

# Moss Motoring

ISSUE 2, 2015

FLBC  
Heaven



A LITTLE  
HELP FROM  
OUR FRIENDS

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Photo by David Stuursma at  
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# Moss Motoring



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David Stuursma

# The Tools of Life

I heard a rumor recently. I'm not a fan of gossip, but this is too good. I know some people who'd want to hear this. There's a British car club mostly made up of older, retired fellas (and their fun-loving spouses), and the word on the street is these guys are selling their cars for cheap.

Let me clarify. These aren't their pride-and-joy cars that they're selling; they're the "other" cars, the second or third British car, the "orphan that needed a good home" car. They're not parts cars missing panels or heavy-duty projects—these cars run just fine—but they aren't going to win awards anytime soon. They are pretty nice LBCs and all they need is a Little Bit of Care at regular intervals.

I heard these guys are letting it slip—even to their wives—about how little they got for them and how excited the new owners were.

Oh, they're not giving cars away; it's not like that. And, actually, often times the cars end up back in their driveways for an afternoon or a weekend. Why is that? Because quite honestly the new owners have no business owning these cars. They don't have a clue of what they're doing. That's the beauty of it. They need help and the POs are happy to give it.

This club is selling their extra cars to young people—kids, if you will.

The guys in this club began by starting rumors of their own. Offhandedly they said to friends and neighbors that they were "simplifying" and had this great little car that they

wanted to put into the hands of some kid who had an interest in learning how to turn a wrench. They would say stuff like: "They can call it their practice car. You know, when I was a punk kid, young and irresponsible, I had a little sporty car—that thing actually taught me a lot about how to be responsible, or at least about being resourceful. I'd like to give them a hand working on it, if they want my help."

In almost no time at all, with the hesitant support of their parents, teenage boys (and a surprising number of girls, too) began introducing themselves with polite awkwardness and that sparkle of top-down dreams behind their eyes.

"It's kind of an experiment," one club member said. "We don't know if this generation will want to or will have the attention span or patience to have cars like these. But if they don't start out when they're young and stupid like we did, then there'll be no interest in our cars down the road. It's not the kids' fault that they don't know what they're missing out on."

I'm told that this particular car club doesn't invite the new young owners to become members. They're pretty blunt about saying, "You kids do your own thing. Start your own club. You can come to our tech sessions though if you want. And we have tools and books you can borrow..."

It is said it takes a village to raise a child. I'd have a tough time naming a more giving, supportive and character-filled village than the British sports car community. The pages of this magazine are stuffed with examples of the village in action. But where are the young drivers and the young tech apprentices? Somehow, more kids should see this, be a part of it and learn from it. I'm not sure what I can do to help. If you have thoughts on this, write me at [editor@mossmotors.com](mailto:editor@mossmotors.com). I guess I'll start by spreading a rumor. *M.M*







# It Is Well with My Soul

By Steve Tom

“Service Manager” ...The sign on the door looked official enough. Silver metal letters and a silver border raised above a rough textured black background. It just wasn’t what I expected to see. Then again, nothing about this place was anything like what I expected. Below the sign was a thin brass card holder with a paper insert that wasn’t quite straight. “Peter, St” was typed on the card.

I turned and looked at the receptionist to see if there had been a mistake, but she nodded. I knocked on the door.

“Just a minute.” The voice from within the room sounded friendly enough. I heard the familiar metallic tinkling of tools being put into the drawer of a metal tool box and the swish of the drawer being closed. A moment later the door opened. Peter was a medium sized man, with a neatly trimmed salt-and-pepper beard and eyes that twinkled behind bifocals. He was wearing dark blue pants and a medium blue shirt. The MG octagon was embroidered over one shirt pocket. Above the other pocket there was a white oval patch with a red border and his name embroidered in red letters. Peter wiped his hands on a shop rag. He took a quick glance at his right hand to make certain it was clean and then extended it. “Come in, come in,” he said cheerily. “We’ve been expecting you.” He motioned for me to take a seat as he sat down behind his desk.

Peter rummaged through some files in the desk. Apparently he didn’t find what he wanted, so he tried a filing cabinet against the wall. I looked around the room. It was a small, cluttered office with a small couch piled high with MG and BMC parts boxes. Black and white photographs of MG

racecars from the 1930s and ’40s hung on the wall, and a shelf held dozens of dusty trophies. A bright red Snap-On tool chest was wedged against the file cabinets. A pair of SU carburetors with ram air horns sat on top next to a Mallory dual-point distributor. A metal pan filled with what looked like the internals of a Shorrock supercharger occupied most of the desktop.

He carried a thick manila folder back to the desk, sat down, and began to flip through papers. “Let’s see,” Peter muttered, almost to himself, “no major offenses of any sort...a good husband...good father...generous with several local charities...a tendency to sleep late on Sunday mornings and then work in the garage...a golfer? Oh my! The language when you shanked the ball. Tsk, tsk, tsk. Let’s skip to the automotive section.” He flipped to the pages he wanted. “Lusted over a Mustang in high school...that’s pretty harmless...Hmmm. Seems you didn’t change the oil very often in that Mercury you had in college.” He peered at me over the top of his bifocals, and then turned

“The best time came after I made it through the worst time?”

back to the folder. “Bought a TC when you were in your early 40s...good work on the engine rebuild...drove it regularly...that’s good...not a trailer queen...what’s this? A VW steering box conversion???” Peter quickly flipped through several more pages and then looked thoughtful. “Normally that’s good for a few centuries in purgatory,” he said, directing his words toward me. “But, I see you frequently helped out other car collectors, and you influenced several younger people to begin collecting. I think we can overlook the steering box transgression.” He closed the folder and looked directly at the TC owner. “So,”

he said in a businesslike way. "What kind of a car would you like?"

I was startled. "I, I don't know," I said. "I really wasn't expecting that question." I thought about it for a moment. Then my eyes lit up. "How about a K3 Magnette?"

Peter smiled. "Always a K3," he said. "Or sometimes a Tickford Coupe. Eternity is a long time. You'll have plenty of time to play with any kind of an exotic car you'd like. But let's start you off with something a little simpler. How about a TC?" He pulled a small ledger out of his desk and flipped through the pages. "I see number 5311 is available. It's basically stock, although the previous owner really screwed up the wiring. He performed a few other modifications you might not approve of, but all bolt-on stuff. It runs well, although the synchros are pretty weak and the differential is about to blow. Yes, I think 5311 will do nicely."

"I thought everything in heaven was perfect," I said.

"Oh, it is. Most assuredly," Peter replied.

"Then why are you giving me a car with bad wiring and a bad differential?"

"Because it's the perfect car *for you*. Think back on all the times you drove your TC on earth. What was the most satisfying time? What was the drive that gave you the most pleasure?"

