



NEWS

Newsletter of Bay British Cars

Bay British Cars Meeting Minutes of July 5th

The July 5, 2011, meeting was called to order at 6:30pm by BBC President, Greg Lyon, at Zachary's on Grace. There were twenty-one members in attendance.

Charlie Schott, BBC Treasurer, reported a balance of \$ 631.45. Expenditures: car badges: \$285.00; scavenger hunt: \$38.90; dues refund \$20.00; for a total of \$343.90. Deposits: car badges; \$40.00; sale of clothing: \$81.70

Old Business:

- President, Greg Lyons, thanked everyone who participated in the scavenger hunt. A great time was had with many members gaining new information about the Port St. Joe area. An enjoyable waterside lunch was enjoyed by all following the scavenger hunt. *organizers note: NO ONE got all the clues correct!
- The website for ordering clothing is: www.queensboro.com please contact Ken with the items you are interested in purchasing.
- Bob Lowy reminded members of the upcoming October 14-16 GOF in Athens, GA. It is being organized by Earl & Beth Ehrie (also members of our club). Please make reservations as soon as possible. Organizers of the event are currently making arrangements for a Sunday morning 10:00am visit to view a private car collection.
- Pheona and Joe Kaiser, our newsletter editors extraordinaire, recently had a lightning strike to their iMac computer which unfortunately was "zapped". Our newsletter might be of an abbreviated nature until they have a iMac once again in cyberspace. They encourages members to provide them with material to include in the newsletter.
- Our club will provide holiday baskets for residents at Lisenby Nursing Home as we did last year. Jerome Brundage, staff member at the nursing home, will be providing us with a list of suggested items. It was also suggested that we "adopt" a resident.

New Business:

- The July run is scheduled for the 16th. Information will be forthcoming via email
- Greg Lyon's is working on a "poker run" as an upcoming event.
- Currently our officers' term is for one year. These terms will be expiring soon and election of new/continuing officers will be held.
- There was a suggestion that the club add the office of "historian" to document our meetings/events. It will be necessary to purchase a binder and allocate monies from the treasury to support this suggestion.
- Greg will be supplying the club the address of Albert Amato our member who has been transferred.

Mark Your Calendar:

- August meeting: August 2nd 6:30pm at Zachary's on Grace
- September – BBC will meet (party) at the home of Bob & Laurie Lowy
- October 4th and November 1st 6:30pm, location on the beach, restaurant to be determined
- December 1st – BBC will meet (party) at the Bob & Lynn Moore home.
- Southeaster Fall GOF to be held in Athens, GA. Semgrtr.gof@hotmail.com
- Panama City FIRST FRIDAY FEST, August 5th

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35pm.
Minutes submitted by Jan Schott



BBC Scavenger Hunt - June 18th



Greg and Friend



Ken and Christine



Guest



Lunch



Cars & Boats



Lunch



Terry and Sandy



Pavillion

My Too Brief Life With An MG TF

by Ron Keysor, Jaguar Car Club of North Florida

My introduction to car ownership came in 1955 in the form of a green 1941 Chevy coupe that my ever-frugal father awakened from a long snooze in a garage in my hometown, Norwalk, Ohio. I was coming up a senior in high school, generally held a job, and more importantly had a girl friend.

My faithful English three-speed bicycle, bought used for \$35, no longer met my needs. That bike was a revelation in an era of 45-lb. balloon-tired one-speed bikes. I recall racing downhill into a stream valley at top speed, pumping hard up the other side, hopping off half way up, trudging to the top, and then remounting. My lightweight English bike with its three-speed Sturmey Archer hub gears let me ride up hills. Years later, after owning many really fine bicycles, a Schwinn Paramount, a Pinarello, two De Rosas, etc., nothing outshines the joy of owning of that English bike.

With this brief history of my transport and fondness for things British, speed forward to Rome, Italy, where I am working at APO 794 (an Army post office) in the American Embassy Annex across the Via Veneto from the embassy. It's summer 1957. The green Chevy and the Brit three speed were just memories. A year earlier I had volunteered for the draft and had been trained as a trigger puller and postal worker by the U.S. Army. But the gods were looking out for me.

