



Gateway Relay

Vol V, No. 4

St Louis Sports Car Council

January 2016

Council News & Notes

- Four-and-a-third years, 55 consecutive issues of Gateway Relay...and on the weekend following Christmas, StLSCC Central started shipping water. It resulted in a rather hectic 72-hour period and the first-ever cancellation of this newsletter. To all member clubs, again, our apologies for dropping the lack of a December issue.
- On the plus side, compared to many of our neighbors here in the greater St Louis area, eastern Missouri and south-western Illinois, we got through the deluge pretty well. Hopefully all those who were more seriously impacted by the flooding are now on their way back, but obviously for many communities and neighborhoods it's going to take a long time to pump out and rebuild.
- As for events, we have it on good authority that spring will in fact arrive as scheduled and therefore, the event listing is starting to fill up. There's still one holiday party on the schedule and the first of this year's driving events will take place in February. AND, the Boeing Sports Car Club recently released its autocross schedule, we expect to hear about this year's Cars & Coffee gatherings shortly.
- Weather notwithstanding, we here at StLSCC hope everyone had a great holiday. Best wishes for a great New Year.

THE JOY RIDE



We all talk about enjoying driving. When was the last time you did? We recommend to you the Mini 1275 GT!
 Enjoy its performance: 0-60 in under 14 seconds and a top speed, if you can use it, of 87mph. A speed that's exhilarating in a Mini, particularly when it's married to the roadhugging response of front-wheel drive. 54bhp doesn't keep you waiting, either.
 Enjoy its style: in the 1275's case, style goes a lot farther than the distinctive side-stripe. It's a GT in every sense of the phrase, with standard fittings like a leather bound steering

wheel, a short racy gearstick, Denovo tyres, all-round independent suspension, tachometer and twin mirrors.
 And enjoy its sophistication. The Mini is a world-beater in terms of mechanical reliability. The 1275 GT adds the comfort of rake adjusting front seats, fitted carpeting, comprehensive instrumentation and precisely adjustable temperature controls. Supercover and the most accessible after-sales care in Britain keep it happily on the road.
 Drive any Mini and you'll enjoy yourself immensely.
 Drive a new 1275 GT and have the joy ride of your life.

HAPPINESS IS SHAPED
 All performance figures courtesy of Motor Magazine.



Up & Coming

- 18 Jan 2016**—MG Club of St Louis **Winter Tech Session**, "What to look for when evaluating the value of a British car." Starts at 7 PM, All British Car Repair, 2618 Woodson Rd, Overland 63114.
- 21 Jan 2016**—MG Club of St Louis monthly **RUBCO** (Retired/Unemployed British Car Owners) gathering, at the Sunrise Family Restaurant, 3500 N Lindbergh Blvd. Meet at 9:30, please RSVP to uca57mga@aol.com.
- 23 Jan 2016**—MG Club of St Louis **Holiday Party**, at Mathew's Kitchen, 5625 Hampton Ave 63109. Cash bar at 6:30, dinner at 7:00, \$15 per person (club subsidized); evening will including trivia game and music by the Arch Rivals. Make payments online at www.stlouismgclub.com/payments or send a check to Bruce Hamper, MGCStL Treasurer, 139 Wildwood Lane, Kirkwood 63122. Reservations extended to **17 January**, don't miss out!
- 23 Jan 2016**—First Jaguar Association of Greater St Louis **Coffee, Coffee & Cars** for the year, at Just Jags, 7113 N Hanley Rd, St Louis 63042 (314)524-5300. Starts at 8:30 AM.
- 28 Jan 2016**—Gateway Healey Association **RUMP** (Retired or Unemployed Member Persons) road trip to West Alton to see the eagles at Riverlands. Lunch at Fast Eddie's afterwards. Monitor <http://clubs.hemmings.com/gatewayhealey/> for start time and location.
- 7 Feb 2016**—Blue Line Roads, **Fried Chicken & BBQ Pork Steak JAGSL Rallye**. Plan on 50 miles out and 50 miles back through Defiance, Dutzow, Washington, Labadie and St Albans. Meet at 9:30 AM at the St Louis Bread Co, 447 N New Ballas (three blocks south of Olive); arrive early for a cup of coffee and pastry. Depart at 10 AM with a planned 12 noon arrival at the Knights of Columbus Seisl Council No. 1121, 1121 Columbus Lane, Washington, for fried chicken, BBQ pork steaks and other great food. Maybe an ice cream stop in Labadie and candy stop in St Albans...and home by 3 PM. RSVP to Jim at jhendrix@curtispack.com (636) 227-2565 or Phil at ssjagman@aol.com (314)727-9179.
- 14 Feb 2016**—Annual **SLTOA Polar Bear Run**, traditional top-down first drive of the year; what better way to spend Valentine's Day than with your significant other driving around with the convertible top stowed in mid-February? With post-drive gathering and hot food. Meet time/location will be posted at www.sltoa.org following the 19 January club meeting, stay tuned.

