

# Moss Motoring

ISSUE 3, 2018

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## ABINGDON AUTOS

THE HISTORY OF A COTTAGE INDUSTRY



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# Moss Motoring



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Editorial contributions to Moss Motoring are welcomed and should be emailed to [editor@mossmotors.com](mailto:editor@mossmotors.com) or mailed to Editor – Moss Motoring, 440 Rutherford St., Goleta, CA 93117.

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Robert Goldman

## ARE THEY SPARE PARTS OR ART?



greasy old car parts. It was a gradual transformation. A spare master cylinder from my first MGB begat a spare SU carb, and then an old ball bearing which I just couldn't bring myself to throw away, etc. The justifications to keep old parts tracked the growth of my little British car addiction. "I may need that some day."

If you're old enough to remember the stop motion animation classic, *Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer*, you may also remember the Island of Misfit Toys. In my new workshop, I'm nearing completion of the I-beam of Redundant Intake Systems. It's similar, but different.

At some point in the process of maturation, my childhood definition of toys changed from Hot Wheels to

New space: need more stuff.

Fast-forward nearly 40 years, and moving from one location to another has become an exercise in getting those old, broken down boxes, leaking greasy parts out of long since burst seams, from point A to point B one more time. This latest move was the last straw. I'm in what I think will be a long term location. It's time to empty the boxes, chase out the spiders, and organize. After a lifetime of moving from one temporary storage location to another, the need to organize is strong.

No doubt you'll laugh at me for this, but I'm determined to fit within my new space. My neighbor, a world-class pack rat, can barely maneuver in his place. If that isn't bad enough, he's got storage locations all over the area, and greedily eyes my space whenever he comes by. I'm not going there, but I'm not out of the woods yet either.

In hopes of better space utilization, do I go to the local big box and buy some of those compelling plastic storage boxes? One can spend an awful lot on those. All the while, there is another vexing question, how do I decorate my space? "What if I were to..." and the I-beam of Redundant Intakes is born. You see, that big ole I-beam holding up the mezzanine is begging for decoration. The Jag tri-carb set won't fit in a little plastic storage bin. The Triumph PI system is escaping its broken down cardboard box, and maybe the two would look kinda cool on display.

Drill baby drill. Using my time honored method of measuring once and drilling twice, the I-beam has taken form. Each item on the beam has value as car parts, but I'm starting to wonder if any will ever find a home. Jags cost too much to buy one just so I can use my carb set. The dream of adding PI to a TR250 died when someone asked Brian Furestenau, of Group 44 fame, for advice on installing Lucas fuel injection on his 250. Brian's brief response: "Bring a big fire extinguisher." Then there is the Healey factory intake manifold for a 948 Sprite. Except, I have a '64 Midget, with a 1275 and Moss supercharger.

I should have sufficient starter and generator cores to last my lifetime, and yours. However, they make poor decorations. Perhaps, as I slowly organize, other bits of "art" will come to light. I have all winter to think about it. After all, the I-beam represents three full shelves of now available storage space. This is working great. *MM*





# Two Years on THE HILL

By Walt Peterson

Speed is velocity.

*Speed is not emotion.*

Speed is the application  
of skill to sound principles.

- E. Paul Dickinson



Walt Peterson | 1962 Austin Healey 3000

**E**arly August 2016, Polish Mountain Hillclimb, Saturday morning, Green light. Off the start line. No bog. No wheel spin. Then a smooth shift to second gear. Revs build like the Hill, rising quickly into the fast lefthander at Turn 1. In third gear at 4,500 RPM, I approach the apex. Sure and strong the Healey 3000's straight-six produces gobs of torque. Suddenly it happens: a red flag waves in my vision, like a sharp stick about to poke my eye. I react quickly and wrongly, lifting the throttle and stabbing at the brake pedal. The back end of the Healey comes all the way around, swinging the left front fender into the Armco barrier.

Like the corners of "Weatherly" and "Giants Despair," Turn 1 will make or break a run. Get a fast launch and a strong pull to take the first turn at speed, keep that rhythm and the time clock at the end will reflect the start. But my third run is going to be the finish of the competition this weekend. After the morning rain I was poised to break the class record in Vintage II, but now the weekend has become a flat tire, a crumpled front fender, and the bling of a broken headlight on this mountain road.

Polish Mountain is the fourth race in the Pennsylvania Hillclimb Association championship series. It is considered a very fast hill. Carroll Shelby won here

in 1955 in an ex-Grand Prix Maserati. Back then, the race was called the Breakneck Hillclimb. This event on public roads was stopped, then revived in 2006.

## Volunteer Angels

After the impact, corner workers are at the car immediately. I unbelt and climb out to catch my breath and survey the damage. A worker hands me the beehive turn signal lens, unbroken. I glare at the woman holding the red flag but don't say anything—just a case-hardened stare.

Unloading the Healey from the rollback in the paddock, people quietly stare, sorry for me but glad it is not their racecar. A hillclimb represents a unique type of motorsport. Drive hard enough and it is not a question of if you will go off the road in competition. You can count on it. And there are no soft offs, no getting back on the road and finishing the run. There are culverts, phone poles, guardrails, drainage ditches.

In August, the Appalachian roads look like a green cathedral with sunlight streaming through the trees, but an hour later the sun will move and the shadows will have shifted—and your depth perception better have shifted along with them. Each bend here has its own particular blend of dips and undulations, camber and obstacles.



I've always thought of the vintage classes as safe, rather slow, but beautiful cars—a Jag Mk II sedan, Mini Coopers, TRs, big and little Healeys brawling their valiant fight against age and gravity's pull—but my 100-plus-mph friend Mustang Mark points out, "I wouldn't drive an old car like that the way you do!" Fair enough.

### I'll Take PHYSICAL SCIENCE for \$800, Alex

Who was it that said a racecar should be driven only slightly in control? When the Healey's rear wheels slide out and the front fender and tire meet the metal guardrail abruptly, there is no rewriting the laws of physics. At the apex of a turn, the vehicle's weight is balanced on the outer two tires. Lifting off the throttle shifts more of the weight to the front right. Stabbing the brakes multiplies that weight shift. Immediately the right front tire is carrying most of the vehicle's mass. The right rear lightens and the wheel loses traction big time, the left front acting like the other end of a baton, spins into the inside of the bend and comes in contact with the guard rail.

Saturday afternoon brings distance and some perspective to the "shunt." The front fender can be pulled out and the headlight cavity decorated with duct tape, but there is a gash in the tire sidewall and no replacement is available locally. Yet, this weekend has always been about fun and the beauty of the mountains, as well as competition. Hillclimbing is built mostly on friendship. Other racers will work all afternoon to get you on the track if possible. But that's not going to happen today. So this weekend morphs into a mini vacation for Jade and me, and an excuse to head to Ottoviani, a cool restaurant in Cumberland.

Over a couple of beers after dinner, I decided I wronged the woman holding the red flag at Turn 1. The call that came over her headset was a red flag and the racer's bible admonishes the driver to bring the car to a safe, controlled stop on the side of the course and wait for

further instructions from the corner workers. In other words, I was the last one to touch the steering wheel and brake pedal. Kissing the guardrail was my responsibility, not anyone's fault, just, as people say, a racing incident.

After we retire to the night's lodgings, I sleep tolerably well considering Jade refers to our place as "the Bates Motel." The window AC unit must be powered by a Farmall tractor, and there is a cemetery a few steps from the door of our unit, number 10.

The next morning at the Hill, we hike up to Turn 5 where Amanda (I'll call her) is working. I heard an official had overreacted and given her hell Saturday night; this made my penance doubly important. My newfound friend and her significant other came up from Virginia to work the Hill. In her other life, she works for a publishing firm. She told me they now were on virtual lock-down, printing the latest Harry Potter book. Personal stories are the great thing about talking to people at an event, and this Hill is peppered with people like her, willing to spend their days off working to help you pursue this mountain madness.

