



Pacific Tiger Club Newsletter

ROOTES OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

PRESIDENT'S CORNER



*BY
BUDD
BENNION*

In early December, British car owners were invited to Group 2 Motorsports in Seattle's Ballard neighborhood for coffee and a shop tour.

As you can see there were a mix of all kinds of British Cars. This was more than coffee as displays by Hagerty, Griots Garage (free give away item), and a few others were on hand. Also there was donuts, beer, wine and a hot dog cart.



Seven PTC members attended but only two with their cars. It was a cold day but not raining. This was a first ever open house by Group 2 but was well attended. They might make this an annual thing.



A mixture of old and new British iron at Group 2 Motorsports.

photos by Budd Bennion



Jim Clark brought his white Tiger.

2019 Event Meeting Planning Meeting

Jan 26 10-12am

**Hosted by Budd Bennion
14720 20th Ave NE Seattle
(206) 364-8478**

*Our best event ideas come from you, the members. If you can't make the meeting in person, please send your suggestions to:
Budd.Bennion@comcast.net*

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- Historians:** Dave Dunn / Dan Kuenzi

Renewing your membership?

Members are asked to send all membership checks and correspondence to:

Pacific Tiger Club
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1130 Spring Lane
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shelbycuda@hotmail.com

Annual Membership Dues: \$32.00 (US funds).

Make checks payable to: Pacific Tiger Club.

PTC Club Events

January 26 – 2019 PTC Planning Meeting

Saturday January 26, 2019 Budd Bennion will host our 2019 Event Planning Meeting, **10 AM**. 14720 30th Ave NE Seattle 206-364-8478. Kick those winter blues with a morning of Sunbeam camaraderie!

Sunbeam Events

Tigers United XXXIX June 13-16

Sacramento, CA

Presented this year by STOA (Sunbeam Tiger Owners Association)

Rootes United XXXVIII – Aug 15-18

La Crosse, Wisconsin

Hosted by Tigers East/Alpines East. Go to TEAE.org/united-38 for more info.

Sunbeam Invasion – May 18-20

Cambria, CA

Centered at the Bluebird Inn in Cambria. Hosted by Sunbeam Alpine Owners Club of America. Go to SAOCA.org for more info.

British Events

Vancouver All-British Field Meet – May 16

Held at the world famous Van Dusen Gardens. Bentley, Mini and AJS Motorcycles are the featured marques. Advance registration required. More info at Westerndriver.com

Western Washington All-British Field Meet – July 20.

Held again at St. Edward State Park in Kirkland, WA. 60 Years of Mini. Details TBA

Portland All-British Field Meet - Sept 7-9

Portland International Raceway. Once again, Indy Car racing at PIR on Labor Day Weekend will bump the ABFM back a week. Look for concours, rallye, funkhana, autoslalom, Land Rover off-road excursions. And SOVREN races, too! <http://abfm-pdx.com/2019>

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Driving Through Paradise

Story & photos
by Jim Clark

One sunny day in May 2016 I stood admiring the engine compartment of a 1995 Japanese Skyline entered in the Red Square Car Show. It was called that because it was located in the Red Square at the University of Washington - not the one in Russia. It was a fund raising event for PAWS (Progressive Animal Welfare Society), a regional non-profit animal adoption group. Many breeds of dogs and cats were in attendance and you had to be quick afoot to avoid having the occasional leash wrapped around your ankles. You can meet a lot of pet owners that way, but I wanted to meet car owners.

The show had about 50 cars arranged in a circular pattern in the square. There were a few American and European classics scattered amongst the cars. With only two Mustangs, one Ford GT, and no Camaros, there was a lot of out-of-the-ordinary vehicles to look at. Cat Exotics, a company that sells high-end cars, brought several Lamborghinis. I found the story of an older Maserati from the 1970's very interesting: the would-be buyer told the owner that if he ever considered selling his car, keep him in mind. Several years later the buyer and the original owner met each other at a Maserati club meeting. And a deal was struck.



