position of the pistons. Specifications for timing include the number of degrees before or after top dead center, and the required engine speed at which the setting must be made. Supplemental instructions such as “disconnect vacuum advance line” may also be given. When a specific engine speed (other than “static”) is given, or for electronic ignition systems, timing must be done using a stroboscopic timing light. For most of our older British sports cars, however, “static” timing is specified. This simply means that the timing is set with the engine not running. Before considering checking or setting the ignition timing, it is imperative that the condition of the points and the point gap be checked and reset, if required. While most Lucas point type distributors require a point gap of .014” to .016”, check your workshop manual for your particular distributor’s requirement.

Adjusting the point gap is really an indirect way of setting what is known as the dwell angle. This is the angular period of rotation of the distributor cam during which the points remain closed. Setting the point gap with the aid of an inexpensive dwell meter is much more accurate than setting with a feeler gauge. Do not neglect this setting - the dwell angle is one of the most important settings on a car, having serious effects on performance and fuel economy. All engines have some sort of timing mark - one or more marks on the crankshaft pulley or fly-wheel, which align with a fixed mark on the timing chain cover or engine block. A pair of these marks will align when the piston in the “timing cylinder” (usually No. 1 cylinder) is at top dead center. Consult the appropriate workshop manual for information

specific to your engine. Occasionally, the timing mark or pointer may be missing or improperly positioned. (This is fairly common on TR2-4A, where the crankshaft pulley is easily installed with the timing mark in the wrong position in relation to the crankshaft throws.) When these conditions exist, top dead center may be found by removing the appropriate spark plug and observing the piston movement through the spark plug hole while turning the engine over by hand. When the piston reaches its highest position, it is at top dead center. When you are satisfied that top dead center has been accurately located, mark the position for future reference. The static timing procedure is not difficult. The only equipment required is a 12-volt test light. If a commercial test light is not available, a substitute may be easily made by soldering two wires to a 12-volt light bulb; one wire to the side of the base, and the other to the bottom contact. For convenience, alligator clips may be installed on the other ends of the wires.

To static time your engine:

1) As accurately as possible, locate the piston of the “timing cylinder” at top dead center, on the compression stroke. This is achieved by noting the position of the ignition rotor when the piston is at top dead center. If the rotor points to the contact on the distributor cap which leads to the spark plug of the “timing cylinder”, the piston is on the compression stroke.

2) If the rotor points away from that contact, the piston is on the exhaust stroke, and the crankshaft must be rotated one full turn to bring the piston to top dead center on the compression stroke.

Check that the timing marks

line up correctly. (If the distributor has been removed from the engine, consult an appropriate workshop manual for proper re-installation instructions.)

3) If your vacuum advance unit has an adjuster, you may either proceed with the instructions in this paragraph, or skip it and go to paragraph 3, continuing from there. If your pulley or indicator is marked with degree settings, turn the crankshaft until the single mark and the appropriate degree mark line up. If your pulley or indicator is not marked in degrees, use a timing degree wheel (Moss #384-910) to set the crankshaft to the proper advanced or retarded setting as specified for your engine. It is essential that a reliable workshop manual be consulted for this specification. The piston of your "timing cylinder" is now in the correct firing position, and the distributor must now be adjusted to the firing position.

4) Loosen the distributor clamp to the point where the distributor may be rotated freely. Set the adjuster on the vacuum advance unit (if present) to mid-scale.

5) Connect one wire of the test light to the low tension contact on the distributor, and the other wire to a good ground. (The low-tension contact is where the thin wire from one side of the ignition coil connects to the distributor.)

6) With the ignition on (but the engine not running), rotate

the distributor body slowly in the opposite direction of the rotor's rotation until the test light lights up, indicating that the points have just opened. Do this a few times until you have accurately determined the exact point at which this happens, and re-tighten the distributor clamp bolt.

7) For distributors with adjusters on the vacuum advance unit, only if paragraph #2 was skipped: With the piston of the "timing cylinder" at top dead center (see 1.), the adjuster on the vacuum advance unit may be used to "dial in" the correct static advance setting. One division of the scale is equal to four degrees. Count the "clicks" on your adjuster nut between divisions and divide by four for the number of clicks per degree (generally about ten per degree, but check your individual distributor). Multiply this by the number of degrees advance you require, and set accordingly. Refer to a reliable workshop manual for this setting. Be sure to turn the adjusting wheel in the direction of the "A" to advance, in the direction of the arrowed "R" to retard.

8) Disconnect the test light and start the engine. If it does not start, make sure that you remembered to replace the rotor after adjusting the points. Don't feel foolish if you find it on top of your battery or wiper motor - there probably isn't a single auto mechanic dead or alive who hasn't had this happen.

Eric Wilhelm Moss Motors Staff

The meeting concluded with a reminder of the club trip to The Breaks Interstate Park on 21 June 2003.

Summer Solstice Expedition

By: Allen McKenna

It was a beautiful clear summer day as 8 intrepid explorers set out for the western frontier on what shall be known as the Summer Solstice Expedition, appropriately, June 21.

