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ISSUE 1, 2017

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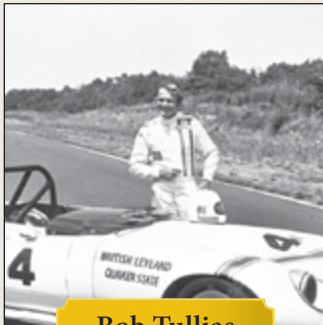
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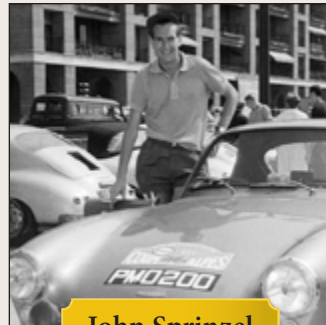


2017 INDUCTEES INCLUDE



Bob Tullias

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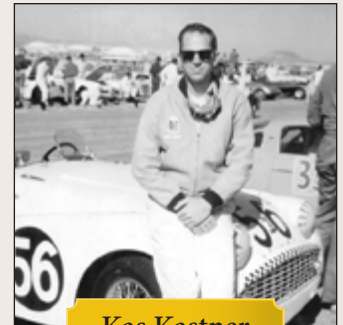
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For more information and to register, go to MossMotors.com/Motorfest

OUR BEST SELLERS ON SALE!

Moss Motoring



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You never forget it, and you wonder what it would be like to be reunited.

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This beauty is now more than skin deep.

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Abram Perry's dive into Big Healey restoration is shown dark and dramatic.

THERE IS MORE ONLINE!

The tip of the iceberg. That's what you're holding in your hands. The MossMotoring.com archive is **chock full** of stories and a wealth of technical advice. If you could just see the shelves and file cabinets of material we're gradually digitizing... holy smokes! But it is **worth it!**

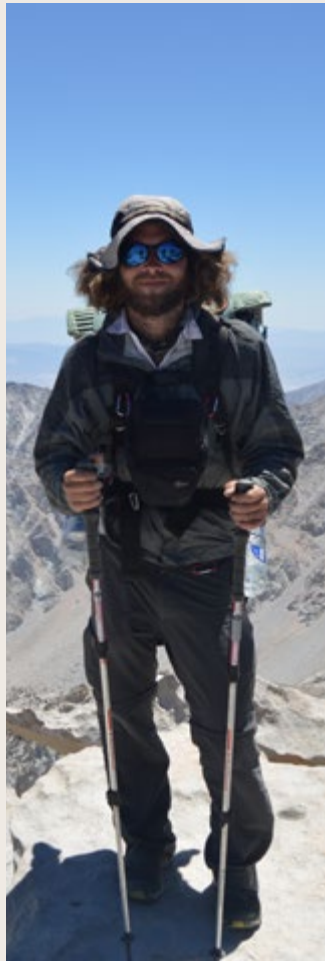
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Outside the box thinking and several dollops of fun.

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Tech tips, cartoons, illustrations, humorous anecdotes and other odds-n-ends that help make Moss Motoring great.



Robert Goldman

A million years ago, seemingly, I was standing by the fence taking photos at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca's famous corkscrew. A gentleman strolled up and started to chat. The conversation meandered about, and eventually drifted into the realm of Piper Cubs. Two things I know about the Cub, it was the aircraft in which I flew my first solo, and a guy named Peter Egan once flew one around the US.

The guy standing there was talking about flying a Cub around the US. I hate asking "are you so and so?" It leaves the door open to too many ribs. "Actually, I'm Waldo. You found me!" Better to take another tack. I introduced myself and stuck out my right hand. He said his name was Peter. OK, we'll call that one confirmed.

There is an understandable rush to record the remembrances of our few remaining WWII vets, but what about the smaller histories? There is within the British hobby what a friend once referred to as niche fame. To be fair, Mr. Egan's notoriety crosses all lines, but he, like several others, holds a particularly high regard among our niche of little British car lovers.

Enter John Nikas. John has for some time been talking about the generational changes taking place in our hobby, and the fact we need to preserve the history of the players whose involvement and actions helped shape the hobby we enjoy today. John proposed, and has

gone on to start, the British Sports Car Hall of Fame. The purpose of the Hall is simple, to honor those who, over a lifetime's work, have greatly influenced the British car hobby.

As often happens in such instances, an innocent question as to whether we would be willing to host an HoF display, has morphed into a full on induction ceremony as part of Motorfest 2017. And we are thrilled to play host.

The Hall will be independently run. Moss Motors is not picking inductees, and we fully expect to see certain influential business competitors make the grade. As John has stated all along, a key to the first inductee class is to honor those who are still with us.

The Hall's inaugural class can be reviewed on the web at britishsportscarhall.org, and the induction ceremony will be held on the Friday evening, June 2, before Motorfest on the 3rd. While an impressive number of the inductee class

BRITISH Sports Car
HALL OF FAME



members have indicated they will be present, we can't guarantee they will all be able to attend. Space is limited, so head over to the Moss website now to make reservations.

In addition to the induction ceremony on Friday, there will be interview and autograph sessions on Saturday as well. Have a look at some of the names and ask yourself, should I take the time to meet some of my British car heroes while I still can? Yes, absolutely yes. These folks

know things about your hobby from the perspective having been there and done that. Their memories cannot be replaced.

We'll likely never again have the opportunity to see this many British car legends in one place at one time. Don't miss out. And Mr. Egan, if you want to fly in with a Piper Cub, there's an airport right near by. Frankly, we have enough flat ground out behind the warehouse for you to go ahead and land there. We won't tell you. *MM*



Robert on his solo day, with a very brave instructor.

First Love

By Bryan Hutchinson



It is about 3:30 in the morning and I am exhausted from the grueling past 28-hour journey. My mind is in overdrive and I am pondering this question: “What car first made me fall in love?” From the beginning it was the MG—first the marque as a whole and quickly one particular ole’ girl that would meld herself into the genome of my composition.

As far back as I can remember my memories are interwoven with 20 weight Castrol, Whitworth threads and Lucas bullet connectors. My dad fell in love with the MG early in life and carried that passion through his military career, while raising our family and through many memories even to this day. Truth be told, I cannot remember a time when we didn’t have an MG or two or three sitting around. They may not have run, may not have been driven, may have only been a playground for growing boys in a fenced-in suburban backyard but nonetheless were always there. Over the course of my life I cannot think of a single time when my dad, brother or I didn’t have at least one MG.

My daughter Madison says that she stopped counting how many different

cars or motorcycles I have had at 100. I don’t know what that number is, but I do know thus far I have owned 29 MGs. Bookended by a ’52 TD and an ’80 LE, the number keeps growing. All of them have great memories—like my oldest daughter Peyton standing in the seat of a beautiful burnt orange ’79 B as we went to preschool four blocks from home. Kids in the garage with 40-grit sandpaper getting them ready to paint, or on creepers with me chasing wiring shorts late at night are common memories to me.

A couple of years ago Robert (brother), Karen (wife) and I did a frame-off restoration on a ’62 MKII. I feel pride every time I see a picture of her on Facebook, knowing that the new keeper of the keys is lovingly cherishing her. Maggie, our ’73 MGB, has provided over 70,000 miles of memories in the 20-plus years she has been around, including winning the Moss Motoring Challenge and

proposing to Karen on a long cross country trip. Indeed MGs have come and gone and thus far only one has been given the not-for-sale-don’t-ask-or-offer status. I am always happy when they come my way and happy when they go to new homes, never regretting when they pull out of my drive.

Except once.

***Life changed
that moment I
first saw her
and I officially
became a
gearhead.***

The car that made me fall in love was a 1970 MGB that my dad owned. It was the car that transformed me into the gearhead I am today. I never drove it to school, never took it on a date and, with the exception of adding wood blocks to the pedals for a sneak trip down the road,

I have never even driven it. Yet this car had a magical effect on me.

