



Gateway Relay

Vol IV, No. 8

St Louis Sports Car Council

April 2015

Council News & Notes

- After last month's production/editorial flails, we fully intended to get this one out at least a couple of days in advance of the week-end of the 18th and all its activities. Unfortunately, a corrupted MSPublisher file put the kibosh on that plan, followed by rebuild of this issue, hence the Sunday delivery.
- BUT, holy cow, what a weekend. The St Louis Chapter of the BMW Car Club of America was first out of the blocks on Friday, with their participation in a track day at Gateway Motorsports Park with the local chapter of the Porsche Club of America.
- The MG Club of St Louis followed up *early* Saturday morning, sending a brace of Morris Garages products and their owners out for the annual Missouri Endurance Rally. Upon departure they made a pass of the incredible field of cars at the first Cars & Coffee of the season. The estimate of participants came in north of 350 (see the bottom of page 2 for a corollary story from C&C).
- And the fun continued from there, in the face of promised major thunderstorms. We'll provide photos of the first "Big Weekend" events in next month's issue.
- In the meantime, congrats to all of the member clubs on a string of excellent early-season events. Drive 'em!

What could be more swinging. Find out why Morris 850 is your kind of car. It makes motoring so simple, so enjoyable. No other car is so exciting to drive, holds the road so tightly, corners so positively, motors so inexpensively, parks so easily. Take the steering wheel of Morris 850 and feel the whole world at your fingertips. This is new-wave motoring.

BMC MORRIS 850
The Car that goes with Sun and Fun

PHOTOGRAPH BY CONWELL SP

£779 incl. tax

BMC MORRIS 850, THE LARGEST-SELLING, LOWEST-PRICED LIGHT CAR IN AUSTRALIA

Up & Coming

- 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."
- 22 Apr 2015—MG Club of St Louis April RUBCO Breakfast**, at the Sunrise Family Restaurant, 350 N Lindbergh, at 9 AM.
- 23 Apr 2015—RUMP** (Retired/Unemployed Member Persons) **Tour of the Fox Theater**. Meet in the lobby at 10 AM for a backstage, behind-the-scenes tour, tickets \$8, \$6 for seniors. Tour starts at 10:30, lasts about 90 minutes, afterwards the group will walk to Dooley's for lunch. Please RSVP to Tom Evans at tom@judyandtombevans.com or (314)973-8789 so he can notify Dooley's of seating requirements.
- 25 Apr 2015—Benefit Car Show for the St Louis County Police Welfare Association**, 8 AM to 5 PM. 50/50 raffle, 31 car classes, at Mehlville High School, 3200 Lemay Ferry Rd, info (314)229-4360.
- 25 Apr 2015—Breakfast Cruise at Letty Lou's Cafe**, 505 Strecker Rd, Ballwin 63011 (636)273-9317. Hosted by the Wildwood Car Club, 8:30 AM. For more info, contact John Gragnani at jgrag@sbcglobal.net.
- 2 May 2015—Cinco de Mayo Parade** on Cherokee Street. Gateway VCOA, for owners of Volvo 240-series cars. Details to follow, monitor <https://sites.google.com/site/gatewayvcoa/>.
- 2-3 May 2015—Fling in the Spring**, hosted by the MG Club of St Louis. Meet at 8 AM at the McDonalds in Columbia, IL, on Highway 3. Drive through the spectacular Shawnee National Forest to Giant City State Park & Lodge, Makanda (south of Carbondale), stay the night, Sunday brunch at the lodge. Make your overnight reservations by 25 April, the cabins are filling fast. Call Charlie Key at (314)580-3133 or leave word at (314)428-9335 to reserve a room or with questions.
- 2 May—Lafayette Renaissance Car Show**, at Lafayette High School, 17050 Clayton Rd, Wildwood 63011. Pre-register for \$10 prior to 23 April, \$15 registration on the day of the show, all proceeds benefit the Lafayette Renaissance Program, which rewards academic excellence. Music, food trucks, drinks available, trophies for best classic car, best contemporary car and people's choice. For info and registration email lafayettcarshow@gmail.com.
- 2 May 2015—15th 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.

