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Moss Motoring

ISSUE 3, 2017

Fathers & Daughters
Blest be the ties that bind



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Moss Motoring



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THERE IS MORE ONLINE!

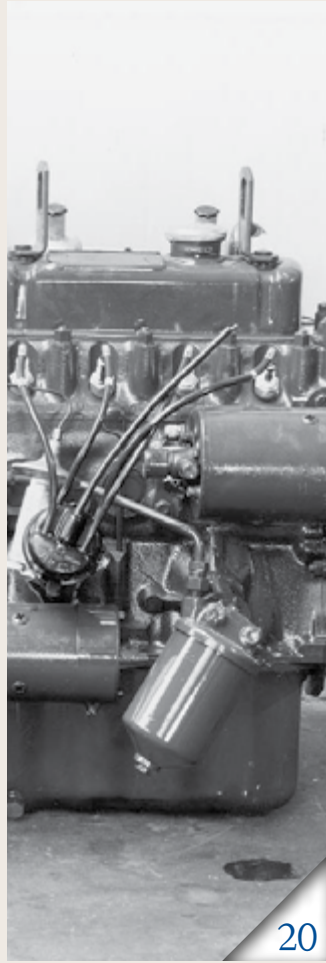
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Robert Goldman

KAY PETRE RACED AUSTIN 7 MONOPOSTOS

While working in Japan, the young man, my grandfather Maurice, bought a cigarette case, and had a local silversmith add an image of a biplane.

The type of biplane in which my grandfather flew was a flaming death trap, all of which were shot down. Fortunately, after training as a gunner observer, my grandfather became an instructor and survived the war. It wasn't until after he passed away that I learned of and purchased the Thornton-Pickard camera. The Hythe camera is shaped to mimic a Lewis machine gun. It was a training tool meant to save money on ammunition. As an instructor, my grandfather could have used one of these cameras. In fact, there is a minuscule chance he could have touched the very device in my collection.

It is within the context of history that these three dissimilar physical items are connected, and make an interesting story. We moved on to the Hall of Fame program from there.

Back in June, I opened our Friday night pre-Motorfest party with a brief story. It went something like this: History is the context which links seemingly disconnected things into a story. Among my possessions are a funky striped silk necktie, a Japanese cigarette case, and a Thornton-Pickard MkIII Hythe camera. The necktie was a unit tie, worn by a young man, who to be “demobbed,” or in other words to get out of the military, needed a job. After the war, there were no jobs in the UK. His older brother lived in Japan, and was the importer of Haig & Haig scotch. He offered a job.

The next evening, I was riding in a car with John Nikas and HoF inductee, Graham Robson. They were swapping anecdotes. As the lightweight in the room (please place no weight upon my use of the word “weight”), my metaphorical shots at the conversation had to fly true. I offered up an anecdote from some years back. In September 1993 we were putting on a British car event at a horse ranch in the Santa Ynez Valley. One afternoon a woman, probably somewhere in her 80s, came walking up the driveway. It was not a short driveway, and the neighbor's properties were a respectable distance away.

As she approached, she asked in a lovely English accent what all the British sports cars were doing about. I explained the nature of the show, and in the course of a brief conversation, she stated in the 1930s she had raced factory-sponsored single seater Austin 7s. Needs of the moment drew me away. When I returned, she was gone. Who was she? Graham piped up, “Was she an elegant woman?” Yes. “Kay Petre was her name. She was the only woman to drive a factory sponsored single seater 7.”

Had John Nikas not asked me one day over a burger to house a British Sports Car Hall of Fame, one half of this article would remain an amusing little mystery to me. Who was the aged woman with the sports car story? Nothing more. Two years later, the burger lunch landed me in a car with Graham Robson, who swatted aside the fog. I now have historical context to go with that encounter. What a tenuous thread connected the woman in the story to her name. History is a fragile thing, worthy of protection. *MM*

Smoke 'em if you got 'em.



THE BIRTH OF BMC



Sports cars for the masses By Graham Robson

Okay, admit it, and be proud of it—many of you out there own cars built around the time when Britain's Queen Elizabeth II came to the throne in 1952, the year in which the British Motor Corporation (BMC) was founded. When the new Queen walked down the steps of her aircraft at London's Heathrow Airport, she was starting what the British press called a 'New Elizabethan Era'.

Looking back sixty-five years shows us just how completely the British car scene has changed. Not only was Britain's largest carmaker, BMC Austin, still British owned, but it dominated the market. It was a time when Britain's carmakers out-sold everyone except the Americans. Surely this would last indefinitely. Or could it?

Post-war Recovery

By 1952, Britain's motor industry still had a colossal order bank, and a long waiting list for new cars. My father ordered his new Ford in 1948, but it was not delivered until 1953. Britain's

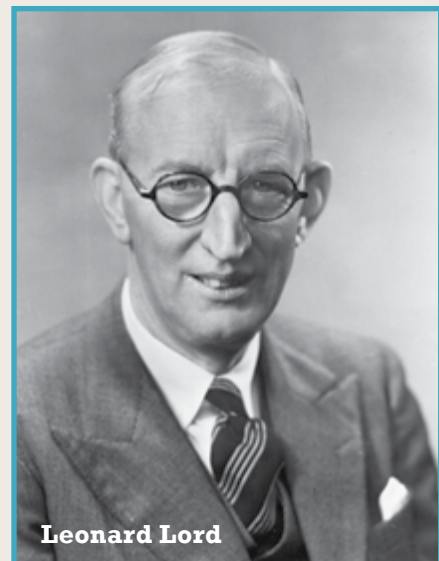
factories produced only 219,162 cars in 1946, and 522,515 in 1950. In 1952, the first 'Elizabethan year', production dropped back to 448,000, of which 308,942 were sent overseas.

By then, the aftermath of war was nearly forgotten, and normal life was returning. Unhappily, British carmakers still wanted to make models that appealed to *them* rather than to the customer. Does that explain why there were British cars that overheated in American summers? Where the heater didn't work well in winter? Where you needed a tame mechanic in the garage to keep it on the road?

In those days, of course, Government ministers encouraged carmakers to revert to a single-model policy. One wonders why? Once the Model T had been killed off, this hadn't worked for Ford-USA, and for sure it wasn't going to work in Britain. Accordingly, most carmakers ignored the message and started widening their ranges as fast as they could.

Britain's League Table

In 1951, there were still 34 makes of British cars, of which the 'Big Six' dominated the numbers game. Two groupings—BMC (Austin, Morris, MG, Riley and Wolseley) and Rootes (Hillman, Humber and Sunbeam-Talbot)—took centre stage. Ford sold more cars than Vauxhall, while Standard-Triumph brought up the tail.



Leonard Lord

The balance was provided by a series of glamorous independents, of which Bentley, Daimler, Jaguar, Rolls-Royce and Rover made most headlines. Even so, it was marques like Allard, Aston Martin, Frazer Nash, Healey and Morgan, which produced interesting and sporty cars, the type which many still love and restore today.

Now, though, it is time to recall how BMC was formed, and how it became the massive grouping which came to produce so many MGs, and Austin-Healeys, almost all of which went to the export market, many of them finding homes in North America.

Up until then, the 'founding fathers'—Austin and Nuffield (which meant Morris, MG, Riley and Wolseley)—were fiercely and proudly independent of each other. Herbert Austin had founded his company in 1905, saw it grow to the largest British car maker by the late 1930s, and to begin looking round for more conquest in the post-war years. Nuffield, on the other hand, had been set up as Morris Motors in 1913, invented MG in 1924, then bought up Wolseley in 1927 and Riley in 1938. By then its founder, William Morris, had been raised to the British peerage as Lord Nuffield, and the grouping therefore became the Nuffield Organisation.

By 1951, however, both companies needed to merge to underpin their plans for further expansion. Austin built 132,557 cars that year, and Nuffield 110,654, and although both were profitable, there wasn't enough in their 'war chests' to finance huge expansion. Accordingly, Austin's chairman, Leonard Lord, made the first approach to promote a merger, but as he and Lord Nuffield could then be described as the 'Best of Enemies' (Lord had worked for him in the 1930s and neither had enjoyed the experience), he was originally re-buffed.

Months later, Nuffield, who was by then an old and physically fading personality, thought again, and gave in with ill grace, the result being that BMC was officially formed on



MG TC assembly at Abingdon

31 March 1952. From that moment, Leonard Lord became CEO and within months Nuffield was persuaded to retire completely, leaving Lord as chairman, too.

The corporate surgery began at once, for although both Austin (with the A30) and Morris (with the Minor) were making hugely popular small cars, their middle-size and larger cars all needed rejuvenation. Not only that, but Nuffield's MG (the TD, at the time) was an appealing sports car, it was technically obsolescent, while Austin produced nothing more exciting than the awfully ugly A90 Atlantic. Len Lord's plans to impress the North American sports car market could

not be achieved until he had a new MG—which appeared as the MGA in 1955—and invented another brand, the Austin-Healey of 1953.

Quality and Character

On the other hand, there was still some motoring class to be had. If you were rich, you looked no further than Bentley, Daimler and Rolls-Royce, but if you were middle-class you could order an Alvis 3-litre, an Armstrong Siddeley Sapphire, a Bristol 401, a Humber Hawk, a Jaguar Mk VII, a Jowett Javelin, a Riley RMA 2 ½-litre, a Rover 75, a Sunbeam-Talbot 90, or a Triumph Renown: some never reached the USA, of course.



