



## IN THIS ISSUE

- At the Wheel ..... 2
- Autojumble ..... 10
- The British Choice ..... 5
- Editor's Ramble ..... 9
- Fort Langley Run ..... 6
- OECC/VCB Calendar ..... 10
- LeMay Collection ..... 7
- Living With CMS ..... 8
- Name This Mystery Car ..... 10
- Overland to Langley ..... 1
- Rare Embers of Bygone Days ..... 1
- Wings & Wheels 2006 ..... 9
- What Was I Thinking? ..... 1

Get Roundabout in colour:  
[www.oecc.ca/vcb/ra03.pdf](http://www.oecc.ca/vcb/ra03.pdf)

### July 4 Meeting

7:00 MCL Motor Cars,  
Vancouver

### August 1 Meeting

7:00 Stewart Historic Farm,  
Surrey (come at 6:00 and  
bring a picnic; bring your  
English car and tour  
Crescent Beach and White  
Rock afterward)

OLD ENGLISH CAR CLUB OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, VANCOUVER COAST BRANCH

MAY-JUN 2006 - VOL 11, NUM 3

## Overland to Langley

Les Foster

"By road this 7<sup>th</sup> day of April, in the year of..." Who could blame Carl Knorr and me for feeling like we should scrawl a claim on some handy rock after finally reaching Langley in a 1951 Ford Thames E83W pickup truck!

Nowadays it is seldom necessary to question whether your vehicle can make it to the Fraser Valley from Tsawwassen, a distance of 35 miles, even for elderly British classics. The Thames, however, is a different breed. Called in one book "a study in classic Fordisms" it is the product of a different age and a very different set of expectations. The E83W was introduced in Britain in 1938. A true commercial vehicle, its offset drivetrain allowed a short snout and maximum load space on a 90 inch wheelbase.. It was designed for a legal speed limit of 30 m.p.h. in a land of country lanes, congested city streets, punitive tax laws, and expensive petrol. With a top speed 5 m.p.h. above the national limit, it was considered rather sprightly. Today, with 30.5 B.H.P. and a 6.83:1 rear axle ratio pulling an unloaded weight (with fuel and two occupants) of about 2500 pounds, it is spectacularly slow! A 1947 road test claims about 20 seconds to 30 m.p.h. but this seems incredibly optimistic.

The result is that any expedition requires careful route planning. The Thames simply cannot use many of the familiar arteries. Seeking a survivable route to Langley, I got out the map and decided on a circuitous meander

Continued on page 3

## Rare Embers of Bygone Days

Elaine Lafontaine

A few summers back Patrick Jones and I went on a trip into the interior of BC in pursuit of car graveyards. An auto-wrecking yard in Clinton proved to be of the bygone days where cars were abandoned without being crushed. What we found were fields of trees and of stacked, shoved, dumped rusting embers from a time long gone. The yard's owner was as overgrown and as worn as the cars, but in his frame and field sparks of life were still being lived out from the remains.

The owner moved as slowly as and looked as out of time as the tractor he used to drag the wrecks from their resting places among the trees. There was energy in that old tractor that chugged and persistently pulled at the cars that had set roots into the soil just as much as the owner had. There was rumor that this yard housed a 1958 Austin, and I spied it off in a protected valley where it had been resting and rooted since 1968: the majestic Westminster Countryman.

A long time ago wagons were called Estates and Countrymans reflecting the prestige for a social class of people who desired to go back into the country that the romantic poets alluded to; bring to mind the harmony of nature, the honour of a simple hard working life, the majestic nobility of breeding and social standing. True to their calling, the Estates were given extra trimmings. They were fitted with leather seats and

Continued on page 2

## What Was I Thinking?

*Or the Restoration of a Demon Imp*

John Chapman

My story begins back in 1973 at a Saturday car auction in Southend-on-Sea in Essex, England, when I was 20 years old. This was a "low end" auction where desperate owners would try to unload their sick and dented vehicles and back street dealers would get rid of cars of dubious backgrounds. I would visit quite regularly in the hope of picking up a bargain that I could fix up and then sell on at a profit.

I could tell many tales of the cars that I purchased over the couple of years that I went there. Once I bought a Rover 2000 for \$120 and put in a Perkins diesel engine mated to a Triumph overdrive gearbox. But that's another story.

On this particular Saturday amongst the usual pile of wrecks was this 1966 Sunbeam Imp, white in colour with black interior, one owner with just 21,000 miles on the speedometer. The interior was like new and just a small dent on a front fender that would be easy to fix. Imps had a reputation for bad build quality and bad reliability. This one had signs of water in the oil and oil in the water, a common fault on these cars. The water pump would break which in turn overheated the engine which would then bow the cylinder head which would then result in poor running and non-starting.

Continued on page 4

## Rare Embers of Bygone Days Continued from page 1

arm rests, larger more powerful engines, extra leaf springs in the back, and extra dash options such as tachs and clocks. Going a step farther, the Countryman also provided fold down seats, with fold out leather seat cushions for headrests, and the wagons offered a six-foot long bed space. It was a car for the man who had everything.

Just as the old yard owner came to life when speaking of the cars and the stories behind them, I could see the nobility in the old hulk of the Westminster A95. Its proud flying A held aloft on its hood, forever marked its destiny to the driver at the wheel, setting the direction. The Westminster had come to a premature stop as the brother of the owner had cause to have the engine overhauled, sending it to a car repair shop. But during the same year, the brother had poor health and consequently died. The car was ignored, but as the memory of the brother was kept, so was the car held in memory of a time gone. As time went by, the engine was lost, never to be recovered from the garage, but the car, either by association of its owner or of its own noble bearing, was protected by its current owner until 2003. The locals had not managed to stone the windshield like the other hulks and the trees had not found holes through the floors to grow through. It had stayed its ground from time and time's ravishes. It had succumbed, however, to the hot dry climate, and looked as it had been burned and shrunk by the sun. The leather was faded and fallen to pieces, the paint on the roof was cracked and peeled like birch tree bark. The licence plate read a faded BC 1968.

