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Subject The British Car Network - December 1, 2008
 From britishcarnetwork@gmail.com
 To Rick Feibusch <rfeibusch1@gmail.com>
 CC
 BCC
 Sent on 11/30/2008 10:55 PM
 Size 7 MB
 Priority Normal

"Christmas is weird. What other time of the year do you sit in front of a dead tree and eat candy out of your socks?" - - George Carlin

British Car Network

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E D I T O R I A L

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the British Car Network. Again, I would like to salute you readers for all that you send back to the network. Although the network was created to publicize the British Car Meets that we were coordinating in the SF Bay Area and Los Angeles, it has taken on a life of its own. Maybe it is because all British car themed publications in the US seem to have fallen away or been absorbed by other automotive publications. Even the British home market publications have become more "international" and cover cars made in Europe or, gasp, the US! Not that I have anything against Fiats, Alfas, or big block Mustangs for that matter, but my brain has only so much memory left.....

2008 SoCal MG Club Swap Meet November 23rd, 2008
 Photo Montage attached.....

Well, I finally got over to Fullerton from the beach at about 11:00AM and found that I forgot to remember that swap meet folks come out at O-dark-thirty and run home like vampires when the sun comes up. Hell, everyone was packing up! Still, lots of cool stuff to see and people to meet and greet. Ran into two old Riley friends (yes, I once owned a Riley for a short while), Hema Ratnayake and Al Edridge as well as

literature vendor Irv Strohm who had a bunch of nice stuff and a model I needed for a Christmas present... yeah, I Christmas shop at swap meets!! There were some interesting non-MGs for sale as well, including a 1275cc Sprite powered Austin A35 van and a really cool TVR coupe.

Speaking of Christmas, here is a great idea for any MG or British car enthusiast on your list:

Limited Edition - The Last of the Abingdon Classics. (pdf info attached)

Compiled by my longtime friend, Ken Smith, Moss Motors advisor/public relations mainstay and Editor of Classic MG Magazine, the book contains much previously unknown information about the last "REAL" MGs, the 1980 Limited Editions. As the last rubber bumper Bs are getting older and becoming more collectible (especially to newcomers to the hobby who are not able to pony up chrome bumper B money), these special cars will be the first to reach collector car status. The book contains over 80 pages and nearly 100 color and black & white photos, plus lots of historic documentation. The book explains in detail the concept behind the L.E and how it did in the market.

Priced at only \$25 per copy: including p & p. Send cash or check payable to:
Classic MG. P.O.Box 8645. Goleta. CA 93117.

Thanks for readin,' thanks for writin,'

Rick Feibusch
British Car Network

L E T T E R S

Rick,

Do you know anywhere I can get a model 1953 MGTD?

Cheers

Gene Fodor
Vermont

Gene,

There are very few models of the TD and I had most of them when I had mine..

None are available today except on eBay

o Dopke made a huge kit in metal in the early 1950s (about 1/12th scale) with working suspension and steering - very good - I restored one to match my real TD - sold it many years ago for \$285!!

Matchbox did one in HO scale - I have one - A British train accessory firm reprod them in the 1970s as white metal kits and these still might be available.

o MY FIRST MODEL!! Revell made a really great model in 1/32nd scale in the early 1950s and these were re-issued many times - the Japanese somehow got the molds (marketed here as Mini Craft) and did a reissue of the whole line (TD, XK120, Ferrari Barchetta, and Ford Deuce hot rod) all in one box. Only demerit was that you had to paint the chrome parts so they never looked shiny enough....

o Aurora Models also did a 1/32nd kit that was so out of proportion that I could have fashioned a Jag SS100 out of it - reissued a bunch of times but who cares???

o Abingdon Classics in the UK made them in 1/43rd scale in both built-up and kit form - I still have my maroon factory made example - REALLY, REALLY nice.

o Ideal Toy Co. made a crude plastic kit approximation with working rack and pinion steering in about 1956 - very educational - they forgot to include the rear mounted spare!

o Wills Finecast (now called Southeast Finecast) made a very detailed white metal kit 1n 1/24th scale - Moss Motors even used to list them in their catalog - Might still even be available.

o K & R Models in the UK makes five different TDs in both built-up and kit form presently available - 1/43rd scale - The K & R models website:
<http://www.kandreplicas.co.uk/>

Anyone out there in BritishCarLand know of more or have one for sale for Gene? Let me know.....