Morris Minor – 1949.

You also got wooden dashboards, leather seating, rakish styling, and individual engineering. But, sad to say, some of these companies would not survive for long (Jowett disappeared within a year, Armstrong-Siddeley in 1960, and Alvis in 1967), but this was the time when they were still enjoying a reputation.

Jaguar, of course, was on a high and getting higher. With the TR2 on the way, Triumph would soon come to mean a whole lot more to North America than it did in 1952. And Rover would hang on so well that its name would eventually go to the country's last all-British combine tractor.

Popular Sports Cars

It was Britain's sports cars which made the most news in 1952—especially in North America—and BMC was responsible for most of them.

The variety was amazing: from the sleek, 120mph Jaguar XK120, to the creaky old Morgan Plus 4, the cheap and cheerful MG TD to the expensive but appealing Healeys, and from Cadillac-engined Allards to hand-built Bristol-engined Frazer Nashes. And I haven't even mentioned the Aston

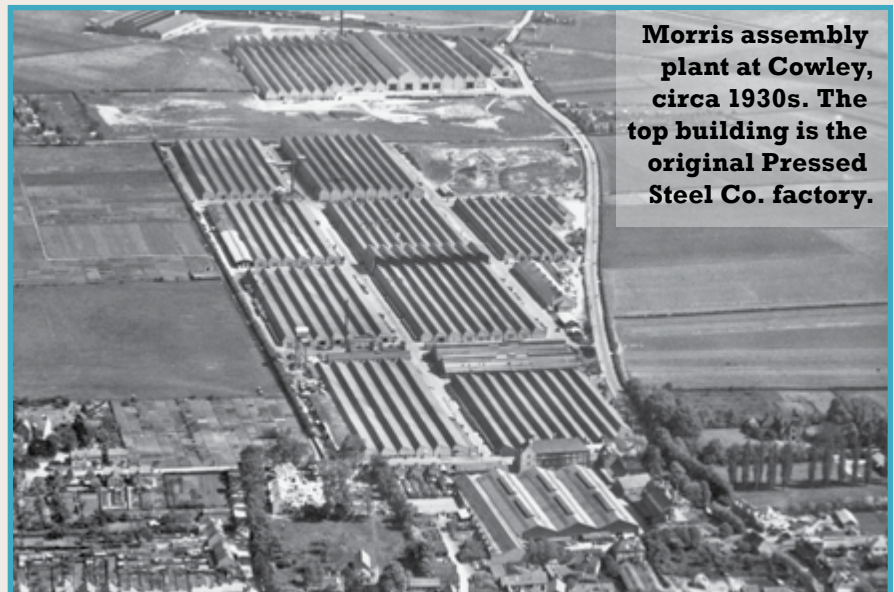
Martin DB2, the HRG, or the Jowett Jupiter.

British sports cars controlled the market (no competition from Japan, just yet). There was tradition, style, racing success, and there was sentiment behind this. America's love of British sports cars, they say, was forged during World War II, when thousands of US Army and Air Force personnel were based in the UK, and discovered the

three greats: British pubs, British girls, and British sports cars!

There was, indeed, something about British sports cars that could not be replicated, nor learned in the classroom. Other countries would try to match our popular-price models, but had little success—not, that is, until the Datsun 240Z in the 1970s.

As far as North America was concerned, it was the quaint MG TC which started a trend in the late 1940s,



Morris assembly plant at Cowley, circa 1930s. The top building is the original Pressed Steel Co. factory.

and the independently-sprung TD of 1950 built on that success. But it was Jaguar's amazing XK120 which really caused a sensation. Even in 1952, when deliveries had been going on for three years, to own an XK still seemed like an impossible dream for so many enthusiasts.

It wasn't just the appeal of the silky-smooth XK engine—the world's first-ever series-production twin-cam, by the way—and it wasn't only the seduction of that sleek two-seater style. There was also the character, the sound, and the still-unbelievable ability of a road car to reach 120mph in a straight line. The fact that Jaguar had just gone into sports car racing with the special C-Type, and won the Le Mans 24-Hour race at the first attempt with that car, confirmed the Jaguar legend.

Behind Jaguar and the MG, too, there were several other worthy machines. Allards—especially the J2X types which got Cadillac V8 engines—were crudely engineered but effective, Jowett Jupiters looked better than they actually were, while Aston Martin's DB2 was the first of another family of fine, twin-cam engined sports coupes.

For lovers of sporty motoring, 1952 was already a great time to be around—and that was before that famous day at London's Earls Court Motor Show in October, when Donald Healey and Triumph both showed their latest prototypes. Although the Triumph was still undeveloped and needed a rear-end re-style before TR2 deliveries began, the Healey 100 only needed an alliance with BMC to make the 100 BN1 famous.

Here was Britain's sporting future. Even so, for MG, London's 1952 Motor Show must have been a nightmare. Not one, but two important new sports cars broke cover—and both of them were set to hit hard at the TD's cosy marketplace. It was a revolution in looks, performance, and value for money—for Triumph's new TR2 and (at a higher price) Austin-Healey's 100 were about to render the old-style MG completely obsolete.



**Austin-Healey
Assembly
at Longbridge.**

Just think about it. In 1952 the TD had no serious competition, but it was already old-fashioned. The only other small-engined British sports cars were the archaic old HRGs and Singer Roadsters. Along with the Jowett Jupiter, these were all slow and expensive. MG, its TD's styling rooted way back in the 1930s, was smug—and it showed.

Then came October, and the promise of two smart new sports cars which would soon blow the 80mph TD into the weeds. By mid-1953, not only would Triumph have the 100mph TR2 on sale at similar price levels, but the larger-engined Austin-Healey 100 seemed to offer so much more style and performance. The TR2 and the Austin-Healey 100 represented a step-change in British sports cars—they looked modern, they were a full 20mph faster than the TD, and they were comfortable too. When it rained, the cabins stayed dry—and you could also buy removable hardtops. MG never offered either.

Until the MGA arrived three years later, this meant that MG would struggle, but for Austin-Healey and Triumph, the battle was only just starting. It would not be resolved for nearly thirty years. In the meantime, the 1950s, '60s and '70s would be an exciting time for open-top fanatics.

MM

Graham Robson is a prolific motoring historian, who started his working life as a design engineer, got involved in rallying as a hobby, started writing about motor sport soon after that, and is now one of motoring's most published authors. Graham was inducted into the British Sports Car Hall of Fame this year. We are honored to feature more of Graham's writing in upcoming issues of Moss Motoring.

Live & Learn

"Wisdom" from the hard way



By George Alarcon

While working at a copper mine in Copiapo, Chile, my boss saw that I was carrying a handful of nickel sized steel balls. The balls are thrown into a big tumbler, whose agitation causes the balls to beat copper-laced rocks into smaller pieces. When he saw that they were souvenirs, he recommended something other than Brasso to remove the years of rust—Catsup! We put the balls in a sandwich bag, poured Hunt's finest in with them, would occasionally squeeze the bag to keep moving fresh catsup onto the balls, and voila! After a few days, the balls were as clean as the lunch plates in the cafeteria. So fellow Brit freaks, as you remove those one-of-a-kind Whitworth fasteners, just label the sandwich bags, pour in some of the "red" and let natural acids do their work.

Two other Chilean inspired tips come to mind.

Uno

I took my MGB radiator to Romero's Radiator Shop. The insides looked coated with brownish oil sediment.

Romero didn't have a chemical bath service but offered to remove and replace the core... for more than \$300. I asked if he could remove the bottom and ream out the individual tubes. He said he doesn't do it or recommend it, as the old tubes might get pierced by the cleaning rod. I thanked him for his time and said I'd try to clean it *my* way.

I poured in two liter bottles of white vinegar (buck a bottle at 99-cent store), topped it off with distilled water, capped off the openings and left it alone. Several days later I poured out the vinegar solution around the garden (as weed control) and rinsed it out. A final flush showed clear water running through the radiator and engine. Only caveat is that the brass petcock has been so cleaned that it tends to drip. My solution? Either replace it or put a gob of silicon in the opening so I have to remove the whole petcock whenever I drain said radiator. Oh, I returned to Romero's as promised and showed him my results. He was impressed.

Dos

To all DIY'ers who need a temporary way to stop leaks in the brake components, vacuum lines, even smaller water openings, use: *ear plugs*. Some come with a string attached and some don't. \$1.00 will get you at least a pair, and your work might provide them gratis if it's noisy.

Take the plug, roll it between your fingers, and insert into the opening. Leave enough out so you can grab it. It will expand and stop the flow or air leak while you do what has to be done. The earplugs won't stop any measurable pressure but it will prevent or slow the medium from getting out.

If that buck pains your bank account, just put the ear plugs in your pocket and wash your pants to reuse them.

Breaking Bad

With Moss Parts I had replaced the wheel cylinders, had the calipers rebuilt and was deep into the bleeding of my '71 MGB's brake lines. Problem was, the rear brakes weren't bleeding. The fronts bled just fine.

I went back to the rears and focused on the plugged up rubber hose that connects to the brass tee that sends fluid to the driver and passenger side brake drums. I managed to rod out the hose (with a welding rod and carb cleaner) but opted to replace it as it did have surface cracks. Of course, I would never try to bring back to life a failed flexible brake hose. I was curious to see if I could free the obstruction before I replaced it.

