

SYSTEM
SALE

SAVINGS ON GEAR BOX, ENGINE, AND MORE!

Moss Motoring

ISSUE 3, 2023



Most memories fade with time.
**And a Few Grow All
the More Beautiful.**

Enjoy classic British poetry? See pg 24.





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

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On the Cover:

Mike, Alex, and Sara collaborated to create this scene to complement Scott's poetry on page 24.

Editorial contributions to Moss Motoring are welcomed and should be emailed to: editor@mossmotors.com or mailed to "Editor – Moss Motoring, 440 Rutherford St., Goleta, CA 93117" Moss Motors assumes no responsibility for lost or damaged materials. Materials accepted are subject to such revision

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Guests Welcome

I love, love, love hearing about what car clubs are doing to have fun while at the same time building up a community of support and encouragement. I'm an introvert at heart, but even I know that the best moments in life are experiences shared with others.

It takes extra effort to reach out and invite others—especially people you don't know well—to join you in the garage. Some people, God bless 'em, are gifted in this way and find it natural and enjoyable to open up their doors. Whichever “vert” personality camp you fall into, I hope you open yourself up to encounter folks like you'll find at the Capital Triumph Register.

~David Stuursma, Editor

TAKING THE LEAD

CAPITAL TRIUMPH REGISTER

by Matthew McGuire

Ironically, my wife and I relocated to London, England, about a year after I acquired a Spitfire, so all the refurbishments I was considering were either on hold or being conducted piecemeal during our occasional visits back stateside. However, whilst abroad, I was still posting photos on the Triumph Experience website of the various car shows and auto-jumbles I visited to pick up parts and other bits.

It was from one of these posts that a member of the Capital Triumph Register reached out and invited me to join the club. My address was still listed as Virginia. Upon my return, I quickly joined the club, and it was the best thing I could have done as a novice Triumph owner.

One of the benefits the CTR are the “Get Your Hands Dirty” sessions.

As someone who did not grow up working on cars, my mechanical

knowledge was considerably basic, to say the least. Website forums and YouTube videos will only get you so far. The GYHD sessions provide firsthand experience with guidance from club members who have technical knowledge of the job at hand.

Any club member who has a project that they need help with can volunteer their vehicle to be the session's subject.

About every month or so, the club will gather at a garage for a project, repair, or upgrade that might require at least two sets of hands or is something the owner has not attempted in the past. The projects can include anything from a relatively simple task, such as a brake upgrade, to something more difficult like replacing your convertible top.

Typically, the project can be accomplished in a day. In an unusual circumstance, during our clutch replacement session, it was determined



the flywheel needed to be resurfaced. We stopped for the day, and one of the guys took the flywheel to a local machinist the next day. Luckily, the skim job was done quickly, and we were able to schedule a follow-up session for that weekend. Everyone reassembled, the skimmed flywheel and clutch went in, the transmission re-installed, and the job was done.

The next scheduled GYHD session is to replace Rotoflex couplings and install an oil cooler kit along with a spin-on oil filter on a GT6.

This will be the seventh session in eight months. Other projects have been: TR6 shock oil and springs replacement; Spitfire overdrive transmission installation; refurbish door window channels on two TR6s; TR6 clutch replacement; and install a new windshield into a Herald Estate.

To highlight these sessions, and hopefully help other enthusiasts, the club has videotaped several GYHD sessions and put them on our YouTube channel at The Capital Triumph Register Club. *MM*

Please continue to send your stories of the leaders that have so much to do with the enjoyment of the classic British car experience. Submit stories and photos to: editor@mossmotors.com



Get Your Hands Dirty — on YouTube.



Not only is the Capital Triumph Register sharing their expertise among their members, but the whole world is also welcome to benefit from the CTR Club YouTube channel where you'll find videos of many of the Get Your Hands Dirty projects and the fun they have together.

Like, comment, and subscribe to stay tuned for more!



Bouncing Across America

By Bruce Porter



THE TRIALS OF DRIVING A MORGAN THAT WOULD RATHER HAVE STAYED HOME IN BRITAIN

The plan was to pick up the brand new 1986 Morgan Plus 8 in San Francisco, where it was imported from the factory in England, and drive it back home to Brooklyn. I'd been warned, of course, that taking it on a 3,000-mile trip was an experience not even Morgan zealots would anticipate with much joy. Its steering is stiff to the extent that wrenching the car around curves feels a little like doing weight training arm exercises. There's no insulation in the firewall, which means that heat from the engine compartment pours onto one's feet in nearly visible waves. Then there's the famous Morgan ride, about which the standard joke—that the car hits the first and fourth bumps, hurtling over the middle two—only mildly overstates the case. On top of all this, the car's engine—a monster 3.5-liter V-8 from Rover that can push it up to 150 miles an hour—is routinely converted by the lone US dealer to run on propane instead of gasoline in order to satisfy American clean air standards. “Where on earth will you get propane?” friends asked. “No problem, it's everywhere,” I said. “I've got a book.”

Whatever secret qualms I had melted away when I arrived in San Francisco and saw the car sitting

with the top down on Pier 33, its low, sinuous, roadster shape outlined against the harbor, its color a deep, deep, almost black green—a machine that could be described as achingly beautiful. “A little champagne before setting out?” the dealer asked as he brought out a couple of glasses.

Soon I was hurtling out of San Francisco down U.S. 101, past those grassy hills that look like the backs of golden bears, one arm draped over the gentle dip in the door. At Palo Alto I picked up a friend, Wade Greene, who had flown out from New York on business and would ride back with me as far as Santa Fe. A Lincoln Continental pulled up at a light. “That one of those plastic replica cars?” asked a voice from within. I looked over blankly and depressed the accelerator. A noise like that of a small earth tremor emerged from the twin exhausts. “Oh,” said the voice. I moved off.

San Jose, 5pm. Horrendous traffic jam. Also very hot, the Morgan not happy. Its home in Malvern, England, sits on the same latitude as Labrador, Canada; where it is now lies in the Mediterranean. Wade is marveling at the amount of heat being experienced by his feet. Anxiety about the radiator's boiling over dominates the conversation,

until our attention is diverted at a stop light by the fact that the gear shift seems to have come off in my hand.