In my mind's eye, I could see the car's strong impression and obvious attraction of its era. It was a desperate cry to save that noble image of a car that I saw that motivated me into making room for this car in my life. I had already restored a

noble car of the Wolseley breed that liked the long highway miles, and had started restoration on my in-town car the Austin A55 Mk. I. I had even planned ahead to my retirement car and pur-



chased the Triumph TR3 roadster that now sits in my father's back yard until the day that I can work on restoring it. Like the first car I restored, these were all to be home repairs and works of passion. This new addition would be looked upon as excessive even by my own standards.

The thousand dollars that I paid for it, the auto wrecker's enthusiastic reassurance and determined insistence of its intrinsic value, and the assurances of a fellow car enthusiast were factors, but basically I was enthralled. So it has been hauled to a dry storage on the coast where will sleep for another few years until its' day of restoration. I have learned of its rarity over time, as Patrick, a short time after its' voyage across BC, sent pictures with a short description of the car to the UK auto magazine called Practical Classics who in turn published it in their next issue with his phone number attached. He soon got calls from the UK asking to purchase the car, and to have it sent back by ship for restoration. It turns out that there are only eleven known left in the world, two of which are here in Canada, one

being mine. Unwilling to sell it, I have made contact with the Ontario owner and have learned of his attempts of restoration. I have also learned of the role the Westminster Countryman played in the Royal visit of the 1950s by Queen Elizabeth who toured Canada's countryside. It was also her car of choice in the UK during the time of the Westminster's glory days.

I look forward to the day when I can make the time and find the place and energy to restore this timepiece to its former glory for all enthusiasts to see. It has jumped the cue line I have made

for myself, and hope to have more than just my hand directing its return to life. The liveliness and camaraderie of enthusiasts working together would encourage and kindle the fires needed to pursue such a daunting task. At the end, the Countryman would be a testament to those who deem it to take it upon themselves to bring back to life what was a people's accomplishment of a time and era gone by.

### AT THE WHEEL

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## Overland to Langley Continued from page 1

through the farm roads of Ladner and past Boundary Bay Airport (using some of the Ladner to Bellingham Run routing). This necessitated an unavoidable white-knuckle sprint down Highway 10



for a few miles until exiting at the East Delta Hall to resume more leisurely motoring to our main eastward link, 64<sup>th</sup> Avenue. It all looked quite plausible on the road map. I am now seeking a contour map of the Fraser Valley! I forgot about those alternating ridges and valleys that must be crossed.

We did pretty well, though, only having to drop down to a non-synchro first gear once each way. Uphill stints were mostly managed at a brave 15 m.p.h. in second gear followed by a screaming descent reminiscent of a scene from the movie "Memphis Belle" where speeds might even have exceeded 35! Following a slight jog off 64<sup>th</sup>, we connected with Crush Crescent to drop down a steep grade to Milner. With a fully loaded Sterling dump truck on our tail I was pondering the origin of the road's name as the E83W managed to keep the hissing dirt-hauler filling the rear view mirror. After that it was an easier run along 56<sup>th</sup> Avenue behind Langley Airport before winding our way up a scenic ravine with a long parade behind us. We reached 240<sup>th</sup> Street and turned south for the final approach to our goal- the home and shop of Tom Hood the Ford Guru.

Slightly deafened, and very stiff, we carefully extracted ourselves from the tiny cab to be greeted by an amused Tom. The Thames is a symphony of engine and gear noise accompanied by myriad squeaks and clunks of loose bodywork. There really is no provision for a passenger's seat, though one was offered as an option. With no footwell for the passenger, the passenger's seat had to be raised a few inches to allow a sort of knees-under-chin squat and a hunched-forward attitude to peer downward out the windscreen. It was in

the finest tradition of the old racing car riding-mechanics that Carl endured the trip!

Tom Hood is a huge gentle bear of a man who quite simply knows everything about old Fords. Although he has several projects of his own pending, in truth his real love is the challenge of finding solutions to the mechanical woes brought to him by Ford owners of infinitely less knowledge than himself. He excels at

making parts and tools and is a true craftsman who takes real pride in his work. I am honoured to have had my mechanical needs attended to by Tom. He could easily have laughed off an English Ford (something I've almost come to expect) but he saw it as an interesting challenge and a test of his Ford acumen. I'm grateful he did! He quickly appreciated that Carl was a kindred spirit and correctly, but benignly, assessed me as an enthusiastic old car guy who should not be allowed near tools. Tom had rebuilt the Thames' front axle and steering box some years ago but this past Fall he tackled its corrosion-ravaged rear axle. This job came about after I drained several cups of water from it! He did a great job on it and it was interesting to see the typical Ford design applied in slightly smaller scale- a feature throughout the E83W. In fact it actually shares some parts with the domestic Ford products of the 1930s.

For almost two and one half years, Carl and I have laboured on the mechanical restoration of the Thames. Carl, by nature thoughtful, precise, and civilized, has been heard to utter obscenities (albeit fairly mild ones) only when confronted with the seemingly endless stream of worn out and corroded items presented by my English Ford truck! His mantra became, "Les, this part really isn't that good". Without Carl's help and friendship this restoration would have been very, very difficult indeed. Thank you, Carl.

I'm grateful, too, for the help of many others along the way. Alec's Automotive and Pacific Parts got me started with machine shop work. John Fuller, a Ford Model A expert from Washington State known locally for his daily trips to the MacDonald's in Lynden in his well worn

Model A coupe to get his lop-eared mutt, Henry, his daily ice-cream cone, assembled the engine, doing the babitted con-rod bearings himself. He, too, found everything to be completely recognizable as an early Ford product. After all, the Thames' immediate predecessors stemmed from the Model Y designed right in Dearborn to bail out a faltering Ford of England hard-hit by new tax laws and a worldwide Depression. Paul Beenham was my inspiration and great help for many years and Joe Carroll's and Fred Bennett's mechanical and historical knowledge has always been there to draw on, too. Belonging to the OECC has created many friendships and contacts without which such a task would be not only daunting, but greatly less enjoyable.

With all the mechanical components refurbished the next step will be replacement of the very bent and damaged chassis and, finally, the very challenging repair of the bodywork. The debut at VanDusen will be some years off!