Brake fluid now made it to the rear passenger side, but it still wasn't getting to the Driver's side. Releasing the brake line at the passenger drum and the brass tee, and disconnecting the tube's band/clip, I took the entire line down.

Turns out a two-inch portion of the tube was flattened, wouldn't let fluid through. I'll bet some of you can guess the cause...

Local parts places didn't have one, so back to Moss, and three days later I installed the new tube and bled the lines again. Did fronts, too. All good.

So, DIY'ers, if you have to tow your Brit-mobile on a flat bed or trailer, tell the tow man not to chain the axle, because that's what crushed the tube to begin with. *M.M*

"But Honey..."



By Eric Glomstad

In my early years as a financially challenged school teacher, I often purchased sports cars in the summer months on which I would practice my budding restoration skills. The idea was that come spring I could sell the vehicle and make several hundred dollars profit. My long-suffering wife saw through this ploy after a few years, but early on it was quite a successful sales pitch.

In 1978 I spied an MG Midget on the lot of a local car repair business. I stopped to have a look and, after talking to the owner of the repair facility, found that the car had been abandoned. It seemed the owner did not want to pay for the complete engine rebuild which had been performed. I was eager to make a deal! This one would make me money for sure. I bargained the price down to \$1300 and went back with my wife to pick up the car. It wouldn't start.

After a battery jump and several squirts of starting fluid, the car came to life with a roar. Smoke poured from under the driver's side and a rattling metallic clatter could be heard from the bonnet. I proudly drove this car home. When I arrived, my wife who had been following me asked, "Are the lights supposed to work?"

For the next several weeks I was in heaven. Actually, I was in my garage... but you know what I mean. I spent absolutely no time on the drivetrain,

after all, looks make the best first impression, right? I purchased black vinyl by the yard and loop pile carpet by the foot from Pacific Fabrics and dove into a full interior remake. The door panels were flat and responded well to my efforts. I sewed an edging on the carpet pieces I had carefully cut and when glued in place, a transformation took place.

The driver's seat needed attention, but upon removal I found that with a needle and thread I could sew the split portions together by hand. I covered the steering wheel with a tan laced plastic cover, added a Sears and Roebuck tape deck, and things were definitely looking up.

A friend of mine painted the car in his shop. My vision was "French Racing Blue" but, when finished, the color more closely resembled "whale wash." Recap tires with white walls and a brand new vinyl top finished off my efforts and I was ready to sell.

These were the days of curbside selling and the car generated lots of interest. I explained the hard starting on the fact that the car just needed to be run and that this feature would soon be a thing of the past. My secretary in the school office where I worked purchased the car and named it "The Blue Frog."

I am sure that many of you have been warned not to sell a car to a friend or co-worker, but I was young,

euphoric and stupid. I proudly flashed the cash in front of my wife, "Honey, I made \$350 dollars!"

One week later I visited my secretary's garage. The car would not start. I told her I would tow it home and get her Blue Frog back on the road in no time flat. There was an oil slick the size of the Exxon Valdez on her garage floor. The motor had two dead cylinders. After removing the valve cover, I was surprised to find that a former mechanic had used multiple washers in its assembly to "bring things to level." With a heavy heart, I used my profits to buy a used engine at Aurora Auto Wrecking in Seattle, WA, and installed the replacement in the car. The Blue Frog croaked to life once more.

The night I delivered the car back to its happy owner, I sat at the dinner table surrounded by my loving and patient wife and our two small children. I was looking over the latest issue of *Auto Trader* and I saw an unbelievable deal. A 1967 Sunbeam Alpine, which was for sale by the original owner! It had been sitting in a cow pasture for the past four years and was sunk up to its rear axle in mud. With an excitement born of passion and pride, I looked my wife in the eye and said, "But Honey, I can make money on this one!" *MM*



THE LAST NICE DAY

By Adam Ford

[Adam sent me the following story last spring, and I'm so glad he did. It prompted me to put a call out to car clubs requesting photos and stories of fathers and daughters that express the love for British cars that they share. If you would like to add your story and photos to the collection I will be sharing online, send an email to: editor@mossmotors.com ~Ed.]

Kristin stood on the front porch and looked out across the fields. The sky was an uninterrupted blue and the morning sun was slowly removing the dusting of frost on the lawn. There was a chill in the air—this was November after all—but the prospect was for a gorgeous day.

The kind of day that you cherish before winter comes. The kind of day for a drive.

Kristin opened the garage door and climbed into the cream-colored 1953 MG TF parked inside. She pulled the choke and listened to the engine cranking over in the cold air. Eventually it caught and the sputtering rumble of the old car bounced off of the newish passenger car parked next to it—the car that started every time, even in the dead of winter, the car that had heat and all-wheel-drive and space for kids and groceries. She wouldn't need that car today. Today was a day for her, for driving, for getting out on a smooth stretch of road just to feel the pavement flowing along under the tires.

She eased the MG out of the garage and turned it around, letting it idle in its irregular rhythm as she fetched her things. She had a small plaque that needed to be delivered to a business a few towns away. It was a recognition award for a generous contribution that the business had made to a charity that Kristin worked for, and it was small enough to mail to them, but hand-delivering it was a good excuse to go for a drive.

Her father had always looked for such excuses to roll the MG out and often Kristin would join him on these excursions to nowhere. Sometimes he would ask her if she wanted to join him for a "\$50 lunch"—a rough estimate of the gas, oil, and maintenance or repair costs that might be incurred in driving down a series of back roads to buy two \$10 lunches. She happily rode along in the left-hand passenger seat (the car was, as her father had said, "properly British," with the steering wheel on the right), waving to the passing traffic, letting her hair blow around the cockpit, sometimes into her father's face.

Kristin still always called the car "Dad's car." She'd had it for many years now, before she got married, before kids, but it would always be her father's. He'd salvaged it from a distant relative's garage and spent years bringing it back to as near an original

shape as he could. Kristin helped—bringing her father lemonade on the hot days, holding a part in place while he wrenched it in—or she'd just sit and watch. Her older brothers never seemed to have much interest in the MG—they were into sports and girls—but Kristin always pictured herself alone and free, motoring through the countryside on a summer day with the top down, the wind whipping her hair behind her.

There was no wind this morning but it was cold enough to leave the top up. The chill in the air was hampering the MG's performance and as Kristin set off up the first hill, it sputtered along, feeling like one cylinder wasn't firing.

"C'mon Mags," said Kristin, patting the dashboard. The old car struggled along, slowly warming up, and within a mile it was roaring along a winding stretch of asphalt, engine hitting on all cylinders. Her father had named the car "Maggie," after Dame Maggie Smith, but Kristin never felt that the car was a girl, so she shortened it to "Mags," which sounded more masculine to her.

The road from her house to the town hall had been paved that summer so it was a delight to race down, faster than the speed limit advised. She scanned ahead of the bends and dipped across the centerline, cutting the curves in all the right places. She rolled into town and downshifted, letting the engine kick out some noise as she pulled up to the curb by the town hall. It was election day. She hopped out, leaving the keys dangling in the ignition. She enjoyed living in a small community where you could leave your car unlocked, and the line to vote wasn't more than a couple people, if any.

Ten minutes later she was out of the town hall, a bake-sale brownie in her hand. She headed north to make her delivery. There was a highway, but she opted for back roads.

She motored past the box stores and strip malls, keeping Mags in check until the city limits, where the speed limit went up. The local police liked to catch people coming down the hill into town who hadn't slowed down enough yet



and sure enough, Kristin saw a patrol car parked on the side of the road, scanning the traffic. She kept as close to a safe speed as she could, knowing that soon she'd have to give the car all it had in order to climb the pass.

Soon she was roaring up the hill and keeping an eye on the temperature gauge as it climbed along with the car. One last construction vehicle ahead of her, flashers on in the slow lane, and she crested the pass, taking in the view all too briefly before feathering off the accelerator, letting gravity and the engine keep her rolling safely down the back side of the pass.

She pulled into the business on the other side of the pass, the MG's engine having cooled on the downslope. The chilly morning had given way to a sunny and warm day and she considered putting the top down, but didn't feel like taking the time. This was a beautiful day, she thought to herself, why spoil it with effort?

She delivered the plaque and spent more time than she'd planned chatting with the store owner, who was the only one in the shop. It was past noon by the time she pulled herself away. She stepped back out into the empty parking lot and gazed at Mags, sitting smartly, waiting to be on the road. Her father had spent countless hours tweaking Maggie to perfection, but he had no illusions that this was just a show car. "Cars were built to be driven," he'd say, and he and Kristin would hop in and point the MG in no particular direction, exploring the surrounding countryside and searching for turns and straightaways, diners and vistas. Inevitably there would be more hours spent after any long excursion, touching up chips in the paint, tightening a loose bolt, massaging the engine to run like a top.

Kristin felt sad that she couldn't spend more time with Mags, either behind the wheel or under the hood, but she kept the MG running. Her

husband didn't share her interest in the old car. He drove a sleek German sedan—an automatic, of all things!—and his interests lay more in his job and physical fitness. The jury was still out on whether either of her kids would develop an interest in classic automobiles. She wondered if someday she'd be driving out for a \$50 lunch with one or both of them.

The MG thrummed to life and she pointed it down the valley, enjoying the solitude and sound of the engine. She smiled and let the accelerator down, doing well past the speed limit where she knew that she could, easing off through the towns where the local sheriffs protected and served.