Instant depression. It is Friday evening, the start of Memorial Day weekend, in the leisure capital of the world where the chance of finding anyone to work on a broken Morgan gear shift is about the same as the car's sprouting wings. We haul our depression into the cool recesses of El Rancho Bar in a shopping mall across the street. The Morgan will just have to be flat-bedded back to San Francisco. We'll fly home. Forget the whole trip. Great! Our predicament makes the rounds of the bar to the general heehawing of men and women in cowboy hats. You boys driving to New York? Car runs on propane? Everybody goes out to have a look. There we find a young man affixing his business card to our windshield. “What's the trouble?” he asks. “I saw it was a Morgan: I had to stop.” Turns out he runs a garage that specializes in British cars. Quickly he unfastens the gear box. “Nothing serious,” he says. “A screw has come loose, that's all. Get the car towed to my house, take about 30 seconds to fix.” (Not counting, as it turns out, the six hours it takes him to tear down the gear box to get at the screw.)

Nevertheless, Saturday we're back on the road, zooming through the San Joaquin Valley, past the giant rolling irrigators that make the desert bloom. After a stop at a friend's in Hollywood for a swim and a bed, we set out to cross the Mojave Desert. In late May and without air-conditioning, this is something to be undertaken at night, listening to the tires crunching the tarantulas that lie on the road. We're in a hurry; so after filling up with propane at an RV campsite near Barstow, a desolate, treeless place that fits our image of a penal colony in the sub-Sahara, we hit the worst stretch of the desert at about noon, with 200 miles to go.

It is 110 degrees. We have put up the top but the waves of heat pouring in through the sides and through the firewall from the engine make it feel as if we'd left the oven on broil for 24 hours and then climbed inside. The Morgan is seriously hyperthermic, its temperature needle lying close to the pin that signals 140 degrees Centigrade. Nothing around but sand, scrub and cactus. It now dawns on us why Indians in the Southwest stand in clutches under road signs—crowding into that little parallelogram of shade. Greene notices that the wiper blades are melting onto the windshield. Finally, thankfully, we reach Needles, stop the car and hurl our bodies into the Colorado River.

From the low desert at Needles, the road climbs a cooling 8,000 feet to Santa Fe, whence Greene flies home, and another friend, Tad White, a New York admiralty lawyer, takes his seat. By now we'd gotten the hang of finding fuel at various propane wholesalers, truck stops and campgrounds to the extent that we'd stopped thinking of ourselves as desperate characters out of "Road Warriors." The only real worry is running dry at night, a fear that toward 5 P.M. forces us into 100-mile-an-hour dashes to catch a propane place before it closes.

According to a billboard outside Liberal, Kansas, this is where Dorothy lived before being tornadoed to Oz,

something that encouraged local boosters to bill the town as "The Land of Ahhhs." It is also the center for the formidable Kansas thunderstorm, which can arise in minutes and meeting no resistance from the prairie, build to an intensity rarely known in the East or West.

We ran into a sample halfway between Liberal and Wichita, when a malignant, gun-metal gray curtain suddenly dropped down all across the horizon. As we rushed to get the top up, raindrops with enough water to fill a shot glass began splashing on the car; within seconds we were driving through a waterfall, the tiny Morgan windshield wipers unable to cope. The wind picked

up. Then hailstones the size of cherries started banging down, and the storm clawed open all the imperfections and pores in the Morgan top, which is not made to withstand anything more formidable than Scotch mist. In no time, we were drenched as well as driving blind, 18-wheelers swooshing by. Finally, an overpass loomed ahead, and we pulled over to wait out the deluge.

From St. Louis on, I drove alone, barreling along Interstate 70, wanting badly to get home. Illinois, Indiana, Ohio just a blur. Bolts began coming loose in the undercarriage, the British apparently not having discovered lock washers, and when the car hit northern Pennsylvania, it began having serious



problems with the rotten roads of the frost belt. Its rear suspension consists of a 100-pound axle and a couple of leaf springs, about as sophisticated a mechanism as on, say, a manure spreader. With not much to dampen it, when the car encounters a major bump the rear end takes off into space. The driver's knees crash into the underside of the dashboard and his head strikes the strut holding up the top. The trick is to avoid bumps.

A brief stop at Gettysburg to see the Peach Orchard, where my great-grandfather, Isaac Porter, lost his arm during the battle. Then there I was crossing the Verrazano Bridge and too suddenly bouncing over the decrepit streets of Brooklyn, feeling slightly out of place, the car begging to be put back on a smooth highway, and among the many reflections I was having about the eight-day trip was how to tell Wade Green that I'd misread the instructions for a switch under the dashboard and we'd had the heater running full blast all across the Mojave.

Looking Back

I fell for the Plus 8 in the summer of 1985. A magazine had sent me to the UK to do a story about Peter Morgan and his son Charles, whose family had been famously building the car since 1909, and at the same factory near the Welsh border. I watched workmen push a new model off the assembly line, a vision I challenge anyone to resist emptying their IRA account for, along with their child's college fund, so as to take possession immediately of this irresistible vehicle.

That decision prompted my eight-day cross-country odyssey a year later to bring the lady home—a story I shared in the New York Times. In those days all new Morgans had to be converted from gasoline to propane to pass US emission standards. This nod to a safer environment caused major obstacles when taking it on the road. Not only were propane dealers lamentably scarce, and located well off our route home, but they harbored this apprehension that, once the car had taken on 20 gallons of their super-volatile motor fuel, it awaited only activation of the starter switch to blow itself sky-high.

On the other hand, there's almost no hardship I wouldn't gladly endure while driving a British sports car—for a little while, at any rate. Unfortunately, being 6-foot-3, I never quite fit into any of them, including a rickety and abused MGTD and a down-on-its-luck TR3B.

My last year of Morgan ownership was 2008. I had turned 70, newly retired as a professor at the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism. I drove it down from Gloucester, Mass, to our place in Greenwich Village. It was 104 degrees; I had the top up and the side curtains off, to blow in some air. Arriving in the city after five hours of heavy traffic, I was so overwhelmed by the engine heat and this feeling of disorientation that I could hardly pry myself out of the car. That did it. I sold the Morgan for an old duffer's sports car, which was an air conditioned 1989 Mercedes 560 SL hardtop convertible, jet black, the last year they made it. I found it where many end up as their final resting place, an old Mercedes dealership in Pompano Beach, Florida.