It came into our lives when I was in 5th grade. A freckle faced, long haired and puny elementary school kid, I didn’t understand the importance of the car. At first it was just cool, loud and not



something any of my friends had. Her skin was two-toned orange and white, her Minilite wheels and Goodyear tires were tucked up deep inside of her flared fenders. The pad was missing from her roll bar and a big "10ep" was emblazoned on her doors. You see, this old MG was not like any of the others we had ever owned and the enjoyment she would bring would not be on the prairie lined roads of North Texas. This car from birth was a purebred racer. She was lean, full of venom and bore a historic pedigree. Life changed that moment I first saw her and I officially became a gearhead.

Her story started in 1968, before she was born. I am researching now, but here is what I know thus far. British Leyland had just purchased MG from British Motoring Company and brought

the marque under a larger brand. The shuffle led to the cancellation of the factory sponsored MG race team. In mid 1969, British Leyland began the process of creating factory supported race teams in England and here in the USA. In all, it is believed that nine cars were designated by MG to be exported and shared with three teams here in the states.

Gene Fisher was a prominent fixture in the British car world. Among his other dealings, Mr. Fisher owned Overseas Motors Corporation and was the southwestern US distributor for British Leyland Motors bringing many of the Jaguars, MGs and other marques to the states. Moreover, his 1966-1968 fielding of the Purple People Eaters (1965 Austin Coopers) proved successful, winning three consecutive American Road Race of Champions National Championships. He was a natural choice to receive the first group of cars.

And so it started. The cars were shipped in January 1970 to the Port of Houston where Overseas Motors took possession and immediately began the process of building the team. All three cars, with factory support, were treated to Huffaker chassis and suspension



work, fully-built engines and a host of other unique tricks. Capped off with the famed white and gold paint schemes, the cars took to the track in time for the 1970 Southwest Region's National Series where the team captured the championship. Wayne Rutherford went on to Road Atlanta for the first SCCA National Championship but failed to finish the race. In 1971 Carlos Garza became the driver of this MG while McDaniel and Rutherford fielded the other two cars. The team continued to see success in 1971 finishing 1-2-3 in the Southwest region championships.

It is here that the story of this old MG takes a twist. In June of 1973 Fisher donated the racer to the Northwood Institute of Texas, a small college in Cedar Hill. The college was one of only four in the country with its own race program. The car remained





at Northwood until the mid 1970s when it was bought by Les Conner and returned to the SCCA circuit. He raced her on and off until 1983 when it came to live with us.

The day it came home, I knew life would be different. I soon began to understand that weekends in the creeks and woods would be replaced with long drives to different tracks throughout the southwest USA. Surreal. I learned how to wrench. I learned what tire pressure does and how to maximize grip. I learned what a properly tuned engine sounds like and how engine timing can be adjusted to free up power at high RPM. I experienced rattlesnakes in our tents and jack rabbits on the banks of Texas World Speedway. I enjoyed fast laps in the pace car driven by Paul Newman around Hallett Motor Speedway. Years later, I came to understand my mom's jealousy of that. I saw grown men cry and withdraw from races in south Louisiana after eating too many Tobacco boiled crawfish. Good and bad, fun and difficult, I grew into a gearhead with that old car.

My dad campaigned her in the SCCA series winning both Southwest Regional and Southwest National championships in 1985 and 1986. One of the sister cars reportedly made its way to Canada where it was destroyed. Glen Popejoy totaled the other car in a racing incident somewhere around 1984. My dad continued to run as he could afford to. His last race in the car was in 1988 at the Grand Prix of Dallas Vintage Race. It was there that Wayne Rutherford found the car and my dad. After exchanging stories and reminiscing, Wayne autographed the door. The car was loaded on its trailer never to be raced again.

For years, my parents worked to keep the car around. Though she wasn't on the track anymore, there was always hope. It survived a trip to California and a couple of more to Illinois. In 1998 my dad gifted the car to me. My grandiose plans were to return it to its former glory. I was young with a young family and eventually diapers and a mortgage collided with dreams. A fellow from North Carolina drove across the country with an old trailer, paid me for the car and she was gone. As she turned left out of my yard, I felt my heart sink. Physical pain took control of my gut and I knew she was gone.

As I continue pondering the question of first love, life has changed. In the 16 years since I parted ways with that car my girls have grown into amazing women. I remarried and three more children fill my heart with pride. My career has changed and luck, coupled with hard work and divine grace has brought me some vocational success. My love for cars has only grown and with each one I obtain, each story that is shared, each gearhead that I meet I find myself feeling richer and fuller. While I still regret selling that old MG, it no longer haunts me. Where once I would be woken from my sleep dreaming about it, I am now at rest. As Paul Harvey would so eloquently say: And now, the rest of the story.

In 2004, I began looking for that car. Not that I could do anything about it, but I just had to know. The internet was gaining steam and blogs, chat rooms and Facebook started taking the place of our front porches and barber shops. People who had a story to tell, would share it for the world to see. One day, I found such a story. It was from a man in North Carolina who was looking for any history that could be found on the "Overseas Motors MGBs." My attention was caught. Blog after blog and site after site I began hunting. I would find a name, then a phone number or address, write a letter and mail it off. Sometimes I would get a response, mostly my requests went unanswered. That changed in 2013

when sitting on the porch on my first night in a new small house, I found a link that led to a forum that led to an email that led to the car. It was safe, secure, radically changed but with most of the original parts. It was tucked away in a barn in south Florida under the care of a gentleman racer and his wife.

So here I am, exhausted yet wide awake. For three and a half years I have been working to get her back. On Saturday afternoon the gentleman racer and I came to an agreement. I left at 5:00pm on Sunday afternoon, drove all night and most of the day to get to her. When I saw the Firestone rain tire, I knew her instantly. She has changed since I remember her last, shedding fender flares, gaining a roll cage, losing all of her paint. I peeked in at the through-bored SU carbs. I picked up the seat we hand made to fit my dad's frame. I held the front valance that I helped make some 30 years ago in an old shop where I learned to wrench. Yep. It's her. My first love.



Tonight, she is on my trailer and again I am her keeper of the keys. Two days from now she starts the road to recovery and I think if I can keep it secret long enough, she will make a grand reentry to public eyes at a Texas MG event just in time for my Dad and Mom's 50th wedding anniversary. I will let you know how it goes. *M.M*



A BODY REBORN

by Dennis Oldland

When I became the current steward of a '60 TR3A, it was British Racing Green with a brown interior that wouldn't have been too bad...in a boat! **[1]**

The previous owner had carefully crafted a wooden dash and wooden door panels and they looked nice, but...

Realizing how much work the owner had put into the dashboard, I gently asked him if, by chance, he saved the original. It was included in the deal. The owner said the car was restored in the late '70s from two cars. The car was painted in lacquer and overall the finish was good. A British Motor Heritage search indicated that the original color was Silverstone Grey, which only came with a red or very rare light purple interior. Since it was going to be a few years until I retired and would have time to restore the body, I chose a new black interior to go with the green rather than drive around in a Christmas car.

A retirement plan formed: do all the work, except final color, in my garage and have a pro paint shop finish it off. Exploring the attic, I found my old body tools, sanders, and paint guns so a big chunk of expenses were already covered. I have painted cars at home before and no matter how much plastic I hang on walls, paint gets on everything and finds its way into the house, too.



Then there is the amateur painter X-Factor that comes into play. Even when you have done all the prep work right, for some reason shooting the color results in orange peel, runs, dry spots, and other nasties.

The only way that I could maintain focus was to take one corner of the car at a time, strip it, work the metal, fill with lead if needed, acid-etch it to prevent rusting and move on to the next section. When it came time to prime, I would sand with 220 to remove the etching.

