

October, 2025 Edition

OIL SPOTS

A Newsletter of the Plateau British Car Club



The Prez Sez

As I write, I am preparing for the drive to Ooltewah on October 4th. Spent the last few days with my brother prepping our cars for the trip. Got Lizbet's oil changed and the carbs adjusted. Spent some time working on the two project Sprites. I'm really looking forward to the Brits at Cambridge event.

Though it is our last big event of the season, it isn't the last thing happening. Check out the Nashville British Car Club and you will find they are having a car show the weekend after Ooltewah. Also, with the weather turning milder, we really need to plan a few drives. There is always our go to brewery in Crossville, Sparta with Marioochi's and Calfkiller, and Father Tom's and Red Silo in Cookeville. All offer some nice back roads to drive followed by great food, beverages, and good friends. I know some of you have some ideas.

Looking forward to seeing you on the road. And remember, as Broderick Crawford used to say, "if you care to drive, drive with care. Until next month.

Jack—

Oil Spots is the official monthly publication of the **Plateau British Car Club of Tennessee**. Material is actively solicited for the newsletter and every effort will be made to use appropriate material from the membership. Unsolicited material from non-members is also encouraged. The editor reserves the right to edit for length and appropriateness. No placement of material is guaranteed. Your contributions should be submitted to: dprainey@att.net

Deadline for submissions is the 20th of the month prior to publication.

[PBCC Officers and Support Positions - 2025*](#)

[Jack Spradling](#) - President- shadowfever@yahoo.com - 931.255.2040

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[Pat Nielsen](#) - Cards & Flowers - jann_nielsen@hotmail.com - 484.919.8090

All British Cars/Owners Welcome

The Plateau British Car Club was created to band together owners of the Little British Cars (LBC) to provide a way of exchanging ideas, technical data, amusing stories, and just plain fun. All LBC owners are invited to enjoy the "LBC experience" to the fullest with friends. Ownership of a British car is not required for membership, but non-British car owners are classified as Associate members and have no voting rights.

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A day without cars is like...Just kiddin'. I have no idea.

A Dizzy Tech Session

In the last issue of the Oil Spots, we used a technical article written by a fellow LBC'er by the name of Jeff Schlemmer who is the “go to guy” when it comes to anything distributor related. Due to the length of the article, I chose to break it up into two issues. Following is the second part of Jeff’s fine and informative article. Enjoy.

Installing a distributor in a disturbed (rebuilt) engine:

This may require an extra set of hands or a compression gauge. Turn the engine over from the crank bolt, with either a finger over the #1 spark plug hole, or with a compression gauge in the hole, until you see or feel the compression build in the cylinder. Since its a 4-stroke motor, the exhaust stroke will come up to TDC and build no compression, while the firing stroke comes up to TDC and DOES build compression. When you know you are on the compression stroke, turn the engine CW until you get to your timing setting, such as 15 degrees BTDC, and stop there. Do not back up to get there, turn the engine 2 more full revolutions to get back to that spot, always turning CW as you look at the front of the engine.

At this point, put a spark plug in the #1 plug wire, or use a clamp-style spark tester in the wire, and properly ground it to the engine. Make sure the distributor is properly installed with the rotor pointing roughly to the #1 spark plug wire terminal. Correct as needed. Loosen the distributor clamp enough so you can turn the distributor, and grab some welding gloves. Turn on the ignition key. Turn the distributor housing the opposite direction the shaft rotates, wearing the gloves or you'll get shocked. You should see a spark at the plug. Turn it back past the starting point, and quickly repeat. You should be able to pinpoint the moment/position when spark happens at the plug. Turn off the ignition, and lock down the distributor clamp. Reinstall your #1 spark plug. If you have fuel present, the engine should start and run at the proper timing setting. Recheck with a timing light to confirm its set as you intended. This will work for points or most electronic ignitions, with the exception of some HEI-type systems that require a faster shaft rpm to develop a signal. This works beautifully on virtually all collector cars built before 1975.

Points or Pertronix?

This is one of the most frequently asked questions I get. My answer is almost always points, for performance and reliability, but it depends. If you have a distributor that is severely worn and the dwell angle refuses to stay stable, an electronic ignition will stabilize your dwell, providing

better drivability. EVERY TIME this happens, every time you hear a story of a car running much better from installing electronic ignition, its because of this single factor. It was installed into a distributor that needs to be rebuilt – not cleaned and reassembled. Rebuilt. Most people don't understand the difference because they don't know what clearances are required or what advance curve is required to make their car run the way it used to run on leaded fuel of the decade the car was produced. In fact, most people don't understand much about what the distributor does, and that's ok. Just know its a critical function like valve timing or compression values, and if its wrong the car can run downright mediocre or worse. If you're reading this, I know you want better than mediocre.

