



# Gateway Relay

Vol IV, No. 6

St. Louis Sports Car Council

February 2015

## Council News & Notes

- As this issue gets finished and published, the weather reports are going from 1-3" of snow to 5-9" of snow in greater St. Louis, with the prospect of 3" more of the stuff on Monday. Obviously, we won't come anywhere near the Boston/New England "standard" for winter precip, but the next couple of days could prove sporting for those who have to get out. To those who have heated and attached garages, congrats! The work on your car can continue.
- One of the member clubs alerted StLSCC Central to a new car organization in west county; for lack of better, for the time being we're identifying the crew as the Westwood Cruise Group. See the calendar section for their next gatherings, we'll have the StLSCC IG team at the 21 February breakfast cruise to check out the proceedings.
- Along the same lines, if affiliated member of StLSCC learns of a new group or show/drive opportunity, pass the info along and we'll take a look.
- Finally, for the newsletter editors: the monthly feature articles are available for reproduction in your newsletter. Feel free to copy direct from the *Relay* or contact the ed.

**TR7 IT'S OUT TO STEAL THE AMERICAN ROAD**

First consider what you see: a bold, shapely wedge taken from the Grand Prix aerodynamics of the world, the slashing shape of things to come. Now consider what you don't see: the edge of the wedge knives through the wind, forcing the front down for solid control. The slippery silhouette cuts drag. Enhances power. Adds miles to the gallon. Our EPA estimates are 29.8 mpg on the road, 20.7 in city streets. Your mileage will vary depending on the type of driving you do, your driving habits, your car's condition, and optional equipment you have.

Consider sensation: a swift, nimble, fast two-seater that holds the road as if it had hands.

Consider comfort: shut your eyes and you're riding a luxury sedan (sports cars were never like this). You enter the cockpit without acrobatics, sit and stretch in well-thought spaces.

Consider the overriding sense of lightness sports cars. TR7 emerges as a beautifully simple and simply beautiful machine: a triumph of dependability priced at only \$5,649. It's a steal.

For the name of your nearest Triumph dealer call 800-447-4700. In Illinois call 800-322-4400. British Leyland Motors Inc., Lincoln, New Jersey 07036. From the land of British Racing Green.

**TRIUMPH**  
THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

## Up & Coming

- 16 Feb 2015—Tech Session** hosted by MG Club of St. Louis, at British Cars Restorations & Services, 2338 N Lindbergh Blvd, StL, 7-10 PM. Tech talk/demo on installing the wily MGB top.
- 19 Feb 2015—February RUBCO** (Retired/Unemployed British Car Owners) **Breakfast**, 9:30 AM at the Sunrise Family Restaurant, 3500 N Lindbergh. Please RSVP to Rich Berger at uca57mga@aol.com so he can get an accurate count to the restaurant.
- 19 Feb 2015—Gateway VCOA social**, at The Fountain On Locust restaurant and ice cream bar, 3037 Locust St. Details to follow, monitor <https://sites.google.com/site/gatewayvcoa/>.
- 21 Feb 2015—Breakfast Cruise**, Wildwood Cruise Group, at the Sunny Street Café, 2480 Taylor Rd, Wildwood, 8:30 AM. For information contact John Gragani, jgrag@sbcglobal.net.
- 1 Mar 2015—Annual MG Club Pinewood Derby**, 2 PM at the Gashouse Grill, 12643 Olive Blvd, Creve Coeur. Monitor [www.stlouismgclub.com/](http://www.stlouismgclub.com/).
- 3 Mar 2015—St. Louis BMW Club Monthly Social/Indoor Driver's School**, 6:30 PM at Granite City Food & Brewery, Olive & Craig Rd, Creve Coeur. Get your questions answered and join us at the track this spring!
- 8 Mar 2015—St. Louis BMW Club Tech Event**, JML Audio, 519 Rudder Rd Suite A, Fenton, 12 Noon. Josh and the team will demonstrate how they do custom audio, video, tuning and more.
- 16 Mar 2015—Tech Session** hosted by the MG Club of St. Louis, at All British Car Repair, 2618 Woodson Rd, St. Louis, 7-8 PM. Tech topic TBD, monitor [www.stlouismgclub.com/](http://www.stlouismgclub.com/).
- 21 Mar 2015—Gateway VCOA Tech Session** on brakes, 10 AM at Integrity Automotive, 9741 Gravois Rd, Affton (314)717-5556. Details to follow, monitor <https://sites.google.com/site/gatewayvcoa/>.
- 21 Mar 2015—Terry Fanning Memorial Rally & Picnic**, hosted by the MG Club of St. Louis, 10 AM-2 PM. Start at Starbucks, Dierberg's Town Plaza, 125 Plaza Dr (Taylor & Manchester), Wildwood. expect a 90-mile gimmick rally, touring some of the best roads for driving fun, will end somewhere for dinner. More info to follow, monitor [www.stlouismgclub.com/](http://www.stlouismgclub.com/).