(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

Plenty of good reading for the New Year, starting with January's *Hemmings Sports & Exotic Car*. The cover articles include restorations of a 1957 Jaguar XK140 MC and 1954 MG TF; elsewhere in the issue, reviews of the MG 1100 and Austin America. The February issue of *HS&EC* includes a cover article on the 2016 round of America's British Reliability Run (the teams included MGs, Triumphs



Continued on pg. 2

- 15 Feb 2016**—Annual Gateway Healey Association **Valentine's Party**, Trailhead Brewery, 921 S Riverside Dr, St Charles, at 7 PM. It's also President's Day, so you can wear your Uncle Sam costume, including a red shirt. Please RSVP to msalini73@gmail.com or (314)991-9363.
- 15 Feb 2016**—MG Club of St Louis **Winter Tech Session No. 2**, 7 PM at British Car Restorations & Services, 23338 N Lindbergh Blvd, 63114. Topic TBA, monitor www.stlouismgclub.com/.
- 20 Feb 2016**—Gateway VCOA Shop Visit/Tech Session, St Louis Auto Detail, 17833 Edison Ave, Chesterfield (314)21-9-4142. Time TBA, open to all sports/special interest car owners in StLSCC-affiliated clubs. More to follow, monitor <https://sites.google.com/site/gatewayvcoa/> in the meantime.
- 28 Feb 2016**—MG Club of St Louis **Annual Pinewood Derby**, at the Sports Café, 3579 Pennridge Dr, Bridgeton. Ladies and gentlemen, start your engines...oh, wait, there are no engines. Time TBA, monitor www.stlouismgclub.com/.
- 5 Mar 2016**—Jaguar Association of Greater St Louis **visit to Hunter Engineering**, 11250 Hunter Dr, Bridgeton (west of Lambert), for a tour of the **Steve Brauer Collection** of 50-plus American and British cars, plus the collection workshop. No charge for the museum; please arrive prior to 10 AM to get your name badge. At about 12 noon, the group will proceed to Westport for lunch at Patrick's. The club needs an accurate count for this event, please email Jeanne Carmack via the link at <https://www.jagstl.com/events/general/hunter-engineering-museum-tour>.
- 20 Mar 2016**—Annual MG Club of St Louis **Terry Fanning Rally**. Details to follow, monitor www.stlouismgclub.com/.
- 21 Mar 2016**—MG Club of St Louis **Winter Tech Session No. 3**, 7 PM at All British Car Repair, 2618 Woodson Rd, Overland. Topic TBA, monitor www.stlouismgclub.com/.
- 27 Mar 2016**—**55th Annual Easter Concours at Forest Park**, hosted by the Horseless Carriage Club of Missouri in the new, completely rebuilt Munny parking lot. The event incorporates the resumption of the annual **MG-Triumph Challenge** for the British Leyland Participation Trophy. Details on both to follow, monitor <http://hccmo.com/easter-concours/>, www.sltoa.org and www.stlouismgclub.com/.
- 3 Apr 2016**—**St Louis Region SCCA Solo No. 1**, Gateway Motorsports Park, Madison, IL. Info at www.stlsolo.org.
- 16 Apr 2016**—**Missouri Endurance Rally**, the MG Club of St Louis' annual premier driving event. Form a driver/nav team, travel to distant and exotic lands and try not to get lost! Details to follow, monitor www.stlouismgclub.com.
- 17 Apr 2016**—**St Louis Region SCCA Solo No. 2**, Family Arena, St Charles. Info at www.stlsolo.org.
- 18 Apr 2016**—**St Louis MG Club Winter Tech Session No. 4**, 7 PM at British Cars Restorations and Services, 2338 N Lindbergh Blvd. Topic TBA, monitor www.stlouismgclub.com/events-calendar/.
- Apr 2016**—**Boeing Sports Car Club 2016 Autocross season** starts, Family Arena, St Charles. To enter and/or get on the event mailing list, contact Racer Steve at sshab@yahoo.com. Dates/details next issue.
- 20-24 Apr 2016**—**The Oklahoma Run: 2016 South Central VTR Regional**. Regional Vintage Triumph Register gathering, hosted by the Central Oklahoma VTR at the NCED Conference Center & Hotel, 2801 E State Highway 9, Norman, OK 73071. For info contact David Hogan, david.l.hogan1@gmail.com (405)227-8467, web page at www.triumphsock.org/#!/scvtr-regional-2016/ch5d.
- 1 May 2016**—**St Louis Region SCCA Solo No. 3**, Family Arena, St Charles. Info at www.stlsolo.org.
- 13-15 May 2016**—**SCCA Majors Race/IT Regional**, Gateway Motorsports Park. The St Louis and Southern Illinois Regions, SCCA, will hold a test day on 13 May with racing over the weekend. Volunteers needed to help work the track and event, more details including contact info to follow.
- 14 May 2016**—**Brews & Blues!** Gateway VCOA tailgate party at a strategic location near Spirit of St Louis Airport, Chesterfield, for the annual Air Show & Stem Expo. Eat, drink, show off your cars and watch the US Navy Blue Angels, Royal Canadian Air Force Snowbirds and the RCAF CF-188 Hornet flight demonstration team. Details to follow, air show information at <http://spirit-airshow.com>.