After working on the car for a bit I realized the title of the article needed to be changed as the body had been reborn under the PO and was actually a shell of Bondo™ perfectly shaped to look like a TR3 with some connecting metal underneath. New Title: "Mining for Metal...Any Metal Will Do!"





3

Whoa. So Many Colors, Man

Paint removal is always an adventure. You never really know what you'll find until you get to bare metal. This car came with undercoating sprayed everywhere there was not body color, including under the bonnet as well as the entire boot and spare tire space. It did not come off easily, so I reluctantly used chemical stripper on these parts but abrasive removal everywhere else. **[2]**



4

With the interior removed, I looked down the cavity usually covered by the dogleg panel and saw light through the bottom of the car. When I removed the rubber plug under the cavity, I was greeted with a seemingly unending flow of dirty, rusty sand. The light bulb went off: Someone sandblasted the panel and forgot or couldn't remove the leftover sand, which continued to provide a damp bed suitable for the rust demons to make a nice, moist home. Never a good idea to sandblast a cavity unless the car is on a rotisserie. The proper repair required cutting out steel panels, forming them, and welding them in place. This was followed with lead body solder and a bit of plastic filler. **[3]**



5



6

The rocker panels I could buy. That was good news. The bad news is that they are formed straight from front to rear and on the car the panels have a slight curve inward at front and rear. Rather than build up the middle of the rocker panels with filler, I cut a slit about 6 inches long on the top and bottom horizontal surfaces, opened up the slit a bit, clamped, and welded close. It worked. All that was needed was to cover the welding with lead and fit to the car. **[4]**



7

Step to the Rear Please

On the rear apron are blind box sections behind the bumper mounting area—meaning, it was impossible to get behind and do body work with hammers and dollies. One side was so damaged and crinkled that it had to be cut out and replaced with new metal. In this section and several others, I dug out up to a half inch of plastic filler. I was amazed that the filler had not cracked or otherwise shown on the surface.

[5] [6] [7]

As mentioned, this car was built from two. There was evidence of welding two rear apron sections. So if they spliced in the “good” section, I would have liked to have seen the bad half! **[8]**

The car took a fairly hard hit in the right rear to the point that it took a bottle jack to pry out the corner reinforcement under the car. The damage extended down the rear fender which had a long crease and several holes intended to make the way-too-thick layer of plastic filler bite. **[9]**

The boot lid wasn't too bad and only took a small bit of lead to fix some dings.



Doors of Horror

The doors had amazing and illogical damage that it deserves mention. I could only envision that the door was hung in a barn and used for shotgun practice. No event in nature would have caused the number of small dents in only the door and not the surrounding panels. The first door was a problem. The second door was just depressing. Not only had it been in a shooting gallery, but the bottom was rusted out. I was able to get a donor door in excellent shape from Team Triumph, a Moss distributor. **[10]**

It seemed wise to fit up the “new” door to the car to see how it lined up. Hmmm. Not even close. The rear of the door was banging against the B post. So how do you adjust a non-adjustable door? The Engineers of Triumph (And perhaps other marques) soldered in a section of lead on the forward edge of the B post in order to adjust the closing gap. Brilliant! **[11]**

So it became a matter of filing the strip in order to get a nice gap. This gap is also shared with the uninstalled new rocker panel. Seeing how the factory guys made adjustments possible, I figured I could do the same thing on the rocker and made a fence/form of flattened copper tubing and dripped molten lead into the fence to make my adjustable edge on both pieces and Bob's your uncle. **[12]**



In the Cave of Darkness

Onward to the Catacombs of Rust, the oft-neglected Cave of Darkness where mighty steel can be turned into little brown flakes unseen by the eye.

Most British cars have a cavity between the rear of the front inner fender and the A-post that is a breeding ground for rust. It gets fed water from the seam between the fender and body and a lot of damage can occur before it is visible. On TRs 2 through 6, this space can be sealed when the fender is fitted up to the car. Mine was not too bad. Checking the unseen portion of the fender, I scraped the fender where the rubber seal meets the inner cavity and found pocking under the undercoat. Aha, the deception of undercoating. One never knows what is under the undercoat no matter how good the surface looks. Since this isn't a “how-to” article, the details are skipped, but the basic protocol is scrape, convert rust, encapsulate rust and seal all edges, then undercoat. That should be enough to go another 50 years. Where blind panels had no drain holes, one was added with the plan being to inject a waxed oil blend up inside all drain holes after final paint and then plug the hole. **[13]**

One front fender suffered damage, though not as bad as the rear. After chipping off another half-inch of filler, the fender was rusted below the filler as well as it being so thin and fragile that one hammer bump broke through, so no repairing here. As it were, none of the patches had been just flat—all had some curve arrangement. Made me wish I had a leather sandbag and mallet to form the metal easier. Patch panel shown beside the discard. **[14]**

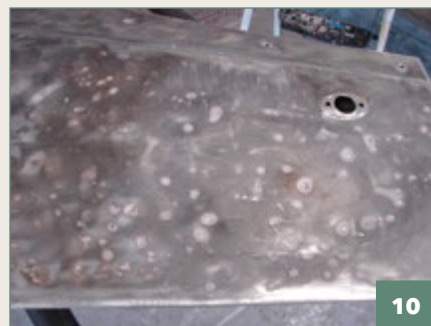
Now the problem was lining up the body contour of the fender with the front apron, which also had similar damage. That sentence represents about a month of work before getting the shapes to be acceptable.



8



9



10



11



12



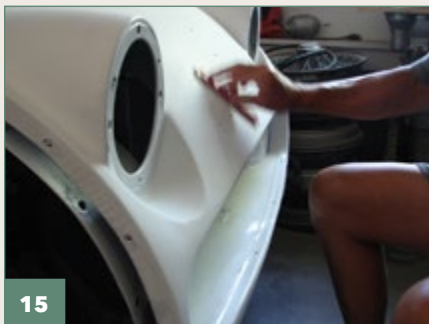
The Voyage of Discovery: Primer

When you get to the point of final sanding before priming, you can trust nothing. You can't trust your touch or your eyes. Even using your off hand and eyes closed, you think you have found all the taters and craters, but you are likely wrong. Trying to check the flatness of a white-primed body panel in bright daylight is blinding. Actually the best sunlight is late in the day. It is amazing to see colonies of missed opportunities grow before your gaze in the setting sun.



So the discovery coats of primer were applied and the result was immediately depressing. How could I have missed that and *THAT*?

After seeing the damage on all the other corners of the car, finding the nose a mess was no surprise. Repairs here required a basic reshaping of the nose after removal of all the filler.



Using body tools, a contour gauge, and the grille, the shape returned without either bending the grille into a convex or concave shape. TR3A grilles are supposed to be flat. It took several guide coats to find the last bits of offending filler putty and sand them to lay down flat and stick-sanding was the best way to ensure flatness—actually the whole car was stick-sanded to 120, then 220, then 320 grit. This work was best done inside with overhead lights off. Outside in the glaring sun with white primer, it was nearly impossible to see the finish without getting snow blindness. **[15]**

Saving the Best for Last

I followed the rollback to the paint shop carrying the bonnet, boot, spare lids, doors, etc. in our truck along with all the paint codes I could find and some photos of TR3s in Silverstone Grey to help the painter mix the color. The painter called me back. All the codes were obsolete. His European paint supplier sent several current chips that all were shown as Silverstone Grey ranging from very light to a near battleship grey. Turns out there are as many varieties of this color as British Racing Green.

My friends at Socastee Collision did another fabulous job. They have painted several cars for me, the last one being a Jaguar E-Type coupe about ten years ago.

As an appropriate end, on the very day that the car was put back together with all trim, a shelf broke holding a spare generator and other road trip items and the generator did a one bounce impact to the rocker panel which required... more body work.