I thought about it. "It was probably the drive after I rebuilt the differential. I had already rebuilt the engine and the steering, but I had never really been able to relax and enjoy driving because the differential kept making noises. One day it ate a bearing and locked up solid. After I rebuilt it, the car ran perfectly. It was a chilly spring day, but the sun was shining and I was bundled up. I put on my goggles, dropped the windscreen, and took a three-hour drive through the foothills. The air was crisp and fresh. The trees were just beginning to leaf out, and there were wildflowers along the side of the road. There were no other cars. Just me, my TC, and the switchbacks. I loved listening to the exhaust when I double-clutched the downshifts."

"And what was the most frustrating time you ever spent with your TC?" Peter asked.

I didn't hesitate a second. "Rebuilding that differential. I'd never done a diff before and I was nervous the whole time thinking I was screwing something up. I put Prussian blue on the gears when I was trying to adjust the pinion shims, but I couldn't see the wear pattern. It looked so simple in the instructions, but their photos didn't look anything at all like the vague scratches I was seeing. And trying to set the preload on the bearings! I read

those instructions over and over again, but every time I read them they seemed to say something different. A friend took a look at it and noticed I had one of the bearings in backwards. Boy was I embarrassed! I had to take the whole thing apart and do it over."

"And do you see a relationship between the best and the worst times you spent with your TC?" he asked.

"The best time came after I made it through the worst time?" I replied tentatively.

"Exactly," Peter responded. "You enjoy surmounting a challenge. You find satisfaction in driving a car that *you* fixed, a car that wouldn't even be on the road if it wasn't for *your* skills. What would life be like with a TC that never broke, that never needed work?"

"I dunno. Kind of boring?" I guessed.

"Absolutely. And that's why TC 5311, with all its faults, is perfect for you."

"I never thought of it like that. Does everyone get a TC when they get to heaven?"

"Oh no." Peter quickly replied. "TCs aren't for everyone. We also have an MGA heaven, an MGB heaven, Triumph heavens, Healey heavens . . . there's even a heaven for Toyota Corollas, although just between you and me it's pretty boring. And of course Heaven isn't just about cars. There are heavens for every kind of pleasant experience you could possibly imagine. You can travel freely from one to another. And the wonderful thing about eternity is that you can spend as much time as you like in every one. You can work on your TC to your heart's content and still spend an eternity with your family. And you'll have plenty of time left over to spend with your friends."

"Whoa!" I blinked in amazement. "And I thought heaven was all about singing hymns of praise with a heavenly host."

"Oh we have a heaven for that, too" said Peter. "It's actually one of our most popular venues. And after the group sings





they have coffee and cookies in the Fellowship Hall. The coffee is a little weak for my tastes, but they like it."

I sat in stunned silence. I was so overwhelmed with this concept I didn't know what to say.

"Let me show you around the place," Peter offered. "I'll introduce you to a few of the other TC owners and show you the shops. I think you're going to especially like our nail salon."

"A nail salon?" I said suspiciously, glancing at my hands. A few fingernails had black grease underneath them, but that was normal. I certainly didn't think I needed to go to a salon.

"That's just what the owner calls it," Peter laughed. "You know the British sense of humor. It's really more of a

fastener shop. He has a few kegs of nails, but mostly he has nuts, bolts, screws, those special knurled nuts that hold in the instruments—you know. All the hard to find stuff. He specializes in the metric threaded bolts with Whitworth heads that MG liked to use. He's a virtual fountain of information if you ever need advice, and he loans out tools, too. If you ever need a Whitworth tap or die, that's the place to go."

I smiled and followed Peter out the back door. I knew I was going to like this place. *MM*



August 22, 2009  
Marty Snoop's grand-kids found their favorite spot to play.

Afterlife +2



March 16, 2012  
The young Durning family highlight in mid-March..

Afterlife +3



August 18, 2003  
Spent the day working with Tim, finding Gremlins and working out bugs in the wiring.

Afterlife +12

January 6, 2008  
VW Steering Box Conversion.....???

Afterlife -100!!



Note to self - set aside a special heaven for Doug Kniff.



A person wearing a white protective suit and blue pants is leaning over the engine compartment of a yellow Mini car. The person is using a tool to work on the engine. The car's hood is yellow and has some water droplets on it. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

# Might AS Well

By Rodney McDonald

“How could a car this small hold so much dirt, grease and oil,” I thought as I alternated between applications of degreaser and a paint scraper to the firewall of the little car. It was obvious after pulling the head off of the 998cc A-Series engine that the tappet chest cover gaskets were leaking and the oil mixed with overzealous lubrication and road dirt combined to make a black concrete-like substance. “There really ought to be word for this stuff,” I mumbled to myself as I noticed the growing pile of muck under the Mini.

Surprisingly to most people that hear this tale, this was not a step in a restoration of my 1973 New Zealand-built Mini. Instead, it began with the failure of the head gasket during a late fall afternoon pleasure drive along Mobile Bay in south Alabama.

After nearly ten years of trouble-free driving, the Mini had to be hauled on a rollback to my favorite local shop for a firm diagnosis. Richard Cunningham, proprietor of Classic Motorcar Services in Daphne, Alabama, confirmed his suspicion with a compression check. Having known

Richard for nearly twenty years, he kindly allowed me to assist in the teardown and eventual repair.

Removal of the head made it easier to find the nagging exhaust blow (loose pipe clamp) and allowed me to clean up a few otherwise unreachable areas. While the head was out for a skim, we painted the intake/exhaust manifold, cleaned up and painted the radiator and shroud and knocked the top layer of crud off the accessible parts of the engine room.

While we were deep in the scraping, blasting and painting of various Mini bits, Richard casually mentioned that it would be a snap to remove the front subframe with the engine block and drive axles in place. This is from a guy whose quick underbonnet cleanup project turned into a six-year full restoration of his already nice 1964 Jaguar E-Type. Anyone who owns and occasionally wrenches on their classic British car well understands the slippery slope called *Might as Well*.

I tried to feign a temporary loss of hearing but Richard was enthusiastic over the possibilities. “We can get to everything on the subframe. I checked

the Moss catalog and they've got all of the bushings, boots, ball joints and stuff we would need to make it right," he said with a bit of a wild stare. "It would be FUN." The die was cast.

The next weekend we were using the shop's lift to raise the body off of the front subframe, and it went remarkably well. Everything was on the subframe just as Sir Alec intended. Richard was right, in that we could now really get things cleaned up and painted. Lifting the engine block out of the subframe, Richard remarked, "We should probably have a look at the clutch, too." Even though the clutch seemed to be OK, I heard myself say, "Might as well."

We removed the drive axles and as I started to put them away for safekeeping, Richard said, "Hey, we need to have a look at the bearings, too. Moss has an improved bearing kit that looks like it would be a snap to install."

"Might as well," I sighed.

So now the Mini is outside getting its engine bay cleaned and ready for a paint touchup and the head gasket job that I thought could take a few days to do is stretching into its second month. But Richard and a group of friends in the South Alabama British Car Club have really pitched in and helped out by washing parts, sandblasting, painting and generally doing anything that needs to be done. The friendship of guys like that is one of the best parts of owning a classic British car.

