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THE WELL-TRAINED EAR

BY ROBERT GOLDMAN

Longtime British car owners have evolved the ability to hear at a very special frequency. The medical name for this ability is long and hard to pronounce, so for the sake of conversation we will simply refer to it as “parts falling off.” The uninitiated might easily think a small stone has been kicked up by a tire and thrown against a wheel arch, but the experienced owners will recognize the difference; they can instantly recognize that metal-strikes-metal sound and will quickly glance in the rear view mirror.

While exiting the freeway on my way to work the other day, I heard that sound. Glancing up at the mirror, I caught what looked like a nut and a washer. When the “parts falling off” sound is accompanied by the “parts seen bouncing down roadway in the mirror” look, the unconscious mind makes a snap judgment regarding just how badly that bit is needed. I see a few nodding heads in the audience. Been there, done that, eh?

The washer appeared to be both fairly large and shiny. A large, shiny washer most likely would have originated from that prototype TR4 rear tube shock conversion kit I was trying. Moments later my theory was validated by a new and satisfying clunk from the rear end. “Satisfying” in this instance refers more to psychological affirmation of my superior powers of diagnosis—as opposed to being pleased about parts falling off.

I told you that story to set up this one about another new product from the Moss R&D team. A buddy of mine has just finished building a fresh motor for my TR4. For the first time in my life I’ll have a TR4 with four working cylinders, as opposed to the years I’ve spent driving TR2.8s and TR3.7s. We got our hands on an aluminum oil sump for the TR4, but it didn’t

fit properly. This led to a discussion about designing a really cool aluminum sump, which our R&D group have now done... for the MGB.

Now, I know that an MGB sump won’t fit my TR4, but with a little input from Kent Prather, the multi-championship-winning SCCA legend, we think we’ve built a real winner. The die-cast MGB Super-Sump (so don’t give me that job naming stuff in the marketing department) incorporates extensive competition-inspired baffling around the oil pickup, a finned bottom for added cooling, and a slightly

increased capacity. The oil pan’s casting is stronger than a stock stamped steel piece, so it provides additional stiffening to the bottom of the block as well. For competition, or serious street performance, we’ve also designed an optional windage tray. Your original dipstick will work fine with the new alloy pan.

Dear MGB owners, I really, really need you to please buy these great new oil pans, because how else will I justify asking R&D to make the TR3/4 oil pan I wanted in the first place?

All joking aside, between Purchasing and R&D, we have some terrific new pieces coming. They run the gamut from sourced products like the new Classic Gold brake pad set, to some great new R&D projects like the MGB alloy sump. After testing this stuff on guinea pigs like me, we expect every new product to give years of service—and without ever falling off. **BM**



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Bugeye Birthday

Fifty years ago, a car came forth that turned the sports car world on its ear: the Austin-Healey Sprite. It packed a lot of charm, performance and value into a tiny shape, and enthusiasts have been fans ever since. Look for a full retrospective on this milestone car in this very issue.



50 Years of Triumphs

Triumph Travelers Sports Car Club of the greater San Francisco Bay Area is celebrating 50 full years of existence. Triumph Travelers is the oldest continuously operating Triumph marque club in the U.S. It was formed by a Triumph dealership, Allinger Motors of Palo Alto, California, in 1958.



As the membership grew, club officials realized that the club could become its own entity. Today the club offers monthly meets for its 100-plus members, while planned activities include driving tours, parties, rallies and test and tune sessions.

Club officials are holding a special anniversary party during Triumphfest 2008, a gathering that celebrates all things Triumph. It takes place October 2-5 in South Lake Tahoe, Nevada. The club's Web address is triumphtravelers.org.

A Weekend at the Track With Prather Racing

The June Sprints is the second most prestigious race throughout the SCCA racing season, and Moss

Motors-sponsored Prather Racing made a big showing during the June 20-22 event. The team brought along Kent Prather's MGA, Jesse Prather's Miata and customer Bob Bramlage's Miata. Kent and Bob participated in the F Production class, while Jesse ran in E Production. "With the Runoffs moving to Road America in 2009, we decided a preview of the track to check out gearing and the line was in order," Jesse explains.



The challenging four-mile course is fast

with long, sweeping corners, as well as some tight 90-degree turns. On Friday, the drivers' average speed was well over 90 mph and top speeds were around 130 mph. "Yet we found our lap times just a bit off the local drivers' times," Jesse reports.

"Following a debriefing session where we analyzed and replayed racing footage, we were ready to improve our qualifying positions." On Saturday, both Jesse and Kent qualified third in class.

After the green flag dropped for Sunday's race,

Jesse moved into second position and Kent took third in F Production. The team's next big outing will be the season-ending SCCA National Championship Runoffs at Heartland Park Topeka, and you can keep tabs on the team online at pratherracing.com.

Leo Long Passes

We were saddened to hear of the death of Leo Long, owner of Victoria British. His long-term involvement with British sports cars has helped to make the hobby what it is today. A successful entrepreneur who gave back to his community, Leo was active in the Boy Scouts of America and local business. Our best wishes go to his family and all of the employees of Long Motor Corporation, parent company of Victoria British.

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You have questions and we have trunnions—we mean answers! Compliments, comments and castigations are all welcome at Motor Mail. Please send yours to editor@mossmotors.com or via USPS to:

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Goleta, CA 93117



Super B

I enjoyed reading the article "MGB V8 Restomod" in the Late Winter 2008 issue of *British Motoring* and I thought you might like to see my "improved" 1975 MGB Roadster. I call it "Super Toy." I won't bore you with the details since Mr. Shimp pretty much covered the trials and tribulations of such conversions. The engine is a Ford Motorsport 302/5.0L crate motor, aluminum GT40 heads, roller camshaft, roller tip rocker arms, Edelbrock Performer Air-Gap intake, Road Demon carburetor, T-5 transmission, all 8-inch Ford rear end narrowed to fit the "B." Needless to say, extreme caution is needed when in 1st and 2nd gear in order to maintain control!

Signed,
William M. Lane
Groveland, California

Small Car, Small Note

Thanks for sending the magazines and just wanted to thank you for the article you did on my MG Midget. My husband loved it, and it made both of us very happy.

Thanks,
Diane Ohlendorf
Beecher, Illinois



TR6 Spoiler—Beautiful Reproduction as Original

The Moss Motors Product Team has been working over-time again! Now on our shelves is our beautifully reproduced TR6 spoiler. Modern manufacturing and materials are what set our TR6 spoiler apart from the rest.

Moss Engineers used new old stock original spoilers as our templates for tooling. Samples were made for fit and finish, and tested over and over until we had a spoiler that looked like a factory original in all respects, but more durable.

Even more impressive is the price! Production in large quantities means lower prices, and Moss is now able to reduce the retail price nearly in half!

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- Originally fitted to '73-'76 TR6s; ours will also bolt on to '69-'72 TR6s
- Made from ultra-durable High Density Polyethylene

TR6 Spoiler	855-095	\$144.95
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MGB Brake Master Cylinders

Change to Finally, reproduction master cylinders and reservoirs are available again! Value priced reproduction brake masters include reservoir and cap. Cap and reservoir are also available separately for the first time in many years.

1968-'75 MGB Master Cylinder Assy.	180-767	\$169.95
1968-'75 MGB Reservoir & Cap Only	180-769	15.95
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Chrome SU Crested Filters

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1½" Carbs	223-295	\$39.95
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Triumph PCV Valve

Moss has just made available this impossible-to-find PCV valve. Get one for your Triumph and pick up an extra one for the toolbox today!

TR250/6 to 1969	379-010	\$40.95
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MGA Grilles

The Moss Motors MGA Grille Assemblies are the finest, most authentic reproduction grilles ever offered. Our grilles incorporate all of the subtle factory design features. The ever-critical back edge curvature is cut with a precision clipping tool and matches genuine originals. Like the original, the shell and false nose are made of chrome plated brass, and the slats of polished stainless steel. Also included are grille piping, metric installation hardware and complete installation instructions. We even carry the recessed grille for the MkII!

MGA 1500-1600 Grille Kit, Flat	470-068	\$329.95
MGA MkII Grille Kit, Recessed	470-098	399.95

Slotted Brake Rotors

Our slotted rotors provide maximum stopping power by venting water or the heat-produced gasses that cause fade from under the brake pads. As an added feature, you can use the slots to measure rotor wear. Sold as a pair for front wheels only.



