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THE  
 BOOK OF THE  
**B.S.A.**  
 THREE WHEELER  
 by Harold Jelley

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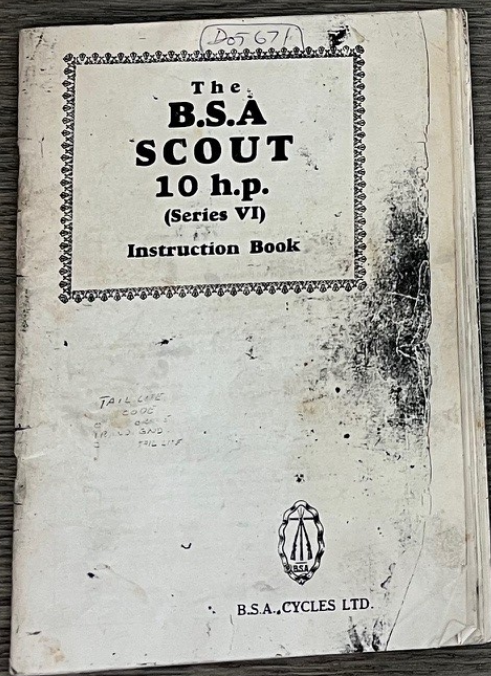
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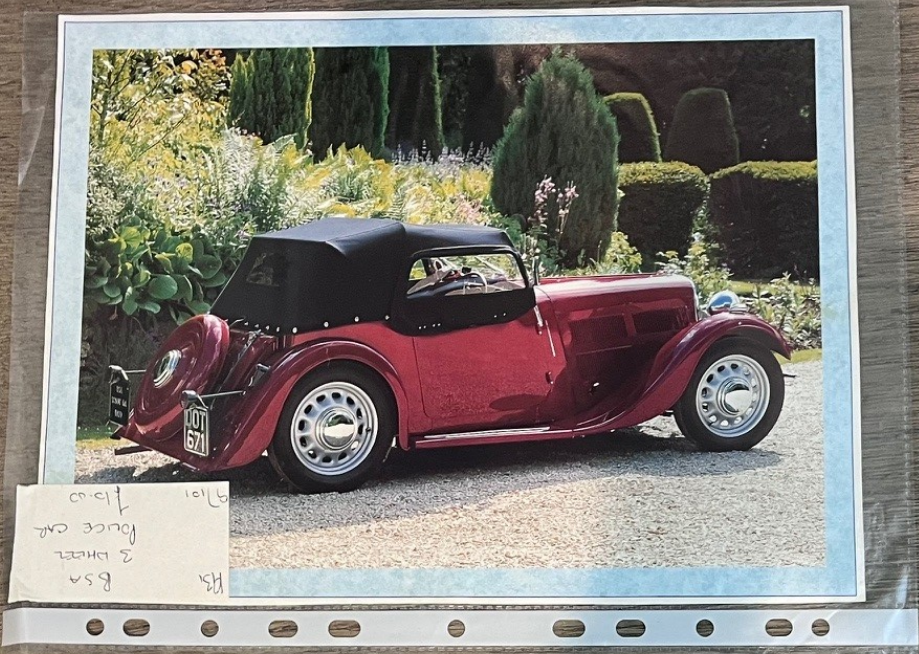
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In the event of any difficulty with any of the equipment, no matter how slight, we think it only too proper to give every assistance possible. The best course to adopt is to call on the nearest Lucas Service Depot (the addresses of which are given below) where the equipment can be examined as a whole. The depot is not only at your disposal for repairs, overhauls and adjustments, but to give free advice. If it is necessary, however, to communicate, or when ordering spare parts, always give the type and number of the tool in question, the make, and the year and date of the Three Wheeler on which it is fitted.

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60





## Small Arms Sportster

In 1937, the sales before front-wheel drive became popular, BSA produced a stylish tourer for four called the Scout.