MM



www.

Bullfire.net

Click on “Triumph TR6 Rebuild” no matter what kind of car you have!

By David Stuursma—and with the 6-Pack crew, too

I'm a lurker. One of my daily tasks is to log onto the 6-Pack.org Forum and keep a lookout for conversations about Moss Motors, our parts and our service. There are other Moss employees on other forums, too. Online forums are a fantastic resource for many reasons—on our end, they help us do our job better and open up a direct line of communication to an entire community. The 6-Pack members know I'm there and will often message me if there's a Moss-specific question. How great is that?!

Lurking is like people watching at the airport. I get to see people's character comes out in their writing, and on 6-Pack this is a treat. Such kind, helpful and talented characters they are. There's one guy in particular whose posts intrigue me. Every so often he writes modest notes saying: “Hey guys I finished such-and-such project and here's the link to my write-up.” I can't click fast enough. I've got to see what he's been up to. Surf his site and you'll see why.

I've wanted to do this for quite some time; let me introduce you to Ed Hollingsworth.

On the forum Ed flies under the radar. He's not flashy or showy, but when a post by Ed_H shows up, ears perk up—and not just mine. For example, here's what 6-Pack member Chris Baggett has to say:

This guy... appears on 6-Pack one day. No big “hey, I'm here!” Nothing. Just starts posting about this jalopy akin to Chitty Chitty Bang Bang. And in this Midwest garage, starts disassembling it and sharing his progress. Each time you scroll through his Bullfire website, you



Artwork by Ed Hollingsworth

stop, look at his comments, the work, and you sit there almost speechless. So, you back up and re-read it again. Little things go through your mind like, “Why hasn't anyone thought of that?” or “Why would you restore that?— just replace it!” And then you see his restored washer motor, for example, and it is lovely.

His work goes beyond what most of us would do. Take a trailing arm for example, and how I might power wash it, media blast it, and maybe rattle can some of the parts, and reassemble. No. His stuff looks like a Triumph parts guy in 1976 walked back behind the counter, and came back with this factory replacement part. I've been around a lot of restorations. I've been through many restoration shops, and seen the progress of a full restoration. This guy, in the middle of Nebraska, seemingly almost off the grid, has this vision of what this marque needs, and just gets out in the shop and turns the vision into reality.

Ed is a renaissance man, at a time when antique cars are in a renaissance.

It really does not matter what kind of car you own. Even if TR6s aren't your thing, craftsmanship can be universally appreciated. But be aware, once you start reading, it's hard to stop.

Myself, as a frugal Dutchman, I love reading about how Ed feels he spends little money since he's doing repairs himself on original parts. The rationalist in me, though, can't help but tally the hours he's spending. His dedication at times borders on the monastic. Funny thing though, at just about exactly the time my mind starts struggling to see the point of this monumental effort, Ed says something simple like, “It was an enjoyable day in the shop.” Instantly my bean-counting brain cells take a deep, healing breath. He does what others would do if they had the time, and bless 'im for that. Too few people take this approach. And even fewer document their work for the benefit of others.

I asked Ed to say a bit about his background. He wrote:

I can trace my fondness for Little British Cars all the way back to my high school days in the '60s. While the other guys were lusting after Corvettes and Mustangs, my fancy was plucked more by the British roadsters—especially the then pretty new Triumph TR4. The compact, nimble size, the open cockpit, the spare, muscular style all spoke to me. It was well out of my price range though, so my first vehicle was actually a quirky '54 Renault 4CV

with cool suicide doors and 21 blazing horsepower.

It was a few years later that I finally bought my first LBC—a '57 MGA. I found it in a backwater used car lot in Colorado Springs, snuggled between a quaint little MGTD, which I thought might not be reliable enough, and an absolutely seductive XK120, which I couldn't afford. The MG was my sole means of transportation for a few years while I was in the service, and later in college. It was worn and never very trustworthy, but the frequent roadside repairs were usually pretty easy, so it met my needs at the time.

When it dawned on me one day that I was about to get a real job, I decided I needed something I could count on a little more. A nice little '69 Triumph GT6 came along, and I jumped at it. Though not a roadster, I liked the style, and the heater worked. Not willing to totally give up on the MG, I stashed it in my parent's garage where I gradually rebuilt the engine and did a lot of needed body work.

As the Triumph aged and slowly became less dependable, I moved on to a more "sensible" car. It's funny, but I can't even remember what it was now—that says something, doesn't

it? But, thinking that the GT6 hadn't really come into its day yet, I decided to stash it away, too.

I eventually got tired of driving a boring car, and went looking for something more interesting. I landed on a direct descendent of the TR4—a yellow '74 Triumph TR6. The six retained the husky, squarish brawn that I loved about the TR4, but had a bigger engine. The car was only a few years old when I bought it, so it was relatively reliable as LBCs go, but still not a great car for Midwest winters. I put up with that for a few seasons, and finally caved in and bought a pickup truck for winter driving.

By this time, I was married and had a house with a big enough garage to keep the MG and the two Triumphs (all in one stall!). My career and family life kept me too busy to do anything besides dream of the day when I'd have the freedom to give the cars some attention.

They slept in the garage for close to 30 years by the time I finally retired in 2013. The same week I retired, I drug the TR6 out from its space and pulled the engine. It's been nearly a full-time job ever since. I don't seem

to be getting tired of it, and still look forward to getting to the other cars.

I guess I'd call what I'm doing with the TR6 a resto-mod. I want the car to look, feel, sound, and drive like a TR6, but if I see an area that I think I can improve, I will usually do it. I'm keeping a running chronicle of the project on my web site, but it's as much for my own use as for others. I refer back to it pretty often.

I learn something nearly every day on the TR6 project. Since my education and experience is in Electronics Engineering, I understood the electrical stuff pretty well, but my mechanical skills have all been self-taught. Of course, that's not hard when you enjoy it, and when you have such a great resource as the online community of LBC enthusiasts. TR6 and other LBC forums channel an enormous reservoir of expertise and subject matter wisdom—for free!

Ed is a valuable member of the 6-Pack community, and an inspiration to all who restore these classics. Do take a look at Ed's Bullfire.net website. And don't let its very simple structure mislead you; the content within is absolutely gorgeous. *MM*

Brief excerpts from Bullfire.net

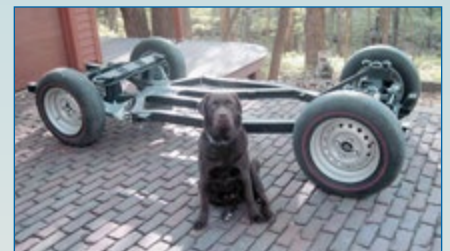
Dog Years



The left picture was taken back in May, 2014 when the body had just been taken off, and the frame power washed. Even though it may not look like it from this distance, the difference between the three pics is



hundreds of hours and many hundreds of dollars. The center photo is from October, when I had just attained the milestone of a rolling chassis, and was about to put it away for the winter. The one on the right is almost exactly one



year later. The tub is now done, and I'm prepping the chassis to receive it. This entails mainly the drivetrain and the chassis plumbing—brake and fuel lines.

I also invited (without Ed's knowledge) a handful of 6-Pack members to share their thoughts on Ed and his work. I'm certain many others would have loved to speak up, too.

Ed took me by surprise as I suppose he did a lot of us who frequent the 6-Pack.org Forum. Parts, large and small, brought back to life thru Ed's thoughtful and creative efforts and techniques are something to behold. I have a feeling what we've seen is only the tip of the iceberg as far as Ed's accomplishments. What a legacy he's leaving for us current and future TR6 owners.

-Ken Dolhonde aka "poolboy"

I benefit from Ed's work and blog as he is just ahead in the restoration process from me. I look forward to each installment so I know how to do it right. Invaluable advice for my first-time restoration.