Spitfire MK IV & 1500	586-529	\$129.95
Sprite/Midget, Disc Wheels	182-159	129.95
Sprite/Midget, Wire Wheels	182-147	119.95
Austin-Healey BJ8 from (C)26705	021-202	154.95
MGC	021-202	154.95
TR3B-4A, 10¾"	586-512	149.95
TR250/6	586-512	149.95



Brooklands Badges

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Brooklands Flying School	408-371	\$44.95
Brooklands Aero Club	408-373	44.95

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13" Moto-Lita Wheel	905-145	\$356.95
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MGB 1972-on	453-754	\$12.95
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COVER STORY

BEGINNER'S LUCK

Three Great Cars for the First-Time Restorer

BY KATHLEEN M. MANGAN



We constantly hear from people who want to buy a British car. They yearn for that sports car experience—a curvy road, a humming engine and a nice day to put the top down. Some want to do a frame-up restoration, while others just want a play car to take to shows. Perhaps it's a father who wants to teach his teenage son about mechanics by rebuilding a car, or a retiree who wants to tinker in the garage. These enthusiasts-in-the-making all seek the answer to the same question: Which car to buy?

For first-time British car owners, the experts at Moss Motors recommend three classic sportsters: the MGB, Triumph Spitfire 1500, and square-body MG Midget and Austin-Healey Sprite, called Spridgets since they're nearly identical twins. All three models capture the essence of the British sports car experience and can be pain-free classics.

Tops go down, heads turn thanks to their classic style and they're good fun to drive. They also offer a low center of gravity, tight handling and an active driving experience. Oh, and they get good gas mileage and won't take up an entire garage. History buff? You're in luck; all

have an impressive racing heritage.

This trio also offers great value. Thanks to high production numbers, all are readily available even though production ended decades ago. You can still find a decent project car for \$1,500 or less.

And once you acquire your project, all three cars are easy to fix, rebuild and restore yourself. Simple mechanical and electrical systems mean even novice mechanics can understand the diagrams. Technical advice from Moss Motors experts is also a convenient resource.

Speaking of Moss Motors, they also stock thousands of parts for each car on our list. Whether you need a component for the body, drivetrain, brakes, suspension or interior, Moss has it.

In addition to repair and restoration, it's also easy to upgrade and personalize the three cars on our list. Rev up your roadster with some bolt-on speed parts. For a sharper look, install specialty wheels; for safety, try a roll bar.

So if you want to get off the fence and join the British car hobby—or would like to get another person involved—here are three great cars worth a serious look. **BM**

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Moss wants to help you keep these cars on the road, so they offer competitive prices, seasonal sales and Web specials. You can qualify for the Moss Customer Loyalty Program when you place a parts order at list price for at least \$1,500. You'll get a 12 percent discount on that order and all orders for a full year (some restrictions apply). You'll get a dedicated salesperson who will be your personal project advisor throughout the restoration.

With a Spitfire, MGB or Spridget, you'll also have plenty of support from dedicated clubs, enthusiast magazines and Web sites. You can participate in local club outings, car shows, national conventions, rallies, hillclimbs and event races. You'll meet other owners who will be happy to share their knowledge and experience with you about these enduring classics.

TRUSTY TWINS: AUSTIN-HEALEY SPRITE AND MG MIDGET

The post-Bugeye Austin-Healey Sprite and near-identical MG Midget, together known as Spridgets, make great sportsters for today's enthusiast. The two cars have long been renowned for their affordability and easy repair. They were also sold in large quantities—some 300,000 units were built between 1961 and 1980.

An authentic driving experience is the key advantage of the Spridgets, says Blaine Graham, a Moss technical expert. They offer “bucket seats, a big tachometer, a big speedometer, four-on-the-floor and an engine that sends its rumbling sounds right through the fire-wall from under the bonnet,” he says. “In the Spridgets, you aren't insulated from what's going on. It's not just a ride, it's an experience.”

In a practical sense, Spridgets are relatively simple to work on and are usually quite forgiving when a novice is on the other end of the wrench, Graham adds. Parts availability is not a problem—Moss' current Spridget catalog boasts 120 pages.

Larry Macy, a 29-year Midget veteran and one of the organizers of MG 2008, recommends looking for a 1966-'74 Spridget thanks to their 1275cc engine. “They're easier to work on and aren't clogged with pollution control equipment,” he says. Be aware that the transmission doesn't have synchronized first gear prior to 1975, so you won't be able to downshift from second without stopping first.

Macy adds that many owners complain of faulty wiring, but cleaning all the connectors and coating them with dielectric grease can prevent most problems.

Upgrades are just a phone call away. One of our favorites is Moss' supercharger for the 1275cc engine. It's probably the best bolt-on performance part ever made for these cars.



Simple yet effective, Sprites and Midgets are ideal vehicles for entering the British car ranks.

Things to Know:

Spridgets received many improvements and changes over the years, with engine displacement constantly climbing: 998cc for 1961-'62; 1098cc for 1962-'65; 1275cc for 1966-'73; and the same 1498cc engine that Triumph used in the Spitfire for 1974-'80.

When shopping for Spridgets, watch out for rust. Rusty lower sills are common and can hurt the rigidity of the body. Repair panels are available from Moss.

Sprite production ended in 1971, while the MG Midget carried on until 1980.

When car shopping, a non-operational engine isn't terminal. If the engine turns over and hasn't seized up, it can usually be brought back from its slumber.

The basic shape of the Spridget didn't change much over the years, although the 1972-'73 cars feature distinctive rear arches. Rubber bumpers first appeared in 1974 and continued through the end of production.

Fast Factoid:

The only real differences between the Sprite and Midget twins are the vertically barred grille and chrome side strips found on the MG. Of course, the logos are different too.

Popular Upgrades:

Moss sells heavy-duty valves for the original lever shocks. You can also go with a tube shock conversion kit, complete with new shock drop links.

Expect a 40 percent power increase when you install Moss' supercharger on the 1275cc engine.

Heard horror stories about broken Spridget rear axles? Moss sells stronger rear axles. Choose from nitrited or heat-treated.

Moss offers five-speed gearbox conversions for all four engines found in the Midget. The kits use Ford's popular T9 transmission and include all necessary parts.

QUINTESSENTIAL STYLE: MGB ROADSTER

Timeless good looks, an uncomplicated nature and a lively ride mark the classic MGB. It's like a best friend who's always ready to play.

Nearly 30 years after production ended, the MGB is still one of the best-selling sports cars ever made. More than half a million units were produced between 1962 and 1980, and the company exported some 300,000 MGB roadsters to the U.S.

Today, good examples are easy to find at surprisingly affordable prices, while parts and upgrades are readily available. Like the other cars on our list, Moss has just about everything needed to keep an MGB in top form. The car's fan support is off the charts.

The MGB wasn't just a good, honest sports car—it represented a technical breakthrough, too. It introduced the monocoque chassis to mass market sports cars, as the body shell and frame were combined into one unit. Advantages include less weight than a traditional body-on-frame design, plus a stiffer overall unit. An MGB probably has more in common with the later Mazda Miata than most of its contemporaries.

Throughout its 18-year production run, the MGB used the same basic unibody, engine block, suspension and drivetrain. Compared to most other car models, changes were few.

But despite this, fans seem to have their favorite years. Some enthusiasts prefer the pre-1966 cars due to their door pull-handles, while others favor the 1965 and up cars due to their five main engine bearings. An all-synchromesh transmission, another desirable feature, appeared for the 1968 model year, yet so did emissions equipment and a less classic-looking padded dashboard—again, a plus came with a minus. Power started to slide as the 1970s progressed, yet some owners prefer the rubber-bumper cars that first appeared halfway through 1974. Yes, weight was up and power was down, but these cars are newer and can make great daily drivers. The 1977 and up cars are desirable thanks to their updated dashboards.

Short answer: With so many MGB roadsters out there, one is right for you.



Produced for nearly two decades, the MGB gives shoppers an array of choices, from a bare-bones early model to a more modern and sophisticated later edition.