Rick

Dear Rick.

My name is Debbie Pieracci-Fugate and I have a 1965 Bond Equipe GT4S -Triumph Herald based sport coupe for sale. This car was bought and shipped here from England. There are not many in the United States. The car is Red and White and has black seats. (image on Mini page attached)

The Manufacturer is Bond Motorcars Ltd, Preston, Lancashire England. It was designed by Lawrie Bond. 2,505 Motel Gt4S were made between May 1963 and August 1970. This model was never imported to the US. The Chassis is Standard Triumph Herald. The body is Glass fibre, steel doors from standard Triumph Herald. The Engine is Standard Triumph Spitfire 1200, inline 4-cylinder, 1147cc. It has had 4 owners since new, only one in the US (Me). It was bought by me June 2000. The car has been sitting in a carport for the last year and runs after battery hooked up and charged. It has some rust and small hole in floor pan on driver side front. This car is right hand drive. I hate to sell it, but would really like someone to own it and love it as much as me. I would like \$4000.

Thanks,

Debbie
Santa Cruz, CA
<neysa9@aol.com>
831-423-3543

Gang,

While we don't generally do want ads here (yet) I have seen this car in the past and feel that it is a really cool and arcane British car that is fairly priced - It is kind of like placing pets - If you are interested in something completely different..... call Debbie

Rick

Hi Rick

Thanks for the write-up and photos of our (the Czerwinski Bros.) cars. --Me and Mike went to the Scottish games in Orange County on Saturday, Sept. 11th - I got a bit drunk with Irish whiskey, then fired up my '33 English Ford (rod/Buick V6 automatic) and it took off and ran backwards into the building behind me! I forgot it was in "R" for race! (no reverse lockout) After getting really mad at myself, I took some duck tape and taped the fiberglass fender and valance together, soz not to loose them on the freeway, then Mike and I drove to Clovis that afternoon for the show on Sunday. Well it took Mike about 3 qts of oil to get there - his yellow Minor Woodie leaks a lot. When we got there, they gave us a role of paper to put under our cars to catch oil drops for the oil leak contest! Mike ended up winning that. well there was no class for me so they put me in the saloon class. With the bashed up panels, I put a sign on my car saying "This is what happens when you drink Irish whiskey"- had a crowd around the car all day!(maybe it was the beer I was giving out to friends...) I took first place! Had a blast.

CHEERS,
WILD BILL CZERWINSKI
Ventura, CA

Richard :

Thanks for the updates. Can you recommend anyone who restores British license plates. I have a right hand drive 1969 MGB.

Thanks,

Robert Michelson
<rm@rmitv.com>

Gang,

I'm stumped - anyone out there got any input on this? Please let Robert and me know anything that is available - Rick

Mini Madness
(Images attached)

Drag racing 2008 MINI in the States (image on cover)

MINI USA AND ABF Performance have teamed up to create what they hope will be the world's fastest drag race MINI. With 650bhp under the bonnet driving the front wheels, the MINI has posted a 10.48 elapsed time, crossing the line at 135.16 mph. The ABF built car weighs in at just 1750 pounds, just over half the weight of a standard car.

1966 Mini Cooper S Dune Buggy (see cover)

Jeff Morris and Sharon Harrison of Cromer, Norfolk, UK stripped down their rusty 1966 Mini Cooper S called bugs for a very good reason. It now has a Meyers Manx style dune buggy body with a proper Mini logbook, and a 1275 S engine code 9fsay35--- with only 1800 thou on the clock.

