

Moss Motoring

ISSUE 2, 2020

Portland ABFM

The most fun you can have on two wheels

Highlights on pg 22



Pressed Steel

The backstory of the company behind the bodywork - pg 13



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Vitesse

Five Speed Gearbox kits

Built on the superb, tried-and-tested Mazda MX-5 gearbox, this conversion kit offers smooth gear changes and relaxed cruising in 5th gear. Each kit comes with a new, fully assembled Mazda gearbox, and a bespoke cast aluminum bell housing designed to fit directly to your engine. The custom shift lever, and included shift knob, retain the existing shifter position. Installation is straightforward, and includes a full set of instructions. With proper tools and some automotive competency, you should be able to fit a Vitesse gearbox.

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- Drive Shaft
- Pilot Bearing with Mazda OE needle roller bearing assembly
- Speedometer Drive Cable
- Gearbox Rear Mount Bracket Assembly and Isolator
- Complete UNF fittings kit
- Clutch Alignment Tool



- ▣ **MGB**
- ▣ **MGA**
- ▣ **TR2-4A**
- ▣ **TR250**
- ▣ **TR6**
- ▣ **TR7**
- ▣ **Morgan**

Throw it into 5th Gear!



Moss Motoring



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Sticky Situations

Read into stories from drivers whose inventive solutions were borne of necessity.



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Globe Trotting MG

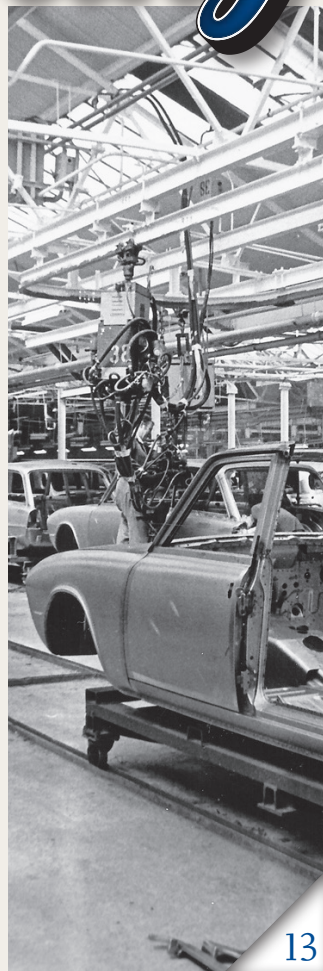
From floods Down Under to skydiving in Argentina, this is Part II of Roy's Journey.



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Would you put your car in the hands of pre-teens? No? Then get them their own car.



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Pressed Steel

Have a look inside one of the most important producers of factory car bodies.

On the Cover:

With PIR adjoining the Portland ABFM, photo opportunities are everywhere. Thanks to Jeff Payne for the action shot from last year!

THERE'S MORE ONLINE!

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

Check out www.MossMotoring.com today!



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MG T-Rex

You think ressurecting an old car is a challenge? Well you're right, it is. It can be a little like paleontology, actually.



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Portland ABFM

Last year's All British Field Meet saw a bit of rain, a bunch of Minis, and the legendary Paddy Hopkirk.

WRITERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS WE WANT YOU!

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

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The very best way to submit material is via email. Please attach digital photos at full size when possible. Film photographs and handwritten articles may be mailed to:
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I'm not a horror movie fan, but I have read Stephen King's novel, *Christine*, the story of a demented Plymouth Fury. Think of that car as a slightly darker, automotive equivalent of the blood-sucking plant in *Little Shop of Horrors*. Somewhere back in the '80s, Nels Miller sold my family the grief fed version of Christine, a Jaguar XJ12C. The car doesn't kill. It merely prefers treasure over blood. Almost 20 years since it last caught fire ran, I'm getting my turn to feed the beast. Allow me, in four brief stories, to recount my relationship with the car.

☎ **LATE NIGHT CALL**

"This is your father. Your mother and I are on the side of the freeway between off ramps X and Y. Bring gas." Those in the know will tell you the Series II XJs had two distinct gas tanks, with a dash switch to swap fuel supply. The tanks are not interconnected. To run both tanks dry takes a special perversity of character. The old man had what it takes. The payoff pitch was "your mother." I may well have left him to work it out on his own were Mom not in the car, and most likely a good deal of angry.

💧 **POP THE BONNET**

Grandpa Louis was a Cadillac man, from Detroit. He didn't place much stock in those foreign jobs. He also had no desire to fly in the family airplane, so we were driving him from Santa Barbara to Los Angeles...on a hot summer day. The car began to overheat. *Go figure.* Owners of British cars with front tilting bonnets know the last ditch cooling gambit. *Pop the hood and let it float.*



A CAR IN FOUR STORIES

Air pressure will keep it from rising up in your face, and hot air from under the hood now has an additional place to escape. Grandpa didn't know any of this. "Why is the hood open?" "Because the car is over heating." "My Cadillac never does that." I thought there was gonna be a fist fight right there on the side of the road. Thankfully, on this occasion we made our destination without needing a phone. Funnily, I can't recall driving back.

🅄 **YOU GET TO DRIVE THE CAR**

This was it, my big chance to drive the beast, head to LAX, and pick up the folks on their return from an overseas trip. You cannot imagine how desperately a twenty-something kid wanted to drive that lovely V12. I hadn't made it across Santa Barbara before the alternator light came on. I may be dumb, but I'm not stupid. The SS Titanitwelve wasn't going to make it there and back. Mom would be both tired, and super very angry when the car died.

My other grandfather, also a Cadillac man, lived along my route. I stopped at his place, explained the situation, and he was thrilled to loan me a proper car—his Cadillac V8-6-4. If you don't know about that infamous machine, look it up. It ultimately cured his Cadillac obsession. I drove that soul crushing box to LA and back, all the while dreaming about what could have been.

💧 **"I THINK YOUR CAR IS ON FIRE"**

My mom drove to the market one day, her big, golumphing Bernese Mountain dog in the back. It was a mild day. She rolled down the windows, and headed in for a quick purchase. Someone stopped her and pointed out the car appeared to be on fire. It was, but only a little. In those pre-cellphone days, she got the dog out of the car, and ran in to the market to find a phone.

It wasn't as easy as that because of a leash problem, however, this isn't a dog story. The fire was put out before engulfing the car, and repairs were made. Soon after, the transmission developed some form of transmission fluid incontinence. It got parked after that.

Once I saw a UK based ad for a Peerless GT. The owner literally stated in the ad, "Step forward, you brave young man." Now there was a guy who knew what he was selling. I'm a guy who thinks he knows what he is buying. Being in my peak earning years, I am in hope of resurrecting the beast long enough to commute in it now and then, or die trying.

Of course, if we both make it to my retirement, it will then become a race to see who expires first, me or the car. After that, the next brave young owner will step forward. XJ Coupes are way too pretty to let rot, unless they refuse to do anything else. *MM*

INSPIRED -BY- NECESSITY

One of the the many arguments for owning a British sports car—especially at a young age—is that it teaches a person how to keep their wits about them in challenging times. It helps develop resourcefulness—and good storytelling, too.