Things to Know:

Cheerful in every color, the MGB is large enough to deal with modern traffic, and provide a roomy interior and a sizable trunk.

One of the most significant changes came in 1965, as a five-main-bearing engine replaced the previous three-main-bearing motor. Overdrive was also offered as an option. This was the most powerful engine offered for North America, reaching 98 horsepower and 110 mph.

More changes came for 1968: An all-synchromesh transmission was added, an alternator replaced the generator, and the electrical system was switched to negative ground. The first emission-control devices were also added. As emission requirements got tougher during the next few years, both the engine compression and horsepower dropped.

Mid-1974 saw the biggest outward changes—the ride height was raised and black rubber bumpers were added to meet U.S. safety requirements. For 1975, a single Zenith-Stromberg carburetor replaced the dual SU units, dropping power to 62 horsepower. Production at the Abingdon factory ended in 1980.

Fast Factoid:

Another MGB innovation when it was released in 1962: roll-up windows. Don't forget, this was a big deal at the time.

Popular Upgrades:

The most popular upgrade is an electronic ignition, says Kelvin Dodd, a Moss technical expert. Up until 1976, MGBs had distributors fitted with points; after '76 they had Lucas electronic ignitions that often failed. Moss carries Crane and Pertronix kits that make the car more dependable, Kelvin explains.

Adding overdrive to the stock four-speed transmission can be expensive, but Moss offers a five-speed conversion kit that provides the benefits without the complexity.

For the finishing touch, Moss carries a leather seat kit, a cloth top and new wheels. Wire wheels come in original painted or chrome finish; conversion kits are available for later cars that originally came with steel disc wheels.

What's the coolest MGB accessory? Moss' air-conditioner kit. It's designed for any 1962-'76 MGB. If your idea of cool is speed, there is Moss' supercharger. Both add-ons can be installed with basic hand tools.

TAKING NOTICE: TRIUMPH SPITFIRE 1500

The Triumph Spitfire was originally developed to compete against the Spridgets in the showroom and on the track. It succeeded in both arenas, dominating small-bore racing and selling well: 314,342 Spitfires were produced between 1962 and 1980.

Our favorites are the cars built from 1971 through 1980. They feature a redesigned rear suspension that eliminates some of the handling quirks found in the earlier swing-axle cars. You don't have to peek under the car to determine if it's fitted with the upgraded rear suspension. The chopped-off tail is the telltale sign.

These later Spitfires feature excellent handling, explains Moss technical specialist Ken Martin. The Spitfire has a low center of gravity and an independent rear suspension, making it a frequent autocross contender, he adds. Other advantages are its narrow body and light weight.

The Spitfire also gets high marks for its sheer aesthetics and comfort. Italian designer Giovanni Michelotti gave the car nice lines, as well as lots of legroom and trunk space.

Wear watch: The rear leaf springs often weaken, resulting in negative wheel camber—replace them when needed. Watch for wear in the ball joints, crankshaft thrust washers, rear U-joints, and all the bushings for the suspension, steering rack and differential. When the grease fitting on the rear axle dries out, the rear wheel bearings freeze up and need to be replaced. If the rear differential oil dries out, you'll hear a whining noise at the back end while driving.

Spitfires have been ignored by many for too long. Between the Italian-designed coachwork and handy flip-up front end, it's definitely worth a look.



Things to Know:

These 1971-and-up cars can be broken into two groups: The 1296cc-powered Spitfire Mk IV was sold from 1970 through 1974, while the appropriately named 1975-'80 Spitfire 1500 was powered by a 1493cc engine. The last-of-the-line 1979 and 1980 models, by the way, are easily identified by their all-black plastic bumpers.

The entire front end can be unhinged and flipped forward. You can sit on the tire while you work on the engine.

The body-on-frame construction makes it a great restoration car since it's easy to replace body panels.

Despite the swoopy look, the Spitfire shares much under-the-skin architecture with the Triumph Herald and Vitesse sedans.

Looking to rack up some highway miles in a Spitfire? The factory-optional hardtop turns it into a coupe.

While the 1493cc engine has more power than its predecessor, some enthusiasts prefer the revvy nature of the 1296cc powerplant.

Fast Factoid:

Like the MGB and Spridgets, the Spitfire is still a popular contender at club racing events today.

Popular Upgrades:

One popular addition to the Spitfire 1500 is an oil cooler kit, says Bill Redman, a Moss Motors technical expert. A Hayden electric fan will provide better airflow, he adds.

Want to make the car even quicker in the turns? The factory raised the Spitfire 1500's front suspension to meet then-current bumper and headlight rules. Moss offers a Lowered Fast Road Spring to correct this.

Panasport eight-spoke wheels provide timeless looks without requiring a trip to the swap meet. Moss sells the 13x5.5-inch size for the Spitfire.

Moss also offers a five-speed conversion kit for the Spitfires from 1970 and up. The package comes with everything you'll need, such as the Ford T9 transmission, driveshaft, clutch kit, transmission tunnel cover and carpet.



Exceptional handling, timeless beauty and easy maintenance make the Spitfire an excellent first British car.

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ALL SMILES FOR THE BUGEYE SPRITE

BY KATHLEEN M. MANGAN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY
STEPHEN TAMIESIE



If there were an all-time award for car cuteness throughout the entire history of automobiles, the Bugeye Sprite would sweep the honors. With an almost-giggling grille smile and astonished, star-struck eyes, no other car model projects a happier disposition than the original Austin-Healey Sprite.

It's easy to imagine this little speedster as your best friend, sharing road trips with plenty of laughs along the way. This is a car you'd want to spoil with special treatment to keep it smiling, since the car's happiness rubs off on you when you drive it and on others who see it on the street. Smiling is contagious, after all.

Aside from its countenance, the car gives you plenty to grin about—it's peppy to drive and also easy to work on. All body and mechanical parts are readily available, and there is a vast number of ways to upgrade performance. Plus, the car's racing pedigree adds to its aura.

Now 50 years since it was introduced, the beloved Bugeye Sprite enjoys a near-cult following and a steadily increasing collector value. At about \$1500 when new, it undercut the competition by about a thousand dollars. Today, mint examples can cost upward of \$20,000.

Sprite Launches in 1958

Austin-Healey, a company combining the production capability of Austin Motor Company and the design prestige of racer Donald Healey, earned success with their first effort, the 1953 Austin-Healey 100. Still, they saw the need for a small, basic sports car to complement the 100. So the Sprite was born.

Based on the Austin A35 sedan, the Sprite was the first British car to use unibody construction. It had an 80-inch wheelbase and a low stance that provided flat cornering. The car was powered by the four-cylinder Austin-Morris A-series 948cc engine, a proven motor that went on to power the Mini. For the Bugeye, the A-series received stronger valve springs and twin SU carburetors to provide 43 horsepower and a top speed of nearly 85 mph. Part of the performance came courtesy of the Bugeye's low mass, just 1460 flyweight pounds.

The handling of the Sprite was typically British; stiff, with an independent front suspension featuring coil springs, single arm lever shocks and a lower wishbone on each side. The rear suspension featured quarter-elliptical leaf springs, a rigid axle and lever arm shocks. The tight rack-and-pinion steering suited the speedster. It was fitted

with drum brakes and drilled steel disk wheels stamped with a simple AH.

Of course, it was the round headlamps inset on the hood that gave the car its lasting impression along with its nicknames—Bugeye in the States and Frogeye in Europe. However, these lamps were a last-minute design compromise. The original design featured retractable headlights like the later Lotus Elan, but plans were changed due to cost considerations.

These cars were downright Spartan in fit and finish. Completely missing were exterior door handles, a trunk lid and bumpers; windows were sliding side curtains. The cockpit was minimalist, trimmed in leather. But love is often blind, and owners forgave any inherent weaknesses.

Four Years of Production

The Bugeye Sprite was produced for only four years, totaling some 48,987 cars. The model was reintroduced with more conventional styling in 1961 as the Austin-Healey Sprite Mark II and near-identical MG Midget—a lot of the body and engine parts, plus running gear, are interchangeable on these cars. The cheerful look was gone, however.

Thanks to the price, handling, light weight and easy engine modifications,

Bugeyes became popular for racing and inspired all kinds of aftermarket performance parts and conversion kits. The tuners went nuts. Back in the day, for example, Speedwell offered a streamlined front end and an engine tuned to 60 horsepower.