1967 Riley Elf with custom features
(did anyone see my Mercedes grille?????)

"Sadly a previous owner has chopped her roof off, and installed a Zak skirt kit," reports Andy Hind of Billericay, Essex, UK, who bought her for the Mercedes front end conversion which he has always loved. "She's rotten as a pear and held together with expanding foam and fiberglass that has been disguised with underseal, presumably to get her through the MOT. Sez Andy, "I bought her off eBay and wanted to restore her to the period custom she once was, although I hope my work will be done to a higher standard!"

2008 Mini Wiernermobile

What can we say? The new downsized Oscar Meyer advert wagon in a more economical form - Easier to park , as well.....

"To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism;
to steal from many is research."
-- Stephen Wright

Report: Jaguar in UK govt. talks for large loan
Automotive News Europe
November 24, 2008 12:00 CET

LONDON (Reuters) -- British-based carmaker Jaguar Land Rover is in secret talks with the UK government over a 1 billion pound (\$1.48 billion) loan, just nine months after the Indian conglomerate Tata Group bought the luxury carmaker, the Sunday Times newspaper reported.

The request reflects the sharp downturn in the global car market, which has already pushed a handful of big carmakers to the edge of bankruptcy, and one UK government source said Prime Minister

Gordon Brown is studying the request, the paper added.

In a Jaguar Land Rover statement, the group said on Sunday it supported UK and European carmaker's

industry bodies seeking help from governments but would not comment specifically.

"We are not going to comment on speculation on confidential discussions with government," the statement said..

One of Tata's listed enterprises Tata Motors paid \$2.3 billion for Jaguar and Land Rover earlier this year and financed the acquisition with a \$3 billion bridging loan, but since then sales of new cars have plunged.

Tata is looking to the UK government for a bridging loan for the next 24 months as it is difficult to access funding markets and the market for its vehicle has fallen causing big problems finding the cash to make debt payments, the paper said.

The group employs 15,000 workers in the UK. Last year Land Rover produced 230,000 vehicles at its Solihull plant in the English West Midlands while Jaguar made 54,000 cars at its nearby Castle Bromwich plant and at Halewood on Merseyside in northwest England.

It has already cut shifts at the plants.

submitted by John Voelcker

SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL AUTO SHOW FOUNDER KJELL QVALE CELEBRATES SIX DECADES IN AUTO INDUSTRY

San Francisco businessman Kjell Qvale (pronounced Shell Kev-all-ee) has been a big wheel in the automotive industry for more than six decades. Qvale, 89, founder and chairman of British Motor Cars Ltd., introduced "foreign cars to the West Coast in 1948, when American-made vehicles were unrivaled in the United States and foreign competition was considered a joke. His vision in bucking the establishment made him legendary, but Qvale takes no pleasure in the current financial crisis facing Ford, General Motors and Chrysler and he believes they will survive, albeit with some changes.

"The oil companies have made a ton of money, charging more than they should in my opinion and it has just about destroyed the 'Big Three', Qvale said. "Damage has been done and they may need help right now, but I see them making smaller, more fuel-efficient cars."

When Qvale began selling British imports with exotic names like Jaguar in 1948, the American manufacturers were in the driver's seat, even excluding him from exhibiting in the San Francisco Auto Show. Qvale fought back and founded an alternate show in 1958 that featured only imported vehicles.

Eventually, his show outdrew the Detroit-sponsored event. "The Big Three went to Kjell and asked to be allowed to exhibit in his show, which became the International Auto Show, said show director Kevin Diamond. When this year's International Auto Show opened at the Moscone Convention Center, over 40 major manufacturers from around the world will display their products.

