

Board Members 2007-2008

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2008 BMTA Conference and Trade Show Packed with Information for All

By Dick Lunney, *Classic MG Magazine*; photos by Alan Dalman

This year's British Motor Trade Association (BMTA) Sixth Annual Conference offered something for everyone and the "Building Bridges" theme provided a slightly different agenda from the previous meetings. The venue of St. Petersburg, Florida, offered the majority of attendees, who reside in more northern locales, a break from the winter weather.

The Holiday Inn SunSpree Resort served as the host hotel and the location right on Pinellas Point overlooking the Sunshine Skyway Bridge over Tampa Bay was an ideal.

Past conferences have focused on the business side of



operating a shop which specialized on British motorcars and cycles. These businesses are usually small operations with fewer than 10 employees and often are run out of single-person garage. Such small operations have unique business needs and the benefit of networking through the BMTA organization has proved to be an invaluable resource. Another major focal point for the organization is the need to monitor and improve the overall quality of parts available for classic British vehicles. Finally, the organization has been actively promoting the British car hobby through a modest media campaign and a new association logo which is often displayed in member advertisements and signage.

Top: Attendees take a look at new products and information during the first BMTA Trade Show. **Lower:** Intensive sessions provided management as well as practical advice.

The 2008 convention continued to focus on shop management and organization with a special presentation by George Witt from the Automotive Management Institute (AMI). His main focus was helping owners and managers develop interpersonal skills that take some of the headaches out of managing people while growing a business. Mr. Witt owns and manages his own repair shop, and he travels across the country teaching at various automotive conferences and seminars. After his presentation Friday afternoon the entire group was hosted for cocktails and appetizers at our weekend hosts, Glenn and Gail Lenhard's impressive shop, Glenn's MG Repair, and later a dinner and BMTA business meeting at the unique Tampa Bay Auto Museum owned by Alain Cerf. During the business meeting, a lively discussion about the future direction of the association took place moderated by BMTA president Mike Engard

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FROM THE CHAIR

By Michael Engard, Ragtops and Roadsters

Greetings fellow BMTA Members.

The 2008 BMTA Conference and Trade Show was a big success! I'm sure that everyone who visited Florida and attended will join with the Board of Directors in thanking Gail and Glenn Lenhard of Glenn's MG Repair for their efforts putting together this wonderful event. You'll be able to read all about it in this newsletter.

I sincerely encourage everyone to attend the 2009 event as the social interaction and information exchange that goes on is one of the core benefits of belonging to the BMTA. The chance to meet and greet the other professionals in the British Car Community makes us all stronger and better able to serve our clients. We're working now to finalize a location and date for 2009 and will get you the information soon.



BMTA president, Michael Engard, welcomes everyone to dinner at the Tampa Bay Automobile Museum.

Your current board of directors will continue to move the organization ahead, we heard from many members at the conference with ideas on projects for and the direction of the BMTA.

Kip Lankenau and Carl Heideman's board terms expire this year. As a result, we'll soon be sending out nomination forms for elections of members to the Board of Directors, We're also starting several committees which may include membership, elections, events/2009 conference and advertising/marketing. We'll need volunteers for these committees and will have more information about these in the election mailing.

Finally, we are always looking for new members to join the BMTA. Every member can help. If you know of someone in the industry who should join the BMTA, talk to him and encourage membership. We've been a grassroots organization for more than five years now and every member's effort helps.

New Members

Hemmings Sport & Exotic Magazine, Bennington, VT

Kat Kare, Inc., San Juan, Puerto Rico

The MGB Hive, Cambridge, England

Sports Car Parts, Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Union Jack, San Martin, CA Restoration Parts

Manufacturing (China Auto Group), Irvine, CA

K & T Vintage Sports Cars, LLC, Allentown, PA

Mantell Motorsport, Sidney, IL

Garage Ernest Leroux, Inc., Terrebonne, Quebec, Canada

CoolCat Express Corp., Bedford, NY

MG Five Speed Company, Green Cove Springs, FL

International Classics, LLC, Skokie, IL

W & G Motorparts LLP, Homewood, IL

Restoration Supply Company, Escondido, CA

Do you know someone who should join the BMTA?