In European competition, Bugeyes took class wins on the tough Alpine Rally in the Dolomites and Leige-Rome-Leige Marathon. The car won the 1959 British Rally Championship and took second overall at the British RAC International Rally. In the U.S., Sprites took a class win at Sebring, won SCCA H Production championships for many years and were competitive in D Prepared autocrosses. They were regular entrants in TSD rallies, and today they're prevalent in vintage racing.

Seeking Your Bugeye

If you're looking to acquire a Bugeye, the first priority is to ensure that the body shell is as complete and rust-free as pos-

Popular Replacement Parts		
Part No.	Price	Part
190-960	\$323.95	Clutch Kit (Borg & Beck), includes pressure plate, disc and release bearing
180-670	\$399.95	Brake Master Cylinder, 7/8-inch bore
181-885	\$32.95	Brake Drum, front
434-540	\$34.85	Water Pump
459-730	\$329.95	Radiator
264-078	\$224.95	Major Suspension Kit, Front
471-190	\$346.95	Fuel Tank
455-495	\$83.95	Rocker Panel
454-010	\$50.95	Front Bumper Overrider
242-181	\$732.95	Convertible Top by Robbins, black sun-fast
242-530	\$299.95	Black Carpet Kit (starting prices)



A flip-up front end makes for easy access to the engine bay of a Sprite. Interiors are spartan, but they feature all of the comforts you need for quick trips or extended tours.

Insider's Info:

The hinged front end means the hood, nose and front side panels of the car flip back as a unit, providing excellent access to the engine and front suspension. Moss Motors' Kelvin Dodd observes that when you work on the engine, it looks like the car is about to eat you.

This car only features small vertical bumperettes in stock form. Upon its release, a slim front bumper was optional at \$15. (Note: Moss carries these, but sadly the \$15 price is just a memory.)

The back end of the car is more luggage locker than trunk since there is no trunk lid. A small opening behind the seats allows access to the spare tire and storage space.

A fold-down windshield was part of the initial design, but this was scrapped as it was considered too costly.

To tune your Bugeye engine for better performance, get a copy of the cult bible: "Tuning BL's A-series Engine" by David Vizard.

The special-bodied Sebring Sprites are rare and valuable.

According to the "Cars That Matter" price guide, a decent driver goes for about \$7000. Excellent examples go for about \$20,000.

Check out the Austin-Healey Club of America at serve.com/AHCA; you can find the Austin-Healey Club USA at healey.org.

sible, advises Kelvin Dodd, Moss Motors technical specialist. The sheet metal is thin, but thankfully Moss Motors stocks every repair part, making it possible to restore even rusted-out examples. All mechanical parts are available, too.

One must-do engine upgrade is Moss Motors' new rear crankshaft oil conversion kit, says Dodd. The original crankshaft has a scroll to catch wayward oil at the back, but it tends to leak, he explains. The new kit puts a rubber oil seal on the back of the spinning crankshaft to stop oil leaks and extend crankshaft life.

Dodd also recommends yanking the original 948cc engine and substituting a 1275cc engine from a late-model MG Midget. "It will give you 78 horsepower at the rear wheels," he adds. For the ultimate machine, Dodd recommends adding the supercharger kit and the new five-speed Ford T9 transmission conversion kit. Most owners prefer the twin SU carburetors, but they can be tricky to balance, so Dodd says to keep an eye out for the single SU kit coming out soon.

Upgrading Performance

Moss Motors offers more tricks for the suspension, too. Their new Frontline kit replaces the original lever-arm shocks with forged aluminum arms and tube shocks. The result, Dodd says, is smoother handling.

The increased power and handling calls for better braking. Dodd recommends replacing the front drum brakes with disk brakes from the Midget, an easy bolt-on procedure. For even more performance, go for slotted rotors, high performance brake pads and braided brake lines, he says.

To improve exhaust flow to the back of the car, install a tubular header and performance muffler offered by Moss Motors, says Dodd. For reliability, change the original generator to a Lucas alternator, and upgrade to a Pertronix electronic ignition. The original wheels are skinny and tend to break, he says. Aluminum Minilite replicas make excellent replacements.

No matter how much performance you tune into your Bugeye, ensuring that it's running and reliable will mean you can take it out on a sunny day, put the top down and share some smiles. **BM**

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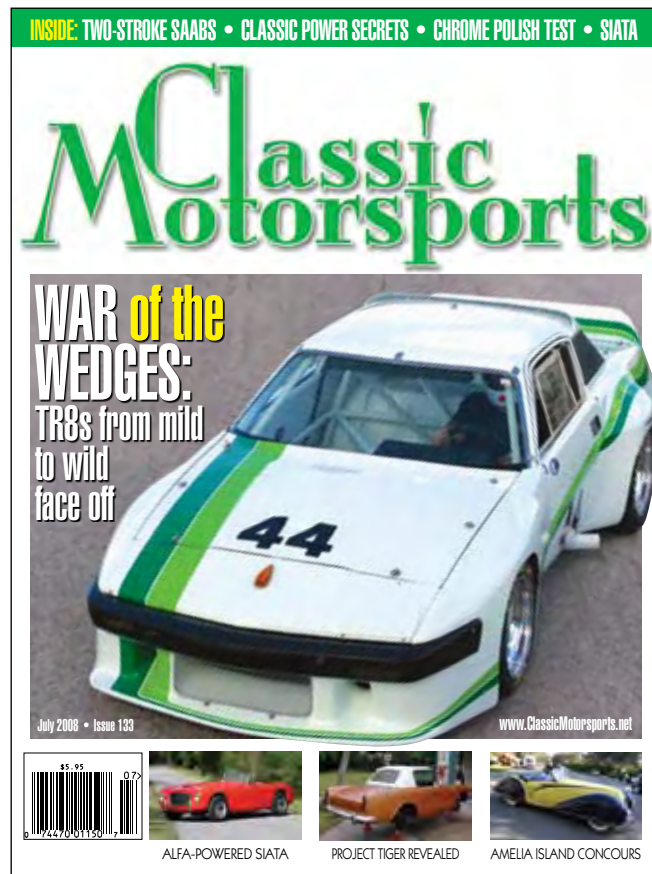
HOW-TO

TOP SECRETS

Almost Anyone Can Properly Install a Convertible Top

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CBMAD08

While a convertible top can last 20-plus years if cared for properly, the day will come when it needs to be replaced. A piece of cloth can only last so long. While some people consider this a job for professionals, it's really not that difficult—if you've got a patient demeanor and a few special tools.

Before replacing the top, you'll first want to consider what type you want to purchase. There are often choices of color, material and, in some cases, functions or features. For your application, you may be able to choose between cloth or vinyl, one or three windows, and maybe even a zip-out rear window. There may be more than one manufacturer of tops for your car as well, and if you ask around, you may find that some offer higher quality than others.

What to Buy?

If originality is your goal, then you'll want to pick the color, material and style that are correct for your car. If you want a different look or better functionality, then you may want to consider some changes or upgrades.

For example, most British cars came with black vinyl tops fitted with fixed windows. You may consider a cloth top for a more elegant look, while a zip-down rear window may also be available for your particular top bows.

Cloth tops are generally easier to install and handle temperature fluctuations well, but may fade over time. Zip-down rear windows are a great option to get more air flowing through the cockpit without putting down the top. They are especially nice on very hot days, when being under the unremitting sun may be too much. The increased airflow with the window zipped down, coupled with the sun protection of the erected top, is often a great comfort option.

Be sure to look at your top bows and header rail before ordering your top. Some cars, like MGBs, were manufactured with more than one style of top bows. (In the case of the MGB, there are actually three styles: stowaway, knee-action and Michelotti.)

You may want to consider switching

to another style of bows. Following our MGB example, many people believe that the Michelotti and stowaway bows are superior to the knee-action bows, so they'll find a used set and switch them when it's time for a new top.

Once you've settled on the type of top and top bows you're planning on using, you'll want to assess the condition of all related equipment to determine exactly what you need to order. Look carefully at your top bows and header rail to confirm that the bows are not bent, broken or excessively worn. Make sure the header rail isn't rotten (if it's made of wood) or rusty (if it's steel).