Uncle Sam chose me to receive \$300 in civilian clothes of my choice at the Army PX in Livorno, Italy, essentially doubled my pay, and dispatched me by rail to Rome from Livorno, where I had been writing money orders at APO 19 (the Army post office on the base outside of Livorno) to a life of as an almost civilian at the APO in the embassy annex in Rome. It was heady stuff making chit chat with Ambassador Zellerbach and wife at a party he hosted for newcomers at his grand home.

In Rome I discovered public transportation, buses and trolleys. I also discovered girls, Italian girls, American girls, whatever. As told in an earlier article about my Jaguar Mark 2, I told how my brother Clark back in Ohio had purchased an Austin Healey 100 while living in Dayton. He sent a picture, and I immediately became a sports car fancier. It's not that Italy was swarming with sports cars. The first one I recall seeing on base in Livorno was a Porsche Speedster with its top up. "This is one is one ugly car," I'm thinking. There were also a couple of the new MGAs on the base.

Rome was a Fiat world, from the elderly Topolinos through the newer 600s and 1100s, plus a smattering of Lancias, Alfas, and the like. I was there for the introduction of the greatly anticipated Fiat Cinquecento, the 500, which will be coming here soon, more than 50 years later. A rare treat for me was seeing an Austin-Healey 100 with painted side panels parked on the Via Veneto one night. My admiration for that design endures, surviving my ownership of a Healey 3000 in the 60s.

GIs were not permitted to buy cars from Italian nationals in those days, nor could they sell them. My roommates with older American cars, a Studebaker and a circa 1948 Plymouth sedan that occasionally rented out as a gangster car for Italian movie makers had to drive their cars down to Naples to dispose of them, the fated Plymouth with a rod knocking all the way. Those cars were dumped in Naples Bay by the Navy—it was said the Navy was particular that the spare tire, radio, etc., were in the car for their dip.

With all of my roommates without cars and girls on my mind—ever try dating by bus—I decided I needed a car. Earlier, in a blindingly prescient act untypical of my usual behavior, I had clipped a brief article from an Army newspaper that said enlisted men who had been ordered to that command before a certain date were permitted to have the Army transport their POV (lingo for private owner vehicle) back to



the ZI (Zone of the Interior, other wise known as the States) for free. That included me.

As if by miracle, a homeward bound Army sergeant placed an ad in the embassy newsletter offering for sale his 1953 MG TF. I promptly came up with \$775 to buy it. MGs weren't really on my want list, though I was totally in love with a silver over maroon MG Magnette that was often parked in the U.S. consulate. My TF had been titled in Germany in '53, and began life painted gray with a red interior. When it came into my hands it had been nicely resprayed in a soft yellow, a color I found appealing. Looking back at it now, I recall the car as being almost perfect except for the tires, which I replaced early on, adding white Port-A-Walls (remember those?).

Owning a car in Rome at that time required precautions. If you parked on the street overnight, you could be sure your car would be opened and searched. Cars with wind wings were a piece of cake. The TF, of course, didn't have door locks, and I soon had my copper knock-off hammer stolen from the tool box under the hood. The car was secure when I was at work, as I could park at the embassy under the watchful eyes U.S. Marine guards. Overnight it was parked in the garage under our apartment building, where a young man kept watch over our cars. But inevitably there were risks.

American's living in Rome had lots of advantages. Many of the Italians we worked with were fluent in English, the Rome Daily American newspaper kept us informed, there were two English-language theaters, and, perhaps most helpful, was Frank's Garage located in the "American" section of the city. Frank, an expatriate American, had lived in Oberlin, Ohio, in his earlier years, and he used to buy auto paint in my hometown, Norwalk, perhaps 25 miles away. Frank literally had a lock on the market for car repairs for English speakers, including me. Not that his shop was perfect. When a mechanic told him that he didn't have gear oil to top off my transmission, I was listening and understood enough English to know Frank told him to put motor oil in the gear box. I later bought gear oil at the PX in Livorno and changed it myself.

