

The Origins of the British Automobile Touring Association of Nova Scotia

By Bob Hamilton

(With additions and corrections by Joel Page and Sandy Fraser)

Frequently I am asked how this organization started so perhaps this cold winter December day in 2007 would be a good time to begin putting this down on paper.

My interest in British cars goes a way back to the early 1960's when living in Montreal (my birthplace). I was working as a salesperson with the Ford dealer Latimer Motors when the service manager decided to sell his 1954 Sunbeam Talbot drophead coupe as he had a new 1963 Ford Galaxie 500 convertible on order and didn't want to leave the Sunbeam outside during the winter. So in October 1962 I exchanged \$400 for this car which I still own. It was my daily driver for the summer months for the next few years and in 1967 I brought it to Nova Scotia when I took a position with Hawker Siddeley in Trenton, NS.

Time passed, family appeared but I managed to keep the Sunbeam in which we drove around Nova Scotia on fine days. On a Thanksgiving Sunday in October 1983 I decided to take the Sunbeam Talbot on the back roads to Wolfville to take my son to Landmark East School. To kill time, my son and I drove around Wolfville and into New Minas and on at least two occasions passed a fellow driving a pretty neat Lotus Super 7, acknowledging each other's cars with a friendly wave. Then about mid-afternoon, the Lotus pulled up beside me at a red light and with sideways glances, we both revved our engines a bit as to initiate a race from the green. Needless to say there was no contest as I fell way behind in his dust!

Shortly after this we met again near Acadia University and this time pulled over to finally meet each other and talk cars. The Lotus driver turned out to be Joel Page who had recently purchased the Lotus from Alex Colville, Canada's internationally renowned artist. After chatting awhile Joel asked if I had time to visit a friend of his who had a 1938 MGTA Tickford so off we went to meet Sandy Fraser at his home and admire his beautiful MGTA.

This was the beginning of a long time friendship and the genesis of B.A.T.A.N.S. as from then on, we kept contact through Christmas cards and the occasional phone call. In 1986 I moved to Waverley, NS and while driving around the Halifax area in the Sunbeam attracted the attention of a few other owners of British cars. In the late 1980's Joel, Sandy and I organized an Apple Blossom run and then other short runs to various areas of the Province all the while attracting more British car owners.

About this time in the mid 80's Bernie Smith also had intentions of forming a British car club. He had collected dues for a year or so but his work took so much of his time that

this fell through and he kindly donated \$1,000 he had collected to help with what was to be B.A.T.A.N.S.

Up until the early 90's, we just called ourselves a British car club with no official name but we had a 2 page newsletter that was sent out quarterly with events listed. One night we gathered at the Anvil pub in Wolfville, (Joel, Sandy, Geoff Muttart, Dean Rogers, Roger Phinney, Drew Sperry, Robert Bell, Terry Murphy and others I forget at this time) to decide on a name. As we felt our main purpose was to tour in our cars, we decided "Touring" should be included somewhere in the name and we finally agreed on the "British Automobile Touring Association of Nova Scotia" which is quite a mouthful so we shorten it to B.A.T.A.N.S. when necessary.

Again, in 1995, the same group and others met at the Anvil and decided that as we were collecting dues and having expenses associated with operating this club, we should enlist the services of Geoff Muttart to help us register the organization as a society with the Nova Scotia Registry of Joint Stock Companies. At the same time we called for submissions for a club logo and towards the end of 1995 we chose the excellent design created by Wolfville's Andrew Hurst from among many good proposals.

So there you have it. From a small group of people connected only by their love of British cars our present club has evolved with members from beyond just the borders of Nova Scotia. I hope that with strong support from club members we will continue to enthusiastically enjoy the British cars we love and cherish.