It seems that whenever a maintenance project is underway it becomes a call-to-arms and the call is almost always answered by fellow enthusiasts

anxious to pay it forward and get someone else's grease under their nails for change. I've seen this firsthand in the strip out and repaint of an MG Midget engine bay, the disassembly of a Triumph TR6 in preparation for a body off frame restoration and other smaller projects that rally the troops. Pleasant banter and occasional ribbing keep the atmosphere light even when an especially tough task (like removal of mildly corroded cotter pins from the brake and clutch pedal clevises on a Mini) tests the limits of a home mechanic's patience.

As of this writing, the parts we need to reassemble the components to the subframe (and the subframe back on the car) are on order. It's hard not to act like a kid anticipating the arrival of Santa Claus but the excitement is similar. After renovating an MGB nearly 18 years ago I can well remember the satisfaction of actually putting things back together after having had them apart for so long.

Daydreams of improved ride and handling weaved their way through my thoughts as the powerwasher did its work. "Hey," Richard says, "new brake and clutch hoses are not at all expensive for this car. We should probably do them while it's apart."

All together, now: "Might as well."

The day's scraping and washing is over and as we push the now two-wheeled Mini back inside for the evening, I hear a familiar voice say, "It really wouldn't take much to strip everything off for new paint, you know." *MM*





# NEXT ROUND'S ON ME

By Tad McDonald

**A**fter many, many years of pining for a TR6, I was finally able to acquire a 1973 in remarkably good condition, which I drove to and fro along back roads and byways at breathtaking speeds. For four years, my manly mallard-hued motor was a ready companion, never failing to start, never failing to run, never failing to thrill. Until, one day, it didn't. I was stranded, armed with nothing more than a bag of tools, a bottle of water, and an ill-conceived belief that, whatever the problem, I could "fix it."

What an idiot.

Chaucer introduces us, in the *Canterbury Tales*, to an educated character (the Prioress) who speaks fluent French. Chaucer satirizes the Prioress' inability to speak the language as a native; rather, her vernacular is limited to that which she learned in a book.

When it comes to things automotive, I know exactly what Chaucer was talking about. What I know about cars I learned from surfing the web, reading books, and the patient (so far) tutelage extended by members of my online TR6 forum. I'm big in the lurking biz.

Let's be clear, while many high school folks took shop classes and learned skills that might be vigorously and beneficially applied in later life (e.g., auto mechanics, carpentry, metal work), I was busy making cupcakes and crepes Suzette in Home Economics. Why? Because, of course, that's where the girls were.

Sure, over the four decades since high school I dabbled in things mechanical, helping friends and family members affect car repairs or to rotate their tires. My assistance was limited, for the most part, to handing tools to someone doing the work. On occasion, I even managed to replace my own alternator and, one memorable time, a starter, always under the watchful eye

of someone who actually knew what they were doing (mostly my brother-in-law, a mechanic of some repute, who looks constantly at me as if saying, "How can you face yourself in the mirror each day?"). Upon reflection, most of my automotive "training" involved fetching and consuming beer. But I digress.

So what? you ask. So this, I say: Just because you're a mechanical moron is no reason you can't thoroughly enjoy your own magical mystery tour in your own magical, yet mysterious, motorcar.

Where was I? Ah, yes, broken down on the side of the road. Technically, I was at the exit of the local public library, safely pulled over to the side where I stopped to read a text message (Safety First! is my watchword). The sun shone gloriously, temperatures were unseasonable and comfy, hovering in the mid-60s. It was a GREAT day to be rendered inert in one's little British car.

While reading the brief text message, the content of which has absolutely no bearing on this story whatsoever, my beloved conveyance (we'll call him "PD" for the purposes of this story; mostly because that's his name, in memory of PD Eastman, the man who penned the ultimate automotive tome, *Go Dog, GO!*) ceased, for the first time EVER, to run. Naturally, I turned the key to restart his stout and reliable engine. For the first time EVER, he didn't (you know, start). He made lots of hopeful starting "noises," but none resulted in the desired result. I was, for the first time EVER, less than thrilled.

It's times like that when ones "book learning" can be a real kick in the shorts; it gives you false hope and a completely unfounded belief in yourself and your obviously limited capabilities. I hoisted the hood and got from the boot, the tools.

In all honesty, I had no idea what I was doing or what a bag of tools in the hands of an idiot could possibly



accomplish (for the briefest moment, I considered placing the bag behind a rear wheel in case PD, parked on an incline, decided to roll backward). Since I knew what I didn't know (a man's got to know his limitations; mine seem considerable), I called a gentleman in Louisiana I had met online through the 6-Pack.org forum. He was in the middle of a haircut but didn't hesitate to stop immediately and offer assistance. His name is Ken, and he is legendary for his knowledge and giving nature. With the patience of Job and the recognition he was not dealing with any ordinary dufus, Ken had me do all sorts of "things," using all sorts of "tools," my understanding of which was zilch. Sure, I can turn a wrench, but as my brother-in-law has learned, you better give me the right wrench, put it in my hand, and guide me to the correct nut. My cell phone battery running low, I let Ken go and attempted to follow his instructions, flying solo, as it were.

Frankly, I think I could have made better progress if I hadn't been constantly interrupted by all manner of folks, many of whom chatted amiably about British sports cars they had owned, or offered to call someone on my behalf, or to give me a lift, or to offer a bottle of water. Those dang people were really, really nice. I just wanted to shout, "I can do this!"

At some point, a truly Good Samaritan interrupted my unrequited search for a screw I had dropped while attempting to install a new "condenser" and started talking to me in some strange language about "points" and "distributors" and "coils." It turned out he was a member of a local British car club and knew more than a little bit about cars. It was embarrassing to find myself back in my usual role, handing tools to someone working on my car. I wondered if I'd ever seen beer being sold at the library counter.

Despite the veritable steamer trunk worth of spare parts I had carefully packed in my car, no "gizmo" or "whatsit" or "thingy" met the need; I was forced to turn to the ultimate roadside repair kit: a cell phone and a towing plan.

It's possible I wept when PD was dragged ignominiously upon the flatbed, dispatched in an efficient and timely fashion to save the day.

Over the course of the next thirty-six hours, I pestered my online brain trust, describing symptoms, following the sage advice offered, and posting the results of my diagnostic endeavors, all the while admitting freely my lack of automotive acumen (trust me, it was pretty evident from the outset). One guy actually complimented me for being unafraid to admit just how much I didn't know. Eventually, PD roared back to life!

So now, I can identify all the parts and pieces associated with a 1973 TR6 ignition system, I understand how they all work together (admittedly, I'm not totally versed on that condenser bit), I can gap points, and bypass switches, and test sparkplugs and plug wires and, well, I can do lots of stuff I couldn't do before. Most importantly, I know now the importance of a tiny little ground wire inside my distributor...

The point of this bastardized Chaucer's tale is that throughout it all, I had somewhere to turn for help. Despite my lack of experience and knowledge, no one made fun of me, no one turned their back. A community of car lovers, including Ken and that Good Samaritan on the side of the road, all pitched in to ensure my little British car regained its mojo and to make sure our hobby and its thrills are kept alive.