George Witt, AMI



John Hackett, appraiser

Guest Speakers BMTA Winter Conference



Left to right: John Heckman, Grundy Worldwide; Donna Wares and Bryant Kelle, Hagerty Insurance; David Wallens, Classic Motorsports; Chuck Helt, Glenn's MG Repair; Jonathan Stein, Hagerty Insurance; Moderator: Carl Heideman, Eclectic Motorworks. Not pictured: John Twist, University Motors, and Glenn Lenhard, Glenn's MG Repair.

MGB Side Cover Breather

By Glenn Lenhard, Glenn's MG Repair, St. Petersburg, Florida

Recently I had some discussion with a British car shop owner about oil consumption issues that may be caused by a problem with the front engine breather plate on MGB engines. He was unsure of exactly what was causing the problem, but knew only that by replacing the cover, or modifying it, the problem would go away.

There are two such plates on these engines, one at the back, which is a plain blanking plate that covers the access area for the cam followers, and one at the front which doubles as a crankcase vent. As an engine runs, there is a certain amount of backpressure from the compression and firing that is present in the crankcase. That pressure must be vented in some manner, either to atmosphere as in the case of the MGA engines using a straight inverted "J" pipe, or through a hose into the intake manifold. Early year MGB's use a PCV valve, and later ones merely have a "y" connection and hoses that connect directly to the carburetor(s).

There were at least two different versions of this plate, and the early ones are directly covered over with very small holes as shown in photo 1. We plan on checking this style out more carefully in the future, but for now we are more concerned with the later styles as in photo 2, although the early ones could possibly have the same problem.

Inside this assembly is a wire mesh that allows vapor to pass through. Any liquid oil present is trapped by this mesh, which then

can flow back to the engine. In many cases, this mesh has been totally blocked by hard carbon deposits that prevent it from doing its job. We have tried many different ways of testing for this problem. The easiest is to just blow through the pipe with your mouth making sure it blows easily. This however only makes sure the oil separator is not completely plugged, causing excessive crankcase blow-by. This blow-by can then force oil out of seals and gaskets, and possibly cause oil consumption by oil entering the combustion chamber upwards past the rings.

The factory manual states that there should be a slight negative pressure (vacuum) present in the engine at all times. The simple device shown in photo below can test this. We usually see 1 or 2 inches of vacuum in this manner depending on engine speed if all is well.



This test however will not uncover the problem that seems to be the most severe manifestation, one that we have encountered on a very small number of engines, but that when encountered causes extreme amounts of oil to enter the combustion chamber by traveling out of the breather pipe and directly into the carburetor body, or past the early style PCV valve. This phenomenon occurs when only the upper portion of the oil separator mesh is plugged by deposits, leaving the lower area clear. The side cover is normally filled in the bottom with liquid oil that is splashed in by the valve train. When the upper mesh is plugged, the oil is actually pulled up out of the lower area by the intake manifold depression and is pulled directly into the engine.



Drawing 1

It has been suggested that a remedy for this is to cut open and remove the oil separator material. We do not recommend this, as the separator serves another purpose; that of a flame arrestor. During intake manifold backfiring that could occur under certain conditions, a flame is produced in the manifold that could easily travel back to the engine crankcase and ignite the oil and fuel vapors present. Many engines have a similar type of "flame trap." The most well known in the automotive trade is the one used by Volvo for many years, that also had a chronic tendency to sludge up, causing excessive crankcase pressure. This was an inexpensive part, and was usually replaced as a regular maintenance item by experienced Volvo shops.

We have tried chemical cleaning (carburetor immersion tank, Safety Kleen, etc.) with negative results. The preferable method of repair is to cut open the breather as shown in photo 4. Remove the mesh, then install the new material and fold the flap back down. There is no need to braze or weld this shut again. The best component we have found for this purpose is the common kitchen Chore Boy brass pad found in any grocery store. One complete Chore Boy will fit into the cavity and should give many miles of service.