(Continued on page 2)

Note: Some club 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

SPECIAL 500TH ISSUE

Thoroughbred & **Classic Cars**

CELEBRATING OUR BIG **500**

500HP FERRARI F50, JAGUAR XJ120 & LAMBORGHINI DIABLO SV DRIVEN

Wild TVR Conquest 500

12 Man Ferrari 500 TRC

PLUS YOUR CHANCE TO DRIVE YOUR DREAM CLASSIC

The cover article for the March edition of *MotorSport* concerns four racing Jaguar V-12s: the Group 44 E-Type, Broadspeed XJ12 ("Despite the aero profile of Downton Abbey..."), TWR XJS and the Group 44 XJR-5. The magazine also provides a one-page summary of the BMW 218D SE Active Tourer. March's *Thoroughbred & Classic Cars* – which marks the magazine's

SPORTS & EXOTIC CAR

ALFA'S FANTASTIC SPIDERS

From first to last, we drive them ALL

PLUS: THE RACE THAT ENDED WITH THE CORSE

Continued on pg. 4

- 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.
- 15-17 May 2015—St Louis BMWCCA “The Weekender,”** 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. For more information contact Amy Bradford at mikebradford@sbcglobal.net or Barbara Flushing at bvfrog@gmail.com.
- 16 May 2015—Cars & Coffee**, Westport Plaza, I-270 and Page, 8:30 AM.
- 16 May 2015—MG Club of St Louis Rally**, plans coming together, keep an eye on www.stlouismgclub.com for details.
- 16 May 2015—Gateway VCOA Route 66 Tour**, on the Illinois side. Details to follow, monitor <https://sites.google.com/site/gatewayvcoa/>.
- 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, jrag@sbcglobal.net.
- 17 May 2015—Annual SLTOA MaiFest Run**, Hermann, MO. 63rd annual, one of Missouri’s oldest German celebrations of spring. Meet and departure repeats the Polar Bear Run sequence: meet at either the I-64/MO 94 commuter lot (north start) or the Dierberg’s in Wildwood, MO 100 at Taylor (south start). Rendezvous at the Walgreens in Washington at MO 47 and MO 100, then proceed to Hermann for beer, brats, other food and the requisite oom-pah.
- 17 May 2015—3rd 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 34th Annual Art Fair & Wine Fest, all proceeds benefit Grace’s Place Crisis Nursery. Info at www.gracesplacecrisisnursey.com under the events tab.
- 17 May 2015—Fit-Flavors 2nd Annual Car Show** benefitting SSM Cardinal Glennon Children’s Medical Center. At Fit-Flavors, 14842 Clayton Rd, Chesterfield; show at 9 AM, entrants parked by 9:30, show runs 10-3 with awards at 2 PM. \$20 entrance fee, 100% of the proceeds will go to SSM Cardinal Glennon. Raffle for three gift baskets and the Rally Squirrel will be at the show. To register, send year/make/model of car to Nikki@Fit-Flavors.com.
- 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/.
- 24 May 2015—Tech Event/Lunch at the Bradley Motor Werke**, 6184 Bermuda Dr, St Louis, hosted by the St Louis BMWCCA. Tom, Jon Eye and the Bradley Motor Werke team will provide an in-depth look at how BMWs work, from an expert mechanic’s point of view...plus, FOOD! Please RSVP to president@stlbmwcca.org if you plan on attending.
- 28-30 May 2014—4th 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 and on the Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/All-British-Marques-The-National-Meet/201070176584388>.
- 30 May 2015—St Louis BMWCCA Car Detailing Clinic**, at Clear Auto Bra, 3220 S Brentwood Ave, Webster Groves. With the St Louis Chapter-Audi Club NA, learn how to wash, wax and polish your car just in time to show it off at the St Louis European Auto Show.
- 30 May-7 Jun 2015—British Car Week**. Drive ‘em!
- 31 May 2015—MG Club of St Louis Wine Tour**, start at the Target lot in Chesterfield Valley, 10 AM. Other details to follow, monitor www.stlouismgclub.com/.
- 6 Jun 2015—26th MG Heartland Regional**, Kansas City, hosted by the Kansas City MG Car Club. Host hotel and other details TBD, monitor <http://heartlandmgregional.com/>.
- 7 Jun 2015—Annual St Louis European Auto Show**, location changed to Taubman Prestige Outlets, Chesterfield Valley off I-64/US 40 (17017 N Outer 40 Rd). Set-up from 10-11 AM, show from 11 AM-3 PM, awards at 3. Registration \$40 if paid prior to 23 May, \$40 afterwards, proceeds benefit the St Louis Shriners Hospital for Children. Monitor <http://stleuropeanautoshow.com>.
- 7 June 2015—Annual SLTOA Picnic**, at the Blumenhof Winery, in Dutzow on MO 94. Great drive, followed by a great gathering with food and, er, assorted libations. Details will be announced at the April club meeting; this gathering will constitute SLTOA’s meeting for June.
- 12-14 Jun 2015—Annual Midsommar Meet**, hosted by Gateway VCOA in Hannibal, MO. Cars/owners currently signed up from Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Wisconsin and Virginia (!), more details to follow, monitor <https://sites.google.com/site/gatewayvcoa/>.