Qvale has made a career out of taking risks and meeting the challenges. Born in Norway, Qvale, , immigrated to the United States in 1929. The 10-year-old brought with him an infatuation for anything fast on a track---cars, horses and people---and that has not changed. Though he earned a track scholarship to the University of Washington in 1939, his college career was cut short by World War II, in which he served as U.S. Navy pilot.

Qvale settled in California after the war with \$8,000 in his pocket and the drive to open his own business, selling Jeeps with partner and future wife, Kay. The couple began selling MGs and Jaguars in 1947 and later added Bentley and Rolls Royce to his marquee inventory. They also acquired sole Northern California distributor rights for Volkswagen.

When the Qvales opened their showroom on Van Ness Avenue in 1949, it certainly was no competition for the palatial showrooms on San Francisco's Auto Row. "It was a tiny little space at 214 Van Ness Ave., Qvale said. "Since then, I have owned most of the big showrooms on Auto Row at one time or another."

Over the years, Qvale's infatuation with speed grew into a full-blown love affair. He was instrumental in creating local auto races, including one in Golden Gate Park and had a hand in convincing the U.S. Army to set aside a portion of Fort Ord near Monterey for a race track that became the fabled Laguna Seca Raceway.

But what's a track without a car? Qvale bought a Lister Jaguar to race. But what's the point if you don't win? When he lost to Joe Huffaker, Qvale wasted no time in hiring him. Over the next few years, they

raced British-built cars throughout the West Coast and at Indianapolis, driven by racing greats A.J. Foyt and Bobby Unser. Although never a winner at Indy, Qvale popularized British cars in the most important race in the United States.

Qvale's influence was also felt internationally. Never one to rest on his laurels, he began looking around for new conquests---and in 1970 he bought the Jensen car factory in Great Britain. Under his ownership, 14,000 Jensen Healey's were built, but Qvale closed the factory when a coal strike forced the factory to limit production to three days a week. "I was losing \$100,000 a week and that was a lot of money in 1975, Qvale said. "It was either stop production or go broke. I stopped."

At the time, he swore he would never build another car, but changed his mind when he saw plans for the Bigua, a car under development in Italy. Qvale bought the development rights, renamed it the Qvale Mangusta, manufactured 280+ of them and took a financial bath. "I lost about \$1 million making 14,000 Jensens, but I lost more than \$28 million making 284 Mangustas, Qvale said. "It cost me \$8 million just to get it qualified to sell worldwide. "I finally realized I wouldn't make it making cars. But, you know, if you don't fail at a few things, you don't appreciate the successes."

Qvale has had more than his share of successes, some against all the odds. In the late 1960s, he was approached by the legendary Billie Jean King and her husband, Larry, who urged him to sponsor tennis tournaments in San Francisco and Los Angeles for women only. He backed the tournaments that eventually put women's tennis on the front pages of sports sections around the world.

Qvale's fondness for winners is not confined to the two-legged kind. A race horse enthusiast, he bought the renowned Silky Sullivan to put out to stud and now his ranch in Sebastopol, CA, stables more than 50 horses. But he still spends his days on Van Ness Avenue tending to the business that put his on the road to success in the automotive industry.

From a SF Auto Show press release

COM M E N T A R Y

Jeff S. Savage - Publisher & Executive Editor of AutoPhyle

(Photo montage attached)

Hi there!

I have to respond to a little of what James Ruppert and Edward Lapham wrote that appeared in the latest newsletter. By and large, they are correct. I have made a career (in some ways) of following and studying the collapse of BLMC/BL. The only areas I would disagree (or correct) in James Ruppert's very well written excerpt "The British Car Industry - Our Part in its Downfall" are the following items:

A) I would disagree that the British press has largely been positive on British built cars. As with the American automotive press (which I am a member of), there has always been (at least from the late 1960's onward) a bias against the domestic industry. Some deserved, but some not! At the time, it was even referred to as "B.L. bashing"! A friend of mine in England, who currently works for part of the BMW organization there and whose father owned several of the B.L. products that we think of including three examples of the often maligned Marina, recently commented that the worse car he ever owned was a B.L. Mini and several of the B.L. products had a lot of trouble including the Marinas. He then added that some of the Japanese and European cars also had issues and rusted out at the time, but somehow were never criticized as much. There is an attitude in both circles (British and American automotive press) that they would not criticize some foreign car makers to the same point due to a number of factors including a certain desire to look more sophisticated combined with a desire not to criticize another country's product as much.