There are also a few cars that aren't worth the effort to remove the intake assembly to get to the distributor, or cases where losing 10% power just doesn't matter, although remember that when you give up this power, you are forcing your engine into a poor state of tune that can have other ramifications, such as fuel in your oil. The Lotus twin cam comes to mind as one of those applications where access downright sucks. Then again, its a VERY expensive engine to rebuild, so the extra labor is worth it in many cases.

Here's the biggest reason electronic ignitions don't belong inside a distributor. Low voltage electronics do not work consistently when they are installed next to a high voltage source, unless you have plenty of room to install

shielding, and even with that possibility, its rarely 100% effective. Inside your distributor spins a rotor, which throws an arc to each cap terminal, up to 50 times per second in a street car, 200 arcs per second in a 4 cylinder, 300 in a 6, 400 in an 8. This 15,000 Volt arc jumps within a couple inches of the 12V module that's looking for a tiny magnetic or optical signal. Many times a second, an extra signal can be generated or one can be skipped. Even if the "misfire" rate is only 1 in 500 (usually its higher than that), you can be down 3, 5, 10 hp. I've seen a TR6 lose 39 hp on the dyno from installing an electronic ignition with no other changes. You'll see this happen more on a chassis dyno than in an engine dyno cell since the alternator or generator, car wiring, and many other factors can turn the engine bay into a Faraday cage amplifying the problem – as if the distributor cap itself doesn't already make a good Faraday cage. Other types of misfires, high resistance plug wires, improper or mediocre grounding, 5kOhm spark plugs (resistance type), and countless other common "issues" in collector cars can amplify issues when using ANY electronic ignition. Which one works perfectly? Points. They are a simple on/off grounding switch that rarely have issues. Yes, points need to be adjusted, but the adjustments are easy and only take a few minutes a year if you follow the simple guide below.

Adjusting points: breaking myths:

This used to be a simple monthly maintenance item, but has become a fear invoking, menacing, time consuming issue because people have just forgotten how to do it well. Here are a few simple tips to not only make it easy, but reduce how frequently you need to make adjustments.

If your manual says the point gap should be .014 – .016", That DOES NOT mean set them to .015". Never, ever. Points wear out over time. Set them to .016", let them wear down to .014", and repeat. In fact, my recommendation is that for many reasons including wear, play, slop, poor tolerances, you can set the point gap to .017" or even .018" and go from 3000-7000 mile intervals between adjustments. There will almost always be a break-in interval of 500-1000 miles, requiring an adjustment, similar to how you need to readjust valves or retorque a head gasket 500 miles after an engine rebuild. The key is to file and reinstall the same points, not new ones, for as many years as you can. You will get significantly longer adjustment intervals from a broken-in set of points than continually replacing them with new ones. Its not unusual for me to see a 50 year old set of points in an MGTD that outperform new replacements and appear to be good for another 50 years with a peak rpm of 7000+ engine rpm before bouncing becomes an issue.

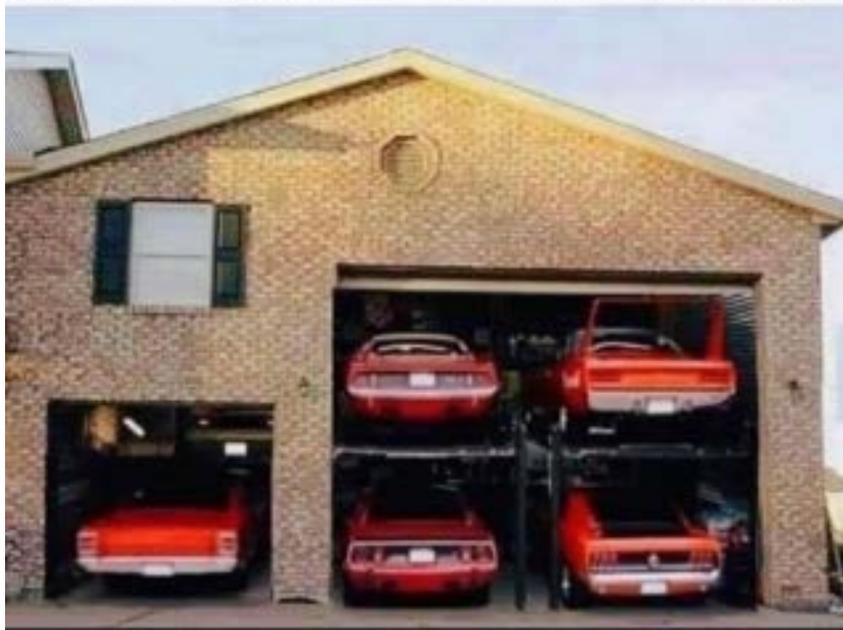
Filing points can be done with a \$2 point file from Harbor Freight or anywhere that has automotive tools. Don't use

sandpaper on points as it can leave behind a layer of silicon and resistance is not good – from residue or corrosion. An arc will eventually burn through it, but avoidance is easy. Occasionally I use a cut-off wheel to resurface badly pitted points, then file to clean.