If you're one of those "car guys," be sure to keep lending that patient and helpful hand. If you're someone like me, the least you can do is buy the beer. *M.M.*

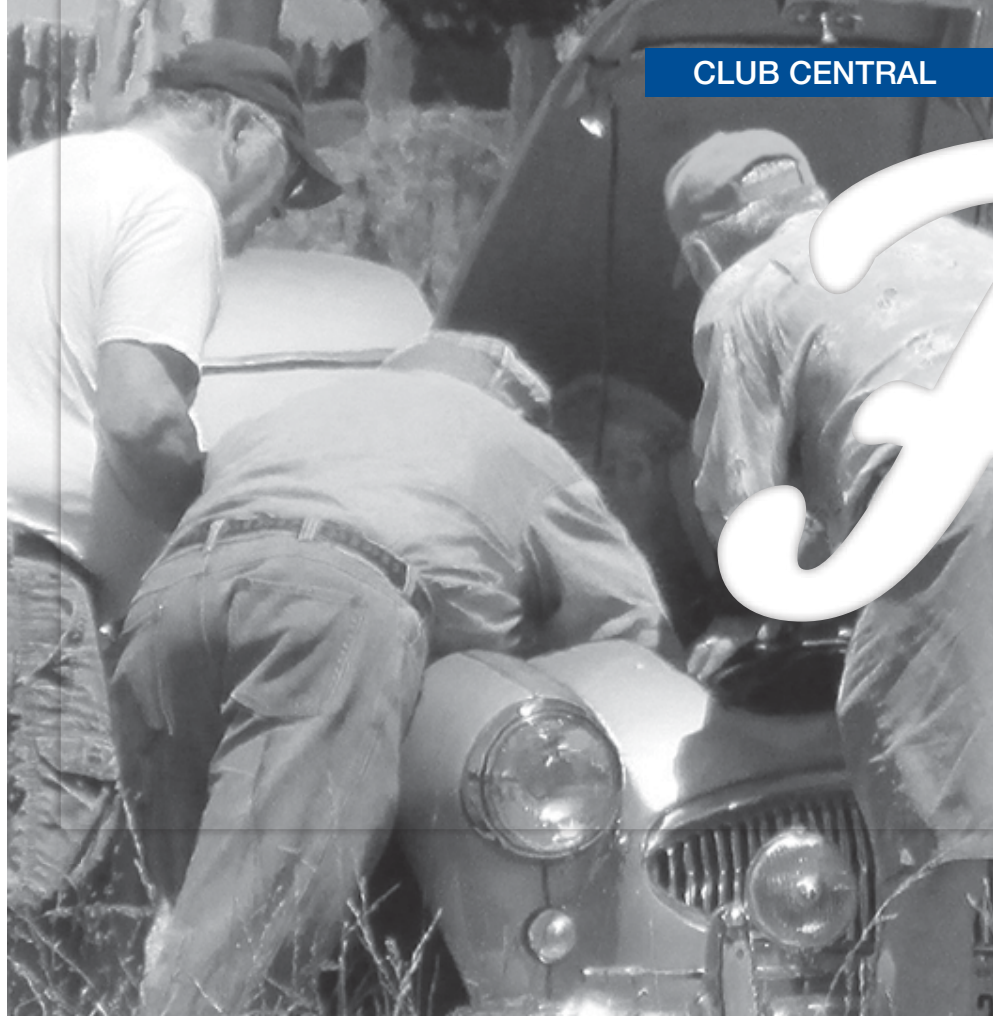
# THE BEST OF ENGLAND

More than 2,000 people cast their votes. While this isn't exactly science, it's still a decent sampling of Anglophiles. So, not including cars, what do readers say are the 10 best things to come out of England? Here are the top vote getters:

- 1 The Beatles:** They changed the world of music as group. The music changed the way people looked at themselves and world.  
-Butch Orend
- 2 English Pubs:** With cask-conditioned ales, and tasty pub food, the pubs are the heart and soul of the small towns in England.  
-Bob Pavlina
- 3 Fish & Chips:** I love eating fish & potatoes, helps to keep the ladies happy too.  
-Bill Mcenery
- 4 British Motorcycles:** Character and tradition. As a dear British friend explained it: "It was good enough for your grandfather. It's good enough for you."  
-Willi Waak
- 5 The Magna Carta:** Just a bunch of rebel barons out for themselves, yet was the start of the long path to individual freedoms.  
-Thomas Cordery
- 6 Winston Churchill:** The man Saved England, and maybe the World.  
-John Bushnell
- 7 Monty Python:** Simply the funniest comedy group ever to inhabit the face of the Earth.  
-Nathan Wendland
- 8 Rolls Royce Merlin Engines:** Made our P51s invincible and won the Battle of Britain in the Spits. Might not have been any LBCs without them!  
-Frank Rice
- 9 James Bond 007:** Come on! It's Bond, James Bond. He pushed a '63 Sunbeam to its limits in "From Russia with Love," and an Aston Martin beyond your imagination in "Goldfinger." All for God and country.  
-Karl Graewert
- 10 The English Language:** It is the most widely used language in the world facilitating communications and commerce.  
-Darrell Stonyer

To see the full list of submissions, visit [MossMotoring.com/best-of-england](http://MossMotoring.com/best-of-england).

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



I have been asked to provide a female perspective about the Tech Team of our Ohio Valley Austin-Healey Club. My credentials? I'm a Healey wife who has observed this team at work. Now I can identify a transmission—when it's out from under the car, that is. While I prefer things clearly labeled, these fellas thrive amongst various disassembled parts scattered in buckets, trays and other makeshift receptacles. In my opinion, these gearheads are a golden resource performing motoring miracles.

I'm told Healeys can be temperamental, almost fragile at times, but as one owner said, "After driving 3 years without a first gear, a weak reverse and a bent lay shaft, these Healeys are tough old beasts."

Testimonials and words of gratitude to the Ohio Valley Austin Healey Club (OVAHC) Technical Team are reported in articles in our monthly newsletter, *Newsleak*. The OVAHC is comprised of members (including the Tech Team), who reside in a wide radius of the Greater Cincinnati OH/Northern Kentucky area.

Seeing this Team in action is impressive. They're all characters-with-quirks and rugged individualists, who, with common Healey fervor, bond to work together efficiently like the soon-to-be well-oiled machines they are repairing.

This intrepid Tech Team, possess another interesting trait. While kibitzing during a break, or troubleshooting an assignment, they seem to be happily immersed in surrounding aromas of exhaust fumes, welding incense, leaking oil and smoky wisps curling from wiring...Esprit Parfum de Healey.

In a tech session, there seems to be a hierarchy of specialized skill sets and a natural, unspoken order of assigned tasks for each tech guy. The head engineer guru barks out orders with the precision and presence of a four-star general. Bouts



# Healey Helpers

By Cindy Loos

of frustration are nonexistent or quickly joked away. Lots of levity and stubborn perseverance. Team members fall into focused, synchronized action in their Healey euphoric zone.

