

The Mother of all Mother's Days

Dennis L. Rainey, Shoals British Car Club: Florence, AL
Melinda Watson, Blount British Cars, Ltd.: Maryville, TN

Townsend, Tennessee – May 8th, 2010

It was the 23rd annual gathering of British cars and motorcycles hosted by Blount British Cars, Ltd of Maryville, TN. Present at the show was Richard Lockhart, a man with a really funny hat (more about this later) that is in the business of restorations, parts and service for Little British Cars (LBCs). He had been hired to complete a restoration job that had begun some thirteen years earlier. His work was done and he had with him that day a beautifully restored '59 MGA. All LBCs have a story and this one is no exception. In fact, this car is an exception in that it has a great story associated with it.

MGA before restoration.
Photos by Robert Fox

The owner of the car is a lady by the name of Sally Fox who lives in Ohio. Mrs. Fox bought this car brand new in 1959 after hunting for an Austin Healey, which was about \$500 too much. She paid \$3300 for the MGA, took it home and enjoyed it for many years. We also heard that her dad could be seen driving it on the weekends when he went to meet his buddies for coffee! Then as years pass and families grow and what often happens with many LBCs happened to this one... the MGA was parked in the barn when it became impractical to use. There it sat for a number of years, unused and almost forgotten.



In 1996, without Mrs. Fox's knowledge, her son, Robert, took the car out of the barn to have it restored. In fact, she commented that she went to look for the car but couldn't find it. Robert told her that it was there just buried under a bunch of stuff. She told us she didn't believe him and thought that maybe he had sold it and just did not want her to know.



Robert had taken it to a shop for a complete restoration but after thirteen years it had not been finished. That's when Lockhart, owner of English Auto of Tennessee and the guy with the funny hat, stepped into the picture as he willingly took on the task of completing the restoration. Now, fast forward to Saturday May 8th, to the Springtime in the Smokies gathering of British cars and motorcycles in Townsend.



The guy with the funny hat — that's not real hair! Photo by Mary Grace Photos

Lockhart entered the car in the show under Mrs. Fox's name. The stage is almost completely set. Ms. Fox, along with her husband, had come to east Tennessee to visit Robert and his family for Mother's Day. Now it was time to get Mom to the show for the surprise of her life. They had earlier decided to go for a drive thru the beautiful east Tennessee countryside. As they drove past the show grounds, Robert said "Look over

there – it’s a British car show. Why don’t we stop and see what’s going on?”

Blount British Car club members and show participants had gathered around the car to “hide” it. It was under cover as well. Meanwhile, the very able and amicable Jim Watson from the host club had asked that all the Mothers at the show to please come forward for a special presentation. Mrs. Fox, being a mother, came forward along with many others. That was when the club members and show participants surrounding the car parted, the cover was removed and Robert presented the car to his mother.



MGA being presented to Mrs. Fox. Photo by Mary Grace Photos

Needless to say, Mrs. Fox was very surprised. Her grandkids that were watching were also surprised. The witnesses to this showing of motherly affection from Robert approved with cheers, applause and shouts of “Happy Mother’s Day” – hardly a dry eye in the crowd.



Lost in her memories, Mrs. Fox fondly looks upon her '59 MGA. Photo by Mary Grace Photos



No longer a memory...Tally ho and away they go! Photo by Mary Grace Photos

Later that day, Mrs. Fox with one of her grandkids, could be seen driving through Townsend in her newly restored MGA. This whole experience was a nice reminder of the fact that LBC people are the best. It was a very happy ending for all involved. By the way, the car took “First Place in the MGA Class” in the car show...and this was before voters knew the story behind this particular Little British Car.



David Cline, President of Blount British Cars, Ltd presents 1st place for MGA to Richard Lockhart. Photo by Mary Grace Photos