If you've ever had any questions or problems with the distributor in your car, Jeff is the guy ya want to contact. He has a website named [Advanced Distributors](#) and he can be contacted through his website. Just click on the highlighted link.

Thank you, Jeff for that fine tech article - Ed

**IT'S SO HARD TO FIND THAT
ONE BEDROOM FIVE CAR GARAGE**



Sometimes ya never know who some people really are. There's this dentist who just got busted for drug dealing who just lives down the street from me. I've been going to this guy for twelve years. Twelve years and I would have never guessed that guy was a dentist.

Schedule of Events - 2025

(Listed in chronological order)

- 4th Qtrly. Club Meeting - 18 Oct. - Details TBA
- Hwy. 55 Car Show - All Marques - Third Sat. of ea. Month**
- Monkey Town Brewery/Cafe' - Dayton - Details TBA

We will add to and update this schedule as and when we have additional events or changes to the schedule. We are, after all, a driving club and as with driving, sometimes ya have to make turns.

Making Contributions to the *Oil Spots*

Your stories, photos, tech tips, questions and anything LBC or PBCC related are always welcome in the *Oil Spots*. Please make your contributions to the editor by the 20th of the month preceding the issue in which you would like to see them appear. You may email them to Dennis Rainey at dprainey@att.net.

The *Oil Spots* is the official newsletter of the Plateau British Car Club. It is not the only form of communication that the club is using, nor should it be. Its purpose is pretty straight forward as it is intended to keep the membership abreast of what's going on within the club and to provide a measure of entertainment. Another widely used form of communication is the club's web site and its function is very similar to the newsletter. It is an excellent method of checking event schedules and related information. The third method being used by the club is the mass email announcements which you receive periodically. Once again, this method is used to alert the membership to changes in schedules and to act as reminders of events about to take place. All three methods overlap considerably, and all three have their needed place. Please make sure that you use of all three of these methods and you won't be left behind.—Thanks, Ed.

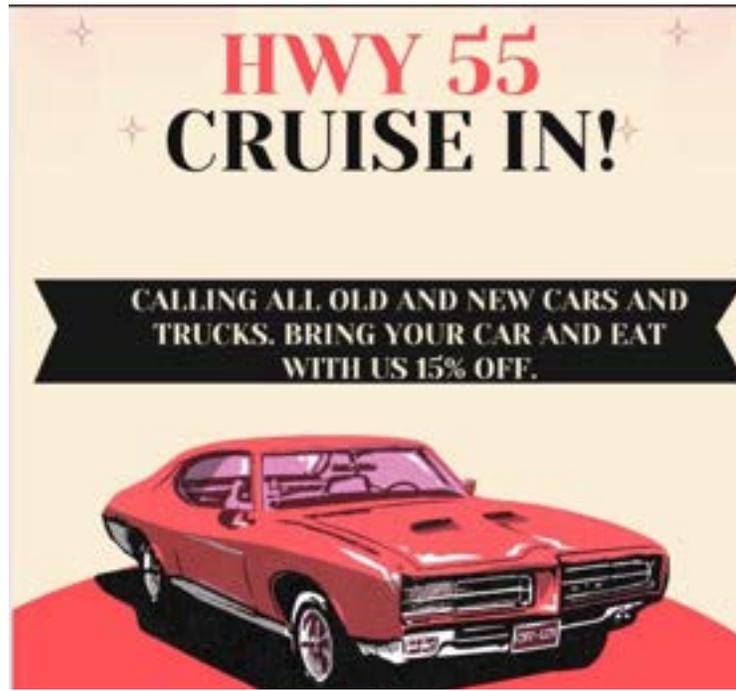
This section of the Oil spots can be used by our members to advertise items they may no longer need or want. If you've decided that car must go or you've decided to clean out your garage for example, here is a place you can let the rest of the world know. If you are trying to find that elusive part or car, this might be the place to find it. In the case of cars, pictures are a must. The old saying, "If ya don't have pics, then it didn't happen" applies here. If you are successful using this section for selling, please let the editor know that your ad can be removed.

FOR SALE

1986 Jaguar XJ6 Vanden Pla

- Desert Sage Metallic paint/biscuit leather interior. Paint is original to car.
- 55,xxx original miles.
- 3rd owner since 2012. Texas car from 2012-2021. Always garage kept.
- Clean Carfax. Receipts since new.
- Hagerty insured value number 2 condition \$26,100.
- My asking price is \$24,500.
- Contact info: Bill Hirschey. Phone: 512-944-4531.