Share your story:
editor@mossmotors.com

Two of a Kind, and...

By Ted Eayrs

I have owned English sports cars for more than 50 years now. Big Healeys, Sprites, MGs, TR3s, and Jaguars. I recently acquired a 1962 Austin Healey 3000 Mk II and am restoring it with the help of my friend William Staples. He and I have traded Healey survival stories over the years, but the best one is his. It was not only inventive, but it worked. After reading your story request, I had to get him to write it down.

I am very excited about the Healey I just purchased. I bought it from the

widow of the original owner complete with the bill of sale, records, even unused parts. Better yet the car was last registered in 1986 and is very original. Still has the original paint, but in poor condition. I now call the Moss sales line on a weekly basis.

I met William 25 years ago through a friend, since both of us have horses and drive Four-in-Hand, that is four horses to a carriage. Since then we have worked together on everything from a TR3, two 1958 Jaguar 3.4s, a 1923 Model T and several '50s

Chevrolet trucks. William is a really good mechanic and I fuss around with the electrics and body work. Back in the day he used to help his older brother, who was racing Triumphs at Daytona Beach. His brother said the Triumphs could stay even on the oval, but on the flat track the Healeys would pass everything. *MM*





A Cog in the Wheel

By William Staples

She was a student at Mary Washington College in Fredericksburg, Virginia. It was late October in 1966. I picked her up in the afternoon in my newly acquired 1960 Austin-Healey 3000 BN7. The purchase price was \$300. The car was solid, but it had been driven hard and had a lot of miles on it. We were headed south to Nags Head, North Carolina, and the hope of a romantic weekend.

I took mainly back roads and, after skirting Richmond, I headed east. Nearing the town of Franklin, and driving at considerable speed, I saw in front of me a railroad grade crossing, the rails clearly visible above the roadway. I

instantly calculated that the roughly three inches of clearance under the car would not be sufficient to prevent the destruction of my exhaust system.

I slammed on the brakes. Now, the brakes worked fine, it was just that the worn and aged splines on the left rear wheel let go with that grinding noise, familiar to all of us who drive with older wheels. We coasted to a stop. I managed to squeeze the hub tighter with my trusty Thor hammer, but five miles an hour was top speed. Seeing a gas station with a service bay, I crept in. They were just closing up for the day, but said they would try to help in the morning.

I asked if there were any hotels close by and the mechanic pointed down

the street. While I was expecting some quaint Victorian establishment, the door opened to the seediest, dirtiest, smelliest hotel I had ever encountered. Unfortunately, we had no choice. It was so bad, not only were all romantic thoughts extinguished, we slept in our clothes.

The next morning we returned to the garage. It was clear that the mechanic had never seen an Austin-Healey before, and that the only wire wheels he had worked on were from a Model A Ford, and those were secured to the hub by four bolts. It seemed that I had run out of options, since it would take days to get parts to such a remote place. Then I had an idea. I asked the mechanic if he had an acetylene torch. He replied in the affirmative. I asked him if he could blow a hole through the wheel and the hub and out the other side. He proceeded to do that and I then asked him for a five-eighths bolt. I inserted the bolt through the hole and I was in business. The wheel wasn't exactly balanced, but it worked. It was by this time too late to get to Nags Head, so we drove back to Fredericksburg and I dropped off my date at her dorm.

I fixed the Healey, but my hopes for a romantic weekend came to naught.

MM



¡No Tan Apretado! (*Not So Tight!*)

By Bob McCowan

My story begins with my first acquisition of a Triumph TR3. In January 1959 I returned to the US after spending 15 months as a Marine fighter pilot in the Far East. I was in need of a car after failing to purchase a Mercedes Benz 190SL in Tokyo at a discounted cost. After test driving a MGB, a Healey 3000, and a Jaguar XK, I settled on the TR3 for the simple reason it had enough foot space to accommodate my military brogues. Also, it was quite peppy. It easily tromped my squadron mate's Porsche 1600 coupe in a drag race on highway 1 in South Laguna, California.

Before I get into my moment of invention, it is only fair to add that my background before going into service included building hot rods and formal training on aircraft engines and airframes. While visiting my parents in Sacramento, I was showing off my TR to my dad's best friend whose hobby was being the mechanic for Indy racer Bill Vukovich, Jr. When I mentioned that the TR handbook suggested giving the engine a valve job after the first 5,000 miles, he immediately insisted I bring the TR to his shop the next day

and do the valves. He quickly realized that his valve grinding stones that he used on Offenhauser race engines were much too large for the TR. Not deterred, he ground down the grind stones to meet TR specs and off we went. The entire valve job did not take him more than a couple of hours. So I had already acquired some knowledge about TR engines by the time my story begins.

On July 9, 1960, I married my wife Mary Jo and we headed off to Mazatlan, Mexico, on our honeymoon in my TR3. Anticipating poor gasoline in Mexico, I bought a 12-bottle case of octane booster and off we went. Remember, the year was 1960, or almost exactly 60 years ago. While Disneyland had dictated the invention of the "freeway" in Los Angeles, it was still unheard of in Mexico. Although the TR was totally crammed to the top with no room for a spare gas can, I did make sure I included my Craftsman toolkit. The trip to Mazatlan was a story in itself. It was about a 1,000 miles and took three days to get there. Towns were few and far between and motels were primitive. They all had air conditioning, but none worked. We walked into one, turned

on the bathroom light, found the floor covered black in thousands of crickets, and walked back out. We passed on that one.

We finally arrived safely and found Mazatlan to be a quaint small town. We stayed at a nice motel on the beach with underground parking and spent a pleasant week there. On the night before we were due to leave for home I decided to adjust the valves on the TR. That's when the fun started. On piston number three, after testing the clearance with a feeler gauge, I cinched down on the jam nut only to find I had stripped the threads on the rocker arm adjusting screw. It was an "oh sh[oo]t" moment. What do I do now? I had no spare parts and the closest TR dealer was a thousand miles away in LA.

After some careful thought I decided that I somehow had to re-thread the adjusting screw since I had no spare. I backed off the jam nut and saw that its threads seemed to be okay. Luckily, the adjusting screw had a driver slot on the top end. Taking a large screwdriver from my tool kit, I succeeded in driving the screw back through the rocker arm. The rocker arm threads straightened up the threads on the adjusting screw. Very carefully, I extracted the adjusting screw from the rocker arm and tested to see if the jam nut would thread on. Voilà! It worked. Again, carefully, I adjusted the clearance and lightly cinched the jam nut. I was unsure it would hold until back in LA, but it did.

Felling quite proud of myself, I went up to our room to relate my story to my bride. I celebrated by treating myself to a scotch on the rocks. While sipping my drink I noticed sediment dissolving from the ice cubes. I ran to the ice machine to see if they used bottled water. The city water was piped directly into the ice machine.

Oh God, Montezuma had his revenge! *MM*



“Yes. In this Car.”

