

# Moss Motoring

**WHY WE DRIVE SALE!**  
& SUPERCHARGERS ON SALE

ISSUE 2, 2014

LE MANS 1955  
DISSECTING A DISASTER



**BONNEVILLE  
OR BUST**

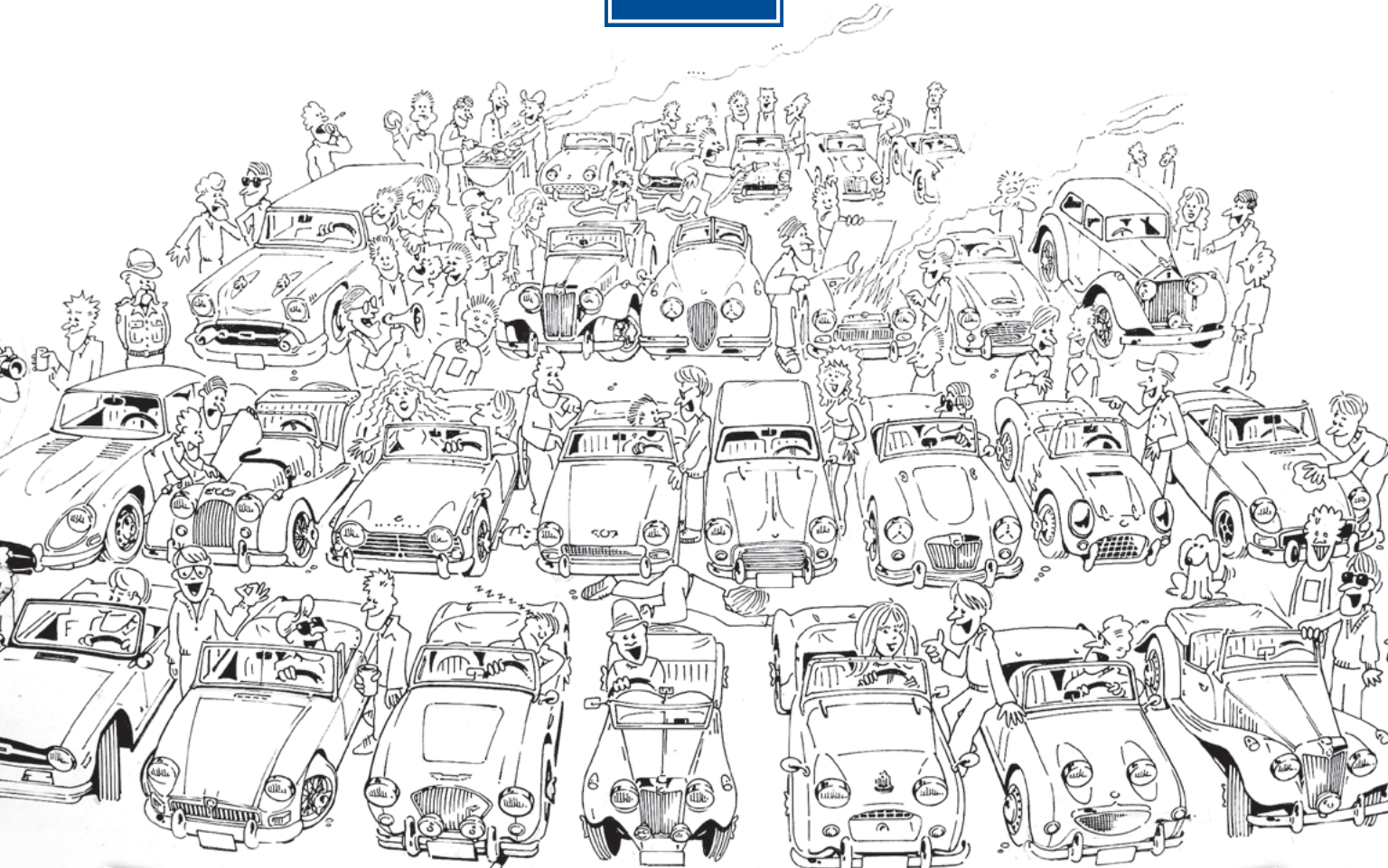
[www.MossMotoring.com](http://www.MossMotoring.com)

**moss**



# WHY DO WE DRIVE?

moSS



# MOTOR FEST

Join us in Virginia this time next year!

**June 6, 2015**—our first ever full-scale event at the East Coast facility in Petersburg. More details coming soon!

**WHATEVER YOUR REASON**  
**WE HAVE PARTS FOR YOU ON SALE**

See the Center Insert for  
Savings on Hundreds of Parts

Valid 5/19-6/20/2014

# Moss Motoring



**Two Roads  
Out of Wendover**  
The sequel to the Salt Flats  
speed saga.  
4

**Power Corrupts?**  
Engine builder, Tom Colby,  
makes a beast of a Bugeye.  
8

**6-Pack Ponderings**  
What do you get when TR6  
guys discuss gender roles?  
11

**Tragic Victory**  
The story behind Le Mans'  
deadliest crash.  
16

## On the Cover:

The Pittsburg Vintage Grand Prix traces a stunning and challenging road course. Photo by Bill Atterbury.  
Read the full story on page 25.





# WRITERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS WE WANT YOU!

Share your experience, wisdom and talent with British car enthusiasts across the country. Contributors whose work is selected for use in the magazine will receive Moss Motors Gift Certificates! Now, since there is no way to print all the terrific stories and tech articles that are sent to us, we will place relevant and first-rate submissions on MossMotoring.com for all to enjoy and benefit. Sorry, submissions that are published online are not eligible for gift certificates.

[editor@mossmotors.com](mailto:editor@mossmotors.com)

The very best way to submit material is via email. Please attach digital photos at full size when possible. Film photographs and handwritten articles may be mailed to: Editor – Moss Motoring, 440 Rutherford St., Goleta, CA 93117

**Feels Like the First Time**  
Ever wonder what happened to that car rescued from Katrina?

22

**Pittsburgh Vintage**  
There is poetry in racing. And hay bales.

25

## \$200 Gift Certificates

Three to four-page stories and articles (approx. 1800 words). This includes: technical/restoration articles, historic accounts, Club and Event experiences, and anything that will inspire or entertain. Please include pictures for us to choose from—the more, the better.

## \$100 Gift Certificates

Cover and main feature photography. General interest stories. Medium length tech articles.

## \$50 Gift Certificates

Tech Tips. Cartoons/Illustrations. Humorous anecdotes. Odds-n-ends that help make Moss Motoring great.

Editorial contributions to Moss Motoring are welcomed, and should be emailed to [editor@mossmotors.com](mailto:editor@mossmotors.com) or mailed to Editor – Moss Motoring, 440 Rutherford St., Goleta, CA 93117.

Moss Motors assumes no responsibility for lost or damaged materials. Materials accepted are subject to such revision as required to meet the requirements of this publication. Unless otherwise specified, all correspondence will be considered for publication. All materials accepted become the sole property of Moss Motors, Ltd., which reserves the right to reprint/republish accepted materials.

© 2014 Moss Motors, Ltd.

Published by Moss Motors, Ltd.,  
440 Rutherford Street,  
Goleta, CA 93117  
800-667-7872

Publisher: *Robert Goldman*

Moss Motoring Editorial Team:

Editor: *David Stuursma*

Senior Editor: *Shawn Carlberg*

Creative Editor: *Tamara Cribley*

Website Designer: *Anne Ducale*

Staff Photographer: *Damon Schnepf*

Contributors credited individually





Robert Goldman



## THE OFFICIAL “ENGINE PULLING” TREE

“Drive my car while I shoot some video.” So said my friend, Jim Pesta, at the 40th Anniversary Collier Brothers Memorial Trophy race weekend at Watkins Glen. What he had in mind was sneaking in front of the racecar caravan heading to the center of downtown Watkins Glen. Lined up behind us were all the machinery in attendance for the race weekend, downtown festival, and re-creation of the original public road based race course.

Jim’s car was a very well used MG TF, equipped with bald tires and a transmission which stayed in gear so long as one held the selector lever firmly in place. Directly behind us was the 1948 MG TC of Denver Cornett, and the man himself. He and his car were participants in the 1948 Watkins Glen Grand Prix. Ahead, with lights flashing, was a sheriff’s cruiser, all set to lead us into town.

The grand prix re-creation is a magnificent party. In those days, the Dean of American Motorsports, Chris Economaki, was the event emcee. A long time SCCA flagman came over to give me personal instruction on how he would flag off the parade drive. After all, Jim and I were first in line, so we controlled the entire line of racecars.

But before all that, upon arrival at the original start/finish line in front of the county seat, we were accosted by the media. Surely, being first in line, we must have been driving a historic car...we told some terrible lies. During the re-creation, in spite of an admonition for everyone to stay in line and not race, we, being “official videographers,” moved freely back and forth among the line of racecars. It was one of those days one can only look back on with fond memories. I hope the media types never quoted us in their coverage.

While the memories of that weekend will never fade, some of them may have dulled a little, until

several months ago when an old friend called out of the blue. Yes, he remembered me sitting there in the pits consuming too much libation, and yes, I remembered helping a crew pull Bill Eberhardt’s MGB engine, using a rope and a tree limb. Don’t worry though, it was an official engine pulling tree.

The caller, Gary Harrision, reminded me it has been twenty years since that auspicious weekend, which of course means 2014 will be the 60th Anniversary Collier Brothers Memorial Trophy all-MG race. Perhaps it is time for a reboot. As luck will have it, THE TC, Al Moss’ pride and joy, will be on the eastern seaboard this summer. Sounds as though the planets are aligned.

There are many ways to distract oneself these days, but let’s face it, telling your friends via social software that you have just exited the bathroom is only one of them. The old analog way is to actually go somewhere and do something. Speaking of doing things, we’ve had folks telling us for years we should recreate the old British Car Festival we used to hold at Monty Roberts’ Flag Is Up Farm. Well, while that venue is not available these days, another one is. You may have seen the announcement of our very first Moss Motorfest, scheduled for June 6, 2015 at Moss in Virginia.

Robert (speaking of myself in the third person) may be a little too old to run around with a lampshade over his head, but given the right opportunity, and sufficient encouragement, one never knows what could happen at Motorfest. And for the record, Jim wasn’t an official videographer, so much as a fast and convincing talker. For a little preview of what could go laughably wrong at the Motorfest, come say hi at Watkins Glen in September. Fun and British cars never go out of style. *MM*

# TWO ROADS OUT OF WEND OVER

By Chris Conrad





**62** years ago, an MG Special was towed down this road from a service station in Wendover, where the car was stored and prepared. The car was the MG EX 135. The driver was Goldie Gardner. After checking into our hotel room in West Wendover on the Nevada side of the border, I chose to drive this short stretch of old road to the flats. I wanted to get a better sense of what it must have been like in 1952, when the EX 135 was towed to the salt.

That experimental car, built on a MG K3 Magnette chassis, was the first land speed racing MG to ever turn a wheel on the salt. With the support of the factory, and the installation of a XPAG engine to demonstrate to the American consumer the potential of MG sports cars, the expertly prepared EX 135 would take the flying 5-mile record of 189.506 mph. Not bad for a hot-rodded MG TD engine in a pre-war chassis.

So here I was, with my wife Kate and her nephew Nick Martin, towing my stock bodied MG Midget down this very stretch of road. Under the hood was an engine design that pre-dates the world conquering small block Chevy, a BMC 1275 destroked to 999cc, tuned to 95.1 hp at 8,000 rpm, ready to do battle.