B) The Marina. The Marina was never intended to be in production for some 10 years plus. B.L.M.C. (here we are talking of the original corporation that was "encouraged" by the British Government to take over BMH - BMC on the one-side and Jaguar-Daimler on the other in 1968) tried to come up with something that actually competed with the English Ford Cortina as well as the Vauxhall and Hillman cars that were rear-drive and selling in large numbers. Gee, there's a thought! The Marina DID have issues (the front suspension on early cars, the single rail transmission and the weak rear-ends) but WAS capable of going 100,000 miles usually WITH those issues (unfortunately) raising their heads several times during that period. The Marina did actually sell in large numbers, often at the 100,000 range or a bit less. It was actually, fairly successful from a corporate point of view - it made money! The Maxi never sold more than 28-29,000 cars in a single year and along with the Allegro was a huge financial disaster. The Marina

needed help, but was not quite as bad as often described by the British Press at the time - which often ignored the financial issue. The 1100/1300 series (available in all SIX BMC nameplates) sold some 250,000 units plus a year. Its replacement, the Allegro, sold some 50-60,000 units a year. The 1100/1300 was the one profitable model (other than the much smaller production cars from MG or Jaguar) that BMC had. B.L.M.C. has to take the blame on the Allegro even if the bulk of it was Austin's design.

C) The Stag. I own one. An early one. Great car. VERY well built. Probably better built than my 1980 Jaguar XJS and almost as well as my two Jensen Interceptor IIIs - not to the same quality standard due to being a little over one-third the price. The Stag was never intended to sell in large numbers. It was designed by Triumph PRIOR to the whole B.L./BMH merger and its only real issue is the heads of the engine. A MAJOR issue I admit! Properly maintained, they hold up well but it required maintenance the likes of a high strung Alfa, Aston or Ferrari. A redesign of the heads was looked at by Triumph. However, Triumph and Rover were starved of financial funding due to the ever constant draining of funds for the Austin-Morris-MG side, especially Austin at Longbridge. This is why there was so little development and when there was, it was something along the lines of the TR7 (designed to replace TWO Triumph sports cars and one MG sports car) and the P10/SD1; the Rover 3500/2600/2300 fastback designed to replace the Rover P5, P6 and big Triumphs. In both cases the designs could not accomplish what was being asked even IF they had not had issues themselves! Rover-Triumph essentially surrendered their lucrative market to many imports and MG was never developed a proper sports car to replace its popular models.

D) English Ford, especially in the form of the Cortina, was just a better car that suited the British buyer far more. The Cortina would go 100,000 miles on its smooth, high-revving 1.5/1.6 litre 4-cylinder engine. A friend of mine, both an MG and an Eng-Ford fan, once made the comment (some 16 years ago!) that "BMC should just have bought English Ford 4-cylinders (Kent engines) and put them in their cars!" Ouch, but probably true. Even more damning is the fact that Nissan took the same basic BMC (really Austin) engines and slowly developed them into some of the finest OHC units in the world back in the late 1960's and early 1970's. The Cortina outsold the Maxi because it was a far better car. Also, it was cheaper to make than the Maxi and Ford could never build enough of them. At one point the English Ford factories were turning out some 500,000 units while the entire BLMC empire (including the truck operations) were producing some 700,000 to 800,000 units at its height. Ford made money because the Escort, Cortina, Granada and Capri shared a lot of the same components including the drivetrains and suspension designs. The sad thing is that Austin-Morris once owned the mid-size sedan market in Britain with what was referred to as the "Farinas", the Farina or Pininfarina designed 1.5/1.6 sedans that look a lot like the Farina designed Peugeot 404. Replacing them with the radical and unattractive 1800/2200 and Maxi was a huge and costly mistake!

