

# THE BRITISH DIAMOND

30th April, 2020

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## President's Message

Hi, Everyone,

Sadly, my last newsletter predictions are pretty much out the window due to COVID-19. With that in mind Governor Carney's emergency declaration banned gatherings of large crowds, effective March 13<sup>th</sup>, effectively ending our car show. It's pretty clear to me everything else is a wash possibly into the summer. Our way of life of hand washing, six-foot social distances, minimizing our risk and counting the days when we can return to "normal." As much as we wanted the Lewes Motor Car show to go on, we reluctantly made the decision to wait to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of The Lewes British Motorcar Show "The British are Coming...Again" next year. On the bright side, we have another year to prepare our cars for that first prize! The sooner the better! Well let's see if there some better news.

As of this writing The British Car Club of Delaware, Inc. is about one second from finalization! Of course, with our new way of life that second may turn into a few hours. Let me give you an update. The formation of a corporation is selecting board members. They are me, Bill, Sharon, Calvin, Mike, Jerry, Trevor, and Geoff. Additionally, we are conforming our by-laws to Delaware criteria. The final step will be applying for Federal 501 (c)7 non-profit status. Maybe "one second away" is optimistic but we are making progress.

Speaking of optimism, I just glanced at the latest tentative BCCD schedule. Being positive is our best chance to get through the rest of the year into the fall... well, our fall activities is a wait and see situation. I hope we can salvage our Fall Car Show at Bellanca Airport and our annual Southern Chapter rally in and around Sussex county. In the meantime, as we patiently wait the COVID-19 restrictions lift, go look at your car and get it ready to drive.

Stay safe, keep your "social" distance, wear a mask when in public, get to know and love takeout and tip big.

Terry



Every care was taken to insure the accuracy of the contents of this newsletter. The editor(s) accept no responsibility for any effect caused by errors or emissions.

## From the Editor:

I asked you to tell me about your first Little British Car. Thank you for your responses, keep 'em coming!. You will find those I have received in this newsletter but first, what about MY first LBC.

As you know I am a Brit and was born and lived there for the first 42 years of my life. A number of LBCs passed through my hands during that time but my first car was not British. It was Italian and the make name began with an F. Alas, it didn't have 12 cylinders, nor was it red. In fact it had 4 tiny cylinders totalling about 700cc and was Bahama Yellow (a.k.a. gold), a Fiat 600. It did, however, sport the Abarth scorpion badge on the front. Fun car!

My first **British** car, bought in about 1965, was a pale blue Ford Prefect similar to the one pictured. I think it was a '57. It was the Deluxe model but still had rubber floors and a metal dashboard. The engine was a 1172cc flathead four backed by a 3 speed manual gearbox. The gearstick was a long wand like affair that came out of the floor by your feet. Reverse was where first is on a four speed and I am lucky not to have front ended the car behind me several times. On the plus side, that gearstick helped make the car an excellent snog-mobile. By putting the car into 2<sup>nd</sup> gear and releasing the hand-brake you could snuggle up to your passenger and enjoy a long passionate snog (kiss, for the uninitiated).



Trevor

Bill Tattersall's first LBC, a 1963 Triumph Spitfire "This was back in the days when I was going to be the next Bob Tullius. "



## Forever Young

From the AH Club newsletter

My mirror's lately been unkind,  
Exposing all those lumps and lines.  
Is that receding hairline mine?  
When I was thirty, it looked just fine!  
Those baggy eyes 'neath brows so white,  
Just yesterday were firm and tight.  
To hell with this! I'll take a drive!  
The Healey will, my youth, as sin.  
I'm not as limber as I was,  
My belly flat and chin with fuzz.  
I pull the choke. I turn the key,  
And push the starter anxiously.  
She stutters, then she catches hold,  
And suddenly, I don't feel old.  
No aches, no pains- sheer joy instead  
The open road lies just ahead!  
Beneath a cloudless, sunny sky,  
The verdant scenery flashes by.  
I downshift through a hairpin turn  
Then wind her out without concern.  
But all too soon the time has come,  
When I must steer the Healey home.  
I check the mirror changing lanes,  
And notice something rather strange.  
I have to do a second take,  
Before I set the parking brake,  
For in that looking glass I see,  
The kid, I once was, smile at me!



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## The Deadly History Of This Delaware Bridge Is Terrifying But True

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The Indian River Inlet Bridge has a long and dark history, with death and collapse being a regular occurrence. Do you travel this way regularly? Did you know about its terrifying but true story?