Look at the seals and their channels. Look at the snaps. Finally, look at the latches and latch-mounting hardware. If any of these items are worn, broken or simply missing, then you'll want to replace them along with the top to make sure it can be installed and operated properly.

One last consideration that may be possible is whether you want to spend the extra money to buy a top that includes the header rail. While more expensive, these are usually much easier to install since the top has already been pre-fitted and attached to the header rail.

Prepare for Surgery

Once you've made these decisions and purchased the appropriate parts and pieces, you can prepare to install the top. Tools for the job include standard hand tools like wrenches, ratchets, sockets and screwdrivers, plus some specialized tools like snap installers.

A razor knife and some awls or pointed "dentist tools" are helpful, too. If the top bows or header rail are dirty or rusty, you may want some paint to clean them up. Finally, there's glue: We prefer 3M General Trim Adhesive for jobs like this. (The part number is 08088.)



Hopefully the top you're using will include some installation instructions that make sense. If not, you'll have to look for instructions in a manual, on the Internet, or from some friends or professionals who have been through the task before. Even with instructions, though, make careful notes as you remove the old top, keeping track of what folds on top of what and where things appear to have been trimmed.

If at all possible, use the weather to your advantage. Ideally, working in the shade on a sunny day when it's 70 degrees or warmer is going to be your best option. You'll be comfortable in the shade, but you can still occasionally use the sun to warm up the top and make it more pliable.

You'll find that installing a vinyl top in temperatures below 50 degrees is just about impossible. Not only will the top be hard to work with, but your glue won't dry very quickly.

Removing the Old Top

As you prepare to tackle the job, take the new top and header seal out of their packaging and lay them in the sun so they'll be nice and pliable when the time comes to install them. Then you can move to the car itself.

Before removing the old top, repair all of the snaps, latches and other types of attachment hardware. You'll want all of these to be functional when you fit your new top. If you take shortcuts here, you'll be frustrated later on, since not using all the snaps or attachment points often leads to problems with fit or leaks down the road.

Next, remove the old top. This is usually a matter of unsnapping the top from the back, sometimes followed by separating it from some bows. Then remove the top from the header rail.

The most critical part of this process is carefully removing the top from the header rail. It is usually attached with rivets, screws or tacks. In the case of rivets, you'll need to drill them out. For screws and tacks, it's just a matter of unscrewing or prying.

Usually the header seal is pulled out first, then all or most of the attachment hardware can be found underneath. Keep careful track of where the attachment hardware was located and where and how the top was folded under the header rail, header seal and in the corners.

If the header rail is a hollow metal piece, make sure to shake it out well. Most header rails have a hole or two at an end so you can shake out rust, scale or rivet pieces. If you don't do this, you may

find yourself listening to an annoying rattle every time you turn a corner or hit a bump in the road.

If the header rail or top bows need any repair or paint, do this next. If not, you'll be ready to start installing the new top.

Installing the New Top

It's usually helpful to start from the rear of the top, snapping or clipping the top to its appropriate mountings with the top bows erected.

Now it's time to start using the glue.

The great thing about upholstery adhesive is that it's pretty forgiving and often will give you several chances to get things right. Spray a light coating of glue on the front few inches of the top and the header rail, and then give it a few minutes to get tacky. Once tacky, it's ready to start working.

Next, latch the header rail and pull the top forward as tight as you can get it. (An assistant is very helpful at this point.) Using a piece of chalk, mark the front edge of the top where it meets the front edge of the header rail. We'd also recommend putting a few witness marks at the center and each side of the top to make sure you get it centered and aligned properly at the corners.

It's pretty unlikely that you'll get the

top to fit right on your first try, so carefully look at the overall fit and note where it is too tight or too loose. You can make chalk marks on or near your existing lines to indicate where to make changes.

Unlatch the header rail from the windshield and pull it back a few inches, then pull the top from the header rail and reattach it according to your new chalk lines. Relatch the header rail to the windshield and check the fit again. If you're not satisfied, you've got about three or four chances to repeat this procedure before the glue stops working.

When you check for fit, look carefully along the header-to-windshield sealing area and make sure you've got even gaps. Ensure that the top is still properly centered and fits the corners correctly. If your car has roll-up side windows, roll them up and make sure they seal against the top properly. If your car has side curtains, install them and check their fit.

Stand back and look for inappropriate wrinkles or overly tight areas. If you're not happy with any of these areas, pull the top away from the header rail and make some adjustments.

Care and Feeding of a Convertible Top

A properly treated top can last 20 years or more. An abused top won't last more than a couple of years. Here are some tips to keep your convertible top in good shape.

Keep It Clean: Dirt is hard on a top, especially the window (or windows). Use a mild soap-and-water solution to wash the top whenever it gets dirty. You can use a brush or rag on the top to scrub it thoroughly, but don't use anything abrasive on the window. It's best to clean the window with a blotting action so that you don't rub any grit into the window and make scratches.

Fold It Right: A lot of tops get ripped or stretched out of shape due to sloppy or improper folding. Make sure you understand the proper way to fold your top and follow the method religiously. Also, as you fold it, try to avoid folding directly on the windows or letting sharp edges of the top bows or latches touch the top.

Fold It Dry: Never fold a wet top. You'll be welcoming stains, wrinkles, mildew and other nasties into your top. Let it dry completely before putting it down.

Latch and Snap It Right: Top snaps are designed and placed to distribute the load of holding the top in place. Use every latch, slide and snap each time you erect the top. If you are lazy and don't use all the snaps, the remaining ones and the top material will be overstressed. They will stretch areas of the top and eventually cause rips or broken snaps.

Leave It Up for Storage: For long periods of storage, leave your top up, not folded away. It will keep its shape much better if it's left in this position.



1 This MGB's top was about 15 years old. The back window had yellowed and many of the snaps were torn out. The time had come for a new top.



2 Before we started the job, we laid the new top and header seal in the sun to let the fabric become warmer and therefore more pliable.



3 We started removing the top by unlatching the header rail and pulling away the header seal, revealing the aluminum seal channel and attachment rivets below.



4 We completely removed the header rail from the car by undoing three screws on each side.

5 We drilled out the rivets using an 1/8-inch drill bit in a cordless drill.



6 We pulled and unglued the old top from the header rail.

7 We reattached the header rail to the top bows.



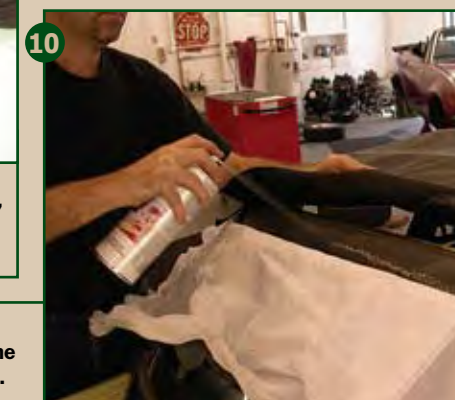
8 The header rail had a hole at one end that we could use to shake out all of the rivet parts.



11 We pulled the top tight to the windshield and header rail.



9 We repaired several worn-out snap studs, and then snapped the new top into place at the back.



10 We sprayed some 3M General Trim Adhesive on the header rail and front of the top, then give it about five minutes to set.

Tight as a Drum

A subtle detail we've omitted thus far concerns the general "tightness" of the top. Most people like their tops to fit very tightly, with few or no wrinkles.

If you're aiming for this fit, keep in mind that the top may stretch or shrink over time. The top will certainly stretch in the heat and shrink in the cold. Vinyl tops are very sensitive to temperature changes, while cloth tops are more forgiving.

Nonetheless, if you're fitting your top when it's around 70 to 90 degrees outside, don't make it drum-tight or you may not

be able to put it up on a cold evening or fall day.

Following fit adjustment, finishing the top installation is usually a matter of re-installing the header seal (usually a push-fit into a channel) and then installing any snaps that don't come preinstalled with the top. These require a special tool, which is shown in the pictures.

All in all, a top installation is more a test of patience and careful planning than a learned skill. It's a good job for a weekend afternoon and, done properly, should last a long time. *BM*

sources

Eclectic Motorworks
(616) 355-2850
www.eclecticmotorworks.com

Moss Motors
(800) 667-7872
www.mossmotors.com



12 We marked the front edge of the top, then put some witness marks at the center and sides. As we made adjustments to the top for fit, we re-marked these lines.