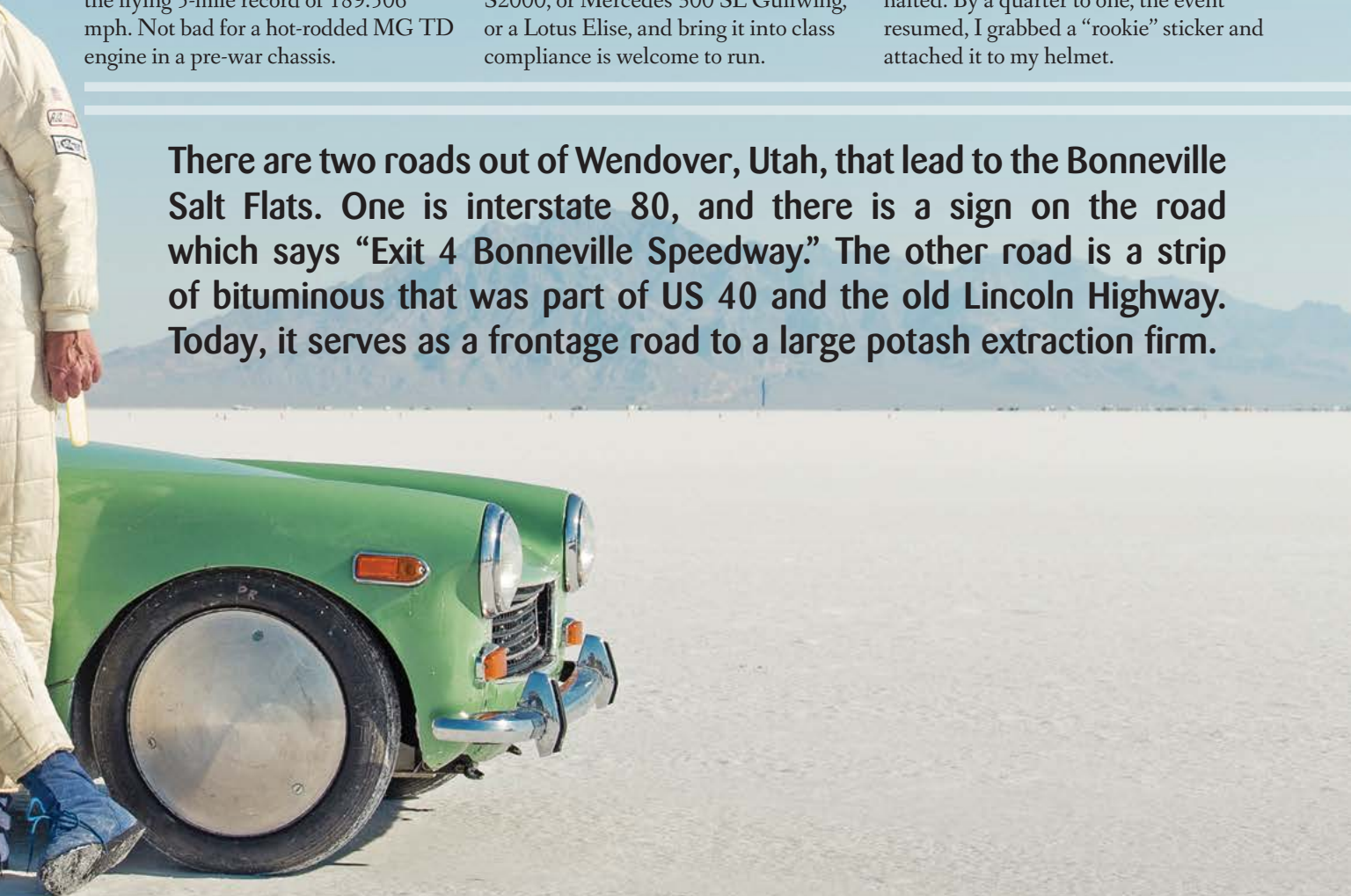
I was looking for some MG mojo. Goldie Gardner, George Eyston, Phil Hill, Stirling Moss—all had passed through this corridor to get to one of the strangest and most unforgiving landscapes on earth. Morris Garages and Austin-Healey held dozens of international records here in the 1950s—many still stand. And while this little detour was acknowledging MG's past, my quest is not one of nostalgia. My Midget runs in the Grand Touring class, and anybody willing to take a Miata, or a S2000, or Mercedes 300 SL Gullwing, or a Lotus Elise, and bring it into class compliance is welcome to run.

Bonneville is not vintage racing. This is timed trials. It's you against the clock. The salt doesn't care whether your car was created through CAD programs or chalked out on the floor of a barn. At Bonneville, what's relevant is what shows up. What's relevant is the time slip.

We arrived late on Saturday and set up our pit area. This would be the only time we would have to really take a look at some of the other cars and for Kate and me to catch up with some friends.

On Sunday, Nick and I elected to get rookie orientation done before we teched the car. Normally, this takes about an hour, but part of the orientation is observing other drivers and their procedures at the starting line. As is often the case at Bonneville, the breeze picked up, and racing was temporarily halted. By a quarter to one, the event resumed, I grabbed a "rookie" sticker and attached it to my helmet.

**There are two roads out of Wendover, Utah, that lead to the Bonneville Salt Flats. One is interstate 80, and there is a sign on the road which says "Exit 4 Bonneville Speedway." The other road is a strip of bituminous that was part of US 40 and the old Lincoln Highway. Today, it serves as a frontage road to a large potash extraction firm.**



We pulled the Midget into the tech area and were gratified to find “Kiwi Steve,” a tech inspector with whom I traded numerous e-mails during the past several years. From those conversations, Steve had a very good idea what he was about to see. Toward the end of a very thorough inspection, I was told to get my suit on and prepare for bail out. This is not so much a timed test as it is a reassurance to the tech inspectors that you have a plan of escape in the event that something unfortunate should happen.

This was also the event that so many of my friends on the salt had been gathering to witness.

It’s no secret that the MG Midget is dwarfed by a modern MINI. It’s also no secret that I am 6’5” in my stocking feet. Gathered around were easily a dozen onlookers, cameras in hand, waiting to see something akin to a Ringling Brothers routine—a cross between an illusionist’s lady-in-the-box trick and a clown car gag.

Strapped in with a 5-point harness, removable steering wheel secured, helmet and HANS device in place, safety net up, window latches secured and door closed, Steve yelled, in an accent that only a New Zealand expatriate could muster, “YOU’RE ON FAAAAR!”

I feigned turning off the fuel and ignition, pantomimed pulling the cables on the fire suppression system, unlatched the steering wheel, tossing it to the passenger side, unlatched the seat belt, dropped the safety net, pulled the cable to the window latches, threw the door open, and flopped out of the car like a Raggedy Ann doll—to a round of laughter and applause. Kate came up to me afterwards and said, “That was funny.”

It probably did look funny, but we passed tech.

We pulled the car around to track #4—the short rookie track intended for slower cars and limited testing. Once again the wind had picked up and the tracks closed down. It became clear that even if the line started moving again, I wasn’t going to get a run in that day. The event was officially called at 6:00, and we left the car in line. Despite being the fastest sport on earth, sometimes, it’s the slowest.

## THE RIPPING LOUD MIDGET

Monday morning was cool, sunny and still when Nathan the instructor came up to me. Without a prompt, I said, “I’ll be taching it to 6200 rpm which should be 100 mph, and pulling out at the 1-mile marker.” Nathan appreciates it when you pay attention in class.

I was pleased with the outcome. While the engine is quite peaky and barely idles below 3,000

rpm, I was able to get the car launched, and wound it up through the gears, shifting at about 8500 in first and second. The rebuilt transmission shifted smoothly, and near as I could tell, there were no scary noises to be detected over the chainsaw-like roar of the short-stroke 5-port. At the 1-mile marker, I was running smoothly at 6200 rpm—giving me a speed of 102.464—a little over what I thought, but not so far off to require a re-test. We returned to the start line with the time slip, showed it to Nate, and was informed I could pull my rookie sticker from the helmet.

I was ready to compete but the wind had picked up again. Hurry up and wait.

In 90-degree heat on a reflective pan of white and a stiff breeze wicking your sweat, dehydration can hit you before you even realize it. Nick, who used to captain the Trek mountain bike team, made it abundantly clear—“If you feel thirsty, it’s probably too late.” And when you’re about to climb into an enclosed car the size of a Weber grill in a quilted fire suit, keeping one’s physical body in equilibrium is paramount. Every time I turned around either he or Kate were shoving a bottle of water at me.

By 1:30 the line started moving. About four cars back from the starting line, I suited up. Nick helped me in the car, checked my belts, pulled up the net, clamped the windows into place, and gave the top two solid hits. I fired it up two car lengths back, getting the BMC 5-port up to temp, and rather enjoying the incredible racket this car is able to produce. Even seasoned salt flats veterans were covering their ears.

At 2:28 in the afternoon, I passed between the 2 and the 3-mile markers at 115.886 MPH. No stress, no issues.

Nick and Kate met me on the return road—for safety reasons, you are required to tow vehicles back to the starting line. We stopped at the timing booth to pick up the slip. I was less than 6 miles per hour off of the class record of 121.779 mph, and I hadn’t even learned to properly drive the car yet. We pulled back around and got into line again.

5:08 pm—with a little more confidence and a cleaner shift technique, we pushed it to 116.698.

By this time, many cars were in impound. Folks were getting hungry and calling it quits for the day, and I felt a bit worn, but Nick insisted on one more pass before they closed down the track. “We’re here to race,” he said. “Get your suit on.”

I wasn’t expecting anything other than a practice run. The ambient temperature remained at a stubborn 90 degrees, and as the heat persists during the day, water from beneath the surface



tends to percolate up through the salt, making the track soft. The adjusted altitude reading, which takes into account air density and temperature, was 7145 feet—we dynoed the engine at 680 feet—so I was likely down 10 horsepower or more.

Nobody was more surprised than me when I read 118.069 mph. Tomorrow morning, I knew the air density would be more favorable to the little motor, so we packed it in for the day, grabbed tacos and went to our hotel with high expectations—and in dire need of hot showers.

## WHY WE RACE

The first cars to run in the morning are the cars that exceeded class records the day before. These cars are impounded and the next day are permitted two hours of prep time and are paraded to the starting line under the watchful eyes of the officials. No other racing will occur until those in impound have had their opportunity to back up their runs from the day before. When a backup run is made, the two numbers are averaged, and if that average is in excess of the standing record, subject to class specific certification, you have an SCTA-BNI record.

Communications between the officials is handled through CB radio, and there is a low

wattage broadcast provided for spectators. While waiting in line, there was a bit of buzz about an accident on course one—one of the two long courses for cars faster than 175 mph. I was consumed with getting the Midget ready, so I didn't pay a lot of attention—most accidents on the salt are quickly and readily handled by the safety crews.

I suspect Nick knew who was involved—a friend of mine, Bob Steele—but if he did, he didn't let me in on the details. Bob's car was destroyed, and while he made a complete recovery from the bumps and bruises, if I had known, I likely would have had a tough time driving that day. Having managed a race team before, Nick knows about “head space” and the effects personal distractions can have on a competitor's performance. Nick kept me to task, and I'm pretty certain that's how Bob would have done it, too. I may have removed my “rookie” sticker, and despite my performance with the Midget on Monday, I'm not a true competitor yet.

The conditions were ideal for a swift drive. The temperature was 71 degrees, the coolest temp I would see all week, and the wind was tacking at one mph—virtually inconsequential.

*continued on page 21*



Read part one of Chris' story at  
[MossMotoring.com/reaching-for-the-top](http://MossMotoring.com/reaching-for-the-top)



# POWER ...CORRUPTS?

By Tom Colby, Owner, Speedwell Engineering

**IN THE RIGHT HANDS  
A SUPERCHARGER  
IS A BEAUTIFUL THING**



Bugeye owner,  
Craig Ludwin

Photo by  
Mike Upham



*It's rare in life when one gets the opportunity to build a dream car and get paid to do it. The only parameters I had to work around were body and interior color. The body, a dark, dark blue-ish purple that is almost black—I would have picked myself. And the silver interior I certainly don't mind at all. Quite honestly the rest of the build was, "Tom, do your thing."*

**S**o far I've done two Sprites for Craig. This second one was finished at my shop several years ago, but with Craig, "finished" is a moving target. "Yeah, we already pretty much have the two baddest A-Series powered Sprites in existence, but...?" and he would ask about fuel injection, turbocharging, you name it, etc.