In 1934, the first bridge was created to solve the travel problem. Bridge technology wasn't exactly great yet, and the rapid waters and exposure of the Indian River Inlet took this first bridge down in less than five years.

The second bridge was the scene of an icy nightmare. Though it seemed to be much more stable than its predecessor, the second Indian River Inlet Bridge collapsed in February of 1948, just 8 years after it was built, taking with it three souls. All from Dover, they plunged into the icy water, and perished at the scene. Maybe these deaths should have been a clue that the Indian River Inlet Bridge project was doomed.

Delaware engineers thought "Third Time's a Charm" and it took four years for a third bridge to be built. This bridge was holding up well to the currents and swirling waters of the inlet, but it did not last more than a decade.

In 1962, the Indian River Inlet bridge was so damaged by a deadly Nor' Easter that it was declared impassable. Imminent collapse was the warning of the DeIDOT workers who shut it down. With this bridge's unbelievable history - averaging one bridge collapse per decade - it's crazy to me that they continued to press on.

The first span of the latest Indian River Inlet Bridge seemed to hold up for a bit, and Delaware added a second span in 1976. Traffic on the bridge was constantly heavy. The inlet was relentless, though, and the water scoured the bridge's supports wave after wave. This bridge would not be the brick house that the Big Bad Wolf could not break down.

By 1989, significant damage was noted and the bridge was declared "structurally deficient", with collapse possible after one more severe storm. Still, the bridge stayed in use. As traffic got heavier and heavier, over 14,000 travelers crossed each span every day.

If you grew up driving over this bridge, chances are you took several trips up and down each span, all while it was structurally deficient. How does that make you feel?

It took until 2005 (yes, 16 years after the declaration) for bridge officials to realize that collapse was imminent. The prediction was that between 2008-2013, the bridge was sure to fail.

The newest Indian River Inlet Bridge began construction in 2003. Guess how long that lasted? By 2006, the project was dead. Three years. We're on bridge number **five** for those keeping score at home. Engineers had begun to build the longest arch-span bridge in the world, but the exit ramps were unstable and the project had to be halted just three years after it began.

Once more, engineers met to tackle this seemingly haunted bridge. In 2009, the final attempt was made to create a bridge that could stand up to the churning Indian River Inlet. Though it took over 75 years and six bridges to create a bridge that will safely carry travelers over the Indian River Inlet, it seems that this rendition is here to stay. It is predicted to last 100 years, though I'm not so sure I believe it. Maybe I'll take the long way.

1934



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## The 1953 Ford Prefect

(Trevor's First British Car)



In 1953 a much re-designed Ford Prefect was introduced alongside the similar [Ford Anglia](#) and remained in production until 1959. Externally, the Prefect can be distinguished from the Anglia by having vertical bars on the radiator

grille and four doors. The old separate chassis had gone, replaced by integral construction, and coil independent front suspension supplanted the transverse leaf spring. Girling hydraulic brakes were fitted, initially 7 in drums but quickly increased to 8 in (200 mm) A new side-valve engine of 1172 cc engine was fitted having the same bore, stroke and layout of the previous engine, but in all other respects completely different - changes included adjustable tappets, raising the compression ratio from 6.3:1 to 7:1 and larger inlet valves, resulting in the power output increasing by 20% to 36 bhp.<sup>[14]</sup>

Inside there were separate front seats trimmed in PVC with leather as an option and two circular instruments in front of the driver one containing the speedometer and the other, fuel and water temperature gauges. De Luxe models from the second dashboard update in 1959 included glove box locks.<sup>[15]</sup> The gear change was floor-mounted. The heater was an optional extra. The windscreen wipers were powered by the inlet manifold vacuum; when the engine was working hard, the vacuum fell away and the wipers slowed or stopped. The dashboard was revised twice; the binnacle surrounding the steering column was replaced by a central panel with twin dials towards the driver's side in 1956; the last from 1959 had twin dials in a binnacle in front of the driver and 'magic ribbon' AC speedo similar to the 1957 E-series Vauxhall Velox/Cresta and '58/'59 PA models.

In 1955 an [estate car](#) version was introduced, marketed as the [Ford Squire](#) and mechanically identical to the contemporary [Escort](#), an estate car version of the Ford Anglia 100E, but with wooden strakes and a higher trim level.