Ah comfort. Ah peace.

But what fun it had been. *MM*



Morgan Plus 8 cut-away illustration by artist David Townsend. David has created dozens of extensively detailed classic car and racecar cut-away works of art available as gallery quality prints at SportsCarArt.com.

Car Art



Some people want their car to be precisely like it was when it was hastily driven off the factory floor to the transporter. All original, baby.

And then there are folks like Steve Homewood who, with precious memories of years of youth spent in Montana and Wyoming, sent cut swaths of leather to the best artist he could find: Jeff Morrow of Shooting Star Saddlery. The effect on his 1962 MGA, owned since 1968, is magical. "You know what's wrong with your car?..." a perfect stranger said to Steve, "...what's wrong is—I'm not the one driving it!"



Show us your handiwork.

Attention car customizers, this is your invitation: Show us your creations! We want to see every form of creativity applied to make your car uniquely yours—from the subtle touches to the extravagant. Send photos and a story describing your car customizations to: MossMotoring.com/Car-Art



Some More Dos Than Don'ts

When Working on Your MGA

By Ned Serleth

Perhaps you've read my last DIY exposé in *Moss Motoring* on working on your MGA. Well, let's ramble on and address another step of the restoration process: body repair, especially those infernal B-posts, sills, and accompanying rocker panels where rust grows like weeds in a garden, causing the body of your MGA to become two pieces of the same vehicle. Hopefully when it's your turn to attempt replacing those pieces of metal Swiss cheese, a few step by step "Dos and Don'ts" instructions may save you what's left of the hair on your head. *So here we go...*

Step One: Remove all body parts needed to expose rust issues, breaking off a minimum of three bolts in the process.

Step Two: Since you're just getting started, "Do" thumb through your brand spanking new Moss Motors parts catalog and decide which stamped steel components you'll be needing to resurrect the barn-find-rust-bucket you've chosen to restore.

Step Three: Once you've gotten your replacements, the next step is to outline with a useless marker how much of the decomposing body must be amputated, using new parts as a guide.

Step Four: Once you've made those nearly invisible marks, it's time to get rid of the rust, and what better way to do that than to whip out the ol' Sawzall. "Do" be sure to put on a pair of newer safety goggles, instead of those scratched, sun-bleached, and fly specked goggles which you normally ignore and which lie forlornly on the windowsill, secured by a brown recluse's web.

Step Five: "Do" be sure to take a few measurements before lopping off the rusty B-pillar and accompanying sill panels. "Don't" forget to do this!

Step Six: "Do" adjust your M.I.G. welder before attempting to weld your MGA. If your M.I.G. is too hot, you'll soon have a honeycomb of holes in those shiny new parts. "Don't" forget to turn on your shielding gas, or you'll have sputtering drops of liquid metal falling to the floor of your work space where they come into contact with the puddle of flammable fluid from the dripping oil pan and ignite, thereby scorching your floorboards and singeing those last few

hairs on your head that you're trying to save. Also, be sure to check the nozzle of the wire feed line to make sure it isn't full of slag from the last failed attempt at welding when you forgot to turn on the shielding gas.

Of course, it goes without saying, you cleaned off the area where the B-post is to be connected so you get a good weld instead of just burning holes and sending drops of molten steel cascading to the floor like some kind of Mt. Kilauea eruption.

Okay, let's say for the sake of argument you cleaned all the metal to be welded, you adjusted the heat setting on that wire feed welder, and the B-post is securely joined to the body with only a minimum of burn-throughs. Now it's on to Step Seven.

Step Seven: Time to rehang the doors and make sure you've got a good fit.

Like I had suggested, those measurements you forgot to take sure would have come in handy before welding the B-post to the car with five pounds of welding wire. Did you allow space for the shut face panel that so many of us overlook and will make the door openings too small? If not, the only



Another “Do” in the previous DIY article suggests securing the cockpit front-to-back with strong braces before lifting the body off the chassis, which due to the disintegration of the B-posts, sills, and rocker panels will soon crumble and become two pieces of the same car. Ted, the Dalai Lama of reconstructive MGA surgery and the owl-wise old man in the accompanying selfie, highly suggests keeping the body on the chassis when welding. “Otherwise the whole thing will fall apart,” he says in his soft-spoken British accent. But I have to ask, where is the challenge in that?



remedy is to get the trusty Sawzall back out and repeat steps one through six. If by chance all the metal blades have been smoothed off like teeth on an over-the-hill horse, an angle grinder with a cut off wheel gnaws through pounds of poor welds as easily as slicing off a piece of watermelon.

Step Eight: So, the B-post is in place and the doors fit. Now comes the inner sill. First, “Do” remove the door; it makes for an easier installation. Like with your previous welds: remove all paint, oils, blood, sweat, and tears. “Do” weld the new sill (part number 457-800 R/H and 457-810 L/H) to the A and B-posts. “Don’t” forget the lessons you learned in Step Six.

Step Nine: Your next welding challenge includes the top flange of the inner sill panel, sill plate, and sill. “Do” be careful not to apply too many globs of metal. Otherwise, you’ll have to grind off all that extra steel, which only adds to the unrealistic timeline you’ve set for yourself. Now do the same with the lower flange of the inner sill panel and sill.

Once again, you’ll want to make sure all the metal parts to be welded are clean enough to eat off. If by chance a friend of yours has a spot welder like my mentor Ted, it’ll be smooth sailing when it comes to attaching all those parts at one and the same time. Of course you’ll need a hundred or so Vise Grips to hold the pieces together and to get in the way of the spot welder, which weighs close to that of a Briggs & Stratton ten-horse mower engine. I found using two belts linked together as a strap to hang the welder around my neck—recommended by no back specialist ever—freed up my hands to make adjustments to the clamps while kneeling in the black soot from the burnt oil and floorboards.

Step Ten: You’ve done a fine job so far. The only piece left is the outer rocker panel. Don’t assume everything will line up correctly and all your troubles will be over. No sir. Remember what happens when you ass.u.me something.

Nevertheless, after clamping the inner sill panel, sill, and outer rocker in

place, hang that back-breaking welder around your neck and commence to finishing the job.