WHEELS AND METEOROLOGICAL BY MICHAEL HAYWARD

When the BSA Scout, Honda, AJS, and Triumph party had produced both automobiles and motorcycles, the BSA Scout was the first mass-produced automobile, the Birmingham Small Arms Company—known as BSA—had led in automotive factory up and running, 1875, enough after 1912, both BSA and Triumph were based in Coventry competing head to head mostly in the motorcycle market, and then, soon, the automobile market.

During BSA's manufacture of small open touring cars, which began in 1937 and ended in 1939, its production included several thousand, which made it a significant auto manufacturer and not just a flash in the pan motorcycle maker.

Unfortunately, few enthusiasts would know that today, due primarily to the simple fact that few BSA cars have survived. Marketed under the name BSA Cycle Ltd, its first prototype automobile was made in 1912, which led to the production of some 100 cars for the 1918-19 model years. By 1918, there were five different models being offered, yet it wasn't until the introduction of its model 10 in 1921 that the public really started to take notice. The success of the 10 led to a 1,200 cc two-cylinder engine, soon led to BSA's best known car of all, the Scout, introduced in 1935. The Scout was a sporty and stylish car that was unique in the fact that it had a spare wheel at the rear. The engine and gearbox were compact in size, with the fairly large cast transmission case positioned behind the engine.

At first, the four-cylinder, 1,200 cc engine had a 1,200 cc, then after the 1937

Period correct 1937 BSA Scout includes a speedometer with odometer on left and a clock on right. Instrument panel gives a highly stylish look as affected by touring car.



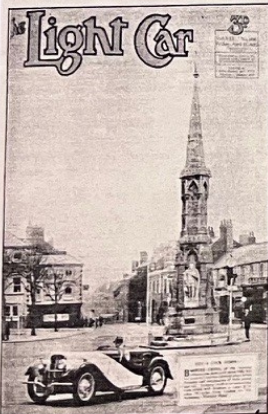


Graham Skillen tells the story of the only British designed and built front-wheel-drive production car of the thirties.

# The B.S.A. Scout

April 1985 has come and gone without remark. Let me change that! Fifty years ago in April 1935 the Birmingham Small Arms Company announced the launch of a new model, the Scout. This event is not perhaps worthy of public celebration, but nevertheless the Scout represents the sole British front wheel drive car in production during the thirties. I am, of course, referring to four wheelers and excluding that other example from the same stable, the BSA Three-wheeler.

I must also point out that B.S.A. were not the first British firm to catalogue a car with



The B.S.A. Scout was announced in April 1935, but while the new car made an appropriate appearance on the front cover of *The Light Car*, the caption writer concerned him or herself with the news that the replacement for Banbury's original criss had now been standing since 1642 — it appears to have worn well — and ignored the car altogether.

front-wheel-drive since Alvis had produced about 150 f.w.d. cars between 1928 and 1930. Furthermore, during the thirties the B.S.A.s were not the only front-wheel-drive car on the British market — Citroën's plant at Slough is said to have assembled 10,000 Traction Avants before the war.

That B.S.A. built a 'grown-up' three-wheeler is not surprising. What is interesting is the way that they did it with stillborn predecessors, a prolonged gestation period, and finally an attractive little car very different to the rest of their range.