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

In Print (Continued from page 1)

and Jaguars), a feature on one BMW owner's modified turbocharged 1986 535i, an article on a single-owner 1959 MGA Twin-Cam plus one covering the restoration of a 1965 TR4A.

Classic Motorsports for January covers the Sunbeam Tiger, does a comparison between the MGB and Mazda Miata/MX5 and provides a buyer's guide for the Triumph TR6. The magazine also includes an article on a 1972 BMW-Alpina 2002tii and the 12th and final installment of "Project Mini Cooper." February's *Road & Track* has a highly entertaining article by editor-at-large Sam Smith covering his drive of a Jaguar Heritage XK120 at last September's Goodwood Revival.

The 21 December issue of *Autoweek* provides a first look at the new Volvo S90 (one new feature: the Large Animal Detection System, "...designed to avoid moose and horses and other large, immovable quadrupeds"). Also, the magazine's staff takes a Jaguar F-Type to the drag strip...yes, the drag strip (the car did quite well). *Thoroughbred & Classic Cars* for December includes an interview of long-time Brit rally driver (Austin-Healeys, Minis, Triumphs, Rovers) Brian Culcheth and a buyers guide for the Jaguar S-Type and 420. Elsewhere in the issue, an update on long-term ownership/restoration of a 1977 MG Midget 1500 ("Problem child finally comes of age").

Roadwork: The “Bigger” Minis

Generally, success breeds additional success. When an individual, company, industry, rock band, whatever comes up with a big hit, he/she/it tries to replicate the process. If something worked well the first time, why not stay on course, use the same basic design or approach – maybe with a few modifications, upgrades – and continue to profit?

Case in point: the original Mini.



Alec Issigonis with his most famous creation. Photo via Unique Cars & Parts

The Mini's history is well known (and if you aren't familiar with it, there plenty of resources out there available for review). From the initial design sketches by the legendary Alex Issigonis through British Motor Corporation's development of the car as project/design ADO15 and first sales in August 1959, the car was highly successful and an automotive landmark.