-Paul Thiele

Ed is a true craftsman. He likes to give new life to the car's original parts. Usually they are better than new after he repairs them—no shortcuts or cut corners with Ed. Ed takes great pictures and notes in his detailed step-by-step effort in documenting his work, complete with sizes and measurements for others to learn from and follow on their efforts. I have saved most of the articles in hopes that someday they will help if I ever have to use them.

-Luis Mijares

I have read many books in my 35 years restoring Triumphs, and no one until Ed has documented the restoration of each individual part with great step-by-step instructions of how he did it. He needs to write a book. So glad he has done this for the 6-Pack community.

-Mike Richardson

I am going through a project and have referred over and over again to Ed's site. Including frame, body work, meticulous stuff that I couldn't find answers to—he answers my most challenging questions. Ed also chimes in on my build from time to time, and it's so refreshing to see his name knowing he'll offer pointers and/or just give me a thumbs up on my progress. He is phenomenal!

-Dne' Weir

Without question, the quality and resourcefulness of Ed's accomplishments, are simply astounding, even to the other competent restorers that frequent the 6-Pack site. He is certainly light years ahead of my own capabilities, and so far has refused my request that he adopt me.

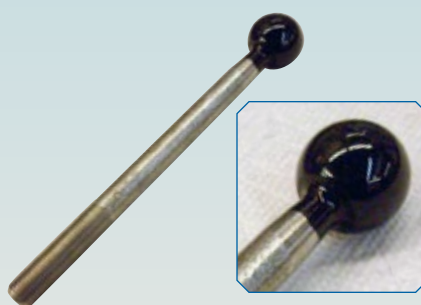
-Bruce Waller

Calipers



When there is a pair of items on a car, I usually try to do one at a time so I have the other to refer to.

Ball Joints



Most of the ball joint parts live out their lives bathed in grease, so plating is unnecessary. The exception is the rod part of the tie rods. These are at least partially exposed to the elements where the gaiters don't cover. I thought zinc plating the tie rods would be worthwhile, but didn't want to



interfere with the nice surface of the ball. I ended up selectively plating the tie rods by spraying a couple of coats of lacquer paint on the ball parts to act as a resistant to the plating. Lacquer dries fast and is easy to remove. It worked out well.

Three Hours to Vegas

By Ron Zayas



I was in Las Vegas starting my first year of college. With the leftover proceeds from my student loan (Who needs books?), I had \$500 of stake money and I knew exactly what I wanted: an MG convertible.

I credit a friend's father (a transplanted Oxford grad, who went on to work for BMC) for introducing me to the marque. His shiny MGB with overdrive caused the automotive equivalent of imprinting on me. It could have also been his four attractive daughters, but why quibble? Either way, I was hooked.

I knew finding a B for \$500 was going to be tough, so I settled for the B's sportier and less expensive sister. I purchased a 1970 blue MG Midget that ran perfectly except for not having a master brake cylinder, which meant that I didn't actually drive it before I bought it.

My father pointed out every flaw in my teenage logic, but still took on the project with me to get it to run. A master cylinder quickly escalated to brake pads and rear cylinders, a new coil, rebuilding the carbs, and putting

in a new clutch. We splurged on new cylinders (bored out for extra oomph) and, of course, the mandatory cassette player and speakers. Music was a higher priority than a top, so I went without. In the Vegas winter, I had to gut a Tauntaun to stay warm on my way to school. Solid choices.

Within a few weeks, I was driving to California on my days off of school to have lunch with my friends. Back before traffic choked I-15 (actually, it was before I-15 was even completed), I could easily head out at 8 a.m., have lunch with my friends and be back in time for work at 6 p.m.

Over tacos, we got on the subject of how long it took to drive to Vegas, and ended up playing a game of one-upsmanship with miles and minutes slicing away. I made it once in 3:45. Yeah, that's fast, but my dad and I did it once in 3:30, with the wind at our backs and aligned with the rotation of the Earth, just right.

"I bet I can do it in 3 hours," I said. My friends laughed in a chorus of disbelief and ridicule. Someone started doing the math: 270 miles in three

hours meant an average speed of 90 mph. Factor in a little traffic leaving Orange County, cops and the Cajon and Baker grades, and you'd have to top 100 to maintain that average. MGs fly apart at less speed than that. But I had a plan: leave at night to avoid traffic and keep the car running as cool as possible.

By 10 p.m. I had gassed up and was heading up CA-55, with Jackson Brown's "Running on Empty" filling the air. The first leg went well, and I slammed into the Cajon pass on schedule. Going 90 mph meant maintaining 5500 rpm since I lacked overdrive. I was punishing the car, but I knew she could take it. I was hoping she could take it.

Victorville, a notorious speed trap halfway to Barstow, slowed me down, so I floored the pedal after passing the last exit. My accelerator cable snapped, stranding me on the side of the road, cold, dark and despondent, but not beaten. Thirty minutes later I was back on the road, one end of the choke cable linked to the throttle with me awkwardly pulling on the choke to speed up and change gears, a vice grip locking the cable in place; a hillbilly cruise control sans the duct tape. I was mathematically eliminated from making it in three hours, but I didn't believe it. Did I mention I was 16? (I got kicked out of high school. Rather than have to explain to my parents that I had been expelled, my sister recommended I just enroll at UNLV where she studied. By the time the school figured out my transcripts were incomplete, I had been there for a year, was editor of the student newspaper, and old enough to take the GED. They were highly motivated to let me stay at that point.)

Between Barstow and Baker, singing along to "Hotel California" kept my face from going numb in the night air.

Suddenly, I hit a set of dips and actually caught air, hitting the ground with a bone-numbing thud. None the worse for wear, it seemed, I pushed her along, slicing through the lonely darkness.

The Baker grade came quickly, and the telltale third lane magically morphed out of nowhere. Reflective signs were alerting me to turn off my A/C and look for signs of overheating. Heat, gravity, heavy American A/C compressors and poor cooling maintenance were the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse for cars in the Mojave summer. But it was winter, I had no A/C and my father had smartly replaced my Midget's toy of a radiator with something much larger, so, what, me worry?

By the time I had made the top of the first grade, the car's normally loud growl was now drowning out the stereo. The water temp had soared to red territory, forcing me to shift into neutral and coast on the downgrade. The temp cooled, but oil pressure had all but disappeared.

As I hit the base of the next incline, I slipped into fourth, pulling back hard on the choke cable, forcing the speedometer to keep up. I could see another truck lane forming, and prepared to lock the cable into place for the home stretch. I never made it to the sign. The engine noise was deafening and as I strained towards 4,000 rpms, a loud crack and harsh jerk signaled that a rod had shattered and the engine was seizing up. I slammed it into neutral and rolled across the emerging truck lane and onto the shoulder. As I sat shivering in the dark, I looked at my watch and I realized the 3-hour mark had ticked away.

It was a long night. I eventually got picked up but left my poor car abandoned by the roadside. When we

brought her home the next day all my father needed was one look underneath the car to know what had happened: that hard thud I took when I defied gravity at the dips had torn a hole in the oil pan. Without oil, revving too fast for too long, and with a knucklehead driver at the helm, my Midget had no chance. He shook his head, numbed by my stupidity.

The human mind is an interesting thing: I don't remember the amount of pain and effort it took to get my MG back on the road. I don't recall the money I spent, the many more times she left me stranded in the heat, the cold, the wind and the rain. But I remember that trip vividly, and how good it felt to be alive. Sadly, I also remember the day I sold her, when the practicality of starting a family overcame the selfishness of wanting to hold on to my youth. Yeah, I was young, irresponsible and careless, but having those good memories somehow made the transition to adulthood easier.