St Louis Car Shows and Cruises: <http://clubs.hemmings.com/clubsites/lakerscarclub>.



So That Jack May Walk

Participants in April’s Cars & Coffee undoubtedly noticed the three British classic Minis in red, white and blue. Hosted by the St Louis Mini Club, the team, dubbed “The American Job,” is on a 10,000-mile drive over four weeks to raise funds for four-year-old Alex Jack Sims, who needs surgery in order to walk and live a normal life. So far the team’s raised over £3600 of the targeted £30,000 (\$44,845).

Their presence certainly livened up an already entertaining C&C. You can call up the project web page and make a donation at <https://www.justgiving.com/theamericanjob/>.

Roadwork: Mr Issigonis, Meet Mr Cooper...



Sir Alec Issigonis.
Photo: BMC via Auto-Source

For starters, the title is a tad inaccurate: legendary vehicle designer Sir Alexander Arnold Constantine Issigonis became acquainted with legendary racing designer/team operator Sir John Cooper long before the 1961 introduction of the Mini Cooper. In fact, their association stretched back nearly 30 years, to the Brighton National Speed Trials held on Madeira Drive, Brighton, East Sussex. However, for most, the names are irrevocably associated with their creation of the fired-up version of Issigonis' masterpiece, the Austin/Morris Mini.

One thing that I learnt the hard way – well, not the hard way, the easy way – when you're designing a new car for production, never, never copy the opposition

– Alec Issigonis



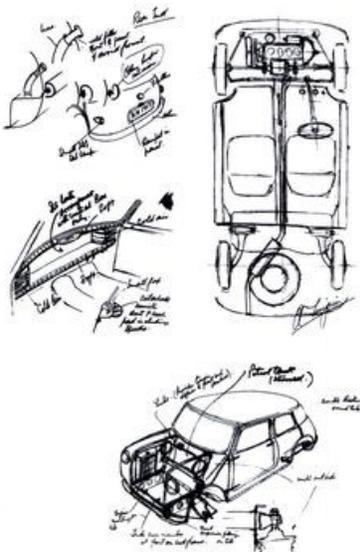
Issigonis in the Lightweight Special, Brighton, 1946. Photo via Mini Mania.

Born on 18 November 1906 to British parents in Smyrna, Greece (now Izmir, Turkey), Issigonis moved to England with his mother in 1922, following the death of his father. In 1925 he started a three-year engineering course, followed by work as a draftsman for an engineering firm

which was developing a semi-automatic transmission. In his free time, he and friend George Dowson decided to design and build a race car; the resulting vehicle, named the "Lightweight Special," featured a monocoque design of aluminum over plywood, powered by a supercharged 705cc Austin Seven engine.

In 1936, Issigonis began his long association with Morris with employment as a steering and suspension engineer at the company's Cowley Plant, southeast Oxford. In and around working on defence projects during World War II – which included a rather funky armored reconnaissance vehicle, armed with a .303 Bren light machine gun and Boys .55 anti-tank rifle – he also did the majority of the design work for a new small car planned for postwar production. Issigonis' design became the Minor, which debuted at the September 1948 London motor show at Earls Court. The car was a big hit; variations remained in production through 1971.

During the mid-1950s, Issigonis received an assignment to develop a new, small, highly economical car as competition for the various "bubble cars" emanating from Germany (Heinkel, Messerschmitt) and Italy (the Isetta, also built un-



der license by BMW). Working under Austin Design Office Project 15 (ADO15), he designed a four-passenger vehicle with a transverse front-mounted engine, front-wheel-drive and hydroelastic suspension developed by Dr Alex Moulton. The transverse placement of the engine allowed for a surprisingly large cabin suitable for four adults, while retaining a short overall length with minimal overhang at either end.

The management of the British Motor Corporation (formed by the 1952 merger of Morris and Austin) expressed concern over both the radical design and the tooling costs involved with developing such a car but finally gave the go-ahead for an initial production run of 20,000 cars, with public debut in April 1959. The cars went on sale in August as the Morris Mini-Minor (or Mini MK1) and Austin Seven for £496 (approximately \$1313).

Despite some typical new-car teething issues, the Mini proved an instant hit. BMC sold every one it could build and had to scramble to keep up with the demand.