Step Eleven: Spend time at the chiropractor to re-adjust your cervical alignment.

Step Twelve: It's time once again to hang the doors to check the fit. Dang it! The lower driver's side door wants to scrape the outer rocker. It would seem there's a bit of a rise to the outside of the rocker. Naturally, this means the spot welds need to be drilled out, re-vised gripped, re-welded, and the chiropractor re-visited.

Not all is lost though since we learn from our mistakes. The second time to re-weld the lower flange, "Do" leave the doors on and place a used paint stick between the lower portion of the door and the outer rocker to help achieve a horizontal surface.

Looking at your finished product, you say to yourself, "Now, that's a

fine job, well done. Guess I'll have a beer." Oh, sure, you say that until you look more closely at your lower welds. Your spot welds are good, but do you remember those you drilled out? They still exist like black holes at the center of a thousand parallel universes. Thankfully, that's no cause for concern.

As any good welder worth their weight in steel wire knows, with a practiced hand you can fill those holes with M.I.G. wire by just tapping the trigger, leaving a small bead which can easily be ground smooth. Besides, the finishing strip, which comes later and which so many ignore, works as beautifully as an invisibility cloak to hide those miscalculations.

Step Thirteen: Great! All the rust had been eradicated and new parts gleam in their rightful place on both sides of the little roadster. Now, if you took the Dalai Lama's approach, it's time to unfasten the body from the chassis

so you can begin removing 60-some years of grime, followed by dismantling brakes, brake lines, the gas tank, engine, gearbox, wiring, and more tasks than the length of this article allows. Since you did such a fine job welding the body back together and your workspace is limited, it's perfectly fine to lean the body on its side against the wall of your restoration palace, keeping in mind to leave those strong braces in place, just in case.

There you have it. In thirteen superstitiously easy steps you have repaired the typical rust that plagues most older barn-find MGAs. Now is the time to take that break, pat yourself on your aching back, and have a beer. However, "Don't" rest too long; more fun in MGA restoration awaits you. *MM*

Don't be shy. Get in good and close to appreciate the gradual improvement of your welding skills. Once the car is put together, you'll be among the few to have seen your handiwork. Enjoy the moment!



One-of-a-Kind Tools: DIY Valve Compressor by Russ Van Tine

Sometimes unique tasks inspire special doohickeys or custom-made contraptions. We want to hear about the unique tasks, problems, and tool solutions that British car owners are more likely than most to encounter and hurdle with a bit of ingenuity and luck.

Tell us about your oddball
and custom-made tools at:
MossMotoring.com/oddball-tools

There is often a problem discovered on many XPAG engines that have been worked on by people who are not familiar with its design. The valve seals get installed incorrectly below the spring washer (instead of above the washer and below the cotters) causing a lot of oil to pass down the valve into the cylinder. In a moment of inspiration, I made a valve spring compressor that allows the valve springs and seals to be worked on or replaced *without removing the head*.

There are a few valve spring compressors on the market (and I have several) but none of them worked on my 1953 MGTD with shot valve seals. The XPAG engine uses two springs for each valve. Some of the spring compressors available work on some cars with one spring (by grabbing onto the spring and using a dial to compress the spring) but it does not reach the internal spring on an XPAG engine. Other compressors require the head to be removed, and not everyone is comfortable doing that. So I came up with a basic spring compressor that's very easy to make.

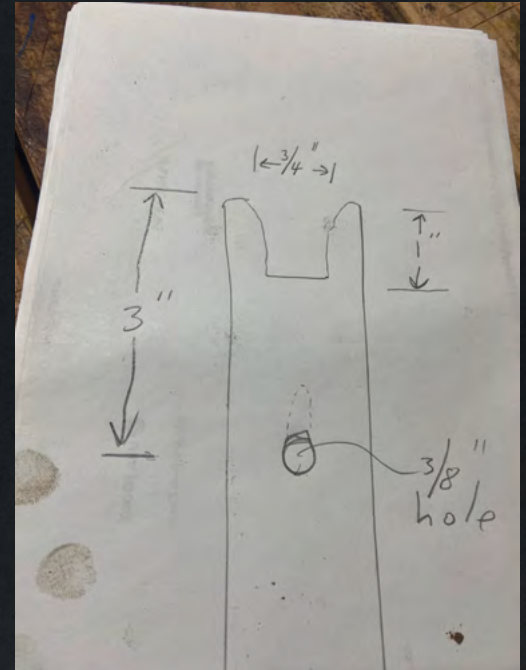
Start with a standard pry-bar you can get at any hardware store. Using a grinder, open up the pry end to make room for the top of the valve (with cotters and seal) to pass through while holding down the spring washer to pass through it. I then drilled a $\frac{3}{8}$ " hole enlarging the existing v-shaped nail hole to make room for the rocker bolt to pass through it and screw into the head.

Very simple tool. Easy to make. And it works great!

Of course, each piston should be brought to TDC so that the valve does not fall into the cylinder. To ensure the valve doesn't fall you can apply air pressure to the cylinder via the spark plug hole, or push some vinyl rope into the spark plug hole so the valve stays in a closed position. Don't use cotton rope. It can leave lint in the cylinder and it is hard to push in.

Basically, after removing the valve cover and the rocker, each spring can be compressed by passing the larger rocker bolt through the hole in the tool and screwing it into the head where it was removed from. The "ground end" of the tool is placed above the valve and the valve spring washer. Tightening or loosening the rocker bolt comes in handy in order to get the best leverage (and to adjust for any curvature that the pry bar has). Pushing up on the longer end of the tool compresses the springs giving you great leverage to remove the cotters, remove the valve seal, and remove the springs. The tops of two valves can be worked on from each of the positions from the rocker bolt holes. To reassemble, simply reverse the procedure.

I have tried many times to do this with other valve spring compressors but each was a nightmare. I hope this helps someone. *MM*





FORMULA FORD RECOLLECTIONS

by Ed Praxel

In the 1970s, one of my ambitions was to race a car on as many British race circuits as possible. So, with help from friends and family I set out to do this. A relocation from Panama to the north of England was the first part of accomplishing this quest. The second part began when I read a “for sale” ad in a British car magazine advertising a Lotus 69 Formula Ford. Colin Chapman’s innovative designs were obvious in the esthetics of the 69. I bought it, and so began the adventure.

