March/April 2020

Pacific Tiger Club Newsletter

ROOTES OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Jerry Logan

The Clashing of Two Diseases

Being influenced by global developments and abandoning a trip to visit Australian friends in January I redirected the travel itch towards Europe. This would be the dream trek any car enthusiast would champion. Devoting hours into mapping out a four week journey in Europe devoted to automobile adventures. The daily efforts signal the brain to fantasize about the unity of reality with a passion. To envision celebrating the vehicle zeal with friends. To lust after the potential for finding a rare part at a UK spares meet or explore new vehicles walking through a museum. It is as if my mind is afflicted with some gratification plague. A demonic need to explore the unknown with prior knowledge. Enter an ugly organism with no alignment to the adaptability of human beings. A virus that exploits its stealth movements annihilating the expected order of daily life. Removing even the basic potency of human desire.

The chasm that has been placed between all of us will not be forever. Our mechanical passions will not be tempered by a rogue enemy. We will overcome this insidious set of circumstances and prevail as a collective group raising each others spirit with every mechanical victory we accomplish. May we all stay the course to reach for our vision. I will meet with my friends around the World in due time. We will all enjoy each others' company and share the many thoughts and adventures in our world of vehicles.

,PTC

Stirling Moss:
A Champion for Sunbeam

Moss, who died April 12 at age 90, will mostly be remembered for his F1 exploits: "The greatest racer who never won a championship," his epic win for Mercedes in the 1955 Mille Miglia, and so on. But his time behind the wheel of Sunbeam-Talbots and Sunbeam Alpines (old & new) still commands respect from true motorsports enthusiasts.

In 1952, Moss was still a relative unknown in formula circles and did not have a ride at the beginning of the year. Rootes competition Team Manager, Norman Garrad, asked him if he'd like to try rallying. Moss took him up on it

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Rootes never missed a chance to market their association with the fast rising star.

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Renewing your membership?

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

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509-952-7120
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Annual Membership Dues: *$32.00 (US funds). Make checks payable to: Pacific Tiger Club.*

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Calendar - PTC Club Events

May 16 Tour of Kenmore Air – Kenmore, WA
Canceled due to you-know-what!

June 13 Tour of Thunderdome Car Museum – Enumclaw, WA
Tentative, but still on the schedule! They hope to re-open by June. (Don't we all.) An impressive collection of cars awaits in Enumclaw. Included is a tribute Sunbeam Alpine Sebring racer, originally restored by Steve Alcala. A Tiger that was on display was recently sold at a Mecum auction in California for $61K. The museum also has another Tiger offsite awaiting restoration – and reportedly the installation of a supercharger!

July 18 Western Washington All British Field Meet – St Edward State Park, near Kenmore, WA
Oh, No! Canceled!

August 15 - Picnic at Hanville waterfront park – Hansville, WA
Hoping!

September 19 Tour of the Spark Museum - Bellingham, WA
Ditto!

October – Annual General Meeting. Site TBA
Double Ditto!

Other Events

Just added! Aug 20 Open Track Day at Portland Int'l Raceway.
All makes and models. Sponsored by Shelby American Automobile Club - Northwest club. They need 50 cars to sign up by June 1st cancellation deadline. No CC charges before that. Refunds for virus cancellation. 4 run groups, including a special pre-'73 "Vintage Exhibition Group" - 3/4 speed, gentlemanly run group with no hassles allowed. Also standard Novice, Intermediate and Advanced groups. Questions? Contact Gary Bartman 559-285-9233.
http://msreg.com/SAAC-Northwest-Track-Day-2020-PIR

How we ended up with a Wedgewood Blue 1962 Series II Alpine named *Bleu*

By Bill Clemans

My first Alpine was a new 1961 Series II in black with red interior/black piping, optional black hard top, wire wheels, and white sidewalls. My interest in Alpines was generated by watching Liz Taylor drive one in the movie "Butterfield Eight" in 1960. (Liz's character was killed in a crash in the car). At the time, I was driving a '56 cinnamon and cream two door hardtop Chevy, one of their most desirable production cars to this day. It was probably the best car I have ever owned but the black Alpine ran a close second. Too bad I couldn't have kept the Chevy. Unfortunately, one year after Glenda and I were married, my job took us from Richland to Syracuse, NY where the state uses salt on all roads in winter to melt the snow, which there was plenty of! This was something neither of us was familiar with and ultimately led to the car becoming a rust bucket, so we sold it.