Round the World – Part II

By Roy Locock

The run from England down to the south of India was a little over 10,000 miles. The time required to ship the Midget from Chennai to Perth, Western Australia, was four weeks, so I spent a couple of those in Phuket, Thailand. I flew into Perth a week before the car was due and found a hotel in Freemantle.

I was met at the airport by some members of an MG Car Club that had been tracking my progress from a blog I keep. Over the next couple of days they showed me around the local area and took me to a number of club events. I was stunned by just how many

classic cars (mainly British) there are in everyday use!

Australia, as a destination, had never been a priority and initially I only decided to go there because it was between Asia and South America. However, I decided that if I was going to visit the country I might as well drive all the way around it. When I announced my intention, the Aussies thought that either I didn't appreciate how far that was or that I was out of my mind.

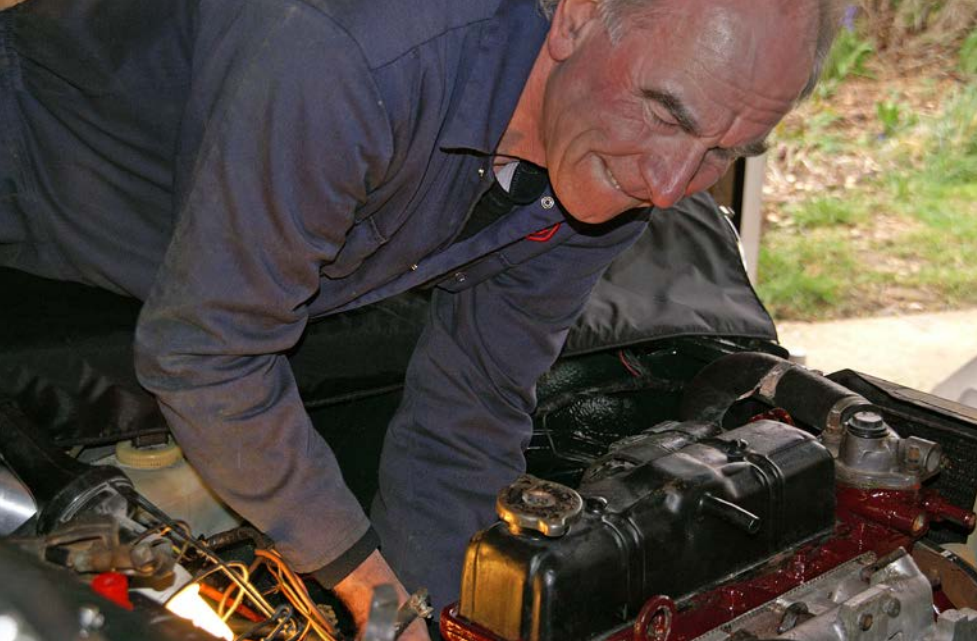
From Perth I drove down to Esperance on the south coast and then turned east to cross The Nullarbor Plain. This is the main highway across the south of Australia and is

approximately 1,700 miles across. Australians were constantly telling me how boring the drive would be, but as it was my first time, I found it interesting. It was necessary to watch the fuel consumption as there are relatively few filling stations. I carried two 20-liter jerry cans for just this situation, but careful rationing was still necessary.

Arriving in Adelaide, I was met by some more Aussie MG Club members one of whom said to me, “You're going the wrong way. You should have gone up north first.” I replied that I didn't realize it was a one-way system, but he said “Going this way at this time of year means you're going to hit *The Wet*.”



Spending Christmas on the Gold Coast of Australia.



He was mentally calculating my arrival in the Northern Territories at the start of the wet season, and it transpired that he was right; but first I was to visit Melbourne and Sydney before spending Christmas on the Australian Gold Coast.

At around this time, Bridget's engine began misfiring.

I drove north as far as Port Douglas from where I would take a diving trip out to the Great Barrier Reef. The plan was to drive from there to Normanton using largely outback roads (unpaved). However, leaving Port Douglas on a Sunday morning, the rain leading the first cyclone of the season started. I stopped at a café in Mareeba and watched the rain pouring down outside while I enjoyed a coffee. A truck driver came in and asked who owned the MG in the car park. I said it was mine and he asked, "Are you heading for Normanton?" When I affirmed he told me I wouldn't be doing so on that particular day as the road was washed out and he had only just made it in a V8 Toyota Land Cruiser.

I struck out south hoping to outrun the storm and started to understand the problems caused by "The Wet" in North Queensland and the Northern Territories. I ended up that night at an old gold mining town called Charters Towers and decided that from there I would drive the Barclay Highway

westward the next day. Wrong again. A 140-meter section of highway had completely washed away and I was stranded in Charters Towers for 15 days.

When travel resumed, Bridget's engine was seriously misfiring so I checked a number of possible causes including testing the compression of each cylinder. Sure enough, piston number four was sick, but I was unlikely to find any of the spares as all suppliers were based at least 2,500 miles away. I decided to continue on across the top of Australia then back to Perth, a mere 2,700 miles.

On arriving in Perth, I went straight to the Sports Car Garage, owned by Tim Harland whom I had met when I first arrived in Australia. He is a 'top bloke' as he loaned me part of his garage and his parts ordering system along with lots of sound advice on how to rebuild a Midget engine. It took me around ten days, but we completed it before my visitor's visa ran out. Once again I loaded Bridget into a 20-foot container and caught a plane heading for Argentina.

SOUTH AMERICA

Arriving before Bridget was now routine, so I had the time to take a good look around Buenos Aires. I had a visit from the local MGCC Chairman, Pablo Fernitz and John Ortiz his number two. They arrived in a beautifully presented MG TC and took me to lunch proving beyond any doubt that Argentinian steak is the tastiest in the world. The accompanying Malbec wine was also superb.

Once Bridget arrived and cleared customs, we set off in a westerly direction towards Mendoza. Our first overnight stop was at a small town called Laboulaye where I quickly found a hotel and settled down to dinner around 8:00pm. Midway into the meal I was interrupted by



Engine overhaul against the clock

the arrival of a television film crew who had been tipped off that Bridget was there. "Could I please do an interview?"—and they had even gone to the trouble of bringing along an interpreter. So we did the interview, but I couldn't ignore the feeling that there was a connection between the rather young and good-looking woman interpreting the interview and myself. Old men with young women is not apparently frowned upon or dismissed as 'gold digging' in many countries of South America, and we continued to communicate for some time after I had left.

Shortly after that meeting, Bridget and I moved on to Mendoza where I took the opportunity to experience a different form of travel. While reading a local magazine at the hotel where I was staying, I saw an advert from a local paragliding club for people who had never tried the sport. The hotel kindly booked for me to go the following day, and I went to bed that night wondering if I had finally tipped over the edge? I was collected from the hotel the next morning at 9:00am, not giving me a chance to cry off, and was driven almost 5,000 feet up the foothills of the



Andes just to jump off! It's absolutely fabulous and I thoroughly recommend paragliding to anyone that gets the opportunity to try it.