Epilogue

Almost 30 years later, with my two oldest in college, my memories drove me back to the arms of a convertible. The idea was to get an upgraded, reliable analogy to my favorite car. Then I thought, why not get the original and make it better? I found a nice 1979 MGB, redid the electrical, outfitted the interior in leather, and added a 5-speed transmission. In the heat of June, I took her to Vegas on a weekday, speeding along the busy but fast moving interstate. Maybe I pushed too hard, maybe that smog equipment-choked engine just wasn't up to the task. But at the second Baker grade I was once again on the side of the road, same relative place, same broken car. But this time I had AAA, Internet service and an iPad. While I calmly waited for the truck to arrive, I smiled. I was young again. Only better. *MM*

The author (bottom right, with his son, Evan) continues to enjoy his love affair with MGs. In addition to his MGB (his TARDIS), he owns a 1976 MG Midget that he has converted to a full electric. Although a pilot, Ron prefers the freedom of his B flying down an old stretch of Route 66 or some other forgotten highway.



SUPERCHARGE

Your Car Club

How are you car club meetings going? Struggling to get people to show up? Tough to motivate yourself to go sometimes? I've been there, and I didn't like it one bit. Life is too short and our cars deserve the best clubs we can give them. So let's talk about it.

I first joined the MG Car Club—Central Jersey Center (New Jersey) around 12 years ago. After going to a few of their monthly meetings, I left disappointed. There was some small talk, a short business meeting, and then everyone went home. They weren't having fun! Why even bother going? With around 140 members, only some 20 came out to meetings. This wasn't sitting well with me. Club meetings should be fun!

So, I volunteered to run their monthly meetings. I had automotive and engineering backgrounds, I've had many British cars since 1967, and had been involved with car clubs for many years, too. Now, no car club in their right mind turns down a volunteer, right? I proposed to them what I wanted to try and they gave me the green light. They approved my requested budget of \$1,200 for the year—mainly for food. My goal was to make the meetings fun, social, and interesting.

First, I surveyed the members to get to know their interests and thoughts. With their replies, along with my

ideas, I developed my plan. I presented it to the club officers, both for their suggestions and approval. My plan incorporated a combination of club business, presentations of interest, snacks, fun stuff, and social activities—plus occasional special activities.

Right from the start I involved other members in the planning. There is an art to gently twisting elbows. Remember: your club members are your best resource—once you've tapped into them things goes more smoothly. Each year I would survey the members again for their feedback and suggestions. I made improvements along the way.

Okay, lets get to the meat of the story.

Where to Begin

I arrived early to the meetings to put out drinks and snacks as well as to set up my display board of upcoming events and items of interest. Then either the meeting or the special event would begin. You may notice a theme: our club loves to share food together!

Some of the special nights included: Hawaiian Night with colorful clothing, leis and tropical foods; at British cuisine Night, a catering company brought in British food samples for us to taste and learn about; we had a BYOB Wine and Cheese evening; a "Hot Doggie Night" with all the fixings; Pizza Night; movie night showing a flick with British cars

in it; and a potluck dinner night—just to name a few. I even brought in a cake once for us to celebrate my MGTD's 60th birthday. You get the idea. We were having fun!

Meeting Setup

We met at a VFW hall and had a good-sized room, which works well for us. Alongside the snacks on the welcome table there were nametags and a free raffle ticket for everyone. The nametags helped with socializing a lot, and they included space to list their car(s).

Another table was set up, covered with a green tablecloth, and cleverly called our "Green Table." Members were invited to bring in anything they were willing to give away for free. Lots of interesting stuff showed up on it: car parts, car magazines and books, tools, fresh garden vegetables, hardware, videos, etc. There was only one rule: if no one took your stuff, you had to take it back home. One person's trash is another's treasure! Interestingly, the Green Table evolved into a social mingling place. And the free raffle at the meeting's end worked well, too. The club paid for some prizes. Members were also encouraged to donate one item for the raffle, once a year, the month of their birthday.



Meeting Night

When lining up speakers I would talk with them about areas of their specialty I felt the club would find useful and interesting. I explained how much time they had and told them about their audience. If the speaker had a business, they could put out literature—but their talk was not to be a sales pitch.

Meeting agendas were sent out to member in advance and included brief descriptions of the topics being presented or special activities. Members were invited to bring spouses, significant others, children, and friends to the meetings with them—we are all family!

With these changes, monthly meeting attendance rose from about 20 members to 50! Here are a few of the presentations we've had over the years:

- We staged a multi-station Tune-Up Instruction where the basics were explained by knowledgeable members on: points, plugs, timing, carbs, and valves.
- A fire shop professional talked about tires for sports cars.
- Members brought in car memorabilia for "Show and Tell."
- An oil engineer from Castrol spoke to us about oils and lubricants.
- We held a 50-50 auction of members' car stuff (half of the proceeds went to the club, half to the seller).
- A presentation on hardware (nuts, bolts, etc), their differing types and grading including: SAE, Metric and Whitworth.
- A talk on garage safety and car fires, inspired by a Jaguar that caught fire driving to the "Britfest" car show.
- Richard Miller of the MG Drivers Club spoke on the British Car Invasion of North America.
- Art Issacs, who lived and worked in China for a time, talked on MG activities over there.
- A new car salesman, from Norman-Gale Buick-GMC, gave an insider's perspective on buying and selling cars.
- We had a Story Telling Contest for Halloween (with prizes!) with some of the strangest car stories you've ever heard!
- I gave presentations on headers, the importance of ZDDP in oil for older cars, batteries, spark plugs, gasoline technology, and vintage racing.
- Police Officer Denis Nelson talked about police activities and policies, especially concerning vintage cars and motorist.
- A guy out of Newark, NJ, whose business it is to provide cars for movies had some great stories for us and told us how we could get our own cars into movies.



- A rep from J.C. Taylor spoke on antique and classic car insurance.
- Phil Eng of Shade Tree Garage talked about the best ways to select a reliable garage for getting vintage cars fixed.
- Members talked about special trips they had taken with their LBCs over the years.
- A guy from First Place Auto talked about waxes, cleaners, polish, etc. for cars
- Lemon Award night! Members talked about the troublesome cars they've owned over the years. Prizes were awarded for the best lemon stories, and member Butch O'Conner (lawyer) spoke about New Jersey's Lemon Laws.
- Chris Leydon of Leydon Restorations talked about restoring historic vintage cars, and his life with vintage cars.
- Club president Mike Ruane talked about painting your own car.
- The "Introducing our Members" talk series is a great way to get to know each other.
- Nick O'Donohoe talked about re-upholstering car seats.
- Dick Bettel talked about powder coating car parts.

It really is amazing just how many resources, topics, activities are at your fingertips—and how much fun—when you tap into the enthusiasm of your club members!

Tip of the Iceberg

Monthly club meetings are only part of the club fun. There are so many other activities can your club can do, too: Rallies, drives, BBQ's, garage tours, socials, etc. One good example of being creative was our club's adventure at an indoor go-kart racing track. We rented the entire facility for one evening and gathered up 30 people to race—and spectators to watch! This was not kid's stuff! Those go-carts could fly! Competition was encouraged as three racing teams were formed to compete. We brought our own refreshments and gave out a number of token awards—for bragging rights of course—to the race winners in several categories. It was a big hit!

Our club isn't only about getting together as a group. We try and look out for each other individually as well. We ask veteran members to volunteer to become an "MG Buddy." When someone new would join the club, we'd assign them an "MG Buddy" who lived close by and could help with any questions or problems they had.

One of our members owns a garage where he worked on foreign cars. One Saturday every spring, he invites our members over to work together on their vintage cars doing simple stuff. He

has three lifts for our use, as well as his tools and equipment. Oil changes, fluid checks, brakes, tune-ups, etc., as well as just doing general safety checks—you'd be surprised at what was sometimes found!