We had already "inherited" an MGB from Glenda's parents and that helped to bridge the gap years of Alpine lackadosis. Eventually our hearts ached for another Alpine and we began the search. It turned out that nobody seemed to want to turn loose of a decent Alpine and after a couple of years of searching we had to lower our expectations if we were ever going to pull this off. Through Sunbeam Alpine Owners Club of America we found a wedgewood blue Series II with promise located in Spokane so drove up to take a look. The owner was a Brit who met his wife in England. He built the car in England from two donors and switched it to LH drive because they planned to move to this country.

The body was pretty straight but the engine sounded like a threshing machine and had only 15 psi oil pressure at highway speed during our test drive. It also needed to be re-painted. We offered $4K under the asking price and they took it so we drove it home.

Restoration began almost immediately with step one being engine and overdrive overhaul. A shop in Yakima was recommended to us that promised completion at the beginning of the next driving season. Two years later, we drove the car home! Needless-to-say, that slowed down the restoration a bit. Next came paint. I was thinking black like the '61 but Glenda suggested we keep it original per the VIN tag and that does carry some weight when the car gets passed on so I agreed. The choice of shop was easy since we already knew Steve Tate in Yakima who had a well-earned reputation in the northwest painting mostly Austin Healeys. He agreed to paint the Alpine and we've been quite pleased with his work. Other resto items have been conversion to chrome wire wheels, aluminizing several engine bay components, and replacing the tires with whitewalls.

Experience since restoration has been fairly trouble free. The only troublesome problem was a blown head gasket and this was traced to the gasket being installed by the shop upside down and backwards, limiting coolant circulation to cylinder numbers three and four. This happened on a club drive we were leading and yet that little car got us home on two cylinders! None of the other minor difficulties has left us stranded and can be expected for a car that is 58 years old. By contrast, the MGB has been flat-bed towed three times and it is 10 years newer. Hmmmm. We are looking forward to driving both of these cars until they take our driver's licenses away. Both cars are probably more reliable than their owners at this point in our lives. ***PTC***

Moss - cont. from page 1

and instantly showed his versatility, driving a Sunbeam Talbot 90 to an overall 2nd place in

Moss, at left with co-driver John Cutts following the 1953 French Alpine Rally.

the Monte Carlo Rally. In the Alpine Rally, Moss took 10th overall, helping Rootes win the Team Prize, a huge feather in the cap of the budget-conscious works department. He also took home the first of three consecutive Coupe des Alpes for running penalty-free stages. It was this team victory that inspired Rootes to name their new two-seater derivative the Sunbeam Alpine in 1953.

Moss continued his rallying success, driving an Alpine in 1953 and 1954, again up against many faster and nimbler racers. As Moss said in a Thoroughbred & Classic Car interview in March '90: ***The Alpine was a very heavy car but well balanced; a bit like an uninspiring MGB, though you could throw it around, especially on the rough stuff, and you could drop a wheel off the road without worrying about something breaking. It would deliver anything you asked of it except sparkling performance. On the '54 Alpine [Rally] we were up against it almost all the way and I pushed that car, and myself, to the very limit."***

As another article described Moss:
He would return to the Monte twice more, but it was his trio of attempts at the punishing [Alpine Rally] Coupe des Alpes that would truly test him, across 31 of Europe's highest mountain passes over six days. Notably, he won coveted Gold Cups for penalty-free runs – but in his diaries, Stirling admitted it almost broke him. Having driven for "24 hours solid" over one final section [including several hours without second gear], *he "collapsed from nervous strain and couldn't stop shaking".*

In the early 1960's Moss drove for Rootes again, finding time between grand prix events to road-race a Series II Alpine in the States. Once again he was competing in a car that would deliver anything you asked of it, except sparkling performance. His highest achievement was a 1st in class and 3rd place overall, co-driving with Jack Brabham at Riverside in 1961.

Stirling Moss at Riverside

Moss's career was tidily summed up in a few sentences in a long Wiki entry: "*Moss raced from 1948 to 1962, winning 212 of the 529 races he entered, including 16 Formula One Grands Prix. He competed in as many as 62 races in a single year and drove 84 different makes of car over the course of his racing career.*"

Moss (shirtless) huddles at Riverside, including Rootes team manager Norman Garrard to his left.

In what may have been a footnote in an illustrious racing career, never let it be forgotten that Moss was also a champion for Sunbeam.