The next day I crossed the border, on top of the Andes, into Chile. Bridget suffered a little from 'altitude sickness' and I was just considering stopping and adjusting the carburetors when we actually arrived at the crossing. I decided not to bother with the motor as it was all downhill from there. There was a particularly awkward border official on the Chile side who insisted

that he and a colleague would search all my bags. His female colleague clearly felt embarrassed but they started the search. In one of the bags that the lady was searching, I had a number of postcards that were made for me, containing a picture of Bridget on one side. She really liked the car and so she asked if she could please have one for her grandson. I was delighted to be able to say yes, and even more delighted when the male saw them and asked if he too could have one. I'm just a big kid, so I said, "NO." It felt so good.



Entry into Chilé

My first stop in Chile was the city of Santiago, and from there I was to follow the Great American Highway up to Ecuador. This highway is for me the best drive in the world. It runs along, up, down and across my favorite geographic landscape of mountains and deserts. The road starts close to the Pacific coast with the Andes in the distant east. As you progress north the mountains get gradually closer and closer until, rather than being pushed into the sea, the highway starts to wind its way up the mountainside.

My first overnight was in the town of La Serena. After dinner that evening I strolled down the sandy beach and was watching the huge gathering of birdlife on the shoreline. To my delight, flights of pelicans swept across the ocean only inches from the water. They reminded me of the Dambusters on the final run in to Germany's Mohne Dam.

I personally found this route through Chile spectacular, although some people that have been lucky enough to experience it focused on the

dangers. There are few barriers to stop vehicles from running off the cliffs and it is necessary to avoid oncoming trucks driving on your side of the road around some of the tight corners. The Atacama Desert on top of the Andes is again a favorite of mine.

I decided to stop over, for my last night in Chile, at Iquique, on the coast. I had been surprised by the Atacama as I had not previously known of its existence, however, the greatest surprise was to turn a corner and find myself on a road 1500 feet above an almost sheer drop to the ocean. Very spectacular. New trousers please!

Bridget and I were to cross into our 21st country the next day and I had prepared everything as much as one can. Everything seemed to be going really well at the border. Bridget was parked outside the front door of the Immigration office and all the preliminaries were completed. It just remained for the officer to go into the new computer system and check the details of the car that had been

imported. He looked at his monitor, then outside at Bridget, then frowned. "A Toyota," he said nodding towards the car. Feeling a little slighted I said indignantly, "No, an MG." The officer looked at his monitor again and said, "It says your car is a Toyota." His colleague seemed to step between me and the door as if to block my escape. It took over an hour to get agreement that his colleague at the Argentinian border of entry had been faced with a computer list that did not have MG as an option, so he just selected Toyota instead.

MM

Next Time: From Peru on to North America, and back to the UK.

If you missed Part I of Roy's Round the World adventure, you can read it at: MossMotoring.com/yes-in-this-car



The Atacama Desert drops dramatically into the ocean.

It Runs in the Family

By Casey Yunker

I became infected at the age of four in 1978. You know how the story goes, Uncle Rick had a 1965 MkIII Austin-Healey, black with red interior, and he'd take me for rides. The disease spread quickly in our family, given how contagious it is, and my father in 1981 got it in his head that he needed a British car. My Dad and I joined the Texas Healey Club and one or both of us have been participating in their yearly show and rally "Roundup" weekend ever since.

My father would buy non-running MGs in the winter, and he and I would fix them up to sell in the spring. When I finally reached the age to drive on my own, I took over the '59 MGA we had

at the time. It was a blast, even if when powering through a hard left turn I'd have to lean over to hold the passenger door shut.

I learned a lot with that MGA, including the lesson: "When the right price is right, everything is for sale." I was offered \$6,000 while sitting at a traffic light and the car was gone. A couple of months later in December my dad found a Tahiti Blue 1974 Spitfire. A co-worker of his would part with it for \$300. A running, driving car with a little rust. It didn't have a top but I drove it anyway, after all we lived in Louisiana and it didn't get that cold in the winter. The next spring I found a second Spitfire—a '72, Apple Green with a



header, double SUs and a bad rear end (the one in the blue Spit sounded like it was grinding tin cans). I made one car out of the two and enjoyed it for the next two years. Those Triumphs cemented my love of the Spitfire and its ability to take a corner at whatever speed you have the tires for, and for the way it makes you feel like you're driving 30mph faster than you really are.

My dad and I went through more than 50 British cars between the time I was eight years old and when I graduated college, most of which were MGs with the occasional Triumph and Healey sprinkled in the mix. Currently, I have my daily driver, a primrose 1968 MGB GT, and for the past year I have enjoyed owning my uncle's car—the black Healey that started it all.

Now I have kids of my own. Two girls: Addison (10) and Carson (8). Since they were four-years old I have had them in the garage with me turning wrenches and washing cars. We have





been through a couple of starter cars, but I felt it was time to start a real project. We've settled on a 1973 MG Midget donor and a 1967 tub.

The project has really taken off in the last couple of months. The tub and all the panels are off and with the painters, and the donor car is really getting stripped down now, with only the suspension and brake lines left to remove. The girls do 90% of the work leaving me there to break bolts loose and make sure they are safe. I have found that planning the work takes as much time as doing the job. The benefit of planning is that both girls can be working for a couple of hours, which is about as long as they can last, leaving me to bounce back and forth as a helper. So far, they are loving it and I hope that never ends, at least that is the plan.

For those of you with hopes of eventually doing a car restoration with a child or someone from a younger generation, my advice is this: Just start a project, no matter how small, and learn and grow from there. *MM*

In Addison's own words...

Growing up with British cars, and with a dad who has a little bit of an obsession, has seriously influenced my life. On occasion I would go and help him work on the Healey or MG, and now I have my own car (although it's in many pieces) for us to work on. We work on it quite often now. With school and soccer, it's a little hard to find the time to spend on the car, but somehow dad creates time for us to go out and continue stripping down the Midget in preparation for a beautiful teal paint job.

I think that fixing cars teaches me so many things—life skills and social skills. In one of our latest trips to the garage I learned to “visualize” while removing a nut on the backside of the dashboard. I especially enjoyed this part because I tend to day dream, so I liked seeing the hidden, inside of the car in my own cartoon version. While taking off the tires with dad and my little sister I learn synergy and teamwork. I think this is important in life because it makes working on school or work projects easier.

The best part is each time I come in from the garage I end up with a better relationship with dad.

– Addison Yunker



PRESSED STEEL

By Graham Robson

Long ago, in the early 20th century, every British road car was built in the same way. First there was a chassis frame, then all the running gear was bolted to it, and finally a body shell was added. In almost every case the body was based on a hand-crafted wooden skeleton, to which steel, light alloy or (in some cases) fabric panelling was added. It was all very time consuming, and frankly not at all durable.

That was when the thrusting North American entrepreneur, Edward Budd, built up the Budd Corporation, by pioneering methods of producing large quantities of pressed steel panels, and of welding them together, to produce body shells in a cheaper and more efficient way. It was only later that Britain's foremost motoring tycoon, William Morris (who owned the fledgling MG company at this time) visited the USA, saw the potential of Budd-style body

production, and set up a deal with Budd.