### Early August 2017

For once-a-year events like this, I keep a notebook of thoughts, observations and facts. Sometime during the long, grey Pittsburgh winter, I recalled a tip from E. Paul Dickinson at driver's school: "Lesson Plans—do 'em before a competition and review 'em afterward."

*Here is my version:*

1. Forget the Incident—Remember the Lesson.
2. Check out YouTube. Brian Fritzer's white and red Corsair sports racer says all there needs to be said about driving Polish Mountain.
3. Visualize driving the course, just like slalom skiers before a run. How fast can I drive it while eyeing (you drive where you look, Bunkie!) the apex? I need to visualize a sudden red flag and not overreact.



Bob Buchmann | 1967 Austin-Healey



Daniel Ahn | 1974 MGB GT



Adolf Battifarano | 1968 Lotus 7



Tom Knorr | 1964 Austin-Healey Sprite



Dave Miller | 1962 Triumph TR4



Bruce Whipple | 1963 Austin Mini Cooper S



Luis Patitucci | 1960 Lotus 7



Richard Good | 1972 Triumph TR6

4. Walk the Hill, replay different scenarios at each turn. Note changes of conditions from previous years.
5. Work up to speed gradually. With two days of competition, maybe fourteen runs, there's no need to counter-rotate the earth to show what a fearless competitor you are.
6. Expect to be quick, expect to be red-flagged. That's reality. With luck, speed will come and the flag won't, but it's a driver's responsibility to be ready. T-1 is only about 20-car lengths from T-2, a tight, blind right-hander, trees and a hill on the inside of the bend then hay bales, Armco and a 40-foot drop-off on the outside.

### A Passing Grade

We didn't get to walk the Hill until Sunday at lunchtime. Still, competition runs Saturday were measured, safe, and steadily quicker.

After the first run Sunday afternoon tire pressures are building with the warmth—a sign that traction will improve dramatically. By the third run, things are smooth and fast. I couldn't believe the speed through the apex at T-1 and T-2. Further up the Hill, I have flattened the ramp into T-3 for more power on entering T-4, followed by the longest, most important straight at Polish Mountain.

The clock down at the start line flashed 78.6—that is 5/10ths faster than the 2014 record! I had done it,

hadn't I? "Maybe it didn't count, dude," my mind said. I convinced myself I needed a back-up run to prove it wasn't a fluke. Within 2/10ths of a second of the new record time was the mark I set for myself.

I don't remember much about the post-record run except coming through T-7 near the finish, I didn't up-shift to fourth, not wanting to disconnect the power from the wheels. I chose not to look at the redline-bound tach needle. The run was muscle memory, like Mark Knopfler jamming on "Telegraph Road." The clock flashed 77.179, 1.5 seconds faster than the record I just set.

### Sultan of Slope, yeah.

I told Jade I need a last run—slow—to thank the corner workers with a flash of the lights and a wave, but sitting in the staging line with several race cars before me, I saw the grid marshal draw his index finger across his throat. I heard the radio at the announcer booth crackle, "Shut it down." Wrecker needed at Turn 4. It was late Sunday afternoon. There was some packing and the load-up to do before the tow home through the Appalachians. I'll have to save that run for the first weekend in August, next year.

Thank you, workers. *MM*



Susan Salsburg | 1961 Jaguar MK2



# THE COTTAGE INDUSTRY OF ABINGDON



By Graham Robson

**I**t was on arriving at MG's headquarters in Abingdon, near Oxford, for the very first time (in the 1960s), that I suddenly had to decide exactly what sort of business I was visiting. Was I about to enter a manufacturing facility, or merely a cute, old-fashioned, assembly plant? In fact I think my mind was immediately made up for me, when I found that as I arrived I had to dodge incoming transporter-loads of bodies, and trucks crammed with engines, before being able to park anywhere near the bustling assembly lines.

What was the difference, I had to decide, between manufacturing a car and assembling it? Were there really two different types of factories involved? It took only minutes for me to observe just how much of a "cottage industry" MG's Abingdon plant really was. Until then I hadn't realised that almost nothing was actually manufactured on the site. Because all those parts had already been thoroughly tested, re-tested, and

approved by MG engineers, that was fine, and there was no evidence of foundries, machine shops, or pressings departments at Abingdon.

Oh really? Well, yes, for to take the MGB as an example, the body shell came from Cowley, the engine from Longbridge in Birmingham, the transmission from another Birmingham factory, the suspension and steering assemblies... Oh, hang on, this is getting complex. Let's pull back and consider why, and how, this situation developed.

Way back in the 1920s, MG started up in Oxford as a tiny offshoot of Morris Motors. This was still a private company, funded by William Morris (who would later become Lord Nuffield) whose philosophy had always been to let someone else manufacture the hardware for his cars, and to use his factories only to assemble them. He was a ruthless controller of costs, and would negotiate the very best price for components. He then made sure that his suppliers would have as much—maybe even too much—business to the

degree that he often ended up taking financial control, and adding them all to his private "Morris empire."

When the still-new MG company finally settled in to its little Abingdon factory (which was itself a building and land taken over from another unrelated leather-working business which was happy to close down), the ever-growing flood of major pieces came from



elsewhere. Chassis frames were from an outside supplier in the Birmingham area, engines and gearboxes came from Wolseley (which after 1927 was another Morris subsidiary) in Birmingham, and body shells came from several sources, the most important being Carbodies of Coventry.

It was only in the mid-1930s that Morris (Lord Nuffield by that time) directed Leonard Lord—yes, that Leonard Lord—to make sense of his sprawling business empire, and put no limits on his authority. In 1935 the result was that Lord swept through the MG business without a thought to nice words like “tradition,” “heritage,” and “motorsport,” quickly closed down the engineering design office (apparently the small staff were told of this on a Friday, and were directed to turn up at Morris’s Cowley [near Oxford] HQ after the weekend), and set about making sure that future MGs would be based on “corporate” rather than special building blocks.

This explains why the first of the Cowley-designed Midgets—the TA—used a lightly-modified engine/transmission/rear axle combination from the current range of medium-sized Morris and Wolseley types, and had a body shell built at the Morris Bodies Branch location in Coventry, which had originally been Henry Hollick’s small supplier operation, one which had



supplied Morris bodies to Cowley in the 1920s before Nuffield bought him out. Those engines and transmissions were built in Coventry, too, at the Morris Engines concern.

Even in the 1930s, then, it was instructive to stand outside the gates of the busy little MG factory at Abingdon, to see the steady flow of trucks arriving down the overcrowded and narrow roads from Birmingham and Coventry, and to see small numbers—maybe no more than 50—of completed cars flow out every week. After the tumult of World War II, it was the same situation as before, the difference being that the TC had taken over from the TA, and the first post-war MG saloon was the Y-Type, which went on sale in 1947.

Inside the plant, which was small by any Detroit standard, there was virtually no automatic machinery, and no moving assembly line. Indeed, even

in 1980, when the MGB was produced, the cars still had to be moved from work station to work station by being manhandled along twin tracks. There were two levels in the main assembly shop, with the “top deck” looking after trim completion of the body shells before they were lowered onto the chassis line below.