Driving Through Paradise

Story & photos by Jim Clark

My Dancing Suspension

Have you ever had your car talk to you? I don't mean in French or Italian, or Siri. I'm talking about those odd noises or erratic behaviors you notice while driving. My 55-year-old Sunbeam Tiger spoke to me quite often last year. It was "concerning" to say the least. My car is an on-going project, as it sat outside for many years. So I was not surprised when the "antique" protested being driven on the freeway. I-5 can be rough in spots and my car did not like any of its

bumps and jolts. Pot holes and concrete spacers effected strange noises and behavior. Even lane markers would jolt the car, making it want to dance into the next lane. I don't hit the dance floor like I used to, mainly because of my knees and my Tiger was dancing like it had bad knees.

It was obvious the car had suspension problems. The car should be dancing down the highway like we were in those formal ballroom dance competitions. Personally, I like the Cha Cha, but I digress.

Last summer Larry Atkisson caught wind of my troubled car and took a look at my Tiger, at a club event at Sunset Park. He has a firm grasp of every part on a Sunbeam Tiger. He proclaimed the front suspension original and worn out. Fifty-odd years of abuse was evident as a large dent in the cross-member was visible. Someone hit something pretty solid. He also found some frozen steering column knuckles and chewed up suspension dust boots. It's hard to dance with holes in your dust boots.

Baby needs new (dancing) shoes. On the way to Larry's.

Larry offered to exchange the cross-member with a refurbished one he had in storage, and would keep mine as a core. He told me it would take time to rebuild and paint the spare cross-member. I decided to have Larry powder coat it, by a shop down the street. He used his time well as his crossmember came out awfully pretty. It looked like a pair of those shiny black dancing shoes.

Larry wasn't ready for my car, but asked if there were other things he should look at. I suggested the carburetor, because something

was stealing gas from the gas tank. He asked if I had a 4-barrel carb, which I do and he said "Well you are going to use a lot of gas with that."

I described a small problem with sticky brakes. The car stopped very well. It was just the taking off from the green light that was a problem. Sort of the opposite of taking off in a quarter-mile drag race. He suspected a malfunctioning brake booster. I didn't think so; it was only five years old.

Several weeks later, Larry wanted to show me the new replacement crossmember he had refurbished. It was ready for installing. Driving to Larry's house to drop the car off included a very pleasant ferry ride. After inspecting the steering column, and other suspension parts, he thought we might have to replace the rack. Now that's a major part in dancing that straight line on I-5. As I left he said he would check out the rack to see if it could still be used.

Larry called the next day and gave me a list of parts I might purchase from Sunbeam Specialties. He told me it would be less expensive if I bought them direct rather than have Larry do that work. Working from a list I had in front of me, I ordered the parts over the phone, but I missed one major item. Oh, I hate that. I think I concentrated too much on ordering a couple extra odd parts. It reminded me of the time I

Clean and tight – and no dents!

took dance lessons and I had to think about what the left foot was doing, while maneuvering on the right foot. Complicated, right?

The good news was that my steering rack was salvageable, but it desperately needed fluid. It was dry as a bone and had been for some time. Many of the racks that he sees are dry. However, the bad news was that the Tiger's spindle on the passenger side did not have a back spacer, so that the wheel bearing was somewhat loose and was wobbling against the back of the spindle. Oh, oh, I confess, that may have been my handy-work. Perhaps the occasional shriek from the car was a missing back spacer.

As a side note, we discovered that the disc-brake backing plate on the driver's side had come in contact with the ground, making it look like an accordion in a Oom-pah Band. Apparently someone lost a wheel – no one seems to remember when that happened. Of course, our memories aren't what they used to be. "Maybe it came from the factory like that," the previous owner's wife tried to tell me.

What seemed like a few days later, the car was ready and I was excited to take a test drive with a new suspension. The county roads around Larry's house were just the thing for a test drive. Anticipating the drive, my feet were tingling as I climbed behind the wheel. Previously, I had to stomp on the gas to start moving. But on the test drive, a gentle nudge was all I needed to start rolling."The new brake booster, makes a difference," Larry said with a smile. "Yours needed rebuilding."

As we drove over several speed bumps, the car was strangely quiet. At a hairpin turn, the car cornered effortlessly, the turning response was smoother and quicker. Gone was the loose steering of a tired car with bad knees.