13 Once we were satisfied with the fit of the top, we folded the excess material underneath the header seal channel area.



14 We planned to reattach the header seal channel with rivets, so we used a dentist tool to poke holes in the top material.



15 Then we riveted the header seal channel into place.



16 Using a razor blade, we trimmed away the excess material.



17 We installed the header seal using a special plastic tool used by windshield installers. If we didn't have the tool, a paint stick or even a screwdriver would have worked fine.



18 The finished top had a few minor wrinkles, but everything worked great. The wrinkles would work themselves out during the next few weeks, as the top was exposed to the elements and some stretching and shrinking occurred.

19 The one specialized tool we needed was a snap installer, which we got from Moss Motors. We used it, along with a hammer and a block of wood, to install the front snaps.



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Location: The Westin Savannah Harbor Golf Resort & Spa - Hutchinson Island, overlooking the Savannah River



Friday, October 31

9:00am: Historic race car and motorcycle racing exhibition sessions.

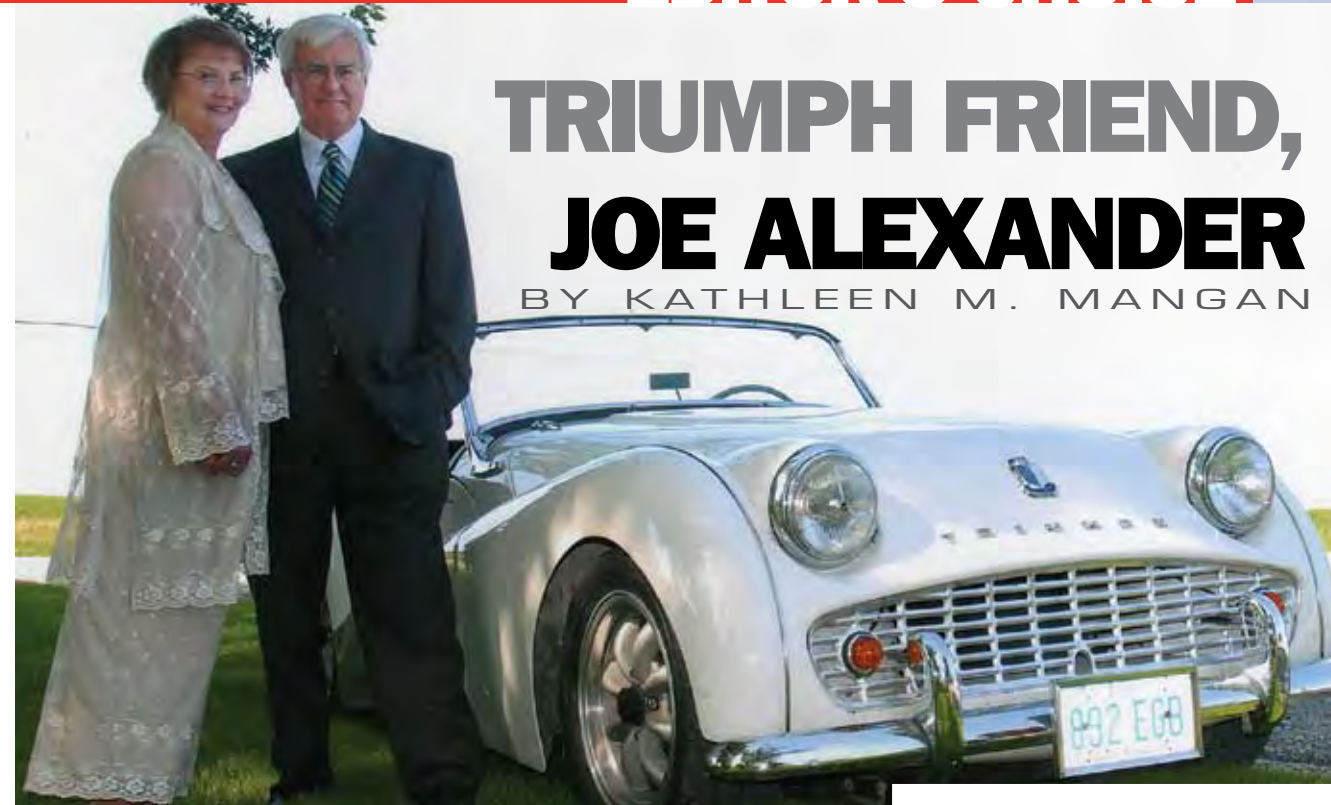
10:15am: American Grand Prize Centennial Driving Tour - of the original circuit of "The Great Savannah Races". *By Invitation Only*

2:00pm: Concours Judging - of Historic race cars and motorcycles with presentation of the prestigious "Centennial Trophy Cup" for each class.

HSR will run Exhibition Races Only if circuit is not completed and Exhibition and Competition Races if circuit is complete.

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TRIUMPH FRIEND, JOE ALEXANDER

BY KATHLEEN M. MANGAN

When vintage Triumph racer Joe Alexander launched a private e-mail list server over a decade ago for the guys he met at races, he expected to count the members on two hands. But the Friends of Triumph e-mail list has grown to over 300 members worldwide and includes such notables as former Triumph team boss Kas Kastner.

"It's really a non-organization," Alexander says. There are no rules, no dues and no politics. Potential new members are nominated by a list member and then seconded for approval. E-mail postings include safety items, new products, helpful technology and speed secrets, he explains, adding that there is great camaraderie. "It took on a life of its own," he adds.

Alexander says that the Friends of Triumph list has had a major influence on the preparation of Triumphs on the vintage racing scene, especially TR3s and TR4s. "Triumphs were an inexpensive car, and many were getting pretty ratty a decade ago. Now you see very nicely prepared cars thanks to the technical expertise shared among members," he says.

The list also helped develop and create a buzz for new, custom-designed performance British sports car parts, both for Alexander and other producers. Alexander retired in 1999 as a manufacturing engineer and project manager from John Deere, but it took him a few years to realize that he could use that expertise to produce parts for his vintage racing hobby. He started with laser-cut stainless steel heat shields for Triumphs. He explains that MGs and Austins had them, but the Triumph enthusiasts never had the money to tool up to produce them.

Now his Alexander Racing Enterprises offers products such as spun-aluminum headlamp covers, lightweight steel flywheels, alloy front engine plates, Nylatron rocker arm spacers and a rear axle locator kit. Many products are carried by Moss Motors.

Of course one of Alexander's primary test beds is his own

1963 TR4 vintage racer. He built it with his son, Sean, and they started racing it in 1992.

For the first 10 years he ran a stock engine and never had a DNF. Now the car has been modified and has an 11.1:1 compression ratio, Erson cam, Quaife rear end and other suspension modifications. He adds that he is only running a few vintage races per year, and is happy running in the top third of the pack.

In addition to vintage racing, Alexander enjoys attending vintage car festivals, and has been heavily involved in organizing events, especially ones for Triumph owners. This season he is organizing the Triumph festivities at the SVRA/ U.S. Vintage Grand Prix at Watkins Glen September 4-7. "Triumph owners are a special group of people," he says.

In addition to his TR4 race car, Alexander also has a TR3 that he found in an Iowa corn crib and has since refurbished. He has owned Triumphs for nearly 40 years. "Triumphs have a way of growing on you. They're easy to work on and they beg for attention," he says. Like many British car owners, he also has a project car in pieces in the garage, a TR250. He is also currently building a 1950s vintage Ambro on a TR4 chassis using the original fiberglass body molds. **BM**

As we were going to press, we were shocked to hear of the death of Jack Drews, longtime friend of Triumph racers. "Uncle Jack," as he is known, will be missed, and our best wishes go to his family and friends.



IMPORT CARLISLE: SOGGY, BUT FUN

BY KATHLEEN M. MANGAN

Thanks to this year's British Invasion theme, the Carlisle Import/Kit-Replicar Nationals—held May 16-18 in Carlisle, Penn.—had a great turnout among all of the British marques. The sun's rays on Saturday added sparkle to the chrome trim and smiles on the faces of foreign car enthusiasts. The cheerful, topdown day was unfortunately sandwiched between opening and closing days of storm-roiled skies, soaked fields and puddles of mud.