I did not see any big value in putting fuel injection on a Sprite. Not a huge gain in power. Turbocharging: For a guy wanting a turn-key, hassle-free performance modification I didn't feel he would like it. Too many drawbacks, namely, the heat and exhaust system issues. While these can be overcome, once again I felt it would take too many hours of experimenting to get it right. And then Craig said to me, "What about the Moss supercharger?" I said to Craig, "You know what, if you want to go to the next level let me do some research, but I think the Moss unit is the way to go."

Many moons ago I had THE test mule engine for the Moss supercharger in my shop. I remember vividly taking Robert Goldman's "Flaming Cockroach" Midget on a much too short test drive and thinking, "Gawdamn, that's quite impressive!" I can't even remember how long ago that was; I'm sure Goldman could since he told me I took way too long to build it. ["True," said Robert, "but to Tom's credit that engine is bulletproof."]

Speedwell has been doing business with APT in Riverside, CA for a gazillion years (that's a lot!) and I spoke with both owner, David Anton, and his man of all hats, Phil, about my quest. The engine already in Craig's car was basically a de-tuned vintage racing 1275cc. It had .060" pistons, Weber 45 DCOE on a Manifold inlet manifold and LCB exhaust header. APT supplied us with a Stage 1 supercharger camshaft and a Pocket Ported Big Valve head; this dropped us right down to an allowable 8.7:1 compression ratio. The really tough part of all this was doing it on a perfect car with a perfect engine compartment. We can't scratch, chip or nick a damned thing!

This car is so subtle in appearance that many of its customizations go unnoticed by most folks, although there are a few exceptions, like the rollbar support that gently "falls" back into the rear bodywork, and the "completely stock" tachometer that inexplicably goes to 8000 rpm. The Moss blower fit right in with this understated theme. It's simply attractive and unbelievably effective hardware.

Though perhaps unconventional, I decided to pull the engine and install the supercharger with it on a stand. Once the blower was strapped on, I could attach the starter motor and crank it over to make sure the drive belt and all ancillaries lined up and functioned properly. Once happy with the mock-up, it was install time.

Placing a gleaming engine into a perfectly painted bay is more challenging knowing your customer will put on his reading glasses during visitation. Yes, I consider them visitation rights. You see, while I may not actually own any of these special cars, in my own twisted mind they are actually mine, but I allow these "other people" to keep them at their homes and drive them because I'm such a nice guy. I've on more than a few occasions accused customers of fiddling with their own cars, damn it to hell. I do realize how irrational I can be, but what can I do? I'm emotionally attached. All joking aside, this is my soul we're talking about. Somehow a majority of my customers actually end up being my friends. It's the odd bond of motorheads.

I know the phrase "light this candle" should be reserved for astronauts, but that's what I say whenever starting a rebuilt engine for the first time. I don't bother attempting to get a pop or backfire, once I get oil pressure, ALL of my engines are 100% ready to fire on the first kick, and I take it very, very personally if they don't. For some reason, and it doesn't matter if it's 7am or 3pm, my engines are NEVER ready to light until it's dinner time and I have to call home and say I'm running late. Seriously, this happens more than 90% of the time.

And I get nervous about it too, not about the possibility of a major problem, but the prospect of it not starting immediately. The nervousness sets in, I start puttering around, I go wash my hands—for some reason a fresh engine has to have clean hands—I get the timing light out (I static time the engine to where I know it will start), I run the fuel pump. I always tap, tap, tap the float bowls to make sure they're not stuck. I know my heart rate is up. It sounds lame but that's the way I am. I wash my hands again, make myself a drink (always Rum & Coke), and light up a smoke.

Let's go, baby. Ignition. Fuel Pump. Starter. BANG. HELL YEAH! My first A-series supercharger build, and it lit right up.

One of the perks of doing what we do is getting to drive some spectacular cars. The flip side of this perk is the responsibility involved. If anything happens to a completed, ready to deliver car, I am just so up the creek, so to speak. Fortunately, nothing terrible in all these years. Close calls to be sure. Too close. After the successful start up, I drove the Sprite home for the night to shake it out and pack it up the next day.

So it's another of those typical perfect southern California days. Saturday late morning, I roll the Sprite out of the garage—something I always do—for some reason I like pushing sports cars silently from the garage into the sunshine and fresh air, watching the light hitting the curves of the body and glinting off the chrome making me squint a little. I walk around, and while admiring the car, running through my head anything that might need checking.

I like to start these cars with the bonnet up, ignition on, hearing the fuel pump run, putting my hand on the throttle linkage, and hitting the switch. The smell of fuel, the throaty rumble, most folks these days really miss out on this stuff. For me, it's what I live for.

Plenty of fuel. Won't have to stop on the way to the shop. 16.2 miles, put her on the trailer, and it's over. Once the temp gauge moves that's when I close the garage door. I hop in, making sure I don't pinch the tonneau cover in the door, latch the seatbelt and tug it tight. "Straight to the shop, Tom. No stopping anywhere for anything. Straight to the shop, don't be stupid." These occasions are very special for me and I enjoy taking my time. After all, I don't get to keep them.

16.2 miles and it's over. As I'm headed up Topanga Canyon Blvd. I see two 20-something kids in a hot-rodded 80s Mustang GT. Not a drag car, it's a Ricky Road Racer set-up. It's lowered, wide rubber, stainless dual exhaust, and it's a nicely done, clean car. Reminded me of myself as a kid with my '72 Mazda RX2. They're checking the Sprite out as we go from light to light. Of course, they have no idea at all what this tiny little car is.

"What year is it?" 1959. At the next light—"Cool, what size engine is in it?" A little 1.3 litre, I reply. You could tell that, as usual, a Sprite, supercharged or not, will never get any respect, not from kids with a V8. Unless...

I start mumbling to myself, "Kids please don't turn left on Santa Susana Pass Road, please don't turn left, I can't risk teaching you two a lesson." Yep, they turned left. I had no choice. I had to show them that this tiny little 55 year old car was going to pummel their ass. I learned and honed my driving skills on this short, famous stretch of road and they were in for it. Actually, a lot more than they would ever want

to be. They did exactly what I knew they'd do, too. I stayed about four car lengths off of them; the road splits to two lanes for about a quarter mile and then back to one. Remember, I know this road like very few do, and I'm in a Sprite, a model of car that I've spent my lifetime building, restoring and racing. These turns are all in the 50-60 mph range, either a cliff on one side, or the side of a mountain on the other—a quick right, quick left, and then a decreasing radius right while at the same time going back to one lane. The kid's next mistake is he went for the left lane, which will put me on the inside when we go back to one lane. The huge amount of low rpm torque from the addition of the supercharger allowed me to just roll into the throttle and remain side by side coming into the first right, and we're still shoulder to shoulder into the left turn but he's just screwed now. Coming into the decreasing radius right, it's THE Sprite type of turn, I just keep on accelerating because I know he can't pull this off. I wait to see his nose dip from braking, count to three, then just hammered the Sprite's brakes. Well, the Mustang did pass me all right. With all four brakes locked up. The kids stopped and got out of the car—probably to pay witness to their fresh skid marks—while I coasted a ways. It was my duty; I had to be the wise guy. I flipped a U-turn and as I rolled by I calmly said, "Those decreasing radius turns are a bitch, ain't they?"

Nothing in the world like a Sprite, tons of power, and a tight road. *MM*

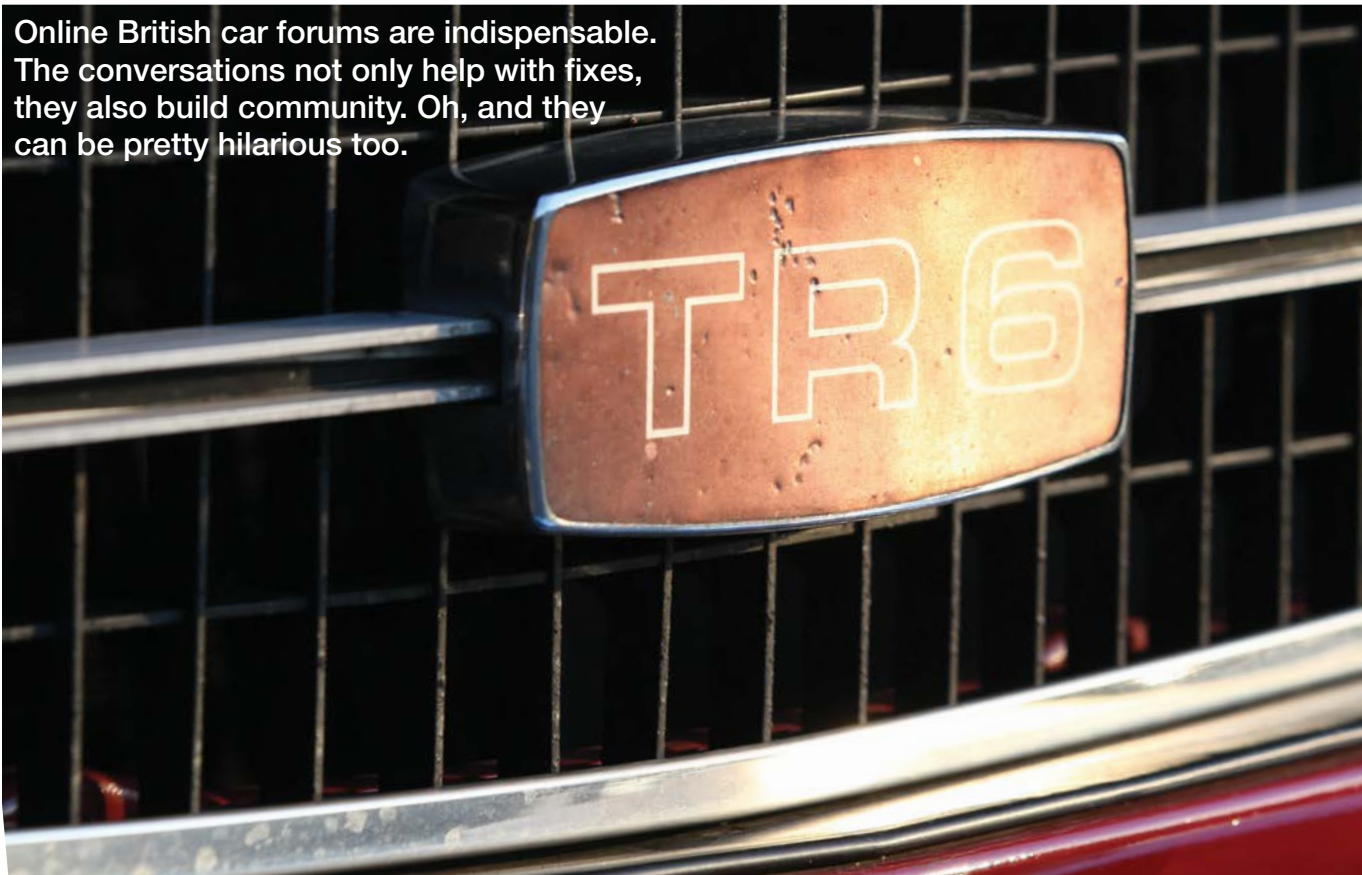




# 6-PACK Ponderings

Deep thoughts from the lighter side of the forum

Online British car forums are indispensable. The conversations not only help with fixes, they also build community. Oh, and they can be pretty hilarious too.