This was the road that Kristin and her father drove. After she'd mastered driving and was allowed to take the wheel of Maggie, he would drive north and let her do the return trip south. She kept it slow and safe when she was younger and driving with her father in the passenger seat, but now she pushed it, dipping over the centerline on the left-hand turns, and taking the MG to the very edge of the pavement on the right side, feeling that she could almost reach out and brush her hand against the guardrails.

As she swept down the valley, the November sun streamed through the bare trees, casting an endless zebra-stripe pattern on the road. She sped through, feeling the sunlight flicker like a strobe light as she dropped the car down to third gear to navigate a tight turn before throwing it back into fourth to race by the lake. Her hand rested gently on the gear shift knob as the miles ticked off under the wheels, and she felt the itch to have one more gear—to be able to keep accelerating, to have another throw of the shifter. But four gears was all she had, and it was good enough today. It was a perfect day for a drive, and maybe the last nice day of the season. She'd checked the weather before leaving the house

and a cold front was due in overnight, with the first snow of winter scheduled for the weekend. Mags might be tucked away into the garage soon, but today was a day for letting the little car do what it was built to do.

Nearing the last small town before turning on the road to her house, she thought about the day and how much it was like the last time her father took Maggie out for a drive. It was late October, warm, clear, the sun rippling the fall colors on the trees, a perfect day for a drive. Kristin couldn't even remember why she didn't go that day—homework, a school project, a boy—but she was too busy and her father hit the road without her. It snowed a few days later and then the big blizzard hit in the beginning of November. Maggie stayed inside. Her father had the stroke in February. Her mother moved into a smaller house a year later and the MG sat in a friend's garage until Kristin and her husband bought an old farmhouse near where she grew up and had the space to take care of the MG again. The first drive was bittersweet, as memories of her father flooded back, but she resolved to drive the old car whenever she could, especially on the nice days late in the year when you never knew if this might be the last nice day or not.

She made the last turn and headed home, the MG purring contentedly, over the road she'd driven to and from work every day until the first baby came along. Six more miles and she swung into the driveway, slowly rolling to a stop in the shade of the garage. She turned the key and the motor clunked to a stop, leaving Kristin with a calm silence. She closed the garage door, looking fondly at the old car, always waiting to be driven. "See you in the spring, Dad," she said. *MM*



Kate's Story

By Kate Rosebrough
Member of Hoosier MGs

his car, but he would let Andy drive it. I helped a lot as dad overhauled the brakes, replaced the clutch, cleaned, tuned, etc., and at last, had it painted dark green. It was absolutely beautiful. My brother was a wild man who didn't care much for rules so he thought nothing of handing me the keys. In the event that my dad reads this, I will not divulge just how much I drove that car before I got my license, but suffice it to say when I did, I was well practiced!

Thanks to my brother's knack for rule breaking and subpar grades at that time, I got to drive most days. I learned how to drive on snow and ice in that car, and can now handle any road conditions nature throws at me. No one had a car like ours and I was so proud. The occasional mechanical issue never instilled panic. In fact, I calmly showed the auto-shop teacher at Carmel High School how, with a couple of taps with a ball peen hammer (stored in the trunk) on the starter, I could get it running just fine on my own, thank you very much! Wish I had a picture of the look on that guy's face! Driving that car was truly the highlight of my adolescence. Then I went to Purdue. And my dad SOLD MY CAR! He called me on a Saturday morning and told me about the brand new convertible Z28 that he bought for my mom...and how it needed to be in the garage. I didn't even get to say goodbye.

Somehow I managed to forgive my dad, but I never stopped wishing I had that car back. Time passed and three kids later, I ended up with a

My Granddaddy was my best pal. I was pretty sure he walked on water. And he had *the coolest car in the world*—a 1952 MG TD. It arrived in his garage before I arrived on the planet so I guess I would say I've known MGs my whole life.

Sometime around 1977, my dad found a red 1960 MGA Twin Cam in a barn in Decatur, Illinois. He bought it for \$750 and towed it home on a Friday. By Sunday, the carbs were rebuilt, the engine was humming, and it was cleaned up and waxed. He sold it three months later for \$3500. I was three years old at the time, but I have vivid memories of being absolutely fascinated by pulling the cord in the side pocket to open the doors.

When my Granddaddy died in 1984, his TD came to live with us. When I was the ripe old age of 13, my dad took me to a school parking lot and taught me how to drive it. I was pretty

sure, after that day, that I ruled the world. My dad and I spent a lot of hours working on that car. I was generally in charge of holding the flashlight—a skill not to be underestimated. I learned how the engine worked, which tools did what, and how badly Lucas electrics stunk. I learned more than a few bad words. I heard stories galore of my dad's history with cars and in my eyes there was no one smarter or cooler in the world. Keep in mind I was a teenager and loved spending this time with my dad. I also watched my mom roll her eyes and smile, putting up slight resistance for show, each time a new part was purchased. So I learned a bit about marriage, too.

One evening in 1990, my dad pulled into the driveway in a bright banana yellow 1977 MGB. It needed "some work," and he launched a plan to perfect it. My older brother, Andy, was 16 and about to get his license. My dad made it very clear that it was

minivan—my worst nightmare. When kid number four came along, on more than one occasion I almost drove off the road as an MG went by. I said to myself, “Someday!”

Fast forward. I am 42 years old, my son and my daughter are both driving. My second daughter will have her permit soon. I’m driving down Rangeline Road one day and see a gold MGB for sale. I begin scheming...we would need an extra car with all these teenagers driving! I stopped in a few days later to check it out. It had 90K miles on it and a large puddle of oil on the crosspiece under the engine. I took my 16-year-old daughter for a test drive just for fun. Just like riding a bike, it all

came back to me and she was surprised by my driving skill. These kids have never ridden in a manual transmission car! Tragic! The car didn’t run well, the oil leak was a concern, and the mileage was high. I took it back to the dealer and told him the price was ridiculous. Long story short, he was rude and treated me like a dumb girl. I walked away with burning determination to find myself a great MGB. I get this trait from my dad, who was in my corner. I hit Google immediately.

In my search I happened upon a small ad in the Hoosier MG’s flea market. It was a 1979. It was Green. It had only 15,000 original miles! I called my dad and the two of us went to take a

look. It wasn’t running, had been sitting for three years, but man oh man, *she was beautiful!* It belonged to the man’s father who had passed away and he knew absolutely nothing about the car. He had no idea what it was worth and just wanted it to go to “a good home.” God is funny sometimes. I believe in “meant to be”—or could that just be my above average justification skills which I learned from my mother?!

After some work, my MGB is running. There are still some kinks to work out but nothing too complicated. My dad is 68, suffers from COPD, and is easily in my top ten favorite people in the world. We have had a blast strolling down memory lane while working

Dads & Daughters



by Dan Walker

Three generations of MGA addicts, father Dan, daughter Jessica, and granddaughter Lola. They will be inheriting this and one other '60 MGA when finished. Every time they come over, little Lola says, “Papa, how’s the car coming?” and runs out to the garage



to see it. I tore the car down in 1973, but sadly, never worked on it when my daughter was younger. I mentioned maybe selling it once a few years ago and got the rather indignant reply, “What?!! Do you realize that I’ve been walking past that car every day of my

life? You’ve got to finish it!” Jessica would gladly have gotten her hands dirty helping me then, but I let that opportunity slip away. Ah, hindsight! So, finish it I will so the three of us can enjoy it together! Lola wants to know if her car seat will fit in it! *M.M.*

on my car. Even better than that, my daughter is learning how to drive a stick (although she hasn't yet been brave enough to go past second gear), my son is learning about how it all works and is anxious to help me fix some things, my 15 year-old wants me to pick her up at school in the MG so her friends can see it, and my 9 year-old daughter knows how to change the fuel filter!

And I can't forget my dear, sweet husband, John. He knows better than to stand in my way when I decide I'm going to do something. He patiently deals with my financially irresponsible impulse decisions. He repeatedly says, "Whatever you want." And, bless his heart, he is genuinely happy that I have my car back. An MGB was the car I was driving the day I met him. I am

confident I will talk him into a new, all-black interior very soon!

I posted a picture on Facebook the day I had the "new" MG towed to my house. I simply said, "She's Home!" My old friends came out of the woodwork with funny stories and memories of my first MGB. Maybe it's "just a car" to a lot of people. To me, it's the best of my past and my future all rolled up in a tiny green package.

We bought the car last year, late August. On September 1st, my middle daughter, Jess, was stricken with what would become a very long and mysterious neurological illness. (She is going to be fine.) We went through everything from looking for brain tumors to testing for parasites and heavy metal poisoning. Needless to say, it had

been an incredibly stressful and difficult journey. And unfortunately, there was nothing anyone could do. Now, my father *adores* my children...especially this one. Dads need things they can fix. I don't know what he would've done without my little MGB over the last year. When Jess was at her worst, my dad was in my garage fixing the things he could fix. My mom commented several times how she thanked God for putting that car in our path at just the right time. Funny how life works out.

MM



By Denny Hale

A long time ago when my daughter was about five years old, she came to the garage and asked if she could help work on the "G" (that's what she called it). I was bleeding the clutch, so I said sure, get in and push the pedal down when I tell you to, and then release it when I tell you. She stretched out and reached the pedal. All worked out well. A few days later, I was struggling working on a carburetor, and she came out and asked to help. I said sure, get in and push down the pedal like we did before.