E) TVR is now gone (having failed last year - sad for me, an old TVRist) and Bristol is STILL with us and has been for decades! AC lasted until 1996 when it went into receivership. Emerged with a new owner who could not make a go of it and sold it to "AC Cars of Malta Ltd." Seems to be in the twilight zone now. Jaguar and Land-Rover now owned by Tata of India (as of April 2008). Aston-Martin sold off to a group of investors headed by Richards and consisting of three wealthy oil industry enthusiasts. Now selling some 7,500 units plus!

F) Triumph was NEVER part of BMC! Standard-Triumph Motor Car Company was bought by British Leyland (truck maker) in early 1960's, which then discontinued the Standard car. They later bought Rover (which included Alvis) and then in 1968 was cajoled into buying the automotive assets of BMH (British Motor Holdings). This formed BLMC. Even under this umbrella, Rover and Triumph were technically independent companies within the corporation! When the British government nationalized BLMC and formed BL Ltd. in 1975, they began to eliminate the separate status of Triumph and Rover. Eventually Jaguar-Rover-Triumph and Austin-Morris-MG were formed with the odd situation where the Vandenplas name was usually attached to Jaguar (despite being part of Austin's empire) and eventually even MG being transferred to JRT!

G) MGB (great car) never sold 620,000 units, and certainly not in the US! Love it when people make things up. Total sales were somewhere in the 300,000 range total over the years. TR7 sold about 120,000 units and outsold the MGB in some years and BOTH were PROFITABLE! However, Sir Michael Edwardes (BL chief in late 1970's and early 1980's) did not like the sports cars divisions and saw them as a diversion. His job was to save Cowley (Morris), Longbridge (Austin) and Solihull (Rover) and he slowly dropped both makes. MG's survival was a miracle!

Finally, Austin and the Morris "merger". The so-called "merger" in the early postwar period (early 1950's if I remember correctly) was really an Austin takeover! The idea that there was no integration is silly! Leonord Lord (Austin) was RUTHLESS in this department! Within a few years all Morris models were sporting AUSTIN engines (A-series, B-series and C-series) except for a few odds and ends here and there. Even Morris Minors and MGs soon had BMC/Austin engines. Some of this consolidation, however, was actually quite necessary and good as the new company was profitable for many years in the 1950's

and early 1960's.

In the middle 1950's, Lord considered dropping the MG name as well as the Riley marque (and that is MARK! pronounced correctly people, not "marquee" and not pronounced "mark-kee" either! It is French for "make") and slowly reduced the big Morris and Wolseleys to nothing more than badge engineered Austins. Austin had Austin (a full range), Austin-Healey and Vandenplas (limousines and upper range Austin sedans) and Lord really did not see a reason for Riley and MG and even thought about ending the Wolseley. His major interest with Morris was the Morris Minor and its market, and the Morris name and dealership network for Austin. Even the Morris designed Mini was launched in BOTH Austin and Morris forms and almost from the start more as an Austin despite being a Morris. Morris certainly was NOT in control! The MG A happened by sheer wilpower on the part of several key MG people. Lord finally relented and allowed it to be built some 4 or 5 years after it was designed! The MG B, Midget/Sprite, Mini, Maxi, 1100/1300, et al, all had ADO numbers. "Austin Design Office" showing their design heritage. However, Mini (ADO 15) was truly designed by the Morris people before the design was taken over by Longbridge. So, it is of mixed parentage design-wise.