## IfmTR4

Lou Mijares



I am seeking to understand why some of you have named your cars after a guy or refer to it as a he? We named ours early on as Lilred (sounds better than Little Red Bastard) but she's always been a she. Oh by the way, a female can be a bastard too. 😊

To my son Michael and I it was clear from the beginning what we were dealing with. From the subtle hints of problems that, if left unattended, festered until all hell broke loose, to the temperamental mood swings, to the constant need for attention and propensity for shiny stuff. The messing with your mind in the middle-of-night runs. The just the right amount of adjustment

needed—too rich and too lean is just a 1/4 turn away, like those two degrees on the thermostat battleground. I bet some of you can think of more examples, but I'll leave it there.

The sun came out this afternoon and the weather dictated that Michael and I take her take her out for a proper ride to keep the fluids in all the right places and the rubber from getting flat sided. We took her out on the town for some Honky Tonkin'. Treated her a little rough, but she sorta likes that every now and then. She loves going topless in the cool weather and runs like a dream.

So 'splain away fellas, inquiring minds want to know.

## Poolboy

Ken Dolhonde



I guess it's the ruggedness of the TR6 that makes me think masculine. I'm trying to think of a sports car that I've owned that wasn't. Maybe the P1800 Volvo. Neither of the Jaguars, they were just too rambunctious. The Bugeye Sprite could go either way; rugged too, but it was sure cute. The Porsche...no way that was a fräulein. So I guess it would come down to a Sprite and a Volvo that had some feminine tendencies, at least while I had them.

My car is definitely a she. Her official name is Guinevere but I call her Gweny for short. She is faithful, beautiful and sweet. She's never left me stranded and has always gotten me home safely. I know she is a female because once a month her spotting increases for several days.

### Whooshka

Chuck LaBarbera

My wife would not approve of me spending so much time with another woman. So it's me and my proper British friend in the garage only...

He answers to Winston.

### A Brit in Bama

Keith Norrie



Well...as you know Lou, my car, Trevor, is male. He just is. I think it comes down to the angular lines and the chopped Kamm tail, which are not in the least bit feminine.

Trevor is definitely a fun-loving, beer-swilling, rugby-playing, woman-chasing scamp, eager to go out in all temperatures, and (after his recent 6-month stint in rehab) ready for a good time at the drop of a hat.

### RatRidgeRoadster

Jim Herter

My car is not gender specific, It's a machine... a well oiled machine that sometimes purrs like a kitten and at other times roars like a lion. At a glance I can't really detect the gender of a cat so I must maintain that it's just a machine, and a fine machine it is. Some would say it runs like a sewing machine and I don't know of them having a gender identity, so I still maintain it's just a machine.

I usually just call it the Ol' TR. 😎

### Tadmcd

Tad McDonald



PD is, of course, a fellow of some repute, direct offspring of PD Eastman, creator of probably the greatest sports car tome ever inked and illustrated: "Go Dog, GO!"

My BBQ is named Buggy for "Back Up Grill System - Yard" (truthfully, I wanted to name it Danica cuz it's on wheels and is way, way hot...but my brother-in-law named it Buggy and I didn't have the heart to break his little heart since he was very drunk at the time and seemed pleased as punch).

Speaking of my brother-in-law, he has one of those bullet heaters in his garage named Bennie P. Shaboom (I can't for the life of me remember why). It's got P.I.S.A.S. "Pre-ignition Start Alert System"...essentially an old bicycle bell and rubber horn we sound prior to turning it on; anything within 10 feet of its business end would otherwise receive an unwelcome surprise.

My boat is, of course, a gal, named for my mom and her mom. Plus, I mean, boats are gals. It's one of those universal rule things. My daughter's nickname is "Fred" which is pretty funny when you think about it (well, you wouldn't, but I do) because she married a guy whose name is Fred[erick]. Works well when I shout, "Hey Fred. Can you grab me a beer next time you're up?" Always seems someone named Fred drops one by my chair.

### SCMCGO

Scott McGowan

IMHO, anything that:

- Needs to be washed twice a day
- Gets covered up tightly at night
- Requires a good rubdown
- Begs for attention, even when a great ball game is on TV
- Is pleasing to the eye
- Purrs like a kitten when tuned properly
- Insists on being taken out on Friday night
- Doesn't like being wet
- And, requires occasional servicing 🙄

Has got to be FEMALE!



## Ima68tr

Tom Freemont



Mine are *Valley Girl* (driver, so named for the trip to Monument Valley in '09) and *Jaqueline the Ripper* (concours car, named after my mother, and for how she gets down the road).

In fact I never think of them in terms of gender, but as faithful toys that give back in spades what I've put into them.

## Tr6harris

Ken Harris



I guess my wife should answer since she named the car way back when. I think she told me she named it as "Mr. T", basically short for Mr. TR6. In my experience the moniker certainly fits.

*Tenacious* – when it runs well. Cruises when we want it to, and attacks upon command. 😊

*Temperamental* - when things aren't quite right, and it will not let you off until it is.

*Terrier* - Like those dogs that are small but don't think or act like they are. 😊

*Tough* - The little engine is. It'll run with fuel, spark, and time anywhere near. Maybe not well, but it'll run and will tear itself up before it quits...(amazing).

Mr. T certainly fits our car... 😊😎😊

## Litespud

Dave Carroll

Nigel – as in "Chocks Away, Nigel!!!" Clearly a bloke—drinks too much, farts in the morning, still acts like he's a sprightly youth, despite being, in reality, a rather creaky 41 year old. It was the most British name my girls could come up with. Since I was spending their college fund on it, I thought they should have naming rights. 😊

## Tush

Definitely Female...I often give my cars a little pat on the dash when they get me home safely after a trip (particularly a longer one), or have got me through some bad weather (coming home from Townsend, TN after a TRials comes to mind). Of course, the little pat is usually accompanied with a "that's my girl" type comment...

## Plumcrazy

Craig Bentley

I really don't know. Doesn't have a name. I looked under the tail for any positively identifying features, didn't find anything. It burps, farts, complains and sometimes does some very irrational things (drives too fast, takes chances, runs with scissors). I hope it's a dude cuz with some of the names I've called it I'm going to hell if it's a she...

## Rellic

Brian Tomlinson

"She" is a thing of beauty, a pleasure to look at, drawing smiles of admiration from men, women and children. "She" tempts onlookers to touch Her, "She" handles the road like a dancer on Her toes floating gracefully to the sound of her own distinct Symphony of Cylinders.

I cannot describe the '67 Malibu SS 396 4-gear the same way as it growls, snarls, barks and pulls itself along the road desperately hanging on to the corners by sheer brute force and ignorance. The Malibu is one hell of a Car but "It" shuffles to a different tune.

I equate grace to be feminine and force to be masculine. To me our TR is a very graceful ride.

## Rfweidner

Ray Weidner

My car has no sex...but thank God I still do! 😊

6-PACK is the world's largest club dedicated exclusively to the TR250 and TR6, with over 900 members and thousands of forum participants. The [www.6-pack.org](http://www.6-pack.org) forum provides owners and wanna-be owners with buying tips, repair instruction, parts reviews, life lessons and a whole lot more.

6-PACK hosts a once a year gathering called the Trials. This year Trials will be held October 9-12 in Oxford, Mississippi, with a car show, drives through small towns straight out of a Faulkner novel, and all the Southern charm and food you can imagine. Visit [www.2014trials.com](http://www.2014trials.com).

# BRITISH SLANG

...as described by the authors (all getting \$25 Moss credit!) and judged by you. For the full list of submissions: [MossMotoring.com/british-slang](http://MossMotoring.com/british-slang).

- 1 **Knackered:** Tired, broken, done for  
*I had to push that MG up this hill—I'm absolutely knackered. That's why I drive a Triumph.*  
—Keith Norrie
- 2 **A dog's breakfast:** A complete mess  
*I made a dog's breakfast of my Big Healey tri-carb tune up..*  
—Bill Allan
- 3 **Bob's your uncle:** An expression at the end of simple instructions; similar to "thats it," or "there you are"  
*To find the pub, go one mile, turn left, go one half mile and Bob's your uncle.*  
—Bill Marcus
- 4 **Fiddly:** A repair on a car that takes more time or work than anticipated.  
*I recently removed the dash from my Spitfire. What a fiddly job that was.*  
—Harry Siegel
- 5 **Cheeky:** Smart Aleck  
*He's a cheeky little twit!*  
—Wes Barbour
- 6 **Blimey:** Oh my god  
*Blimey mate, give me a break.*  
—Stanley Breita
- 7 **Gobsmacked:** Amazed  
*I was gobsmacked when I switched on my Lucas headlights and they worked!*  
—Missy McKenna
- 8 **Tickety-Boo:** Things are the way they should be; every thing is neat and tidy  
*I restored my SUs and now my MG-TC is Tickety-Boo!*  
—Curt Sorensen
- 9 **Good nick:** Functioning properly  
*I say old boy, your TR seems to be in rather good nick!*  
—Rob Wood
- 10 **I cut it off twice and it's still too short:** Just can't figure it out; an expression of frustration  
*Three hours into the Lucas trouble, I cut it off twice and it's STILL too short.*  
—Charles Durning



## THE BEST KIND OF JUMP START

By Lillian Blair

It is no secret that owners of Triumph sports cars are passionate. The preservation, restoration and maintenance of our cars are daily thoughts. We take sometimes elaborate steps to ensure long lasting enjoyment of the vehicle, both for display at shows and for the simple sheer pleasure of getting behind the wheel and driving. For us, membership in an organization like the New Jersey Triumph Association (NJTA) is ideal. Talking with like-minded people, going on drives with other Little British Cars, attending car shows and tech sessions—we wouldn't miss it!

For the past several years, members of the NJTA have been invited to tech sessions by the Triumph Rescue restoration shop in Bally, Pennsylvania. The sessions are usually held in mid-March when owners are chomping at the bit to get back on the road after

winter and "shake out the cobwebs" with a nice run. In all, about 80 club members generally take advantage of the opportunity to learn something new about the care and use of their cars from the professionals, with a bit of camaraderie with fellow enthusiasts.

It's also fun and instructive to view firsthand some of the projects that the shop is working on. The shop professionals are usually on hand to answer any questions. Recently, the shop has beautifully and pridefully restored a very rare Aston Martin DB5 convertible with left hand drive. Of the 125 Aston Martin DB5s produced, only 24 were left hand drive convertibles. Needless to say there was much interest in this project from among the members, even if it's not a Triumph.

Matt and Beth Bakes—owners and general managers of Triumph Rescue—

Be a part of the fun of the next Top 10, go to [MossMotoring.com/top10](http://MossMotoring.com/top10)



## Show & Event Calendar

Visit the MossMotoring.com Event Calendar to find upcoming events in your area and get all the details.



Find an Event  
near YOU

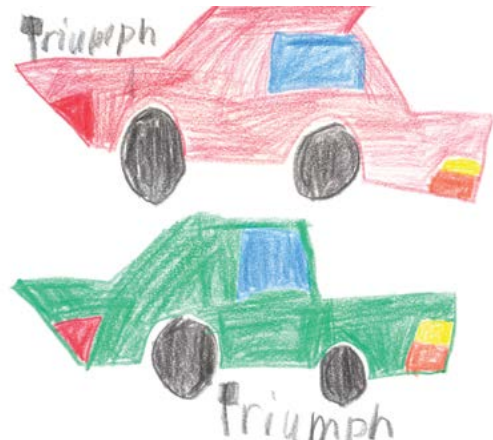
## Get the Word Out & Get Sponsored

Share your next Club Event on MossMotoring.com by filling out our online event submission form at [MossMotoring.com/AddYourEvent](http://MossMotoring.com/AddYourEvent)

## CONTEST

### Car Art

Calling all kids! If you're too young to drive and absolutely love cars, we've got a job for you...



*The creations of Vanden Harris, at age 7.*

Send us your best drawing of your favorite British sports car. We will have special prizes for the winners!