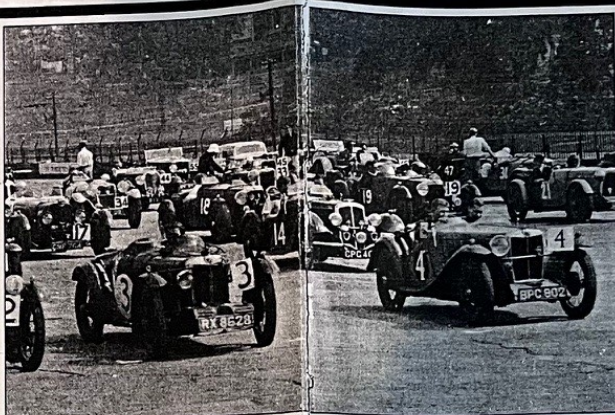
Throughout their existence B.S.A. had a reputation for good engineering based on solid principles, but sometimes lacking flair or imagination. At the end of the twenties the B.S.A. group were involved in three separate fields — they were still involved in the manufacture of small arms; they had owned Daimler since 1910 and were soon to acquire Lanchester; and another division made motorcycles. Between 1921 and 1924 they had produced a light car with an 1,100cc air-cooled vee-twin engine supplied by British Hotchkiss but stopped making B.S.A. cars between 1926 and 1929 when they introduced the BSA three-wheeler powered by their own version of the Hotchkiss engine.

The strategy behind this move was to attract those looking for cheap motoring and particularly those wishing to make the transition from a motorcycle and sidecar. The ploy was successful since the car outsold all other three-wheelers put together during the period 1923 to 1936.

In an attempt to extend the market the three-wheeler had enjoyed, a four-wheeled version of the tricycle was introduced in September 1931. This was called the B.S.A. FW 32 and amounted to little more than the provision of a two-wheeled, dead axle at the rear of the otherwise little changed three-wheeler design.

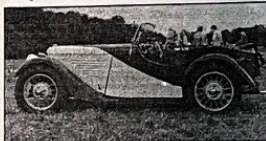
The public has always had reservations about three-wheelers since the very early days of motoring but merely adding a fourth wheel to the existing design was apparently not enough and the FW 32 failed miserably.

Within a year B.S.A. management had reconsidered their ideas and produced a



"proper" front-wheel-drive car, the T9, in July, 1932. The design owed much to the f.w.d. van B.S.A. had introduced in February, 1932 but it was not a success — not more than about 300 were built, and those sold slowly over a period of about a year.

The B.S.A. T9 had a heavy four seater body not enhanced by fussy bumpers and an ill-considered front apron and it was towed along by a 9hp four cylinder side valve engine which gave only marginal performance. However, that same engine was soon to revitalise the B.S.A. three-wheeler where, with half the weight to pull, it provided an altogether more acceptable power to weight ratio.



A surviving B.S.A. Series 1 Scout showing its attractive lines and how they were accentuated by a black and ivory livery on many of the earlier cars. This car should have its spare wheel in position behind the fuel tank.

Surprisingly, having had two attempts to extend the range to include four-wheelers go awry within a year, B.S.A. gathered themselves for a third try — perhaps, by now, they had a better idea of what was required.

In the early thirties there were two types of sports car — real ones and sporting versions of the mass produced saloons. The former were expensive, amongst the cheapest example in 1935 being an MG P type Midget at £222 and a Singer Le Mans at £375; the saloon derivatives were cheaper, for example a Nippy cost about £130 but lacked exclusivity. The B.S.A. Scout, when introduced, filled a niche not previously exploited as it was a cheap 'sporting' car, selling for £149.10.0, a figure carefully aimed at 10/- below the magic £150.

I use the word 'sporting' advisedly as in no

and-aft engine, the 'in vogue' slab tank with spare astern, cut-away doors, and a striking two-tone black and ivory colour scheme.

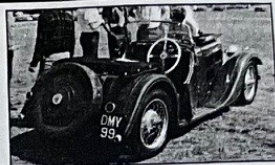
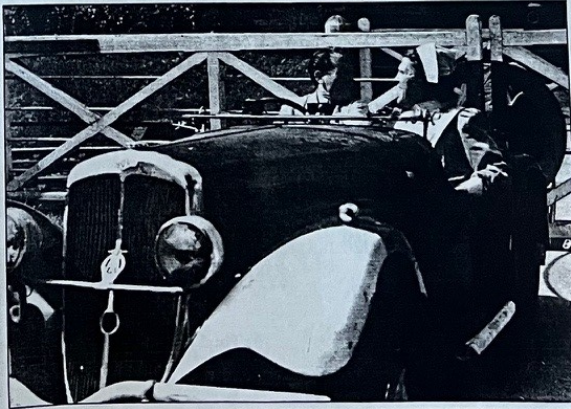
The three-wheeler heritage was very evident, the mechanical arrangements for the front half of the car being virtually identical. This meant that the weight saving inherited from the three-wheeler helped the Scout's performance, but left it with small disadvantages such as a single differential brake drum at the front and awkward gear and handbrake levers. All these less than perfect aspects were amended at various stages in the model's lifetime.