These supple, seasoned 60-to-70-somethings perform collective hands-on acts in positions envied by even the most extreme contortionists. And of task flexibility: They can execute a wide range of services “as simple as advice on oil types to a complete engine/transmission rebuild.” The Team can not only provide services in their well-stocked garages, but also on roadside shoulders, underpasses, scenic overlooks and parking lots. In the great outdoors, the testosterone *really* flows, along with techie wizardry. In trip caravan form, there is a high probability of repair success due to expansive supply of tools possessed between all the Healey men. If, incredibly, they don’t have the needed part or tool, adaptive jury-rigging is in their bag of tricks.

Healey boots hold an amazing array of common and not-so-common spare parts that have traveled hundreds, if not thousands of miles awaiting their save-the-day use. No wonder my Healey husband limits me to a tiny toddler-sized soft, crushable travel bag. (Of course, one must leave *some* space for the marvelous finds one must own.)

I must reprise one particularly memorable bonnet up/hard luck event en route to a Conclave. After hearing a short series of loud backfires, the BJ7 broke caravan rank and drifted (thankfully) onto the shoulder of the road. The Tech guys, reacting with immediate, almost rehearsed action, pulled over and initiated a roadside tech session. Determined to perform diagnostics, one Tech made a swan dive into the engine compartment and, with legs akimbo, seemed to be waving like a dolphin at passing motorists who sped by gawking. The “Healey Huddle”

## EVENTS

### Show & Event Calendar

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



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## MOSS MOTORFEST



### #MossMotorfest

Use the hashtag #MossMotorfest when sharing your Moss Motorfest moments on Twitter or Instagram, whether you’re taking a tour of the Moss facility, enjoying a cocktail at the Keystone Truck & Tractor Museum, or admiring the sportscars next to you.



Are you prepping your LBC before the event? Share that too! Connect with car lovers and join the fun.

commenced and, after more than an hour of scrambling for various tools and more yoga-like postures in and around the car, victory was announced by the restored roar of the Healey engine, followed by applause and sighs of relief. The bonnet was slammed shut and motoring was resumed. Once again, an amazing tech “leave no man—or Healey—behind” success. A guess that it was the piston was wrong. (It seems one Healey wife, in particular, always blames the pistons.) Actual diagnosis: Bad condenser. (Lots of condensers were in “boots’ stock.”) That experience became one of the many archived motoring tales to be repeated (and likely embellished) among techs and non-tech car enthusiasts alike, whilst “sampling” varietal grain and grape libations.

Compensation, one asks? This problem-solving team is rewarded with satisfaction of quality work, performance, completion of task and, most importantly, having helped others. (I recall a rather unique payback from a grateful Jensen owner, who trimmed and de-vined some Tech members’ trees.) However, take note Healey owner: Prerequisite to hosting this well-oiled, dynamic group is ongoing fluid and fuel exchange—lots of beer and some pizza.

### In Others Words

Not sure why I didn’t think of this earlier. No need for me to say what’s already been said. Our club newsletter regularly glows with comments from grateful Tech Team service recipients:

“Why put your car in a shop? What you have going on sounds like a Tech Session. How about I round up some of our guys and we’ll come fix up your car for free?”

*A new Healey owner asks the Tech Director for shop recommendations for AH work.*

“A helluva deal ... These guys tore into my car—and I mean that literally—and worked their tails off from 9:30 in the morning to 5:30 at night. All it cost me was about a case and a half of beer and one bottle of Chardonnay. What a great help these guys are!”

*New Healey owner (pinching himself to ensure he wasn’t in a dream state)*

One appreciative Sprite owner whose car was the target of a repair wrote an ode to the group’s prowess. Here, in part:

They spoke a few words, to the car they did attend,

Pulled the master cylinder and dropped the rear end.

In just a few hours with the wrenches a’ flying,

The work was done so pizza I was buying.

To all who turned a wrench or touched a screw,

I say from my heart, a sincere Thank You!

And of romancing a Healey: These Tech guys heartily tackled a Lotus-powered owner purchase on Valentine’s Day.

*“Several members helped express their love for my Jensen-Healey by drilling holes beneath the trunk to finally release a stuck latch. Many welcome accessories were revealed, sans gold doubloons. With the techs’ collective electrical expertise, some Lucas gremlins living behind the dash were evicted. Thanks a bunch. You really impressed and surprised me with your tremendous support. We had fun, got the damn trunk open, and more...”*

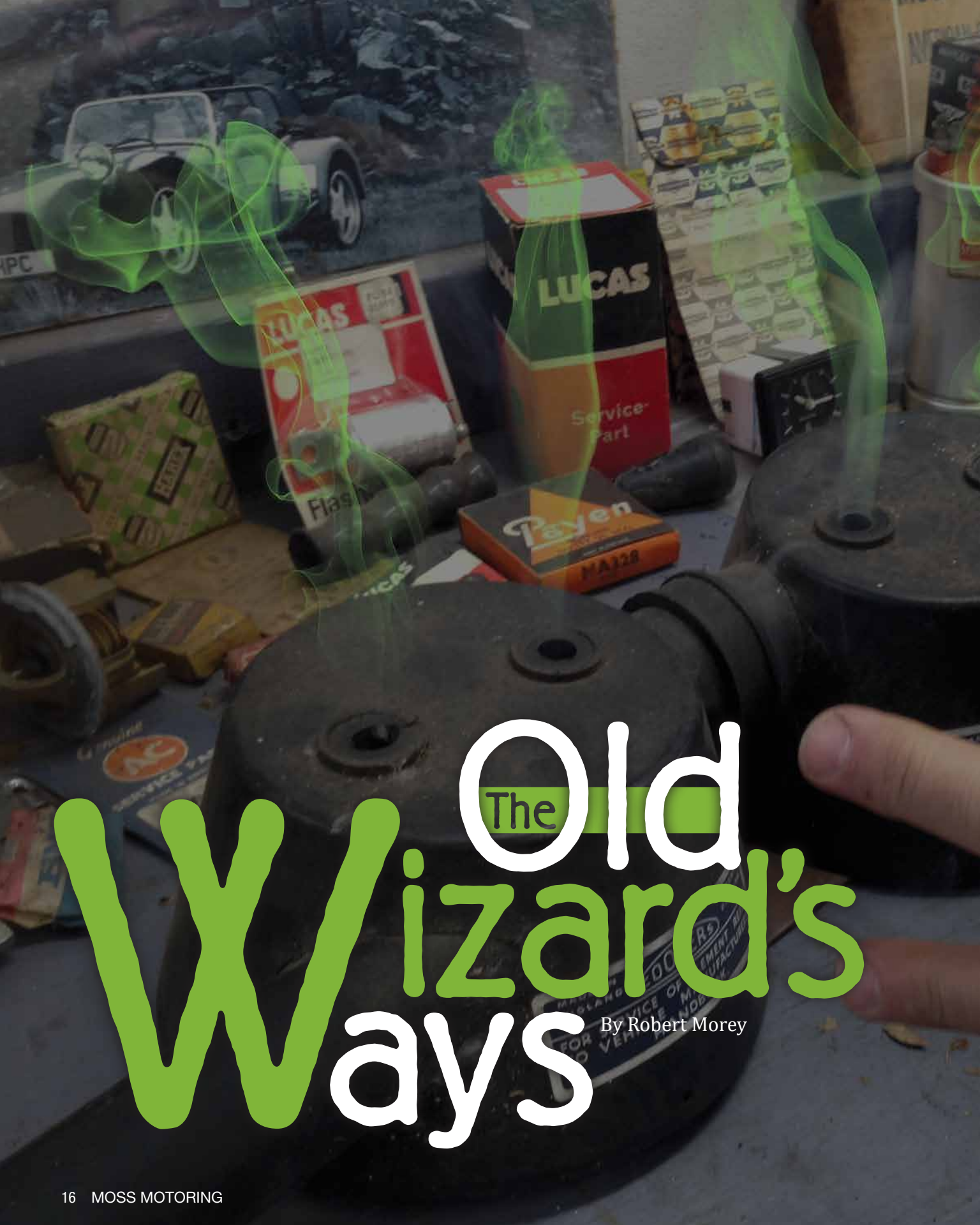
Fast-forward to a near future Conclave 2016: Wheels Over the River “Healey Family Reunion” hosted by the Ohio Valley Austin Healey Club. This event is the Austin-Healey Club of America’s annual national convention and celebration of all things Healey. The 2016 site will be held in the Northern Kentucky area “across the bridge” (Ohio River) from Cincinnati. No shades of grey for Conclave attendees wondering if assistance will be available for any car contingencies. Attendees can be assured, if any mechanical, electrical, “mysterical” woes befall their classic British metal possessions there will be a Tech Team of the highest, most dedicated order that will restore calm and drivability. And with a sparkle in his eye, the OVAHC Tech Director will inform you, “All work is guaranteed to be the best that we could do on that given day and worth every cent you are charged for the labor, which is free.” *MM*