According to automotive writer Keith Adams,

When the press first got their hands on BMC's new car on the 18-19 August 1959 at Chobham in Surrey, they were not shy to praise it; the Mini's unique personality, exceptional space efficiency, relatively good performance and tenacious front-wheel-drive handling meant that it was a sure fire hit with the critics. It swept aside the conservatism that was rife in the corporation and the perception of BMC in the public's eye was changed indelibly.

To be sure, like most new designs and great leaps forward, the Mini had initial, er, issues. Adams, again:

As a car with an accelerated development programme, its reliability was somewhat questionable, and there were some design flaws that became apparent very quickly. The most famous of these early teething troubles was what was known back then as the “great floating carpet epic”. If driven in the rain, the carpets would soon emit a musty odour, which coupled with the squelching sounds they made when one stood on them, meant only one thing: water ingress.

Still, BMC pushed the cars out of the factories in Longbridge (Birmingham) and Cowley (Oxford), as fast it could; early on, the company couldn't build the cars fast enough. The 1 millionth Mini rolled out seven years into production, in 1965, while the 2 millionth only took an additional four years. Multiple variations also hit the streets, chief among them the Mini-Cooper, which went into production in 1961. Other models included the Countryman and Traveller estates (station wagons) and the Mini Moke. BMC also badge engineered the design, producing Riley Elf and Wolseley Hornet variants. The car was also built overseas in multiple locations.

So, the basic design was a winner. What to do next? Well, BMC never made a lot of money on the car (small cars continue to have lower profit margins, hence the tendency of salesmen like the legendary Jerry Lundegaard to push prospective buyers into larger vehicles and option packages); plus, the company had a need to develop newer large sedans to take on the competition. If it could come up with a car which employed the basic Mini design and engineering layout at a larger scale, BMC stood to make a good amount of additional profit.

In the end, BMC and the follow-on British Leyland turned out three larger cars based on Issigonis' design. One proved a major success and one did okay while the third wound up being something of a disaster.

Morris 1100

Development of the first car under the designation ADO16 started prior to the public release of the Mini. Again, Issigonis took the lead on the basic design and engineering layout; no surprise, the car was of two-box design with large passenger compartment, transverse front engine and front wheel drive. Leonard Lord, BMC President, contracted with Pininfarina for the styling, in an effort to increase the car's impact with prospective buyers.

The first pre-production Morris 1100 rolled out of Longbridge in October 1958 with an A-Series 948cc engine (subsequently booted to 1098cc, 48 bhp), hydrolastic suspension and front disc brakes. The car made its public debut at Worcester College on 16 August 1962, although by that date dealers already had examples for sale. Issigonis stated, “We have tried to produce a good looking functional car – while cutting out as far as possible the risks of things going wrong. The main plan was to design a motorcar to travel as efficiently as possible from A to B, with full comfort over really rough roads. The world will decide whether we have succeeded.”

A number of badge-engineered variants followed, including the MG 1100 with two carbs and 55 bhp and Austin, Wolseley, Riley and Vanden Plas models. In 1967, the MG sedans gained the 1275cc



If it's an MG, you race it, right? An MG 1100 at Goodwood. Photo: CCK Historic

engine with an optional automatic transmission, thus getting a 1300 designation. A year later, the Austin America two-door with automatic transmission was introduced specifically for marketed as an alternative to the VW Beetle in the US, Canadian and Swiss markets. Beetle.

The cars sold exceedingly well, earned status as the best-selling British vehicle in the home islands and remained in production through 1974. Conversely, the Austin America did poorly in the colonies; the car was slow (Hemmings' Jeff Koch: “You could reheat last night's pizza in the time it took to get to highway speeds”), suffered from poor quality and tended to rust out quickly. The America went out of production in 1972.

In the face of competition from the VW Golf, Fiat 128 and Ford's third generation of the Cortina, BMC pulled the plug on the 1100/1300 and moved on to the next bigger thing. The last UK car to come off the line, in June 1974, was a Vanden Plas Princess 1300.