More info at

[MossMotoring.com/car-art-contest](http://MossMotoring.com/car-art-contest)



are most cordial hosts. Matt opened the session with a hearty welcome to the guests and introduction of his staff. He has made presentations to the group on some basic maintenance tips especially for the storage of the cars for a length of time. Matt is a safety and fire conscious guy and shared that when he first opens the shop each morning, he sniffs around for any gas that might be leaking. He feels strongly that all cars should be equipped with a fire extinguisher. "Our best hope," he quipped, "is to have an extinguisher ready in case of a fire in someone else's car and not our-own." Matt also touched on important topics such as fuel; including fuel stabilizers for long-term storage, fuel filters, and the use of gasoline with ethanol. This led to discussions on the effects ethanol has on our old cars, especially the rubber components.

Triumph Rescue's upholstery specialist, Brad Danish, demonstrated how to properly fold a convertible top and followed this with a presentation about the damage mice and other rodents can inflict on cars, especially

when they are stored for a long time or, worse, neglected and left to deteriorate in a garage, barn or outdoors. He showed some very cringe-worthy, graphic pictures of just how aggressive and destructive these small creatures can be if left to their own devices. You can bet the sale of traps went up at local hardware stores.

The day certainly served as a great impetus to get the juices flowing and to get those LBCs back on the road for the season, hopefully a little safer and better maintained.

Being a member of a club like the New Jersey Triumph Association opens you up to a long list of options to add to the enjoyment of your cars. Technical discussions, reviews and tips of parts recently installed, trading accumulated spare parts or whole cars...not to mention the drives, the shows, the fun and the laughter we all share! All in all it is an enjoyable time with some mighty fine people. *MM*

[www.NJTriumphs.org](http://www.NJTriumphs.org)  
[www.TriumphRescue.com](http://www.TriumphRescue.com)



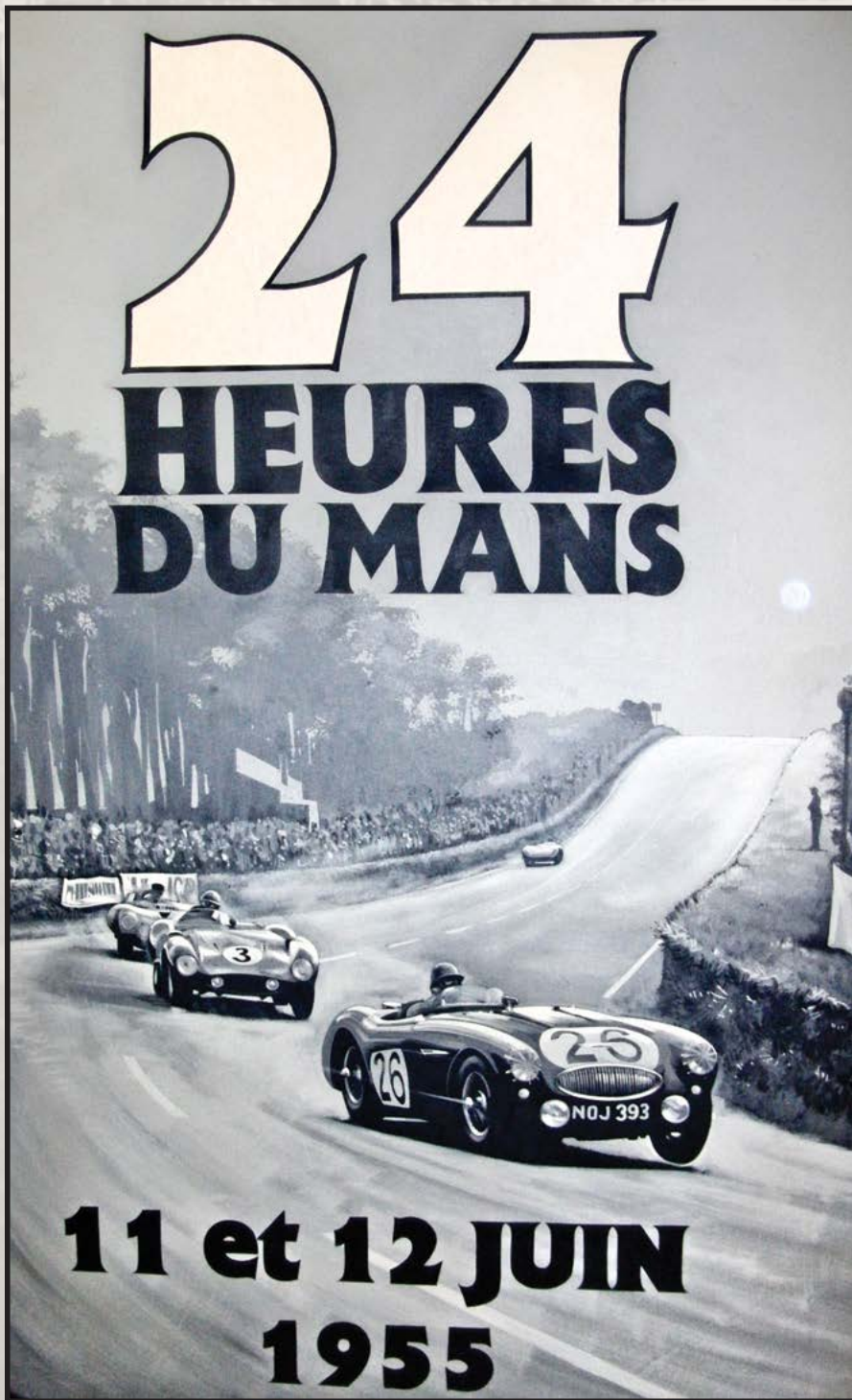


# TRAGIC VICTORY

A LOOK INSIDE RACING'S DARKEST HOUR

By John Nikas

## 24 HEURES DU MANS



11 et 12 JUIN  
1955

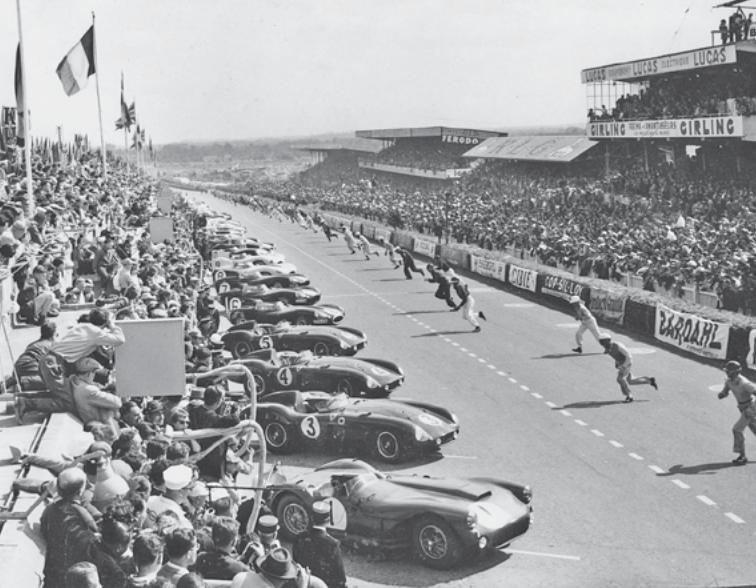
It had been said that any man could be fast for a few hundred yards but that no mortal could sprint for miles. Since 1923, Le Mans had always been a challenge of endurance and the early hours were typically spent in finding the right pace and preserving the car. But the 1955 race was unlike any before it. It ran more like a Grand Prix fiercely contested with sports cars, and the best drivers in the world were there.

Notwithstanding the tragic death of the great Alberto Ascari—killed at Monza just weeks earlier—the roster of drivers was without equal: Phil Hill, Mike Hawthorn, Masten Gregory, John Fitch, Peter Collins, Les Leston, Dickie Stoop, Paul Frere, Briggs Cunningham, Tommy Wisdom, Ken Miles, Colin Chapman, Zora Arkus Duntov, Stirling Moss and the incomparable Juan Manuel Fangio.

World War II had ended a decade earlier and memories of the conflict were fresh in the minds of many. An internment camp where members of the French resistance were held was located not far from the course and many of the drivers themselves had participated in the war effort. The all-British team from Jaguar found it hard to disguise its antipathy for the Germans.

Mercedes-Benz had only recently returned to international competition and it carefully assembled the team for Le Mans with an eye towards public perception. The lead SLR was shared between Fangio and Moss, who were both among the greatest ever to drive on the world stage. The second car was an





all-German affair with Kling and Hans Herrmann. The third Mercedes featured a populist hero in the personage of elderly French driver Pierre Levegh—who had almost won at Le Mans in 1951 while driving his Talbot single-handed for 23 hours—and American star John Fitch.

The 300 SLR fielded by Mercedes was a technical marvel with its magnesium alloy body, fuel injection and an air brake that could be deployed to slow the car without threat of instability at triple-digit speeds. With the two best drivers in the world sharing the same seat, most competitors believed that a Mercedes victory was a foregone conclusion.

## GAMBIT

Jaguar had won at Le Mans in 1951 and 1953 and it refused to concede victory to the Germans. The D-Type was an amazing car in its own right with better stopping power than Mercedes—thanks to disc brakes over the SLR's drums—and an aerodynamic advantage that allowed speeds over 190 mph on the Mulsanne straight.

The real difference between Coventry and Stuttgart came down to talent. Mike Hawthorn was exceptional, but he was essentially a playboy that drove racing cars for hire. He was capable of beating Fangio—Hawthorn had won the 1953 French Grand Prix in a Ferrari by one second over Fangio in his Maserati—but none of the other five drivers for Jaguar were near his equal.

Fair-haired and resplendent in his bow tie, Hawthorne thought to himself as he surveyed the competition, *“damn it, why should a German car beat a British car?”* That thought also motivated Jaguar competition director Frank “Lofty” England. The plan—as described by Jaguar driver, Norman Dewis—was for Hawthorn to go out and set a blistering pace *“with no real thought of winning with that car. That was the car designated to go out and break the opposition. Hawthorn was sent off to blow up the Mercedes...that's how we worked it. Fangio and Moss together: you couldn't match anything like that...Mike was going to push on as hard as hell with no thought of finishing...”*

## DUEL

Lance Macklin glanced in his mirrors to see what was approaching from behind as he passed Arnage headed for the Maison Blanche. Less than three hours had passed since the start and he was already down four laps to the race leaders who were about to go past him again for the fifth time.

In the mirrors of his Austin-Healey 100 three cars were closing fast: a Jaguar D-Type was bracketed front and rear by two Mercedes-Benz 300 SLRs. Behind the wheel of the D-Type was his friend, Mike Hawthorn, who shared Macklin's enthusiasm for pretty women, strong drink and good times.

After leaving the Royal Navy, Macklin set out for a career in motorsports. He raced on the Grand Prix circuit but was never very competitive. That said, he was still very good and his Healey had the support of the factory despite its privateer label. Most importantly, Macklin was smart and realistic. His 100 could never compete with the faster cars from Aston Martin, Jaguar, Ferrari, Maserati and Mercedes. His real battle was against the three works Triumphs and to a lesser extent against the BMC factory team with the MG EX182.

The fans, however, were treated to a spectacular show with Hawthorn and Fangio trading record laps one after the other. Only five cars from the original 60 were on the same lap as the leaders after just two hours of racing—with each lap 8.3-miles long.

Hawthorn was practically spent: *“I was momentarily mesmerised by the legend of Mercedes superiority. Here was this squat silver projectile, handled by the world's best driver, with its fuel injection and desmodromic valve gear, its complicated suspension and its out-of-this-world air brake. It seemed natural that it should eventually take the lead. Then I came to my senses. As there was no one in sight but me to stop it, I got down to it and caught up with him again.”*

The pace of the Jaguar and Mercedes weaving through traffic was not only enthralling the fans, it was also placing pressure on the other drivers to stay the hell out of the way. What made Le Mans different from Grand Prix races were the widely variable differences in performance among the

competing cars and an even wider gap between the skill of the drivers, some of whom were outright amateurs.