Croft - 1972

Croft, in the north of England, was my first race and I drove cautiously during practice. Thus, I was at the back of the grid for the actual race, but like Graham Hill used to say, “You meet the nicest people at the back of the grid.”

As a novice I was required to have six signatures on my Restricted license and must have raced on at least two

race circuits before I could obtain my National license. I also had to identify my novice status with a large black X on the rear of the car.

As the race progressed I became more confident and was using the brakes later and harder at the end of the straight before the chicane. The next lap I applied the brakes vigorously and the car swapped ends and I was in a lurid slide on the grass. I just clipped a marshal’s post and that resulted in no signature for my license! Not a very auspicious start to my racing aspirations. Adjusting the brake bar balance remedied that problem.

Cadwell Park

Cadwell Park was referred to as the most challenging circuit in Britain as it undulates over a considerable drop and rise in terrain. One of the marshals, in a serious manner indicated to me that at the end of the short section of track

there was a barn and the farmer left the doors open so that a car missing the following turn could run through the barn without doing themselves damage. Sure enough, on my first lap there was a stone barn and the doors were open! I was driving cautiously so I didn’t avail myself of the farmer’s kind consideration.

Thruxton

Another destination was Thruxton race circuit 240 miles south of our home in Harrogate on rural roads that wound through one village after another. Thruxton had a long downhill gradient which used the highest cogged gear I had. The straightaway was approached on a sweeping corner, which could be deceptive if a car was set up for understeer. The end of the straightaway was an abrupt chicane. I felt it was a demanding circuit.



Top photo: The Flying Scot himself, Jackie Stewart.

Bottom photo: My friends Roy and Rich chatting with Graham Hill.

One of the best parts of spectator viewing at the circuits was to be able to buy a pit pass and walk among the race cars, drivers and pit crews, take pictures, and talk to famous drivers of the day.

While in the vicinity we visited Salisbury Plain and the 5000-year-old stone monolith, Stonehenge. As I stood where people of another age had existed I speculated on how man has evolved.

Mallory Park

Accommodations were sparse in the Mallory Park area so we decided to spend the night in the rough, meaning my mechanic Roy and I slept in the starter's booth alongside the track, and my wife and daughter slept in our car. We went prepared for most eventualities and always carried camping gear. The next morning the aroma of bacon, eggs, and coffee was a good way to start the day.

Mallory Park was the shortest circuit in England—a little over a mile and a half. The track was flat in the oblong portion with a spur that climbed steeply to a hairpin curve and then dropped away to a blind left-hand turn. The downhill gradient didn't have landmarks so the driver momentarily looked out into space. It took fortitude to determine the braking point. It was a good circuit to learn on and one of my favorites.

Mallory was also one of the few racetracks that had entertainment between morning practice and the afternoon races. At one event the RAF Red Arrows performed precision flying. The red smoke trailing from each jet defined the maneuvers. Another event was competitive men's rollerskating, excluding the hairpin stretch. Motorcycle events also took place at Mallory.

In 1975 I made arrangements to meet a person from the engineering works that rebuilt the Lotus' engine. We were to meet at the pit entrance. The entry/exit road was narrow and cars were parked over a mile out from the track. I wondered what event was taking place and soon found out that Radio 1 had scheduled a fund raiser music program that included the "Bay City Rollers" a pop rock group world famous in the '70s. Some 47,000 people were in attendance and quite a stir was



Cresting the harpin's apex at Mallory Park.

made when "...A number of teenage girls ended up in the famous Mallory Lake in a bid to accost the Bay City Rollers..." The band never did get to perform. I did, however, get my engine.

Rufforth

Rufforth (a former RAF WWII aerodrome) was our backyard circuit and closest to home in Harrogate, Yorkshire. It was flat and featureless with a lot of room to "explore the grass!"

It was an enjoyable track to race on with a relaxed atmosphere where people mingled and anyone needing assistance was helped with parts or loans of equipment. It was club racing at its best.

Silverstone

Silverstone was hosting a sports prototype event and I was on the grid for a Formula Ford support race which was on the long circuit. Previously I had raced at Silverstone only on the short club circuit. In walking the pit area I noted an outbuilding with graffiti carved into it. The writing, at about head high, declared "War is big business, invest

your son!" It wasn't dated but the message, unfortunately, is timeless.

In racing terminology "turning a wheel in anger" refers to race competition and I thought of a time past when plane wheels headed for their targets did turn in anger on Royal Air Force aerodromes like Silverstone.

My young daughter and I walked along the pit area that evening and the atmosphere was punctuated by the din of generators which produced the lights for the teams as each team provided its own amenities. She was impressed by one of the mechanics wearing wooden shoes (clogs).

Children's Event

I was asked if I would bring the Lotus to a fund raiser on an estate where kids affected by the Thalidomide drug resided. It was mainly a showing of vintage cars and motorcycles and the Lotus looked like a dinky toy car compared to those horseless carriages. I didn't know what the reception would be but I was kept busy explaining the features of the Lotus. A constant question was "how do you get in and

out of the car?" People were amazed at how close the bottom of the car was to the road surface (3 1/2") which meant my bottom was as well. A lady asked if she could have her picture taken with the car and before I could say anything she proceeded to sit on the fiberglass body shell forward of the wind screen. No cracks appeared and the lady thanked me. The event was determined a success and it was apparent that the Lotus fulfilled another function besides racing.

Ingliston, Scotland

Ingliston was a small, tight circuit near Edinburgh, Scotland, and there wasn't any real run-off area. The event was by invitation and the race committee paid my trailer fee to the venue which was inside the Agricultural Fairgrounds. The paddock was in the covered livestock sheds area. Friends traveling in Europe attended the event and pit crewed the Lotus for me.

To conclude the day's racing, there was a Formula Libre event, which I entered. Formula Libre is exactly what its name says—a free-for-all of any type



Myself and Roy sheltered from the rain at Oulton Park. Debris in the clutch prevented any engagement. Fortunately we were able to flush everything out.

of race car from open-wheel cars to sedans to sports cars. I was located on the grid next to a head-high door handle! My concern was that I hoped the driver knew I was there. This wasn't a championship race so no points were involved and the atmosphere was congenial.