(Continued on page 2)

**Note:** Some club driving events restrict participation to club members only, primarily for national/chapter insurance reasons. If interested in joining in on a drive or other event, we recommend you contact the club's event coordinator in advance for details.

## In Print

For starters, in January's *Thoroughbred & Classic Cars* you'll find an article comparing six (count 'em, six) variants of the Jaguar XJS: the original XJ-S, XJ-S Cabriolet, Jaguarsport XJR-S, Lister Le Mans, XJS Coupe 6.0 and XJS convertible...plus, a one-pager where Bob Tullius describes racing the XJ-S. And, for one of the senior officer of one of the StLSCC affiliated clubs who apparently is a quiet Citroen enthusiast, the magazine also includes an excellent article on the restoration of a DS. The Jag



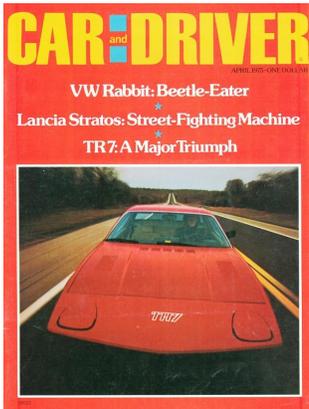
(Continued on pg. 2)

- 21 Mar 2015—Dinner meet**, Wildwood Cruise Group, Wildwood Pub & Grill, details to follow. For information contact John Gragnani at [jgrag@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jgrag@sbcglobal.net).
- 4 Apr 2014 – Annual Gateway Healey Association Wash-Up/Tune-Up**, in advance of the Forest Park Easter Concours. Details to follow, monitor <http://clubs.hemmings.com/gatewayhealey/>.
- 5 Apr 2015—54<sup>th</sup> Annual Forest Park Concours/Easter Car Show**, in the Muni upper parking lot, Forest Park, hosted by the Horseless Carriage Club of Missouri. Information at [www.hccmo.com/](http://www.hccmo.com/). The event includes the **7<sup>th</sup> Annual MG-Triumph Challenge**; monitor [www.stlouismgclub.com/](http://www.stlouismgclub.com/) and [www.sltoa.org](http://www.sltoa.org) for details/preps/scurrilous language and thinly veiled threats.
- 18 Apr 2015—Cars & Coffee returns!** Westport Plaza, I-270 and Page, 8:30 AM.
- 18-19 Apr 2015—Annual Missouri Endurance Rally**, hosted by the MG Club of St Louis, details to follow, monitor [www.stlouismgclub.com/](http://www.stlouismgclub.com/).
- 19 Apr 2015—Start of the Boeing Sports Car Club autocross season**, Family Arena, St Charles. Show about 9-9:30 for tech inspection and course walk, \$35 for six runs, AM and PM sessions. Any questions or to get on the email event listing for future autocrosses, contact Racer Steve at [sshab@yahoo.com](mailto:sshab@yahoo.com).
- 20 Apr 2015—Tech Session** hosted by MG Club of St Louis, at British Cars Restorations & Services, 2338 N Lindbergh Blvd, StL, 7-10 PM. Tech talk/demo on “the fine art of joining metals.”
- 2-3 May 2015—Fling in the Spring**, hosted by the MG Club of St Louis. Nice leisurely morning drive to Giant City State Park & Lodge, Makanda (south of Carbondale), stay the night, Sunday brunch at the lodge. Please RSVP if you plan to be there for lunch, (314)580-3133 or (314)428-9335, monitor [www.stlouismgclub.com/](http://www.stlouismgclub.com/) in the meantime.
- 2 May 2015—15<sup>th</sup> Annual Classics on Wheels Car Show**. In Elsberry, MO 79, \$15 registration from 9 AM to noon, awards at 3 PM. Multiple classes, awards for best of show, mayor’s choice and peoples’ choice, on Broadway next to the park. Fun drive, fun show.
- 9 May 2015—BSCC Autocross No. 2**, Family Arena, St Charles, 9-9:30 show time. For info contact Racer Steve at [sshab@yahoo.com](mailto:sshab@yahoo.com).