Austin/Morris 1800

Next up, the ADO17, an even larger “Mini” albeit of a more traditional three-box design, with trunk/boot out back. Incorporating a transverse-mounted 1800cc



Wolseley Six variant. Photo via engine/transmission AROnline.

(Continued on page 4)

and suspension systems to the body. This removed the weight penalty of separate sub-frames. Still, the car which resulted was surprisingly wide and quite heavy.

Austin dealers received their first 1800s in September 1964. The vehicles achieved immediate acclaim for their interior space, performance and handling; in a review, Geoffrey Charles of *The (London) Times* stated, "I would sum up the Austin 1800 as a ruggedly built car, adequately powered, comfortable, offering exceptional passenger space, and thoroughly well-designed for modern traffic and touring. It should earn the highest placings in export markets." However, with most prospective buyers (and automotive writers), Pininfarina's styling of the car rang up a clanger – in his review of the model, Keith Adams cited "... somewhat inappropriate proportions." An Australian journalist noted that in rallying guise the wide 1800s tended to go through corners sidewise, leading to the nickname "Landcrab."



Rally "Landcrab." Photo via Autosport

The car also featured a rather awkward driver's position, very heavy steering and a balky transmission. They also displayed an alarming tendency to burn oil and quickly proved unreliable.

BMC moved forward with corrective actions while turning out additional models, including the Morris 1800 and Wolseley 18/85. In 1972, the corporation added a 2.2-liter inline six, developed from the Austin Maxi's (see below) E-Series four. According to a write-up by the Landcrab Owners Club, "... This transformed an insipid thrash box into a refined power plant which actually weighed 45 pounds less than the cast-iron B-series engine, making the Wolseley Six a very spacious and responsive cross country cruiser..."

Still, the car never sold particularly well. Production ended in 1975 after the sale only 368,811 examples, its place in the dealer lineup taken by the Harris Mann-designed, wedge-shaped Austin Princess. Adams noted, "For the first time, BMC finally woke up to the fact that people were no longer prepared to blindly buy their products." As is, the failure of the car resulted in Ford assuming dominance of the mid-size car market in England.

The misfire proved costly to BMC, which was in serious financial by 1966. On 11 July, the company merged with Jaguar to form British Motor Holdings. BMH immediately started layoffs and reduced hours for the surviving workers; strikes and disruption of production quickly followed. The financial and labor troubles culminated in 1968, when the British government financed the merger of BMH with Leyland Motors, creating British Leyland. A third and final "Big Mini," already in development at the time of the merger, became one of the first offerings of the new corporation.

Austin Maxi

Development of the ADO14/Austin Maxi – notably, the last car developed by Alec Issigonis – started in 1964. BMC's George Harriman designed an all-new engine for the car, the aforementioned 1.5L, SOHC E-series, which provided power to the front wheels. The car came with the first domestically-produced five-speed transmission and also served as the first British hatchback, complete with fold-down seats.

Due to the now nearly continuous labor troubles in England, the Maxi didn't make it to the showrooms until the spring of 1969. Unfortunately, like its predecessors the car ran into immediate problems, some of them internal to BL. As described by the Maxi Owners Club,

The new management that took over the running and launch of the Maxi were decidedly unimpressed. The car was judged very much a BMC product and before and after launch they let it be known that it was not one that they wished to be associated with...When it was eventually launched, it was immediately criticized for excessive noise, a poor gear change and lethargic performance.

BL made an attempt to fix the problems, including replacing the cable-actuated shifter, described by Julian Mounter of *The Times* as feeling "...like stirring treacle with a long thin cane;" Jeff Daniels, *Car*, stated the transmission was "...one of the worst gear shifts in Europe – this side of the Iron Curtain, at least."

The corporation pressed on, adding a more powerful 1750cc engine in 1970, followed by the two-carb HL model in 1972 and a switch from hydrolastic to Hydragas suspension in 1976.



Austin Maxi HL. Photo via Caravantalk.