When Macklin watched the D-Type pull abreast of the first SLR—it was Hawthorn lapping Kling—Macklin may have noticed the third SLR approach into view. Macklin made sure to get through Maison Blanche directly which he drifted through at about 110 mph and set up to the right as the course narrowed towards the pits. Checking again he saw the D-Type and the second SLR side-by-side—Hawthorn and Levegh—with the third SLR just behind them both. Macklin moved further over to the right so that if they reached the kink ahead at the same time there would be plenty of room for the faster cars to pass.

Looking to his left, Macklin saw Hawthorn in the Jaguar draw alongside—in the overall lead—and then pull ahead with the two 300 SLRs (Levegh and Fangio) still behind his Healey. Macklin continued to hold his line. It was 6:27 pm on June 11, 1955. The worst accident in racing history was about to begin.

### SOMETHING LIKE A WAR

Between Fangio and Macklin's Healey was the 300 SLR driven by Levegh. He was off to the left but would have to move right to get on the racing line as the road ahead narrowed. Levegh was not yet scheduled to pit so he continued at speed. As Macklin looked up he saw Hawthorn move sharply over to the right and then brake hard so that he could enter the open pit area.

Macklin saw the brake lights of the Jaguar and hit his own brakes hard. The Healey was on the verge of wheel lock. As he eased left, astride the white center line, he began to lose control and the car began to veer. Fangio remembered that Hawthorn braked "rather violently" leaving Macklin no choice.

The track at that point was almost 23 feet wide but due to the kink it was necessary to drive to the right of the centerline at speed. Levegh was closing too fast and the right wheel of

his Mercedes struck the rear of the Healey and launched into the air. Macklin felt a strong blow and then saw "a silver shape with the driver hunched over the wheel" in the air above his car, which was knocked into a spin and moving backwards towards the pits.

Fangio would later estimate that he was less than 50 yards away and credited Levegh with raising his hand in warning sufficient to steer him clear of the danger unfolding. He saw the Healey ahead begin to spin and then—with no room or time to brake—drove between the spinning Healey and Hawthorn's D-Type.

Levegh was still in his car as it flew through the air headed for the stands across from the pit area. It landed with a terrible crash that tore the car to pieces as it flung the helpless driver onto the track. The fuel—reacting to the magnesium from the body—burst into flames and showered fire across the stands. The various components cut through the crowd like a fiery scythe. The front axle and the flying engine decapitated several fans and within moments at least 50 people were dead.

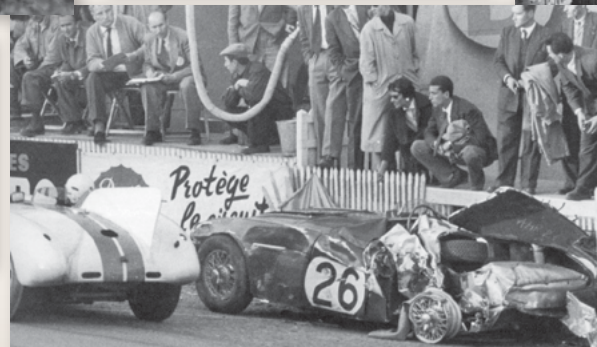
Dewis was watching from the Jaguar pit counter when he saw the Mercedes "go very high in the air—and crash down nose first on the banking. It exploded like a bomb."

The Healey careened into Jaguar's pit area after crashing into three people and came to rest at an angle. Smoke from the burning Mercedes obscured the track and Macklin's first thought was to get out of the car as quickly as possible. Dewis could hear him shouting, "This was all Hawthorn's fault, it's Hawthorn's fault!" Distraught, Macklin was led away. Meanwhile, Hawthorn had stopped his D-Type far beyond his own pit. No one was allowed to reverse on course so he soon went out and completed another lap then came in to hand the car over to his co-driver Ivor Bueb.

Macklin was livid. He explained to Donald Healey that Hawthorn "had pulled straight in front of me and clapped his brakes on" and was "a bloody idiot" for doing so. Healey



Pierre Levegh





calmed him down and they retired to the paddock where they shared a bottle of champagne to celebrate the close escape. Afterwards, Hawthorn approached Macklin. He put his arm around his friend's shoulder and said, "Oh my god, Lance, I'm terribly sorry. I bloody near killed you, and I killed all those people. I'm really sorry. I'm certainly never going to race again."

Whatever moral culpability Hawthorn may have expressed could not obscure the fact that it was a Mercedes that had crashed, exploded and killed dozens of people in the stands. It was also a Mercedes that was still in the lead as Moss opened up an unassailable advantage on the rest of the field even as authorities gave aid to the injured and tried to identify the dead.

Afraid of the bad publicity that would result from the appearance of racing to victory over the dead bodies of French fans, Stuttgart directed its team to pull out. The head of the Mercedes team paid a courtesy call to the Jaguar pits to inform them of their decision. Lofty England was nonplussed. Mercedes could withdraw if they wished, but Jaguar would press on regardless.

So it passed that at 2:00 am, with an almost insurmountable lead and running 1-2, Mercedes called its drivers in and packed up its gear. Within minutes after the cars were loaded onto the transporter, the pits were packed up and the team headed quickly for the border in the darkness. The only thing left behind—the wreckage of Pierre Levegh's 300 SLR.

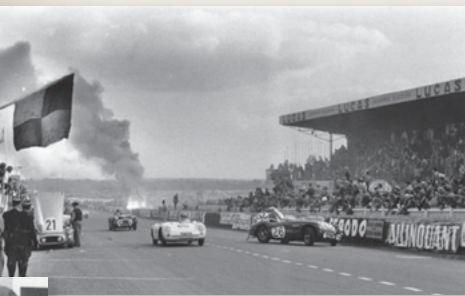
Getting out was also on the mind of the Healey group. Macklin's car was impounded, but Geoffrey Healey thought it prudent to go: "I ordered our team to pack and disappear immediately after the accident. I drove the spare 100S non-stop in the rain to the coast and took the first available boat."

By morning, the only Jaguar still running was Hawthorn's and it held a comfortable lead over a Maserati and Aston Martin. Before the end of the race that afternoon, Hawthorn went back out so that he could be in the car for the finish and he took the checkered flag with an ebullient smile that was soon doused with celebratory champagne offered up by Lofty England. The British car *had* beaten the German car—but there was no victory.

## PICKING UP THE PIECES

The final toll remains in dispute, but most sources agree that 84 people were killed in the accident on June 11, 1955. During the inquiry held after the race it was impossible to precisely determine what had happened and who was at fault. After the race had ended, Hawthorn had changed his tune—so much so that his friend Macklin would sue him later for slander—stating that he had (1) signaled to Macklin his intention to enter the pits; (2) moved to the right with time for Macklin and anyone else to maneuver past him; and (3) that he was in no way at fault for the resulting accident.

For his part, Macklin acted as he believed a British gentleman should and avoided any direct recrimination of Hawthorn or anyone else. Instead, he said, "*The main thing responsible was the speed of the race...I would not say any one particular person is responsible.*" Some questioned Levegh's reaction to the Healey in his path—which was attractive since he could not defend himself—in that he was too old, too slow in reacting and well off the racing line when his car was launched in the air. The final verdict assigned blame to no one. It was deemed what it was—a terrible racing accident. *MM*



Photos courtesy of the International Healey Museum, Bonhams, and Charles Matthews.



# Austin-Healey NOJ 393



Notwithstanding its participation in the ill-fated race at Le Mans in 1955, NOJ 393 has an unparalleled provenance among Healey competition cars. It was constructed in 1953 as one of four Special Test Cars for use by the factory racing team and is one of only two that were later converted to 100S specification.

NOJ 393 competed at the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1953—following a swap of registration numbers with the prime car following an accident before the race—where it finished second in class and 12<sup>th</sup> overall. Most importantly, it ran at the first event of the 1954 World Championship season—the 12 Hours of Sebring—where it finished an impressive third overall and won its class. Later that year it competed in the La Carrera Panamericana and the Bahamas Speed Week where it finished sixth in the Nassau Trophy race behind a trio of Ferraris, a Porsche 550 and a Maserati A6GCS.

Following its release from police

impound in the aftermath of the Le Mans accident, the car was repaired with steel panels and then sold into privateer use. In 1969, it was sold for £155 with a seized engine. Ultimately, NOJ 393 was offered for sale by Bonhams in 2011, the premier British auction house, where it was sold to a private Swiss collector for £843,000 (approximately \$1.3 million) setting a new world record for an Austin-Healey.

The car was delivered into the hands of Steve Pike at Marsh Restorations in Australia who set about to restore the car to its condition at the starting line of the 1955 Le Mans race. Pike preserved the original parts where possible and recreated the rest using period and bespoke substitutes. After the restoration was completed it made its debut at the London offices of Bonhams. Since then the car has been driven around the continent and competed in the Mille Miglia Storica with its new owner behind the wheel. *MM*







Myself, Nick Martin, and my lovely wife, Kate Martin.

*continued from page 7*

After short-shifting into 4th, the time slip showed a disappointing 115.878.

Now this is when I realized that, yes, a record would be really nice, but above everything else we're out here to have fun. We laughed it off, and more importantly, I was finally getting familiar with the car.

As altitude goes up, a carbureted engine tends to run richer. Mark Balinski had helped me immeasurably with tuning and sent along a series of progressively leaner jets to try. SU carbs are somewhat self-adjusting, but Weber DCOEs require precisely machined jets and emulsion tubes to match the engine and conditions. Mark says, "You want to be running lean up until just before the point that things might get melty." Call me chicken, but I only went one jet size smaller. The next run we were back on our game: 117.293 mph.

Thinking that if less is good, lesser is better, we checked the plugs again, and swapped out the jets to the next smaller size. Our efforts were rewarded with the best time so far: 118.257.

I had allotted one more day to run, leaving a wiggle day for back up, if I were to be that fortunate. We agreed we'd give it two more shots on Wednesday.

## LAST CHANCES

Wednesday morning was cool, dry and absolutely zero wind. We grabbed a 117.816, but it was becoming clear that the heavier air was having less impact on our power output, and seemed to be working to our disadvantage with more air resistance.

It was just past noon, and we decided we were going all in. I changed out the jets to the smallest set we had, and Nick located a compressor. We took the tires up to 50 psi, and went for broke.

118.693...yep, 3.086 mph short.

But that's fine—it gave me something to do over the winter. There's likely a bit more power to be had from this engine. While I can't modify the body—the class requires a stock body—I can get it dropped a little lower to the ground for a smaller frontal area. There are parasitic losses in the drivetrain that can be minimized by utilizing a crank scraper and windage tray, using an electric water pump, going with a lighter oil in the transmission and differential. There is still speed to be had.

The car that currently owns the record is an Abarth Bialbero. While I was in line, a gentleman with an English accent came up to me and said, "I/GT,

eh? Do you know what car holds that record?" I informed him that indeed, I did, and he replied, "That's right...and I own it!"

Without missing a beat, I said to him, "I have a picture of your car on my dart board in my basement."

As it turns out, my new friend from England, Martin McGlone, also races a Sebring Sprite in Europe—one originally driven by Stirling Moss. Martin wasn't there out of nostalgia. He was piloting a 1966 Shelby GT350, and looking for a class record against cars much more technologically advanced.

I talk to dozens of people who invariably say, "I'd like to go to Bonneville someday." I had said it for years until I finally made my mind up and went. But until one attends, until one starts talking with these competitors on the salt, you cannot grasp the sense of community Speedweek provides. There is magic here, born of history, sweat, and a defiance of those who say: "It can't be done." There is a reverence for the past that runs parallel to the advance of technology, but it never trumps the goal of going faster.