On the rainy Friday, attendees flocked to the technical seminars taught by the likes of John Twist of University Motors and Carl Heideman of Eclectic Motorworks.

People also stood in line to get an autograph from Bruce Meyers, creator of the original dune buggy, the Meyers Manx.

Attendees were happy to spend time looking at the 1500 cars on the show field on sunny Saturday. Standard of Excellence top winners were John

Rogowski of West Seneca, New York, for his 1980 MGB in the Original/Unrestored category and Steven Paules of Manheim, Pennsylvania, for his 1973 DeTomaso Pantera in the Restored category. People also enjoyed the new race car paddock with imported racers from various series, including a Toyota Supra drift car, an Audi-Escort endurance road racer and Porsche hillelimb car.

The Sprite Jubilee event offered Austin-Healey Sprite owners a long list of activities to celebrate the marque's 50th anniversary, including



Most famously known as a swap meet, Import Carlisle has become as much a true automotive event as a place to buy and sell old parts. Car shows, tech talks and drive-in movies all augment the pre-owned bargains.



a Sprite maze, rally, funkhana, English-style auto-test and English High Tea.

Dyno testing during the weekend was booked solid. Rand Torman of Dartmouth, Mass., realized immediate value in the testing when he saw gray smoke blowing out

of the tailpipes of his 1980 Triumph TR8. The engine was running rich and losing horsepower—down to 230 horsepower at the rear wheels from a previous 255 horsepower dyno reading. Now his mechanic will do further testing to re-jet the carburetors, he says.

The Appalachian Sports Car Club and the Susquehanna Region of the SCCA organized the autocross on the fairground's quarter-mile, six-turn mini road course. The top-finishing British car was Steve Brown's Lotus Elise in ninth place. Joe Macinnes and his 1966 Austin-Healey Sprite made up the top-

finishing classic British entry, as the duo came home in 23rd overall out of 35 starters.

The swap meet also featured plenty of people walking around with chunks of metal under their arms. A movie at the Cumberland Drive-In movie theater, a scenic cruise through the countryside and marque dinners rounded out the event offerings.

Sunday brought a drenching downpour. The few cars scattered here and there on the field seemed to be sad and longing for the companionship of like models after the previous chummy day at the packed fairgrounds.

The sun came out at the end of the event in time for the drawing for the red 1992 Mazda Miata. Paul Tegler of Severn, Maryland, held the winning ticket. He's been attending the Carlisle Import event for a decade with his tricked-out blue 1975 Triumph Spitfire with a custom fuel-injected mid-engine Split Six. He was delighted with this addition to his garage. **BM**

Save the Date: Next year's Carlisle Import/Kit-Replicar Nationals will take place May 15-17, 2009. For details, check carlisleevents.com.



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TRIPLE PLAY



Moss staff photo



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LEFT AND ABOVE: Vintage racing and more than 60 classic British cars on display marked the Moss British Extravaganza at Buttonwillow Raceway. BELOW: New Jersey's Britfest might be celebrating its final year of existence, but it's going out with a bang, hosting nearly 140 cars on the show field.

BY KEN SMITH

Moss Motors might be in their 60th year, but you can't say they don't get around. The first weekend in May saw the Moss crew scattered across the USA at three major venues.

We reported on their attendance at HSR *Classic Motorsports Mitty* in our last issue. However, during that same time period, Moss was active at Britfest in Succasunna, N.J. This was the final year ever for Britfest, and nearly 140 British classics gathered under somewhat cloudy skies to celebrate Jaguar, the featured marque. The Jaguar Auto Group provided a new Jaguar XF for attendees to admire.

The star of the show was Mark Golding, who drove his double-deck 1962 Bristol Lodekka Bus to the show. Best in Show went to Van Horneff for his lovely 1936 MG P-Type, while other major awards went to Garry Perrault for his 1969 MGB and Jonathan Stein for his superbly restored 1959 MGA Twin Cam Coupe. MG Car Club Central Jersey Centre was fortunate to have both Moss Motors and Castrol as major sponsors.

Giles Kenyon led the Moss contingent, while Bruce Firkins was Castrol's main man. Our thanks to Charlie Tregidgo for this report.

At the same time, 3000 miles away on the West Coast, Moss made their annual pilgrimage to Buttonwillow Raceway for the 13th Annual Moss British Extravaganza, an event held in conjunction with VARA. Thanks to the economic climate, the event saw a slight downturn in attendance compared to previous years, but there was still a fine turnout of competition cars. Twenty-two races were held during the weekend.

Lots of thrilling activity under warm skies culminated in a car show that saw a gathering of more than 60 of Britain's finest. Gene Roth once again emerged as Best in Show with his beautiful 1949 MG TC.

Many took advantage of the track drives, while a Saturday night slalom attracted the diehard competitors. Next came barbecue and karaoke that lasted until the wee hours. One more dose of racing on Sunday concluded this most laid back of events. **BM**



Giles Kenyon photo



Giles Kenyon photo



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MGA MGB Supercharger UPDATE

A rule of thumb in the world of product development is everything always takes longer than expected. We had hoped to announce that the MGA/B supercharger kits are back in stock. Unfortunately, this is not the case. The first loose run manifold casting had a few issues and has gone back to the pattern maker for modification. We were at least able to determine the modified manifold design will fit.

Once we have a revised casting in hand, we will run a test installation, confirm the tune-up, and finalize the bill of materials. From the time we order manifold castings it's usually about 60 days for delivery. Add in time for kit assembly and kits should be on the shelf in plenty of time for the holidays... nudge nudge, wink wink. Be sure to leave this ad where your loved ones can see it.

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A CONVERGENCE OF 350 MGS

BY KATHLEEN M. MANGAN

A single-marque car event is different from a British car show. What impresses at these gatherings is the number of same-model cars that line up together. Your focus turns to the details, appreciating a bit of craftsmanship or an innovative solution to a mechanical problem. The shared experience feels like you've returned to the old neighborhood and all your friends are waiting for you to join the kickball game.

I grew up with an early-1974 MGB, my dad's daily driver, so I felt a sense of "homecoming" when I drove into the host hotel for MG 2008, held June 25-29 in Valley Forge, Penn. Hundreds of friends (MGs) were parked in the lot like a car show preview. I took along my 13-year-old nephew, Ryan; this was his first-ever car show.

There were about 350 MGs registered for the national event, hosted by the Philadelphia MG Club and sponsored by the North American MGB and MGC Registers. Prior to the Saturday show, the schedule included technical seminars, a covered bridge tour, Philadelphia tour, gymkhana and Philly cheesesteak extravaganza.

About 40 MGs drove to the new Simeone Foundation Museum near Philadelphia for a guided tour by Dr. Frederick Simeone. Many of the race cars there are in original post-race condition. The museum staff fired up the 1934 MG K3 Magnette, the highest-finishing MG in international competition with a fourth place finish at LeMans in 1934, and took a few laps around the parking lot. Ryan's favorites were the 1954 Ferrari 375MM and 1953 Jaguar C-Type, and I acknowledged his good taste.

More than 300 people packed the theatre to see the East Coast premiere of "Sherman's Way," starring an



Attendees at MG 2008 were treated to not only hundreds of MGs, but the East Coast premiere of "Sherman's Way," an MGB-centric movie hitting DVD shelves next year.



MGB. This road trip film centers around the relationship between a geek and a hippie

dropout as they restore a red MGB to sparkling glory. The dialog was hilarious, but the audience laughed most at the scene where the windshield was taken off and reinstalled with no difficulties. Director Craig Saavedra was thankful for the standing ovation from the car enthusiast audience. The film will be released in the fall in New York and Los Angeles; the DVD will hit shelves next year.

Hundreds of MGs paraded to the show grounds on Saturday and lined up in an impressive array. Ryan com-

mented, "Did they make these cars in every single color?" It seemed the entire rainbow was represented, and all the colors looked equally good. There was a row of 12 identical black 1979 MGB LEs (Limited Editions), a large showing of MGB GTs and many MGCs with those easy-to-identify hoods.

Attendees admired each other's cars while dark clouds moved in. When the heavens opened, half the field departed. Some owners preferred the cover of regalia tents to the battle for visibility between windshield wipers and the deluge. However, the sun soon returned and people dried off their cars.