The Motor magazine tested a de-luxe 100E in 1957 and recorded a top speed of 71 mph (114 km/h) and acceleration from 0-60 mph (97 km/h) in 32.2 seconds. A "touring" fuel consumption of 33.1 miles per gallon (imperial) was recorded. On the home market it cost £658 including taxes of £220.<sup>[13]</sup>

## E Type Update

You saw my first LBC on page 2 and on the left here.

The last LBC I bought in Blighty was the E Type I am currently re-restoring. Here is a progress report:



EME1B now runs and drives! It took some fiddling to get the engine to run smoothly enough and much more fiddling to get the bonnet to fit.

There are, of course, glitches. The gearstick on the new box fouls the cover so I will be doing a bit of surgery to fix that. The lights, heater and wipers all have electrical problems, and the door locks are a bit dodgy (the driver's (right) door won't open from the outside and the left door is a bit iffy too, but does open).

But she runs!

Next job will be the dashboard and instruments.

Trevor

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## A WINDMILL FOR TATTERSALL TO TILT AT

**Bill Tattersall**

Ever since way back in my “wannabe” SCCA racing days I have had a love for the 7 Series Lotuses (Loti?). Recently the opportunity arose for me to purchase a basket case Lotus 7.

The owner had taken it apart many years ago with an eye toward reassembling it as a racer. This never happened, so I am the beneficiary of his benign neglect. Basically what I have is multiple boxes of Lotus parts and no idea how to restore and reassemble them, even assuming that all the parts are there. Well, as they say, “a faint heart never fills a flush” so off I go on my project.

I wasn't going to say anything to anyone about it but, at Trevor's prodding, my enthusiasm has won out and I am writing this for the newsletter.



I will probably make a pain out of myself by bothering George and Paul and anyone else with knowledge of assembling one of these cars. I also hope to take advantage of some existing local 7's as templates.

There will be no reports on my progress until I make some, so don't ask.

The picture you see is the most intact piece of the car right now.

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# MGTC

By Terry Young  
February 25, 2020

I've been wanting a MG T-Type car for a while. Especially after seeing these classics at several car shows through the years. It's my idea of a "classic" sports car. Many G.I.'s drove MG T-Types during the course of the war and found them fun to drive. In post war years the MGTC production began exporting many to the US with an EXU designation in the Vehicle ID. The MGTC was the car that started the sports car obsession here in the United States. This car's design, fashionable in the 30's, used righthand drive steering as standard and affordable at about \$600.00. When the MG T-Type production ended in 1955 they were considered obsolete. The MGA era was introduced.



As Baby Boomer growing up in a northeastern Pennsylvania farm, I had no idea T-Types even existed. I was familiar with the Ford Motor Company's 1910's model T's and later model A's driven in the occasional parade

blasting their 100db ooga horn to everyone's delight. Thinking back, my uncle had an old Model T sitting in my grandfather's barn. It sat there for years until it finally sold around 1965. It actually started right up. He drove it out of the barn, spiderwebs and all right on to the trailer! Unbelievable...



Our family cars were '50's and '60's vintage Plymouths and Dodges all the while drooling over the newly introduced Corvettes and Thunderbirds. Oh, and I almost forgot. The closest vehicle we owned was a four-cylinder Allis Chalmers tractor. Fun to drive though the farm fields. It had to be hand cranked on cold days. Always a workout until it finally fired up. Getting back to the MG T-Types. There were so many good examples almost within my grasp reminiscent of an elusive butterfly. But then one night while lamenting to Jim Martin about my car trials and tribulations he said while visiting George Alterman's automotive shop saw George's newly acquired MGTC. Jim indicated George may want to sell it. A flash of my previous experiences passed before my eyes. But maybe this time would be different. I thought of several questions.

Would it be available? Would George be willing to sell it to me? Would the price be affordable? Only time would tell.

Approaching George after our Fall Show he invited me to his shop for a look. Arriving George walked me through his garage past a Lotus Caterham and an Esprit. There it was sitting in the back corner a green 1949 MGTC. Wow! Although, partially apart I could see the potential.