As I've already mentioned the new 1936 models introduced at the 1935 Olympia show were a four-seater rouser and a fixed head two-seater coupe, supplementing the already popular two-seater which now had a 1204cc, 10hp engine. The handbrake was placed between the seats, a great improvement over the push on variety of the early cars. The 1937 Series 4 cars were the most successful versions, the models being basically the same as before, but with De-Luxe variations of each.

Detail changes included a revised dashboard and a more convenient gear lever but more significantly the single brake adjacent to their differential where it was prone to oil seepage had been discarded and there were now two outboard drums. For 1938 the brakes were revised again. The simple, conventional rod brakes had worked quite adequately but they now gave way to the Bendix self-servo arrangement — a questionable improvement. By contrast the change from 6v to 12v electrics was a distinct improvement.

For 1939 major changes were instituted. Although the engine capacity remained unchanged at 1204cc the crankshaft now ran in three bearings. The two bearing B.S.A. crankshaft was of healthy proportions and I

John Mills with "nurse" Will Hay in the Ealing Studios comedy, *"The Black Sheep of Whitehall"*. The film was made in 1941 and the car is a Series 1 Scout geared with "knock-on" wheel nuts which are not standard. The car is generally well used and the states of the reflectors suggests that blackout masks were virtually unnecessary. Photo: Ealing Studios.



The two-seater had all the visual ingredients MG and Singer found so popular — a spare wheel (boasting a cover in this case) slung behind an exposed slab fuel tank, cutaway doors, a big spring steering wheel and fold-flat screen with a long bonnet ahead of it. This is a Series 2 version and two rows of raked bonnet louvres replaced the horizontal louvres of the earlier cars.

have never heard of one breaking but other manufacturers had experienced problems and there was a contemporary trend towards more bearings in the pursuit of smoother running.

The Series 6 (1939) cars were outwardly identifiable by the adoption of "Easiclean" wheels and the track of the rear axle was increased — the B.S.A. four-wheelers had previously been crab-tracked and while the change gave the cars a more conventional appearance it almost certainly reflected the need for a more spacious rear seat for the tourers and closed versions. The B.S.A. was growing up and had to cater for a public which had higher expectations than their 1935 predecessors.

Finally in the spring of 1939 a Tickford-type drophead coupe was announced, but only fourteen were built before war stopped play. It was B.S.A.'s intention to introduce a 1940 model, the Series 7 with revised front suspension, but of course, many of the young sporting customers had Spitfires and Hurricanes to fly and the production line in Armoury Road, Small Heath, was turned over to the manufacture of Browning machine guns to arm them. The designer of the B.S.A. Scout, and the three-wheeler before it, was Mr F.W. Hulse and as the war approached his efforts were diverted to the design of an armoured Scout car. The connections here went further than the name as the armoured car was in essence two car front ends back to back. Look at a Daimler Scout car!

B.S.A. considered re-opening the Scout production line after the war but eventually decided against it, alas. Post-war austerity was dominant and the sporting car boom of later years was too difficult to foresee. With hindsight

(Continued)



A Series 1 B.S.A. Scout wearing the factory's fixed head coupe body. The quite attractive shape rather limited internal room and there was a noticeable weight penalty.