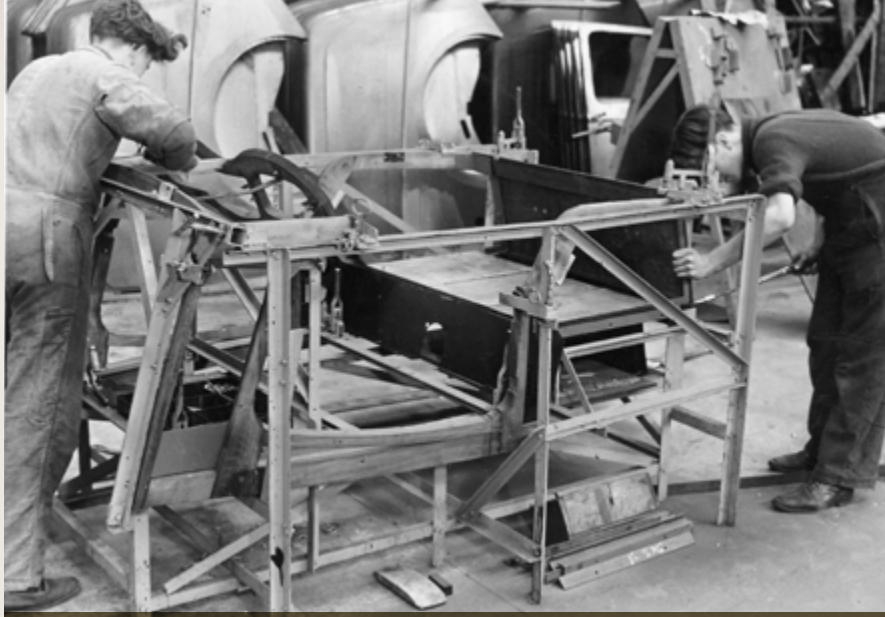
### TRUE TO ITS ROOTS

The situation changed in the mid-1950s, for from 1952 not only had the British Motor Corporation been born (and had taken over the Nuffield Organization, MG and all its subsidiaries, in the process), but chairman Leonard Lord had decided on a two-stage rationalization program. First of all, he would end dual-supply of major components from “old” Austin and “old” Morris subsidiaries, and secondly he would then concentrate on several very large projects for things like new engines, transmissions and body suppliers.

This meant, for instance, that Morris Engines would shortly be making a new corporate engine, Morris Bodies would soon be phased out altogether, and that Longbridge (The “Austin” part of the BMC) would come to dominate Cowley. Yet MG’s assembly plant at Abingdon, in a very small country town, with tradition on its side, would not only survive, more than 60 miles from the corporate headquarters, but would also become the site where the Austin-Healey Sprites and “Big” Healeys were to be assembled.







So, and purely as an example, this is how the production of MGBs was planned in the 1960s, and how the cars came together. First of all, this was to be the first MG production car to have a monocoque body/chassis (you might call it a “unit body”) structure, and it would be supplied by the Pressed Steel Company. Although the PSCo factory was literally across the road from the Nuffield premises at Cowley, it was still financially and functionally independent of BMC, but was a long-serving and trusted supplier. It was Britain’s most prolific body shell supplier (it also supplied bodies, for instance, to Rolls-Royce, Rover, Hillman, and Ford, and had been doing so since the 1930s). Because it was less than ten miles from Abingdon, MGB shells, already painted and trimmed, could be trucked every day—sometimes up to 100 truck loads a day.

Engines—the ubiquitous B-Series power plants—were completely manufactured at the Longbridge plant in Birmingham, starting from cylinder blocks and heads cast in the foundry which was actually on the premises. They too were regularly trucked down the infamous A435 and A44 main highways, for in those days the British motorway network was still very sparse. Manual gearboxes came from the BMC Tractors and Transmissions plant in the heart of Birmingham, while the optional Laycock overdrives were manufactured

elsewhere in what was (and still is) a part of the Midlands known as “the Black Country”—this effectively being the “Rustbelt” of the UK.

But that was not all, for in those days the Midlands also housed plants where major items such as tyres (Dunlop in Birmingham), Girling brakes and Lucas electrics (both nearby), all took shape under the same smoky skies. The more one witnessed this, the more one wondered why Abingdon should be allowed to survive as such a remote outpost, but closure was apparently never even considered at the time.

Even though there was almost no high-tech engineering equipment at

Abingdon at that time, the management could best be described as “paternal” (a one-to-one meeting with General Manager John Thornley often involved a glass of sherry, too), tea break-time involved ladies with trollies rather than machine supplies, and still the factory became incredibly productive. The story goes that soon after British Leyland had been formed at the end of the 1960s, a top management “methods” team descended on Abingdon, looked arrogantly around this small factory, and announced loftily that it really needed a lot of investment, after which it could produce up to 25,000 cars a year.

“Thank you for telling us,” the MG managers said, “but we should tell you that last year we produced over 50,000 cars.”

And so it was until the late 1970s, after British Leyland had regularly collapsed into strike-bound chaos, and starved MG of vital components to complete its popular sports cars. Closure plans were announced in 1979, the last MGB of all was built towards the end of 1980, and the buildings were swiftly emptied. The whole site was then sold off to a real estate developer, almost all of the original factory buildings were bulldozed, and almost no trace now remains. *M.M*



The 100,000th MGA rolls off the factory floor. The car, owned by the Skomp family, is now on display in the Moss Virginia Showroom.



By Scott Shnurman

# THE MGA EFFECT

I've never written to a magazine before, but this exercise has been helpful. It's been exactly four weeks since my best friend died. He just happened to be my Dad.

Devastation is too weak a word to describe my feelings. I'm fortunate to have a car story to help pull me through this sadness. I'll try and tell it.

Maybe not so fast. When I think about it, I need to back up to the time leading up to the car.

In 2013, Dad was having a problem with his physical endurance. Walking for long periods of time was a chore, and climbing stairs left him winded. He had a physical and his Doc decided he might need a stent (or two) put into his heart.

He had signs of arterial blockage. What was to be an outpatient procedure turned into a six-hour, quintuple bypass, open-heart surgery. That was the first time I fully understood my Dad was mortal. It was a reality check showing me how we all really don't have long on this planet.

Dad recovered magnificently, but the scare kick-started checking things off his bucket list.

First item on the list: find a 1959 MGA roadster just like the one he owned when he proposed to my mother.

Dad talked about this car my whole life. Not knowing anything about British cars, he borrowed \$400 from his brother and bought a black convertible

imported sports car in 1967 thinking it would draw the eyes of the ladies. He drove it to college, killed cones in



Dedicated to  
Dr. Benjamin Shnurman  
1946-2018





parking lot autocrosses, and did his very best to keep a very used British car on the road.

I was 38 years old before I saw an MGA in person, so I didn't really get it. I am, and have been a "car guy" for decades, but knew nothing of MGs. I assumed it was a poor man's Jaguar. Knowing my dad was passionate about it, I started the search to find him a duplicate of his favorite car. At the time I had been living in Phoenix. How hard could it be to find a rust-free, odd little British car?

Ugh. How quickly I learned that not only are MGAs few and far between, they are also highly coveted by the people who own them and polish them with only the best baby diapers. An MGA owner and his car are not easily parted! So my quest began. Actually finding one wasn't too difficult, a quick eBay search usually yielded a dozen examples of everything from a rusted shell to beautiful, and I do mean beautiful, examples that were beyond our budget.

Despite the difficulty of the search, or perhaps because of it, I now wholly believe MGs find us, we don't find them.

### LOW AND BEHOLD

Dad's original was a 1959, black with red interior, on whitewalls with black steel wheels. On consignment in Indiana, five hours from my parent's house, I found a very well maintained 1960 roadster black exterior, tan interior on original painted wire rims—and owned by another doctor! I would rate the car a six out of ten, which fit perfectly in our budget and, being a bit

of a mechanic, I knew I could tackle any gremlins the car might have. Obviously I had never heard of Lucas electronics.

First, a five-hour flight from Phoenix to my folks in Illinois, then a five-hour drive to Indiana, followed by a five-minute test drive (it took less time than that for me to fall in love), and I counted out the cash and loaded the car onto a trailer. My Dad had to work that day and wasn't able to inspect the car with me. I kind of kept him in the dark about its condition and other details. He knew it was black, and a year off from his '59, but that was about it.

I arrived back in Illinois at about 10pm and it was dark outside. I parked the trailer a few blocks away and unloaded the car, wanting to drive up to the house and let my Dad see the car in all its rolling glory.