As I gazed over the 1949 motorcar, I acted like I knew all about it. I didn't. I had no clue. Although my experience with my MGB restoration gave me an indicated of some of the work that would most likely need done. The XPAG engine, leather seats, steering wheel, hood and a couple of boxes of miscellaneous



parts were in good order. As I took a few photos George pointed out the four extra 19 inch 48 spoke wheels. What a bonus! As we turned our attention back toward the car's engine compartment, he said he had just rebuilt the dual SU carburetors and just started working on the distributor. Now it was time to ask what he wanted for it. I didn't pass out! Seemed like a doable amount. I would have to talk it over with my banker, my wife Georgia. Of course, I already knew. Calling the next day and not wanting another T-Series to slip by I agreed to the price and made arrangements to pick it up. Now it's sitting in my garage.



## My First Car by Becky Brown



I graduated from Monmouth College in Monmouth, Illinois in 1969. I was newly engaged to my first husband, and planned to work near where he was a camp counselor in Maine that summer. I was visiting my fiancé in New York, and was trying to find a car to buy. The selection was much better up there than in Chadds Ford, where I lived. I was so happy to find a 1965 TR4a, but didn't have enough money for it. My fiancé's Dad was a wonderful man, and he co-signed a loan for me. I then drove my new wheels to Maine for the summer. I returned home, and then drove the car to Illinois, where I taught second grade for the year while my fiancé finished college. I learned to drive in snow and ice in that wonderful vehicle. After his graduation, I drove it back to Chadds Ford, then two weeks later, got married. It went back to NY, and I drove it to work for a few years, until there was a bad hurricane that flooded the apartment parking lot, and drowned my little car.

Fast forward to July, 2016. I had been searching for several months, and came across a beautiful little white 1972 TR6 in a town near Reading, PA. We were in the area to see Ringo, so went to see the car!! It was about the fourth one I had looked at. The man who had owned it had passed away, and his son was trying to find a new home for it. I made an offer, and it was accepted. So, back we go to pick it up. My husband had talked to a man who was going to fix my clutch. So we drove it to his place, and that and other work was done on it. It finally



was sitting in our driveway in October of 2016.

### First car

#### It was a Brit car - 64 AH 3000

My girlfriend in high school (1 yr older) asked what I would get as I was approaching 16 as a known motorhead.

Growing up in a small rural town a muscle car was likely but she liked Brit sports cars so now I liked them as well if she did.

The next week we went to see the car noted and with all the money I had (\$650). I test drove and bargained for it.

To my surprise the seller let me have it (maybe to preclude any embarrassment in front of my girlfriend ).

I drove it home with no license and improved the car till my father let me put it on the road at age 17

My car disease has never been cured over 100 Brit cars later

Steve Schultheis

# BRIT TITBITS

Need some professional help with your LBC? Here is the link to a list of resources for a variety of things from general maintenance to bodywork and upholstery.

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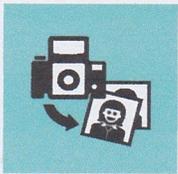
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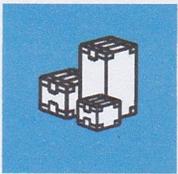
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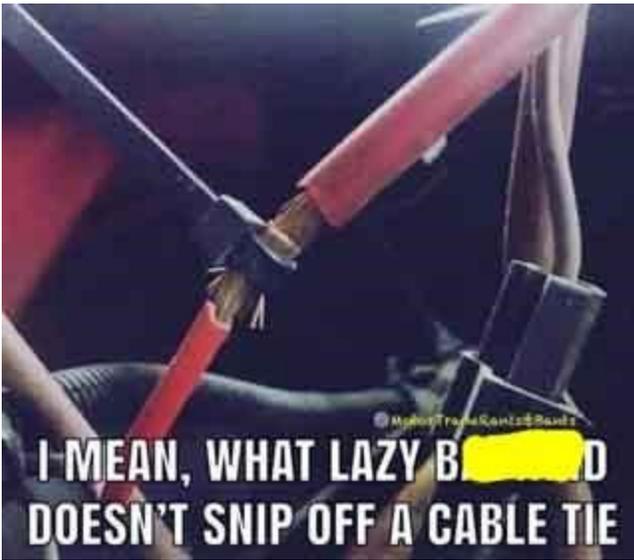
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## Members Market Place

I still have a tan interior taken from my 67 Healey 3000. It is a replaced interior. Probably 4 or 5 years old.

I have no idea how much someone would pay for it but offers will be greatly appreciated.