Photo 5: Two to a box.



Photo 1: Early Cover



Photo 2: Late Cover



The next time you find liquid oil on top of pistons after removing a cylinder head on an MGB, be sure to give this repair a try. You will not be disappointed. We have had two engines here so far that were consuming oil to the extent of 1 quart in 50 miles that were cured by this repair. In both cases, you could blow through the pipe, and the sludge was only marginally apparent from visual inspection, but when cut open the element was found to almost totally restricted. We have started performing this on any side cover that even looks marginal on visual inspection. This amount of oil consumption is unusual, but I believe we will see more and more of these plugged side covers in the future.

My thanks to Jeff of *Motorhead* in Virginia for the clues needed to begin my research into this problem.

BMTA Conference

(continued from page 1)

of Ragtops and Roadsters in Perkasio, Pennsylvania.

The Saturday morning program continued to be interesting with presentations by representative from both Hagerty and Grundy Worldwide insurance companies, and a fascinating presentation by John Hackett, noted appraiser and owner of Classic Automotive Consultants. Once again, Saturday offered a small trade show and local club car show. Advanced Performance Technology, Classic Motorsports, Eclectic Motorworks, Moss Motors and the MG Five Speed Company displayed their newest product offerings. A chilly, foggy morning limited the attendance at the car show, but those who came were able to enjoy a great box lunch and afternoon sessions that discussed proper care and maintenance for tires for British cars led by Chuck Helt from Glenn's



Cocktails in the midst of MGs at Glenn's MG Repair where Glenn and Gail Lenhard opened their shop to BMTA members.

Put the BMTA Logo in Your Ad!



Every day more members are adding the BMTA logo to their advertisements. Putting the BMTA logo in your ad compliments the BMTA group ad and brands your business as a quality business.

If you have any questions about getting the BMTA logo in your advertisements, call or email Alan at Eclectic Motorworks or have your advertising rep down the logo from the BMTA website at: <http://www.britcar.org/logos.html>

Have you been to the BMTA discussion board lately?

If you haven't, you've been missing some great discussions including:

- The BMTA Annual Conference and Trade Show wrap-up
- Shock, master cylinder and water pump rebuilding
- Daily tech tips
- ... and more!

Visit <http://www.britcar.org/discussion/> and join in! If you cannot remember your login and password information, are having difficulty logging in or do not currently have access to this area of the website, please contact Alan at Eclectic Motorworks at 616.355.2850 or email him at eclecticalan@yahoo.com for more information.

MG Repair, and technical tips and British car conundrums led by John Twist of University Motors and Glenn Lenhard. These sessions had broad appeal for both the shop owners and local British car enthusiasts who came out for the car show.

Sunday morning's sessions began with David Wallens from *Classic Motorsport Magazine* discussion on "How to Write a Press Release." This was followed by John Heckman from Grundy Worldwide Insurance introducing a new program designed especially for the business needs of classic car and hot rod shops that should lower their business insurance costs while actually improving their overall business coverage. The final program was by Jonathan Stein and Brian Kolle of Hagerty Insurance discussing "Claims: Concerns and Resolutions for the Shop Owner."

The BMTA conference continues to grow each year – seeing the organization gaining a stronger and stronger footing, both financially and organizationally. This year's trade show needs to be followed with a more aggressive and larger show that will hopefully draw a bigger audience from a broader area. Properly done, the trade show could be a major focal point for shops and



Not everything was work! Here members enjoy dinner among exotic cars from yester year and hear about the Tampa Bay Automobile Museum from Alain Cerf (left) who owns the collection.

enthusiasts to see the latest parts and novelties for their hobby and customer needs as well providing a launching pad for new products and services from BMTA member companies.

To continue to survive in the future our hobby needs a strong foundation of parts suppliers, shops and businesses dedicated to maintaining the various British marques, and a vibrant network of national and local organizations that promote the enjoyment and enthusiasm of British motorcars and cycles. The annual conference is the perfect annual event to solidify the BMTA, and hopefully, it will continue to grow and expand its supporting role for our hobby.