*Disclaimer: There may be other Austin-Healey clubs that have assembled mechanically-savvy members as a resource to assist their members. So the fact that I’m espousing high praise for this OVAHC Tech Team, as among the best, most organized, responsive, reliable and skill-diversified, is completely unsubstantiated, based on no statistical, scientific data. However, I surmise some other AH club folks reading this may experience a shred or two of envy. Perhaps this crack Tech Team should expand their reach.*

*One more item: Attention to all you OVAHC Tech men (you know who you are). Words to you, o’wise guys: Don’t let all this hyperbole-like commentary go to your heads. You know the driving force behind every good man...*







# The Old Wizard's Ways

By Robert Morey



The Wizard sat still, trying to shake off the sluggish mind of sleep, trying to move slowly every little muscle starting at the toes and working up. This seemed the safest way to get all the old parts moving and prepare himself for a day of the new spells, “Ha the new spells!” What a far cry from the magic of his childhood, so sad an excuse for magic; again he could not move.

Sitting another 10 minutes and moving all the parts of his fingers, he finally got up for a small breakfast to stop the hunger. This simple act brought up the courage to get on with it; the coffee brought about some more thinking but it was mostly sad. He looked about the room and there were not more than a few inches anywhere on the walls where there did not hang a tool or a part and all the available shelves were filled to overflowing with the potions of his craft.

There were of course the favorites: the degree wheel, the porting and polishing tools, the CC’ing rig with its clear glass so covered with dust it was no longer transparent, the scales so long unused they had taken on the appearance of a prop in a movie. This was a shop of the old magic and every corner proved it.

The decorations were all of old magic from the time of glory, the time of pride and the time when all that magic had a feeling of permanence. Now there is none of that and the children know not of what he speaks. Talking to the young he can tell he speaks to them in an old tongue full of words they do not comprehend: “end for end and total weight,” “setting the cam timing with offset keys.” The tools around the shop were bizarre to them too. “Fettle”...it trims sharp edges from combustion chambers?! Why?? ... No need to go to the trouble to do this lesson again for some child who will never need it.

The Wizard slumped over his desk and wondered if the coffee was still warm—the only pleasure he would likely have today. Then on the phone a familiar voice and a request for old magic—an MGA needs a fresh engine—oh how fun! A real job and being allowed to do some of the old spells.

The Wizard fantasized for a while about a patron who would have him build a Lotus TwinCam like the old days when they would be waiting in line for a build complete with all the magic spells and some of his own making.

The Wizard caught himself and proceeded with the paperwork and parts chasing, seeing that the cost of old Magic is a bargain compared to the new, plastic parts more costly than steel! Amazing how the world has changed. He cursed the tiny computers that so many had polluted the old cars with—an ignition module in a 50s car? What a foolish move! Not even a puff of smoke when it fails and they all believe when it does that it must be the only one that ever failed.

The Wizard would always nod at the glass jar on the shelf he kept full of the dead modules to try to make them understand: “the new magic is not good magic for the old cars.” If he saw any glow of understanding in the customer, then he would point out the other atrocities that had been wrought on their car: alternators and the ground conversion

it required, modern headlights to see pointlessly farther than necessary, LED lights which look so wrong and require so much change to the car that any failure in the system now requires a fantastic amount of work to correct (compared to the simple act of replacing a bulb), the gear reduction starters (a curse indeed!). What foolishness to put a thing like that on a wonderful car; a pile of those also live here under a bench.

The Wizard feeling better now remembered some of the good jobs, where a wise owner removed all traces of modern equipment and made his car correct; the only failing in a totally correct car is that it is much less likely to come visit his shop! But still this is not a problem.

What is a problem is when so many insist, "I need AC." "Put the top down." "I need iPod interface..." "Are you mad? Get earphones and don't modify the car!" and with this admonishment that fell on no one's ears he realized he had again been talking out loud to himself.

He settled in again to reminisce. He closed his eyes and in his mind he could see his mentor the great Wizard so many years ago—when all the great marques were still sold new—and feel the importance of his teachings. He remembered that the other apprentice went on to work with the Bentley Le Mans team. How he would have loved that! He thought of another wizard from where he studied and the great stories of F1 adventures that wizard told, the engine building magic he learned from him, magic used by the greats—Colin Chapman, Enzo Ferrari, McLaren, and so on.

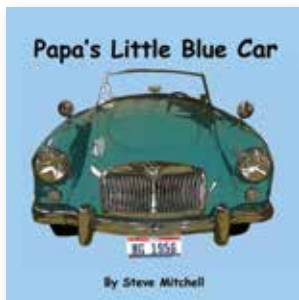
He opened his eyes and saw across the shop a '67 Lotus, '53 Aston Martin, and the start of it all—his '62 TR4. A smile of contentment spread across his face. *MM*

Robert Morey owns British Sports Car Consulting and is a member of the British Car Club of Charleston. This story was featured in their newsletter, "The Windscreen."



## Creative Customers

Inspiration is a wonderful thing, and we're proud to share the places our customers' bright minds take them. In the case of Steve and Felicity, you can find their literary creations on Amazon and Amazon.ca.