**CAR MAKE**

**B.S.A. SCOUT**

**MODEL & YEAR**

**6A SPORTS - 1939**

**OWNER**

**TREVOR PICKEN**

**HISTORY**

**REGISTERED 4 WEEKS BEFORE  
THE WAR THIS IS PERHAPS THE  
NEWEST B.S.A. CAR REMAINING.**

**FROM 1956 TO 1989 IT HAD  
ONE OWNER IN CALIFORNIA.**

**1203cc SIDE VALVE ENGINE.  
FRONT WHEEL DRIVE.  
3 SPEED GEARBOX.**

**PRICE NEW £168**

**EVENT PARTICIPATION**

**B.S.A. NATIONAL RALLY.  
1993.**

**CLUB MEMBERSHIP**

**B.S.A. FWD CLUB.**



APR 12 1999

164 Cottimore Lane  
Walton on Thames  
Surrey KT12 2BL  
Tel 01932 225270  
2nd April 1999

Alain Cerf  
3301 Gateway Centre Boulevard  
Pinellas Park  
Florida  
33782 USA

Dear Alain

It's very nice to hear from you again, but I am sorry to hear of your troubles with the scout. Before I suggested that you look at Trevor Pickens Scout I sought the opinion of several members as to what they thought it was like and the general concencius of opinion was that it was likely to be a good example of the marque. I am sorry to here that this does not appear to be the case. All we can do now is to try and get you back on the road as soon as possible.

To this end I looked up the available drawings for the fan and they are :-

38-109 Fan Bracket 1936 Export Scout  
38-112 Fan Blade 1936 Scout  
38-302 Fan Drive Case Rear Half S5  
38-313 Fan Blade Complete 1938 S5  
38-314 Fan Blade Only

Sadly the list is incomplete, but using the drawings available and the one from the parts manual, it should be possible without to much difficulty to make the missing drawings. The drawings are available from Tony Meade, 34 Delapre Cresent Road, Far Cotton, Northampton, NN4 8NH


Looking at the fan drawing I was interested to see that the fan is driven through a friction coupling that could be adjusted to slip at high RPM to save power. Having a fan chain driven is also very unusual.

I hope this information will help you out and if you feel there is anything else we can help you with please contact us.

Should you find yourself in England on the weekend of the 10th/11th July this year we would very much like to meet you at our National Rally being held at The Heritage Motor Centre, Gaydon, just off Junctoin 12 of the M40 Motorway.

This year is the 70th Anniversary of the introduction of the BSA front wheel drive car and we are hoping for a record turn out of cars, both restored and unrestored, runners and non runners. It would be wonderful if you could come over to see us and bring a car.

Yours Sincerly



SHRINK FILM EQUIPMENT

POLY

CERF

inc.

Trevor G. Picken  
Sequoia  
Tobacconist Road  
Minchinhampton  
Stroud, Glos GL6 9JJ

England

March 25, 1999

Dear Trevor,

I was disappointed with the Scout.

- The clutch did not work and could not work: the corks were too long and charred.

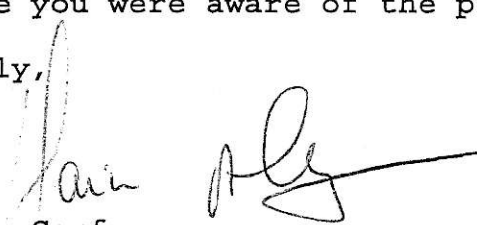
With the corks of the right dimension it is now working.

- The engine was losing power when it was hot. When the engine was rebuilt the head was slightly warped and was not milled.
- There was a leak at the 3rd cylinder.
- Timing chain is new but the gears are completely worn. We will replace the gears.
- The pulley to run the generator had two fingers which were broken and the pulley was glued (!). We will replace the pulley.

I never received a copy of the tape "Deal on wheels". I would enjoy to be interviewed for a sequel.

I assume you were aware of the problems when you sold the car.