OK, let it up. Push it down, and at that point I got sidetracked thinking about the carb. Two or three minutes later I heard this little voice: "Daddy, my leg's getting tired."

Now I have four grandkids that help me work on my '68 MGB every winter, getting it ready for spring. We started off rotating tires, four wheels, four g'kids. Then we change the oil together. And finally we replace the spark plugs. Four plugs, four g'kids. I have them sign the plug so I know who



changed which one. Breaks my heart to throw away a fouled, autographed plug.

My grandsons wore tool belts with toy plastic tools when they were working in the garage with me. My four-year-old granddaughter told her mom, "I want a tool belt." Being short on time, and very clever, my daughter said, "Girls don't wear tool belts, we wear tool purses." So she got her one of her old purses, put in a screwdriver and a pair of pliers, and she was fine. *MM*



by Coral Hurley

I vividly remember dad cruising up our gravel drive and parking the coral colored convertible swiftly under a giant tree that sat adjacent to his one-car workshop—complete with oil pit that my brother and I had to swear never to enter. Being of a curious nature, I knew that cars (especially cool, old ones) became warm while they

were driven, but I decided I needed to know just how warm. My four-year-old self decided that the best way to test would be to wrap my tiny hand around the end of the tail pipe...for the sake of science, of course.

Upon gripping the pipe I immediately snapped my hand back from the burning metal, my eyes filled

with fat, rolling tears, and I bee-lined to the kitchen wailing for my mother.

I never became a scientist, but I'm sure my father brought me an orange popsicle to ease my pain and tell me how proud he was of my bravery in the face of scientific discovery. *MM*



by Brian Sipling

I am a member of the Central Pennsylvania Triumph Club. I have a 1972 Triumph TR6 that my daughter and I enjoy working on and cruising in. Her name is Megan and she turned six on April 1st.

A lot of times when we walk down to the garage she says to me, "Daddy can we take the Triumph?" Weather permitting my answer is always, yes sweetheart we sure can. *MM*



By Brian Smith

As a young boy I had an artistic ability and was constantly drawing. The rest of my free time was usually spent in the garage with my Dad wrenching on vintage British sports cars. There were Triumphs, MGs, Jaguars, and Minis overflowing our garage and onto the driveway at any given point of my childhood.

Being a car guy with the same gasoline in my veins as my father, my drawing naturally gravitated towards cars as the subject. I read every car magazine I could get my hands on and loved seeing new concepts. My bedroom was filled with posters of primarily European supercars, then one day I distinctly remember changing out the Ferrari 308 GTS poster I had with one of the new 1984 Corvette. I couldn't believe it was an American design. So dramatically proportioned yet so clean and simple. The clamshell hood that exposed the fat tires and suspension was an awesome sight. I was 11 years old and decided right then and there that car design would be my profession. Later, in college I found out how competitive and specialized the field actually is. There are fewer car designers in the USA than there are NBA basketball players, to put it into perspective. I had to work extremely hard to get summer internships to refine my craft with the help of the professional designers. I completed my final internship at General Motors in 1994 and, after graduating the following year, I've been there ever since.

Even though much of my world is focused on American cars, my entire adult life there has always been at least one vintage British car in my garage, including my first car that I bought with my own money—a '67 Triumph TR4A that is currently undergoing a complete restoration.

Not long after I joined GM Design, I met my wife Jen. An overseas assignment led us to Trollhattan, Sweden, working at Saab, and my first son Connel was born there. I couldn't

The Art of being an ORIGINAL

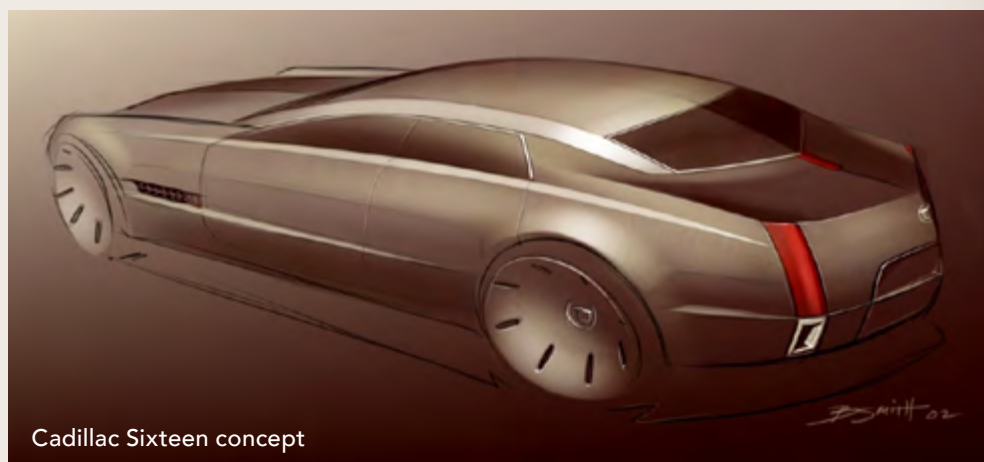
take my cars with me, and soon after getting there the urge to have another British car led me to purchase a '74 Austin Mini 1275 GT. We later brought the car home to the US with us.

Over the next five years, we had two more boys, Cormac and Ian. While my wife was pregnant with Cormac, I was working some very long days on the 2003 Cadillac Sixteen concept car—a V16 powered hyper luxury sedan with 1000 horsepower. It earned the Concept Car of the Year award in 2003, one of the highlights of my design career. In 2007 I was asked to go on assignment in the UK to manage our advanced design studio there and we jumped at the opportunity. It was here in Coventry, very near the Jaguar technical center, that we designed

top-secret internal projects primarily for Cadillac. The final result of my tenure there was the Cadillac Converj concept car. The family enjoyed every moment of living there and we travelled as much as my job would allow.

While in England, I purchased another Mini, this time RHD, and I installed a supercharger on it. I was able to really enjoy some of the B roads in that one, which we also shipped home at the end of the assignment.

My career at GM has been exciting and fruitful. I've had the honor of working with some of the most talented women and men in the business on some truly stunning automobiles: 2006 Camaro Concept, 2014 Cadillac CTS, and the 2017 Cadillac XT5.



Cadillac Sixteen concept



Owning a Time Capsule

Time has flown by and a handful of interesting cars have come into our possession and gone, but in the spring of 2014 we purchased the crown jewel of our collection—a 1954 Austin-Healey 100.

You don't have to be a car designer to appreciate the beauty of a Healey 100. The extreme cab-rearward proportions, dramatic curves, tight cockpit, and that fantastic lay-down windshield always manage to captivate onlookers. Our Healey 100 BN1 has been owned by two car designers in its whole life, including me. We bought it from its original owner, who bought the car in Indiana in 1954 for \$3020 while he was designing cars at Studebaker for Raymond Lowey. He only managed to put 25,000 miles on it in 60 years of ownership, but he clearly cherished it, maintained it lovingly, and kept it out of the elements for its entire existence.

The car was not advertised, instead I found out about it from a co-worker who saw it in a garage in his neighborhood under a cover. The day I bought it, I sat for more than an hour talking with the previous owner about

the Healey, cars and design in general. Turns out the gentleman that I bought the car from actually worked alongside Gerry Coker (the man who penned the Healey 100) while at Chrysler Design in the late '50s. It also became obvious how fastidious and meticulous he was about his car. I received a crisp, new-looking 1958 title for the car after payment. I received a stack of oil change and service receipts dating

back to 1954, along with the original tool kit, Shelley jack, and hardbound owner's manual. I drove the car home on a crisp cool spring morning on its factory-original Dunlop Road Speed bias-ply tires!

I've always enjoyed the look of the big Healeys. They have perhaps the most dramatic proportions of any mid-50's sports cars. The impossibly long hood works so well with the low, short





tail and gentle curve of the body side. Front overhang is almost non-existent. The lay-down windshield gives the car the ultimate profile and low stance. Inside it is pure function—bare bones, but still absolutely beautiful. Sitting in the car, you get the feeling of being in a vintage airplane, so strong is the wrap-around feeling of the hollowed out doors and body color steel dash. I particularly love the simplicity and cleanliness of the BN1 100s with their color-matched interiors, smaller front wheel arches, and lack of rear lamp reflectors. The unique shield-shaped grille also sets the 100 apart from the other Big Healey models that followed. It is amazing to me that a car as beautiful as the Healey 100 was never

created in a full-scale model before the panel bucks were created. The Tickford craftsmen created the body solely from blueprints.

This particular Healey 100 oozes originality—from the soft patina of the original lacquer, to the aged green leather of the seats. Even the smell is intoxicating: old leather mixed with the slightest hint of fuel and oil. I even like the period accessory choices the previous owner made, like the aluminum valve cover he bought for \$20 new in 1958, and the wonderful driving lights that necessitated removal of the over-riders (which were wrapped in newspaper and stored for 50 years). There is also a neat clamp-on rear view mirror on the drivers' wing edge

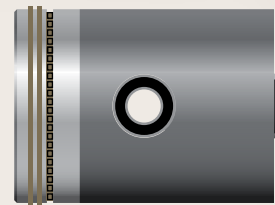
that didn't require any drilling of the bodywork yet looks perfectly at home on the car. Amazingly, even the chrome is in such good shape that you would assume it was re-done less than 10 years ago. The factory paint still shows over most of the underside with only hints of slight surface rust here and there.