I'll be back in August—there are 3.086 mph sitting on the table. I can't get 'em if I don't show up. *MM*



FEELS LIKE...

# the First Time

By Jerry Gruss



My niece, Sara, was seven years younger when she "helped" me take the body off the frame.

**M**y first time driving was in my older brother's first car, a red 1964 TR4. We had just finished a repair. My brother realized that somehow I understood mechanics better than he did. He saw that I wasn't assisting him, but the other way round. I hadn't caught on yet. I was 14 and he loved driving that TR4. Teaching me to drive was an easy decision for him. And so my driving began, as well as my addiction to working on Triumphs.

My brother owned more cars than I have owned suits. He changed cars like the weather. He owned four or five TR4s, depending on your definition of 'car'. When I was 16, he owned a 1976 blue TR6 with red pin striping. That was my favorite and probably why I have owned a TR6 for the past decade. A TR6 attracts more attention now than when it was new and people often stop and talk about their ownership experiences. I have never personalized my vehicles. I have never defined their gender, or named them. I never wanted to own an 'older' car but that was about to change.

When Tim, a former Texas Triumph Register member living in Bay St Louis,

Louisiana reached out for anyone to take his TR3 Katrina flood victim and restore it, I felt called. I knew the car had marinated under 20 feet of salt water and silt. I knew I'd have to touch and revive every centimeter. I did not, however, know much of anything about TR3s.

When I hauled a trailer to pick up the TR3 in 2006, I had never in fact driven one. And when I accepted this challenge, There were seven years of dedicated work ahead of me before I would have my first drive.

The day the TR3 became mine it was British Racing Green with a red interior. I found the car had been painted more than once, and more than one other color. I decided the car would be grey. Grey connotes age, and I wanted to celebrate that aspect. Or so I thought.

In the upcoming years while I worked on the frame, chassis and engine, everyone tried to dissuade my color choice. One night my wife and I were looking at original Triumph colors and came across Primrose Yellow. She did not call it by its factory name and insisted it was "butter." While I proceeded with body work, we looked for cars on the road that were a similar

shade of yellow. It's not bright. It is soft, but not dull. It took time to accept, but eventually I was won over. Finding the paint codes for a 50-year old color was not an easy task. I found someone with access to outdated, printed documentation and received the codes. The "y63-orchid yellow" was mixed and I remember the paint guy holding the stir stick above the can and casually commenting: "butter." It was to become the name of my TR3.

I finished the body work after what seemed like an eternity. Butter had taken shape and she was no longer a separate body and chassis, but was becoming a car. After seven years of pushing parts in and out of the garage, she was assembled enough to be driven.

My wife, Prudence, grabbed the camera, as I backed down the driveway. It is funny how long the driveway can become. Butter made it all the way to the street, and then I drove all the way to the end of the street. I pressed forward through the intersection, and circled the cul-de-sac. Then I drove right past my own house and all the way to the other end of the street. As I circled around in another cul-de-sac, my heart raced as I



watched the engine temperature hold at normal. As I shifted into second, I was mesmerized by the sounds, hearing noises I had only imagined. All the gauges were indicating completely different normal situations. As I pulled back into the safety of the garage, a small bead of sweat dripped off my brow. It was as nerve-racking as any virgin drive, even though everything went well.

The low sloping door lines along with the protruding headlights make the car delightful to look at. My TR6 never got this much attention, from me or anyone else. This car was designed to enjoy the driving experience, regardless of any safety implications. The doors are cut so low I can rest my hand flat on the road without leaning from the driver's seat. I have to slouch down while driving for my elbow to rest on the padded door top. Had Ralph Nader driven a TR3 10 years before driving a Corvair, he might have cried out "unsafe at rest!" The car weighs just over a ton, produces about 100hp and the top of the windshield stands at 46" with a wheelbase of 7'4". It is a tiny car. The cockpit is so narrow it pays to choose your passenger wisely—you're gonna get close! The TR3 came from the factory with disc brakes on the front and the expectation it could attain speeds in excess of 100 miles per hour—the first car with an under 2-liter engine to do so. In many ways it was ahead of its time.

## ALL THE WAY TO AUSTIN

A few weeks later, I was still imagining noises that were not there. I had a few hundred miles on Butter, and a few 'issues' had been resolved without

requiring a tow truck. My confidence was gaining, but not quite there. We needed a decent run, of a decent distance, and so we set out for Austin.

Austin, Texas is about 200 miles from my home in Spring. My wife had to work there for a few days, and we have friends that can always use some help around the house. She left a little earlier in her car, while I had breakfast with the club guys and waited for traffic to die down. It was in the low 70s, sunny and perfect top-down weather. About an hour into the drive, and I found myself cruising along at 70mph. I glanced in the tiny rear view mirror, and saw myself smiling. I looked relaxed. A few miles later, and I knew I was relaxed. All the work was worth it. How could something this simple be so enjoyable? The ride back was even better—even though I noted several more issues to be resolved before I would consider a real "first drive."

## A TRIP BACK HOME

With 800 miles on her odometer, I re-aligned the front end, re-balanced the wheels, re-bled the brakes, re-packed the front wheel bearings, changed the oil, re-torqued the head, re-adjusted the valves, greased the front end, checked the diff fluid, installed a heater, double checked the voltage regulator settings, and made some side curtains. My Father was turning 90 and I wanted to be with him on his birthday. This would be Butter's "first drive" across country to Pennsylvania in late October.

Prudence and I loaded Butter with as much as we could fit for an extended trip. Our first day was scheduled to be

12 and a half hours of driving, from Houston to Tennessee. A cold front was working its way south at about the same rate as we made our way north. We pulled into her brother's driveway at about 1:00 am with temperatures in the 40s. The next day we drove another 10 and half hours to our hotel. Driving across Ohio and into West Virginia, I could see dark clouds above the mountains. Temperatures were dropping, and it was raining lightly. Eventually, I saw snow in the rain and started thinking about black ice, slush, and generally bad driving conditions ahead. I looked at Prudence in the passenger seat. She was wearing her heavy coat and gloves with a blanket on her lap. The heater was all the way up, so her feet were warm. Her noise cancelling head phones were holding her hat in place. Her scarf was wrapped around her face, with only her eyes exposed so she could play 'Words With Friends' on her phone. I bumped her and pointed at the snow. She peered through the misty rain until she saw the flurries and exclaimed, "How exciting!" At that moment, I knew she had the better attitude, and I needed to adopt it.

Our hotel in Pennsylvania is on the down side of a steep hill. Butter developed a habit of stalling when it got off a freeway, and continued the trend anytime the temperature was below 60. After I climbed the hill to the hotel and started the down side, the stalling trend continued. Without hesitation, I coasted down the hill, drifted into the lot, and glided into the first vacant parking spot. I turned off the lights, set the brake







and switched off the ignition as if the car were still running. I looked at Prudence, and in unison we threw our hands in the air and exclaimed, “We made it.” It was 3:30 in the morning.

The next day we had a slight incident in the parking lot which eventually led me to understand that one of the float valves was sticking. We were able to spend most of my father’s 90th birthday with him. We visited with family for a few days, and then headed to Washington D.C. for a day with our daughter. Preparing to head home, Prudence suggested we stop in Bay St Louis so we could show Butter to the previous owner.



## STOPPING IN BAY ST LOUIS

The last time I was in Bay St Louis was one year after Katrina had done so much damage. The destruction and rebuilding was evident everywhere. I pulled in front of the house from where I towed away the flooded TR3—only now the house is a bed-and-breakfast. The caretaker was the only person around and he didn’t have a phone number or address for the person we were seeking. But he knew enough that with the help of Google, we found an address and headed across town. It was after 9pm and dark out, but eventually Tim answered the door. He was a little hesitant so I stepped back a little and said, “I’m Jerry and you gave me your TR3 a few years ago.” He looked a little confused, and pondered a few seconds before his face lit up. “Yes, I was wondering when you were going to bring it back to me. Wait a second, I will be right out!”

With the help of a flashlight, Tim looked over my car. *His car*. He told me he enjoyed the yearly pictorial updates I sent. He loved the *Moss Motoring* article I sent. He loved the color his TR3 had become. He loved the idea that the car had been saved. We looked under the hood and discussed the project in general. We discussed other club members. Tim stood at the edge of the driveway and watched as I started his car, and drove away in my car. He watched just as he had watched it being towed away on a trailer seven years ago.

Prudence and I drove 3,500 miles in 8 days across 10 states in a car older than us. Every single part of the 1959 TR3 had been disassembled, renewed and reinstalled. Every part had been tested in many ways, but this trip was a comprehensive test of it all. When I show up in a modern car (like a TR6), I have ‘arrived’, but when I show up in a TR3, I have once again ‘cheated death’ by embracing life. Nothing drives like a TR3.

We always remember our first drive. *MM*





# PITTSBURGH VINTAGE

By Walt Peterson



*The 2014 Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix festivities will be held July 11-20. Don't miss it!*

You awaken Sunday morning; think about the concrete barriers,  
Like riot police, shoulder to shoulder,  
At the far end of Panther Hollow Bridge.  
The Healey is traveling three times the legal limit,  
Cars are trying to pass.  
The Jersey barriers scribe the outer edge of the far sweeper.

When you ask Zappa if he takes it flat-out  
He laughs, "You don't have the balls!"

Tap the brakes, weight the front end, cross the crown to good  
camber, tires hold.

Kiss the apex at the sidewalk to the coffee shop. Beyond,  
Corner workers in white. Furled flags  
Are wings of yellow, red, black, white.  
Then the Westinghouse Pond, a Porsche locks his front brakes,  
Smoke pouring off, the 356 climbs the hay bales then balances in air.  
Flags unfurl.

Get over! Slow it, Get it over, yellow flag. Yellow!

\*\*\*

Like the racecourse in the park named after her, Mary Elizabeth Crogan Schenley was unique. In 1883, at the age of

sixteen, she eloped with an army captain twenty-six years her senior. She had been on-track to become one of the wealthiest English women of her time. Her family disowned her. The 2.3-mile course in Schenley Park has five major elevation changes, a boulevard, a bridge, hairpins and sweepers, curbs, and all roads are crowned not cambered. Serpentine Drive, with two 280-degree turns, winds downhill under a canopy of trees between stone walls built by masons during the Works Progress Administration then twists to the front straight and more Jersey barriers.

If you're looking for run-off room, go somewhere else to race.

This course takes autocross precision and hillclimb focus. And here there is the beauty of high-summer in a park over a hundred and twenty years old. Schenley rolls across four hundred urban acres of trees and Western Pennsylvania undulations. In 1897 the first automobiles raced here—somewhere. Then a horse race track was built in 1907, and the grandstands and stables were lost to fire in the 70s. They say you could smell burnt horse-flesh in Squirrel Hill. The Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix began in 1982 and today is billed as "a ten day festival of races, car shows and motorsports events." Last year 210,000 people participated and \$350,000



Photo by Matthew Little



Photo by Bill Stoler

was raised for charity. There is, here in Pittsburgh, community and compassion.

\*\*\*

Sunday afternoon, shade trees  
and skirl of bagpipes in the pits.  
Carnegie's legacy: steel, libraries,  
labor violence, a university.

*Group Four to the starting grid!*

Saddle up. Kevin rides down,  
shakes the old man's hand.  
Grid Marshall's hand in air. Five minutes to go.  
Zip and velcro Nomex, helmet,  
glasses, belts tightened, gloves.  
85 degrees and like humidity.  
So what?

The marshall's two fingers in the air.  
Can't hear your engine fire-up.  
Check the tach and 60 psi of oil.

Drivers' fists in the air.  
One Minute: running and ready to move out.