Papa's Little Blue Car  
Available through  
Amazon Books

*"...as the saying goes, an idea was born. So I combed through all my pictures and found some that illustrated the tall tales I tell my grandkids about my little blue car. The little book turned out well and my family encouraged me to make it available to more old car guys like myself. I think it's a good way for us car nuts to introduce our hobby to our kids and grandkids. My sense of humor keeps my hobby of working on and driving a 1956 MGA in perspective—sometimes you gotta laugh to keep from crying."*

~Steve Mitchell

*"I wanted to celebrate MGs, feeling the wind in your hair, and being one with the universe through the breathtaking beauty of the landscape that is the mountains, foothills and prairie. My passion for travel and convertibles began in childhood. I knew already then that a sense of adventure and boldness is needed to drive an MGB roadster."*

~Felicity Foster



I Cannot Rest from Travel  
Available through  
Amazon.ca

# Mastering the Long Cut

By Dan Berglund



I'm parked on the grass alongside Highway 59 just outside Montevideo, Minn. I've positioned my car in front of a bright green sign announcing "Lac qui Parle County." As I set up the tripod and camera, a passing Ford pulls over and stops. The driver rolls down his window and asks if I'm having trouble and need help.

"Thanks," I say. "I'm just snapping photos for a sort of scavenger hunt. I'm fine, really."

He pauses for a couple of seconds. "What is that?"

"It's a Mini Pickup," is my practiced reply. "Cousin to the Mini Cooper."

Another pause, only this time with thoughtful nodding. Soon his window is up and he's on his way.

These Little British Cars on the side of the road are magnets that draw the compassionate and the curious. As a participant in the Moss Motoring Challenge, I've parked on many

shoulders over the last year and a half. As a result, I've met a surprising number of motorists who offered assistance when I wasn't broken, volunteered directions when I knew where I was, and even asked if I was shooting pictures because I was selling the car.

## Moss Motoring Opportunity

It's the folks at Moss Motors who call this a challenge. To me, it's more of an opportunity. Although I drive my Mini thousands of miles a year, participation in 2014's contest inspired me to make more trips, to plan those trips more strategically, and to add "long cuts" to my routes whenever possible.

In fact, the Challenge inspired me to take a serious long cut to a favorite car show in Eastern Washington. The annual pilgrimage normally involves a straightforward round trip—east and west across the Cascade Mountains—of about 400 miles. However, with

Challenge points to gather, I opted to drive south to Oregon first. From there I turned left to follow the Columbia River east, and then I looped back into Eastern Washington to the show before crossing the mountains for home. The result was a drive of more than 650 miles—along with Challenge points for a Z town, an H county, a U county, a tunnel, a waterfall, a World War I memorial, a National Park and, of course, the car show.

By year's end, I was adding long cuts on my way to the grocery store. ("Honey, I'm headed to the market to pick up a gallon of milk and a Dead End sign.")

The Moss Motoring Challenge is in full swing for 2015, and I have two drives planned to British Columbia this year. On one of those trips, a long cut might stretch into North Cascades National Park, and I know there's a town up there with fewer than 100 residents, and a one-way bridge, and a ghost town, and some falling rocks, and... *MM*

# There & Back..



By Ron Mulson  
Wedding photos by  
Casey Connell Photography



# Again

I stood on the wooden floor of the barn and stared at the carcass. It was a tub, a driveline, frame rails, and suspension. The engine was painted, carburetors rebuilt, water pump and cooling lines replaced. If you looked closely you could see the shiny new brake lines that were tucked along the frame to eventually direct the new fluid from the new master cylinder to the new wheel cylinders. There was no wiring, no dash, no interior, no fenders or doors. The fuel tank and instrument panel were stored twenty feet away. The windshield was leaning against a wall. I thought about the time that was left and how many other things that I needed to do that had absolutely nothing to do with the car. I realized it was time to move in a different direction.

My wife Linda took the news much better than I expected. The car would not be ready for our daughter's July 4th wedding.

The 1952 MGTD first came into my life in high school. My father, Ron Sr., owned a garage and decided to buy a car to restore. I recall riding in the tow truck to pick out of a backyard the very rusty black sports car that possessed such beautiful lines. It was slow going as the car was taken down to the tub and chassis. I chipped

away at it as time allowed and, as a graduation gift, my parents surprised me by giving me the registration. It was still years until it was drivable, and virtually everyone that I know from that time period has a memory of working on the car in some capacity. Eventually the MG became my primary transportation. It always started and never broke down with a problem that required more than a tap on the fuel pump.

I met my future wife while working at my father's garage, and I am certain the MG was a major asset for me in getting the attention of the prettiest girl in town. On our wedding day her father drove her to the church in the MG decorated with flowers. After the wedding reception, as we drove home on a twisty country road, an approaching truck veered into our lane as we came around a tight turn. I cranked the wheel right and then left and the car held its line from asphalt to dirt and back to asphalt. It had been a close call and when we put the car to sleep in the barn that night I still recall giving it a pat on the steering wheel before turning off the ignition and headlights.

We drove the car a great deal, and when our daughter Jessica was born we put a wool blanket



across the driveshaft tunnel and made it a three seater. Three years later our son Derek got the middle seat and Jess moved to the space behind the seat. We were reduced to short rides on the back roads near home. Eventually the car saw less use and sat in the barn.

The brakes were the first to go. The master cylinder that had been rebuilt multiple times began to leak. The wheel cylinders froze up. Rust showed through the lacquer in countless places. The car needed another complete restoration.

I never forgot about the car. I stockpiled parts for the future. One year it was a stainless exhaust. The next I bought wheel cylinders and a new master cylinder. I would ask for gift certificates to Moss knowing that one day there would be time.

### No Time to Spare

Rather than slow down, life accelerated dramatically. My daughter's boyfriend Pat proposed to her and a wedding was planned. My wife decided early in the process that I was going to be driving Jess to her wedding in the MG. I had nearly a year to get the car ready, so I did not anticipate any real problems. The car was taken apart down to the tub, frame, suspension and driveline. All of the old wiring was taken out, the interior was removed and stored, and I began to install new parts as it sat on wooden blocks in the barn.

Two things went wrong that I had not considered. First, the winter was especially cold and long, making mechanical progress difficult. The second issue was even more unpredictable: the wedding photographer saw our old Dutch Barn as a perfect backdrop. For some reason this changed my wife's perspective on the condition of the property. Everything had to be fixed and everything had to be painted. "But the people who are coming have been to the house many times and seem to like it the way it is." I debated and lost. It wasn't even close.

Siding, sills, trim, scraping and painting. It all got done, but the clock had been running the entire time. I would not get the car finished for the wedding.

### Going Full Throttle

On Saturday, the 14th of June, less than three weeks before the wedding, everything changed. Linda was having a conversation with my father's wife Loretta about the wedding plans and mentioned how the MG wasn't going to be finished in time. That same morning my father drove to see my brother, Tom. Then my brother unexpectedly called me to ask what was happening with the car. I told him the body was a disaster and the car was in a million pieces all over the barn. "I'm coming over to take a look," he said. Apparently, by the expression on his face, "a million

pieces" and "disaster" looks much worse than it sounds over the phone. On Tuesday we hauled everything out of the barn and brought it to the garage. After a waterblasting on Wednesday, on Thursday the 19th, the restoration officially began.