As I pulled into the driveway and opened the garage door, it rose to reveal my Dad sitting on steps inside the garage expecting to see his SUV pulling a trailer. I wish I had a video of his reaction when I pulled in with the 1960 MGA. Instant tears. He was beside himself. I think he, my Mom and I only saw the car through blurry tears for the

first ten minutes. What other car can have that effect on people?

For the next five years my Mom and Dad enjoyed their MGA as often as possible, taking long road trips and traveling the back roads of the Midwest. Every summer when I flew in from Phoenix I had a laundry list of things Dad wanted done to his car, from touching up minor paint chips to the inevitable replacement of anything Lucas related. He bought Dayton wire spokes and Coker whitewalls. We had the upholstery refurbished, keeping the original tan hides but replacing the foam cushions. He told me almost daily that he was amazed at my knowledge of cars and how proud he was of me. I'm crying now as I type this.

I fell in love with this car and wanted to learn everything about it. 25 years ago it was restored, and the lacquer paint has held up beautifully. I don't need to tell MGA owners how gorgeous the interior is. The dash is a work of art. There are subtle, hypnotic details in the wings, bonnet and boot. Dad had me add a luggage rack (from Moss of course), Mom contributed a vintage suitcase and picnic blanket. I





I probably spent two hours talking to dozens of people about his car that day.

His car is mine now, and my only regret is that the last time we took it out for a drive, neither of us knew it would be the last time. There is a silver lining though. Living in Silvis, Illinois, we're practically neighbors with Antique Archeology (creators of the "American Pickers" show) and Dad and I took the MGA for a cruise to look at a vintage motorcycle I was interested in. I don't believe in coincidence so I think it was divine intervention when we met two other local MG enthusiasts. As my Dad was standing there, weak from chemo, literally dying and probably feeling miserable, he was actually enjoying the conversation of a couple guys who knew a lot about MGs and admired his car. For an hour he forgot all about the cancer. It was a great day and a fitting last cruise.

I drive the car daily, weather permitting. Dad wouldn't want it any other way. I keep his cap and a pair of his signature snakeskin cowboy boots on the passenger seat, and I'm joined by my four-footed copilot, Kodi, whenever possible. I know the days will get easier, and my Dad will always be a part of this particular MGA's history as long as it survives, which I hope is longer than me, my children and their children. I hope this MGA outlives countless owners and brings joy to people for another 60 years.

Enjoy the ride. Cherish every day.

*MM*

replaced the exhaust and some chrome trim, and rebuilt the top end, using more parts ordered from our dog-eared Moss catalog.

My Dad stood by my side while I made his car run like a well oiled sewing machine again—and that baby will cruise at 80 mph all day long. Everything original to the car is still in storage in Phoenix. I hung the original banjo steering wheel on my wall (Dad required something slightly smaller in diameter to enter and exit the car, if you catch my meaning), and the original grill, while in great shape had enough pitting of the chrome that the car deserved a new bright replacement.

### **OUR BEST-LAID PLANS**

Dad and I talked about taking the car to Arizona in the winters so we could go to shows together (I own a 1959 Chevy Apache truck), we wanted to cruise the southwest

and participate in some road rallies. Everything was planned to ship the car to my house last December.

But in October our world was shattered with a stage IV cancer diagnosis, and just four weeks ago my Dad left this earth for the most incredible journey of all.

The forecast called for rain, but Dad pulled some strings. I was able to get his car out, detailed and parked in front of the church for his funeral services.





Story provided by your friends in the Moss Tech Department

## Belts are a Cinch

**R**ecently, when my neighbor's son, Steve, started his Classic British car, sometimes I'd hear a loud squeal from the motor. Lately it's been getting worse. Either that, or he's waking up earlier and my ears are more sensitive when it's dark out. One Sunday morning I walked out of the coffee shop and bumped into Steve. When he started his car the squealing started up again. I could see him slide down in his seat with embarrassment. "Hey, let's check your belt this afternoon," I said to him. "I'll swing by after lunch."

With the bonnet up I gave Steve a brief tour of the route and purpose of the belt:

*"The generator and the water pump on your engine need to be spun to charge the battery, and to cool the engine. To get them to spin, there is a pulley on the front of each of them. There is another pulley on the end of the crankshaft near the bottom of the motor. The crankshaft pulley rotates whenever the motor is running. The belt links them all together. So, if the motor is running, the water pump and the generator are rotating automatically. If the belt slips on one or more of these pulleys, it squeals. It's a lot like when you're at a basketball game and you hear the players' sneakers squeak when they slip a bit on the floor. We need to figure out why your belt is slipping. Be thankful it's been squeaking! It's helpful to know when something's not right!"*

There are four possible reasons the belt is slipping. Belts slip because they are loose. Or, because they got some oil on them (contaminated). Or, because they are old. Or, because the pulley they are trying to rotate has a problem. That's it, just those four. This isn't rocket science.

### **With the motor off.**

First I suggested Steve check to see if the belt was loose. "Feel the tension in the longest stretch of the belt." In this case that was the length between the generator pulley and the crankshaft pulley. He pushed against flat side of the belt in the middle to see if it had more than a quarter inch of movement with moderate pressure. It did.

*"Look at the other reasons for slippage and squealing," I said. Steve inspected the belt and found that it wasn't oily, but it was tired looking and there were a number of small cracks. I said, "If the belt is so worn on its sides that it slips to the bottom of the pulley groove, it's ready to be retired. Order a new belt and I'll help you put it on. We can check the pulleys when you've got the old belt off."*

Steve ordered a belt from Moss' web page. A couple of days later it was here. Time to change the belt.

Everything up to now had been a walk in the park. Afterwards Steve admitted he expected the installation would be where he would come face-to-face with the Prince of Darkness who supposedly inhabited cars like his. However, that was not what happened. Following my advice, Steve loosened the bolt on the generator that goes through the arched bracket. Then he rocked the generator toward the motor. That loosened the belt. Then, he removed the old belt.

It was now that I remembered we hadn't run the last test for belt squealing: a pulley that might not want to turn. I put my hand on the pulley



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of the generator and spun it. I said to Steve, "It feels heavy and doesn't spin like a skateboard wheel, but it's smooth and seems fine. No noises. It certainly didn't fight me." Steve repeated my actions to get a feel for it himself. We did the same with pulley on the water pump. That felt tighter. It didn't spin as freely as the generator did, but the end of the pump that is inside the motor was trying to pump water while it spun, so that was okay. Both were fine.

Steve put the new belt on. "Pull the generator toward you with one hand and tighten the bolt with your other hand," I said. "Some say to gently use a pry bar, but you should be able to pull it tight by hand." Yep, that worked out fine.

I'm pretty sure Steve was holding his breath when he started the motor. It came to life without any squealing at all. Not a bit. In fact the engine sounded quieter. There must have been other noises coming off the old belt that were now gone. I said to him, "After about a hundred miles of driving, check the belt tension again. You may need to re-tighten it a little." With that done, I walked home smiling, knowing my mornings would be a little more peaceful from now on. *MM*



# British Car Myths

By Eric Glomstad

**I** began my ownership of British cars when I was 19 years old. The vehicle was a Jaguar XK150, which I drove through my first three years of college. Since then, I have owned six Jaguars, seven MGBs, two Midgets, one Sunbeam Alpine, two Triumph TR3s, and three Austins. Through all the joys and frustrations of ownership, my vehicles have taught me many truths and dispelled others. Here are few of those “myths” which are often spoken of but which are not certainties by any means.

## Lucas is the “Prince of Darkness”



Everyone has a story of being left on a dark night without lights, or finding that their car won't start because the battery has died for some unknown reason. Yes, I have had my share of electrical gremlins in many of the British cars I have owned. Yet, these were few and far between. I learned that, for the most part, Lucas designed a system that was pretty reliable. Most of the electrical problems I had were due to my own attempts to add fog lights, 8-track tape decks, or some other accessory. Lucas systems in the early years were delightfully simple. For example, my TR3 had only four fuses! Contrast that with my BMW 325, which has more than 50(!) fuses on its panel.

