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YOUR HANDS DIRTY

Moss Motoring

ISSUE 2, 2017

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THE LEGENDS**

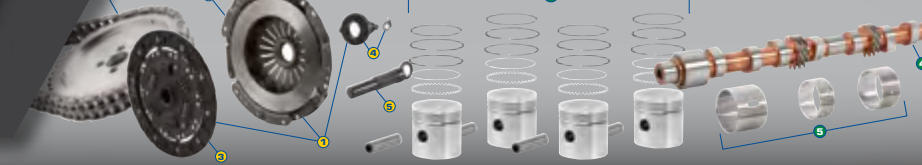


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I'm thinking about it.



Hope to see you there, too. **June 3, 2017**

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Hall of Fame

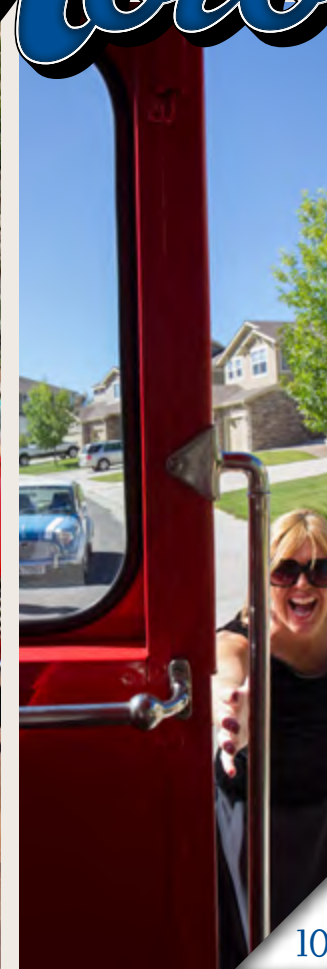
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Inaugural British Sports Car Hall of Fame member Sir Stirling Moss. Photo provided by Mercedes-Benz USA.

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!** Check out www.MossMotoring.com today!



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WRITERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS WE WANT YOU!

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

editor@mossmotors.com

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

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

\$100 Gift Certificates

Cover and main feature photography, general interest stories or medium-length tech articles.

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

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LOUD PEDAL



Robert Goldman

My Credentials

I do have the performance chops, and proof of same, to mingle with the inductees. You see, on December 10, 1978, my father handed me the key to his MG TC and said to head on over to the airport for the Santa Barbara Special Ts slalom. It wasn't really a slalom, like an SCCA Solo event, but more of a parking lot Gymkhana.

Gymkhanas are great fun. Unlike a Funkhana, which requires bean bags, blindfolds, and teeter totters, a Gymkhana is about how fast one can drive around while doing some slalom maneuvers, and changing direction, and going in and out of garages. It's as fast as one can go, against a watch. Sadly there are few of these run today, but it was a safe and enjoyable way to get started breaking parts on your car.

As a freshly minted, licensed driver, I was okay to head down there on my own, but I was

nervous as heck. It didn't help, while waiting in line for my first run, that fellow employee and notorious liar, Chris Nowlan, sidled up and informed me competition cars require beer in the radiator. He unscrewed the cap and started to pour. My blood pressure rose.

Chris, by the way, is definitely not a liar. As lowest of the low on the Moss totem pole, I came to realize, eventually, that Chris' first answer to technical questions was generally never true. The second answer always sounded plausible, and the third answer, if you were wise enough to ask again, was factual. Having said that, I'm sure those muffler bearings he told me about are in stock... somewhere.

So, with a proper amount of beer in the rad, off I went. How'd it go? I won Class C. "C" as in cart sprung, like an oxcart, or a TC. My only competition was a guy named Al Moss, driving a brown and cream TC. I was in my father's TC, which his parents bought for him in 1951, which he still owns. Admittedly, Al had an off course excursion, which gave me the penalty time necessary to pull off a win.

In his lifetime, I never spoke to Al about that win. He would have accused me of cheating, and I would have had to admit to the beer chaser in the cooling system. But a win is a win, so I've got that going for me. My trophy case may not be as stocked as some of the HoF inductees, and I may not have journalism awards for paperweights, but I've tasted the "grit" of competition, so I claim to belong. *M.M.*



If asked, Al would have said, "You must be cheating, because I was cheating and you still beat me."

MAKING HISTORY

BRITISH SPORTS CAR HALL OF FAME



On the second of June the British Sports Car Hall of Fame officially inducts its first group of members.

All of us at Moss Motors are excited to be able to host the ceremony and help start what will be an annual celebration of the women and men who have made a lasting impact on the British sports car industry and hobby.

There is no end to the stories of innovation, hard work, adventure, craftsmanship, bravery, skill and passion surrounding these cars.

The British Sports Car Hall of Fame was started to ensure that these stories, and the community that holds them dear, thrive and continue on for generations to come. To learn more about the Hall of Fame, and to nominate and vote for future members, visit www.britishsportscarhall.org.

A lap through Hall of Fame history

Although the British sports car entered the global consciousness during the years immediately following the end of the Second World War, the foundation for their success was laid decades earlier when numerous small domestic manufacturers made a deliberate effort to build automobiles capable of sporting performance at an affordable price. Although Alvis and Riley were the early pioneers, MG's introduction of its first bona fide sports car in 1923 established the archetype for an entire industry. With open two-seat bodywork and minimal weather equipment, these often primitive vehicles possessed highly tuned engines that offered performance equivalent to the more advanced and expensive European competition, not

to mention more reasonable acquisition and running costs that would become hallmarks of later British sports cars.

In short order, MG was joined by AC, Frazer-Nash, Invicta, Morgan, Singer, Sunbeam, SS-Jaguar and Triumph, as well as numerous others, many building models that enhanced the basic roadster formula with increasing amounts of performance and better handling. Despite stiff competition from legendary marques like Alfa Romeo, Bugatti and Mercedes-Benz, British sports cars usually punched above their weight, notwithstanding their typically simplistic construction, modest engine capacities and minimal development budgets.

As was so often the case in Britain, these companies were also direct reflections of their respective managers



and employees, presenting a far more human face to the world than other rivals from America and Europe. Although nominally a part of the Nuffield empire, MG's real DNA was contributed by **Cecil Kimber**, while Triumph fully matured as a sports car builder under **Donald Healey's** watch in the 1930s. Similarly, **William Lyons** was almost single-handedly responsible for his company's transition from building sidecars to world-class Jaguar sports cars.

During the war, American armed forces personnel stationed in England encountered these delightful machines, often driven by dashing Royal Air Force fliers, and brought their affection for them home. Although the United Kingdom escaped the widespread devastation that had ravaged France, Italy and Germany, the British Empire was saddled with an enormous debt after almost seven years of war and badly needed hard currency to service its Lend Lease payments to the United States. In an effort to rebuild the nation's devastated economy, the Bureau of Trade exhorted manufacturers to 'export or die' to earn the dollars that would allow England to survive amidst its crippling financial obligations.