It was thus, in 1926, that a new company called the Pressed Steel Company, Ltd. was set up in a new factory at Cowley, just yards away from the existing Morris Motors factory, set about producing shells for mass-production Morris (and later Wolseley) autos. This was a joint venture, and both Budd and William Morris invested a great deal of money in the new enterprise.

Even so, at first this was not a success, for when Pressed Steel went out looking for orders from Morris's competitors, it found resistance because the competition did not want to get so close to a bitter rival. Only three years after the first bodies were built, the complex financial structure was untangled, Morris withdrew from the management, and by the early 1930s Pressed Steel was effectively independent.

The 'divorce' was a business success, for before long Pressed Steel found itself supplying large numbers of shells—some in bare metal, some painted, and some even painted and trimmed, to clients such as Morris/Wolseley, Standard, Hillman/Humber and Rover who all took delivery of shells in large quantities.

In the meantime, MG was only making about 1,500 cars a year, and still used bodies made in the traditional wood and steel/alloy panelling. Until 1955, every one of the famous MG sports cars—TA, TC, TD and TF—had coachwork by Morris Bodies in Coventry.

By the mid-1950s, though, the world—and MG's ambitions—had changed. Both Sir Leonard Lord (BMC's chairman) and John Thornley (MG's general manager) could see the chance to sell many more MGs in the USA—if they could be made to look



BMW-developed Minis are now built in Oxford, on what was the original Pressed Steel factory site.

modern, and if they could be built in big quantities.

Enter the new MGA. Choosing the running gear—the new-generation B-Series engine—and opting for a pretty new style, was straightforward enough, but finding a body supplier was a bigger challenge. However, since MG wanted to build up to 300 new MGAs every week, the old ties with Morris Bodies could be cut, and a new deal was signed with Pressed Steel instead.

Pressed Steel had changed mightily in 20 years. Now the largest and most productive body supplier in the UK, it had kept all its existing contracts, and was also supplying Jaguar, Rolls-Royce, Riley, Sunbeam and Volvo, too. The original factory at Cowley was bursting at the seams, and a new 'No. 2' plant was about to be finished at Swindon, just 25 miles away.

This, really, was the point at which MG turned itself from a little 'cottage industry' to a thriving subsidiary of BMC—and exports to the USA, and other nations, rose considerably. Management at MG, a business which had never been a manufacturing, but really an assembly, operation, became used to seeing transporter loads of MGA body shells—six at a time on specially constructed trailers—coming through the main gates at least ten, sometimes more, times a day. Not only that, but these were painted and partly trimmed shells, which made final assembly at Abingdon so much more straightforward.

But that was just the start of it. Although little capital was spent in making it possible, BMC decided to make Abingdon its 'sportscar factory,' and not only set about transferring the Austin-Healey 100-6 from Longbridge, but making sure that a new, small, sports car, the Austin-Healey Sprite, could also find a home in this thriving little operation.

Although the 'Big' Healey structures (chassis and shell, already brought together by Jensen) did not expand Pressed Steel's links with Abingdon, in 1958 the arrival



Austin-Healey Sprite bodies assembled at Pressed Steel in Abingdon.



of the Bugeye Sprite most certainly did, especially as it was the corporation's first unit-body sports model. The bare shell of that car was completely welded together at Cowley before being taken 'across the road' to the Morris Motors factory for painting and trimming, before finally being trucked down to Abingdon for completion. In 1961, when the Bugeye Sprite was re-styled into a Mk II, an MG Midget version was also announced. This, too, shared its identical unit-body with the latest Sprite.

In every way, by the 1960s, the future of MG's sportscars were totally bound with Pressed Steel, and when the MGA (of which more than 100,000 were eventually to be made) was finally discontinued, an even more ambitious product—the MGB—followed.

Here was the project that could indeed make or break MG and the Abingdon operation. Not only was the MGB a more complex car than the MGA had ever been, but it would have a unit-body/monocoque construction instead of a sturdy separate chassis. Pressed Steel, still a financially independent company at this stage, was not about to give away its tooling investment at a loss, and for a time it looked as if MG (for whom John Thornley, not Sir Leonard Lord, would make a decision), could not afford to meet the high cost (well over \$3 million US was mentioned) for tooling costs.

It was typical (and so the story goes, for there never was an official admission of the deal) of John Thornley, that he suggested that if he could have a considerable discount from this quotation, then he would agreed to pay rather more for each individual body shell so that Pressed Steel would get its money (and MG its cars) over a period of time. The deal went through, the MGB tooling was completed in double quick time, and the MGB was launched in the autumn of 1962.

Pressed Steel now had what could be considered as a stranglehold over MG's current, and future, sports car trading

operations. By the mid-1960s, Abingdon was turning out up to 50,000 cars every year, of which all but about 4,000 or 5,000 were 'Big' Austin-Healeys – and all the rest of the output came from one or other of Pressed Steel's plants in Cowley, or Swindon.

Once the link between Pressed Steel and the MGB had been formalized, the relationship settled down, and would not even be mildly disturbed until 1965, when BMC stepped in to make a successful takeover bid for Pressed Steel. From then on, and even more tightly from 1968 when the elephantine British Leyland group came into existence, the two companies were effectively answering to the same bosses, but such was the sometimes chaotic way that the 'empire' was admired that neither let that trouble them too much.

What happened after 1968, is really a story for another day (but must eventually be told) for it involves the way that Pressed Steel was brutally merged with Fisher & Ludlow (BMC's 'other' body supplier), by MG's progressive subservience to British Leyland bosses who were almost all ex-Triumph rather than ex-BMC personalities, and by the repeated suggestions that future MGs would need to have their engineering, styling and manufacture shared with Triumph.

Even so, when the manufacture of MGs came to a halt at Abingdon in October, 1980, the links with what had now become Pressed Steel Fisher were as strong as ever. Just how much MG, and Abingdon, came to rely on Pressed Steel is proven in its twenty-five year history, during which no fewer than 866,069 bodies were produced. Never before, and never afterward, was this achievement matched by any other maker of British sports cars. *MM*

MG T-Rex

By Barry and April James



I was a six-year old fascinated with rocks. I collected them all around our neighborhood in Long Island, New York. My first fossil—a shell—I discovered when my dad was digging a hole in the backyard to plant a tree. The foundations for my future were being cast.

In 1969, as a high school graduation gift, my dad gave me my first car. It was a 1963 Plymouth Belvedere he bought from a coworker who had rebuilt and modified it to go very, very fast. At the time, I knew very little about cars because there wasn't any need to know anything other than the Plymouth always started and ran perfectly up to 125mph. The thought of a flat tire, hitting something on the road or encountering any of the many things that could go wrong never entered my 19-year-old mind. I was extremely lucky.

One day in May, 1970, while driving home, I spotted an incredible looking vehicle—a blue 1959 MGA. I fell immediately in love with British sports cars, sold the Plymouth

Belvedere and bought the MGA. I went from the standard locking doors to pulling on a wire to open the MG, from roll-up glass windows to sliding pieces of plastic into position, and from enjoying the warmth of a heavy-duty heater to layering on lots of clothing in the winter. The willingness to overlook inconveniences enhances the wind-in-your-hair sensations of a sports car.