My acquaintance with the Skyline asked if I brought a car to the show; I told him my Sunbeam Tiger was being restored, and pulled out a picture of the car in its grey primer color. When he grimaced, I thought he was unhappy with the picture.

Through his grimace he told me that he had owned a Sunbeam Tiger years ago when he lived in Santa Cruz, CA.

"You know," he frowned, "I needed wheels so I bought this used Tiger so I could get to work and to school. I got it for a few hundred dollars, and had no idea what it was. Seeing what they are worth now, I wish I had that car today."

"What sort a shape was your Tiger in?" I asked.

"It was in poor shape. Different parts were very rusty; it had bad fenders, bad floor boards. Shoot, I was always losing things through the holes in the trunk floor. The engine was tired but it ran well enough to get me to work. I had

a rag top for it, but it was torn and didn't help much in keeping the rain out."

"What happened to your Tiger?" I asked.

"It sounds crazy now, but I traded it for two mountain bikes."

I whistled in amazement. "Two bikes, they must have been built with an expensive alloy, to trade for a car."

"Not at all, just ordinary mountain bikes," he said. "I didn't know much about cars then and thought the Sunbeam was just like an MG or something. After seeing what Tigers are worth now-I'm sorry I traded it away."

"You know I traded for a car once," I grinned. "Back in the '70's, I traded an SLR Canon 35 mm camera for a '63 Chevy, but it had fenders and a trunk floor."

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“Well in my case there was a girlfriend involved,” my friend smiled. (we both chuckled at that.) He had a private thought, while I tried to envision romance on mountain bikes.

I decided to change the subject. “You sound like you lived in the islands, and you have a



Hawaii plate on the Skyline. Is the car from Hawaii?” I asked.

“I worked as a chef on Oahu until 2 years ago, that's where I had my Skyline. I really paid too much to get the car, but I'm lucky to have it,” he told me.

He didn't say how much he paid for the car, so I asked how he found his Skyline.

“On one of my visits to Japan, I went to a gathering of these cars and knew I had to have one. One particular trip to Japan, my sole purpose was to buy and ship a Skyline home to Hawaii. It took a year to find one for sale thru a buddy I knew in Osaka, Japan. I had to ship it through Los Angeles so that a company called torex could make it legal to drive in the U.S. They did the work to the frame and such, to meet the U.S. safety standards. Then I shipped it to Hawaii. Motorex is out of business now. The car is right hand drive, and the engine is an in-line 6-cylinder. It's not turbo charged, like the GT-R that Nissan makes,



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which is the direct descendant of the Skyline.”

“So you can't call it a GT-R?” I asked having only read about them.

“No, it's a GTS 2500 Skyline,” he grinned with pride. “In 1966 the Prince Motor Company merged with Nissan and they eventually phased out the Skyline, only to have it reappear as the GT-R when Nissan completely took over the company. The GT-R is a performance machine, and they're building them to bring them into the states now. The 'R' stands for Race,” he chuckled. (I thought he was joking.)

There happened to be a GT-R at the show, and the Skyline owner was eager to take me over and look at the GT-R. The GT-R owner was a senior at WSU, and had only owned the car for a few months. It was a nice car, built to go fast, but a bit pricey. My car out of college was a 1953 Pontiac, I got for \$80.00. It was built like a Sherman tank. There was no R for race in my Pontiac.

I left the former Tiger owner and now Skyline owner with a group gathered around the GT-R, talking about how many of the new GT-R's were in Washington State.

A couple of years after that day in May, I checked several times for the next Red Square car show, but sadly, it is no more. The "Red Square Benefit for PAWS Car Show" ended, mainly because no one took the lead in organizing and setting up the event. It's a lot of work to organize a fit car show, plus the University of Washington was not sure it wanted the weight of all

the cars on the bricks in Red Square. I'll miss the variety of that car show, but I won't miss the dog leashes wound around my ankles. **PTC**



Veep! Beep!

by Dick Sanders

On Safari for Tigers on YouTube

Sure, there's plenty of repairs and restoration projects spread around the garage. They all demand immediate attention now! But darnit, its COLD in that garage in January. Contorting myself to fit under the dash to re-install that stock radio just doesn't hold the allure that it might hold in April. So what to do on a cold, rainy Saturday? Pull up some YouTube videos, of course.