At this point, enter John Newton Cooper. Born on 17 July 1923 in Surbiton, Surrey, he'd long worked for his father Charles as a toolmaker, as well as a stint producing aircraft instruments for the Royal Air Force during the war. In 1946, father and son formed the Cooper Car Company for the production of small, light Formula 3 cars employing primarily JAP and Norton motorcycle engines with chain drive. After the initial Cooper T1 front-engine design, they switched to rear-engine cars which combined light weight with outstanding handling; per automotive journalist David Tremayne,



John Cooper and son Mike, 4, with one of the formula cars. Photo via *The Daily Mail*.

The reason they built such "innovative" Grand Prix machines had a typically practical reason that would characterize their engineering, and indeed their whole life philosophy. Both were down-to-earth fellows, not given to flights of fancy and, certainly in Charles' case, not given to lavish acts. Charlie Cooper had a reputation as a close man with a dollar.

The Coopers quickly dominated F3 racing and their success allowed the Coopers to move up into the proverbial "big leagues," Formula 1 racing. They scored their breakthrough victory in the 1958 Argentine Grand Prix at *Autódromo 17 de Octubre*, Buenos Aires. A Climax-powered T43, entered by Rob Walker and driven by Stirling Moss, beat the much larger and more powerful Ferraris and Maseratis driven by luminaries such as Juan Manuel Fangio, Luigi Musso, Mike Hawthorn and Jean Behra. The event marked the first Grand Prix win for a rear-engine formula car; Tremayne noted,

That day the writing was on the wall for the front-engined F1 car; by the end of the season it would be a dinosaur. In the following two, the Coopers would be almost unstoppable.

The company's success culminated with Jack Brabham taking the 1959 F1 world championship in a Cooper-Climax T51, teamed with a young kiwi named Bruce McLaren (6th place) and American Masten Gregory (9th). Brabham repeated the feat in 1960, driving T51s and T53s with McLaren and Americans Chuck Daigh and Lance Reventlow.

Fresh off two highly successful seasons at the top of motor sports, John Cooper turned his attention to Issigonis' Mini. Already well familiar with the car's A-series 848-cc engine, he thought that with a few improvements the already iconic car would provide a highly sporting vehicle "...for the boys at the

(Continued on page 4)

race track.” Cooper made his proposal to his friend Alec Issigonis...who immediately said “no,” ostensibly because the Morris/Austin Mini was a proper small, economic conveyance for individuals and not a “sporting” car. Cooper then went to BMC Chairman George Harriman with his proposal; Harriman told him to take a stock Mini and show what he could do.

Cooper pulled the 848cc engine and installed a 997cc unit similar to the ones used by Cooper Formula Junior cars, boosted the horsepower to 55 bhp and installed Lockheed disc brakes. After taking a spin in the modified economy car, Harriman ordered it into production. BMC announced the new “Mini -Cooper” in September 1961...and things just kind of took off from there.

Working with BMC Competition Department head Stuart Turner, Cooper’s company started developing the cars for racing, with an emphasis in rallying. At the January 1962 Monte Carlo Rally, Finland’s Rauno Aaltonen and Brit navigator Mabbs Geoffrey were in second place, charging for first when they rolled their Cooper, only 9 km/5.6 miles from the finish line. Still, Cooper and BMC realized they had a potential winner and pushed additional development.

In May 1962’s Tulip Rally, Pat Moss – Stirling’s sister – and Ann Wisdom took first place, followed by seven other Minis. In 1963, Cooper turned out an upgraded car, the Cooper S with 1071cc engine, 70 bhp, wider 4.5-inch wheels and bigger brakes. A year later, Paddy Hopkirk and Henry Liddon drove a suitably modified Cooper S to first place at Monte Carlo, winning “...the competition outright, ahead of the larger capacity Fords and Saabs. The mini had finally staked its claim in the rally world and proved that behind its small stature was a true competitor.”



Mäkinen and Easter in the No. 52 car, 1965 Monte Carlo Rally. Photo via *Sports Car Digest*.

The Cooper team followed up in the 1965 event with another win, this time with driver Timo Mäkinen and naviga-

tor Paul Easter. In 1966, the works Minis took the top *three* places: Mäkinen/Easter, Rauno Aaltonen/Tony Ambrose and Hopkirk/Liddon, in that order. However, following protests by other teams, the officials disqualified all three cars for having non-compliant headlights (!). The team returned in 1967 and won again, this time with Aaltonen and Liddon finishing 12 seconds ahead of the second-place Lancia.