Soon thereafter, I found a 1963 Morgan. Books on fossils were put aside and sports cars became my main interest. I read all I could about these wonderful cars. My neighbor Charlie was an expert mechanic who taught me all I needed to know to repair and keep a sports car on the road.

Seeing my Morgan for the first time, a friend said his neighbor had a Morgan that had been taken apart. He suggested that perhaps I could buy it for spare parts. We went to the house but the neighbor wasn't home. Small windows running across the top of the garage door provided a good view of the parted-out car, which was not a Morgan,

but a right-hand drive, black 1950 MG TD—my dream car! Waiting patiently until the family came home, I was able to purchase the disassembled car for \$250 cash.

After putting the car back together, it became my everyday driver. Since I had become intimately familiar with MGs, Chuck Bennett of Hanover Auto Parts in New York hired me as his MG expert, helping other owners find the parts they needed.

In 1974, I purchased a 1938 TA Tickford, sight unseen and delivered directly to me from England. I restored it with the help of all those I spoke to daily on the telephone as well as with input from members of the New England MGT club.

I have never lost the love of these great sports cars. And I also never stopped wandering out in nature collecting fossils.

In 1977 I moved across the country to Santa Barbara, California and found work as a parts manager for a car dealership. However, my



astute new friends in town convinced me to go back to school. It made sense. So I sold my cars, including the beloved TA Tickford, and used the funds to attend college full-time and earn my Master's degree as a Vertebrate Paleontologist.

Following graduation, I met my wife April and, sharing a love of the natural world, we jumped right in and started a unique professional paleontological service, Prehistoric Journeys. Now, 33-years later, we and our crew have prepared the fossilized bones and display-mounted 158 rare skeletons of the world's greatest prehistoric animals and dinosaurs for clients around the world.

Resurrecting an MG

Out of the blue one evening in late 2008, April suggested we find an MG to buy. I didn't argue and she did not have to mention it again. Although it had been three decades since an MG had graced the garage, our admiration for them never wavered. Within a year, I found a 1951 MG TD in need of restoration at Smalley's Garage in Watkins Glenn, New York. Everything I had learned about these magical cars so many years before came right back to me as second nature.

During the TD's restoration, we had the honor of preparing and display-mounting one of the greatest Tyrannosaurus Rex complete skeletons ever found. "Tristan," a 68-million-year old, 41-foot long and 15-foot tall, freestanding skeleton is now on display at the Natural History Museum in Berlin, Germany. Of course we simply had to photograph our (then)

burgundy colored MG TD with the nearly five-foot long skull of Tristan the T-Rex. And now, with the restoration completed, the TD is as dynamically black as the fossilized bones of the dinosaur. This is undoubtedly the first and only time an MG has shared space next to one of the greatest, most powerful carnivores that ever walked the earth.

The rebuilding of a classic car and the display-mounting of a prehistoric dinosaur are not so different. Both require careful preparation of parts when putting them back together. Granted, there are far fewer known dinosaur skeletons to work on than MGs, but the motivation and skills are similar.

Each task also requires being adept with tools—including welding equipment—having patience, applying engineering insight to visualize the dynamics of the finished product, confidence, time, and more patience, as inevitable challenges arise during progress of the projects.

The work with dinosaurs and classic vehicles shares another similarity. A close encounter with a fascinating creature that lived on earth millions of years ago, and the opportunity to appreciate a beautiful MGTD that travelled highways and byways seven decades ago, allows the public (and especially children, who exhibit great enthusiasm) the chance to learn about the past and, in natural progression, to consider the future of our planet.

MM

Included among Barry and April's skeletal restorations/constructions are an 84-foot long, 10,000 pound, freestanding Brontodiplodocus, and a 72-foot long Sauropod skeleton. Google "Tristan the T Rex" for amazing photos and stories.



Racing a Marcos GT at the Nurburgring



By John Sutton

As an 80-year-old nutball car-geek I was reading an article about the Nurburgring and it brought back memories. I raced there in 1963 and 1964 in the 500km race for sportscars, and won the 1000cc Class in 1963.

After winning the AutoSport Championship in 1961 where the final was a three-hour race at the Snetterton circuit in the UK, I decided that long distance racing was a good idea. It required a level of planning and strategy, which was lacking in the short five or ten lap sprint races.

At the time I was working in the design department of the General Motors plant at Vauxhall Motors in the UK, and after several calls to the ADAC (auto club) in Germany I managed to convince them to give me an entry to

the Nurburgring race. Quite clearly an international event of this caliber was going to test my endurance, skill, and ability to prepare the car, not to mention my bank account as a private entrant with no Works backing.

Oh! I forgot to mention that the car I drove was a 1959 Marcos GT made entirely from plywood and spruce, like the famous "Spruce Goose" built by Howard Hughes. It was designed and the chassis built in Dolgellau in North Wales by an aircraft engineer named Frank Costin who had worked on the De Havilland Mosquito bomber during World War Two. The name of Marcos was derived from the names of Marsh and Costin. Jem Marsh being the manufacturer.

Having trained as an aircraft engineer myself, I was immediately

attracted to the possibilities of this wooden car. I was therefore the first person to order and pay for a Marcos GT. However, I was not a very experienced racecar driver in 1959 and Jem Marsh gave me very little support with building the car, as he wanted to succeed in racing and did not rate high my chances of success. So I had to build the car myself working in their factory in the evenings after work. Other cars commissioned by Bill Moss and Barry Filer (whose car was raced by Jackie Stewart in his rookie year) were finished before mine. But by the end of 1960 my car was ready for its first outing at Oulton Park.

Before making the trip to the Nurburgring I decided to seek the advice of a near neighbor, Pat Fergusson, who had raced there

successfully with a Works Lotus. He gave me the following words of wisdom:

First: spend a week before the race learning the circuit.

Second: learn the downhill sections first as a priority.

Third: make sure the car can withstand hundreds of gear changes as there are over 90 corners on each lap.

Fourth: be as physically fit as you possibly can, it is a very grueling experience.

So I and my two helpers/mechanics, Robert Cook and John Fuller, with whom I had been apprenticed in the aircraft business, set off for Germany a week prior to the race with high hopes. We had been allocated a garage in the quadrangle below the circuit, and having unloaded the Marcos, we set about obtaining a Carnet allowing us to drive around the track so that I could learn the circuit.

As we could not afford a hotel, we slept in the garage with the Marcos for the whole week.

The Nurburgring "Nordschliefe" is rated as the most dangerous circuit in the world. In the early 1960s it was still in prewar condition. There was no Armco barrier to prevent cars from going over the edge and falling several hundred feet into the pine forest below. There were several corners



where the approach was blind and preceded by a hump, sending the car airborne when you should have been setting it up for the corner. You had to remember whether it was a left or right corner and the speed at which to take it. The most notorious of these was on the approach to the Flugplats where Willie Mairesse, driving a Ferrari, had misjudged or forgotten, and did not come down until the car was embedded in the undergrowth beyond the corner, putting an abrupt stop to his race.