Oulton Park

Oulton Park was one of two races for the weekend and it proceeded to rain. The rain let up some after practice and Roy and I walked the pit looking at the various cars. It had been awhile since he was last there and he noted there was a new "convenience" of which he had to avail himself. The interior was finished in tile which was a considerable improvement over other circuits' facilities. The partitions were raised about a foot off the floor. Roy started to laugh and said there was graffiti indicating "watch out for limbo dancers!"

The rain began again, and the track was really slick. The car next to me on the grid lost traction and to avoid him I moved over to the verge which was a loose surface. This pulled me in and a sand-like material packed up the clutch. We found an archway and pulled the car underneath. Fortunately there was a nearby hose and we flushed out the clutch housing.

Peter Harrington

I had accomplished my ambition of racing the Lotus so I temporarily retired it to consider future options. I had an underlying thought that to realize my car's potential it would need an experienced driver. Coincidentally, my friend Peter Harrington, who I knew when I began club racing, was between rides, so I asked him if he would be interested in racing the Lotus, and he said yes.

The first time Peter ran the car in its new red livery was at the end of the season at Croft. He came in fifth and said he needed more brake on the front. His assessment of the car was, "Let's go for a championship next year." We picked Tate of Leeds Championship which included the Croft, Cadwell Park, and Rufforth race circuits. When the season finished, Peter won that championship.

Snetterton

Snetterton was a flat, fast circuit located near Thetford in Norwich, England. The day I was there was a practice day and I decided to take the Lotus out for some laps. One of the marshals mentioned to watch out for “heavy machinery.” After a few laps, passing by the pit I noticed a Lotus transporter unloading a Team Lotus F1 similar to Mario Andretti’s #5. I paid particular attention to my mirrors and shortly what was a spec behind me suddenly filled the mirrors and vanished into the distance. I didn’t know the speed difference between the two of us but momentarily the air was turbulent. It was an unforgettable experience.

Aintree

We entered a Formula Ford Festival held at Aintree Circuit with over 100 entries. It gave teams a comparative field from across the country. Aintree Racecourse, near Liverpool, is best known for the Grand National steeplechase, but the inner area was also a car racing circuit. Peter qualified for the final grid but on the first lap the driver behind him proceeded to run up the back of the Lotus, over the roll bar, and launched himself into a vertical attitude. It looked like he was jumping an obstacle at the Grand National. Afterwards Peter commented that he had seen about every angle of a Formula Ford except for the bottom of one going over his head. This left us in a predicament (there was “trouble at mill”—Yorkshire expression) as the rear suspension was damaged, as well as the exhaust system, and next week’s race was at Croft for the Battle of Britain meeting. My friends and I had commitments during the week so we worked individually on the car as time was available leaving messages as to what had been completed and what was left to finish. The Lotus was turned out for the Croft Battle of Britain grid in its usual appearance and Peter won the championship. James Hunt, 1976 World Champion F1 driver, presented him with the trophy.

*Club racing was an adventure but best of all were the friendships made and retained to this day. **MM***



Mike Roe goes aviating in the final of Aintree’s successful Formula Ford Festival after hitting the rear wheels of Peter Harrington’s Lotus 69 (background, top). Afterwards the Irishman, somewhat dazed, asked if he’d turned over!



James Hunt, the 1976 World Champion Formula 1 race driver, congratulates Peter Harrington.



How to Fix Your Carburetor

by Matthew McGuire
Member of the Capital Triumph Register

Back in January, while I was replacing a leaking water heater valve, I noticed a strong smell of gasoline. I soon discovered the fuel line going into the carburetor had a nasty crack, just behind the jubilee clip, and was slowly dripping. After replacing the fuel line, I took a closer look at the overall condition of the carburetor.

It was filthy and covered in oily grime. I didn't remember it looking so bad. But the Spitfire's MPG's seemed to be getting worse lately so, considering the fuel leak and the overall condition and age of the carb, I thought it was a good idea to replace the diaphragm, seals, etc., and give it a good cleaning.

I knew it was a Zenith-Stromberg but wasn't sure of the model. After much online research and questions to various forums, I discovered I have

a Z-S CD150 and that this was the standard carburetor for the Spitfire. The Z-S CD175 was used on the TR6, Jaguars, MGs, and others, usually in pairs, which explained why the vast majority of information online is about the CD175.

At the beginning of March, I was ready to tackle the carb project and ordered a rebuild kit. By now, I was thoroughly educated in the fine art of Carb Refurbishment thanks to YouTube, so I "confidently" set about my task at hand.

The carb came off easy enough and, armed with three cans of Carb Cleaner, I methodically disassembled everything, kept the various bits grouped separately, and took my time cleaning each and every part.

Once the carb was removed, I discovered it still had the factory

original brass ID tag. It had gotten bent at some point and was hidden from plain view while in place. The zenithcarb.co.uk website was a source of good information, and I learned mine (#3612) was made sometime in 1973-74. My Spitfire 1500 rolled off the line in February 1976, but I understand it wasn't unusual for older parts to still be on the production line.

Everything went back together pretty easily and even the damper had the appropriate "thunk" when gently lifted through the intake. It was now time to put it back on the car and see if there was any improvement. The car started up on the second turn of the key and it didn't need assistance from the choke. However, it was idling at 1100 RPM and would not accelerate when I pressed down on the pedal.

I expected some adjustments would be necessary so, I opened the dash pot, inserted the new special tool, purchased just for the occasion, and began fine tuning the mixture. As I was making the adjustments, something caught my eye. Smoke. White Lucas smoke.

A nasty little wisp of smoke was seeping up through the demister vents on the crashpad. I shut off the car and as I removed the key from the ignition, the IGN & OIL trouble lights remained illuminated in the speedometer. I quickly disconnected the battery and thought to myself, "What the *expletive*?!"

It took some time and gymnastic maneuvers, but I finally found the source. In the section of the wiring loom that passes through the firewall into the engine bay, there was a small abrasion that had sawed through the loom tape and cut into four wires, causing the exposed metal threads to come into contact with each other. Apparently, the top of the accelerator pedal shaft, where the accelerator cable inserts into the tip, had been rubbing against the wiring loom.