Tom's perspective was inspiring. "Let's go full throttle and see how far we can get," he said. Tom sealed, primed, and sanded during the day, shouldering most of the work on his own. I was limited to what I could contribute at this point because he had told me to "keep my grubby, greasy hands away from his bodywork." Tom wasn't sure at this point if the car could be finished in time. I, on the other hand, was certain. I knew that once he and my father were involved in the project, failure was simply not an option.

Soon, the once rusty panels were smooth and the color of grey primer. Wimbledon White paint first made its appearance on Friday the 20th. Once the firewall was painted, things began to accelerate. While Tom massaged the body and fenders back to new condition, I started on the wiring and mechanicals. On Saturday the wiring harness went in, the instrument panel was replaced, and the components that mounted to the firewall were installed. On Monday we ran the engine. As we progressed, the need for parts consistently came to the surface. At this point, when I was







speaking to the Moss representatives, I would ask if the parts were in Virginia, which meant short shipping times, or California. As luck would have it, all of the essentials in my late parts orders were in Virginia. As the week continued, Tom went on with the bodywork, finishing painting panels on Thursday the 26th. We began reassembling the body on the next day, exactly one week before the wedding.

Sunday afternoon capped off the weekend when my father and his wife stopped in to check on the progress and helped lift the hood in place. The next day I gave the car a shake-down. The brakes were a little spongy and the carburetors needed more attention but it drove well and shifted just as I remembered. On Tuesday, July 1st, the car left the shop for the trip to my house and its place in the freshly painted barn. It was the longest trip that the car had taken in over two decades. As I was driving, the skies began to leak rain. I pulled the car inside just as it picked up intensity. The rain was to continue for the rest of the week.

Because of the rain, it was the last time that the car would be out of the

barn until the morning of the wedding. I had a number of concerns but countered them with the overriding belief that the MG had never failed me and certainly would not do so on the day of my daughter's wedding.

July 4th was overcast with a threat of rain and there was no time for additional adjustments or testing. Wearing my tuxedo I brought the car out of the barn for the first time since it had come home. It fired immediately and had never looked better. I had hedged my bets on good Karma by putting a box of tools and a test light behind the seat where no one could see. The photographers snapped away as the car seemed to glow, joyfully back in the middle of a family activity again.

Jess looked beautiful as she posed for photos from the passenger seat. It was time for us to drive the eight miles to the reception. As we pulled out of the driveway and drove up the road I listened and felt for any potential problem. My daughter laughed and joked with me the entire time.

Jess and Pat were to wed in an outdoor, lakeside ceremony. The plan was for me to drive Jess up to a small walking bridge and escort her across

and up the aisle. The two of us sat in the car, away from everyone else in the world and waited for the signal. As we sat there talking, it flashed through my mind that I had not fully tightened the bolt that retains the steering column in a collar under the dash. I reached back to the box of tools, grabbed two adjustable wrenches, and tightened the collar while we both laughed. At last, the signal was given, and I drove my daughter to the start of the rest of her life.

The evening flew by and fireworks signaled the end of the celebration. It was time for my wife and I to drive home from a wedding in the MG as we had so many years before. The engine fired to life as I reached for controls that were familiar even in the darkness of the unlit parking lot. I pushed the car a little more, revving higher between shifts the way I did years ago. It responded flawlessly. The ride home was over much too soon. I pulled the car into the same barn that I had thirty-three years earlier. Linda smiled at me as I patted the steering wheel, turned off the ignition and headlights, and climbed out. *MM*

# SHORTCUTS

## Johnny's Coming Along

The Iowa chapter of Drive Away Cancer (DAC) has been doing some work on Johnny, the 1965 TR4A that's bringing a community together. Through a number of tech sessions, a group made up of the Iowa British Car Club and Drive Away Cancer advocates have been reconditioning Johnny to carry on the tradition of "spreading smiles one mile at a time." We're thrilled to be a part of such an incredible endeavor and, in the words of DAC driver, Shawn Frank, it's "heartwarming to see every corner of this car occupied by an eager helping hand." Read more about Johnny and Drive Away Cancer at [www.mossmotoring.com/triumph-heart](http://www.mossmotoring.com/triumph-heart)



## Cars For A Cure

After Mason Watson's mother passed away from breast cancer in 2008, Mason decided to use his automotive design skills as a way to commemorate her memory and fight breast cancer disease. Mason now designs and sells shirts with original automotive art, and donates 20% from each purchase to The Breast Cancer Research Foundation®. [www.carsforacureapparel.com](http://www.carsforacureapparel.com)

## Still Motion: A Tribute to Vintage Racing

Video recording is prohibited at the annual Monterey Motorsports Reunion at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca. But that didn't stop the automotive enthusiasts at eGarage from taking 22,387 photos and stitching them together to create a stunning ultra-high-def (4k) still-motion film as a tribute to the tradition of vintage racing. [www.egarage.com/videos/laguna-seca-still-motion-4k/](http://www.egarage.com/videos/laguna-seca-still-motion-4k/)



## The Evolution of British Sports Cars

Moss' very own Johnny Oversteer provides a thorough explanation on the differences between torque and horsepower and historically why our British sports cars are more equipped with the former. In the words of reader Darrin Broderick, the article is "Bloody brilliant." Read the whole article at [www.mossmotoring.com/stroke-origin-species-evolution-british-sports-car/](http://www.mossmotoring.com/stroke-origin-species-evolution-british-sports-car/)

## WHO WE'RE FOLLOWING ON INSTAGRAM

### @Classiccars\_in\_Tokyo

The classic car culture is Tokyo is alive and this feed curates images of classics from car meetings and events around Tokyo.

### @Hagertyclassiccars

With a history tidbit to go with every image, you'll surely learn a new fact about your favorite car.

### @Vintagesupercars

Beautiful, sleek, timeless: the perfect mix of classic car inspiration

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1275 Sprite/Midget	180-668	79.95
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1962-80 MGB	180-718	79.95
1970-76 TR6	580-778	99.95

**Hood Lift Kit**

Lifting and lowering your Spitfire bonnet shouldn't be a struggle, and with this bonnet lift kit it doesn't have to be. This kit provides ample support with powerful, built-in gas springs that not only make lifting and lowering the hood easier, they do most of the work for you. What's more, this kit is designed and custom built with functionality in mind, so no drilling is necessary! In short, this kit will keep it simple for you so you can get to the good part worry free.

1962-78 Spitfire	867-105	89.95
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**Quick Lift Battery Cover**

Get easy access to your MGB's battery with this Quick-Lift Battery Cover, no tools necessary! Made in the USA with stainless steel quarter fasteners, this cover is both handy and quality made. E-coated with a gloss black finish, this cover replaces your existing battery cover with improved quality and convenience.

1975-80 MGB	456-276	69.95
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