When you first see the Thames you will be forgiven for thinking, "what does he mean, restored?" It still looks the same as ever with its rust and scratches and boded bodywork. But underneath beats the heart of a new truck! Like the face only a mother could love, it has special joy for me. I think Carl, too, has almost reluctantly come to feel attachment to it- even cheering as we overtook a wobbling backhoe on Highway 10!

Sixty years ago my namesake uncle flew in a Halifax bomber named for its shortcomings, "King Gremlin." It seems like it might be an apt name for my truck. Surely the gremlins have been at work on my Thames but I believe that, in the end, it *will* rise again!



Tom Hood & Carl Knorr

## What Was I Thinking? Continued from page 1

The woman that owned it from new had lots of the usual problems and the bowed cylinder head was the last straw. She locked it up in her garage for three years. When she sold the house a neighbour tried to sell the car for her but had no luck so he put it into the auction. As it was a non-runner and due to the bad reputation of the Imps meant that I



picked this little baby up for the equivalent of \$90.

I towed the car home and within two weeks had fixed the dent and the cylinder head. I used that car for about three months before I sold it for \$240, a nice little profit in those days. The sad thing is that it was one of the few cars that I owned and wished that I had kept. It was in as new condition, ran very well, was a comfortable ride and was fun to drive around the twisty roads of England. I remember my 70 year old father hanging on for dear life sitting in the passenger seat as I circumnavigated a roundabout on three wheels.

So, here I am some 33 years later living in Vancouver and I just happen to have a space in my workshop to add to my little collection of old cars and a little time on my hands. But what car? I had drawn up a list of English cars that I would like to own and could afford. There was only one on the list that I had owned before, yes, the Imp.

I must admit, the list was very varied with no common theme, only that I wanted one for some reason. It did not matter what came up first, just as long

as it was worth the money and that it was relatively easy to retrieve. Its amazing how many project Morgans, Daimler SP250s and Berkeleys are for sale on the East coast. I did say my list was varied.

The search began in various classifieds and numerous web sites including Ebay. One November morning after about ten months of searching I was looking on the Buy & Sell website

out of boredom more than anything else and there it was. "1966 Sunbeam Imp, complete for restoration, very solid, only one small piece of rust on the rear fender, \$500." It was located in Abbotsford. Within three hours I was the new proud owner of a 1966 capri blue Sunbeam Imp Sport Sedan. The engine came in kit form. Don't laugh. We have all been there at some stage in our love of old cars.

When I first saw the car it was parked in the owner's driveway with about 3" of snow over it. It looked very solid, as described, and did not have rust in the usual places. However, the carpets were soaking wet and the engine, as mentioned before, was in boxes. The deal included a donor car which was very rusty, incomplete and imbedded in a bush. The owner had bought the car from a neighbour about eight years earlier with the intention of restoring it. But when he discovered that all the parts had to come from England

he gave up. There was no Ebay then. Love is blind. Well it was when I handed the cash over with a smile on my face and then proceeded to load my car up with boxes of engine pans.

The two cars arrived at my house two days later on the back of a flat deck tow truck. The good car still had snow on it and the donor still had half the bramble bush attached.

After the cars were unloaded I dragged my very understanding wife out to the workshop to view my purchase. She spoke no words, just had an expression of bewilderment on her face and probably had the thought of "what was he thinking." My wife does not share my passion for old cars. She didn't know whether to laugh, cry or rush to the phone to get the men in white coats to take me away in a straight jacket. At least our two children laughed at their father's folly.

The original plan, Ah! Yes, the original plan. We all have had "the original plan" at the beginning of a project like this. But it seldom transpires into what actually happens in the end, does it?

O.K. The original plan was to strip the donor car of all useful parts, dispose of the rusting hulk, then dry out the inside of the "good" car (notice I'm using quotation marks now) before the rot set into the floors (too late!). Then put a tarp over it and put it at the side of my workshop awaiting restoration until I had finished repairing two of my other cars.

That, ladies and gentlemen, was the original plan. I can remember the last words that I spoke to the previous owner when he asked of my plan of restoration. "Compared to restoring my Mk. II Daimler this will be easy and should only



take me about 18 months once I get started."

What was I thinking?

*(Continued in the next Roundabout!)*

# The British Choice

Ian Cox

(*Western Classics*, April & June 1993, courtesy of Steve Diggins)

There are good reasons why sports cars are so popular, but sometimes it seems that their popularity influences us to think that all British classics are sports cars. Well, they're fun, they also provide a certain connotation that the driver/owner is a sporting type him/herself: a nice alternative image to put on for the weekend.

But what of the other British cars: the Saloons and Fixed-Head Coupes, the Estate cars and the convertibles? Those fine old British family cars of the 30s, 40s, 50s and 60s (and 70s, too?). So much innovative engineering and quality. So much unique design and character. So much history and heritage.

The luxury cars hold a special place of their own and they truly show what money can buy. The incredible universal admiration for Rolls and Bentley, for Jaguar, Aston-Martin, Armstrong-Siddley, and others is all that needs to be said. They are family cars, too, I suppose, but certainly in a class of their own. The majority of British cars by far are the practical classics. Did you know there are no less than 21 different makes of British family cars other than sport and luxury vehicles? That Austin, as but one of that 21, has about 50 different models and that Triumph has 15 non-sports car models? Unique and interesting each in their own right each of these cars brings delight and pride of ownership, and besides that they're thoroughly practical.

The Austin A-40 was the 1950s equivalent of today's Honda Civic. Reliable and popular, a good deal for the money, and a respected workhorse. British cars were really the only alternative to American cars from 1945 to around 1955. Then it was the several makes of German vehicles (whose factories were restarted by the British) that began to compete in the import market. There were other popular European cars and it was not until much later that the Japanese became so successful in that market. Did you know that the DAT car company of Japan produced an Austin under license?

Conceived as a Dat Son but delivered as the Datsun. Yes, an Austin was the first Datsun. I can't help but add as an aside that the British Ford Company also built Model T Fords for the parent US company, so it works both ways. Then there is the Nash Metropolitan, really an American car but built by Austin in England and only later available in



England.