Before, even affordable sports cars were owned by a select few, but after the war they became a national

instrument of survival. Once again, MG was first on the scene with a lightly revised version of the pre-war TB, which was produced in record time under the guidance of men such as the irrepressible **John Thornley**, who would become the company's General Manager in 1952. Notwithstanding its lack of modernity, anachronistic character, and limited production numbers, the TC paved the way for millions of other similar sports cars and set the stage for a continuing love affair between Americans and British sports cars.

Not long after the arrival of the MG TC, Jaguar introduced the XK120 to almost universal praise and an unquestioned place as the finest sports car available in the world at a reasonable price, laying the foundation for even more success at the showroom and racetrack in the days ahead with contributions from men like **Norman Dewis** and Malcolm Sayer.

The success enjoyed by Jaguar and MG did not go unnoticed by others, leading to an extraordinary influx of British sports cars into American homes and Britain's status as the world's leading exporter after the United States. Triumph's **Sir John Black** parlayed a presumed rivalry with William Lyons into the legendary range of TR sports cars, which usually sported coachwork penned by **Giovanni Michelotti**, while

Donald Healey, benefitting greatly from **Gerry Coker's** equally timeless designs, snatched victory from the jaws of defeat with his unforgettable Hundred, which led to the creation of the Austin-Healey marque that spawned the memorable Sprite and 3000.

Much of the sales growth around the globe was built on the success that British sports cars gained in competition around the world. It was a time of gentlemen racers and recently minted professionals, where former airman **Bob Johns** could race a works TR3 against living legends such as **Stirling Moss**, Mike Hawthorn and Juan Manuel Fangio. Many famed racers like **Tony Adamowicz** started out in small-bore British sports cars, while even more illustrious competitors such as **Bob Tullius** and his Group 44 won dozens of championships campaigning Jaguars, MGs, and Triumphs. Often hamstrung by limited funding, **Kas Kastner** pioneered how to win on a budget, beating better supported rivals on a regular basis all his life. Beating more vaunted competition became the hallmark of rally ace **John Sprinzel**, who drove his Sprites and Minis faster and harder than anyone could imagine, thanks in large part to MG engine guru **Jimmy Cox**.

But the competition success was only part of the reason for the continued success in showrooms around

the country, it was also the efforts of publicity men and sales executives like **Michael Cook** and **Michael Dale** that pushed cars out the door. Authors such as **Richard Langworth** and **Graham Robson** chronicled the industry after years spent on the inside, while **Peter Egan** later gave voice to generations of British sports car lovers with his column at *Road & Track*. The role of the classic car clubs cannot be forgotten either, led by dedicated individuals such as **Richard Knudson** and **Ken Smith**.

But keeping the cars on the road became increasingly important, especially as the cars and their owners grew older, allowing men like **John Twist** to make a name for himself as a wrench nonpareil. But if increasingly draconian safety and emissions regulations helped doom the prospects of the British sports car in the American market, which were not helped by a shift in consumer tastes away from convertibles towards more capable and functional sports coupes, the legacy of what these vehicles meant and represented was created, nurtured, and protected by the men described above. That we now have a mechanism to honor their contributions is the real reason behind the formation of the British Sports Car Hall of Fame. Everyone that drives an LBC owes a debt to these individuals, and countless others like them that will be recognized in successive induction cycles. We hope that you'll join us in June for the Hall's opening. *MM*



Peter Egan



Bob Tullius



Stirling and Pat Moss both drove for John Sprinzel's team at Sebring in the Four-Hour GT race in 1961. This was the only time the two competed with each other on a race track.



John Sprinzel



Sir Stirling Moss



The Moss Motors showroom in Petersburg, Virginia, will maintain a growing collection of British Sports Car Hall of Fame memorabilia, literature, photographs and more.

For sale: 1957 TR-3, One Owner



By Wayne Lynch

The dealership was on Columbus Avenue if I remember right. We had to have the red one of course. Its commission number: T8-18309L. No overdrive or spoke wheels because the \$86.18 a month payment was the most we could handle on military pay. Out the door: \$2896.35.

I was stationed at Hamilton Air Force Base, 26 miles from our home in Penngrove, CA, where Charles M. Schulz, creator of *Peanuts*, also lived. I had different days off from most people so I joined the Volunteer Fire Department. The red TR was a big hit with the community because I would occasionally tuck in behind the fire truck all the way to the fire.

After a year or so my wife Judy and I relocated to downtown San Francisco in the Twin Peaks area so we could be near the sports car action of Gymkhanas, Rallies and Clubs. We were lucky that our apartment came with a garage. We joined an all-TR club called Triumph Limited. Weekends trips became the

norm—Tahoe, Monterey, and the race course near Vacaville to name a few favorite spots. One of the adventures we loved was going to Reno casinos on a Friday night about 220 miles away. If we won enough for a hotel room we stayed the night, if not, back to San Francisco we went.

We are both from South Carolina so the TR was back and forth across the United States many times. We had many great adventures on the road traveling across the country. We would stop in places like Oklahoma City, Phoenix and Charlotte to enter the TR in drag races. We won quite a few trophies and were entered in the



Purchased new on September 23, 1957, from Triumph Incorporated in San Francisco, California.





BRITISH CAR CLASSIFIEDS

The Global British Car Sales Network

Way back when, once upon a time, the *Moss Motoring* magazine had a classified section for customers to sell their cars. It made sense then. That was pre-internet, pre-Craigslist and eBay, and if you were going to sell a British car, why wouldn't you put it in front of as many British car fanatics as you could? We still get calls from customers to help them find good homes for their cars.

And now we can help!

Moss has partnered with a couple of web-savvy car guys who put together a fantastic classifieds site exclusively for British cars. You read that right, only British cars!

Moss customers save \$10

BritishCarClassifieds.com is an affordable way to reach buyers looking specifically for British cars. And, as a Moss Motors customer, you get a \$10 discount on any of the three available listing packages. Just type "MOSSMAG1" in the promotion code to receive your savings. Offer good through 8/31/2017.

Important Note

One thing that needs mentioning: our partnership with BritishCarClassifieds.com is one of support in order to benefit the hobby. Moss Motors and our sales people aren't able to help you list your vehicle. The website developers have a contact page to answer any questions you may have.



Visit **BritishCarClassifieds.com**

top eliminator in OKC against a '58 Corvette. The start light spotted the TR three seconds. The corvette passed my wife in the TR at the finish line with about 10 feet to spare. At the Charlotte drag strip a guy with a new Corvair asked if he could make a practice run against my wife. Judy burned him so bad he would not even look our way when he got back to the pits.

One night after midnight we were going through a small town outside of Little Rock, Arkansas, and made too much noise with the exhaust as we left the only stop light in town. The Sheriff followed us out of town and stopped us. Made us follow him back to town, and woke up the Justice of the Peace who fined us \$12 cash.

