



Overdrive

June 2012 Official Newsletter of the Central Indiana Austin-Healey Club

From the President:

By Jim Frakes

May is complete, June is here and Conclave is upon us. May seemed so strange without our usual trip to SpringThing sponsored by the Bluegrass club. Maybe that is why I am so unprepared for the Conclave trip this weekend. But, come it will, ready or not. No excuses, just have get up and go, ready or not. The month had few Healey activities unless you attended the British Bash in Louisville, the 1st of June. The month has been so busy, we could not attend the Mecum Auction or the Auburn Spring Auction.

The Indy 500 opening day Concours show was everything we said it would be. Cars, cars and more classic cars. I thought it could not top last year's Speedway opening day, but it was certainly very close. Jim and Sandy Burck were there, as was Dick Storrs. If they have it again next year, I would recommend putting it on your Calendar.

My favorite was the 1938 Fastback H.R.G. coupe, the sole example of the body style and the only H.R.G. powered

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Coming Events:

The June business meeting will be 14th at SQUEALERS Southern Barbecue at 5515 West 86th Street (corner of 86th and Zionsville Road) 871-7427.



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1938 Fastback H.R.G. coupe

Central Indiana AHC

<http://www.ciahc.org>

Bluegrass AHC

<http://www.bluegrassclub.com>

Northern Indiana AHC

<http://members.aol.com/midwestah/club/>

Ohio Valley AHC

<http://ohiovalleyahc.com>

Indiana British Car Union

<http://www.ibcu.org>

Marque Matters Blog

<http://www.marquematters.blogs.com/>

AH Club of America

<http://www.healeyclub.org/>

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by a Triumph engine. Purchased for \$20 in 1965, the beautifully completed restoration is a sight to see. Many other cars were impressive including the usual Deussenberg's, Cord's, and more Marmon's. Some 50's cars were also present.

Indy 500 was a good race this year with lots of excitement and drama and an excellent TV Rating. Coming back we hope. We attended the awards dinner and again, always an enjoyable event.

May was also busy for me with the activities many of you have experienced, High School graduation. My Granddaughter, Claire Tighe, competed at the State level in Pole Vault on Friday, June 1, grad reception the next day and Graduation this past Saturday. Proud, yes, as we all are. She will be attending Purdue this fall.

Steve Berenyi had an unusual request the past week, a loose radius arm assembly. It caused a clicking noise and Steve was concerned about how to change the bushings. As he found it, the bolts were just a little loose causing the movement. This item is only on later BJ8's.

Conclave drive: some of us will be going on Saturday and some on Sunday AM. Hopefully we can take the time this Thursday at the monthly meeting to make a plan. I am open for all suggestions for Saturday, the day I plan to go. Haskell's are attending a wedding and will come later.

See you there.

Jim



May 12th , 2012 Business Meeting at Dimitri's

By Bob Haskell, secretary

The meeting was called to order by President Jim Frakes.

Attending the meeting were: David Broyles, Pat Bruce, Dick and Ruth Buis, Jim and Sandy Burck, Jim Bush, Bob and Melanie Haskell, Paul Imel, John and Kathi Mann, Craig Rice, Dick Storrs, Jim and Jo Switzer, Bruce and Barbara Watson, and Don Yost.

Treasurer/Membership Report: we have 56 members.

April meeting minutes accept as published in the May issue of Overdrive.

Don Yost drove his Sprite to the meeting (60 miles one-way). Don took David Broyles' cell phone number (just in case) for his return trip home.

Calendar

May:

- 12th Indy 500 Concours car show this weekend
- 27th Indy 500 Party at Jon and Joan's. Melanie passed around a sign-up sheet
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June:

- 2nd - British Bash (Louisville, KY)
- 14th - Business meeting
- 17th – 21st: Conclave in Louisville – suggest we drive down on the Saturday, the 16th, in order to be settled in ahead of the Churchill Downs kickoff at 12:00 on Sunday. Jim Bush said that the hotel is easy to see from I-65, but easier to get to via the Clark Memorial Bridge (US-31). Jo Switzer mentioned that JC Penney has a great selection of hats on sale (for the Derby hat competition). There will be a 50's prom one evening.

July:

- 12th – Business Meeting at Scotty's (Ruth is checking on), or George's.
- 21st – London to Brighton Run hosted by CIAHC. Registration includes lunch at a British restaurant. Optional breakfast (8:00-8:30) at Triton High School in Fairlawn. Cares off sometime between 9:00-10:00 am. Jim Bush to volunteer.

August:

- 9th – Business meeting
- 11th – IBCU British Car Motor Days in Zionsville. Feature car is Triumph Spitfire (50th Year).
- 25th:- Carmel Artmobile

- 26th - Annual Ice Cream Social. Jim and Jo Switzer to put together ice cream competition or progressive ice cream event?