The overseas popularity of the Standard Vanguard, the Morris Minor, the Hillman Minx and the various Austin A-40s was so great that these exports were highly significant in the rebuilding of Britain after the Second World War. They provided enormous number of jobs for returning soldiers and earned vast amounts of international currency to boost the exhausted British economy. The Vanguard was actually designed and engineered specifically for the tastes and conditions of the Americans and colonials. Just look at it. It's really not



very British! The Brits said it looked like a Plymouth. One hundred and eighty-five thousand of these were built between 1948 and 1952 and most were exported. Over those same years more than 354,000 Austin A-40s "with the 1941 Chevrolet styling" were built and mostly exported.

These cars were popular in North America in those years because they were a good car. A properly restored example is as good today as it was then. Its true that they don't compete well with the no-servicing needed throwaway car of the 1990s, but in their day they transported families over gravel highways, around the Big Bend from Vancouver to Calgary and beyond. Even the Hillman Minx with no water pump!

They were used all day every day for decades and there is still a good collection of survivors to tell the tale. Judge them by the standards of their time, give them the servicing that was commonplace then, and they'll be as faithful to us as they were to our fathers and uncles (with all due respect to any reader who may speak from personal experience about those times).

Although I have not yet mentioned other venerable old favourites such as the Vauxhall, the various British Fords and the Rover, they do claim as much respect in their own right. The Rover deserves special mention for its determination to maintain its

British styling for so long and while other companies were adapting to US market preferences.

Even such a brief dissertation on British vehicles as this would be incomplete were it not to mention commercial "derivatives." If that sounds like a curious phrase, let me explain. British Motors, Rootes, Standard, and Ford all built small commercial vehicles derived from, or based on, their cars. Vans and pickups were simply cars with the back chopped off and boxes added. Modifications to the suspension, differential, etc. were made as appropriate.

Commercial vehicles were used hard and long, they were depreciated to nothing and scrapped unceremoniously. Seldom was any of the family pet status attached to one of these, and so they are now extremely rare. Several Austin pickups and a few vans are known to exist in B.C. The writer owns a Standard Vanguard pickup but knows of no other. There are a few Ford Thames pickups and vans, most of which are not running, and that's about it, to my knowledge. There are also a few heavy trucks by Commer, Ford, and Austin still in this area, but that's another story.

Part Two

Neat, Fun, Interesting, Funky, Sentimental, these are a few of the words used to describe the feelings people have when they decide to include an old car in their lives. Restoring and driving an older vehicle introduces an element of enthusiasm into our lives, it gives us a hobby, and an image we feel good about, and maybe that's all that matters. However, I would like to suggest that the

Continued on page 6

## British Choice, Continued from p. 5

choice of vehicles will impact greatly on the degree of satisfaction achieved, and with such a broad choice of vehicles available, how does one make the right decision?

Let us first admit that there would not be such a wide choice of collectible vehicles if there was not such a great variety of interests to be satisfied. Virtually every vehicle was produced to appeal to a significant number of potential buyers. The variety of vehicles reflects the variety of tastes, and what's right for you is a very individual decision.

For some it's the popularity of a make or model that appeals to them. While for others it's the uniqueness. In the case of sports cars in particular the availability of sufficient parts and services to support their frequent use is an important factor. The point is whatever takes your fancy is the right vehicle for you. Your choice of a classic is as valid as anyone's regardless of make, model, vintage, or expense.

There are however some things to keep in mind whether you're attracted to a Bentley or a Bedford, a Jowett or a Jaguar, or whatever your choice. You can make a success of any project and enjoy any vehicle but keeping a few things in mind will make the experience easier on your patience and your pocketbook.



When I'm considering a purchase these are the things I keep in mind, and they may help you too:

1. Do I like it?
2. Is there a good support network of parts and information, clubs, etc.?
3. Is it something special, is it admired or unique, or does it have special meaning to me?
4. Will I be able to actually use it a) occasionally? b) frequently?
5. Is it distinctively British?
6. Is it appreciating in value, or is it for sale at significantly less than its value?
7. Is it a classic with character?

These points are presented in no particular order and each of us will weight them differently, but keep them in mind and they will help you to feel good about your choice of a British classic.

## Fort Langley Run

### Walter Reynolds

On Sunday, April 23, 2006, a very sunny, hot day, eleven old English cars congregated at the Fort Langley Fort parking lot, along with their owners and passengers for the first club event of the year - a "rally" around Fort Langley organized by Steve Diggins. All navigators were given a list of directions to follow and were responsible for getting the answers to the questions contained therein, so to speak. Those without navigators followed the others in the blind faith that the navigators were able to follow Steve's written directions and knew where they were going.

First stop was the milk shed at the eastern portion of Derby Reach Park. From there, where a certain degree of order went to pot and the lead cars lost their lead (or their way!) we drove



around the area finding new roads and wild life. Places to go, questions to answer, people to see; Steve's departing words, "It's not a timed event", lost in the rush. Eventually we found our way to the Fort Winery. Some found the Winery and dashed off into the sunset, never to be seen again until the restaurant. Others followed the Reynolds into the Winery for some late-morning wine tasting. The sun is over the yardarm, somewhere, isn't it?

Driving down the escarpment road back into Fort Langley proper provided some hairy moments - can you say, "imminent brake failure"?

Our destination was the Fort Pub where Steve took our answer sheets and told us that the awards would

be made at the May 2nd Club meeting. Lunch was served and for those keeping such records, mine was last - eat up, Walter, we're ready to leave!

After lunch, we strolled up to the Community Hall where some of our Club members were with the LAMB's group's static display of Langley Area Mostly British cars. Visiting over, we went our separate ways buoyed by the knowledge



that the day had been a good one with good weather and good company. We were even allowed to bask in the pre-Tradex Award Winning glow given off by Fred Bennett's Spiffire, out on it's maiden event. While the day's event was over for 2006, all bodes well for another similar run (including a stop at the Fort Winery) in 2007. More cars plus more people equals more fun!