Given that this car has never been restored or disassembled in any way, it drives like a very lightly used Healey must have in about 1956. It has a solid, complete, and genuine feel about it. It goes down the road wonderfully on its new wire wheels and Vredestein Sprint radials (I bagged the original set, which were no longer true or round, and stored them in my basement). Having never previously owned a Big Healey, I always imagined one would drive like a TR3 or MGA. Those perceptions were wrong as I found that the 100 drives with a much more sophisticated feel—lighter steering, nimble and planted, and with a fairly stiff chassis that doesn't flex much at all. The huge four has an abundance of low-end torque, providing strong acceleration for a car of that era. Now I just need a set of goggles so I can leave the windscreen down all the time.

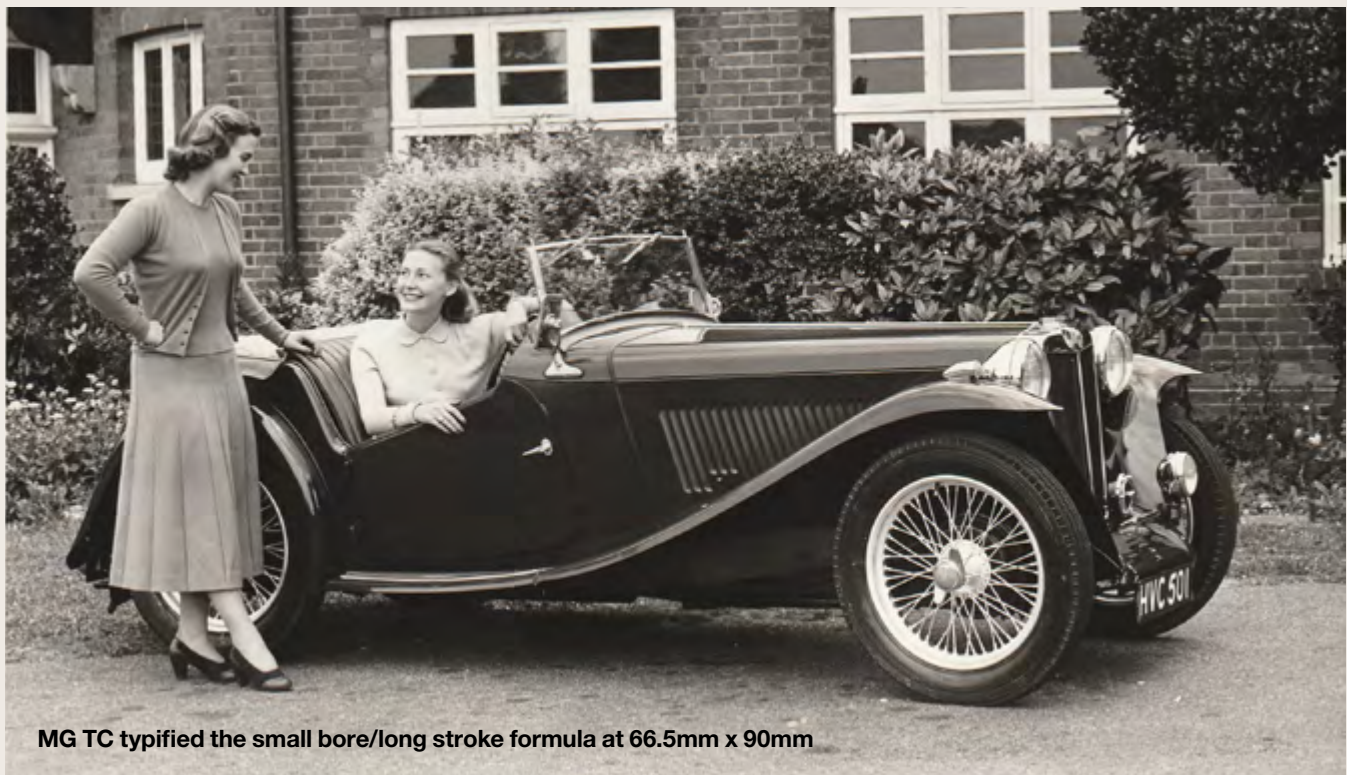
I would rather have this Healey than a perfectly restored example. Owning it feels like winning a special British car lottery. Like they say, they are only original once. *MM*



STROKE OF GENIUS?



By Johnny Oversteer



MG TC typified the small bore/long stroke formula at 66.5mm x 90mm

Most automotive enthusiasts appreciate the innate differences between sports cars from America, France, Italy, Germany, Japan and the United Kingdom even if they are unable to articulate what makes them unique. Even the casual car guy can tell you that American muscle cars have large displacement engines; Italian engines make their power with lots of small cylinders with shorter strokes; German engines are technologically efficient; and the archetypical British sports car makes up for in torque what it lacks in horsepower.

In fact, if there is a common thread running through almost all of the Healeys, Triumphs, MGs and Jaguars it's that torque is the essence of the

British sports car experience. This unifying characteristic separates your 3000 and TR3 from an Alfa-Romeo or Ferrari and ensures that our relatively agrarian British sports cars will always be fun shooting out of those decreasing radius turns or pulling away from the stoplight.

The undersquare engine in the TR2 epitomized its bulldog nature with 90hp and 117lb/ft of torque.

But why are British sports cars like this? Why can a Ferrari or Alfa-Romeo run at 7500 rpm while a Healey 100 hits its redline short of

5000 rpm? Does it have to do with the English bulldog spirit and the relative merits of horsepower versus torque? Is it because grunt is more fun than going fast in a straight line? Were British sports cars born this way or did they evolve to meet some unseen evolutionary challenge?

Actually, it boils down—like most things in life—to money; specifically, taxes.

The Royal Auto Club (RAC) horsepower formula was developed in 1910 at the request of the British government to determine how cars would be taxed. The RAC horsepower rating was derived—uniquely—from only the total piston area or what we know as the bore. To reduce the amount of taxes paid as a result of these calculations, British automobile

The Origin of the Species & the Evolution of British Sports Cars

manufacturers developed engines of a given capacity to have very long strokes with small piston surface areas. These long stroke engines were big on torque but short (comparatively speaking) on horsepower. Without the restrictions on total piston area, the most efficient engine—and a more powerful one too—would possess both a larger bore and shorter stroke. Let's compare two engines of the same displacement: one with a long stroke and small bore and the other with a large bore and a shorter stroke.

The engine in the Healey 100 BN1 had an incredibly long stroke of 111.1mm and produced 90hp. Torque was a healthy 144lb/ft at 2500rpm.

The first engine (long stroke and small bore) is less efficient than the latter (short stroke and large bore) on several fronts. The larger bore promotes better breathing due to reduced valve shrouding while the shorter stroke will also enable the engine to rev higher and suffer less from parasitic loss due to friction and windage.

Does that mean that the agricultural engines in our British sports cars are bad? Not really, they're just different. Due to an absence of any restrictions on engine size—or any displacement based taxes—in the United States, manufacturers were free to build increasingly larger engines that were understressed and could produce large amounts of smooth horsepower which led to the

proliferation of big V8, V12 and even V16 engines in the '20s and '30s. In Germany and Italy, taxes were initially levied on total displacement so that builders there focused on extracting the maximum performance from as small an engine as possible—hence the development of their very small displacement but high-performance engines - until all restrictions were removed when the Fascists entered power in those countries.

The British government abandoned the tax horsepower system in 1947—replacing it with a tax on total displacement – and then abandoned that system in favor of a flat tax in 1948. But the war had sapped the British auto industry and there was no money to develop new engines to take advantage of the new tax regime. Instead, the engines that were used in our Healeys, MGs and Triumphs could all trace their origins to engines developed under the original prewar taxation system which meant longer strokes and smaller bores.

That design element meant high torque and low redlines, but those qualities also imbued our cars with a unique character that was clearly distinct from their Continental and American rivals. It meant that our cars would always find success on the grueling rallies and hill climbs and play the tortoise during countless endurance races to the higher revving and faster hares – hoping to outlast them with their inherent reliability at the end of the long race.

Most of all, it made our cars fun to drive in a country where low speed limits reigned and there were few venues to reach triple-digit speeds.

While other cars might outperform our Little British Cars on the super speedway, once the roads start to curve and hills rise in our way it becomes our time to shine. All things considered, I'm glad the way things worked out.

M.M

Notes: The RAC Horsepower formula and the attendant tax scheme was the reason so many types of similarly named models existed. The Austin 7 and Triumph 7 reflected the taxable horsepower. Similarly, the other numbers in use – like the Ford 10 – all reflected other tax classifications (Sevens, Eights, Nines, Tens, Elevens, etc.).

The inherent disadvantages of the long stroke engine are the reason that Donald Healey and others adopted the Weslake Patent Head to improve breathing and are why improved cylinder heads with larger valves are such a popular performance modification for our British sports cars.

In November 1950, Sir William Rootes in a speech to the Motor Trade Advisory Council said: "For years, the industry was artificially limited by [the Horse-Power Tax]. It is true that by forcing British manufacturers to concentrate on the small car, these political gentlemen have done some good by stealth to us in our export drive today. That is to say, with technical improvements and with roads improved throughout the world, with parking difficulties in large modern cities and a shortage of dollars, British small cars are more popular abroad than ever before... I can only regard it as a fresh example of the axiom that Providence looks after fools, drunks and Englishmen!"