## British Car Parts are Expensive



Not only is this a myth, it has been proven to be false with nearly every repair I have had to make on my many British vehicles. In the early 1970s it was possible to find used parts in most wrecking yards. There were few manufacturers making reproduction parts, but the reverse is now true. Few wrecking yards have the parts I need, but there is a wealth of reproduction or remanufactured parts available for the enthusiast. These parts are not expensive! No one is giving them away for free, but the cost of replacement parts has dropped on many of my favorite makes and models. While wrecking yards have dried up, Craigslist has exploded with parts cars and used parts. They seem to be everywhere and most likely will remain tucked away in sheds and garages for decades to come.



Contrast this with the cost of parts for many American vehicles, especially since they are not “made in America” as they once were.

### British Cars Leak Oil



Okay. This is not a myth. It is quite true that they leak oil. My point is that every car I have ever owned leaked oil and therefore, it's not a problem unique to British cars. I drove an Austin Marina from Portland, Oregon to my home near Seattle, Washington. In the 300 plus miles, I left an oil track that even Hansel and Gretel would have been proud of. But this was an exception, and not the rule for every British car I have owned. From Pontiacs and Buicks, to Mazdas and Volkswagens, they all leaked some oil. My worst leakers were the seven Chevrolet Corvairs I owned. But that story is for another time.

### British Carburetors Need Constant “Fiddling”



The auto enthusiast looks forward to “fiddling” with his/her automobile. However, the myth is that British cars require a prodigious amount of fiddling. I find this to be untrue. Carburetors are often cited as a source

of constant frustration—adjustments, synchronizing, and repairing linkage “slop” are thought to be time-consuming exercises which rarely produce pleasurable results. The truth is that SU, Stromberg, or Weber carburetors are quite simple and respond well to the efforts of amateur mechanics. If an owner wants to make the most of his engine's power curve, a synchronizing vacuum gauge, such as a Unisyn is absolutely necessary. There are no moving parts to master with this tool and no electronics to fuss with. I have also had excellent results with a plain rubber hose inserted into my ear, the other end inserted into the throat of a carburetor, when measuring airflow differences between twin carburetors. The cost of this tool, though primitive, is negligible.

### British Cars Are Not Watertight



When I was in Junior High my father and I visited Beach Motors, the local Sunbeam dealer. We were looking for a used commuter car and I was eager to have him purchase something sporty. It was in the fall and the rains had already come to Western Washington. While I admired the lines of the Triumphs, Austin-Healeys, and MGs on the lot, my father had criterion very different

than mine. He opened the driver's door of every car and felt the floor for moisture. We went home that day in a Renault Caravelle, simply because the floor was dry. Needless to say, that was not my idea of a sports car. It's hard to dispel a notion that is “mostly true” as this one is, but I have found ways to seal the stubborn leaks in the British cars I have owned. Sunbeam Alpines and MGBs have removable hardtops and roll up windows. There were no water problems in these cars. The Jaguar XK 150s I owned were “drophead coupes” and they were watertight as well. The Triumph TR3s were another matter. Not only did they leak when sitting still, they both spit at my face while driving in the rain. A judicious buyer can make a prudent purchase by following my father's advice: “Don't buy a car with a wet floor.”

**There it is, my top five British car myths. Perhaps you have a few of your own? I currently own a 1970 MGB Roadster with a removable hardtop in place for the winter months. The blinker lights are slow, the car drips a bit of oil, I just synchronized the twin SU carbs, and on Tuesday I felt a few drops of water hit my left ankle while driving in the rain. I'm glad I have Moss Motors to assist me, and the parts are not expensive! *M.M***



# DEFINING MOMENTS

By Bob Melka



In the spring of 1971, I was a young Naval Officer recently back from a year in Vietnam. Assigned as a counter-insurgency instructor in Coronado, California, I routinely met with a few friends for lunch at the Officers' Club bar. Discussion one day turned to sports cars, and I recounted my long-standing regard for Austin-Healeys. That afternoon on a whim, I scanned the San Diego Union classifieds, noting a 1960 Healey 3000 listed for \$500. A phone call uncovered a sailor, his wife great with child, in need of a sensible car to accommodate an expanding wife and impending

family. That evening, a buddy and I inspected the Healey. Aside from tired second and fourth gear synchros, the Healey was essentially sound—a strong, tight, solid runner. I wrote a check and drove it home. I reasoned I could enjoy it through the summer, sell it in the fall for \$450, and have fifty bucks worth of fun in the duration.

As one might expect of an 11-year-old used car, there was evidence of deferred maintenance and need of some minor sorting. Worn hinge pins allowed both doors to sag when opened. It was in serious need of tires. The horn/turn-signal switch wires sprouted like colorful weeds from the steering column. And, naturally, Lucas gremlins haunted the electrical system.

A tire shop shod all four corners in handsome new retreads for fifty bucks. That night, I scrubbed and tuned the wire wheels, masked the sidewalls, and administered a wholly acceptable rattle-can retouch. A test lamp and some emery cloth sorted the electrical problems. I scrounged parts the old fashion way, locating a horn switch and stator tube at a distant junkyard. Spotting a clapped-out hulk slumped in the corner of a Pacific Beach gas station,





“For Sale” scrawled on the windscreen, I stopped, worked both doors, and was pleased to find nice solid hinges. I offered the station owner ten dollars to swap door hinges, borrowed his tools, and remounted my droopy doors to factory gaps. Compound buffing, some Turtle Wax, an oil change and fluid top-off readied the Healey for our first road trip.

My girlfriend and I packed the Healey for a weekend in Baja, Mexico. We cruised the coastal highway to a beachside trailer park in Ensenada where one of her friends kept an Airstream. Life was good, and the Healey ran and handled like a champ, with the slight exception of a subtle, intermittent knock.

My daily driver was a Volvo P-1800, and everyone knew “Bob has an extra car.” Two friends visiting from Hawaii shoehorned themselves and their wives into the Healey for a weekend at Disneyland. It performed without issue, but my friend, a Navy pilot, commented about the almost-imperceptible knock. The sound was evident only between 2000-3000 RPM under light load.

I lent it to Doc White, another Navy buddy, for a month when his Ferrari 275 GTB ate a valve and needed a replacement engine from Italy. San Diego lacked a Ferrari dealership in 1971, but Midway International Garage was a factory-authorized shop for Maserati and Ferrari. Repairs finally completed, Doc and I took the Healey to collect his GTB. When the Ferrari business concluded, I asked Sal, the shop’s very Italian owner, what he thought might be causing my Healey’s weird knock. Sal popped the bonnet and leaned over the engine, deftly massaging the throttle linkage.

“You gotta bad-a bearing,” he reported matter-of-factly.

I asked him about the cost to replace the bearing. I may as well have asked to borrow his daughter for a weekend in Vegas. His back stiffened, his brows furled, and he curtly shot back, “I don’t-a replace a bearing. I will rebuild-a this engine.”

“But it runs good except for the knock,” I said.

“No, no. I make it run like a fine-a watch,” he whispered sotto voce.

“How much we talking about, Sal?” I asked.

He led me to his cluttered office. Along one wall were shelves of manuals and ringed binders. He pulled out several thick catalogs and, licking his thumb, he paged through them, laying open specific sections in each. He drew me closer, pointing to a series of identical Healey engine components, all



My initiation was winning first place in a gymkhana, earning me a trophy and a great deal of undeserved recognition and respect.

showing wide variances in pricing.

“There are parts... *and there are parts,*” he proclaimed with profound reverence. Pressing his fingertips to his thumb with a kiss, he added, “I use only the finest. Cost?” he shrugged, “I don’t know. We’ll see.”



In that defining moment, I determined the car was a keeper. I handed the key to Sal and turned him loose.