Thanks Buzz Marshall 610-513-6660 [buzzmar@frontier.com](mailto:buzzmar@frontier.com)

\*\*\*\*\*  
*Do you have an Jaguar XK engine with a dodgy water pump?*

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# My First LBC

By Jack Long

Like many Junior High gearheads, I read every Scholastic paperback I could get my hands on that had anything to do with cars. A lot of these were hot rod related, and I must have read *Street Rod*, by Henry Gregor Felsen, about a hundred times by the age of 12. Then I read a funny little book called *The Red Car* by Don Stanford. It told an unlikely story about a young man growing up on a ranch in the mountains of Colorado, who fell in love with a crashed MG TC that was towed into the local garage. Running afoul of his very practical father, the hero secretly buys the TC, and works with the local garage proprietor (who happens to be a very mysterious Frenchman who turns out to be a former professional racer) to rebuild it. And just coincidentally the SCCA decides to hold a road race in his little mountain town. And of course, he and Frenchy race the TC in it.

While the story was wildly improbable, it fired my imagination with its portrayal of the TC as a tiny, nimble thoroughbred taking on the fat, soft and overpowered American cars of the day. The die was cast – forget the big V8's and drag racing; sports cars and road racing became my nirvana.

A few years later, as a penniless college student, I managed to scrape up a few hundred bucks and decided I was at the point in my life where I had to have a sports car. And of course, I hardly knew anything about evaluating a (very) used car. Nonetheless, I bought myself a very crusty pull-handle 1965 MGB that in cowboy terms had been “rode hard and put up wet”. It sported about 5 different shades of red paint, the sills were made of rusty lace, and you could check the tread on both front tires from the driver's seat just by looking where the floors should have been. But it ran, usually on 3 cylinders, and went fast enough for me to learn that all the transmission synchros had left the building many years earlier. Oh well, all the racers double-clutch anyway so it was a worthy skill to learn.

I dragged it to a friend's shop where he kindly loaned me the use of some tools and space. I discovered that 8-inch galvanized stove pipe had the same outside diameter as MGB sills, and that there was enough of a flange left from the inner sill membrane that I could pop rivet them on. The driver's side floor was made out of a crumpled Buick Electra 225 door skin that I pinched from behind a body shop, stomped flat and riveted in. The passenger floor came from a junked oil furnace cabinet. A fresh set of plugs and wires cured the misfire for at least 35 miles at a time until cylinder #3 got oil-fouled again. Gallons of bondo were troweled on and sculpted into the basic shape of an MGB. And then my friend, who painted airplanes for a living, squirted a thick coat of bright red single stage enamel on her. The pumpkin had been turned into Cinderella's coach, at least in my mind.

I drove her proudly back to school after my “restoration” and presented her to my fraternity brothers. My roommate christened her “Screamin' Lucy” for reasons too complex to explain, and the name seemed to fit. Lucy got me through about 1 semester of school before I had to do an off-campus internship and needed a car that would actually get me to work every day. So, I sold her to a fellow who had an SS-396 Chevelle who wanted something that got better gas mileage. He offered to swap me even up for the Chevelle, a factory 396/4 speed car, which today would be worth far more than any 1965 MGB. I laughed at him because who would want a car that got such poor gas mileage?

Even though Lucy went on, I am sure, to be made into razor blades or Subarus, I never regretted this adventure. She was the first of an entire fleet of LBCs that have passed through my garage, most of them MGs, with one Jaguar foray and one Spitfire that I flogged to death as an autocrosser. Screamin' Lucy was far from the best, but she will always be my first.

## David Haines

My first British car was a 1960 TRA - BRG with a black interior. I was in my senior year at Penn State and became enamored with the Triumph cars that several of my friends had. In May 1967 I was home in Pittsburgh for a visit and convinced my mother that I should have a car to go back and forth the Penn State for my final term in the fall. I purchased it at A&L Motors in Monroeville for as I recall, about \$800. It served me well as I finished the spring term and moved back to Pittsburgh for the summer. During a rainstorm in July I exceeding the traction limits of my well worn tires and planted the car into a telephone pole which totaled my first British car. However, undeterred, I moved onto a well used 1960 Austin-Healey 3000 which I bought from Lombard Motors in Monroeville. I got \$400 for the wrecked TR3A against the purchase price of \$1695.



Unfortunately, I don't have any pictures of the TR3A. I do, however, have some of my Austin-Healey. When I bought it, the car had been repainted a robin egg blue and the original grill was gone - replaced with bar grill. In 1970, I started a restoration by changing the color to Dark Green. That lasted until the 1990s when I did a body off restoration and changed the color scheme to dark metallic green over silver side covers. 53 years later I still have the Healey.



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