The Rally's awards of Fort Winery wine went to The Walker's (1st), the Reynolds' (2nd), the Chatterton's (3rd). Trophies were

awarded to Alan Miles (The Sparks Trophy for the oldest vehicle to complete the rally), and to Steve Hutchens (The Faulty Towers Trophy for when the day doesn't go as planned). These two trophies will be awarded annually at this event.



# LeMay Collection Tour

## Bence McIntyre

On Saturday March 18, Elaine Lafontaine, Brian Lees, Itallo Cirillo, Glen Johnson, David Ballantine and Bence McIntyre joined the Langley Area Mostly British Motoring Club (LAMB) for a tour of the Lemay Auto Collection in Tacoma, Washington.

We left early in the morning from Langley in a rented 15 passenger van. A little advice for anyone planning to rent one of the vans, they are really only 14 adult passengers. At least this is what I was informed by those in the cheap seats. As co-driver / navigator I traveled in first class comfort. The travel time each way was 3 hours with brunch and dinner stops in Marysville both ways. This made for a long day however everyone greatly enjoyed themselves and I have had requests for a repeat trip in the future.

Everyone found something special for themselves; Itallo was very pleased to see a 1959 Vauxhall Victor which is similar to his 1960 Victor and quite rare. He also was also very excited over a Fiat Topolini. (I guess you can put an Italian into an English car but down deep he will always be Italian). David was pleased to check out the three Double Decker buses of which he tried to impart some knowledge onto the Docent (tour guide) as to history and origin. The museum thought them to be London buses, however David was happy to inform them they are Bristol ECW (Eastern Coach Works) and their service area would have been in the north of England. Dave has since looked up the serial numbers and two were run by the West Yorkshire Road Company and the other was operated out of Devon by Western National. David was also taken by a 1959 Chev which was similar to the first new American he had a ride in and a 63 Corvair which resembled one he had owned. Glen Johnson kept remarking on all the cars he had owned or knew some one who had owned one. Glen had a real liking for the 48 Tucker

which is shared by many including myself and Elaine. Glen was also taken by the enormity of the collection and the vision of Harold Lemay. He amazed by the numbers of dedicated volunteers needed to maintain this collection, just keeping all the cars dusted is an enormous job.

Brian Lees got a special visit to the residence garages (which Nancy Lemay has referred to as a humble 5 bedroom bungalow with a 300 car garage) to see his old friend a 1954 Wolseley police car which he used to own. He presented the museum with a police dispatch recording



Itallo Cirillo in the 1959 Vauxhall

for the sound system hidden in the car and was invited back to be their guest for the annual open house to help prepare the car for display. His Wolseley was residing in good company with some Rolls Royces and Duesenbergs, although he did not get a chance to look at them closely. Elaine was quite taken with the collection of moped and small motorcycles, some of which were called Allstate and had been sold through the Sears catalog. Like myself and several others, she really enjoyed the early pre WWI vehicles. Another favorite of Elaine's and mine is a mid 50s Kaiser Dragon with the roof covered in real bamboo and the seat upholstery made to look like bamboo.

I was really taken with a WWI army truck, unfortunately I cannot recall the make but what struck me was how difficult it must have been to drive over rough terrain as the wheels were built like wagon wheels with wooden hubs & spokes and an outer steel rim. The seat resembled a wooden park bench and the steering column came up straight and vertical to a wooden steering wheel

which would have been hard to reach while bouncing around on the wooden slatted seat. Also a 49 Kaiser-Frazer 4-door convertible which was displayed in the shower stalls (shower nozzles still intact but no taps as the Nuns decided if you deserved hot or cold showers), what was special to me about this car is the fender script stated the colour of the car "Indian Ceramic". One of my favorites was a Consol based Thames panel van which appeared in good shape. I say appeared as this was one on many cars up on shelves! Last year when I went through this collection I pointed out that an MG Midget on display is actually an AH Sprite and I took time to mention it again. So they probably will continue to refer to the Double Decker buses as London buses despite David's efforts.

One of the most memorable things about this collection is the sheer volume of vehicles. The buildings are an old boy's military school (run by Nuns!) which has been left in its original state by Harold Lemay by agreement of sale. This makes for a collection of rooms and buildings. The original floor, swimming pool, etc., are covered over by removable floors etc. As you move from room to room you taken back by the number of cars, shelves constructed around the room to hold more vehicles and more vehicles and more vehicles. It is also a very sobering fact to find out that this is a small number of his entire collection.

As we were interested in British cars, we were allowed into an outbuilding that used to be resident rooms and offices. This area had several small British and other imports as well as the motorcycles.

Although this collection is mostly American iron with little in the way of British and other imports, it has lots of rare and unique vehicles. I would highly recommend everyone consider this tour if given the chance. On Labour Day weekend they have an annual open house and car show with free admission for the car show and collection for those bringing their collector cars for the show. This must be a huge event as I was told that they have 400 docents for the day and use their three English double decker buses to transport people among the venues.

## Uncle Olaf's Volvos Living with CMS

Phil Singher

(Ed. Note: This article, from the Volvo Club of British Columbia newsletter, may be as relevant to some owners of old English cars as it was for some owners of old Volvos for whom it was written. The author is a noted vintage Volvo specialist of significant repute. CMS isn't unique to owners of vintage Volvos, so I hope you enjoy the article!)

I'm no purist. It's your car, and you can do what you want to it. Still, some of the modifications I see on old Volvos my customers bring in for healing make me cringe. What leads otherwise rational people to change what Volvo hath wrought in ways that make no sense at all? I have a pretty good idea, because I'm a recovering Compulsive Modifier Syndrome (CMS) sufferer myself—someone who wants to make changes just because they can, not because they improve the car.

The very root of the problem is a failure to acknowledge that Volvo engineers knew what they were doing, and that the cars are really pretty darned good in healthy stock form. If your Volvo is worn out, badly tuned, or has unknown previous modifications, it's easy to overlook this. Various forums on the Internet are replete with discussions of old Volvos that lack power, get poor gas mileage, deafen passengers, require excessive effort to steer, or suffer from a wide range of other ailments. In the great majority of cases, the owner has no interest in fixing what's wrong, but instead wants to modify the car around the problem. "My 1800 overheats—how do I put on a six-bladed fan from a 240?" Sometimes the owner even knows what the problem is: "My distributor is shot and I get terrible performance—can I get more power by putting on an exhaust header?"