The Morris and MG design offices were largely gone by the time BL took over BMC in 1968! Rover and Triumph execs were still trying to work through the task of synchronizing their line-ups when the parent British Leyland trucks took over BMH (BMC and Jaguar-Daimler) and most of their smaller staff were overwhelmed with a few having sad personal results including a heart attack and death for one of the people involved! Austin (BMC) was huge and the Rover-Triumph people (like Webster, Wilks and King) were overloaded trying to straighten BMC out. If I remember correctly it was Harry Webster who once told Jeff Daniels that "you can have my job if you can figure out how to stretch this engine!" referring to the BMC ohc E-series unit for Allegro and Maxi. Typical of Longbridge (and the LATER K-series as well!) the engine was designed with Siamese borings so it could never really be stretched beyong 1.5 litres. Eventually Webster came up with the idea stroking it through some ingenious crank solutions, but it was a sad situation that BMC STILL did not have an ohc replacement for the bigger B-series that was only some 200 to 300cc larger than the E-series! A single engine should have been designed and used. One small example of the waster at the time

And the beat goes on.....

Birmingham AND Coventry are usually regarded as the heart of the British auto industry ("the Midlands"). Austin, Wolseley (Morris Commercial in later years!), Jensen and others were situated there at Birmingham. However, Jaguar, Hillman (Rootes) and others were at nearby Coventry. Rootes by the way, was NOT a government orchestrated almagamation, The Rootes brothers BOUGHT Sunbeam and Talbot ("Tahl-but" English side of business as opposed to Talbot-Darracq or Talbot-Lago in France) when they went into receivership circa 1935. Rootes later bought Singer as well. All of these became high-end badge-engineered Hillmans.

One could argue the same thing has happened to the French and Italian industries too! France had some 11 car makers after the war including Panhard, Ford of France and Rosengart which built cars in decent numbers. By the early 1960's they were down to 4 (Renault, Citroen, Peugeot and Simca), one of which was foreign owned (Simca). The Italian industry has really been reduced to FIAT. Most people do not think about it, but Fiat owns Lancia, Ferrari, Alfa-Romeo, Maserati, Innocenti, Abarth, and Autobianchi and any cars appearing with those labels are basically FIATs! The only other car maker is the Lamborghini and Bugatti duo both owned by Audi. So, it is not just the USA and the UK that have seen consolidation and attrition!

Otherwise, James Ruppert's remarks are on the mark. As to Edward Lapham's remarks in "It Could Never Happen Here", I must agree with what he says. The American auto industry (and several foreign firms as well) have not learned a thing from B.L./BLMC's history. Too many makes, too many models, too many factories and workers, and too much money being spent on wild ideas (Saturn, Volt) while needed devlopment not going for needed lines like Buick. And, yes, the union with its pension funds are a major issue as well. It was pension funds that brought down MG-Rover in 2005 along with some bad decisions on the part of the management. Best of luck "Detroit."

H U M O U R

Tool Dictionary

DRILL PRESS: A tall upright machine useful for suddenly snatching flatmetal bar stock out of your hands so that it smacks you in the chest and flings your soda across the room, splattering it against that freshly-stained heirloom piece you were drying.

WIRE WHEEL: Cleans paint off bolts and then throws them somewhere under the workbench with the speed of light. Also removes fingerprints and hard-earned guitar callouses from fingers in about the time it takes you to say, 'Yeouw....'

ELECTRIC HAND DRILL: Normally used for spinning pop rivets in their holes until you die of old age, or for perforating something behind and beyond the original intended target object.

SKIL SAW: A portable cutting tool used to make studs too short.

PLIERS: Used to round off bolt heads. Sometimes used in the creation of blood-blisters.

BELT SANDER: An electric sanding tool commonly used to convert minor touch-up jobs into major refinishing jobs. Caution: Avoid using for manicures.

HACKSAW: One of a family of cutting tools built for frustration enhancement. It transforms human energy into a crooked, unpredictable motion, and the more you attempt to influence its course, the more dismal your future becomes.