As for other forms of racing, Mini Coopers regularly ran in a wide range of competitive events worldwide. At the Reading,

Pennsylvania, SCCA Road Races held on 10 October 1965, Jim Murphy scored a victory for the Cooper S in C Sedan. Minis also played a big role in the early years of the Sports Car Club of America’s TransAm series; five finished at the inaugural four-hour event at Sebring in March 1966, battling Alfa Romeo GTAs, BMW 1800 Tis, Fiat-Abarth100s, Saabs, Renault Gordinis...and a Honda N600.

British Leyland dropped the “Cooper” name in 1969 as part of a cost-cutting effort; along the same lines, “Healey” was dropped from the title of the Sprite sports car – in its last year of production – so that BL wouldn’t have to pay royalties to either Cooper or Donald Healey. However, Cooper’s company continued to produce kits which allowed owners to turn their “ordinary” Minis into Mini Coopers. When BMW bought out the remains of The Rover Group (the follow-on to BL) in 1994, it acquired the rights to the Mini and Mini Cooper names; the Mini MKVII was the last variant, produced in 2000.

John Cooper left Formula 1 racing following the 1965 season and sold the racing side of the company. The team recorded only two more F1 victories – the last was Pedro Rodriguez in the Maserati-powered T81, Kyalami, South Africa, January 1967 - before shutting down following the 1968 season. Cooper received Commander of the British Empire honors and remained at the head of his company until his death at home in Worthing, West Sussex, on 24 December 2000.

Alec Issigonis also went on to bigger and better things, including the designing of the Morris/Austin 1100, something of a “big Mini” which also sold famously. Queen Elizabeth knighted him in 1969; he continued to serve as engineering director for BMC’s Austin-Morris Division until his 1971 retirement. Issigonis lived to see the five-millionth Mini roll off the production line in 1986; he passed on 2 October 1988 at Edgbaston, Birmingham, at age 81.

As for their joint project, Minis remain popular in SCCA and historic racing, including a win by Joe Huffaker in the GT Light class at the SCCA’s 2014 National Run-Offs. The original Mini and its Cooper/Cooper S variants remain highly visible examples of “...an incredible success story in the rather unsuccessful modern British car industry.”



The Huffaker Mini Cooper. Photo via SCCA.

Sources: Roger Horton, “John Cooper: The Man Who Beat Italia, *Atlas F1*, n.d.; David Tremayne, “John Cooper-A Very British Marque, A Very British Man,” *GrandPrix.com*, 31 January 2001; “Cooper,” www.500race.org; Warren Hoge, “John Cooper, 77, Creator of the Iconic Mini Cooper in the 60’s,” *New York Times*, 27 December 2000; “The Legendary Mini Cooper,” Linguapress.com; Andrew Ritter, “The Works Mini Coopers-A Winding Road to Victory,” *Stance Works*, 27 January 2015; “Mini Turns 50-Racing History and Photo Gallery,” *Sports Car Digest*, 26 August 2009; *Racing Sports Cars*, www.racingsportscars.com; “Alex Issigonis-Automotive Designer (1906-1988),” *Design Museum*; “The Mini Forum,” www.theminiforum.co.uk.

500th issue – offers up a comparison between another Jaguar, the XJ220, a Lamborghini Diablo SV and Ferrari F50. Elsewhere, the “500 Mile Challenge:” two drivers, one each MGB and TR4A, 500 miles and six British race tracks, all within 48 hours.

Car & Driver for April provides an initial report on the new Jaguar XE Sedan; a similar article appears in the 13 April issue of *Autoweek*, along with a brief look at the next generation XF sedan and a report on the magazine’s F-Type R Coupe. Towards the back, an article on one of the surviving MGA coupes which raced in the 1962 Sebring 12-Hour.

May’s *Hemmings Sports & Exotic Car* has a great commentary by columnist Bob Austin, recalling his transition from “MG Man” to Volvos; a photo article on BMW’s victory at the 1975 Sebring 12-hour race; and a look at three generations of one family’s enjoyment of their 1963 Austin-Healey 3000 Mk II. Finally, Classic Motorsports in May provides the tenth installment of “Project Mini Cooper,” where the gang starts reassembling their Mk1 Mini Cooper as well as two pages on the new BMW X6M (“Less utility, more sport, all M”). If you’re a rocker, take a look at the cover article on Brian Johnson’s Lola T70 (uh, you *do* know who Brian Johnson is, right? Here’s a hint: the article’s titled “Hell’s Bells”).



Wash-Up/Tune-Up
GHA—4 April



Forest Park Concours
5 April



Featured Events

RUBCO at the Kemp
MGCStL—19 March



Photos by Stephen Moore



Tech Session @ Integrity Automotive
Gateway VCOA—21 March



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BMW Car Club
of America
St. Louis Chapter