The back of the driver's seat in the TR would fold forward to allow one to

store stuff behind the seat. I switched the seat to the passenger side of the TR and left the nuts off so the back could "recline." With a blanket and pillow one could stretch out and sleep. We used this method to travel in July from Myrtle Beach to Los Angeles in two driving sessions of 24 hours each with a stop in OKC to motel it for 12 hours.

My wife devised an air conditioning system for us. She would buy a bag of ice and place it on the transmission cover under the air vent. Worked great at 80 MPH. One time she was holding the melted ice bag to her face and it broke. She was very cool for a bit.

Another time in October we were in Oklahoma City and I had finished a work assignment on Friday afternoon. We decided to leave for Los Angeles. About half way to Amarillo, Texas snow started coming down in buckets. Soon the TR was plowing along the road. We were way out in the middle of nowhere.

We finally ran up behind a big truck. I told my wife if he stops we stop. We followed the truck into the outskirts of Amarillo and saw a motel on a small hill. We shoved the TR into second gear and made the motel parking lot. Boy were we relieved to get a room for the night. Next morning I got out the tire chains that we had the foresight to bring because they don't plow the roads much in Oklahoma City. The snow had stopped but the roads were iced over. Got on the highway heading to Albuquerque and right outside of town was the big truck we had followed into Amarillo, it had jack knifed and was off to the side of the road. We made it all the way to Albuquerque with the chains on.

All new front end parts (the good stuff from Moss Motors). The entire hydraulic system has been rebuilt, new brakes and clutch. The engine is fresh with new sleeves. The heater

core is shot so I have it bypassed. The car is a real driver—not a show car, but looks great. I can still start it with the hand crank. The side curtains need to be re-built. We do not have a soft top but still have the bows. Comes with a factory steel top and lots of spare parts,

including a spare transmission. The car has always been garaged.

We are getting too old to get in and out of the Red Car. We are only selling it because we know someone will love it and care for it the way we have. *MM*



The underside looks nice and solid...



...just like a California car should.

Want a closer look at Wayne's TR3? You can find it here. (If it's not already sold!)



THE DUCHESS



By Paula Anandasegar

Nine years ago, my husband Arun and I moved from England to Castle Rock, Colorado. After we had settled into a small town with a population of about 20,000, we were both trying to adapt to a completely new way of life, which was vastly different from London living, population 7.5 million. Colorado is an amazing place to live but we felt slightly homesick.

We ventured about getting to know the area around our new home. To our surprise and delight, we stumbled upon a slice of England tucked away in a storage lot behind a really great BBQ restaurant. There in all her faded glory sat a Double Decker Bus. Born in 1968, named Leyland Titan PD3, she's 30ft long and 15ft tall. Not painted red, but blue and cream as she served as a costal bus in East Bourne, UK. We would periodically stop by and gaze at her, wondering what the owners were going to use her for, and excited at the prospect of seeing her around town or in Denver. Unfortunately she never moved and her condition deteriorated with every harsh season. We often said we should find out what the situation was and rescue her. But our busy lives kept us from the pursuit.

While in the UK, Arun purchased a 1980 Mini. It was the perfect car to help him adapt to the narrow roads, immense traffic and limited parking. This little car was responsible for introducing us to many friends. And since we can never get enough of a great thing, we found a Mini Moke and acquired that too!

Both cars joined our worldly goods in the shipping container bound for Colorado. It's hard to be a stranger in a new town when you own Minis—especially when there's a club in the area like Mini of the Rockies! When we found MOTR, we never looked back. They are a fantastic bunch. All at once we had invites to parties, organized weekend drives, and all new friends.

But the bus was still on our minds and a vision was blossoming. "The Duchess," as we were already calling

her, could be an amazing meeting place, like a British gastro pub, serving pints and Pimms! We could hold themed events that will share an insight into British life and celebrate events such as Wimbledon and Burn's night. The Duchess would be (will be!) a unique venue for weddings, proms... celebrations of any kind, tailored to specific wishes with an emphasis on fun, high quality and having an unforgettable day.

It took a visit from a friend from the UK to inspire a push. I was taking him around showing him the sights, and we stopped to see the bus. We walked in and asked the storage lot owner what the story was. He said that the owner had it shipped in from Canada to use as advertising for a business but then promptly sold that venture and forgot about the bus. He had been paying to store it for seven years.

I called the owner, and the timing was right. The bus was #26 on his to-do list. After much negotiation and heaps of paper work, Arun and I became proud owners of a Double Decker bus.

And then the hard work of bringing The Duchess back to life began.

The bus was in a bad way. Birds and animals had made it their home. It also appeared to be a hangout for others as there were a lot of empty food wrappers, drink cans and the name 'Tristan' was spray painted upstairs on the aluminum. I would curse "bloody Tristan" every time I saw it, and spat it with real meaning when I worked to remove it. A friend suggested we could create a drink called 'The bloody Tristan.' A bloody good idea!

Our initial cleanup was very dirty indeed. We enlisted the help of MOTR members who generously gave up a Sunday morning to come and assist in removing all the seats and battery boxes. Fueled with tea and doughnuts it was a productive day full of laughter.

We have limited funds so we are completing nearly all of the renovations by ourselves and with the help of awesome friends.

Our friends Steve and Deb Freeman who reside in a stunning setting on five acres generously allowed us to park The Duchess on their property so we could start the massive undertaking of making her beautiful again. Our first task was to remove all of the exterior paint. We started by sanding, then discovered there were at least four layers of paint, so we switched to aircraft paint remover which was pretty effective and quick—the downside being the fumes, and heaven help you if a tiny bit managed to get on your skin! Battling the elements while working outside added to the challenge and slowed progress.

Before winter really kicked in, we had the difficult task of removing the very well made linoleum, which was stuck hard and fast. In the beginning I started with a Dremel and heat gun. After two days of this monotony, we hired a heavy-duty machine—it wasn't easy, but so much quicker. With the linoleum out, we discovered the floors were rotting away. This particular British Double Decker bus is constructed with a metal structure but with wooden beams to hold the exterior panels. Steve happens to have a fully loaded woodworking shop. In went new pressure treated plywood and beam reinforcement!

The flooring was finished and after heaps of hours spent applying primer to the bus we had a very good friend from MOTR, Darren Haines, who is experienced in restoring cars come and take at our progress. We were pleased as punch with our efforts thus far and thought we had done a fantastic job. After assessing the progress, Darren turned and looked at our beaming smiles, informed us that we had worked hard and there are some good points BUT most of it needed doing again. Crestfallen, we set back to work correcting all of our shoddy workmanship under Darren's watchful eye. We were now the Terrific Trio.

The most difficult, time consuming and down-right boring task was block sanding the primer. I still have a nervous tick at the mention of sanding.





There was also a great deal of meticulous trim work that needed to be done leading to the removal of all 36 windows to accomplish the finish that Darren demanded. So we ordered 400ft of new window rubbers. We are now completely proficient in window replacement!