Sincerely,

  
Alain A. Cerf



cc: Steve Mansfield - Barrie Atkinson - Barry Baker - Geoff Nunn

3301 GATEWAY CENTRE BOULEVARD - PINELLAS PARK, FLORIDA 33782 USA

(813) 578-5000 FAX (813) 578-1300

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**POLY**  
**CERF**

inc.

Geoff Nunn  
The Old Vicarage, The Ginnel  
Bardsey, West Yorkshire, LS17 9DU  
England

March 26, 1999

Dear Mr. Nunn,

I am a new member of the BSA Club.

I just bought 2 BSA.

The Scout series 6 is giving me trouble. You will find, enclosed, copy of a letter to Trevor Picken.

I need to buy :

- 1 head gasket,
- 1 gasket for intake and exhaust manifold,
- 1 pulley to drive the generator (38-292),
- a set of timing gear.

I also found in the parts manual a drawing for a fan assembly (copy enclosed). Do you know if some parts are available or, at least, some drawing?

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Alain A. Cerf

Encl: 2



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727 727

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POLY

CERF

inc.

Barry Baker  
164 Cottimore Lane  
Walton-on-Thames, Surrey KT12 2BL

England

March 26, 1999

Dear Mr. Baker,

I am a new member of the BSA Club.

I just bought 2 BSA.

The Scout series 6 is giving me trouble. You will find, enclosed, copy of a letter to Trevor Picken.

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Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Alain A. Cerf

Encl: 2



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(813) 578-5000

FAX (813) 578-1300

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SHRINK FILM EQUIPMENT

**POLY  
CERF**

inc.

Steve Mansfield  
62A Havers Lane,  
Bishops Stortford, Herts. CM23 3PD  
England

March 26, 1999

Dear Mr. Mansfield,

I am a new member of the BSA Club.

I just bought 2 BSA.

The Scout series 6 is giving me trouble. You will find, enclosed, copy of a letter to Trevor Picken.

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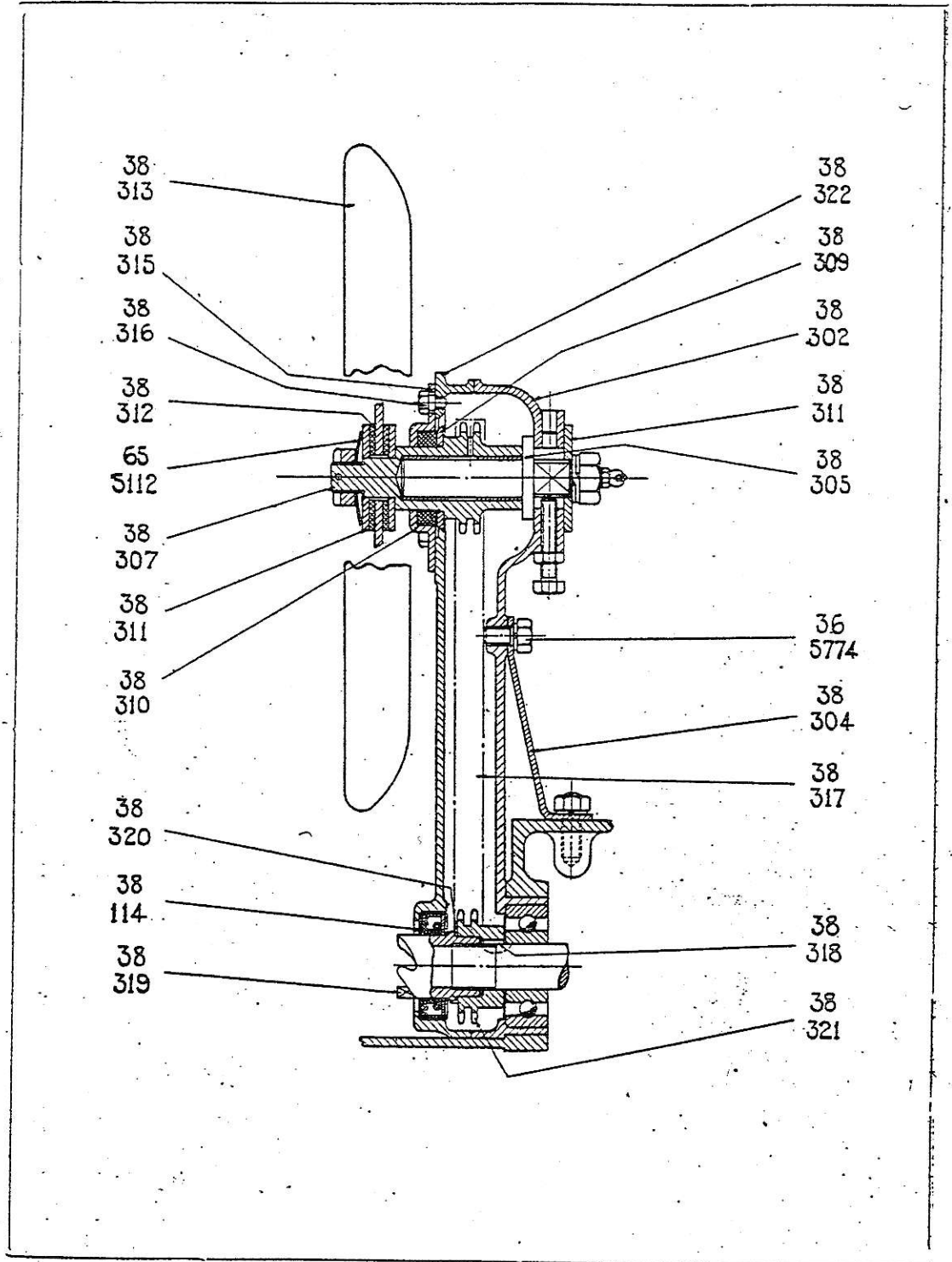
  