Does the first owner really think Volvo designed 1800s with inadequate cooling systems? Does the second one believe that ignition that behaves itself isn't fundamental to good performance? No doubt buying and modifying are more fun than thinking, but neither owner is likely to get good results from that approach.

Once that sort of mind set gets

established, the owner is wide open to contracting CMS, which often progresses to its acute stage, full-blown Catalogue Fever. Of course catalogues, on-line stores, and eBay have perfectly legitimate uses and can be great resources. It's only those severely afflicted with CMS that can't help but buy everything that can possibly be bolted onto their cars, just because the word "upgrade" appears somewhere on the page. The person or company that wants your money must know more about engineering cars than Volvo did—they wouldn't print it if it wasn't true, right?

One of the most reliable indicators of CMS is the inability to resist buying a Weber down draft conversion. This is often brought on by the widespread—and very contagious—myth that SU carbs never really run right and require fiddling with at least semi-weekly. That couldn't be because they're worn out, set up wrong, or mistuned, could it? So, instead of spending \$300 having the SU professionally rebuilt to new condition with the correct needles for your particular motor, it seems to make more sense to spend \$500 on modifying the car with a Weber conversion. Never mind that this is replacing two 44mm barrels and a fairly efficient manifold with a little bitty carb that has one 32mm and one 36mm barrel (choked down considerably smaller internally, no less) and a long, circuitous manifold. MGs use SU carbs and Ferraris use Webers. Ferraris are faster than MGs, so a Weber must be better for performance, no? (I have yet to come across a Ferrari with a Weber 32/36 DGV on it, but maybe I don't get around enough.)

Of course, that Weber is going to automatically come loaded with the correct chokes, jets, auxiliary venturis, and emulsion tubes for your particular motor, because you're buying it from a reputable company that's been selling them forever. Their shipping guy is psychic, knows all the peculiarities of your car, and will set all this up for you. If somehow he slips up and your motor behaves like it's running on mentholated guano instead of gasoline, you can always order the Fine Tuning Kit that contains less than half the components needed to really optimize the carb for your motor, exhaust system, altitude, and driving conditions.

Many CMS sufferers never bother with that anyway. If it runs rough, it's because high performance stuff tends to do that. Top Fuel dragsters hardly idle at all, actually. It's not a problem; it's a feature.

Okay, back to reality. Note that I'm not

saying that the Weber conversion is junk; or that SUs are the end-all and be-all of carburetors. The Weber can be set up to work very well on mild motors, and SUs become problematic in true high performance applications. In the great majority of cases, though, the conversion is more expensive, more work, fussier to tune, and produces poorer performance than simply sticking with the original equipment and fixing whatever is wrong with it.

If the owner is in the acute Catalogue Fever stage of CMS, you'll find a cheap header in place of the nicely-tuned Volvo manifold and dual downpipes, a performance camshaft that's milder than original equipment, a big-bore kit that results in disastrous piston to combustion chamber relationships, expensive-but-skinny air cleaners that both flow and filter less well than the wide paper ones commonly found on three-bolt SUs, a cast valve cover that's trickier to seal than the original stamped one, and so on.

I know—I've been there and done that, in various combinations, and at excessive length. What's surprising is that I liked the results, even though the car I subjected to this was very picky to tune, tended to ping and run on, and always felt like the gear ratios in the transmission were just exactly wrong. CMS/CF causes delusions long beyond the dreaming and buying phases. The recovery began only when I ended up with a second old Volvo that was mechanically stock, fixed everything that was wrong with it, and came to the realization that it was not only much more pleasant to drive than my supposed hot rod, but faster as well.

Unfortunately (for my bank account), CMS cannot be cured—once you've got it, it's with you for life. It can, however, be controlled, or at least channelled into more productive directions. This requires patience, thinking, research, honesty with oneself, and practising Safe Shopping. It is possible to modify an old Volvo so it does everything you want it to do better, and with little or no downside. Permit me to offer a few guidelines:

One: If your car is misbehaving, find out why and fix it. It did not misbehave when it was new; trust me.

Two: Never change anything just because you can, or because someone else did and likes the results (remember the delusional thing). Every change needs to be done for a specific purpose. "Upgrade" does not constitute a specific purpose.

Three: If you don't notice a quantifiable

improvement, or if there's an undesirable side effect, change it back. Someone on eBay hasn't read this column and will want whatever you're taking off.

Four: More is not automatically better. Why do you want to know what the biggest wheels and tires you can cram into the wheel wells are?

Five: Remember that the whole car is a system engineered to work in harmony. If you strengthen one area, all the rest is relatively weaker. One example is putting an overdrive transmission into a car that's geared for a regular four-speed—a definite upgrade for many people—and discovering that the stock motor is overmatched by the resulting tall final drive ratio. You'll either want to gear the rear end down the way Volvo had it with OD (not cheap), or build a more powerful motor (very much not cheap). One choice leads to a much more slippery slope than the other, by the way.

Six: Consider how and where you use the car. Most handling improvements are done at the expense of ride quality. Sure, it's easy to rationalize suspension mods—old Volvos were designed for the 80% of roads that were unpaved in Sweden back when Uncle Olaf was a youngster, but you drive on pavement. I don't know where you live, but would you call the freeway that goes through your nearest urban metropolis "paved?" Don't do more than you need to, and take it step by step.

Seven: It is better to spend \$300 on something that produces positive results than \$100 on something that produces negative results. It is surprisingly easy to confuse which is which, particularly if you're making multiple changes all at once.

Eight: When it makes sense to make multiple changes all at once (building a performance motor, for instance), consult with someone who knows what will get you the results you personally want. My email is [editor@vclassics.com](mailto:editor@vclassics.com), and I can very likely help. If I don't have a good solution for you, I'll put you in touch with someone who does.