The haybale-Porsche gridded behind.  
He'll sneak by on lap 2.  
On lap 3 at Westinghouse he locks them  
Again, doesn't get airborne.  
You almost get by, then lose him,  
but you catch him again.  
Try to shake him braking late  
into the hay-bale chicane.  
He stays steady.  
You back down, drop it into second gear  
through the chicane  
Chirp the tires.  
Impress everyone but the Porsche.

Up on the golf course, your home-boys.  
Later they claim they cheered.  
You'd say the same thing.

You blinked when the front-end  
lost it at the bend below their tent.  
Did they see?

Lap 7: the temp gauge above 210. Ease off.  
The plan: just make the checkered.

Around the second 280 at Serpentine  
The corner worker, an angel,  
is close enough inside the wall  
To lean out almost and kiss your helmet  
Heading toward the esses.

Then the red flag thrown like an angry sun stops you.

\*\*\*

The picture in the *Post-Gazette* shows the driver  
of the Elva Courier in the middle of Turn 20, arms  
raised in the cockpit in the air as in supplication. To  
his right, a Healey 100 has spun to avoid him. The  
Healey 3000 and I are just out of the frame heading  
toward the confusion. Later, when they unload the  
crippled white Courier in the pits, there is silence.  
The driver, okay, ponders his next move; the diesel  
roll-back idles.

Monday morning commuters hustle to work  
through the former racecourse and there is little left  
of Sunday's theatre. Concrete barriers are mostly  
gone before sunset Sunday and in Monday's soft  
rain crushed hay bales look melted like cake in  
MacArthur Park. At the breakfast table, Jade is still  
wearing the fuscina colored crew wristband. "What's  
that for?" "I want to show the girls at work." Race  
day at Turn 20, she had the camera on automatic-  
fire and got all the action before retreating up the  
hill. The white Elva, way off-line, hit the outside  
wall. After impact, Jade said, the car flew to the  
middle of the track.

\*\*\*

Walking to Pitt College in November after the first  
good snow has melted, the Elva's skid marks, way  
off line, are still visible at Turn 20. Maybe it was  
just brain-fade or mechanical, like Robert Pursig





Photo by Matthew Little

says in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*: a ten-cent part is worth the whole vehicle. Apex Zappa, Turn Six, doesn't conjure any worries. You learn in school that the first times in a difficult bend you "brake a few feet later, a few revs more, a lighter touch on the binders time after time till you get it right." If you over-cook Six, you'll know quickly. Thinking about next year, the turn that takes my breath away is the blind 90-degree around (of course) a stone wall at Turn Nine beyond Westinghouse. The cut traverses the slope; cornerworkers stand above and the sweeper goes on for a quarter of a mile. There is a pronounced crown but can be very fast if you enter smoothly and straddle the crown then start a gradual turn-in for the hill at the forked, dead locust tree. With enough momentum the long-stroke six can propel the 3000 up the hill to the hoy polloi on the golf course. Squint hard enough and you can imagine all those burghers and their automobiles are at Ascot or Silverstone with you flying by.

\*\*\*

In 1887 Robert Bigelow, later known as The Father of Pittsburgh Parks, sent an emissary to England who convinced Mary to donate 300 acres and sell 104 more to the City of Pittsburgh to create this *fin de siècle* jewel of an urban American park. Mary Elizabeth's clan had kissed and made up with Mary and her Captain Schenley. There is a sculpture pool dedicated to her at the entrance near the University's campus. Mrs. Schenley never saw the city, fountain or the park that bears her name. In the pool, Pan the god of nature is charmed by Sweet Harmony playing her lyre. Legend has it lately every third weekend in July the nymph's lyre is stilled and the cloven-hoofed deity looks toward the sound of racecars bearing down on the bend at the far end of Panther Hollow Bridge. *M.M*

## SHOP FOCUS



## ON THE ROAD AGAIN CLASSICS

NOT MANY AUTOMOTIVE repair and restoration shops are possessed of the facilities, cleanliness and hospitality required to open their doors on a regular basis to host a gathering of car enthusiasts for an evening of darts, billiards and car talk. Fortunately, *On the Road Again Classics*—located in the picturesque village of Morgan Hill in the San Francisco Bay Area—is not a traditional British car garage.

Bill Hiland spent two decades at the helm of various luxury sailing yachts in Australia before returning to the United States to establish an electronics salvage company. Eventually, he established one of the premier British car shops in the country that combined his love of vintage classics with his unique ability to make his clients feel like cosseted passengers on a private charter.

Walking through the front doors, one is struck that the facilities look more like a museum than a working shop. By design, Hiland has segregated the 12,000 square foot space into two distinct areas. Almost a third of the space is devoted to the display of consignment cars, private collection vehicles and automobilia with the additional area dedicated to the real work of repairing and restoring classic British sports cars.

The team of craftsmen has over 150 combined years of working on classic sports cars and the shop has handled everything from award-winning restorations of British exotica—there is an onsite downdraft paint booth—to regular maintenance and repairs of the countless Triumphs, MGs, Jaguars and Healeys that look to *On the Road Again* for service. Importantly, the shop is also firmly ensconced in the community, locally and nationally, hosting the annual party and rally for the British Fall Classic car show as well as the recent British Motor Trade Association annual meeting. Visitors to the Bay Area should take the time to stop by and come aboard for a real automotive treat.

### **On the Road Again Classics**

16840 Joleen Way, Unit G4  
Morgan Hill, California 95037  
408.782.1100

[www.OnTheRoadAgainClassics.com](http://www.OnTheRoadAgainClassics.com)



# LET'S DRIVE

THE YAW & PITCH

*Cool stuff for cool cars.* Our catalogs showed those words for a long time. While it's true—ever since Al Moss started the company in 1948—that we aim to provide the best selection of British parts, I suggested that we adopt another tagline that reflects what we believe in as much as the previous described what we do.

My proposal: *Let's Drive.* This reflects a shared passion with our customers—to drive and enjoy our cars. But what does that have to do with the business of selling car parts, some asked? While we sell car parts and accessories, what Moss is really about as a company is enjoying British sports cars and helping you to do the same.

Although my own lifespan largely coincides with the advent of the rubber bumper and smog pump, the cars that caught my eye were the sports cars from 10 to 20 years earlier, especially Big Healeys and E-Types. My father owned Triumphs and MGs and most of my exposure came from his friends and going to car shows and watching the races at Riverside International. My enthusiasm continued unabated and my high school car was my father's old TR4A and I drove the hell out of it.

Later, other British sports cars joined the stable, but the common thread among them is that they were drivers all. It was nothing to go for a weekend-long

road trip or to head up the coast to watch the historic races at Monterey. For me, British sports cars were—and remain—a time machine to an era when things were simpler yet more stylish. Beyond the sheer joy of getting behind the wheel was the chance to meet some of the kindest people in the world.

I have long suspected that British car owners tend to be nicer and more interesting. The reasoning is: natural selection. The driver of almost any other vehicle can plan a trip and be reasonably assured of making it there without drama. Most good British car stories resemble an Old Testament trial with copious amounts of smoke, fire, darkness and persecution.

British car owners have to be social to ensure a ready supply of friends to assist when things go wrong. They have good humor to deal with the inevitable stranding when the scourge of Lucas strikes unexpectedly. They deal with adversity when minor gremlins bend them over an open bonnet peering into the dark unknown. They read owner's manuals written in confusing and confounding verbiage. Finally, British car owners have to be romantic enough to smell the bouquet of castor oil and appreciate the limits of drum brakes under foot when forced to stop unexpectedly at freeway speeds.

That sense of romance leads us to attempt speed records on the salt flats;

it encourages us to emulate Walter Mitty in vintage races; it helps us pass the time with idle chatter at local car shows; it emboldens us to seek counsel from wise old mechanics who possess the gnostic secrets to carburetor tuning or wheel balancing that may—if we are not careful—disappear one day. And lastly, romance inspires us to bundle up against the cold and get in our cars for long drives when we really should be in the family Ford. In short, romance gets us out on the road. British car owners—even those that have million dollar examples like the restored NOJ 393—look forward to the road ahead (and maybe even a race if the opportunity presents itself).

We sell parts. You own cars. But together we drive them for the simple fact that we love doing so. *We should* drive these cars; hell, we should drive them every day when possible, and if we can help you drive your classic then we've answered the highest calling for folks like us. The last open road beckons—let's go out and drive. *M.M.*

John Oversteer





## PARTS FOR SALE

### Front Brake Kits

When your LBC needs a brake job, ordering one part number and getting everything you need at once makes the job so much simpler. Kits include brake rotors, semi-metallic pads and pad retaining clips, hardware and rotor to hub bolts & nuts where applicable.



#### Triumph

TR3B (TCF), TR4 Late & 4A – Stock Replacement	586-513	\$99.95
TR250 & TR6 1969-72 – Stock Replacement (¼" Pins)	586-513	99.95
TR6 1972-76 – Stock Replacement (3/16" Pins)	586-514	109.95
Spitfire 1962-80 – Stock Replacement	586-538	74.95



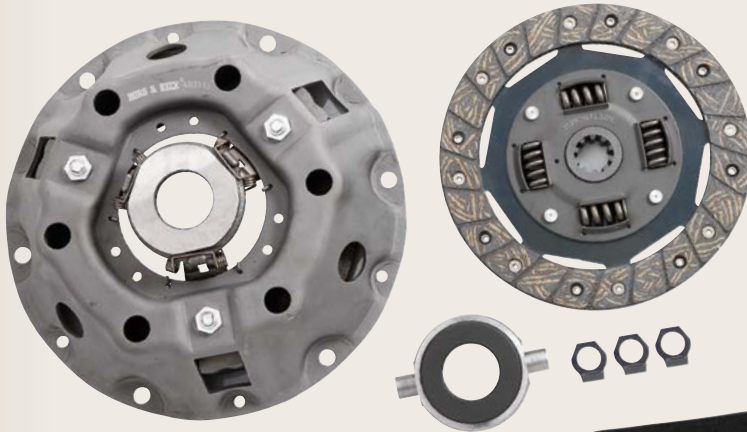
#### Sprite/Midget

With Disc Brakes - Stock Replacement 182-157 \$59.95



#### MGB

Stock Replacement	182-118	\$79.95
Stage 1 (TRW slotted & drilled rotors/Ceramic Pads)	182-128	144.95
Stage 2 (DBA slotted & drilled rotors/GreenStuff V8 Pads)	182-138	279.95



### Clutch Kits by PowerTune

PowerTune is a popular brand for aftermarket clutches and they offer a good value at their reasonable price point. Kit includes pressure plate, disc and release bearing.

Sprite/Midget – 948	190-965	\$149.95
Sprite/Midget – 1098	190-971	174.95
Sprite/Midget – 1275	190-985	149.95
MGB	190-809	139.95
TR4A, TR250, TR6	593-031	169.95

### Plush Embroidered Floor Mats

Custom tailored plush embroidered mats look great at a terrific price and fit perfectly. Edges are bound for a tidy look. Rubber nibbed backing keeps the mats in place. Black, pair.

BJ7 & BJ8	240-492	\$69.95
TR4, 4A, 250 & 6	240-741	69.95
MGB 1963-67	240-721	69.95
MGB 1968-80	240-731	69.95
MGA	240-711	69.95
MG TD & TF	240-751	69.95





**Moss Motors, Ltd.**  
440 Rutherford Street  
Goleta, CA 93117

PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
MOSS MOTORS,  
LTD.

WE CHOOSE TO GO  
to the *Moon*

*We are taking on  
the Motoring Challenge  
not because it is easy  
but because it is hard*

*We will go places  
we've never gone before*

*And discover what awaits  
around the next corner  
and beyond the horizon*



Joel and Pam Justin  
Challengers, 2013 and 2014

**JOIN THE MOTORING CHALLENGE**  
[MossMotors.com/2014Challenge](http://MossMotors.com/2014Challenge)