With the carburetor tuning now on hold, I had to first sort out this new

problem. To make it easier for myself to repair the wounded wires, I decided to disconnect everything inside the engine compartment and pull the wiring harness back through the firewall. This gave me more slack to work with and room to splice in some new wire. Three wires were nearly severed completely through while the fourth was only lightly scratched. I merely taped up that one. After heat-shrinking the repairs, I tapped it all up, rerouted the loom to the other side of the steering column, pulled it back thorough the firewall, and reconnected everything.

Here is where I am supposed to say, "I then got back to adjusting the carb and she's now purring like a kitten." But you know where this is going. As long as I'm this far in...

Along with pulling the wiring harness to make more room, I decided to remove the driver's side glove box and instrument panels to provide more space as well. Besides, the windshield spritzers were loose, and I couldn't get to those otherwise. Also, I had a refurbished crashpad I've been eager to install.

After disconnecting all the gauges, I started to remove the dashboard and

I saw the metal speedometer cable was still attached to the gauge and sliding out of its plastic sheath. Great, now I needed to order a new speedo cable. That arrived a few days later and, with the transmission cover now removed, I disconnected the hollowed-out speedo cable and had a brainstorm. Now would be a good time to swap out those old rubber transmission mounts! Good thing I already had some.

Eventually, I replaced the transmission mounts, speedometer cable, put the trans cover back in place, reglued loose vinyl on all the cockpit trim (as long as it was out), installed the "new" crashpad, tightened the spritzers, repaired the wiring harness, and put the dashboard and trim back in place. Oh, I forgot to mention, while the carb was off the motor and waiting for a replacement part, I replaced the old motor mounts as well.

Now, I can finally get back to adjusting that carburetor. Is it just me or is it always something? *MM*



RUNNING MID-OHIO *with a Legend*

by Earl Mowrey, Jr.

For many years I had watched televised coverage of events at the Mid-Ohio Racetrack. The lush green countryside and gently undulating course intrigued me, and when I read about the Vintage Race and Concours to be held in 1988 on June 25–26, I decided to go. Friends and I loaded my Jaguar XK120 SE roadster and we headed west from Pennsylvania. It was after 1:00am when we were pleasantly greeted at the Mid-Ohio gate and directed to our camping area.

Imagine my surprise when daybreak revealed nothing but brown dried grass and wilting foliage. 1988 found most of us in the east suffering from

an extended drought. However, the vintage races were outstanding! I can still visualize a Ferrari Testa Rossa at speed and hear the scream of the flat 12-cylinder Stoddard Porsche 917 flying down the back straight. In 1973, I traveled to Stoddard's Porsche in Ohio to shop for a 914 Porsche and when I walked onto the showroom floor, I was met with the first 911 Carrera RS in the USA, I was speechless.

Some limited track-time was available for those wishing to take their Jags out for a few fast laps. No pace car was provided. The end of the run of XK120s have a unique dual valve master cylinder that I had not properly sorted, so braking was greatly

compromised. Fortunately, my special equipment 120 has a competition fly-off hand brake that is capable of locking the rear wheels. With creative downshifting and generous tugs on the handbrake we kept pace with most of the cars on the track. My white-knuckled passenger was less than enthusiastic.

A display tent had been erected to house special Jaguars that had gathered for the event. Included were XKSS 704 (XKD 563), Malcolm Sayer's Low Drag E-Type coupe raced by Dick Protheroe, Peter Sutcliffe's lightweight E-Type and the first production XK120, serial number 670001.

Before the parade laps by the display cars, John Watson did fast





laps in an IMSA XJR9 Jaguar to commemorate Jaguar's win two weeks earlier at the 24 Hours of Le Mans. All of the display Jags scheduled for the parade fired up except the lead car which was the XK120. I watched as the recruited driver and his passenger struggled, as the British say, with "a failure to proceed." I was able to observe that the carbs, motor, frame and a large portion of dried grass underneath the Jag were saturated with gas. The driver had assumed that the electrically activated starting carburetor was the problem; he began to prepare to remove its electrical leads. Because of what I could see, I needed to intercede immediately. I realized that any loose or falling electrical connections could lead to horrific consequences. The driver accepted my offer to correct the issues. With borrowed tools and a few minutes of work I was able to start the Jag.

I did not know that the gentleman who lent me the tools was Walter Hill, the owner of all the previously mentioned display Jaguars. Walter was grateful for my help and offered me a ride in his XK120. Owning a

120 Jag, I graciously declined the offer, but I said, "I would welcome the passenger's seat in the XKSS." In 1957, sixteen unsold 'D' type race cars were converted to road cars and each received a new XKSS identification number.

I had some time to contemplate the significance of this opportunity as I sprinted to retrieve a mandatory helmet. The 'D' type Jaguar has always been my Holy Grail of Vintage Jaguar racecars and the thought of doing "hot laps" in one, actually the even rarer XKSS version, was incomprehensible to me.

The XKSS is purely a driver's car. A small door was added to the passenger side for easy entry, but once inside there is no room for your feet. The intrusion of the exhaust system and the dry sump oil tank against the bulkhead requires a folded seating position. At six feet tall my knees were pointing straight up, but I was prepared to become very small to fit in the cockpit. Thankfully, the XKSS has the addition of a full length windscreen; and since there is no storage space, Jaguar thoughtfully added a chrome luggage rack to the tail.

Once positioned on the grid, a track marshal noticed that I did not display the mandatory racing credentials and told me to extricate myself from the vehicle. My driver, who was a known West Coast Jaguar competitor, explained that I was an important Jaguar guest and if required, he would withdraw the car from the parade. Jaguar special guest indeed!

We waited a long time on the grid, as the previous race event's cars departed the track. The warmth from the magnificent motor coupled with the 90 degree temperature, and the heat radiating from the asphalt nearly cooked us. Once flagged onto the track all of the inconveniences quickly faded. The sound of my special equipment XK120 is close to that of the XKSS Jaguar, but my Jag has nowhere near the agility or outright shear performance of the XKSS.