- 15-17 May 2015—BMWCCA St Louis Chapter “The Weekender,”** first of four road trips planned this year, overnight trip to New Harmony, IN, on the Wabash River. Historic town with plenty of opportunities to visit antique shops, art galleries, gardens and restored historic buildings, accommodations at the New Harmony Inn. For more information contact Amy Bradford at [mikebradford@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mikebradford@sbcglobal.net) NLT 1 March, due to overwhelming response, space very limited.
- 16 May 2015—Cars & Coffee**, Westport Plaza, I-270 and Page, 8:30 AM.
- 16 May 2015—Gateway VCOA Route 66 Drive**, on the Mother Road in Illinois. Details to follow, monitor <https://sites.google.com/site/gatewayvcoa/>.
- 16 May 2015—MG Club of St Louis Rally**, plans coming together, keep an eye on [www.stlouismgclub.com](http://www.stlouismgclub.com) for details.
- 16 May 2015—BBQ Cruise**, Wildwood Cruise Group, Alta Shelter, Babler State Park, 12 noon until whenever. More details to follow, for information contact John Gragnani, [jgrag@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jgrag@sbcglobal.net).
- 17 May 2015—3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Gear Head Grape Stomp Classic Car/Truck Show**, at Cedar and Main in Washington, MO. Registration 8 AM to 11 AM, \$20 per car, awards at 2 PM including class and special awards. Car show held in conjunction with the **34<sup>th</sup> Annual Art Fair & Wine Fest**, all proceeds benefit Grace’s Place Crisis Nursery. Info at [www.gracesplacecrisisnursey.com](http://www.gracesplacecrisisnursey.com) under the events tab.
- 20 May 2015—British Invasion**, hosted by the MG Club of St Louis. Sports cars making an ice cream run, details to follow, monitor [www.stlouismgclub.com/](http://www.stlouismgclub.com/).
- 28-30 May 2014—4<sup>th</sup> Annual British National Meet**, in Hot Springs, AR. Large number of events and standout vehicles, this annual event draws cars and LBC enthusiasts from all over the US. More information is available at [www.britishnationalmeet.com](http://www.britishnationalmeet.com) and on the Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/All-British-Marques-The-National-Meet/201070176584388>.
- 30 May-7 Jun 2015—British Car Week**. Drive ‘em!  
**St Louis Car Shows and Cruises:** <http://clubs.hemmings.com/clubsites/lakerscarclub>.

connection continues with January’s Classics & Sports Car, with a cover article salute to the XJ (“Britain’s greatest saloon”).

Over at *Hemmings Sports & Exotic Cars*, an MGB dominates the cover: one with a 4.8-liter Rover V8, good for 275 horsepower. Elsewhere in the issue, a detailed recounting of the effort and expense incurred during the restoration of a barn find Triumph TR4 and a look at a 1954 EMW 327/3, a pre-WWII BMW built postwar in Eisenach, German Democratic Republic (ie, East Germany). Towards the back of the magazine, “Triumphs on a Budget, part 2” and in the “Driveable Dream” series of articles, a look at a Vermont Couple’s 1946 Standard Eight Tourer.

## Roadwork—Riot & Revolution: the Triumph TR7



During the mid-1970s, any fan of British cars (particularly sports cars) who believed there would indeed “always be an England” received quite a shock to the system with Triumph’s announcement of the new TR7.