WISE-GRIPS: Generally used after pliers to completely round off bolt heads. If nothing else is available, they can also be used to transfer intense welding heat to the palm of your hand.

WELDING GLOVES: Heavy duty leather gloves used to prolong the conduction of intense welding heat to the palm of your hand.

OXYACETYLENE TORCH: Used almost entirely for lighting various flammable objects in your shop on fire. Also handy for igniting the grease inside the wheel hub you want the bearing race out of.

WHITWORTH SOCKETS: Once used for working on older British cars and motorcycles, they are now used mainly for impersonating that 9/16 or 1/2 socket you've been searching for the last 45 minutes.

TABLE SAW: A large stationary power tool commonly used to launch wood projectiles for testing wall integrity.

HYDRAULIC FLOOR JACK: Used for lowering an automobile to the ground after you have installed your new brake shoes, trapping the jack handle firmly under the bumper.

EIGHT-FOOT LONG YELLOW PINE 4X4: Used for levering an automobile upward off of a trapped hydraulic jack handle.

TWEEZERS: A tool for removing wood splinters and wire wheel wires.

E-Z OUT BOLT AND STUD EXTRACTOR: A tool ten times harder than any known drill bit that snaps neatly off in bolt holes thereby ending any possible future use.

RADIAL ARM SAW: A large stationary power saw primarily used by most shops to scare neophytes into choosing another line of work.

TWO-TON ENGINE HOIST: A tool for testing the maximum tensile strength of everything you forgot to disconnect.

CRAFTSMAN 1/2 x 24-INCH SCREWDRIVER: A very large pry bar that inexplicably has an accurately machined screwdriver tip on the end opposite the handle.

AVIATION METAL SNIPS: See hacksaw.

TROUBLE LIGHT: The home mechanic's own tanning booth. Sometimes called a drop light, it is a good source of vitamin D, 'the sunshine vitamin,' which is not otherwise found under cars at night. Health benefits aside, its main purpose is to consume 40- watt light bulbs at about the same rate that 105mm howitzer shells might be used during, say, the first few hours of the Battle of the Bulge. More often dark than light, its name is somewhat misleading. The accessory socket within the base, has been permanently rendered useless, unless requiring a source of 117vac power to shock the mechanic senseless.

PHILLIPS SCREWDRIVER: Normally used to stab the vacuum seals under lids, opening old-style paper-and-tin oil cans and splashing oil on your shirt; but can also be used, as the name implies, to strip out

Phillips screw heads.

STRAIGHT SCREWDRIVER: A tool for opening paint cans. Sometimes used to convert common slotted screws into non-removable screws.

AIR COMPRESSOR: A machine that takes energy produced in a coal-burning power plant 200 miles away and transforms it into compressed air that travels by hose to a Chicago Pneumatic impact gun that grips rusty bolts which were last over tightened 40 years ago by someone at VW, and instantly rounds off their heads. Also used to quickly snap off lug nuts.

PRY BAR: A tool used to crumple the metal surrounding that clip or bracket you needed to remove in order to replace a 50 cent part.

HOSE CUTTER: A tool used to make hoses too short.

HAMMER: Originally employed as a weapon of war, the hammer nowadays is used as a kind of divining rod to locate the most expensive parts adjacent to the object we are trying to hit.

MECHANIC'S KNIFE: Used to open and slice through the contents of cardboard cartons delivered to your front door; works particularly well on contents such as seats, vinyl records, liquids in plastic bottles, collector magazines, refund checks, and rubber or plastic parts. Especially useful for slicing work clothes, but only while in use. It is also useful for removing large chunks of human flesh from the user's hands.

DAMMIT TOOL: (I have lot's of these) Any handy tool that you grab and throw across the garage while yelling 'DAMMIT' at the top of your lungs. It is also, most often, the next tool that you will need after a really big hammer.

submitted by Magic Senzamici

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