This is a continuing event held every 4th Sat.
of each month thru the summer months from 2pm - 6 pm.

It's open

to all marques and participants are offered a 15% discount on food
purchased during the event.

The address is 2192 N. Main St., Crossville, TN
Let's do this and make a good British Car showing

X-X

Definition of handling while driving a spirited sports car;
'When you are enjoying yourself and your passenger is
nervous, that is oversteer. When you are nervous and your
passenger is relaxed, that is understeer'.

THE LBC EXPERIENCE

This piece— "**The LBC Experience**" —is a heartfelt, poetic reflection on what it's like to be part of the world of **Little British Cars** (LBCs), and it's *rich* with meaning far beyond the metal, gears, and grease.

Let's unpack it:

What is the LBC Experience?

It's not just about driving old British cars. It's about **self-discovery**. It's about realizing:

- You're **capable** of understanding and solving mechanical problems.
- You can **trust yourself** to troubleshoot and fix things.
- You find joy in **engaging directly** with the physical world—feeling, hearing, and controlling your machine—not passively riding through life.

Community & Connection

- You meet people—**kindred spirits**—who support you and your machine.
- You connect across generations, learning that the **young aren't lost** and the **old aren't irrelevant**.
- You build **real friendships** with people around the globe and feel **their loss** when tragedy strikes.

The Romance of the Road

- There's a deep respect for **automotive history**—specifically British marques like MG, Triumph, Austin-Healey, etc.
- You romanticize the idea of **tweed-wearing drivers** zipping through narrow countryside roads in the rain.
- There's reverence for places like **Abingdon and Coventry**, where these cars were born.

Deeper Meaning

The LBC Experience is about **nostalgia, challenge, freedom**, and a **connection to the past**. It's a rebellion against living life in a "sealed container," whether that's a modern car full of sensors or a lifestyle detached from tactile, mechanical reality.

👉 Final Thought

These words serve as a **thank-you note** to a lifestyle, a community, and a mindset. It's about *more than cars*—it's about reclaiming a bit of control, character, and camaraderie in a world that often feels digital, disposable, and disconnected.

If you're asking what this "LBC Experience" is—**it's a beautifully messy, hands-on, soulful, often stubborn adventure** that teaches you about *yourself, your machine, and your fellow travelers on the road*.

And yeah... a day without LBCs? That's like a day without part of your *identity*. - Ed, Jack Austin & AI.

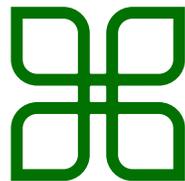


This one isn't quite British, in fact, I don't know what it is. Anyone have a guess?



At a recent car show/gathering at the Hwy. 55 restaurant on N. Main in Crossville, the car pictured here was in attendance. In the last issue of the Oil Spots, we asked if anyone could ID it. No one seemed to know just exactly what this is, so I did a bit of research into this illusive question and came up with the answer. It's a 2022 Vanderhall Venice.

The Vanderhall Venice is a unique, three-wheeled auto-cycle manufactured in the U.S. by Vanderhall Motor Works, offering an open-air driving experience combining features of a motorcycle and a car. It is powered by a GM-sourced turbocharged engine and is legally classified as a motorcycle in some states, meaning a motorcycle license and helmet may not be required.



Return of the British

Rugby Car Show/Gathering

Our club's premier annual event, in cooperation with the Blount County British Car Club and the English Auto Society of Knoxville, was held on the 16th of August in History Rugby, TN. It was by any measure a success. The numbers have been crunched and we are very happy to report our financials here. As you can see, we have a lot to be proud of. The planning for next year's event is already underway.

British Car Show Income & Expense Summary 2025

Cook Out		Sub Total	<u>\$5,398.88</u>
	Tickets	\$270.00	
	Donations	\$25.00	
	Sponsorship	\$500.00	Other site income <u>\$2,884.62</u>
	Food	(\$207.25)	
	Music	(\$400.00)	Total <u>\$8,283.50</u>
		<u>\$187.75</u>	

Registrations		
	Online	\$965.00
	Day of	\$510.00
	Printing	(\$143.87)
		<u>\$1,331.13</u>

Donuts	\$167.00	\$167.00
Vendor	\$40.00	\$40.00
T Shirts	\$232.00	\$232.00
Silent Auction	\$1,616.00	\$1,616.00

Donations		
	Individuals	\$675.00
	Sponsorship	\$500.00
	Online	\$60.00
		<u>\$1,235.00</u>

Raffle		
	License	(\$20.00)
	Tickets	\$210.00
	winner	\$210.00
		<u>\$420.00</u>

Tea Table		
	Online	\$95.00
	Day of	\$75.00
		<u>\$170.00</u>

- In kind donations
- Plaques
 - Port a Johns
 - T shirts
 - Breakfast Foods
 - Water