The amount of work required to repair and finish the paint was overwhelming as we had been given a deadline of three months, with fall weather rapidly approaching, this necessitated nonstop work by the three of us. We recruited friends and family to help whenever we could entice them with beer, burritos and banter!



Fast forward three months battling hot sweaty days, muscle fatigue, wind, rain, nesting birds, angry wasps, bugs, paint runs, dark primer spots showing through—to name but a few daily issues.

Some of the numerous items we got through:

- 10 Gallons of Primer
- 16 Gallons of red paint
- 2 Gallons of English White
- 95 Very fetching Blue Suits
- 20 boxes of Blue Gloves
- Gallons of cleaning alcohol—far too many to say
- Reams and reams of sandpaper (*there goes that nervous tick!*)



Our biggest challenge was keeping up our motivation, waking up early everyday knowing that the long day ahead would entail endless hours of some painstaking task. A non-existent social life, missing our friends, our prior lifestyle was a distant memory. We kept reminding ourselves of the bigger picture and chatted about our vision that kept us focused to finish her.

As we were nearing the completion of the paint project, Darren turned his attentions to refreshing the mechanicals as she had not been started in 10 years. After flushing the old fluids out we were trying to convince the Leyland 600 diesel to fire back to life, and she did! Dumbfounded that she started so easily, happy that at least one thing was in our favor! With a running engine Darren focused working on the brake



system which needed a very thorough going through. Four new tires were then installed and at this point the bus was able to move under its own power.

The last lick of paint applied, a running engine, working electrics, we planned her maiden journey to accommodate her height and to negotiate low hanging obstacles. So under the cover of darkness we set off at 4am to test her road-worthiness. It was the largest vehicle that Darren had driven. Despite the fact she hadn't been driven in a very long time, she handled the drive with ease and grace. He felt comfortable with her sheer size. The steering was quite precise and turning the 30 inch steering wheel took a bit of getting used to. The two main challenges were remembering to double clutch because of the non-synchronized gears and maintaining control of all nine tons of the newly beautified bus.

Elated, emotional and exhausted, we had finally completed the first phase of our project. We are now preparing for our new events business venture to be launched. We still have oodles of work to do but are so excited to see our vision for The Duchess of Castle Rock to become a reality. *MM*



The Quest

By Wesley Garrard



for Class

Whitney loves to win. She is cut throat in her ambition, which is why we have had to ban most board games in our household. In an effort to preserve our relationship, we have found other avenues in which she can compete. Since Whitney took ownership of "Pete," a 1979 MG Midget, five years ago, the two have hit the car show circuit with vigor. There, Whitney can put her roadster up against her peers and compete amongst them—and not me. She loves to put on a performance with Pete to increase her chances at bringing home an award.

Our favorite annual gathering is the Champagne British Car Festival in Bloomington, Illinois. On the first weekend in June each year, the show draws British machinations from all over the Midwest. The weekend starts with a dinner and a keynote speaker Friday night. Specials stops around Bloomington and surrounding communities, workshops, and cruises on Saturday. With it all culminating Sunday on the beautiful lawns of the David Davis Mansion.

Whitney and I first attended in 2012, a few months before securing Pete. As we walked onto the grounds we were in awe of the Anglo assembly surrounding the gorgeous Italianate and Second-Empire architecture of the mansion. So many marques were

represented. Everything from an Aston Martin DB5 to Triumph Spitfires were on display. It was amazing to meander among the beautiful cars and the historic home. The second we acquired Pete, we knew without doubt he would be attending the following year.



As soon as the 2013 registration was open, Whitney promptly reserved a place for Pete in the Midget class. When the weekend arrived, she had us dress in character as English Gentry out for a drive in the country. She donned a black Victorian style dress, and myself clad in tweed, wearing a paddy cap and blazer. Looks that would surely draw the attention of the crowd toward

ourselves and Pete. Upon arriving at the gates, we were directed to the class location. We slowly rolled along the drive as a fellow British car enthusiast entertained the crowd with live music. Every year, he comically over stuffs his MGA with all of his musical equipment. After rubbernecking at all the metal, we found a nook for Pete alongside his Abingdon siblings. Whitney laid out the presentation she prepared for Pete and we walked the grounds as she voted on the other entries. The votes are cast by fellow entrants, putting the choice of the award winners in the hands of the British car lovers' popular vote and far from the influence of a panel of judges.

While waiting for the votes to be tallied, Whitney was distracted from her anxiety by the elegance of the mansion as we toured its interior. An artists' colony was set up inside. Displayed were all sorts of automotive art, Whitney's favorite being a detailed oil painting of a decrepit Bugeye. We sampled ice cream from a local vendor who set up shop near the former carriage house and purchased a light lunch from a Bloomington Boy Scout troop.



While finishing our tour, the crowd was called to gather on the front lawn so the awards could be announced. Whitney's excitement grew as each class called came closer to hers. Once the Midgets were reached, she was elated to receive a Third in Class win. It was a wonderful way to end our attendance of the Champagne British Car Festival. Once the award was in her hands, she was already plotting a bigger win for the following year. We were now obligated to annual attendance out of both enjoyment and determination.



new exhaust. Pete was now prettier and more powerful, ready to win. Both of the girls were very excited as that special June weekend arrived.

We piled into our cars and caravanned to the David Davis Mansion.

Whitney had set up a theme to compliment Pete's new found ponies. She arrived in race attire with cues pulled from the likes of Denise McCluggage and race gumballs proudly affixed to Pete's doors. Unfurled at the gate was the largest Union Jack in the Midwest. The girls both posed with their cars in enthusiasm as their portraits were taken in front of the flag. MG was the featured marque for 2015. While others chose to register with the featured class, Whitney stuck with the Midgets, after all, she had grudge match with BRG. Unfortunately, brake issues kept Whitney's fellow Midgeteer out of the show and no other cars were entered in the class for competition. That meant no award. However, Whitney was at ease, as she wanted nothing of a win by default. Whitney did however, stare daggers at Leslie as she accepted a class win with her Herald. Looks like that are why a carefully crafted ceasefire had to be drafted the last time she and I played RISK. As such, there is always the next year.



For 2014, Whitney and Pete returned to Bloomington with a stronger performance. She arrived at the show with a look that would rival Grace Kelly. With a blue dress, white gloves, horned rim glasses and a scarf framing her face, the crowd looked as if they thought Whitney were some kind of star. With that, she was able to secure a 2nd in class win. She narrowly lost out to 1st in class to a well-presented '69 Midget in British Racing Green. Any British sports car in BRG is a tough opponent. Despite the competition, Whitney sparked a camaraderie with the lady owner of the BRG Midget, encouraging both to attend in 2015.