Alain A. Cerf

Encl: 2



3301 GATEWAY CENTRE BOULEVARD - PINELLAS PARK, FLORIDA 33782 USA

(813) 578-5000 FAX (813) 578-1300  
727 727



Section of Fan Assembly.

Telephones:  
01453-882495 (Home)  
01453-766396 (Day)  
01453-883382 (Joy)  
Fax: 01453-759630 (Office)

SEQUOIA,  
TOBACCONIST ROAD,  
MINCHINHAMPTON,  
STROUD,  
GLOS GL6 9JJ

5th January 1999

Mr. Alain A. Cerf,  
The President's Office,  
Polycerf Inc.  
3301 Gateway Centre Boulevard,  
Pinellas Park,  
Florida 33782,  
U.S.A.

Dear Alain,

The Compliments of the Season to you and your family.

I was clearing out some papers during the Christmas break and came across the enclose photographs of the B.S.A. which I thought would be better in your hands. They were all taken in 1990 in California and show the condition of the car when I first acquired it.

I hope you sorted out the minor problem with the condensor and that both the B.S.A.s have enhanced your most interesting collection. With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

  
Trevor G. Picken

SHRINK FILM EQUIPMENT

**POLY**

**CERF**

Peter Antony TILLET  
13 St. Andrews Road  
Cheddar  
Somerset BS27 3NE

England

July 7, 1998

Dear Peter,

You will find, enclosed, 2 photos of the BSA numbers.

Could you please take care of the change for us.

If you still have a photocopy of the original registration (with the wrong number) I would appreciate if you could send it to us.

Sincerely,



Alain A. Cerf

Encl: 2

Mr. PETER TILLET  
13 St. Andrews Road  
CHEDDAR,  
SOMERSET BS27 3NE  
ENGLAND

16 FEBRUARY 1998

Dear Alain,

Here are some photographs which I said I would send to you. I hope it will give you a much better idea of how the trike looks.

I have had the trike since 1978 and re-built it over two years. All the metalwork, chassis, wheels, front mudguards and bonnet are original, as is the windscreen. All mechanical parts are original, except the crankpin which was renewed to the original specification.