As for my own battle with CMS, the Catalogue Fever part is long past, and I've acquired a fair amount of immunity to it. I try to stick to my own guidelines and practice Safe Shopping. As I said, though, it's incurable, and I'm not done modifying by any means.

The formerly stock, nothing wrong with it car now houses an indisputably silly motor, as those of you who have followed my occasional "Beast" stories in

this publication may know. One weak point is now lack of traction, so I plan to put in a limited slip differential along with stronger rear axles. The rear sway bar, which I'd installed as a mandatory suspension improvement while CF was raging, is now sitting on the shelf. The Bilstein shocks (inherited from the original owner) don't match the progressive springs well, particularly if the rear-Konis or Carreras are in this car's future. It needs better tires, but not necessarily bigger than the ones on there now, which are already quite a bit wider than the originals. I suspect the exhaust system of interfering with engine tuning in the midrange, so I'll need to re-configure that. Also, I'm 98% sure that the aftermarket ignition is not adequate at high RPM and full throttle, so I'm devising a cost-effective experiment in that area. We'll see if its an upgrade or just additional complexity.

Those are only six changes, and they all stand a good chance of making sense. If they don't, I'll admit it. CMS is under control, where that car is concerned.

The other car has further to go. Following a full disassembly and restoration, most of the old CF-phase hot rod stuff is gone, but not all. Due to both time and budgetary constraints, the car is a very pretty mechanical bouillabaisse of parts I had left over from other projects, or could get for cheap. This does not add up to a gourmet dish. What this one wants to be when it grows up (do cars demand what they want, or is that another CMS delusion?) is a powerful, elegant, and somewhat luxurious cruiser. Right now it has a loud, raspy exhaust tone (I reused the old header for lack of something better), revs out well but feels strained doing it (a stock B20E with big Weber sidedrafts is not exactly an engineered solution), and driving on parts of I-5 through Seattle would set off the airbags in a newer car if it rode like that.

This one needs a whole new motor (with characteristics quite different from The Beast), a completely different exhaust system, I'm thinking of electronic throttle-body fuel injection, and the suspension will need reworking in ways I haven't gotten around to thinking of yet.

We'll see how I cope with my CMS throughout all that. I'll let you know. This is a test.

(Editor's Note: At Phil's VClassics website [www.vclassics.com](http://www.vclassics.com) you'll find a nice tech archive, more than you might think applicable to old English cars, and good restoration information.)

## Wings & Wheels 2006 August 20

### Walter Reynolds

Update your personal Car Show Calendar: the Pitt Meadows Airport's Wings & Wheels 2006 show is Sunday, August 20, 2006.

Cars can start showing up at 7:30 AM, and the show runs from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

The show is later than last year to avoid conflict with the B.C. Day weekend (Aug 5-7) and the Abbotsford Airshow (Aug 11-13).

Last year's Wings & Wheels was a "runaway" success with 92 cars showing, of which 14 were Brits, and one of those came over from Victoria. We ran out of room!

For 2006, we are adding two more trophies, one each for "Best Commercial Vehicle" and "Best Motorcycle," making for a total of 11. Although we will have more room this year, only vehicles 1979 or earlier will be allowed.

Visit [www.pittmeadowsairport.com](http://www.pittmeadowsairport.com) and click on Community and Event Calendar for more information. There's even a pancake breakfast!

## Editor's Ramble

### Steve Hutchens

#### BRBC Update

I just received an update from Adele Hedges, the BRBC organizer this year. The numbers are fantastic:

23 cars registered with 42 people

14 cars are doing all of the route

20 of the 23 are doing RITV

British cars from several other clubs are joining us along the way.

The oldest car doing the entire route is a 1947 Bentley; a 1957 Bentley is next oldest. More MG Bs are registered than anything else (6). Other cars: Triumph (3), Morgan (2), Jaguar (2), Jensen Interceptor (1), Wolseley 6/99 (1), MG Midget (1), Morris Oxford (1), Sunbeam Alpine (1), Austin Cambridge (1), DeLorean (1). What a collection!

#### Last Issue's Mystery Car

The contest is still open - neither of the guesses is right so far!

#### Thanks Contributors!

A sincere "THANKS!" from the editor to all of our contributors. They made this issue a delight to put together!

# 2006 OECC/VCB CALENDAR

Please send updates and corrections to sphutchens@yahoo.com  
Visit OECC/VCB online for the latest updates: www.oecc.ca/vcb

Jun 18	Sun	Father's Day Picnic, Victoria			www.oecc.ca
Jun 24	Sat	Highlands Games (free admission w/your car!)	Mike Powley	604-542-0921	mpowley@telus.net
Jun 24-25	Sat-Sun	OECC AGM, Kamloops (registration form online)	Tony Bradwell	250-376-738	www.oecc.ca
Jun 25-30	Sun-Fri	Brits 'Round BC (Kamloops to Penticton)	Steve Hutchens	360-733-3568	www.oecc.ca
Jun 30-Jul 2	Fri-Sun	Rally in the Valley, Penticton, BC	Gerry Hastings	250-769-6505	www.obcc.ca/ritv.htm
Jul 1	Sat	Canada Day Show & Shine, Ganges, Salt Spring Island	Marv Coulthard	250-537-5206	coulthard@saltspring.com
Jul 1-2	Sat-Sun	Pacific Northwest Historics, Pacific Raceway, Kent			www.northwesthistorics.com
Jul 16	Sun	Brits on the Beach, Transfer Beach, Ladysmith, BC	Tony Mantell	250-245-4592	www.oecc.ca
Jul 16	Sun	Minter Gardens Concours, Fraser Valley BMC	Bob Stewart	604 795-5054	www.mintergardens.com
Jul 22	Sat	Western Washington ABFM, Bellevue, WA	Arnie Taub	425-644-7874	www.abfm.com
Aug 12-13	Sat-Sun	Filberg Park All British Field Meet, Comox, BC	David Whitworth	250-338-0026	www.oecc.ca
Aug 20	Sun	Wings & Wheels 2006, Pitt Meadows Airport	Walter Reynolds	604-465-6350	wreynold@uniserve.com
Sep 2	Sat	Portland ABFM, Portland			www.abfm-pdx.com
Sep 16	Sat	Whistler All British Run, North Vancouver, BC			
Sep 16-17	Sat-Sun	English Car Affair in the Park (ECAIP), Victoria, BC	Robert Atkins	250-544-1702	www.oecc.ca/sib
Sep 24	Sat	Ken Griffin Memorial Run, Salt Spring Island	Marv Coulthard	250-537-5206	coulthard@saltspring.com
Nov 5	Sun	Ladner-Bellingham All British Run	Roy Wilkins	604	www.oecc.ca/vcb

## Autojumble

### English Cars For Sale

(see [www.oecc.ca](http://www.oecc.ca) for the latest in stuff for sale and wanted)

#### Cars For Sale

1946 Jag Mark IV 4-door Sedan. Not running but body in excellent condition. Asking \$12,000. Dennis Coates, 250-319-4808 or dpc@mjlblaw.com.