Early sales were reasonably good and the versatility of the hatch proved popular, but over time, as competitors – particularly Ford and Fiat - introduced better cars, the Maxi tapered off. The 1500cc variant went out of production in 1979, followed by the 1750 and HL in 1981. In 12 years, BL produced a grand total of 486,273 Maxis.

And what of the original Mini? It kept plugging along and despite all the conniptions in the British auto industry, managed decent sales. The car hit the three million mark in 1972, four million in 1976 and five million in 1986. Proposals for direct replacements came and went; generally, British Leyland's financial and production problems made most of them moot although the Austin Mini Metro made a successful debut in 1980. However, the Metro – renamed the Rover 100 following the 1987 demise of the Austin brand – went out of production in December 1997.

On 4 October 200, the last of 5,378,776 Minis finished its trip down the Longbridge production line. It had outlasted its larger brethren –



The last one! Photo by Ian Nichols

the Austin 1100/1800, 1800/2200 and Maxi – by 26, 25 and 19 years respectively.

Sources: Jamie Kittman, "Rich Brand, Poor Brand," *Automobile*, September 2012; "God Save the Mini," *Automobile*, April 2012; "Mini Enters the Fourth Dimension," *GQ*, 26 August 2012; Keith Adams, "The cars: Mini development history, part 1," *AROnline*, 5 August 2011; "MG 1100 Saloon," *The MG Owners Club UK*; *The 1100 Club*, www.the1100club.com; Jeff Koch, "Austin America," *Hemmings Sports & Exotic Car*, June 2007; Keith Adams, "The cars: BMC 1800/2200 development history," *AROnline*, 21 July 2011; Landcrab Owners' Club International, www.landcrab.net; Austin Maxi Owners Club, www.austinmaxiclub.org.



Photos by Andrew Ackerman

Gateway VCOA Holiday Party
8 January 2016



Featured Events *continued*

SLTOA Christmas Party
4 December 2015



Photos by
John Moore

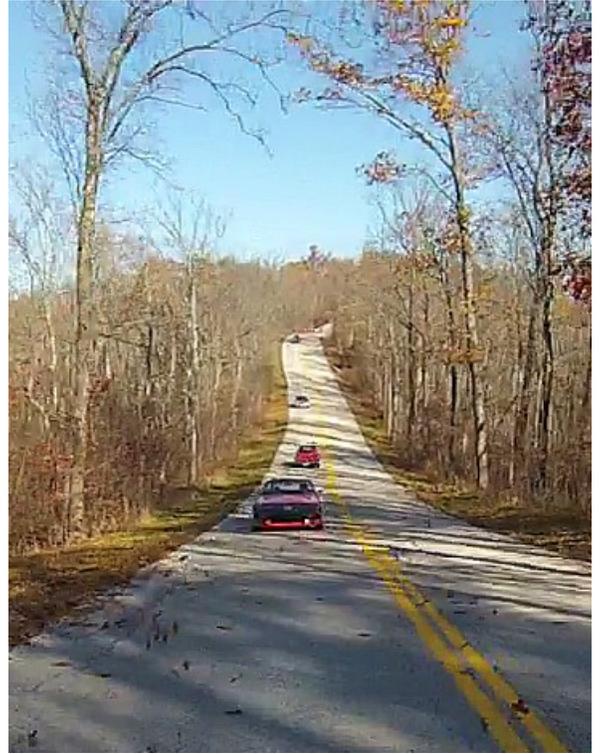


Gateway Healey Association Christmas Party
5 December 2015



Featured Events *continued*

MG Club of St Louis Wine Country Drive
8 November 2015



Photos by Lee Fox

St Louis SCCA Great Pumpkin Challenge
22 November 2015



Featured Events

BSCC Autocross
1 November 2015



3rd Annual Veteran's Day Run SLTOA—8 November 2015



Photo by George

Photo by Creig Houghtaling



Gateway Relay is published monthly for the member clubs of the St Louis Sports Car Council (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 stlscd@gmail.com.

BMW Car Club
of America
St. Louis Chapter