One of our member's kid's elementary school planned a "British Day." So he arranged for four of us to take our MGs to the school's parking lot for "show and tell." All the kids were paraded out to look at them, as we talked to the kids about our fabulous steeds and their British heritage. Start 'em young!

Don't kid yourself! These activities involve planning, organization and work. But labors of love foster camaraderie with our buddies! I have been involved with this stuff for almost 50 years now and have no regrets. My daughter Rachel even vintage races my MGTD these days, when I morph into her head wrench for her races. I also edit the Keystone Region MG Club's newsletter—the "MG Gazette" and do the press releases for the MG Vintage Racers. As long as I am able I will stay as involved as I can. My British car days aren't over yet!

You don't have to get as involved as I do, but step up to the plate and help make your club one of the best parts of owning a British car! Believe me, it's worth it! *MM*

For an extended version of Greg's helpful ideas on club activities and programs, go to: mossmotoring.com/car-club-tips



Abram Was Here, Too



By Abram Perry



We met Abram about a year and a half ago and have been following him ever since. It's not everyday you get to meet a modern day explorer, one who's keenly passionate about British cars of all kinds. The most recent news from Abram is that he's come across a derelict TR3. You can see his projects and photos of his epic travels on his website. -Ed.

www.abramwashere.com

As the tinkering and upgrades came to a good stopping point on my TR6, I set out on a couple short weekend test trips looping out and back 600 miles or so. Once road-tuned I decided that because time, money, and effort was spent bringing this classic back to life, it was the time for a grand tour to really put this contraption to good use. If ever I was to take an epic road trip, now was it! After packing in a few tools, some handy spares, and camping gear, I flipped open my road atlas and pondered, “hmm...what direction to set off in?” I hit the skinny pedal, took to the backroads, and was off into the great unknown—heading west!

Early spring is a great time for touring around the southwest. The landscapes are diverse and filled with National Parks, State Parks, and BLM (Bureau of Land Management)

territory. These amazing parks offer spectacular world-class places to explore and beautiful areas to camp. The cooler temps of spring allow a more comfortable cruise through the desert and so many amazing land formations to see: mesas, slot canyons, arches and, of course, mountains. Weaving my way from park to park, so many people were excited to see the classic cruiser out on the road; many getting a “blast from the past” or a reminder of the good ol’ days. Some just curious as to what it was. The TR6 brought smiles everywhere. My journey led from one experience to the next, many that might not have been found in a less adventurous car. It was amazing to talk, swap stories, and explore landscapes with so many different people from all over the world.

After four and a half months on the road, covering 11 states, I arrived at the Sierra Mountains. Weaving through

a forested valley floor, the TR made its way into the legendary Yosemite Valley, the bare granite walls shooting thousands of feet up on either side. Waterfalls cascaded off what seemed like every other rock face and wildlife flourished everywhere. After several days of cruising and exploring by day hikes, I decided to see more of the High-Country. I opened up the boot of the TR and carefully crammed what gear I could into my small rucksack. I parked the TR6, threw on a quality cover, and took off into the mountains on foot.

The Sierras are a splendid world only accessible on foot. Such good people from all over the world earn their way up the trail, supplied with only what they can carry. Few places can compare to the remote beauty. My expedition meandered all over the Central High Sierras and then some. There and back again, several times. After six months, and well over 1,000 miles of hiking, I made it back to the TR6. A magnificent journey, I climbed and descended a total of over 237,000 feet on the traverse.

After all that walking up and down, it was refreshing to get back on the open road, especially in a topless car with panoramic views.

Soon thereafter a message came through: "Hey, I have a Healey that needs finished up and I want you to get



it back on the road!" The owner was familiar with the work I'd done on my TR6 and invited me to be a part of their Healey journey. I was excited to have the opportunity to bring a legend back to life. The TR6 once again went on standby as my British car adventures continued to unfold. Onward to the next expedition: I'm homeward bound to work on a Healey!



with Armstrong shocks all around. Coil springs in the front suspend the A-arms, and leaf springs in the back hold the solid rear axle. Great access is gained to the rear axle compartment by removing the rear seats of the 2+2. The suspension came apart, was renewed and reassembled with new grade-8 hardware, nylon-insert "aircraft" nuts, lock washers, and a dab of Loctite.

The electrical system and interior were next. The wiring harness had been replaced, though it still had connections to sort out and finish. A wiring diagram made diagnosis a straightforward process. The interior was mostly there, but there was plenty to be done. A Moss carpet kit tied everything together beautifully as the interior was assembled. Another touch of light was added: interior dash lights. Upon flipping the "panel light" switch to its second position, the entire dash and footwell would glow—perfect for the evening.

The front bearings looked pretty good, but while I was in there, it was easy and cost effective to install new bearings, grease, and seals. With a little bit of patience, the hubs were properly shimmed, and it was once again ready to roll for many miles. The brake cylinders were, well, kinda gunkified, and I chose to replace the cylinders instead of attempting rebuilds. Bleeding new cylinders with new rubber seals went unbelievably quick and painless. Taking it one step at a time, the air was soon out of the line. With all the bleeders



TAKING ON AN ICON

Excited to tinker on a dream car, I arrived at the garage, tool roll in tote, and pulled back the car cover. Whoa! It was the latest and greatest of the series: the 3000 Mark III Phase II. It definitely needed work, but it was pretty much all there and looked really good given its age. The restoration had begun many years before, got side tracked, and now needed finishing, firing-up, and a few miles on it.

Like many classics of its age, it needed a good refreshing, especially all of the rubber components. So, up it went, carefully onto jack-stands, and off came the wheels. I tackled the suspension first. Classically British

tightened down, we were onto the next task: the drivetrain.

As fire-up neared, the engine, transmission, and rear differential all received fresh oil. The engine had been rebuilt, just waiting for fuel, spark and a spin of the starter. The big SU HD8 carbs were pulled and rebuilt, mainly to ensure the condition of rubber diaphragms and to find initial settings on the carbs. Further preparations were made before the fire-up such as adding zinc to the oil, oiling the cylinder walls, and pre-oiling the engine. Once the spark plugs were installed and ignition hot again, it was ready. It quickly spun up and fired! Twenty minutes or so at 2,000 RPM and the Healey came back to life!

The new exhaust growled with super-car menace! Like many of the British rally cars, an overdrive transmission was optional. Healey even offered three options for gearing ratios within their A-type overdrive units: 22%, 28%, and 32%. This allowed a

driver to flip the dash switch in 3rd or 4th gear and either split the selected gears, or give it “longer legs” in top gear, for comfortable high-speed touring.

The frame for the soft-top wasn't on the car. It was off tucked away in a dark, dirty corner, and in a forgotten state. Although a daunting project, with a little research and careful progress, the frame restoration and top fitment went well and was a satisfying project. The Moss/Robbins top looks great, really setting off the top-up look. With some final buffing, polishing, and three coats of wax, the Healey gleamed.

After a few adjustments, and a bit more gas in the tank. I motored down the road. Having that old-school feel similar to many British classics, it definitely had more oomph on tap, and with a flip of the overdrive switch, there's no wondering why it dominated rallies in the '50s and '60s.

The dream car was delivered back to its owner. I'm so glad I get to share in his pride and joy.

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES...

Getting back to the TR6, I found it safely tucked under its cover. I emptied the boot to inventory what I had packed away, and thought about what direction to head next. I found my camping gear ready to go. I heard stories of the Sierra High Route, a mostly off-trail journey traversing the 200-mile crest of the Central High Sierra. Because of the difficult terrain, advanced route-finding, and continuous high-elevation segments along the way, some have come to call it “THE hardest hike in America.” Off-trail hiking is challenging and not for everyone, but if prepared, it is amazing to see such landscapes just like the early explorers and Native Americans.