THE ODYSSEY HOME

My precarious and intrepid trek to
“*The best kept secret on the border.*”
So secret I’ve not been able to find it.

by Paul Q. Stover

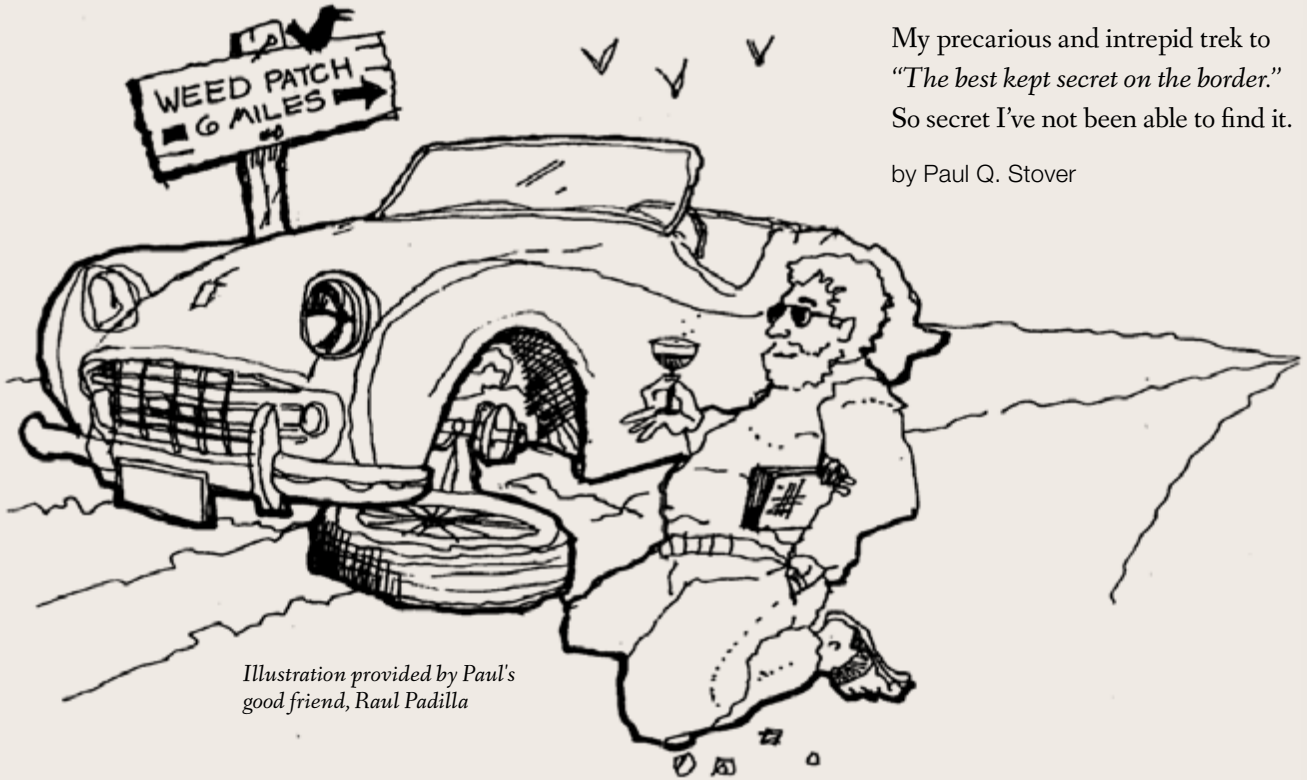


Illustration provided by Paul's
good friend, Raul Padilla

THE PHONE RANG. STEVE ANNOUNCED, “YOUR CAR IS READY.”

Many years ago I bought a Triumph TR3 roadster. After scouring the country I found the beauty in a barn, in pieces, off of highway 17. Hardly a beauty then.

“Come and get it, I need the space.” I realized the impact. A trip of nearly 2,000 miles from San Francisco, California, to San Felipe Del Rio, Texas, in a rebuilt TR3 with totally new running gear, untested. “Steve, please drive the machine to work for awhile. See what falls off.” “Naaa! Got no time for it.” It was rude for me to ask, after all he has done. Was I up for the adventure?

On the morning I arrived, Steve briefed me on the last four years. It was a miracle. Rebuilt engine, transmission, rear axle, generator with voltage regulator, reworked radiator

and gauges. Plus thousands of small items of just plain thoughtfulness to detail and authenticity, too many to enumerate. He sent me on my way with a spare fan belt removed from his car, not on the road yet, and the loan of his torque wrench to re-torque the head bolts at 500 miles.

“How much do I owe you, Steve?”

“For what?” he said.

Steve Farrell is one of those infectious lads who embraces life with gusto. He loves sailing, he loves photography, and he loves Triumphs. When he learned about my reluctant move to Texas, he proposed: “Leave the TR3 with me to polish up mechanically. Just toss me some money for parts when you have it.” So I left my Vintage Roadster in the hands of the neighbor kid, thinking, “I gotta have rocks in my head. I will never see my beauty again.”

The Ferguson tractor engine purred while I re-familiarized myself with the positive steering (no sneeze factor),

rough ride, and the slap of tires from cars and trucks in the next lane as I sat at hubcap level in the low-slung car with the low-slung doors. The 1960 TR3 was tuned to a nice throaty sound that inferred class and power. “Neat car!” People passing would say, giving me a thumbs up. I was a bit shocked at all the attention.

Steve was in his dark room processing color photos or already starting on the restoration of the next Triumph. He thinks he is going to get away with it, doing all that labor for nothing, because he loves Triumphs. I suspect a large Moss Motors gift certificate will arrive in his mailbox.

I need to check the wheel balance again. The untrue wire wheels were at times a little shaky, and there was a matter of a fine *greeeeerrrr* in addition to the *whaaammppaa-whaaammppaa* made by the wheel wobble. I stopped to talk with Larry at the wheel shop about it. “Yeah, yeah it’s not good, but you’ll

make it. No, I don't know what the *greeeeerrrr* is, maybe a wheel bearing, maybe a U joint. Ah, you'll find out on the way." That was not exactly what I wanted to hear.

It was 2:00pm, Tuesday September 2, when I pointed the nose of the Triumph south. At the Altamont pass between Livermore and Tracy I watched the temperature gauge climb above the 205 mark. My heart lodged in my throat, and I was about ready to pull off when I crested the pass and the gauge began to fall. I resolved to check that gauge once every minute.

I reflected on a year ago, the phone rang, it was Steve saying, "I have for you a new re-manufactured temperature gauge, authentic." "Good, how much?" "\$150" "AAAGH!!!" I said. He said "No problem, I will take it then, just giving you first crack." I quickly learned that Steve was *real*—take care of him, because he was taking care of me. A photo came. The gauge polished, laid out on black velvet as though it were a priceless string of pearls. Four years and \$150 later, I scan the dial with joy.

Manteca, the name means lard in Spanish. I turn south on Highway 99; there are flashes of lightning in the Sierra foothills off to the left. It's September. It's against the law to rain here in the valley—everybody knows that. I have the cockpit half covered with the tonneau, not to worry. Fuel gauge calls for a stop. Hmmm... only 100 miles driven. I gas up, eight gallons—wow! Not too good. Well, Steve said it will take a while for the new carbs to settle in. I picked up Windex, paper towels, flashlight batteries.

At 58 mph: *whaaammpaa—whaaammpaa* wheel wobble. At 64 mph: *greeeeerrrr*, whatever that is? I hold my speed in-between thinking maybe nothing will happen. Something does. I watch my new speedometer turn mushy. Ten miles later it stops indicating. Not a show-stopper. I can get along without that.

I had packed an old leather purse with tools: multimeter, flashlight, a lead

mallet, and my brand new handy dandy *Authentic Triumph* jack. I was ready, I thought.

I selected two-lane roads instead of the shorter Interstate 5. I drove through farm towns. Farm towns have tractor parts and ingenious farmers who can just about get anything working with what's on hand. It was the farm boys who won WWII by getting the trucks, tanks, airplanes and ships functioning again when they broke.

Water drops start to splatter the windshield. Not bad, I can handle this. Later as I cruise through Fresno the streets are wet with big puddles. *Poa Pop-Popa. Rain.* Drops the size of marbles. Aw gee, I'm gonna get wet with this one. The cloud dumped. Most of the water went over the windshield and back-winded my head. It actually felt good, cooling from the heat. The tonneau kept most of it out of the car and what was getting wet wasn't being damaged.

The rain stopped by the time I had reached King's River. The Visalia and Tulare signs sprung up in front of me. Today's trip is nearing its end. The sun is getting low and my backside feels every crack in the pavement. Tipton, then Pixley, (The village from Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*), my first stop on the road and a visit with my ex-mother-in-law, Mary Best Smith.

GOOD MORNING

The smell of coffee brewing and bacon sizzling got me going. I waved goodbye as I backed the Triumph out in the street. Listening to the smooth throaty sound of the engine. Mary's second daughter, Jackie, had put a care package in the car: tomatoes, cornbread muffins, two biscuits with sausages in between, and two boiled eggs. It was a good visit in spite my apprehension.