Really? Unibody construction with subframe? Fixed roof? Huge (if integrated as part of the overall design) US-mandated cowcatchers, er. bumpers? Solid rear axle? *And a four-cylinder engine?* Sacrilege! All LBC true believers knew that real British sports cars featured

body-on-frame construction and, in the case of the TR6 and Spitfire, independent rear suspension. The perceived drop back to a four-banger from the TR6’s 2.5 liter inline six constituted a particular slap in the face. However, despite the incredible popularity of the TR6 and Spitfire in the United States, British Leyland management strongly felt the 6 needed a replacement, particularly one with an eye towards increasing Federal safety and emissions regulations. Hence, the big leap forward (backwards?) with the TR7.

Triumph even devised the famous “Shape of things to Come” add campaign to boost the car’s popularity, particularly in the states. On the plus side, *Car & Driver* executive editor Pat Bedard – one of a group of automotive journalists who participated in test drives of pre-production TR7s – summed up the startling effect of the styling, mechanicals and accommodations thusly:

...British Leyland is building Italian sports cars...It has a pointy nose where the others were blunt; its silhouette is a wedge instead of the block shape of the past models; it is wide where the others were narrow; an air-tight coupe where its predecessors were drafty convertibles; and most significantly, its ride quality and interior appointments are accommodating – almost luxurious – where the others were rude.

Positive commentary, eh? However, nearly 40 years after its debut, the TR7 still draws strong comments, with recollections of massive quality problems and unreliability; some even ventured it was the car that killed the British sports car industry.

Some years after the fact, *Time* magazine put the TR7 on its list of 50 worst cars of all times, commenting (in part),

...the thing had more short-circuits than a mixing board with a bong spilled on it...timing chains snapped. Oil and water pumps refused to pump, only suck...“The Shape of Things To Come” quickly became the shape that came and went, in a great could of “good ride-dance.”

Ouch...However, the truth behind the development and production of the “Wedge” – as it quickly became known – was a bit more involved.

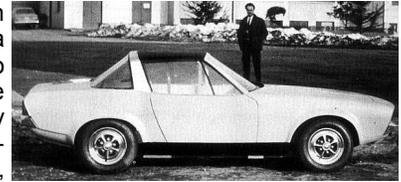


The ADO21. Source: AROnline

In 1968, at the time of the formation of the British Leyland Motor Corporation through the merger of Leyland (Standard-Triumph, Rover, Alvis, Ley-

land trucks) and British Motor Holdings (Austin, Morris, Jaguar), both MG and Triumph were working up proposals for new sports cars. MG came up with the ADO21 as a possible replacement for the MGB, a rather involved design and definitely something of a technological leap forward with mid-engine, De Dion rear end, five-speed gearbox and Hydrolastic suspension. The car looked like something of a cross between a Ferrari, Otas 820 and American Motors AMX/3.

For its part, Triumph pushed the “Bullet” as a prospective follow-on to the TR6; compared to the ADO21, it was definitely more traditional, ie, front-engine, rear-wheel drive, but it also featured a large c-pillar for rollover production and a large wraparound rear window.



The initial Bullet prototype. Source: AROnline

Despite some protests from North American Marketing Director J. Bruce McWilliams, who thought the Bullet was *too* traditional, even obsolete, BLMC management decided to go with a less exotic design, with the intent of making the maximum use of components from existing cars in order to get it into full production by 1975.

Interestingly enough, BLMC management then assigned the project to Austin/Morris/MG designer Harris Mann and his team at the Longbridge, Birmingham factory. They came up with the front-engine/rear-drive wedge-shaped vehicle that at least looked modern, almost on par with the original ADO21 proposal. Mann also added the famous (or infamous, depending on who you talk with) scalloped “swoop” up the side of the car, which reinforced the wedge profile. The initial full-size styling and engineering models bore MG octagons and (usually) Rostyle wheels...but then, in late 1971, word came down from corporate: the car would instead become the next Triumph, leaving the MG brand to soldier on with the B-model.