1953 MG TD. \$35,000. Black with beige leather interior. All bills. Christine, 250-337-5679 or chris@gardensofdistinction.co.uk.

1953 Riley RME 1½ Litre. Garaged at Deep Bay (near Bowser). Will be sold to the first offer over \$8,000. Chris Masterman, 250-483-7400.

1956 MG Magnette. Project, accident damage. Lots of spares. Early MG B engine. Need space, must sell soon. \$1,000. Brent, Cobble Hill, 250- 743-5597.

1956 MG A 1500. Lincoln blue, black leather interior. 1798 cc MG B engine. Eight spoke factory optional aluminum racing wheels. Arizona car. Restored. \$21,000. London, ON. 519-453-7686 after 8 pm.

1957 Austin A55 Cambridge 4-door Sedan. Blue/blue, 49,000 miles. Minimal rust, running and decent looking, doesn't smoke. Asking \$3,500. Mike, 250-757-8850.

1957 MG A 1500. Project. Rebuilt motor. Needs mechanical and body work. Lots of new parts and

spares. Low mileage car. \$5,750 or close. Chislors need not Inquire. Randy, Saskatoon, 1-306-653-0014 or cyclebits@hotmail.com.

1957 Morris Minor Traveler (Woody Wagon). Restoration in progress. Good wood, generally good condition. \$4,200. Ian Cox, Victoria, coxian@telus.net or 250-384-2910.

1960 Vauxhall Velox. Original owner. Useable or restorable. Little body damage, some rust. \$2,200. Bob Lees, alees@dccnet.com or 604-943-4343.

1964 Austin Cambridge. Automatic, runs well. original paint. \$600. 250-592-7156.

1966 Rover TC. Complete, original local car. Offers. 250-474-7214.

1967 Jaguar E Type 4.2 litre 2+2. UK import, converted from a Texas car and restored to UK specifications. Jaguar racing green, tan interior. Collector plates. First offer over \$28,000. Chris, 250-483-7400.

1967 Lotus Cortina Mk II. Good condition. \$15,000. Pete Mack, 361-0990, info@finishlinemotobilia.com.

1967 MG B. Excellent condition, collector plates. \$7,500, offers. Ken, 250-740-0308.

1969 Austin 1800 Mk II. Factory sunroof. Meticulously restored in BRG w/tan interior. Asking \$3,500. 250-474-7214.

1969 MG C GT. Rare. Driveable,

mechanically sound .Needs rust repair and interior work. Spares. \$5,000. Consider British trades. Stefan, Victoria, 250-480-4092 or sniemann@shaw.ca.

1970 MG B. Split bumper. Restored. \$14,900. Jim, 250-753-5780.

1970 Triumph Stag: Soft and hard top, original V8. RHD, manual with overdrive (rare in North America). Engine in pieces, transmission and drive train out of car. Great 2+2 blue body. Stored dry. Manuals. Selling at cost. Offers considered. Jurgen, 604-737-8065 or jpeterat@hotmail.com.

1971 Triumph TR6. \$12,500. 250-724-5946 or 250-720-7092.

1972 Triumph TR6. No rust, broken timing chain. Ladysmith, 245-1031.

1974 MG B Roadster. Chrome bumpers. Lots of new parts. Dark green, nice dash, everything working and running great. \$7,500. Mike, 250-474-1244.

1974 MG B. Good unrestored condition, very good runner with strong motor and gearbox. Accepting offers on \$5,950. Stu, 250-474-3956.

1975 Austin Mini. Low mileage, beautiful condition. BRG with tan interior. \$7,000. 250-592-7156.

1975 MG B. Engine rebuilt. Collector plates, excellent condition. \$7,500. Bill, Victoria, 658-4908 or 812-9750 or bhoyt@shaw.ca.

1976 Triumph TR6. One owner.

Worthy restoration project with many parts. Deb, Vancouver, 604-676-1989 or luka6@shaw.ca.

1977 MGB MK IV. Gold, rust-free, never hit or winter driven. Randy, Saskatoon, 1-306-653-0014 or cyclebits@hotmail.com.

1979 Lotus Eclat. Rare, one of 1,400 built. Rover 4 litre V8, automatic transmission. \$5,500. Doug, 250-756-2207 or dougbain@shaw.ca.

1987 Jaguar XJS V12 2-door Hard Top. Dark grey, light grey leather interior. Runs well, mechanically sound. Needs cosmetic TLC. \$5,000 OBO. Alan, 250-287-9049 or wondergirl3@shaw.ca.

#### Parts For Sale

Rebuilt 1098 "A" series engine. \$500. Jim, jim@island.net.

Triumph TR3 grill, 250-758-9686.

Bugeye Sprite grill, 250-758-9686.

Triumph TR4 engine (CT29044 E). Stored indoors since 1979, includes clutch, pressure plate. \$300. Rod, 250-727-8934 or 1rah@telus.net.

MG B parts. 1974 rubber bumper model. Car completely stripped, most parts available. John, 250-701-0162 or johnniebee@shaw.ca.

#### Stuff Wanted

Reasonably lightweight car trailer to haul little British cars. Prefer a low bed, ramps or tip type OK. Bill, 250-751-8909 or cbdean@shaw.ca.