September

- 8th – Northern Indiana AHC British Car Open Field Day
- 13th -16th – September Roundup in Columbus, Indiana – hosted by CIAHC. Jim Switzer is going to invite the Illini club to September Roundup. Roy Bowman has not heard from Cummins regarding allowing us to use their parking lot for our car show. Roy to call and look for back-up locations, perhaps at the hotel. What regalia do we want for the event? Ladies thought that the (Watson) performance material was too clingy. Jo, Melanie and Bob looked at other items: neck cooler, mouse pads, traveling blanket, microfiber towels, chamois in a tube, wine glass, flashlight/key, fan/mister, etc. Considering using September Round-Up logo without the year. Melanie has sent logo to Land's End Business. The members agreed to go ahead and pay the set-up fee and do a couple of sample shirts. The logo thread color cannot be changed. Need to double check size of logo.

October:

- 6th – Northern Indiana Lakes British Motor Club “Fall Out 2012” at Winona Lake
- 27th – Halloween Party and business meeting

November:

- 8th – Business meeting
- AHCA's delegates meeting is tentative?

December:

- 1st – Christmas Party in Noblesville

Tech: Jerry Baker is looking for a 1275 engine to put in a Bugeye.

A story of an off season to remember! (Part 2)

By Doug Bruce

1959 Bugeye Group 2, Mod-1



When you have a vintage race car (any race car, really) they get dinged and dirty. Mine had not been painted for at least 10 years and while the previous owner and I had taken great care in cleaning it, and trying our best to present it to the spectators in the stands as a clean example of how it ran in the 1970's, it became a difficult task for a car built in 1959!

Racing has inherent risks too. The cars are old, the drivers are (mostly) old, and things break! A point comes when no amount of cleaning, beer, or spray paint cans of "Ford antique white" will cover season after season of racing activities. Oh, I forgot to mention my car was hit while I was racing at Mid-Ohio last summer. I also should point out that, as one would expect, racing is hazardous and can lead to metal to metal contact. It's not a good thing because when that happens it usually means that someone forgot what "the vintage mindset" of racing truly means. I can happily say that I did not have a racing accident! No, my car was not moving either. I was away setting up my tent before it got dark when I returned to the paddock to discover someone had backed their RV into the passenger side of my race car - before the race weekend had even started! Not what you expect - to be hit in the parking lot at a race! I needed a beer as I picked up glass fragments from the side view mirror that now only reflected back at me from the ground!

Over a long winter I discovered that race cars have many parts. A lot of parts! I really thought that taking her apart, like I have over the past five years for cleaning or repairs would be no big deal. Actually, I can do this in the dark. I don't recall how many little clear baggies I stole from the kitchen, but it was a lot! I have been banned from the kitchen now, lest I snag the remaining bottles of Fantastic cleaner.

So, as a beginner to the complete tear down of a 1959 Bugeye Sprite, I asked around. Should I attempt this? I have what I would say are normal mechanical skills: I know what a ball peen hammer is, I can remove my own engine, (and if you already vintage race, you will understand this; I do own my own portable engine hoist). But stripping a vintage race car down to something

someone can easily paint? I wasn't so sure I could that. "Easy", everyone I asked had said. I agreed and begin to dismantle fifty-three years of racing history, very carefully! I neglected to inquire about the whole re-assembly process after the car was painted. Even more, I neglected to even begin the thought process on how I would re-assemble after I decided to make changes to many of the "vintage" components (read, well worn or obsolete).

And so it began. If I learned anything in my five years of being a vintage race car owner/driver/crew it is ALWAYS to expect the unexpected and take careful meticulous notes. I already know to take notes at tracks about braking points, apex, passing areas and even how the car is running. What I had to do during the race car disassembly made the track notes seem so simple.

As I started to remove parts I began to reflect. I had always looked at my coil in the past and knew it seemed to have more wires connected to the negative and positive terminals than many of the other Bugeye race cars. Thinking back, it never occurred to me that they didn't extend to some important black box or superfast-highspark-thing-ama-bob. I just never looked.

Disaster was looking me square in the face and I had no idea. As an example, I was under the dash disconnecting gauges and pulling sensors back through when I found more wires than I expected. I tugged on most of them and pulled one through the firewall. It looked familiar. Later, as I stared at my engine bay, the new coil (remember all the wires plugged into my coil?) terminals had with the wires unattached. What was once an organized mess of wires was now truly a mess of unorganized wires! Better take a picture I thought. Too late. Why on earth did that wire need to run to the coil, I thought? Later, after labeling every wire from that point on, I discovered that indeed the ignition and tachometer obviously must run to the coil. But this little wire was run to the coil only to provide power for some useless switch. And so began the start of many pictures, tape labels and baggies!

I planned to send the car to Zachery Hawthorn for paint as a "rolling chassis". I assumed that certain things would be taped off and masked around and I was sure brake lines were one of those things. Wrong again! So began the removal of all the brake lines (my racing friend Clancy would say to me, "We don't need no stinking brake lines, besides we can make new ones and fit AN fittings for a better seal". I soon learned another lesson in the difference between the AN flare and a British flare – a lot of money and a special tool that I did not own.