The final design for the TR7 resulted from an attempt at a clean-sheet sports car, specifically designed for the US market; therefore, it had to meet the Colonies’ rapidly changing vehicle safety and emissions standards, including the 5 mph bumpers. At the time, the US government seriously considered mandating rollover standards, which pretty much would’ve precluded the production and sales of traditional convertibles (anyone remember “the last American convertible,” the 1976 Cadillac Eldorado? As an aside, some of the original TR7 design concepts included a Targa top but difficulties with maintaining the TR7’s structural stiffness killed the idea).

Besides the characteristics mentioned above, the final design featured coil spring suspension at both ends, with Macpherson struts at the front (as noted by Pat Bedard in his review, “Like all Macphersons, there is not enough camber gain to compensate for body roll, so the car tends toward heavy understeer”) and the live axle at the back, anchored by trailing arms (Bedard, again: “The rear suspension is very much like a Vega, with four angled trailing links locating a solid axle. But it is much more successful at controlling axle movements, chiefly because the arms are far longer and therefore do not have to move through such abrupt angles”).

The engine was two carb, 1998cc SOHC four, which produced 90 hp and 105 lbft of torque (California cars initially received a single Stromberg carburetor and catalytic converters, dropping horsepower to 78). When combined with the four-speed transmission, the engine tended to make a lot of noise at highway speeds: “Like all in-line, four-cylinder engines, this one shakes. And at certain speeds it sets up very annoying resonances in the body. You can feel them in the floor, in the pedals, in the seat – and worst of all – in your ears. As luck

(Continued on page 4)





Annual Polar Bear Run  
SLTOA—8 February 2015



TR7 (Continued from page 4)

Still, for all its faults and problems – perceived or actual – the TR7 wound up the most produced of Triumph model, with approximately 115,000 built. According to automotive writer Aaron Severson, “...had it been designed a few years earlier or a few years later, we suspect it might have been a very different car. It was also the last ‘real’ Triumph to date and marked the end of an era for mass-market British sports cars.” Along with the Spitfire, the TR7 remains a quick and economical way to get into the British sports car hobby.

.....

**Full disclosure:** The author admits to holding something of a bias towards the Triumph wedges; he owns a 1980 TR8, aka the “High-Speed Doorstop.”

**Sources:** Patrick Bedard, “Road Test: Triumph TR7,” *Car & Driver*, April 1975; “The Last Waltz,” *Classic Motorsports*, July 2008; John Holusha, “BL Inc. Announces It Will Stop Making TR7, TR8 Triumphs,” *New York Times*, 14 May 1981; David LaChance, “Tradition, Schmadition,” *Hemmings Motor News*, January 2012; *Racing Sports Cars*, [www.racingsportscars.com](http://www.racingsportscars.com); “Dan Neil, “The 50 Worst Cars of All Time,” *Time*, 10 September 2007; Aaron Severson, “Way of the Wedge: The Triumph TR7 and TR8,” *Ate Up With Motor*, <http://ateupwithmotor.com>, 5 February 2012; Mike Cook, “The Profile of Half A Pound of Cheddar: The TR7 Story – Part One,” *The Vintage Triumph*, February-March 2014; Keith Adams, “Sports car projects: ADO21,” *Austin-Rover Online*, [www.aronline.com.uk](http://www.aronline.com.uk); Keith Adams, “Sports car projects: Triumph,” *Austin-Rover Online*, [www.aronline.com.uk](http://www.aronline.com.uk), 25 June 2011.

# Featured Events

“Jags & Coffee”  
JAGSL—10 January 2015



# BMW Annual Holiday Party StLBMWCCA—17 January 2015



Presentation of the prestigious “Cowbell Award”

**Gateway Relay** is published monthly for the member clubs of the St Louis Sports Car Council ([www.stlsc.org](http://www.stlsc.org)), copyright 2015, all rights reserved. Photos used in this newsletter and the SLSCC web site are the property of their respective clubs. Send electronic articles, photographs, queries and information of interest for the affiliated clubs to the SLSCC Coordinator/Chief Flack/Editor, Mark Morgan, at [stlscdcd@gmail.com](mailto:stlscdcd@gmail.com).

BMW Car Club  
of America  
St. Louis Chapter

