

BOTHAM WEEKEND 2011

By Mike Swanger

The second weekend in August marked our annual pilgrimage to the Botham Vineyard in Barneveld WI. for the 16th Annual Vintage Celebration. This year's featured marque was MG. For those of you that couldn't attend, here is a snapshot of what you missed.

Bill & Debby Nicklas, Fred & Meg Fleischmann, Jim Swernoff, and Fred Thomas & Penny Rushing all met in Delafield for lunch. After all of the tanks were full they caravanned to the House on the Rock Hotel at high noon on Friday, putting themselves in harms way, to scout out the area and make sure it was safe for the rest of us. Thanks to all for your dedication!



The rest of us sheepishly showed up throughout the evening and into the next morning. As with any trip in a vintage British sports car, you hope the journey is incident free – most of the time when you're driving a Healey it is. That was not the case this time. Just outside of Mazomanie, Fred Thomas noticed that Fred Fleischmann's left rear tire was dangerously low on air. The caravan pulled over, and out came the jack, spare tire, and all of the rest of the stuff packed in the boot – it's amazing how much stuff you can get in the boot with some creative packing.

A short time later the problem was resolved and off went the caravan.



Saturday dawned with scattered showers but the spirits of the club could not be dampened. Eight Healeys (and one Mini) started out on a spirited drive of the area lead by the Nicklas'. Only brief moments of the peace was disturbed and minor traffic laws broken as a good time was had by all. Soon we arrived in Verona at

Bach Racecraft. Jim Bach was nice enough to let us in to his shop so we could roam around a bit. Both Jim and his right hand man Tim Griffith were more than willing to tell us about what they do and the recent projects that they have undertaken. Among the cars at the shop were an unrestored 1952 Allard K2, an all alloy Jaguar XK120, a stunning 1950 Lea-Francis 1800 2.5 litre sports roadster, numerous Porsches, and even a couple of Healeys. There was also Jim's own 1964 3000 MkIII in Colorado Red, and my personal favorite, a 1956 factory 100M in Florida Green over Olde English White. In addition there was a 1920's Model T Speedster, quite a few racecars and lots of other cool stuff. Coincidentally, Tim Griffith's 1935 MG PA Supercharged Midget Roadster was one of the featured cars at the show on Sunday. It was also pictured on the commemorative bottle of Botham wine that was given to all of the concourse participants.



Bach Racecraft not only caters to racecar preparation but also all aspects of road car maintenance, repair and full rotisserie restorations. Their specialty seems to be Porsche but they also work on all British and European classics. And, once in a while, they even make room for something American. All work is done on sight including mechanical, interior, body work (aluminum is a specialty) and paint. Big thanks to Jim and Tim for their hospitality. Check out their website at www.bachracecraft.com.

Usually, the Botham Vintage Celebration is paired with sweltering heat followed by a mid-afternoon rain storm. This year however couldn't have been better. The weather was perfect, the wine properly chilled, and the cars were all shined up and looking their best. If you have never been to the Botham car show, you really need to make it a point to attend. They

have one of the most eclectic collections of cars you will see anywhere. Everything from huge Packard's and Cadillac's, to muscle cars, to European classics like Citroens, Porsches, Mercedes, Alfa Romeos, and of course many of the British makes. Our Healeys were very well represented with about 10 examples in attendance. Our club had the best spot on the grounds, parked right on the main drag.



I think that I can speak for all in attendance that the Botham event was a great success and a wonderful time was had by all. And congratulations go out to the Ricchio's as they won an Award of Merit at the show. Be sure to give them both a "thumbs up" the next time you see them!

Now get out your pens and mark off the second Sunday in August, 2012 so you are sure not to miss the 17th annual Botham Vintage Celebration. You will be glad you did! Check out the full set of photos from the trip.