The downhill sections were, as advised by Pat, very demanding particularly as one gained speed very quickly near blind corners.

The Carousel or "Wall of Death" was also tricky to master as one had to fall into it at the last possible moment to avoid being thrown out early and sideways. Plus, it is disorienting to be looking up and ahead while concentrating on where one is on the track.

We were fortunate to meet with another UK driver, Peter Jackson, who took us around the circuit in his Jaguar saloon tow car for several laps and gave us a running commentary.

During official practice we were competing with the Abarth team for starting grid position and giving them a run for their money. Jem Marsh who was managing the Works Team noticed that Carlo Abarth was noting the times we were posting on our lap boards. Jem came over and said that he was going to put fictitious, faster times up for our cars, but not to say anything.

A few laps later, Carlo Abarth called all his drivers into the pits and proceeded to give them all a "dressing down," and telling them to go out and exceed the times put up by the strange wooden cars. The result of this was





several broken Abarth motors and some disillusioned drivers.

I think this is what is called “gamesmanship.”

On the day before the race I was about halfway around the circuit when a nasty noise erupted from the rear of the car and it started to steer very badly. I pulled over to the side of the circuit onto a grassy patch, got out and discovered that the rear axle welding had broken where the leading links were attached. My mechanics circled the track to find me, and we decided that it would be easier to remove the axle completely and leave the car where it was. Fortunately ESSO Track Service were at the circuit and very skillfully repaired the axle for me. We then rushed back to the stranded car, refitted the axle, and continued back to the pits. Unfortunately I was unable to set a quick timed practice lap and was placed far in the back of the starting grid.

On race day the drivers all lined up opposite the cars and when the flag was lowered we ran, jumped in and set off—a Le Mans start, which is now banned as being too dangerous. The Marcos with its Gullwing doors was not well suited for this type of start, and I fought the early laps from the back of the pack. However by about halfway, or two hours into the race, the advice I had

been given started to pay off. Taking Pat’s advice I had fitted a much stronger clutch diaphragm, which survived all the gear changing, whereas the entire team of Works Marcos all dropped out with clutch failures.

Another problem encountered during long distance racing is that a driver can be on a section of the track with no other cars in view and it is very easy to lose concentration. With a track like the Nordschliefe which rises and falls over 3000 feet in the course of one lap, and can be dry on one side and

wet on the other, it is very important to remain vigilant.

After four and a quarter hours racing, I finished 1st place in Class and 2nd overall. When the race was over there was considerable interest in the wooden car and I allowed famous rally driver Elizabeth Jones to take the car for a couple of laps of the circuit.

We then collected the Startgelt (entry fee) and prize money and moved to the Zurburg Hotel for a much deserved rest.

As you can imagine, this experience has stayed with me for all these years and sometimes I even wake in the night having dreamt that I am driving the Nurburgring.

Somehow the dream hasn’t ended yet. Several years ago my car turned up in California. I’m in the process of having it restored. *MM*





WITH LOVE, FROM IOWA

By Shawn Frank

Eight years ago, the Iowa British Car Club brought back to life a 1965 Triumph TR-4A that had sat dormant for more than 40 years. There were many parts missing but with some help from amazing friends, volunteers, and donations from Moss Motors, the TR gradually came together, bolt by bolt. They named it Johnny and gave it a mission.

The car has British Racing Green paint and a glovebox full of Sharpies. It's not a fancy car, and not everything works quite right, but these things aren't important. The mission is simple: give people rides in a cool car who wouldn't normally get that chance—concentrating on children and adults

affected by cancer. In essence, the Iowa car club is bringing a smile and a hug, in the form of a car, to people who really needed it.

This isn't about raising money or awareness, as those things are handled by people far more qualified than us—and we aren't very good at it anyway. What Johnny does best is to give people a way to express themselves. Anywhere on the car they can write the name of a loved one. Some names represent those that are fighting cancer, others are those who have passed on. Gazing upon the hundreds of names on every inch of this car, they know that they aren't alone.

We have seen so many beautiful moments when Johnny has been the conduit for a moment of love and hope

and happiness. People thanks us for bringing Johnny to an awareness event or a fund-raising charity, and we always thank them for inviting us. Not just to be courteous or kind, but because we walk out of every event with a warmth in our hearts, new friends, and a restored faith in the truly important things in life.

We also hope that Johnny inspires other enthusiasts to get their cars out on missions to bring smiles to faces. It doesn't need to be a big charity event, sometimes just making one person's day has a bigger impact than we'll ever know. *MM*

*You can follow
Drive Away Cancer Iowa
on Facebook.*



Russ helped put Johnny together. He signed Johnny with a gold marker, symbolizing those who are currently fighting cancer.



Portland All British Field Meet



By Michael Kotowski

Mind if I take a few measurements on this twelve footer?" I ask the guy at the trailer rental lot as I pull out my tape measure. "Go ahead," he says, eyeing my classic Mini with a hint of suspicion. I measure the rear door and call out to my buddy Jeff, "five foot, eight inches." I turn to my Mini and measure the widest part of the car. "Five foot, six inches," I tell Jeff. "That's gonna be close," says Jeff. "Naw, it'll be fine. We'll just have to take it easy getting past the rear doors," I say. "Whoa, hold it right there!" shouts the lot guy. "You can't put a car in there!"

I anticipated this conversation and was fully prepared. "Why not?" I ask. "My Mini weighs less than 1400 pounds. That's 800 pounds less than the trailer's capacity," I say. "Cuz it's not a car trailer. No cars," says the lot guy.

Jeff and I step away from the lot guy and have an under-our-breath conference.

"Okay," I say, turning to the lot guy, "We'll use the trailer to haul our pit equipment and figure out another way to haul the car." I wink at Jeff. We hitch the trailer to my son-in-law's Dodge Ram, and as we wave goodbye to lot guy, he shouts, "No cars!"

Thinking it might have been pushing our luck to ask the lot guy if he will also rent us some ramps, I decide to borrow a set from my son-in-law. We line the car up to the trailer and measure twice, push once—to paraphrase an old saying. Halfway up the ramp, we're having second thoughts.

It'll fit through the rear doors fine—with inches to spare—but there'll be no room for one of us to get inside the trailer along with the car to chock the wheels, tie the car down, or even to stop it from smashing into the front of the trailer. Defeated, we sheepishly head back to the rental lot to return the trailer and get our deposit back.

"What's wrong," asks the lot guy, "car wouldn't fit?"

PLAN B

Two airline tickets, an adjustment to our hotel reservations, and we were on our way to Portland, Oregon, for the "All British Field Meet," the oldest and largest all British car event in the USA. As disappointed as I was that 'Rosebud,' my Mini, would not be joining us, I couldn't help but look down from 38,000 feet at the highway below and think of the grueling 2,000 mile round trip we were avoiding. Perhaps this was the smarter move all along.