The suspension work was worth every dollar, as the car now prances down the road like a true sports car. The freeway isn't quite as "concerning" as it used to be, especially with my new dust boots. ***PTC***

For Sale

Carroll Shelby Mini Europa Alum Wheels. 13 x 6 and 4.25 X 4 bolt. Two wheels only, still in original boxes. No center caps. These were special run with limited number for CAT club order. $100.00 each. Silvervane (black) color. Bob Bennion
904star@centurytel.net 360-556-1117

For Sale: Series IV intake manifold. Perfect for Weber conversion. $75

Dick Sanders 253-332-0253 or
RootesRooter@aol.com

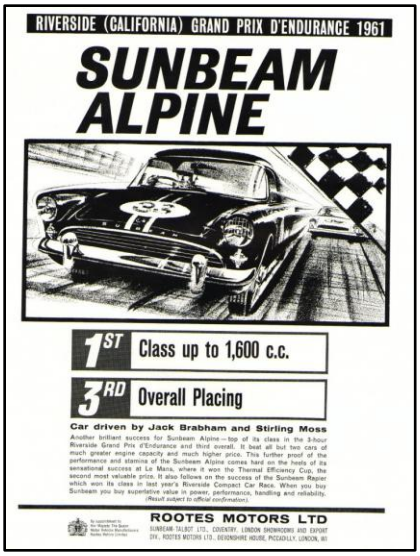
For Sale: 1962 Series 2 Sunbeam Alpine, all original. Same owner for past 25 years. Hardtop. Interior in good condition. Asking $12,000.

Location: Lynnwood, WA
Kelly and/or Leann Hill
leannandkelly@gmail.com
206-321-5339

SO YOU'RE STUCK AT HOME

Governor says to stay a home, away from groups of people. No club meetings or car shows. Does this mean you can't drive your classic car – No? Governor said it is ok to get gas, he just didn't say how far you could go to *get* gas. That could be near or far depending on how sunny the day is. You, of course, would be quarantining in your car by yourself.

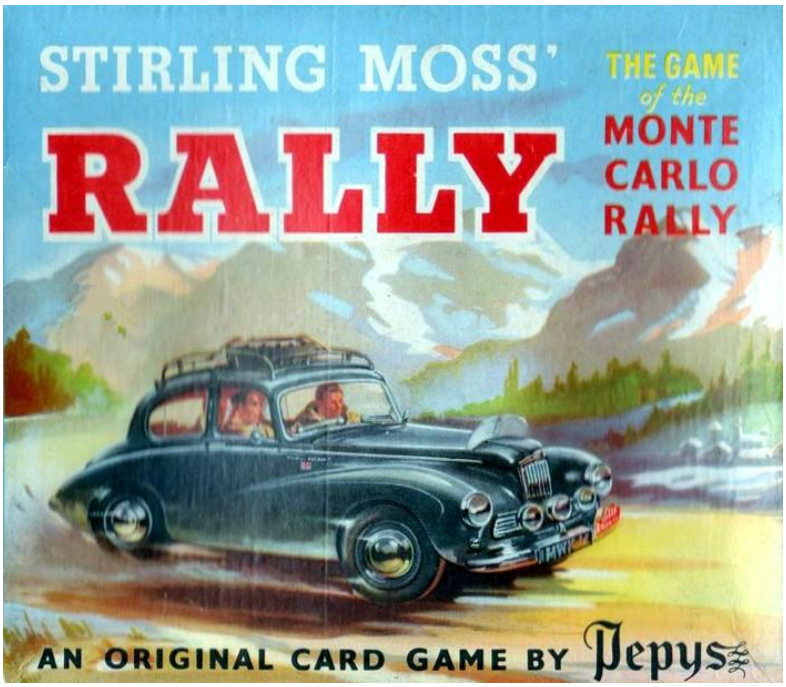
Other things you could do is to go out in the garage and ready your car for spring or summer. One thing I have done is to grab a ½" or 7/16" wrench (for Hillmans and Alpine engines) and go over the engine and tighten anything these wrenches will fit. Also tighten all rubber hoses. I guarantee you will find many bolts that can stand a little tightening. Don't over tighten any, just snug them up.



When was the last time you changed the antifreeze? Ok, you're not worried about freezing but what is the condition of the fluid to protect your iron and aluminum engine. I know you have been thinking about changing the brake fluid well when it gets warm and your car is still quarantined. This is a good reason to get off the recliner and go play in your garage.

Stay safe and I'll see you on the road.

Budd Bennion



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