Now Ryan is looking forward to his next ride in his grandfather's orange MGB—top down, of course. **BM**

MG 2009 Heads to Colorado

High country adventure is planned for MG 2009 in Breckenridge, Colo., June 24-28, 2009. The MG Car Club Rocky Mountain Centre is organizing the North American MGB Register annual event at Beaver Run Resort. Coordinator Bob Gloyd says driving tours on twisty mountain roads will highlight the event, including crossing Independence Pass at 12,000 feet—altitude tuning clinics will help flatlanders make the trek. The schedule also includes visits to the Cussler Museum and a LeMay Museum satellite facility, plus a funkhana and TSD rally. Visit mg2009.com for the details.



BEST BUDDIES

BY CHRISTINE KNIGHT

PHOTOS BY STEPHEN TAMIESIE

One of our customer service reps here at Moss Motors recently told me about two local guys—buddies George Heesen and David Ristig—who were in a friendly competition to see who could finish his restoration project first. Since the two cars they were working on would be featured in this issue of *British Motoring*, I thought it would make a great story and be of interest to possible restorers reading our magazine. George and David agreed, and recently I went to meet them. It turns out there's a lot more to their story than two guys, an MGB and a Bugeye.

George and son Rohun are a happy pair with a lot of pride. They begin to tell me about their 1959 Bugeye, and Rohun quickly dominates the conversation with all of the technical details of the work. George watches his son quietly and with a smile, and after a few moments, he speaks up to tell me how proud he is of Rohun.

David and son Colin arrive in their 1964 MGB, and suddenly the pride and friendship has quadrupled. The boys are good friends, as are the dads. Colin relays a funny tale of Rohun accidentally igniting Colin's sweatshirt while welding, and we all have a laugh.

I'm amazed that these two families, who live in the same neighborhood, not only have sons who are friends, but also fathers who are friends, plus a common interest in restoring British classic cars. The chances of this happening seem as unlikely as being hit by lightning, but I haven't heard the whole story yet. George and David begin to explain while the boys hover over the MGB and discuss what's unfinished.

George and David first met more than 20 years ago while living with their wives in Carpinteria, a small town just south of Santa Barbara. They shared a "common wall" as next-door neighbors in an apartment building. George bought the Bugeye and began restoration, but the project was put on hold in favor of something a little more



important—he and his wife were about to have a child. While George's Bugeye engine sat on David's engine stand, Rohun was born. The previous day, Colin beat Rohun into the world. That engine sat for 15 years while the boys grew up, and during those years George moved his family to Goleta. David's family soon followed.

A few years ago, an MGB was given to David in disrepair, and Colin saw the opportunity for a possible first car. He bugged his dad to let him start the restoration, and when Rohun learned of this, he in turn bugged George to finish the Bugeye.

None of the four had much experience seriously rebuilding a car; George works as an administrator with the YMCA and David is a "recovering banker." They are all very bright, and Colin explained how so much of the theory he was learning in AP Physics was made more understandable as he worked on the car. Both boys taught themselves to weld. In fact, Rohun did such a great job on the Bugeye's floorboards that he earned the praise of the professional auto body guy who painted the car—he didn't realize a rookie had done the job. Most of the work was actually done by the boys, who now are so protective of their work that when they have licenses, they will absolutely not drive the cars to school; they're wary of the damage that might occur in the student parking lot. Both dads note that they were greatly helped by the Moss parts counter; it's located nearby, so they never had downtime because of shipping. Rohun and Colin chime in with "Three trips on Saturdays," which apparently was pretty common.

Both cars have been upgraded to five-speed transmissions, alternators and electronic ignitions. The Sprite has a Weber, disc brakes and a hard top they have yet to clean up. Rohun did a lot of the de-seaming and says it was a hard job that was beyond the cheap Dremel tips he bought on eBay; each failed after only a few minutes of use. George and Rohun agree that the worst job on the Sprite was doing the interior upholstery.

The MGB still has a three-main bearing engine, but the displacement has been slightly enlarged; it also has a header, hotter cam and a head reworked for unleaded gas. David and Colin first fired the engine only a few weeks before our meeting. David is quick to note that he thought the worst job was replacing the windshield.

The MGB has the driver's seat installed, but it also has lots of loose wiring and internal panels that need to be addressed. The Sprite looks gorgeous and is 99 percent finished.

But what turns my head as both cars drive away is the happiness radiating from each pair. Rohun actually has his arm draped over the back of his dad's driver's seat, and he and George look like the best of buddies. David cautiously gets the MGB underway with just a little jerkiness in first gear, causing Colin to really hang on as he perches on the passenger side floorboard—one hand on the dash and the other on the back to steady himself.

Both faces are plastered with huge grins as they realize they are both riding in their hard work, even if it's not completely roadworthy for a passenger just yet. George has pulled over to make sure the MGB doesn't need any help, and as David drives by George yells out with a laugh, "Sure you don't need a push?" All four drive off back to David's garage and our interview is over.



Sept 26-28

8th Annual Legends Weekend, Falmouth, MA, <http://www.CapeCodBritishCarClub.org> Contact Bob Vogel CCSCCpres@verizon.net 508-221-6344

Sept 27

9th Annual Autumn in the Mountains Show, Jackson Park, Hendersonville, NC, www.bccwnc.org, contact Steve Miller millerleft@charter.net.

Sept 27-28

18th Texas All British Car Day Rally and Show, Old Settlers Park, Round Rock, TX, <http://www.txabcd.org/>, contact Bob Kramer rkramer3@austin.rr.com 512-657-8526

Sept 26-28

18th Annual Rio Grande Valley Regional Rendezvous, Carlsbad, NM, www.baooa.org, contact Kevin Kittle 505-345-4207

Sept 27

Out of the Woodwork hosted by TVR Car Club North America, Washington Crossing State Park, PA, TVRCCNA.org, contact Tony Hess aghbop@aol.com 610-346-9026

Oct 3-5

17th Annual Tri-Healey Meet, Lake Stockton, MO, contact John Lore jlore@sbcglobal.net

Oct 3-4

Memphis Euro Fest, TN www.memphisbritishcars.org/eurofest, contact green78mgb@yahoo.com

Oct 4

Nashville British Car Club Show, Pinkerton Park, Franklin, TN www.nashvillebritishcarclub.org, contact kara.winkel@nashvillebritishcarclub.org

Oct 4

10th Annual Autumn Leaf Festival hosted by the British Car Club of the Lehigh Valley, Moravian Academy, Bethlehem, PA, <http://www.bcclv.com/autumnleaf.html>, contact autumnleaf@bcclv.com, Gerry Kunkle 610-867-6955

Oct 3-5

Shenandoah Valley British Car Club Show, www.SVBCC.net contact Mark Harris mharris@cstone.net, 434-295-8469

Oct 2-5

Triumphfest hosted by Triumph Travelers Sports Car Club, South Lake Tahoe, NV, contact Rich & Karyn Gibbon krgibbon@volcano.net 209-296-8792

Oct 12

All British Car Club Day, Gruene, TX, Contact Larry mgrollers@yahoo.com

Oct 18

Houston British Motor Expo featuring MG, Cinco Ranch, Katy, TX, www.houstonmgcc.com, contact Keith 281-238-8701 or Ron 281-346-2417

Oct 18-19

California Classic, Morgan Hill, CA, <http://www.autumnclassic.100mregistry.com> contact Bill Meade billmeade@charter.net, 831-722-3253

Oct 23-26

10th Annual Fall GoF, Abingdon on Brazos Part II, Waco, TX, Contact Marsha Green 254-741-9259 WacoGoF2008@aol.com

Oct 25

24th Annual British Car Show, Historic Patriot's Point, Mt. Pleasant, SC, www.britishcarclubcharleston.com, contact David Wunsch 843-696-0910 HD1CH@aol.com

Oct 25

British Car Festival, South Alabama British Car Club, Fairhope Beach Park, AL, <http://www.sabcc.org/page7.html>, contact mowog@sabcc.org

Nov 7

MG Jamboree16, St. Petersburg, FL, http://www.fsmgcc.com/html/mg_jamboree_16.html, contact Gail gail@glennsmg.com, 727-521-9890

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