Sal called me several weeks later. Before presenting me the bill, he walked me into one of his bays where the Healey stood poised and polished. Sal casually sidled up alongside the driver door, rattled the gear lever, and with his right middle finger, barely touched the starter button. The Healey sprang to life and rumbled smoothly at 700 rpm.

“This engine I blueprint,” he

with materials. A week and \$206 later, the Healey sported a spectacular red Centauri acrylic enamel finish.

Alex, a neighbor on the beach, had a vintage Derrington steering wheel adorning the door of his kitchen fridge. The wheel was quite handsome, laminated in light African Obeche wood and dark mahogany. Having gotten into the racing scene after college, Alex campaigned a Formula V for a while and had crewed for a season with Team Lotus. I took the wheel off the door and was admiring it as Alex

My release from naval service and three job transfers later, the Healey and I settled in Charlotte, North Carolina. I moved into a suburban house with a garage. That was the good news. The bad news was there were no singles bars, pubs, or nightspots to meet girls. In 1976 North Carolina, liquor was not sold for on-premises consumption. As my new barber said, bars were where truckers and pipe-fitters go after work. When I asked him how one met women, he said “at parties.” How somebody who knew nobody got invited to parties was another question entirely, and one for which my barber had no answers.

Coming out of K-Mart one Saturday, I met a young couple examining my car. Turned out they owned a Bugeye and insisted that I come to the next Beer & Pizza night of the Carolina Healey Club. This became my gateway to a social life. Wives had single girlfriends and here I was, this new single guy from California with a nice brick house and a cool sports car. My initiation was winning first place in a gymkhana, earning me a trophy and a great deal of undeserved recognition and respect. I had kept current the registration and vanity plate (SMOOCH) from California, a birthday gift from my San Diego girlfriend. My new friends thought that was especially cool. Before long, the Healey and I were cutting a fairly wide swath around Charlotte’s singles scene, eventually landing us on the front page of *The Charlotte Observer*’s Living section. The next summer, the Carolinas Healey Club hosted Conclave at the elegant Biltmore Estate in Asheville, North Carolina, where I had the honor of meeting the special guest, Donald Healey himself.

The Healey served nobly over the next 40 years, requiring only routine upkeep, a front-end refresh, and the annual California renewal fee to keep my SMOOCH plate legal—even though I now reside in Atlanta. The car shares my garage with a Morgan. Several years ago, I had the Morgan at a monthly Cars & Coffee. As I



noted with obvious pride. He advised me on proper break-in protocol, with instructions to drive it normally and come back for an oil change and re-torque at 500 miles. We retired to his office and settled up. \$1,010.43 in 1972 was a chunk of change to a Navy Lieutenant earning about \$15K annually.

Now committed, I figured the car, originally white, needed to be red. My dad was an executive with DuPont’s automotive refinish division, and he asked his San Diego sales rep to recommend a shop and provide them

recounted how it had lain amid some clutter in Colin Chapman’s office. One day Alex happened to be examining it, and upon observing his interest, Mr. Chapman, nice guy that he was, gave it to him. This thing in my hand had suddenly become a sainted relic! Alex, sensing my enchantment, suggested it would look good on the Healey and gave it to me outright. Fitment required cutting the banjo spokes, machining of the alloy hub, and some delicate surgery on the switchgear. But the Derrington made a statement, particularly in light of its cherished provenance.



wedged myself into the RHD cockpit to leave, I noted a slight, somewhat ruffled fellow in a squash cap, standing nearby in observance. The Morgan fired right up, settling into a rhythmic idle, whereupon he said to me in a discernable British dialect, "It could stand a valve adjustment." He handed me a card, which read, Philip Middleton, English Car Specialist.

Philip, a UK-licensed engineer, provides service to a wide clientele of English car owners. From Aston Martin to Wolesley, if it's English, he knows it and can fix it. He brings his tools in a Range Rover and works at the client's location, thereby avoiding significant overhead.

He wrenched on the Morgan valves for about twenty minutes, lit the engine, and fiddled a bit with the Weber. Having finished, he glanced over at my Healey, noting casually, almost as an aside, "Your swaybar mounting plates are reversed."

"Huh? How can you tell?" I asked. He got me down on my knees and told me to look at the triangular mounts. He said that the angle of the sway bar was a dead giveaway. The "foreign car shop" that rebuilt my front end back in the eighties got the right and left sides upside-down and reversed. With a name like Autohaus, I should have known.

Philip told me that in this configuration, the swaybar was serving no purpose whatsoever. He cautioned me on the need for temporary bolt placement during the removal process to maintain spring compression; also suggesting I replace the rubber bushings with polyurethane as long as it was disassembled. Needless to say, the handling improved immensely. Holding the Derrington lightly in my hands, I could actually feel the pavement!

From the day I bought the car, second and fourth gear synchros were a bit tired. I could ease it into fourth or double-clutch down to second with nary a sound; nonetheless, when others drove it, I had to wince a lot. To extract this

forty-year thorn, I decided to turn it over to Philip. A car buddy and I removed the interior, pulled out the gearbox, and Philip came by to collect it. I was expecting the Range Rover. Instead, he pulled up in a Mini Cooper with the passenger seat back lowered and a large, flattened cardboard box covering both cushions. We wrestled the gearbox, complete with overdrive, into the front seat. Sensing my dismay, he said, "Why not? It probably weighs less than my wife, and she rides there quite handily."

sprays, an interior replacement, new hydraulics, re-plated brightwork, rebuilt suspension, new carbs, numerous exhaust systems, two clutches, several brake replacements, the gearbox, new chrome wheels, a dozen tires, a new radiator, and multiple Lucas exorcisms.

And four decades later, Sal's engine still runs "like a fine-a watch." It starts at the merest touch of the button, with a smooth, rumbling idle that continues to stir my soul. *MM*



He brought it back the following week, rebuilt and beautifully refinished in Healey green. As long as we were in there, Philip suggested replacing the clutch. The entire installation took him under an hour. My contribution was some muscle and maneuvering the jack handle as Philip guided the assembly home.

In all, the Healey has endured six long-distance moves, seven assorted English and Italian stable mates, four girlfriends, a thirty-eight year marriage, two kids, and grandbaby twins. Over the years, it has undergone three re-





# MY FIRST & LAST

By Julius Aballera

**W**e were a part of the Second Great Migration. I was born in Arkansas in 1949 and when I began school my family moved to South Central Los Angeles. 10 years later we moved to Pismo Beach in Central California.

When I wasn't playing sports, I was running a paper route, pulling weeds for a motel owner, working in produce fields, and cleaning classrooms after school. As a result, I saved enough for a down payment on my first car my Senior year in high school—a 1967 Chevelle 327 Malibu with redline tires and a recessed rear window. The motor culture of the days of my youth was entirely about V8s and horsepower and I was all in. I ordered it brand spanking new from the factory, paid \$3,300, and drove the wheels off of it for 13 years, amassing over 300,000 miles. I had that car until I was 30 when for my birthday I gave myself a two-seat sports car. Not long after that, my Malibu got totaled. A coincidence, or was it the hand of the ever mysterious Prince of Darkness?

My first glimpse of British iron I saw through my ears. I was on foot one day in 1969 when an unusual exhaust note turned my head. I stood there taking in the shape of a TR6 quickly zooming by.

A year later it was my best friend who broke our trend of driving American behemoths when he bought a Triumph GT6. He let me drive the three hours to the San Fernando Valley on a visit to his Uncle's place, and I remember feeling impressed by how something so small had so much power. I liked the sound and the feel, and also the ease with which it rushed up San Marcos Pass.

Four years later, my co-worker let me pilot his new Jensen-Healey along the Pacific Coast Highway. It was my second taste of British Iron and my first time topless, leaving a permanent impression.

Employment opportunities took me first to Alaska in pursuit of oil and then to Seattle for a union career. After completing an apprenticeship program, I decided the time had come to get that sports car.