The engine, a twin cylinder air cooled version of 1021 cc has not been modified - Some owners have re-designed the oil feed but not me. The electrics are still operated by a 6 volt battery but both dynamo and starter motors have been re-wound.

Only two pieces of the original woodwork body survived - these being the fascia board holding the instrument panel, and the cross member behind the seat. Instruments are complete and working. In all it has travelled

between 10000 and 12000 miles since restoration.

The instruments comprise a speedometer with mileage recorder (new), ammeter, oil pressure gauge, ignition/lighting switch and a panel light.

There is a hand operated slow warning adjustment and advance/retard lever fitted to the steering column and a push button electric horn and lighting dip switch.

The headlights had to be replaced and these are black bodied with chromium bezels. To meet UK legislation double dipping bulbs have been fitted and the headlight also incorporates a sidelamp. Two lights are fitted to the rear and brake stop lights are included. A new hood and sidescreens are fitted and there is an old tonneau cover. The vehicle is currently fitted with 4.50 x 19 tyres on 3.50 x 19 wheel rims as this gives a much better ride than 3.50 x 19, but I have started to include a 4.00 x 19 as a spare (new) and was going to eventually replace all the tyres with 4.00 x 19.

A good steady reliable ride is obtained at between 40 and 45 mph and fuel consumption is about 30 miles to the gallon. Oil consumption is minimal.

I have a collection of spares which includes the original gear box/diff unit which was re-built some time ago and just needs unbolting into the trike, but it is running very well on the spare I fitted!

I also have a collection of Club magazines going back 20 years almost, original handbooks and copies of pages from magazines, plus photographs, all of which I would be prepared to sell with the vehicle.

My asking price for all this is £6350. If there is any other information you require please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely

~~Fetes~~  
Fetes

over the years, the vehicle has won a number of trophies - these could be included.

P.S. If you decide not to proceed, please return the enclosed photo's.

MAY - 8 1999

Mr. A.A.Cerf.  
POLY CERF Inc.  
3301 Gateway Centre Boulevard,  
Pinellas Park,  
Florida 33782  
USA

34 Delapre Crescent Road,  
Far Cotton,  
NORTHAMPTON  
NN4 8NH  
ENGLAND

Dear Alain,

Re: 1939 BSA SCOUT CHAIN DRIVEN FAN ASSEMBLY

Thank you for your enquiry about the fan assembly used on Series 5 & 6 Scouts. Please find enclosed copies of all of the drawings I hold for the fan assembly, which unfortunately does not include the front of the housing, but it should be possible to get pretty close from the other parts. If you are intending to have a complete unit made, it is probably worth contacting Steve Mansfield to see if anyone else would be interested, as this should bring the unit cost down. Please note that although the material specifications are different, these are only very minor differences in steel composition, and all come in the general category of Mild Steel.

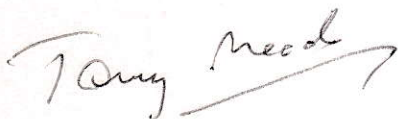
The drawings enclosed are:

38-9075	Fan Assembly	70p
-313	Fan Blade	70p
-302	Casing Rear	70p
-304	Steady Bracket	15p
-305	Fan Spindle	15p
-306	Spindle Assembly	15p
-307	Fan Carrier & Sprocket	15p
-308	Bearing Bush	15p
-309	Thrust Washer	15p
-310	Felt Washer	15p
-311	Disc Washer	15p
-312	Friction Disc	15p
-314	Oil Seal	15p
-315	Dust Cover	15p
-316	Dust Cover Bolt	15p
-317	Duplex Chain	15p
-319	Starting Dog	15p
-320	Starting Dog Lock Washer	15p
-321	Layshaft Sprocket	15p

£4-50 + Airmail Cost

Please make cheque for payment to A. Meade, NOT the BSA Club

Yours faithfully,



Tony Meade