The variety of Rootes-related videos available has grown steadily. How-to repair videos, car shows, historic races - you name it. All it takes is a little searching to find something of interest.

Here are three of the best Tiger videos I've found.



Hanging it all out in New Zealand (screen grab from YouTube)

Search: "Knox Mountain Sunbeam Tiger"
PTC's Roger Flescher, of Bellingham, WA has been running his Tiger in regional hillclimb events for decades. In 2013, a recording crew strapped two cameras to his Tiger, plus a couple of roadside cameras to record the action. Skip through the first four minutes of idling at start/finish and cut to the action. Roar!!

Search: "Top Gear Sunbeam Tiger"

Top Gear has been on BBC since 1977, though it's now relegated to cable under a different name after the suspension/firing of host Jeremy Clarkson for punching out one of his producers. Details on this video are sketchy but this appears to be a race track 'power lap' taped for a New Zealand segment of Top Gear, perhaps as far back as 2010. Regardless, it's a rollicking piece of action. The red Mk II is well-driven. Despite being driven flat out at high speed, no roll bar or cage was required. Just a helmet! The handling and lack of exaggerated body roll makes me think the suspension was beefed up with heavier springs and/or anti-rollbar. At one point the Tiger twitches without provocation on a straight, suggesting a *lot* of toe-out was dialed in to make it more manageable in the turns. It's a very enjoyable 1 minute and thirty eight seconds.

Search: "Jay Leno Sunbeam Tiger"

This two-year-old episode of Jay Leno's

Garage features a Tiger retrospective, with Jay interviewing CAT newsletter editor Mike Michels. Afterwards they go for a drive in Mike's Tiger. Jay recounts his own past ownership of

a Tiger and laments that he had to sell it when he was still an up-and-coming comedian. Leno and fellow comedian Jerry Seinfeld are hands-down the greatest celebrity ambassadors of car collecting we're likely to ever see.

A few months ago we lost one of the longest-term members of PTC, **Ed Wright**. During the 1980s, he and wife Dawn were among our most active members. Former co-Newsletter Editor Jim Leach and I used to make monthly trips to

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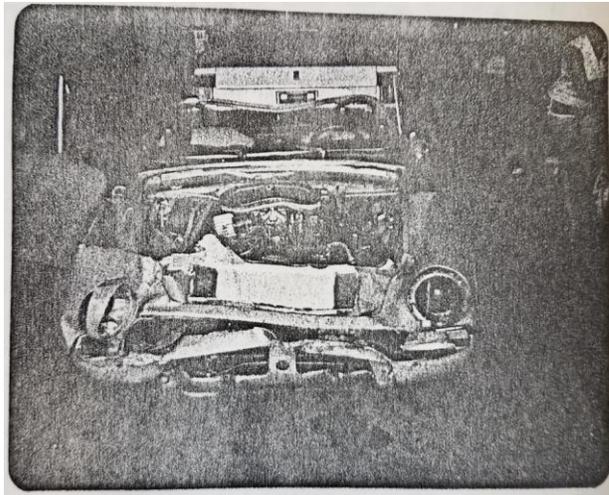
Ed's home to take advantage of his offer to let us print the Newsletter on his home copier. We eventually wore out our welcome, though Ed never really complained, when we ran the pages through a second time to make them 2-sided. Copiers of that era weren't so forgiving and the ink bled off the first side onto the roller, gradually darkening all the copies.

Ed & Dawn started off their marriage in 1981 in a memorable, unconventional fashion. From our Sept '81 issue, Dawn told the tale:

WHAT DO YOU GET WHEN YOU CROSS A TIGER WITH A COW?

Well, I doubt there are many who haven't heard about our unlucky mishap – but here goes one more time. On August 9th, the second day into our honeymoon, we were travelling thru northern California on our way to Tigers United. We came into Klamath Falls very late to find a hotel to stay that night. The whole town was in a total black-out, so we decided to go on into Reno that night. Later we stopped in a town called Alturas for gas. With a bottle of champagne in the cooler and the top down, we headed out for Nevada.