I looked long and hard at the MGB GT, remembering the days in the GT6 and weighing the benefits of a six versus a four cylinder—and it was a hardtop. Back in the 70s, along with private owners there were several car lots in the state of Washington that sold British Iron. While scoping out one of these lots, inquiring about an MGB GT, my memory flashed back to that TR6 in Pismo Beach. The clarity with which I

could remember it surprised me. Like my Malibu it was shod with redline tires and had a recessed rear window. The lot manager, a real car guy, said, "You're describing the hardtop. And it's removable."

The look, the legroom, the sound and torque from this British V6... I now had a goal in mind. I set off on a hunt visiting car lots and private owners. I took frequent and thorough test drives.

An ad in a Kirkland, Washington, newspaper caught my eye: 1972 TR6, original owner, hardtop, 86,000 miles. Sharp. \$2800. A test drive sealed the





deal for me, but I still had to sell myself to the owner who had two other offers. I explained how it would be my first sports car and all I wanted was to keep it clean and drive it. The other bidders threatened to modify it and go racing. Two weeks later, on April 9, 1979, he handed me the keys.

The previous owner saw his car all over town. It's no secret, I'm a driver. The first three years of my ownership I'd even drive to the seller's place of work every so often around noon to show him the car. He'd walk around it, look under the hood, smile and chat. Pride of ownership doesn't have to end with a bill of sale.

### GOING THE DISTANCE

Driving is and always has been my passion. In the ten years I resided in Seattle all but two of those years I drove to California for Triumphfest. It was a great excuse to escape the rain. Now I'm a full-time Californian who finds excuses to take long drives to escape the heat. When possible I join other TR owners for multi-state trips. I've driven all over the western US and into British Columbia, Canada, too. I'd estimate I average 9-10,000 miles a year, easy.

I'm not shy to say it: I have a half-million mile goal for my TR6. Right now the odometer reads 368,368. I've driven 218,368 miles since an engine rebuild in 1990. I'm not making this up.



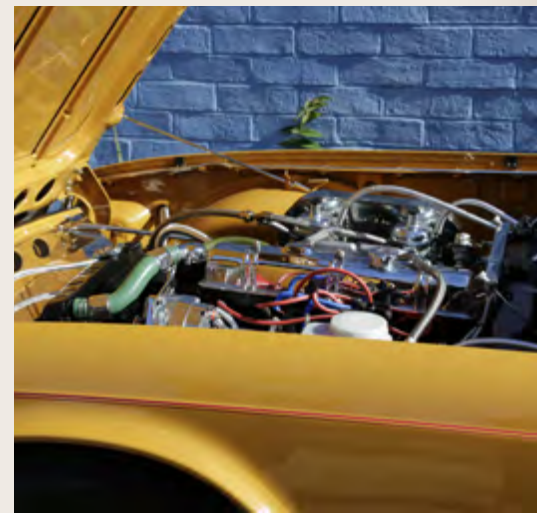
Seeing the Odometer roll over is an event. It's like a rebirth in some ways, and worth celebrating. Approaching the 360,000 mark I decided to visit a special place to witness this milestone. I planned a 1,200-mile roundtrip that landed me right at the Avenue of the Giants in Northern California. Surrounded by redwoods, as the clock turned 360,000, I smiled, kissed the tip of my finger and tapped the dash, and yelled "Woohoo!" On the drive home I daydreamed about what adventures were yet to come.

A high mileage car of any kind takes work, and I've had an ongoing love-it-when-running-hate-it-when-not affair.

The TR has always been a rolling restoration of varying degrees. When I had the engine rebuilt in 1990, I also tackled the suspension, brakes, carpet and paint. The paint is British Code #54 and it took me a while to come to that conclusion. I had the painter spray sample pieces of sheet metal with varying shades until I saw the one I liked. I call it "Buttascotch."

Three weeks after the rebuilt engine's break-in, I drove roundtrip from Seattle to Boulder, Colorado, for VTR. Most miles of long distance touring I peg the speedo needle straight up at 70 mph for several hours. That's where TR6 shines, getting that cast iron engine block "hot enough long enough" to blow out stop-and-go carbon. No less than half a dozen times I've driven non-stop marathons, Washington to California and vice versa, but I know the window for such excursions is closing with age.

Preventive and regular maintenance is crucial, and over the decades it's been an investment. But then again, I demand a lot from the TR in the driving department, and it has more than delivered. I've kept the same mechanic in Seattle. Sure he's retired, but we made a pact that he'd work on my car as long as I have it. So every few years I take a trip up the coast and leave it with him a few days. I've also got a local wrench here in Riverside who makes house calls.



A Triumph TR6 is the best-kept secret in the sports car world. Not only is it a thrill behind the wheel, it is also my direct connection to the places it's allowed me to visit and the great people I've had the pleasure of meeting. It's been with me 39 years now, but I feel like I got it yesterday. *MM*



# Teenage Triumph Tales

By Raymond Lacy

In Sacramento, California, in 1959, my mother must have been having a momentous mid-life crisis due to the stresses of having to deal with me. She went out looking for a replacement for her '49 Chevy sedan and spotted a little red sports car on a used car lot. Thus began my misadventures as, eventually, her 1957 Triumph TR3 was passed on to me when I started college. Dad bought her a nice MK II Jaguar—which was much more suitable.

## I NEARLY LOSE AN ELBOW

On a crisp, bright, clear spring day, a bit windy, I was driving top down with my elbow resting on the door in typical teenage fashion. At that time, Fulton Boulevard was only two lanes wide and configured not unlike a roller coaster. As I topped a hill, at a brisk clip of course, I saw coming down the opposing hill towards me, a '57 red and white Ford Ranchero. It had a contractor's rack on the back carrying a load of sheet rock. As we came down our respective slopes, I could see that the load was secured with a single rope,



diagonally, from right front to left rear. My attention piqued as I noticed the top sheet flapping a little. Suddenly, there was a gust of wind and the top piece of sheet rock lifted off like a kite. As we passed each other, I ducked to the right, pulling my elbow off the door. The sheet rock impacted the car right in the seam between the rear fender and body by the door. It lodged there with such force that the car spun around 180 degrees into the opposite lane. Fortunately, no other cars were coming.

In addition, the engine lurched forward and the fan punctured the radiator. Stunned and weak-kneed, I climbed out and standing there was a Highway Patrolman who happened to have been right around the corner. Did he say "Wow, that was amazing. Are you okay?" No, he said, sternly, "License please." He then looked at me carefully and said, "I recognize your name. Haven't I seen you before?" Having had a couple of speeding tickets by then, that was certainly a possibility. I was at a loss for words, but at least my elbow was intact. Car eventually repaired, I motored on to my next adventure.

## I NEARLY LOSE MY HEAD

On warm summer Saturday evenings, a favorite pastime was to lust over the car lot of Von Housen Motors. Now a Mercedes dealership, back then they sold used foreign and exotic cars and had a race-prep shop as well. I recall such goodies as a Maserati 200 SI, Ferrari Europa and 250 Monza, a Porsche Carrera GT Speedster with Rudge wheels, a Lotus Eleven and so on. Nirvana for car crazy teens. On this particular evening, the lot was slightly less accessible. I made the turn off the street and then noticed, much too late,







the chain hung across the entrance. As the TR went under the chain, it hooked on the left windshield stanchion, bending it down and breaking the windshield. The chain then bounced painfully off the top of my head and hit the rear scuttle near the gas cap, leaving dimples in the sheet metal. After disentangling the car, I left for home with a sore head, but it was still attached. The insurance company didn't hear about this incident, so the car was eventually repaired courtesy of my now empty wallet. And I motored on to my next adventure.