When it came my time to rotate home in June 1958, my "orders" came down to Rome from Livorno, our headquarters, without the critical words saying I was eligible to bring home my car. This caused me momentary panic, but finding an American buyer for the MG on short notice was going to be challenging, and I was loving that car. When I complained to our postal unit commander and requested leave to go to Livorno to pursue the matter, he intervened and got a special order cut that included the POV. Several days later, having driven up to Livorno with my Air Force buddy, Dave Whitman, soon to be the owner of a

(continues back page)



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Panama City, Bay County, Florida
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**Treasurer
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**Secretary
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**Web Master
Ken Waringa**

**Newsletterist's
Pheona & Joe Kaiser**

**Bay British Cars Meeting
August 2 at 6:30 PM
Zachary's on Grace**

My Too Brief Life With An MG TF (continued)

MG as I parked it at the U.S. port facilities. A day or two later I happened to be standing with other returning GIs on the deck of the MSTs ship, the Gen. Alexander Patch, awaiting departure, when I saw the yellow TF hoisted aboard. That was comforting.

After stops at Naples and Gibraltar, we arrived at Brooklyn Army Terminal perhaps 10 days later. We were soon disgorged onto the dock there, with the Army returnees expecting a bus ride to Fort Dix in New Jersey for separation from the service. Again, the gods were smiling on me. One of my companions asked an NCO running the show if those of us with cars arriving by ship in Brooklyn could get separated at nearby Fort Hamilton. To my delight, that request was granted, and I soon found myself at that venerable Army base on the southern tip of Brooklyn. The next day, in company with other GIs wanting to reclaim cars at the terminal, we took a subway to the port. After paying \$5 or something like that to have my car pushed up for agricultural inspection and fueling, I was on my way back to Fort Hamilton and my separation a day or two later. The trip from Livorno had left the right front fender slightly dented, but that was a small price for the free transport to the states.

Finally freed of Army active duty one sunny and joyful June afternoon in 1958, I loaded my duffel bag in the passenger seat of the MG, and began my scary drive through the Brooklyn Battery tunnel, across Manhattan, down into and through the Holland Tunnel eventually out into the New Jersey countryside, where I could finally relax as tooted along at maybe 55 mph and sought out the Pennsylvania Turnpike and the all night drive home to Ohio.

Over the next few months, as I worked at my father's warehouse and prepared to move to Dayton to attend the University of Dayton, I

bought a TF shop manual, pulled out the grill and radiator to replace the timing chain the vain hope that would quiet the motor. I also addressed an annoying problem when the perforate tube inside the muffler rusted loose and dropped to the bottom of the muffler, where it rattled away. My efforts to trap the pipe failed, and I had to hacksaw off the muffler-it was a welded exhaust system-and found an aftermarket muffler. There were other minor repairs, but nothing of any real significance.

The TF's life with me came to an end in January 1959 by an ironic turn of fate. While home in Norwalk for the weekend, I had driven my oldest friend to the Greyhound bus stop for his trip to Cleveland to join the Army as a draft volunteer. To my lasting regret a few days later he showed up on my doorstep near Dayton. Having been declared 4F and being between colleges, he proposed that we go to California and make our careers there. Since we needed better transportation, I placed an ad in the Cleveland Plain Dealer and shortly thereafter sold the TF for \$1,300. It was a sad parting, for that car never failed me, and its replacement, a really clapped out Porsche 1500 Super with the infamous roller bearing crank and an apparently pretty abusive racing history was to take its place for our trip to San Diego. My second big mistake with that car was not selling it in California, where many of people already knew a Porsche wasn't a place where you hung a swing.

The Porsche's ugly fate was to be traded in on a VW bus by my brother, a scenario that left me driving a reliable '50 Chevy through college. What a comedown. Fortunately, soon after graduation it was replaced by a '61 Austin Healey with louvered hood, fender mirrors and . . . issues.