Now the disassembly took on a mind of its own, and consumed most of my time taking things apart, thinking about how to take something apart, cursing why something that seemed so simple to come apart wouldn't. And, thinking about how to make improvements when it was all apart. It began to make me think that I needed to attend support group meetings or seek a counselor. I then stumbled upon "While you are at it" syndrome, which can also consume time and now money. The syndrome starts like this. While you are at it, you might as well add an Accusump. While you are at it you might as well rewire the fuel pump and rear brake lights. While you are at it, you should replace the clutch and brake master cylinders. This syndrome, to my dismay, is not limited to only mechanical goods. While you are at it, why not powder coat the brake pedal box? While you are at it, wouldn't the car look better if you replaced the old wink rear view mirror for that small, convex cool SPA mirror? (THAT is an expensive mirror I might add!) Part of the blame though is where I started thinking about what the completed car was going to look like, that too becomes all encompassing. "You can't put that back on" was another one of my mantras during

this process as I scrutinized every nut, bolt and assembly. I would close my eyes and would imagine just how nice the newly painted car was going to look and realize that I also needed to upgrade or paint items that "might" look bad against a shiny new looking race car! Soon, my UPS driver knew me by name and my office staff could rattle off suppliers such as APT Fast, Speedwell, Pegasus, Moss, (although I do think the bicycle cable/housing for the throttle made them wonder a little!).

Restoration is really rebuilding! It is hard to look at the newly painted shell of a car and imagine that the old vinyl covered dash with holes for gauges should be reinstalled. Thus, the aluminum dash became a part of the plan. At least the gauges will now be located where they are useful for me as a driver. Nothing like having to remove your left hand from the steering wheel as you are rounding the carousel at Road America because it is the only way to see the water temperature gauge! The amount of perfection the dash took became another issue. If you align everything it needs to be exact, but if you decide to place the gauges and switches in a random fashion, then even that must be calculated. I finally decided just to mark and start drilling the holes because at some point you do realize that it is just a race car. For another point of clarification, I really didn't drill the holes. My father-in-law did and, as a retired millwright, HE wanted perfectionand he got it too!

Three weeks to go before the first race and the car was wired, had new (read: expensive) brake lines, the dash mounted, and the exterior trim installed, and I feel like I just may make it in time!

Two weeks to go and the rebuilt engine arrived. Not only did I have a need to paint the car, the engine had a NEED to regain the oil pressure it "lost" while I was racing and running second in the final race last season at Hallett Raceway in Oklahoma. Easy peasy I say! Wrong. The engine that came out of the car was now going back in a car that had been rewired to do away with things like the fuse box. And, the car now has an Accusump three quart oiling system where it did not before, new gauges and all sorts of things I determined to re-do in the name of having an easier car to work on at the track. About the only thing that was still the same was that the engine was using the same engine mounts!

One week to go until the first race and I received the bonnet, (hood for the non-British types) and I finally began to add the roundels and number decals. I had to wait to receive the bonnet before I installed those items as I really like many of the historical cars I remember as a kid. I had an idea for the placement of the decals, but being an architect and having what I call a heightened sense of all things aesthetic, I needed to see the total car to determine the best placement.

Four days to go and I started her for the first time and as the norm for vintage racing, I was overjoyed one minute and shaking my head in disgust the next! I discovered a water leak with a bad hose fitting and after draining her and coming up with a fix I rationalized my anger management by telling myself that it was better to happen in my garage then while racing at the track! We managed to get the car timed correctly and I "bed" the new brake shoes in during a trip up and down my street a few times all the while causing my neighbors to run for cover, or earplugs. At least I don't run her before noon or at all on Sundays!

One day from departure. I bought my fuel, packed the car, found my "spares" (parts), and filled the air tank and the tires with air....air? Another issue! It seemed the powder coated wheels and Hoosier Street TD tires are not holding air for more than a few hours. Oh, perhaps the wheels

really need those metal valve stems and not the rubber ones we changed to. Off come the tires and down to my tire center to reinstall the metal valve stems! Better to do this here again I say, than lug my heavy air tank around after every session at the track!

Time to race, finally. How is the race car going to perform? What issues will arise? Does she look good? I can say that after the first race of the season and a few "teething" issues like an oil leak, (an oversight, now fixed), overheating, (minor issue that cardboard and duct tape solved), and bad ground wire connections, (scrape the "new" paint down to bare metal first!) I am pleased that the "easier" to maintain at the track car is really just that. Of course the issue that was difficult to discover and kept me from a few race sessions was the one assembly that I did not touch during the whole rebuilding process, the distributor! (British cars often like to show you who really is the boss!)

Now, I am setting up for the second race at Blackhawk Farms in June, with Mid-Ohio to follow the weekend after that. I hope to settle down and get to know my amazing looking Bugeye race car once again and to have many successful race weekends this season. I won't forget to apply Locktite to the screws in the distributor; it worked well when I removed it from the car last year! (Boy-don't we all say that?). It is a great feeling to pull up to the false grid with a shiny car that simply looks amazing; the spectators deserve that much!

Wish me luck!