About 40 miles down the road on a long, gradual curve there were about 40 head of cattle that went thru the fence and were trapped on the highway. Coming out of the last turn our headlights hit the cattle at the last possible moment. Ed did his best to get thru and keep



Scanned from the Sept '81 PTC Newsletter. Amazingly, Ed and Dawn emerged with a just a few bumps and bruises. Their Mk II fared much worse.

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the car under control. We nearly made it when one stepped right out in front of us.

They took us back to Alturas to the Emergency and towed the car in later. With a few bumps and lots of bruises we took a Greyhound bus into Reno to get more qualified help with the car. We are very grateful to Mark Leonard, owner of "Custom Refinishing" in Sparks; he and his family helped us transport the car from Alturas into Reno for an estimate.

People really looked at Ed strangely when we were on our honeymoon and me standing there with huge black-eyes. We stayed at Harrah's; they put us on the 13th floor, but sent us up a great bottle of champagne.

With Mark Leonard's recommendation we made arrangements to load our poor, broken Tiger into a Hertz truck and come home.

We took in some shows and rented a car and did some sightseeing. Despite our bad luck we had a good time in Reno. We won't talk about the

gambling. The day we left for home the Harrah's hotel caught on fire. We would have some great pictures to share, but I goofed up our new camera and none of our film turned out. We decided the next fifty years of married life is going to a breeze.

To answer the question at the beginning of the story . . .

YOU GET A CHRISTMAS LIST OF NOTHING BUT TIGER PARTS.

*Thanks for all the sympathy,
Ed & Dawn Wright*

PTC

Want Ads

Selling my 1967 Series V Alpine.

Work done to date: All new suspension bushings, front and rear. Rebuilt front brake calipers, new brake pads and shoes. New U-joints, rear end re-torqued. Tires have few miles on them. Top is in excellent condition, rear window clear (needs front seal reinstalled) Paint is newer but has some orange peel on fender tops. New fuel tank connections. 32/26 Weber conversion. Transmission rebuilt less than 1,000 miles ago (two additional go with car, both needed rebuilding: one 25-spline with driveline and a 10-spline). Electric fuel pump. Exhaust system replace less than 1,000 miles ago. Head milled and two valves replaced less than 1,000 miles ago. Japanese alternator installed

All parts to return to original have been saved.



Needs to be aligned, rear seat upholstery and trim redone (front is in good condition).

All gauges work except ammeter. Car was completely sandblasted when I got it and I have never found any rust anywhere on it. Always garaged since I have owned it (about 8 years). This car is a



driver and not a show car or trailer queen but is in great condition. Total mileage unknown. Asking \$14,500 or reasonable offer. Will also consider trades for a Tiger project, 1960's American convertible or early 1960's Thunderbird. Contact me at gtr6triumph@gmail.com

For Sale: 1967 Sunbeam Alpine



1,300 miles on upgraded rebuild of original motor, 1,600 on transmission. Suspension and main gauges are all fresh. Body / paint very good. Interior has all been redone in pebble texture. Aftermarket seats upholstered in leather. In addition to a cloth soft top, it has both a tonneau and a custom bimini cover. Includes both steel and LAT-copy wheels, with tires plus other spare parts. In Hemmings @ \$12,400. Offered locally for \$11,499, or offer. Walt Suman 206-484-4777 wsuman@aol.com

Tech Tip

Greg Oliver recently installed LED front turn signals and parking lights in his Tiger. They are impressive and *seriously* visible. Greg says he bought them at:

<http://www.vintageleds.com/sunbeam-tiger.html>



Greg adds: "You'll need an electronic flasher that they also sell. The flasher is located behind the dash near the center, i.e. a square metal or round can with 3 pins. The replacement flasher plugs into the same socket. Note: you must connect the black wire from the flasher to chassis ground."



Rarest of the rare. Tennys was probably the best known of Seattle-area Rootes dealers. Jim Leach found this license plate frame years ago and shared it recently as a Facebook post.



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