Jeff was the designated photographer. Despite numerous bags and cases of gear, he decided he needed to rent an additional telephoto lens. The fellow at the camera shop put a \$10,000 encumbrance on his credit card and said, "Here ya go, don't break it." Yeah, the lens was that big. Jeff could have shot the entire event from our hotel balcony six miles away.

As if to make the huge and diverse fleet of British autos lined up on the grass field feel at home, Portland

did its best in replicating authentic British weather—grey and drizzly with moments of pouring rain. That is not to say we didn't have some nice sunshine in the mix. A particularly large downpour occurred during the banquet Saturday evening as Paddy Hopkirk began his presentation. The awning kept us dry and the sound system overcame the sound of the pelting rain.

Paddy charmed the crowd with tales of past glory, illustrated by vintage videos and images. He also brought us up to speed on his present-day efforts helping older drivers retain their driving skills through the "IAM RoadSmart" program.

Mr. Hopkirk is to Minis what Dan Gurney is to Ford. Although he is best known for his success in Minis, like Dan Gurney, he drove many different marques during his long and storied career. His first victory came in 1953 at the Cairncastile hillclimb in Northern Ireland driving a VW Bug.

Paddy's driving skills behind the wheel of a Triumph TR3 got him noticed by Triumph's manufacturer, the Standard Motor Company, where he went on to become a factory driver for Standard, and later, the Rootes Group, driving a Sunbeam Rapier and Hillman Husky. After a test-drive in Pat Moss' Austin-Healey 3000 and being impressed with the car, Paddy



The author along with Paddy Hopkirk and Eric Newland, the ABFM Chairman.

signed up to drive for the British Motor Corporation and took his Austin-Healey 3000 to second place in the Liège-Sofia-Liège rally, despite driving on a shredded tire.

Paddy is perhaps best known for his astounding wins in the fabled Monte Carlo Rally, driving his Mini Cooper alongside Jaguars, Mercedes Benz', Lotus-powered Cortinas, Ford Falcons, and a field of cars with three and four times the displacement of the diminutive Mini.

An outright win at Monte Carlo in 1964 along with co-driver Henry Liddon made Paddy Hopkirk a household name, at least in Europe.

In 1982, he won the RAC Golden 50 in a Mini Cooper with co-driver Brian Culcheth. His ability to expertly pilot Mini Coopers continued into the 1990s as he and co-driver Alec Poole won the Pirelli Classic Marathon. In 2010, the newly created International Rally Hall of Fame inducted Paddy among its first four charter members. A well deserved honor, to be sure.

2019 was the 60th anniversary of the Mini, so of course it was the featured marque at the ABFM. While there were every manner of British car and vintage represented, clearly the Mini was front and center.



As we passed the empty stall reserved for Rosebud, I had a moment of regret—several moments, actually. Jeff and I were thoroughly enjoying ourselves at what was essentially Rosebud's own birthday party, while Rosebud sat in a darkened garage a thousand miles away. It didn't seem right. A few moments later the clouds darkened and it began to pour rain.

Spectators were caught short and began sprinting for the tents and awnings ringing the showgrounds. The car owners, on the other hand, who were, only moments ago, under the tents and awnings to get out of the sun, ran out into the rain and toward their cars with all the panic and alarm of a parent running to shield their child from a swarm of bees.

Flapping tarps were secured, bonnets hastily fastened, and scrapbooks hurriedly gathered up and thrown into boots. Cabriolet owners cursed their balky retractable top mechanisms while attempting to shield 70-year old leather interiors and walnut dashboard veneers from the onslaught. Once the immediacy of the moment had past, I'm sure their attention turned

to the thorough soaking the mostly Lucas ignition systems received. It is ironic that automobiles manufactured in a country fabled for dampness fare so poorly during inclement weather. If there were ever an ode written to British

cars, "Candle in the Wind" would be an appropriate title.

Sunday dawned bright and sunny, the clean, clear air freshly ionized from yesterday's storm. The show cars were mostly replaced by an automotive swap

meet. I say mostly because there were some stragglers, victims I assume, of wet ignition systems.

The swap meet prompted me to once again reaffirm my decision to leave the car at home. I've been known to over-purchase car parts, having only recently dumped the last of my leftovers on eBay from a restoration seven years ago. One checked bag and one in the overhead limits one's ability to drag, say, a rusty sub-frame home.

The ABFM was held on the grounds of Portland International Raceway, and the track provided a much enjoyed soundtrack to the weekend event. There was no mistaking the thunder of the big bore racecars. Whenever the Mustangs, Cobras and Corvettes were running

of the front straight, conversation on the showgrounds ground to a halt until the field was well on its way to Turn One. As enticing as the low-frequency thump and wallop of the V-8s were, it was the raspy, crackly note of the Minis that got Jeff and I off the lawn and into the bleachers. Four races and a field of thirty Minis on the track kept us entertained.

We positioned ourselves at the apex of Turn One. That afforded us a clear view of three, tight little turns that, along with some aggressive curb hopping provided moments when both inside wheels were airborne and it wasn't at all certain the landing would end well.

By late Sunday afternoon it was time to go. Jeff and I tossed our swag bags into the back seat, hopped in our rented Ford Fusion and gave thanks for a dry floor and working windshield wipers. My plan, as soon as I returned home, was to go out into the garage with two slices of cake and a couple of candles for a private moment with Rosebud and wish her a happy birthday.

MM

The 2020 Portland ABFM is scheduled for September 11-13 and is celebrating 90 years of MG. For more information, visit www.abfm-pdx.com.





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Application	Ground	Part#
Austin Healey 3000	Negative	231-720
Austin Healey 3000	Positive	231-721
Jaguar 3.4S & 3.8S	Positive	37-1291
Jaguar 3.4S & 3.8S	Negative	37-1292
Jaguar E-Type Series I	Positive	37-1281
Jaguar E-Type Series I	Negative	37-1282
Jaguar E-Type Series Ii	Negative	37-1283
Jaguar E-Type Series Iii	Negative	37-1284
Jaguar MK II	Positive	37-1285
Jaguar MK II	Negative	37-1286
Jaguar XJ-S, OE Direct Repl	Negative	37-1290
Jaguar XK 120	Positive	37-1277
Jaguar XK 120	Negative	37-1278
Jaguar XK 140	Negative	37-1276
Jaguar XK 140	Positive	37-1279
Jaguar XK 150	Positive	37-1288
Jaguar XK 150	Negative	37-1289
MGA	Negative	231-683
MGA	Positive	231-684
MGB 1962-76	Negative	231-681
MGB 77-80	Negative	231-682
Midget 1500	Negative	231-716
Midget/Sprite 1275 Crossflow	Negative	231-715
Midget/Sprite 948-1275 Vert Flow	Negative	231-713
Midget/Sprite 948-1275 Vert Flow	Positive	231-714
Triumph GT6	Negative	231-719
Triumph Spitfire - Narrow Rad	Negative	231-718
Triumph Spitfire - Wide Rad	Negative	231-717
Triumph TR2 Thru TR4 (Not 4A)	Negative	231-710
Triumph TR250, TR6	Negative	231-712
Triumph TR4a	Negative	231-711



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