I was privileged to travel at speed in such a significant car, all while we dined with Malcolm Sayer's Low Drag E Coupe and one of the 12 lightweight E-Types on such a historic track. *nm*

Coming of Age

by Frank Barrett

Circa 1960 in Hanover, New Hampshire—a lovely small town nestled in the upper Connecticut River Valley and the home of Dartmouth College—there was never a shortage of interesting European sports cars, either in residence or passing through. My older middle brother, an avid reader of *Road & Track*, would keep an eye out for such sightings and inform me accordingly. Most observed were the more common British variety: MGs, Austin-Healeys, Triumphs, and every once in a while, even a Morgan. On occasion, especially during June commencement weekend, some more exotic machinery could be seen. And never to be forgotten was the first sighting on a brand new Jaguar E-Type roadster during a fall football weekend in 1961. It was silver with a black top and red leather interior—breathtaking then to an eight-year-old boy, and just as much so 60-plus years later.

In the spring of 1970, as I was completing my sophomore year in high school, I became aware of a 1961 MGA 1600 that a Dartmouth student had for sale. It was black, and in very nice condition except for the fact that it had swallowed a valve in the number two cylinder; and the motor was out of the car needing to be repaired. The owner, Craig Wyeth, was said to be related to the family of artists. The car was stored at his grandparents' house in central New Hampshire about 50-miles away. The price was \$300 firm.

Against all odds, I convinced my father to withdraw the necessary funds from my savings account. He was vehemently opposed to me buying the

car, but I had sold my reluctant mother on the idea. On June 19, the car was mine. Then it became a bit like the story of the dog that finally catches the car. My driver's license had been revoked by the State of New Hampshire for a speeding infraction, so I convinced a girlfriend, who's family had a big V-8 powered Chevrolet Greenbriar station wagon, to help me get the car home. With a rented stiff hitch from U-Haul, and several other female friends, we drove 50 or so miles and fetched the car, including the partially disassembled motor, loose radiator, and several boxes

of parts that we threw in the back of the big Chevy. The mission was uneventful, and the car and parts were successfully deposited on the side lawn of our suburban Hanover home. Now what do I do? The cylinder head was junk because of the swallowed valve, and although an antique and classic car enthusiast since about age seven, I had never done anything mechanically "hands on" with an automobile.

A good used cylinder head was purchased from J.C. Whitney in Chicago for \$55 (I still have the catalog), and a small, somewhat local MG dealer





sold me a valve grind gasket set and a new piston with rings. Thankfully the number two cylinder bore and top of the connecting rod had not been damaged. Finally, on a Saturday afternoon in late July, the motor was ready to go back in the car. A friend, about seven years older than me who was a shop mechanic at a local garage, arrived with a portable engine hoist in the back of his old Jeep station wagon. With parts spread out on the lawn, as neighbors and my parents watched, and with the added help of a boyhood friend who would soon have his own Triumph Spitfire, we successfully got the motor back in the car. Several weeks after that, following the purchase of a new battery, the restoration of my driver's license, and a tune-up at a local garage, the car was back on the road. My mother bought me my first tank of gas; and even my father, an architect but a non-car type of person, had to admit that the MGA was a nice looking car after I had shined it all up. I had taken the wheel covers off so that the car at first glance

looked like a Twin Cam with the solid disc Dunlop wheels. Needless to say, that fall, the first day of my senior year in high school, I was very proud indeed when I wheeled the car into the student parking area. At my side, a blue-eyed English girlfriend with blond hair completed the picture indeed! Now that I was an expert on all things MG, that winter I helped my closest boyhood friend freshen up a 1953 MGTD that he had just acquired in downstate New York. That is when I first became familiar with Moss Motors.

The following summer the MGA was sold to a Dartmouth student, and a somewhat ratty, but still very strong and fast 1960 Austin-Healey 3000 took its place, also purchased from a Dartmouth student for \$300. That fall the Austin-Healey was disposed of and I went off to engineering school in Boston, Massachusetts. Since then, a string of Healeys, Triumphs, and MGs followed, but those are stories for another time. In my files I still have a copy of Moss Motors' splendid 1978

25-page illustrated MGA catalog, from when I had my second MGA, a 1962 Mark II. On the inside front cover is an architectural rendering of their new showroom, general offices, and warehouse in Goleta, California. At the time, being a budding young modernist architect, the building certainly caught my attention. And by then, with support from Moss Motors, the MGA was assuming its rightful place within the hierarchy of MGs worldwide.

In 1990 my last MG was sold, a perfectly lovely 1948 TC, and since then my automotive attentions have centered around collecting and restoring very early American brass era antique cars and the like. However, from time to time I still think about acquiring, say, an early Austin-Healey 3000, or even another MGA. (I don't know if I can any longer get in and out of a T-series MG.) And as to Liz, the English girlfriend, I must admit that, from time to time, I also wonder where she is now. *MM*

Time to Rest

Ice encrusts my grill at speed,
Kicked up from last night's snow;
The roads are tight,
I'm feelin' right,
My grip will not let go.

The Sun cuts low across my path,
With Earth it doth conspire;
To shorten days,
And chill the nights,
Brings change of least desire.

So I accept this might be the night,
This season's last "Let's go";
Those cherished times,
from Spring to Fall,
that every sportscar knows.

When the doors go up and drivers come,
With their cheers and smiles in tow;
My fuel goes in and it feels just like
a hug from someone you know.

The starter helps me spring to life,
It's then I start to grin,
The smiles that I will bring that day,
Are all I need to win.

But that was then, and will come again,
Alas, today is another time;
The snow that fell,
reminds us well,
Of the Season's endless rhyme.

Arriving home, the door goes up,
My heart it feels the warmth,
Of the cozy spot that is made for me,
To sleep these winter months.

I am content with how I ran,
I did my best, you know,
And next year with some sorting time,
I'm sure my skills will grow.

So, now I sleep, my charger on,
Battery ready to go;
And dream of drives,
Like packaged gifts
To their owners cars bestow.

Forget me not, I'm here for you,
Your dreams all wrapped inside;
To take you where
Your heart feels best,
And Friends are by your side. *MM*

by Scott Lehman
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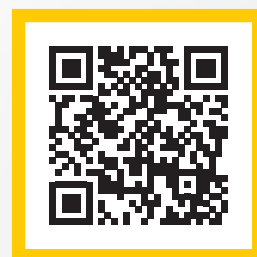


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