## I DEFINITELY LOSE A GIRLFRIEND

Ever raced to the races? That's what I was doing one weekend on the way to the Georgetown Hillclimb in the Sierra foothills, east of Sacramento. With me was a very nice young lady whom I was dating. I was really enjoying the much-improved handling afforded by a new set of Michelin X's, though not fully understanding their handling quirks. Trailing behind me was an Alfa Giulietta and a Jag XK120, and I was actually pulling away from them. Hot stuff! Then we reached a left-right S-bend with the road sloping down to my left. The rear end stepped out a little to the right, no problem, but on reaching the right turn the rear end suddenly swung around to the left like a pendulum. We wound up in a cloud of dust on the shoulder peering down a long, steep slope into a creek bed. The

Alfa and Jag drivers waved cheerfully as they went by. My girlfriend was strangely quiet the rest of the day as we watched the hillclimb and, not surprisingly, declined to go out with me again. Definitely my loss. I motored on, alone, to my next adventure.

## A LOOK INTO THE ABYSS

Back in the 60s, the four-lane Highway 99 came into the south side of Sacramento and, before the elevated freeways were developed, it split into two, two-lane sections. The northbound lanes made a big right-left sweeping s-bend as they went over an overpass and down on to 30th Street. Always looking for a bit of excitement, I would come whizzing along at a good clip in the right lane, then move to the left lane to apex at the top of the overpass, then hard on the brakes and down into town.



Making the experience even better, I had just installed an Abarth exhaust system that popped and crackled and echoed off the concrete walls. I did this all the time... except for the one evening that I didn't. For some reason, I stayed in the right lane. As I crested the overpass, an elderly couple in a '54 green and white Chevy sedan appeared going south in the northbound left lane! I had time to see the startled looks on their faces as their eyes widened before they zipped past and disappeared down the other side. I pulled over briefly and contemplated my fate, then motored on to the rest of my life. I have no idea what happened to the couple, but I didn't hear of an accident of any kind. I still wonder what must have gone through their minds.

## EPILOGUE

I enjoyed the TR for five years and had many happy times, then sold it and bought a '59 Porsche 356A. (Never fully understood its handling quirks, which led to further misadventures. Do you see a pattern? Yet here I am.) I now have a beautiful Winchester blue 1957 Triumph TR3, restored to concours-winning levels by Martin Hveem Auto Restorations in Redding, California. I'm allowed to relive my teens, though I drive at a more sedate pace. Well, most of the time. See, there's this overpass with a nice, banked off-ramp... *MM*

# Jamie Pfeiffer

1944-2018

“They Don’t Make Them Like They Used To.”

This was the headline of a Moss advertisement from the late 1980s. The “camera-ready” artwork sat for decades in a dusty file cabinet—and it truly was artwork since within the ad was a drawing by Jamie Pfeiffer. Jamie worked as an illustrator at Moss Motors in the '80s and '90s and there was something about the joy, friendliness, and humor of his work that wonderfully captured the British car spirit. The drawings, too, certainly were a reflection of the artist himself.

Jamie fit into the Moss toolbox like a Whitworth wrench. His passions fueled his work and vice versa. Jamie loved vintage racing and would campaign his Berkeley #99 at the Monterey Historics and the Pittsburg Vintage Grand Prix, where he won first place in his class.

After retiring from Moss, Jamie and his wife Jan travelled the country in a motor home, often with their grandchildren. And, never far from our thoughts, Moss reached out to Jamie for his help in designing the Moss Motorfest logo and other projects.

Jamie passed away earlier this year after a brief battle with cancer. We are saddened to have lost a friend. Jamie left behind many drawings that we will proudly continue to display. And when we do we'll remember how we can't make them like he used to. *MM*

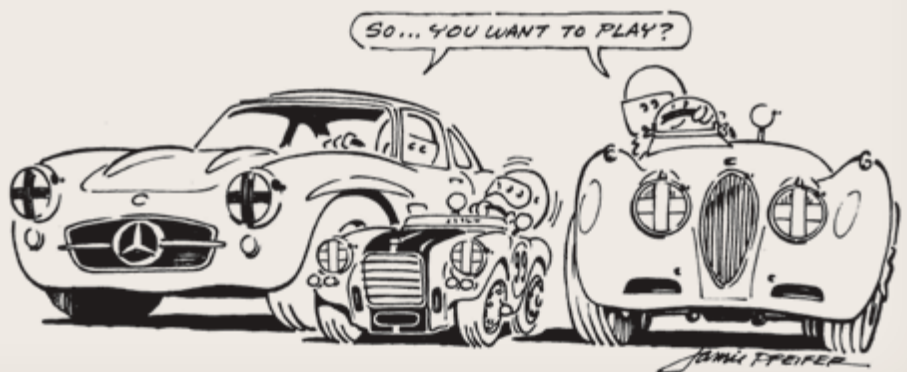
“A cartoon I did in the '90s for a race I was in with a very eclectic grid.”



“Before the days of computers, my 'toon logo showed the tools of the graphic artist/illustrator trade. Brush, Blick Pencil, Rapidograph pen, Rotring art pen, X-Acto knife.”



“Ventura Speedway, mid-80's. Promoter let me take my Berkeley on the track after the midget races. The drive from Santa Barbara south to Ventura is 30 miles, follows the 101 highway along the Pacific Ocean. Should be no big deal but, starting for home in the dark around 11pm ... well you start hearing all the sounds—every Berkeley owner knows them. Remember, no cell phones! Only telling someone when I 'should' be home. Made it safe and sound, in fact, purring along the coast in the open Berkeley—can't be better than that!”





# Moto-Lita®

THE CLASSIC BRITISH STEERING WHEEL

## Dished Moto-Lita Steering Wheels

Renowned for their build quality, the Moto-Lita steering wheels are designed to complement your classic car. And that's why we're glad to be introducing Moto-Lita's steering wheels now also featuring dished-spokes. Handcrafted in the UK, the new dished steering wheels are available in two styles: riveted wood-rim and leather, both employed over aircraft-aluminum frames. So take your pick and enhance your car's interior with Moto-Lita's classic steering wheels!

*Note: Please check the website for our complete listing of Moto-Lita's steering wheels and application specific hubs.*

### Wood Rimmed Dished Wheels

13" 3-spoke Polished/Drilled - Dished	499-585	<b>\$399.99</b>
14" 3-spoke Polished/Drilled - Dished	499-590	<b>\$399.99</b>
15" 3-spoke Polished/Drilled - Dished	499-595	<b>\$399.99</b>

### Leather Rimmed Dished Wheels

13" 3-spoke Polished/Drilled - Dished	905-075	<b>\$399.99</b>
14" 3-spoke Polished/Drilled - Dished	905-080	<b>\$399.99</b>
15" 3-spoke Polished/Drilled - Dished	905-085	<b>\$399.99</b>



## PARTS FOR SALE



## Revotec Electric Fan Kits

These high quality fan kits are available for many British car models. Designed specifically to fit each one, installation is quick and easy with no permanent modifications. Unlike other fan kits that use a universal mounting system, these kits have specific laser-cut brackets that install directly to the radiator mounts. They use a precise electronic controller to enable adjustment to suit your car and easily replace the standard original mechanical fan, reducing the load on the engine, while offering increased performance.

### Kits include:

- High efficiency fan assembly
- Laser-cut passivated brackets for corrosion resistance
- Electronic controller with special top hose
- Hardware, wiring and fitting instructions

Austin Healey 3000	(Negative Ground)	231-720	<b>\$419.99</b>
MGA	(Negative Ground)	231-683	<b>\$369.99</b>
MGA	(Positive Ground)	231-684	<b>\$399.99</b>
MGB 1962-76	(Negative Ground)	231-681	<b>\$359.99</b>
MGB 1962-76	(Negative Ground)	231-682	<b>\$359.99</b>
TR2-4	(Negative Ground)	231-710	<b>\$389.99</b>
TR4A	(Negative Ground)	231-711	<b>\$389.99</b>
TR250/6	(Negative Ground)	231-712	<b>\$389.99</b>



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