Preparation is key to both mountain hiking and British cars. So is a sense of adventure. Whether on the road or off, for those who dare to take the path less traveled, the world is a bigger and more wondrous place. *MM*



In My Own Words



By #STC60TS56749L

Transcribed by Robert Frassinello

It is the darkest day of my life: June 27, 1968. I am a little over eight years old and already used up, cast aside, and up for sale—for bottom dollar. Probably not worth much more than the piddly amount the Dodge dealer is asking the used car guys to get for me. My cloth top is brittle, torn in several places, and revealing a gaping tear. I am fitted with a fiberglass retrofit hard top—crudely mounted. My body has been bumped and banged at every quarter, and in a pathetic

attempt at preparing me for trade in, my once beautifully stylish lines have been puttied up and buried under a backyard dark metallic red paint job. Mechanically I am a train wreck, *but I will start up.*

As I languish, I hear two young guys approaching me. One is saying to the other, “It’s no XKE, but it is a British Roadster.” The response from this guy’s buddy is, “It is cheap enough.” And they walk into the dealership.

After some time they return to my side for another look. The guy with the checkbook says, “Can you believe that scammer said the price was a mistake, that it was supposed to be \$929 not \$629? And he will only accept a cashier’s check.” Am I doomed to bear the embarrassment of the company of wretched unwanted cars?

A day and a half later it happened, I could not believe my bug eyes—the same two guys drive up, look me over, and walk over to the dealership. Within minutes they return and the young guy with the checkbook climbs in. The familiar process begins, and I am telling you I have never felt better. My key is slipped into the ignition switch, quarter turn clockwise, choke gently pulled out



about a third of the way, and then the starter is pushed. I will not fail, I will start, and I will rev with conviction. This guy is going to feel all the torque I can muster. He is going to drive me off this lot *today*. The other guy climbs into his car and drives away. This is happening. The only way this guy—who they've been calling "Frazz"—is going to get home is by driving me.

Frazz drives me with respect, recognizing the need to shift with finesse because synchronization is not one of my attributes. I am parked in front of an old Victorian near the corner of Hyde and Filbert. Being parked on the street is not the coolest thing in the world, but I am not alone anymore—this guy checks in on me every day, and on the weekends we head north out of San Francisco to the countryside. I love the way every other British sports car we pass offers a wave. Those weekend rides are as good as it gets.

The year unfolds with the roar of my throaty 1991cc engine, the laughter of Frazz and what seems to be a different lady friend each time. Not all gals are enthralled with the aroma of blow-by and the force of the wind messing a well groomed coif.

It was a bright beautiful San Francisco morning in September 1968, Frazz comes out to the curb, gives me the once over, and exclaims: "This trip will be top down." It's a wedding in Crescent City 300 miles up Highway 101, and Frazz had no plan "B" if rain happened to fall. A few things tossed in my boot and we were off. The first 200 miles we were in heaven, barreling along at 60-plus miles per hour, savoring every curve, basking in the fall sunshine, and feeling about as cool as a cucumber. Then things changed dramatically; rain fell lightly at first and in a torrent soon after. My cockpit was drenched and there was no letting up. Water filled my gauges like fishbowls. We did finally arrive, soaked to the core. Frazz covered me with a tarp, and I did not see him again until Sunday morning when we drove back down to San Francisco. The return trip validated my very being: the



weather was beautiful, the air crisp, the sound of my back rap as we descended long grades was symphonic—a beautiful ride.

Inevitable Changes

I should have known by now, Frazz's life was not predictable. Winter of 1968 he went off to Vietnam for nine months, and while he was gone I was stored in a garage belonging to Frazz's Dad, John. I was ignored for a long time, then one morning John opened the door, sat down and fired me up. I was taken out of Ukiah—north on the 101—out to Highway 20 and on to Blue Lakes with John's friend Ben Foster riding shotgun. We sailed through the crisp morning air, and settled in at Blue Lake where John and Ben would celebrate every Blue Gill they caught.

When John and Ben cut through Highway 20's banked curves at a pretty good pace they wondered about the outcomes of a possible mishap. John wrote Frazz asking what to do in the event of a crash. Frazz said, "Bend over, place your head between your legs, and kiss your rear end good-bye." The following week John had me fitted with seatbelts and an industrial strength roll bar.

In late summer of 1970 Frazz returned, picked up his belongings and together we started college life. Life was relatively uneventful until we met The Woman. There she was in the driveway, carefully bathing an MG Roadster with a soapy cloth. The MG was admittedly





sweet and the lady was hot. Days after that first encounter, Frazz jumped behind my wheel and I knew something was up—the scent of English Leather filled my cockpit. At first I worried about this Donna Rae, as Frazz called her, coming between Frazz, me, and the Sierra foothill drives I cherished.

Time proved no worry was necessary. The three of us headed up Highway 99 to Red Bluff—on that trip a bottle of red wine seemed to be their beverage of choice and while I sat in the parking lot waiting patiently, Frazz and Donna attended a Joan Baez concert.

During those college days I turned 10 years old, and as a gift I was treated to a fully rebuilt engine. More power, less smoke!

Frazz and Donna Rae were married in 1971, they jumped in, fired me up and took me on their honeymoon—Chico to San Diego, down into Mexico and back up the Pacific Coast Highway. Later that summer I was a little upset when they took Donna's MG north to Canada. In the fall of 1971 Frazz and Donna Rae settled into Ukiah, California. I earned my rightful place in a protected carport where everything from valve jobs to clutch changes and all maintenance in between occurred over the subsequent four decades. Donna Rae's sweet MG was not so fortunate, and I feel bad about it. Even today when Donna brings up the sad fate of her MG, it is difficult for them to look back and accept they allowed it to slip away for a Toyota sedan.

Frazz did have his faults. Once he neglected to address a dead spot on my starter's armature. Rather than fix it, he chose to teach Donna how poke with a stick and move the armature part of a revolution. That did work, but you can imagine how humiliating it is to be in front of the grocery store with your hood propped up while your owner pokes around with a stick. Consequences were deserved and they were delivered. One day Donna Rae employed the armature rotation process, then—without latching my hood down—she climbed back in, hit the starter, fired me up, and drove

down the road. Of course my hood flew up, slammed against my windshield, severed its hinges, and finished with a slide down Sanford Ranch Road. As I heard Donna Rae recounting the day's event regarding my hood, I knew Frazz was paying dearly for his mistake.

As the 1970s passed Donna and Frazz were blessed with a daughter, Gena—and in 1981 sweet Annie arrived. The family sedan became the preferred mode of transportation. Still, for many years I was Frazz's main ride to work and back. But long road trips like the ones to Mexico, Washington State, and beyond were a thing of the past.

In recent years, the empty nesters have renewed their love affair with me and the rides we take. Many trips to the Mendocino Coast, north up the 101, and a special one in the summer of 2014 to Oregon's Mount Hood have brought my youth back—though not without a little drama. Somewhere between Salem and Silverton, Oregon, Frazz pulls over to the side of the road and calls Moss Motors. My generator bearings were smoking and the DC stopped flowing. A phone conversation that began in desperation ends in relief. Our man at Moss assures us we will have a new generator by noon the next day. It arrived as promised, Frazz installs it, and a terrific 1,000-mile tour ended beautifully.

In the winter of 2014, Frazz's friend Ken—who is now my trusted friend—offered repair time in his shop equipped with a rack and other fabulous tools and instruments. Ken performed major magic under my hood and beyond. In my wildest dreams, I could have never believed that at 57 years of age that I would still be enjoying the rush of road trips with Frazz and many golden years ahead. *MM*



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217-367 (\$49.99)	XX-Large	217-375 (\$49.99)	XX-Large
MG Octagon	\$44.99	Triumph Globe	\$44.99
217-360	Medium	217-368	Medium
217-361	Large	217-369	Large
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