Mary Best was a child of the victims of the Oklahoma dust bowl and the great national economic depression. The Best family truck broke down in Pixley in the mid-1930s, and there they stayed. The village population of 1200 never grew nor waned. Mary and her

brood had moved away many times, only to return. This was really their home no matter what. Pixley is a slice of America at its best. Families cloistered—mother, daughter, and grandchildren, all scratching out a living, all pulling together, gardening, canning, putting up fruit preserves, surviving, in a communal economy and lots of love, and always room for one more, even an ex-son-in-law. "Kids, make out a pallet on the floor. Uncle Paul is going to sleep in your bed tonight."

Gas up. Eight gallons. 150 miles. Better. As the car settles in at freeway speeds the wheel wobble seems less. My eyes scan the gauges: ampere meter, 10 amps—okay; temperature, 175 degrees—watch that one; oil pressure, 100 pounds—whoop! 100 pounds pegged, that's not good. Plugged oil passage port? Aww gee! What now? What to do? I eased off the freeway and watched the temperature of the engine climb to 190. When the temperature began to fall, the oil pressure dropped, too. At 95 pounds there had to be some oil flow.

Before I got to Bakersfield the oil pressure had settled out to 80 pounds. My guess is the cold oil built up more pressure till it got warmed up. I developed a sense of confidence now, almost 300 miles under my belt and the car appears to be smoothing out. The sign reads: Los Angeles 150 miles. Yes! This is going to work out just fine.

WHUWHUWHUWHU...

Hmm? Perhaps it's the cracks in the cement road. I am feeling vibration in the steering. Change lanes. No change. I hang my head over the door and look at the wheel. Bad wobble, pull over! "Weedpatch 6 miles." The arrow on the sign pointed east. Got out my lead mallet, walked around the car pounding the spinner nuts. They were all tight. I shook each wheel till I got to the driver's side front. Loose! Okay! So I got out my new handy dandy Triumph jack. Knocked off the spinner, lifted the car, pulled the wheel off, *and the splined hub extension came off with*

it. Four lug nuts fell to the ground... Huh? As I looked at the studs my heart sank. No threads, not one thread, on any of the four studs. I believe this is a show stopper.

I sat down and thought about this for a while, considering the options. The sound of locusts chattering. Whirr of traffic nearby on the freeway. Sweet tang of sun dried grass teases the nostrils. Moments later I hear, "Hey, fellow, need a hand?" I focused on the farmer getting out of a VW Rabbit. "Looks pretty bad," he announced, putting out his hand, "My name is Carl Putnam." "I'm Paul, nice to meet you Carl" "Hey, let's knock those studs out of that hub and I'll run over to the parts store down the way and see if I can get some." Carl suggested.

Fat chance, I thought to myself as he drove off, English measurement all right but English threads and knurls... Just wait, you might learn something. You didn't know the studs were pressed in—you thought they were welded.

As I waited for Carl, vehicles carrying people from all walks of life stopped to offer help. All had remarked, "Neat car!" One hour later, here comes Carl. "Ha! Sorry, that took little longer than I thought." He lays out four studs, four tapered nuts, and a flat washer to

pull them in place. The threads and knurls were coarser than the English, but no matter; if we could get the knurls to press in, the nuts would work fine. The bolts were long. "I can cut those down," and off Carl dashed.

While waiting, I leaned on the car. It fell off the jack, flat on the ground. Gee! That was dumb! As if I need more to deal with. I located a long board and a rock and pried the car up high enough to set it back on the jack.

Three hours after I stopped, hot, drained and dehydrated, the wheel was on. "I'll follow you to the first exist and we'll see how it goes," Carl said. I wave as Carl takes the off ramp. I drive on. My mind returns to the band-aid repairs we installed. I am insecure. When Carl trimmed the studs, two were slightly too long. Carl had forced them, galling the threads. The nut seemed to start cross-threaded. On torquing, Carl said they felt like they were going to strip at 45 foot-pounds. I worry. Each noise, vibration, fuels paranoia, and I play "what if?" But things are going smoothly and eventually I relax.

I wander through 40 miles of hilly, curvy, mountaintop four-lane freeway then down toward Los Angeles. More lanes now. Traffic thickens. And quickens. Eight lanes. *I'm in the center*

of a herd of stampeding rhinoceros! 75 MPH. DON'T STUMBLE AND FALL NOW. YOU'LL BE TRAMPLED.

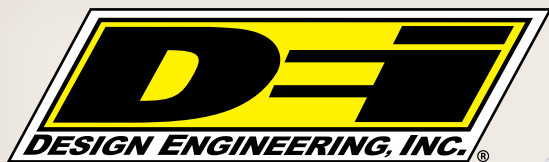
No more LA signs, replaced by San Diego signs. Traffic slowed to stop and go. It's HOT! I hang my head out over the door and look at the wheel. Seems to be okay!

Forty miles outside of San Diego I call John Benya. His wife Rosemary gives me directions. 7:00pm I knock on the door, dripping wet, totally depleted. "Please, a shower first," I request. John, the mad scientist, showed me their lovely home, a miniature and simplified Frank Lloyd Wright prairie-style house in Point Loma. The next morning I examined the band-aid. The two nuts I worried over were stripped on the studs! Call Moss, parts please, "Be there before noon tomorrow." And it was so! I took the day, relaxed, recuperated, regrouped. By noon the next day the car was repaired, bolts re-torqued from 20 foot-pounds to 50. My handy dandy authentic Triumph jack saw its last lift, but it got me through when I really needed it. *M.M*

Part Two of Paul's Texas odyssey will be continued in the next issue of Moss Motoring...



Paul and his body shop buddy, Kevin.



Floor & Tunnel Shield II

Designed to provide the best possible heat protection in areas where high temperatures are always present and problematic, Floor & Tunnel Shield II limits heat transfer on fire walls, transmission tunnels, floor boards, fuel cells and other areas where heat is an issue. It provides excellent light weight thermal protection, acts as a guard against road debris, and provides sound deadening as well.



Constructed with an embossed 10 mil aluminum face bonded to 1/8" composite glass-fiber core and backed with a high temp, super strong, pressure sensitive backing, it withstands up to 1750°F of direct continuous heat. The adhesive side holds past 450°F. Its improved multifaceted modern aluminum surface offers improved reflectivity and rigidity and allows for ease of installation. At only 3/16" thick, this product can be shaped and trimmed for a custom fit and is ideal for minimal clearance areas.

.83 sq. ft. - (10" x 10")	231-904	\$11.99
3.5 sq. ft. - (2' x 21")	231-901	\$45.99
7 sq. ft. - (4' x 21")	231-902	\$91.99
14 sq. ft. - (4' x 42")	231-903	\$181.99

Muffler Shield Kit



The Best muffler shield/wrap on the market. Based off our proven Floor and Tunnel II heat shield, our new Muffler Shield is designed to wrap around just about any size muffler. Includes our tough Stainless Steel positive locking ties for a tight secure installation. Made from 10mil dimpled aluminum with a 1/8" needle glass insulator it can be easily trimmed to fit most mufflers. Greatly reduces radiant heat coming off your muffler resulting in a cooler interior and protection from damaging heat.

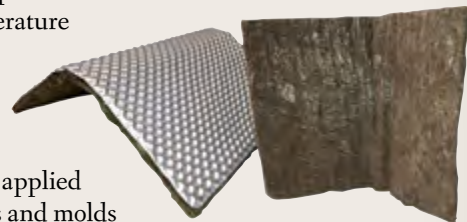
Features:

- Greatly reduce radiant heat from muffler
- Cooler interior
- Protect from damaging heat
- Kit includes:
 - › One - 42" x 24" Muffler Shield
 - › Four - 40" x 1/2" Locking Ties
 - › Locking Tie Tool

Muffler Shield Kit	231-900	\$55.99
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Form-A-Shield

Made from 10mil dimpled aluminum with a 1/4" high temperature basalt insulation, Form-A-Shield can withstand direct temps to +1400°F. Form-A-Shield can be applied directly to hot surfaces and molds easily to exhaust manifolds, pipes and mufflers.



Form-A-Shield - (21" x 48")	231-905	\$91.99
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Positive Lock Exhaust Wrap Tie Kit

Stainless Steel Positive Locking Ties are designed for high heat applications. They are great for securing exhaust wrap or any place a high strength tie is needed. UV and corrosion resistant they will last for many years under severe use. Perfect for securing exhaust wrap, cables, wires or hoses that are close to a heat source.



Positive Lock Tie Kit includes 8 - 9" Locking Ties (Up to 2" diameters), 4 - 14" Locking Ties (Up to 4" diameters) and Locking Tie Tool

Features:

- Made from 316 stainless steel
- Tensile Strength. 5/16" 200 lbs. 1/2" 350 lbs.
- Capable of withstanding in excess of 2500°F

Positive Lock Tie Kit	231-910	28.99
Positive Lock Tool	231-915	\$6.19

Stainless Steel Locking Ties



Locking Ties are perfect for securing wrap to pipes with it's self-locking design. Locking Ties offer many other uses including bundling wires, hoses, and other forms of insulation products. Just slide end into locking mechanism and pull tight.

Features:

- Constructed of high grade 304 stainless steel
- Capable of withstanding heat in excess of 2500°F
- Strong 100 lb tensile strength

Lock Tie - 8"	231-911	\$1.89
Lock Tie - 14"	231-912	\$2.49
Lock Tie - 20"	231-913	\$2.69



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Please share your memories at:
mossmotors.com/way-back-when

Or write to us the old-fashioned way:

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