Another year passed and the fun Whitney and I have at the festival every year did not go unnoticed. A close friend of ours, Leslie, wished to join us that year. We helped her acquire a decent 1966 Triumph Herald she could enter into the show. Whitney had a whole list of improvements completed for Pete. His paint was refreshed, better trim was added, interior improvements were made, and I got to flex my ingenuity. She let me adapt twin Mikuni carburetors from an old Yamaha to Pete, coupled with a shiny



After a few enthusiastic performances over the years, Whitney had caught the attention of the planning committee for the Champagne British Car Festival. We were approached by Dave Hauman, the head of the committee, to join them in building the show. Whitney and I both graciously accepted and joined the committee to help plan for 2016. We got to see how much work goes into securing all of the entertainment offered each June weekend. It was very exciting helping with the show's 25th anniversary. With Whitney and I only ever attending the show on Sunday, we never included ourselves in the other activities. For 2016, we planned to experience more of the weekend. The Saturday before the show, we perused Bloomington's downtown market while John Twist performed a tech session with other show attendees at a local garage.



With Sunday came lovely weather, perfect for the show. Familiar faces and some new ones arrived for the Midget class, with them brought the strongest opposition to a class win yet. Unfortunately, Whitney was unable to win over the crowd with her picnic display and earn that coveted 1st place. However, it was once again a pleasure to attend. Each year with the Champagne British Car Festival is a weekend of enjoyment. Since 2013, every first weekend in June is prominently marked in our calendars. For Whitney and I it marks the beginning of our most favorite season. The Champagne British Car Festival for 2017 will be one of the biggest Whitney and I have witnessed. On June 4th, 2017, the show will be back in Bloomington. The featured marque will be a sea of stainless steel covering the front lawn in a cavalcade



of Delorean DMC-12's, Mecum Auctions will bring their mobile auction experience, the David Davis Mansion will once again provide an elegant setting as it has for 145 years, and maybe Whitney will finally get the class win that she so longs for.

Should others wish to attend, additional details can be found on the shows website cbcf-bloomington.com. Vehicle registration is open to any British conveyance from motorcycles on up. *MM*

Come Join the Fun!
 Champagne British Car Festival
June 4, 2017
 More details available at
www.cbcf-bloomington.com



Columbus Laughed

By Kenneth Walker

In 2014 I had a brilliant idea. I owned a 1988 Merkur XR4Ti that was racking up the miles, but I felt I thought I needed something different, something older. After a few months of looking, narrowing my choice down to about 15 cars, test driving a few, and being rejected or just flat-out laughed at in one case, I finally found the one—a red 1963 Austin-Healey Sprite. Because what's better than owning a semi-modern electrical nightmare? Owning a 50-year-old British car with Lucas electronics, of course.

The car was located in Detroit, which was perfect since the Woodward Dream Cruise was coming up. Our plan, if you could call it that, was to drive up, check out the car show, buy the car, and then...well, that's as far as the plan got. I had no idea if I'd tow it home, drive it back, or some mixture of the two.

After purchasing the car I had it towed back to where I was staying. The car would start and after warming up it would even stay running, but it wouldn't move under its own power. I tried asking for parts at the local AutoZone, but since this wasn't a late model domestic that went about as well as a screen door in a submarine. I ended up with spark plugs and oil. No cap and rotor, no new wires, not even new air filters. If you hadn't gotten the hint yet you should know I'm quite the planner.

After doing what I could (not much) and adjusting the carburetors, I took the car out for its first drive under new management. Proud of myself that it made it around the block, I called it a day and went out to a club that had armed security. Just Detroit things. The next day I didn't get to work on the car at all as I was out taking a tour of Woodward Avenue. Tip: never wear Chuck Taylors to the Dream Cruise. They are great for driving but terrible



for basketball (ironically) and walking. After seeing more classic cars in varying degrees of overheating than I could count, I called it a day.

I had stalled long enough. It was time to get home. Being young, dumb, and with a belief of invincibility I said to myself, "Screw it, life's an adventure!" and set off on the 200-mile journey back to Columbus, Ohio, with Paul Walker tires, dirty air filters, poorly tuned carbs, and less than a mile of total test drive time. Phrases like "what could go wrong?" or "hold my beer" come to mind with decisions of this stupidity level.

Having only driven the car around a neighborhood, the first thing I found out was the car didn't like going fast. Grandmothers were passing me, honking, and giving the stink eye. My father and step-mom in the support vehicle behind me were recording and, at one point, when I hit 60 mph she got audibly excited. Other than some light rain the first 150 miles passed by without much incident. I discovered the windshield wipers needed replaced (just one more thing on the to-do list),

that my radio would cut out whenever I flipped the turn signal, that it's surprisingly easy to talk to the person next to you when you're shoulder to shoulder, and that I'm just tall enough that the top of the windshield slightly obstructs my view of traffic lights.

It wasn't until the final leg of the trip, the last 50-60 miles, that things started to get interesting. The car developed a stutter while cruising at speed. It was already a slow car, but now just keeping 55 mph was becoming a struggle. Pulling out the choke would mask the problem and that worked until we reached Columbus. That's when the traffic lights returned. Trying to pull away from a stop became a laborious event. Semi-trucks were pulling away from me and I was at full throttle. I had resorted to pulling over to the shoulder, accelerating in the break down lane, and then merging when I could. But still, the Sprite soldiered on. I reached the last segment of my trip (finally!) where my support vehicle and I parted ways. I had driven from Detroit

to Columbus on garbage tires at 55 mph and I could taste victory. Home even seemed to be beckoning me with green lights all the way.

And then Columbus laughed. Construction, the official pastime of Columbus, struck when I was two miles from home. Stop and go traffic as far as I could see (being in such a small car, I admit that wasn't far). That's when the car died. That gut reaction of panic kicked in, I gave a little prayer, turned the key and she started right up. I played with the throttle, adjusted the choke, made it 50 feet, and she died on me again. Gentle words of encouragement, promises of a proper tune-up, and she started up again. This time a little bit slower, but that's okay.

I inch closer to home. My street, my lovely street is in sight, I curse the insane amount of traffic that's on the road for seemingly no reason, and sensing my eagerness the car dies again. It's late, my legs are cramped, I'm tired. "C'mon, one last time," I say. She starts back up. Hasn't left me stranded yet. I turn onto my street, pull into my apartment complex, and (yes!) there's a parking spot right in front of my unit. I swing around, home sweet home, and she dies again! I'm literally pulling into my parking spot, fifteen feet to go, and she dies. I crank it once, twice, three times, nothing. I fiddle with the choke, try again, and still nothing. Fortunately my girlfriend was home, and I pushed the car the final few feet across the finish line while she steered.

Amazingly, I drove the car mostly "as is" for quite some time after that questionable journey. Having returned to the place I paid rent, I was able to

take a bit more time to get her running rather reliably. New air filters, an oil change, better fine tuning of the carbs (and learning of "dashpot oil"), fixing the e-brake, and a few other minor things all came in short order. On the nicer days I drove the car to work, but living just five minutes away meant that wasn't a big deal. Eventually though my brilliant idea met the decidedly cold and salty Ohio winter and she was parked for a while. Then, shortly after, my life took a turn when I was offered a job halfway across the country in the Lone Star state.

Don't worry, I didn't try to drive the car from Ohio to Texas. This time I did the smart thing and decided to have her shipped to my new abode. While I moved and got settled into my new apartment and job I left the Sprite with my parents for them to drive on date night every once in a while. An arrangement my equally car-obsessed father happily obliged.

Eventually my Sprite was able to join me, and life resumed mostly to my new normal, until one beautiful evening I decided to explore Houston's abundant nightlife. I had a fresh haircut and was looking rather spiffy when I heard a loud "POP!" followed by my mild 1098

suddenly sounding like it grew a good two liters in size—and then the louder sound of scraping. I was promptly told by a car full of kids that I was throwing sparks from beneath my car and although it looked cool it probably meant something was terribly wrong. I pulled off at the next exit, got out, and found that my exhaust was no longer connected to the manifold.

There's very little scarier than driving an old car that's throwing sparks, marking far too much noise, while in a new city, on a night known for drunk drivers and a heavy police presence. I was fortunate to run into only one officer who seemed to care little that my car was a rolling fireworks display, and I made it home safely in one embarrassed piece.

That night I decided I'd finally do all the work I'd been putting off. An entirely new exhaust system, rebuilt carbs, new gaskets, some cleanup and paint under the hood, and anything else I could afford. She was overdue and I felt bad having neglected her for some of the other projects I had.

I still own the Sprite. This might be the longest I've owned any one vehicle. The radio still cuts out when I indicate I want to change lanes, the (brand new) windshield wipers suck, and two years later I've still never put the top on. But she'll now cruise at 70 mph on the highway and she still looks damn good doing it. She's only left me stranded once which is less than or equal to the Merkur, my old Datsun 720, and my first Thunderbird SC, so I think I'm doing pretty well with my British introduction. The car is still far from perfect, but she's my imperfection.

M.M.



Don't blow a fuse over your...



I read on one of the forums that I have to use British fuses in my Classic British car. Does that mean that British electricity is different than the electricity we have in North America? Is that why we had to buy an adapter for our personal electric devices when we went to Europe last year?

Yes and no. The electricity in your 12 volt Classic British car, is the same as the electricity you have in a 12 volt North American car of the same era.

That's only true for our cars. The electricity we have in our homes and hotels in North America is 120 volts. In many other countries they have over 200 volts. So, if you went overseas and plugged your North American style hair dryer into the wall, it would live an exciting but short life.

However, the suggestion you heard about different fuses is correct. Why?

Most of the fuses you see in British and North American classic cars look like a small glass tube with chrome caps at the ends and a thin piece of metal running through the inside. The differences between British style fuses and North American style fuses are inside.

Terminology.

We usually talk about electricity using the term "volts." That's fine. Nonetheless, in a simplified way, volts really describes the ability of electricity to travel. It's important to know the companion to volts is "amps." The work is done by the amps. (Amps the short way of saying amperage. Amperage is the muscle part of electricity.) Amp flow is also called current. Our fuses are rated by how many amps they will allow to go through a circuit. If more amps are flowing than the fuse is rated to allow, the thin metal strip inside the fuse melts. We say the fuse has "blown." That breaks the bridge and the flow of electricity is cut off.

Let's assume you have a North American fuse rated at 15 amps. That means you can have 12, or 13, or 14 amps running through that circuit all day long with no issue. The fuse is designed to protect the circuit from any load that's greater than 15 amps. Now, if there is a sudden load on the circuit, and it is faced with a 16 amp or a 17 amp draw, that fuse will blow. That's how a North American style fuse protects the circuit.

If a wire gets shorted or an electric device fails, we can get a flow of lots of amps. Wires will melt. A fire could start. That fuse is your protection.

If we are driving along and suddenly a fuse blows, we should first say "thank you" to the fuse. That self-sacrificing little guy may have just saved you hundreds of dollars in repairs and a tow charge.

OK. A fuse just blew: what to do now...

In theory, something bad just tried to happen. The fuse stopped it. We should go looking for the problem. However, most of us (including this technician) will simply replace the fuse. That's OK. Sometimes a fuse just gets tired or internally corroded. It can blow all by itself. Replacing the fuse will fix that.

Sometimes there is a real problem. There is a loose wire someplace. You just hit a bump in the street. That bump caused the wire to move and touch ground for a moment. That moment caused the fuse to blow. Looking for that problem with your car parked on the side of the road, may be fruitless. The loose wire may not touching ground right now. The circuit was only shorted for a moment.

Helping the New Generation: *You can do this!*

Of course, if you replace the fuse, and the replacement blows right away, you have a real and present problem. That problem will have to be addressed before you use that circuit again. Blown fuses are like canaries in a mine. They are telling you something is wrong.

What NOT to do.

This writer has a confession to make. This writer (as a younger man) was known to wrap a blown fuse, or two, with aluminum foil or gum wrapper. That carries current so the circuit can come back to life, but it also eliminates your circuit protection. You can cause a harness meltdown or a fire doing that. This technician got away with it most of the time. You may not.

It's better to keep some spare fuses. Real fuses offer real protection. Bypassing a fuse creates a bridge where damage can enter.

Slow-blow vs. North American style

So, what about this difference between the factory fuses my Classic British car was meant to use and the fuses that most North American auto makers used?

The Classic British cars used what are called slow-blow fuses. They do the same job that North American style fuses do, but they are more patient.

A few paragraphs back, we talked about a North American style fuse that was rated at 15 amps. We said it will blow if it faces 16 amps. That's true. Let's assume we have a wiper motor. It's got some leaves or snow that built up on the wiper arms. We turn the wipers on. For the first moment, the wiper turns slower than it should. It will draw more amps. The North American style fuse will blow.

Some people would feel the fuse didn't really need to blow. They would say it just needed to wait another moment and everything would have been fine. That's the thinking behind slow-blow fuses.

First thing to know. A slow blow fuse is rated differently than a conventional

fuse. They tend to be rated at about double the rate of a North American style fuse. So, that North American style fuse rated at about 15 amps will be rated at about 30 amps in a slow-blow fuse.

When a 30 amp slow-blow fuse reaches a load in the 15 or 16 amp range, the fuse begins to blow. However, it takes a few moments. The fuse says, "I know we are at 17 amps. I know we are supposed to blow at 15 amps. But, I think that wiper arms might be covered in snow. I'm going to wait a moment or two. We are only past the limit by 1 or 2 amps. That's not a lot. We can wait a couple of moments." A moment later the wiper motor will be free. The extra load will be gone. All will be well. That slow-blow feature allows the wiper motor to come to life and not blow the fuse.

The slow-blow fuse will wait a couple of moments when 17 amps is going through. It will wait less if 20 amps is going through. If 30 amps tries to get through, the slow-blow fuse will blow instantly. That's why they are rated differently. They blow instantly when the maximum load is reached. They will blow slowly when amperage near half the fuse's rating is flowing. With more amperage, its patience dissipates.

No fuse.

Most cars have fuses in the headlight circuits. Initially, that makes sense. Virtually everything else in the car has a fuse, why not the headlights? It surprises many people, but the headlights in many of our Classic British cars have no fuses. That's right. No fuse. No quasi fuse. No circuit breaker. No circuit protection of any kind. Raw unfused power travels from the unfused light switch to the unfused headlights. Why?

It has been suggested that this may buy you an extra moment of light. Imagine you are out in the middle of nowhere going fifty miles per hour in the middle of the night. You hit a small bump. A headlight wire is loose and it bumps against ground. If the circuit were fused, the fuse would blow. (In the event of a

short circuit, even a slow-blow fuse will blow without delay.) Instantly, the lights would go out. You are going 50 MPH, in the dark, with no lights at all.

If the circuit has no fuse, the fuse can't blow. That has a positive and a negative impact. The negative impact is clear. If there is a short circuit, we are going to melt a wiring harness. A tow truck will be needed.

However, if there is no fuse, and there is a short, the headlamps will dim. Even dimmed, they will give some light for a moment or two. That will give you a chance to apply the brakes and slow the car. It will give you an instant to record a mental image of the road. That tiny bit of time can help you avoid an accident. Thinking of it like that, a burned harness and a tow truck are a small price to pay to avoid an accident.

Can I use a North American fuse in my Classic British car?

Well, since almost everybody has already done it, the answer is self evident. There are just two things to keep in mind.

1. The slow blow feature of the slow-blow fuse will be gone if you use a North American style fuse.
2. Remember the slow blow fuse will begin to slow blow at about half its rating. So if you have blown a 30 amp slow-blow fuse, and you want to use a North American style fuse in its place, make sure the North American style fuse is rated at about half what the recommended slow-blow fuse was rated at.

Important- If a 30 amp slow-blow fuse is replaced with a 30 amp North American style fuse, that new fuse would tolerate 28 amps all day long and not blow. That would be going on in a circuit that was designed to carry a maximum of 15 amps. If something goes wrong, we can have enough amps to damage wires, but not enough to blow the 30 amp North American style fuse.

M.M.

How not to build a TD

By Bob Hughes

This project started more than 20 years ago. A buddy of mine wanted a TD so bad that he decided to build one, a piece at a time. Then he got lucky and found a complete car that needed paint. I made the mistake of agreeing to

made. The parts for this car, eventually named Phoebe, came from all over the West Coast, as I found them at swap meets, or made them as required.

I encountered a reoccurring problem that others in the hobby may be familiar with: in order to fabricate my car I had to work on everyone else's car to get enough money to do my own.

The frame for the car that the body was to reside on was another opportunity to spend money. It was just a frame with a right hand drive steering rack. Nothing else. At about this time, I was outed. I realized that I was a closet street rodder without a V8. But the conundrum was, that I really loved my British cars. (I have an MGA and an MGB GT.) It was also about this time that I was seriously snubbed by a rather famous MG guru who asked, "What are you going to do for a drive train?" My innocent response was that since I had priced a rebuildable TD drive train for about \$5k, I had made the decision to use an MGB drive train, as it could be had for a tenth of the cost. That was the end of that conversation.

I realized two things: One, some people really cherish their LBCs in original condition. Two, some people really cherish their LBCs, but done the way they want them. My stance is obviously with the second group. This is where I began to understand that I was going to upset about half or more of the MG community. But not being totally irresponsible, I embraced the doctors creed of "Do No Harm" in my construction. Everything that has been done to the car can be unbolted, and returned to original if one wanted to.

Since I was going to use an MGB drive train, I needed brakes, figuring that if it was going to go faster, it ought to stop faster. The front suspension is MGB with sway bar, disc brakes, and wire wheels. Most all of that fit, with little alteration. Out back,

the differential is MGB (banjo style) with wire wheels. Gotta have those wires, as no responsible MG builder would do it any other way, right? The transmission is MGB also. The engine is mounted to the frame using adapter mounts I fabricated to be bolted in (do no harm). This combination should go down the highway with most of the law abiding traffic without fear of being run down from behind. Up here in the Northwest, we have to drive a minimum of 300 miles to get to the next MG cult gathering.

The engine is MGB that's been warmed over with a hotter cam, bored out with high compression pistons, balanced, decked, and fitted with a Weber 45 DCOE carburetor. In order to get the carb to fit I had to create some new bonnet side panels, (do no harm) and then devise a way to fasten it all down. I used the MG latching mechanism with some special brackets to get it locked down. But then, the street rodder came out and I had to have a leather strap over the bonnet to hold everything together, too. This only took a year or so to accomplish, not too bad.

Then there was the roll bar. I figured that if it was going to be a racer poseur, it had to have one. Not having a hoop to fit a TD, I built my own out of a bar I got in exchange for some other work I did restoring an MGA for someone else. Along the line I found two Brooklands wind screens at a swap meet for \$5. They were taped together and labeled "side glass?". Obviously, that street rodder had not a clue what they were. I didn't dicker; I just paid

the five dollars, and danced back to our trailer. Those wind screens fit into my racer theme beautifully.

The interior is made of aluminum panels with a bead rolled into the edges for stiffness. The seats are modified MGB seats with side bolsters to keep your posterior centered. Seat belts are race oriented. They are 5-point belts that attach to the roll bar and the floor, and have a quick release buckle. No doing face plants on the dash here.

Then paint came into play. For years the car was bare metal, then spot primed. Then one summer I was invited to a car show where they wanted a car under construction. This was a no brainer, mine fit that description. We gave it a coat of metal etching primer, and for the first time in 20 years or so it was all the same color again, albeit an olive drab green. Then it struck! Wouldn't an officer from the Great War desire to be transported in a sports car

rather than a clunky Wolsley or worse? So we had to put a white star on the doors to let all know they were in the presence of greatness. Later, at the car show I heard people wondering, "Did they really make staff cars that small?" Now, after much body work, and a few more years, Phoebe has a new Cobalt blue and cream livery with gold pin striping.

There's still lots of work to be done, but at this point there are acknowledgements to be made. Many, many thanks to Ray for helping me and standing behind me, (kicking me in the butt to get busy) and to Wyatt for the white star inspiration. Also thanks to Moss for keeping these cars alive.

Now, as to the name. You remember the fable of the Phoenix, rising from the ashes? That's this car, but with MGB power, hence Phoebe. *M.M.*



paint that car for the TD parts he had, which weren't all that many. He got his completed car and I got a project. I had a set of frame rails, a steering rack, and the cowl. The rest had to be found or

Girl Trouble

By Chris Seely



As illogical and juvenile as it may be, those of us who love our vehicles are all guilty of personifying them. The morning rituals to get them to start, the persuasive talk while trying to remove frozen bolts, the little pats on the dash when they are running well, and even the names we give cars to make them feel like part of the family. And when things go unexpectedly wrong, we write it off as a personality trait, or we say our cars are trying to show us they are unhappy.

It took four years of ownership and restoration on my own 67 MGB to figure out its special quirk. It doesn't like girls.

It's absurd, I know, but it is the only explanation. The signs were all there. It began in high school when my

girlfriend at the time and I were going to go for a drive. The starter jammed on the flywheel, and we had to rock the car back and forth in gear until it relented. Then, while driving a friend of mine to her tennis practice a valve stem seal blew. Not even my sister, Erica, gets a break. With her in the car the alternator bracket sheared. And since I obviously wasn't getting the message, driving back from Erica's soccer game we had a complete engine blowout.

Emily and I began dating after a couple of months into our freshman year of college. She's a brain and cognitive science major, I'm in mechanical engineering, and living on the same hall as one another at the University of Rochester, we established the same friends in the first few weeks. A week at school feels like a day

anywhere else, and before we knew it, two semesters had passed and it was time for us to part for the summer. She lives in South Carolina, and I live in New Hampshire, so seeing each other over the summer would be rare and difficult. We decided to try to meet in June, and after getting approval from my parents, her flight to NH was booked.

This lit a fire under me. I knew she would want to take the MG out. Having only seen pictures of it, she surely thought it was much nicer than it actually was. Mechanically, the car was sound. I had rebuilt and installed a new engine the summer before, and having rebuilt the HS4 carburetors in my first week back from school, it now started every time without issue.

The suspension, however, was a mess. Clunks and rattles came from everywhere. Slotted A-arms, dried bushings, frozen king pins, and cracked spring pans were just part of the problem, not to mention an aftermarket tube shock kit that just could not handle our frost-heaved roads. It had always been my plan to renew the suspension and floor pans over the summer, but with her trip scheduled just a month away, my time frame was cut in half.

I fell into a routine for the next three weeks: go to work, come home at five, grab a quick bite, and then go outside and tinker. I started with the rear thinking it would be the most difficult. I would crawl under the car in the mud for hours spinning sockets, heating bolts with my dad's

acetylene torches, and using my favorite "convincer" to free stuck pins and bolts.

There is no garage at my house, no car lift or anything of that sort. I invent my own ways to get around this, like using strong rope and an engine lift to pull the body off of the rear end. In about a week all new bushings had been installed, the diff was swapped with one that was a little less noisy, brake lines laid wrapped around the rear, the old tube shock kit was swapped for original lever arms, and everything was covered in a nice

black shiny coat of paint.

I turned the car around and began working on the front end. This ended up being much easier than the back, and before long, the old tube shock kit found its way into the trashcan along with the dried out bushings. The cracks in the spring pans were welded, A-arms

We had come too far. I would not accept defeat. Half an hour later, we were driving down the road.



replaced, kingpins freed, and once again, all parts were painted a glossy black. It really looked as if I was going to make it in time for Emily's arrival.

The next day my sister and I were happily humming down the highway on our way to work. I was on cloud nine. I had finished my project just in time, the suspension was quiet and comfortable, the car was in great working order, and in just two days Emily would be here to see me. Suddenly, I heard a shriek, the car pulled hard to the left bringing me into the other lane just before the wheel broke free again. The driver's side wheel bearing had fried, and I had no choice but to limp the car to my grandmother's house half a mile down the road.





48 hours, that's all I had to work with. All day at work I thought of what to do. Surely it wouldn't take long at all to fix; I knew how to replace the bearing. As long as you can see well enough to slip the cotter pin on the restraining nut into place, it is an easy task. Later that night, however, it became clear that this would not be a routine changing and packing of the bearing. After trying for a couple minutes to pull the hub off of the spindle, it was obvious that the bearing had seized in place. I worked long into the night after work, using every method to put force on the bearing to help it break free. Nothing would work. I returned before the crack of dawn the next morning and spent the next few hours before work trying to heat, pull, and even cut the bearing off with my dad's torches. It was simply no use, the bearing was too far into the hub, and the flame of the torch would just lick the outer housing. Emily would be here tomorrow, and I had no tricks left up my sleeve. I worked, cussed, and cussed some more all the way up until I had



to leave to pick her up. I would simply have to accept defeat.

The next three days were spent joyously. We swam in lakes and rivers, hiked the White Mountains, and were beyond happy to be reunited. During a trip to my Grandmother's house however, I found her examining the MG and all the tools surrounding it. "There is really no way we could take it out?" she said longingly. "I'm afraid not," I replied sadly, "the only thing I can do at this point is replace the whole swivel assembly, and I don't have an extra." Then it hit me: I didn't have a swivel assembly, but my friend Michael just across the river in Vermont surely would. I called him that night and explained the situation. With haste, he boxed up an old used driver's side assembly and shipped it out with a bill.

My package arrived the next day, on day three of Emily's four-day visit. After hiking in Franconia Notch all morning, Emily and I drove into town to get the part. The next few hours were spent at my grandmother's house. I worked into the dark, removing all of the bolts I had installed just a week earlier, and happily so as the assembly dropped to the ground. Emily sat in the grass beside me telling me stories. Despite the situation, I was calm and happy as I could be. The A-arm bolts slipped in easily with their respective bushings, but after much effort, I could not get the forks of the shock to slip over the top. We had come too far. I would not accept defeat. Half an hour later, we were driving down the road.

The roof was off, the stars were out, and although I had no time to align the wheels, everything seemed to work as it should. I drove slowly and we both savored the moment, looking up at the stars with the crisp, clean air whistling over our heads. Just before pulling onto my road, I heard, "Could we drive a little bit longer?" We held our course with no destination in mind, just enjoying the moment.

Before I left for school this past year, many weeks after Emily's visit, the passenger's side wheel bearing began to



rumble. With a fly rod in the passenger's seat, and fresh fish in the back, I realized that this had happened without any girls around. Perhaps the events that had unfolded in the past three years and over the summer had just been a string of bad luck. I replaced the bearing that night and left for Rochester the next morning. A month later I returned as I always do to go to the British Invasion in Stowe, Vermont, with my dad, and over the three-day weekend and hundreds of miles following his little Spitfire, the fresh bearing performed without failure. Then again, for these many miles, there were no girls along for the ride. *M.M*

I've started restoring carburetors to sell for some extra cash while I'm at school. It's an amusing scene: a tiny dorm room with a big bowl of Evapo-Rust and HIF-4s in the center. Oh yeah, and an overdrive gearbox propped up in the corner. That will be going to the bench for rebuild one of these weekends. May even be playing around with my own gear ratios as well; one of my professors here is an engineer at a gear factory.



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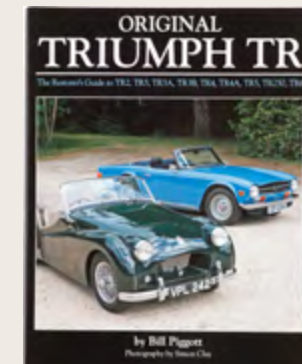
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Tim Karman earns a "Roadside Oddity" point.