Following a sumptuous breakfast rendezvous at Perkins Restaurant in Bristol, the four car caravan (two British, two Yapanese, even if one was technically a convertible that receives favorable comparisons to the venerable MGB) departed into the crisp morning air towards Breaks Interstate Park. Is top down motoring with the feet-heat blasting the definition of irony? Or simply a guilty indulgence?

After a little warm up along US 19 over Clinch Mountain, past Lebanon, and into Rosedale, we took a left onto Route 80, proper. Time to see just what these cars were made of, and for! Through Honaker, up and over Big A mountain (and then, down, down, down the other side). Along the river bottom, past Council, and Bee, and many, many other long forgotten small communities. The rhythm of the road, the passing trees—hypnotic in so many ways, as evidenced by my passenger who was caught snoozing as we rolled along. Route 80 is famous in another sense, as it was—and still is—the route of the Transamerica Bicycle Trail, one of the major mapped routes for cross-country bicyclists. If our little British cars groaned, pause for a second and think of the determination required as a bicyclist might navigate these mountains—exacerbated even more by a screaming coal haul truck using the same route!

Approximately 80 miles from departure, we rolled into the park entrance. A buck apiece bought us admission—what a deal!! A conspicuous parking arrangement allowed us to stretch, and explore the visitor's center/museum. The conspicuous (closer to the road than the lodge) parking arrangement served as connection point as Sam Chandler, in his MGB-GT joined us from his home in Kentucky, along with his significant other and Mike Tierney, and his son, Jordan Tierney, from

Atlanta. Mike is a sports columnist and writer for the Atlanta Journal.

. As a group, we ventured to the Towers Overlook. After the drive up, many of us felt we were on top of the world—but we were corrected. Elevation, above sea level, of the park is approximately 1800 feet—comparable to Abingdon. The depth of the gorge, over 600 feet to the Russell Fork River, creates the illusion of extreme altitude. All involved enjoyed the overlook.

Much hiking develops appetites, and as this group does so well, it was time to seek sustenance. The Rhododendron Restaurant, inside the Lodge, was open and inviting, so we made ourselves welcome. Charming service, adequate food, captivating view, made this a destination not to be missed. More fellowship, followed by the requisite under-the-hood (under the bonnet?) checks (remember—those aren't leaks, these cars are simply marking their territory), and it was time to make a departure.

But wait! We had not yet seen the state line overlook, into Kentucky! So quickly, to the end of the ridge, where we peered into the canyon once again, marveling at the railroad line along the river and the many tunnels through the mountains before us—and then we were off.

Seeking alternative routes, several of us followed Route 63 towards home. Through the communities of Haysi, Clinchco, Fremont, Irvinton, Trammell, Nora, and the Dante. Scenic detours through the company towns of Clinchco, through downtown Dante, and through the heart of the business district of St Paul. Making the connection with US 58 in St Paul, it was back to reality—and back to home. What a fitting way to welcome summer, embracing the wind and sunshine as the little cars purred along. Believe I'll make it a habit this summer—you should too!!

Sometimes I wonder if men and women really suit each. Perhaps they should live next door and just visit now and then.

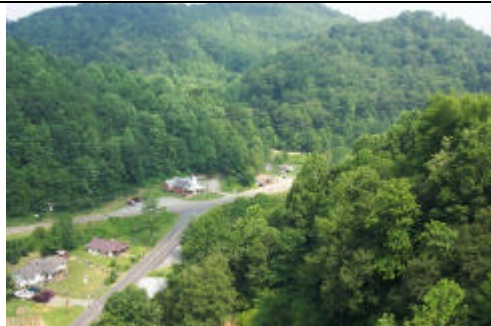
-Katharine Hepburn





By: Ben Bailey

Some pictures I took of the new highway to Asheville. I was invited to go along on media day and got these shots. Some are of the bridge at Little Creek. That is my 1976 blue Lincoln on the bridge. This will be a great highway to Asheville N.C.



APPALACHIAN BRITISH CAR SOCIETY
APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

NAME: _____ ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____ HOME PHONE (____) _____

SPOUSE'S NAME: _____ WORK PHONE (____) _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____ DATE: _____

<u>CARS:</u>	<u>MAKE</u>	<u>MODEL</u>	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>COLOR</u>
#1	_____	_____	_____	_____
#2	_____	_____	_____	_____
#3	_____	_____	_____	_____

DUES ARE PRORATED ACCORDING TO
THE MONTH IN WHICH YOU JOIN:

January-March	\$20.00
April-June	15.00
July-September	10.00
October-December	20.00 (includes following year's dues)
All Renewals	15.00 (due February 28 of each year)

Enclose payment with application and mail to:
Appalachian British Car Society
c/o Al Bradley, Treasurer
143 Stonewall Heights
Abingdon, VA 24210

All meetings are held at 7:00 PM on the second Thursday of each month at the Rush Street Grill in Kingsport, TN

ABCS / Eddie Penland
4547 Grace Dr.
Kingsport, TN 37664

TO: