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ISSUE 3, 2019

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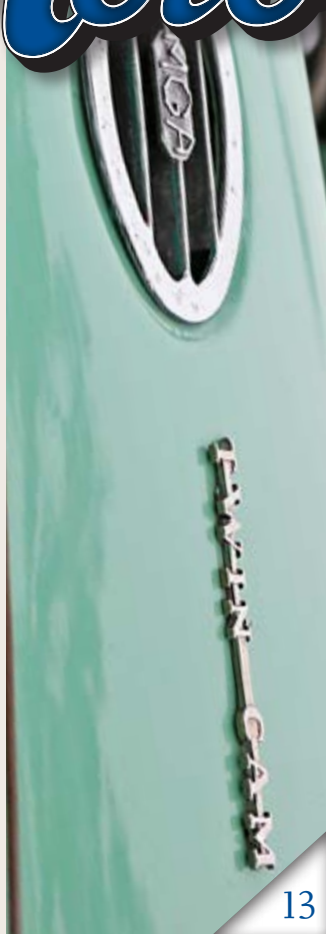
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Editorial contributions to Moss Motoring are welcomed and should be emailed to [editor@mossmotors.com](mailto:editor@mossmotors.com) or mailed to Editor – Moss Motoring, 440 Rutherford St., Goleta, CA 93117.

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## LOUD PEDAL



Robert Goldman



# The Parking *Nightmare*

Growing up, I suffered the form of nightmares common to many folks. Dreams like falling, or needing to yell but your mouth is full of something and you can't get it out. Way back when I was a salesman, I dreamed of part numbers and more part numbers. Oddly enough, when I became an owner of Moss, they all stopped. I've not had a nightmare since, except parking at Motorfest.

The Motorfest parking nightmare is a waking dream. Every other year, our long suffering Facility Manager, Steve Safran, and I share a similar fear. What if something goes wrong? Imagine all those formerly happy show participants' tempers rising in synch with their cars' coolant. As a show goer myself, being stuck in line, yards from your destination, is awful.

Usually, our gravest concern is having enough bodies to direct traffic. Not only does Moss Virginia sit on 22 acres of land, but there are driveways and a giant building breaking up what would otherwise be our neat and simple

parking plan. Perhaps the only thing worse than having insufficient bodies would be if it rains... like it did this year.

Motorfest planning has always considered the potential for rain. We just haven't had any great ideas on how to proceed under a deluge. Back in 2015, we learned how much water our fields can hold. Not enough. But at least the sun came out for the show. This year, it looked like rain and we got it. So, what's the plan if it's raining all day? How about panic?

Many years ago we tried a car show where cars were allowed to park how and where they wished. It didn't work. MG owners were seen advancing with windshield wiper arms thrust forward, while TR owners assembled a defense, using stainless steel hubcaps as shields. If memory serves, our own Kelvin Dodd was seen on the field in full body armor and broadsword. Yes, in answer to your disbelief, photos exist, of Kelvin in armor. Our "combat photographer" was last seen enveloped in a forest of flashing stainless steel dipstick lances.

With Motorfest 2019 facing an inevitability of rain, we made a late call to park all those who braved the weather, together in our paved lot, and in whatever order they showed up. It was similar to the random parking plan, except this time we wouldn't let folks choose their spot. If a Jaguar 420G was followed in by an Austin 7 Nippy, they would park side by side. Of course sufficient room would be required between to ensure the Austin was not sucked into the Jag's extensive gravity well.

Thankfully, while our beleaguered parking crew fought the Battle of Parking Lot A, I was hiding inside enjoying Tom Matano, of Mazda Miata design fame, explain why cars often get designed like dinner plates. There are issues involved in automotive design us laypeople would never consider. Tom's presence at a time when the Miata is celebrating its 30th anniversary was a real gift. I bet the British car folks who watched his presentation learned a few things as well. Thank you Tom.

At this late date in the year, our semi-annual nightmare has faded, to be replaced by fond memories of an event which survived the weather, survived our parking plan, and thrived. Some time about June of 2020, we will start the Motorfest planning process once more. How will we top this year's show? Great. I see a whole new set of nightmares ahead. *MM*





# Built to Last

By Ed Sweeney



**M**y father is a craftsman. Not by trade, as he spends his days managing an industrial machine shop. Many of the same standards apply, but it's much less of an artistic endeavor. He saved that skill set for home, which allowed me to observe the process. Rebuilding his MGB in the garage was our favorite activity together growing up. I learned that we fix, we

don't throw away. We repurpose rather than replace. It's not always easy, and often requires ingenuity and creativity to keep your equipment going with limited resources.

There was one project in particular that was completed well before I was around. For a senior project in college, he built a Redwood strip canoe from scratch, using plans from a 1967 issue of *Popular Science*. 18 and a half feet of

attention to detail, that canoe defined my childhood every summer in the Pocono Mountains. I knew as soon as we reached my uncle's cabin where the canoe was stored I could go down into that musty basement, dust off the varnished finish, toss it in the back of the family Pontiac and be on the lake within minutes. Early morning fishing expeditions and picking blueberries off of the shoreline, the canoe left an

indelible mark on me; you don't have to buy cool stuff, you can build it yourself.

Years passed, the cabin was sold, and the canoe ended up at his other brother's place further north. It was used sparingly, and eventually settled under a lean-to where it sat for the past 16 years.

Although the canoe was dormant, the British car connection in our family continued to evolve. My father still has his MGB, and my first personal car purchase in 2004 was a 1968 MGB GT. That MG set me on a course for working on vintage cars for a living. 15 years later I'm still following my

passion with my own restoration shop called Proper Noise.

The GT eventually made room for a 1958 MG Midget in the garage, with rear seat room for my own family. Part of the motivation for acquiring a Midget was the opulent interior appointed with a full-wood dashboard and door cappings. I knew that my father's experience with woodwork on that canoe and countless home projects would be put to good use. So as I started to fix the rust, he was tasked with restoring the sun and water damaged walnut and mahogany veneers.

Finished in 2010, the Midget was put together to drive, with the perfectly varnished dashboard contrasting almost comically against the worn old paint. The addition of a Moss Motors supercharger added to the fun factor as well. The uniqueness of the MG has made it a sort of calling card, so I try to drive it as much as I can.

When I opened Proper Noise in 2017, it allowed me to relocate back near my childhood home. Living near a lake with room to store the old canoe, the time had come to rescue it. What better vehicle than the Midget to bring it home?

Special delivery in the Midget with Ed and his father, Ned.





Equipped with a luggage rack, ratchet straps, bungee cords, and a cooler full of snacks, we set off early in the morning to retrieve it. With a busy career and children of my own, it's a rare treat to be able to spend that much time with my father. We laughed and joked and enjoyed every minute of the ten-hour drive. It was pleasantly uneventful as that old MG just hummed through the hills of Carbon County and brought the dusty old canoe home. Looking over the wood dash of the car and seeing the skillfully assembled bow of the canoe bobbing along down the highway, everything seemed right with the world.

The canoe was dusted off and immediately put back into service. It hangs in the garage next to the Mquette, both ready for future adventures. The MG still needs paint, and the canoe could use a new coat of varnish. Sounds like a good excuse to spend some time in the garage with the kids. *MM*



Proper Noise is located in Reading, Pennsylvania.  
610-775-3228 | [www.propernoise.com](http://www.propernoise.com)



# Making a Splash

A friend recommend that I send you photos of my car from when we ventured a 200-mile trip to a British car outing at a farm in western North Carolina where they have a large private lake. I was inspired to make a “splash” impression. Did this canoe carrier surprise folks? Yes... at least those who don't know me.

This is my first car that my wife Beverly and I bought in 1963, and I've been a Moss customer nearly since then. I took the TD down to the frame in 1965 while in grad school. Drove it daily for another 40+ years—including teaching my wife and daughter how to drive. Broke a half shaft and the car sat in the garage for three years until I retired and did a proper frame off restoration.

Recently, Beverly and I completed our bucket list of driving this car “to and through” all lower 48 States and each of the Canadian provinces on our northern border. In all our years together, the only time the car was ever on a trailer was one ten-mile trip because a screw came loose in the distributor... which we fixed a half hour later.

*MGs till the roads wear out.*

– Derwood Schrotberger



## Story Request



*Topic:*

*“The Mother of Invention”*

Seeing Derwood's contraption reminded me of people I've come across over the years who've crafted inventive solutions for their British car challenges. Some inventive creations were for mechanical issues, but others were simply for the pure purpose of following a harebrained idea to its “this may backfire, but let's see what happens” conclusion.

Share your story in *Moss Motoring*. Even if your inventiveness ended up failing spectacularly, that may very well be a tale worth telling, too. Experience is the best teacher, right? If I'm able to put your story in these pages, I'll also place a \$200 credit on your Moss account as a thank you. 500 words minimum, 1500 max. And if you can include photos to help set the stage for your story, all the better!

*Write to: [editor@mossmotors.com](mailto:editor@mossmotors.com)*







# The Expedition Module

By Abram Perry



I put my job on hiatus, packed a bit of camping gear into the boot, and set off down the back roads. It took several months to explore the southwest, hiking the National Parks and BLM land, a wonderful region filled with red rock, canyons, and abundant public lands. Reaching California, the TR6 made its way to the far southern end of the US coast. Seeing the expanse of blue water at the edge of the continent was intriguing, especially for a mid-west country boy. From there I set out to cruise the coastal highway northward. In a classic British sports car, I was living the top-down dream.

Sunny skies greeted me in San Diego, tall palm trees dotted the coast. The cars came to a shifting stand-still in the hot noon-time sun as I approached the notorious Los Angeles traffic. Unnerved from the heat, I flipped on the electric fan override switch and kept an eye on the gauges as the traffic inched along.

North of the city, I met up with a space scientist friend who also has a fondness for classic roadsters. “You can drive my XKE, if I can drive your TR6.” How could I say no? We set out into the mountains just north of LA. The series I XKE commanded the road as it powered up the mountains and around the winding curves. A racing and driving icon for good reason. Still, I was happy to climb back into my TR6 loaded with camping gear with the open road ahead.

Before undertaking the next segment up the coast, a good inspection and tune up was in order. While under the car, I found the trunnions had some play in them. I ordered a set from Moss and made sure they were well lubricated. I also decided to upgrade my ignition system with a vacuum advance conversion. After rebuilding and tuning a set of carbs, the TR6 now had proper ported vacuum and was running smooth. The distributor was re-curved for modern fuel by Rob of the British





# and My Triumph TR6

Vacuum Unit Company, resulting in more power, better economy, and greater efficiency on hot days. I have since been able to get mileage into the 30s while in overdrive.

I transitioned from my ultralight hiking tarp, back into a tent. How luxurious! I had gathered a few tools and some additional camping gear, and as you can imagine, the TR6 was growing full, even with a rack on the boot lid. On top of all that, a friend, knowing of my past canoeing expeditions, offered to pass along their canoe to me, knowing I would care for it and put miles on it. Prior to finding the TR6, my last series of canoe expeditions lasted about three years. In my opinion, there are not enough people who know the wonder and joy of life on the river.

So, a challenge arose: a drop-top roadster and a canoe. Hmm, how could this be done? I kept an eye out for a hardtop that might hold a rack, but none could be found. What about a little cargo trailer? Camping gear

could be packed in it, the canoe racked on top, and the TR6 would be back to having ample space! With a goal in mind, I approached it like any art project—focused thought and taking one step at a time.

Which came first, the trailer or the hitch? In my case, it was the trailer. I managed to locate a classic little cargo trailer and it appeared that it'd fit wonderfully behind the TR. This one needed some work, but with a little imagination, it was soon transformed into an Expedition Module.

Now the hitch was a bit of a hitch, as I soon found. There are none made for the TR6, and after more research, I found only a handful of photos and information on those that had been custom built. After coming to the conclusion that I was going to have to build one from scratch, I set off to the local metal supplier.

Driving along I spotted a beautifully restored TR3 parked outside of a small auto shop. Curious, I turned around,







stopped in to say hello, and to see if they could point me in the right direction for welding up a trailer hitch. Seeing the touring TR6, they treated me like one of the family. The shop owner's son just happened to be one of the best welders in the area. I was in luck. I went out to see what he could do and a couple hours later the TR6 was reinforced and equipped with a beautifully stout receiver hitch.

With the TR6 and Expedition Module packed, it was time to continue up the northern California coast and into Oregon and visit with friends and family in the area. The TR's tractor engine proved a capable pulling machine, towing the trailer quite nicely, even over mountain passes. Exploring the beautiful coastal headlands and roving the old-growth redwoods was amazing to behold. How sad only 2% of the ancient trees remain; the rest we have cut down.

I pushed farther north, expanding to the coast of Washington and made it up to the Olympic Peninsula. I camped on the beach and was treated to a beautiful sunset and the sound of waves throughout the night. The next day, I headed out towards Neah Bay. This small historic fishing community is known as the farthest northwest one can go in the continental US. It's a charming maritime region rich with history, forests, and coastline bordering Canada.

I called up my Dad excited to tell him I completed my tour of the coastal highway. He drives a TR3 and we had talked for years about a road trip together in it. He finally managed to get some time off. "This is the year, let's go for it!" He said, "head this way and let's see how far north we can get!" So, with the expedition module back in tow, I pointed east toward my Dad's place. It was a fine 2,300-mile cruise.

After a few months back in the Midwest, I transferred my backpack from one TR into the other. My Dad and I packed some tools, a few key parts, an extra spare tire, and a road atlas. Most of the trip we were planning appeared straight forward, but then we would reach a point in the remote northern wilderness where there are tales of sudden frost heaves in the roads, and beyond that, hundreds of miles of rugged gravel where most only venture with heavy-duty 4x4s. My Dad and I, and his nearly 60-year-old TR3, are bound for the Arctic Circle. *MM*

*Follow Abram on his adventures, both traveling and mechanical, at [AbramWasHere.com](http://AbramWasHere.com).*



# SHOW STOPPERS

By Bill Jouris



*I admit, I'm timid around people in costume. I didn't walk up to Beth and Bill until the third time I attended Stowe. I just had to tell them thank you for the extra something special that they bring to the car show. It takes guts (though it seemed natural to them) and work to do what they have done for so many years.*

David Stuursma - editor

Beth and I were at the first British Invasion in Stowe, Vermont, 28 years ago. We have since attended 27 of them. For the first ten years Beth would drive the minivan with our twins, Brian and Lisa, and I would follow in the Morgan. For the nearly four hour drive I was incommunicado, a lonely drive indeed. In those early years I only made it all the way to the motel once without trouble. Typically it was some little issue that would stop me cold with only ten miles to go. I know I'm not alone holding my breath until I'm less

than 100 miles from my destination and AAA towing would be covered. Eventually, I got smart and bought a car dolly. These days we tow the Morgan to Stowe so we can all be together for the trip up and back.

In the early days, the British Invasion filled a dead zone in the Stowe tourist season between the busy summer and the fall leaf-peeping season. As the popularity of the car show grew, so did the town's support of the British sports car. The kick-off party Friday night on Main Street is a spectacular, well-attended event.



Beginning in the early days, we participated in the Sunday “Tailgate Picnic Contest.” While others were creating elaborate displays of food, we went a different route. Beth and I dressed up.

While I cannot remember all the themes over the years, the ones I remember were: a WWI Royal Air Force officer with a WWI nurse; Hercule Poirot and his secretary, Miss Lemon; Robin Hood and Maid Marian; a couple aboard the Titanic; a man and woman punting on the Thames; Henry VIII and Ann Bolin; two Beefeaters (the first year that women were allowed to serve); Shakespeare and Ann Hathaway; Lawrence of Arabia and his lady; Alice in Wonderland and the Mad Hatter; Sherlock Holmes and his landlady, Mrs. Hudson; and others which escape me at the moment.

Initially we would make costumes with clothing we already owned and

could easily convert. As we progressed, we couldn’t very well come up with themes for which we had suitable clothing and had to start renting costumes. For our last picnic I actually bought costumes, as the cost to rent and ship them was higher than the cost to buy them! The upshot to our effort was that we won the prize for best costume every year and frequently the prize for “Most British” as well.

On the 25th British Invasion we decided to take a rest. Each year we had racked our brains to come up with a theme and all the accouterments. This isn’t to say that Beth and I don’t come prepared to join the fun. I have been wearing a handlebar moustache for nearly forty years now and have smoked a pipe for over sixty. These two traits make me easily recognizable and memorable at such events. A couple of years ago they started giving a prize for the man with the most British hat. With

the collection I’ve accumulated, I’ve won nearly every year.

The Morgan is a 1962 4/4 Roadster that I bought as a wreck for \$300. I spent six months putting it into drivable condition, but I would definitely not call it “restored.” If I should ever win the lottery, rebuilding the Morgan is near the top of the list for use of the money.

As for Beth and I, we have been married for 57 years. We met and married in a south suburban Chicago town called Harvey, IL. When I returned to college to finish a degree at MIT, we moved to the Boston area and have been here ever since. We bought a log home in Littleton, MA in 1969—the same year I bought the Morgan—and although we have lived elsewhere in the country and around the world, we’ve always returned to our log house in Littleton. *MM*





# =Twin Cam=

By David Clark

The Glory Days of the 1930s were long in the past. It had been 20 years since MG was a dominant force, owning records for absolute speed in the classes between 500 and 2,000cc. The engine in their 750cc overhead cam record breaker, EX127, ultimately made 145bhp, supercharged with 39 lbs of boost—more power per liter than the uber-dominant Mercedes Silver Arrow Grand Prix cars so generously subsidized by the Nazi regime.

MG founder Cecil Kimber had been sacked at the outset of World War II, allegedly for securing a contract

to build the control sections for the Albermarle Bomber, an undertaking that, unbeknownst to Kimber, had been passed on by most of the British aircraft industry who simply couldn't even begin to fathom how to build it. By the war's end, the tiny workforce in Abingdon built nearly a thousand units before selling off the test rig they devised to prove its myriad hydraulic and electrical systems.

Peace brought a measure of prosperity back to the "World's Sports Car Factory" and an entirely new market opened up before them, this time in the United States, where

eventually more than two-thirds of total production would end up.

Of course MG went racing again, although this time it was mostly in the hands of privateers with some discrete support from Abingdon. Syd Enever built a LeMans body for a TD campaigned by *Autosport* photographer George Phillips. After being sidelined for a few years so as not to take sales away from their British Motor Corporation stablemate, Austin-Healey, the Enever project became the basis of the MGA, a completely modern MG that featured the new Austin "B" series engine in place of the Morris



It's easier to spot leaks, particularly of the coolant variety, with the hood off.



XPAG engine of the “T” series cars. It wasn’t a particularly elegant design, but at least you could tune it some.

By the late ’50s Porsche was beginning to make their presence felt in the same events where MG was contesting less and less successfully. With its intake and exhaust ports siazemed to camouflage its blatant Chevrolet “Stove Bolt” six cylinder engine architecture, the “B” series was never going to breathe well enough to go head-to-head with the four-cam Porsche Carrera engines. Something else was needed.

On the quiet, in 1955 Abingdon installed two different twin cam engines in the Tourist Trophy MGAs, one of which was completely new, and one designed to be machined on the existing “B” series transfer lines.

By early 1958, BMC management had caved to the persistent demands from Abingdon for the Twin Cam and the new model was announced. It featured a dual overhead cam alloy cylinder head with a 40-degree valve angle in hemispherical combustion chambers, operated by 3/8” lift cams with a fairly conservative 250 degree split overlap duration—the “B” series prototype.

Domed 9.9:1 compression ratio full-float pistons were initially fitted, later reduced to 8.3:1 in an effort to combat piston failures, which actually were most likely the result of a periodic weak fuel mixture caused by carburetor vibration.

Early engines, like the one pictured here, were notorious oil

burners. In a classic example of poor component matchup, the cylinder bores were chrome flashed to improve durability, and equally durable chrome plated piston rings were also fitted, but the chrome rings in chrome bores never seated, with disastrous results for oil control.

More than 50 years on, the cylinders in the Twin Cam engine shown here had no measurable wear at all, and after ball honing them and fitting a Hastings moly ring set, oil consumption is a thing of the past.

Visually striking, and a small marvel of British slide-rule engineering, MGA Twin Cams are rapidly appreciating investments, highly sought after today.

*MM*



*David Clark took a stab at higher learning before he realized it was a waste of his parents’ money and bought more tools instead. For 30 years he operated a British-only shop with as many as five employees, and became a hunter-gatherer, roaming all six New England States as well as Eastern New York and New Jersey in search of work. Nowadays he’s mostly working on his own cars, but there are exceptions...*

A Chevy dealer from Wakefield, Mass, bought this car at the Arizona RM Auction about ten years ago, knocked it down for \$25K. Every time the engine turned, oil came out. When we pulled the engine we found the perp’s fingerprints in the RTC sealer he stuffed all along the bottom of the cam covers in a futile attempt to staunch the flow.





By Sid Bridge

# A SMART-ALECK'S GUIDE TO BUYING A SPITFIRE

*Sid Bridge is a co-host of the Reels and Wheels podcast discussing cars featured in our favorite movies. Reels and Wheels can be found on iTunes, Google Play, or online at [reelsandwheels.libsyn.com](http://reelsandwheels.libsyn.com).*

I recently bought my first British Roadster—a 1980 Triumph Spitfire. I wanted an MG or a Triumph ever since I was 12, but I never had the guts to buy one given all the warnings I would get from responsible adults.

I'm an adult now. Responsible? That would depend on your definition. I've got five kids, I moonlight as a stand-up comedian, I have a 1968 Cutlass in my garage that I have fiddled with since I bought it in 1995, and a pretty patient family.

So... how did I pull off buying a Spitfire?

We were getting ready to move to a new house and for the first time I was finally going to have a two-car garage. I started to feel a sense of “now or never” if I wanted a Spitfire because I could see prices going up for every other Triumph. Plus, I was just plain in love with the Spitfire's style.

Even with the big rubber bumpers, the Spitfire has lines that just pulled me in and wouldn't let go. When the bonnet tips forward to reveal the engine, I'm a kid again, knee-deep in Matchbox cars.

My kids, on the other hand, wanted something else—a kitten. It wasn't an unreasonable ask, except that we

already have two cats. This would mean three cats, which is a lot of cats. One of our cats had a litter of kittens and they had their eye on Cookie, who looked like a hairy ball of chocolate chip cookie dough.

I didn't really want another cat—even one as adorable as Cookie—but at least I found an opportunity to weaponize the kids and win my wife over. Half joking, I declared, “They can have the cat if I can have a Triumph Spitfire!”

Immediately my kids became a powerhouse lobbying team for Spitfire ownership. It only took a little time before my wife finally pulled me aside and said the sweetest words an unrepentant car nut can hear from a spouse: “I really don't care if you get another car.”

The next line of this article was originally going to be “within minutes I was online searching for Spitfires,” but that would be a complete lie. I had been searching for Spitfires well before I got spousal approval. Within minutes I was on to the follow-up call stage.

The first candidate was an abandoned restoration project being sold by a next-of-kin. Sadly, she couldn't get a title, so what appeared to be a half-assembled car with brand new paint

and a freshly rebuilt engine may never see the road again.

Candidate number two was the winner. Previously owned by a mechanic who had a thing for Triumphs (he dailies a Herald!), it was already running with a new carburetor, intake and header. Sure, it needed other work, but “running” wasn't actually one of my main criteria since I now had a second garage bay.

After a road-trip where I checked it out, test drove it, and inspected it on a lift, we agreed to a fair price and I had it shipped home.

In honor of Cookie the kitten, I've been calling the car “Project Kittenfire.” I'm afraid to start taking stuff apart because I'm a little shocked at how well it runs. It starts every single time. It drives fine. It has a few fluid leaks and the gearbox has a couple of issues (whining in third gear and popping out of reverse), but it's a blast to drive.

Oh, and my wife loves driving it. I don't blame her. I'm not sure if there's a scientist who's looked into this yet, but in my limited Triumph Spitfire ownership experience I've noticed that you can't so much as look at the car without smiling like an idiot. And believe me, I'm the biggest idiot in the room. *MM*





## 2019 Moss Motorfest *Highlights*

**The weather was properly British.** Prior to the event we fielded the inevitable phone calls: “I’m driving down and it’s supposed to rain. Just checking to make sure Motorfest is still on...”

We celebrate Motorfest primarily as a way to say thanks to you. It’s important for us to be able to meet customers face-to-face, so much so that we send quite a few of our staff from Goleta to share in the busy weekend in Virginia. We weren’t about to let scattered showers spoil our party.

It did help that there was plenty to see and do indoors.

At the Friday pre-party we cleared space in the receiving area of the warehouse, brought in a couple hundred chairs, and gave a microphone to Tim Suddard of Classic Motorsports magazine. Tim played host to a panel discussion with Moss executives,







including chairman, Robert Goldman and president, Ed Moss. The audience asked some darn good questions about our operations, and we enjoyed sharing insight into our work.

For our Miata-owning friends, we brought in Tom Matano whose design of the original Miata places him among the elite in the field. The great thing is, Tom is approachable and as easy-going as they come.

While the cars and showgoers were getting drizzled on, others shopped for parts, or went on guided tours of the facility, or watched our expert upholsterers work their trade. It was a fine day to be a gearhead.

We'll have our next Motorfest in the early summer of 2021. Rain or, preferably, shine, we hope you'll join us!  
*MM*





# Old Cars

# *Young Souls*

By Emilee Crawford





“First step, let’s see if they start,” a lover of vintage British sports cars says to me, the weary yet excited girlfriend sitting beside him. It’s barely daybreak and two twenty-somethings rev the engines of their decades-old British sports cars, embarking on an ambitious road trip down south to The Mitty.

Sunrise cracks through the Kentucky sky and onto the maroon hood of the 1973 MGB GT leading a black 1964 Triumph following close behind. “Chello mate! Lovely day for a little stroll in the old British cars, eh?” I say over our walkie-talkies in an exaggerated British accent. “Look at you and your fancy blinkers,” the Triumph barks. “And we have heat!” I reply positioning the MG vent toward my face.

While most young boys were sporting grass stains and skinned knees, Ian Crawford, The MG Maestro, was wearing grease-stained nails and scratched up knuckles. We are driving the first of 13 British cars that he has owned and restored since he was barely a teen. Nick “The Triumph” Tonini, a quiet yet witty 25-year old, has a similar story. His father recognized his mechanical talent and bought him vintage car projects—some nothing more than a rusted frame. Then there is myself, a Kentucky lady, museum marketing professional, and lover of all things vintage—and with a family history of crummy cars. I had never dated a “car man” before and explaining this tacky family lineage to my car-loving boyfriend was like speaking a different language. “You see, my family’s cars are bad. I mean, one car was so bad that it was given to us. It was a hand-painted Cadillac, the size of a boat, given to my father by his great-uncle-in-law, James. Hence the car’s name, Sir James. We knighted the car. Is that weird? There was also the 1980s Ford LTD ‘Deputy Dog,’ the Kitty Car, Duggy, Biscuit, then of course, Biscuit Remix.”

Our trip begins on the interstate from Lexington, KY, to Knoxville, TN, and within a few minutes, we smell our

first problem: the tires are rubbing the inner fenders of the MG. “Once we use some fuel it should be better—or so I hope,” he tells me. “Better to lose fuel than my polka dot luggage,” I say to myself. Clutching his worn convertible top for ten miles on the interstate is finally enough to get Nick to surrender to the chilly morning air.

Pulling off the interstate, a long, blue 1980s Cadillac (Sir James is that

strangers pass our mini British car parade. The boys make a stop and I grab anti-nausea medicine after hearing the Tail of the Dragon consists of 318 turns in 11 miles. Meds purchased, Nick realizes his tire pressure is off and Ian smashes his finger in his hood: Are we there yet? Hours later, we arrive at the Tail of the Dragon with one throbbing finger and no car problems to hinder a timely arrival. The MG



you?), loaded down with yard sale inventory exits with us. Hollering out his window, Mr. Blue Cadillac shares his past ownership of an MG then hands us his business card. Without hesitation we make a group assumption that his self-proclaimed title, “Film Producer,” is of a mischievous industry. One Triumph top down and two Cadillac taillights ahead, I make my first “I’ve never been around vintage cars” mistake. I left the MG’s door wide open and resting on the guardrail. The motor’s vibrations had rubbed off the brand new paint job on the door’s edge. I am told to be careful, and I wonder if my vehicular faux pas is remediable.

It’s barely past 8am and already we’ve received four thumbs-ups as

hugs the curves of this wooded two-lane road and I hang out the window with my hand cutting through the zooming air. The smell of the tire rubbing is prominent and the sound of the exhaust bottoming out blends with the musical representation of the car’s era. All in all, it is a ride to remember.

Almost to our destination, we pass through miles of apple orchards. We are months from the fall harvest so a Georgia apple is far from reach, but we find the next best thing: Big John and his fruit stand on the side of the road. The girth of his calves and carrot-thick fingers solidify his name. “I passed my driving test in my cousin’s Opel GT,” John says as we munch on Washington’s best. “Apples are on me,” he tells us.





**“Apples  
are on  
me,” he  
tells us.**

“It’s just exciting enough for me to see those kinds of cars around these parts. Brings me back,” he says through a gap-toothed smile. With a “God bless you” and a carrot-finger wave, we leave Big John. I hope that other Mitty-goers in their vintage cars are on this same path

through Ellijay and make time to pay Big John a visit.

Ten hours, seven thumbs-ups and even a Jersey-style fist pump later, we are united with the engineer father of The MG Maestro, Doug Crawford. Mr. Crawford, who had once owned a

fabrication shop that allowed the father-son team to restore cars, trailered his handmade race car, proudly named the Crawdini, down from Kentucky with plans to break in the car’s motorcycle engine in true style, on a touring lap at The Mitty.

The MGB GT and Triumph wear their journey’s dust with pride as we pull into Road Atlanta for the first day of the weekend festivities. Clouds billow over the track and a cool breeze floods the infield, whipping through the international flags at the car corrals. We proudly park among cars of our own kind and pass time admiring fellow Brits. The infield at The Mitty is far from what I anticipated, considering the Kentucky Derby infield is my only point of reference. The tame elegance of the rolling terrain makes for a scenic afternoon spent meeting The MG Maestro’s car friends with introductions made with what they drive before learning their names.





The next morning we stop to bathe the ladies. With the MG covered in a layer of white suds, we look over to find the Triumph's hood popped. "I snapped the throttle return spring," Nick says. While, of course, this means nothing to me, I am convinced I am a good luck charm when we discover there is an auto parts store about a football-throw away.

Day two of the Mitty is spent smiling and plugging my ears. "This is why my hearing stinks!" The MG Maestro says screaming over the thundering exhausts of vintage Porsches in the hour-long Enduro. Car enthusiasts bask in the sun and hang close to the fences feeling the rumbling ground beneath them.

On Sunday morning the boys rise with the birds and I convince The MG Maestro to let me meet them later. Sweating and anxious, I start the MG. "God don't let me break this thing," I think, finding first gear on the unmarked shifter. Up and down the hills of Big Canoe I go, gaining confidence in my driving and enjoying the turning heads of admirers. Forty miles later, I arrive.

We set out for our trip home with Mitty infield passes taped to our dashboards. As temperature gauges start to climb, we seek out shade to let the ladies cool off. With hoods popped, we relax at an abandoned gas station where the last gallon sold for \$1.35. Turks Service Center is now a graveyard for old mowers and weedwackers. A Pepsi machine, faded from summers of sunbeams, and a Standard Oil sign now serve as a home for woodland creatures. I hear something about leaking and clogged fuel lines as I make my way to a pay phone across the street to dial a 1-800 number on a faded billboard above me. This is a moment, retro in every sense.

Traffic on 71 sends us to 23, which, in turn, ends up to be equally congested. The rarely-traveled, two-lane highway is bumper-to-bumper, and locals enjoy the traffic spectacle from their porches, some even bank on the opportunity with illegal pop-up beer stands on the side of the road. "Not sure the ol' Brits can stand this traffic much longer," The MG Maestro relays. "Did you see that truck pull up next to me? He just offered to sell me headlights," Nick the Triumph Tonini says with a laugh. We agree on a detour of the detour, adding two extra hours to our trip home, but none of us seem to care.

We float onto the driveway on a cloud of pride ending the 12-hour, two-lane highway trip in true vintage style: no radio, dead cell phones, telling time by a watch. I begin to understand why this is such an important part of these two young men's lives and how this trip solidified their rare talent as more than just a hobby. Sitting in the driveway, the MG's motor cooling, I come to the revelation that I am more in love with this car now than I was two days prior. "I get it," I say to the man who has spent the past 14 years under the hoods of these vintage cars. I realize what these cars represent to many. They are fixtures in time that bring people back to moments in their life, when they were young and the world was different, and maybe at times a better place. I like to imagine that the strangers who would stare at us and smile as we drove by were taking a trip back to the 1960s in their minds. That they were remembering themselves as teenagers, wearing bell bottoms and miniskirts, flipping Beatles records and parked at drive-in movies, listening to the voices of the Kennedys and wearing flowers in their hair. It may be a daydreamer's idea, but I hope for their nostalgic moments nonetheless. *MM*

Emilee penned this story several years ago. Since then, she and Ian married and now are raising—with proper British influences—an adorable daughter named Piper.





# Photo Contest!

## Before & After Pictures

**You can win \$500 in Moss parts and be featured on the cover of the Moss catalog!**

*"Buy the best car you can get for the money."* That's the advice most often given to those on the hunt for a classic car. But some people, God bless 'em, ignore the paths of least resistance. These talented folks have a calling in life to bring the dead back to life. Where some see a questionable parts car, they see a diamond in the rust. From a heaping bucket of mismatch bolts emerges, after years of sweat equity, a road worthy motoring miracle.

We want to showcase these resurrections on the covers of our Moss parts catalogs. After all, we're proud that our parts play a role in bringing new life to old cars. Your Before & After photos don't have to be as dramatic as, say, going from the scene on the back cover of this magazine to concours pristine—sometimes just getting a car streetable again is a Herculean effort. Also, we may choose winners over the timespan of multiple catalog covers if we have enough entries.

### CAN YOU TOP ROBERT RUSHING?



"I'm pretty sure mine has been wrecked and repaired more than any other MGB on the planet. I got my car in 1984 when I was 17. It was in okay shape, old but solid. After four years of college, year-round driving, and shoestring repairs, the car went way downhill. Finally I had a big wreck in 1998 (which is why the front Grendel is cut off). It was super rusty too. I couldn't junk it so I started a two year restoration. It's been back on the road for almost 20 years, and I try to keep it repaired as I continue to drive it hard."



Please submit your photos along with a few paragraphs telling the story of your restoration. If your story is as compelling as your pictures, it's quite possible we'll feature it in an issue of *Moss Motoring*. If that happens, you will find a \$500 credit in your Moss account, too, for entertaining or enlightening us from your experiences.

Send your submissions to: [MossMotors.com/before-after](http://MossMotors.com/before-after)



# Period Correct



By Chris Seely

I've always had an eye for cool old things—mainly tools, toys, pocket knives, etc. This was fostered by my mother who took my sister and I to yard sales nearly every weekend. For several summers growing up, we would get into the back of her Subaru station wagon and navigate her to the best sounding yard sales listed in the local paper. It was always an event. We would go to one or two, stop for breakfast at Dunkin Donuts, then get back in the car to hit the rest of the list. Some weekends we would return home with tools, books, games, and other treasures. Sometimes we'd be empty handed.

I'm 21 years old, just graduated college, and the thrill of the hunt is still in me. The only difference is my searching is now fueled by two words: period correct. This search is a constant one, and helps to keep my passion for classic cars alive. There are always certain items I'm on the lookout for on Craigslist, eBay, and car forums that I'll scoop up if the price is reasonable.

For me, being period correct is all about the authenticity. My MGB in particular is the car that feeds my habit. The best part of the game is trying to get as much out of the engine and suspension using only what would have been available in the 60s. There is no question that the MG would be way faster with a Ford Zetec or some V8, but that feels like cheating. I don't own the car because it's fast, I own it because it's a motorized time capsule and a sensory overload to drive. Filling my car with

period correct pieces adds to both of these attributes.

When my eyes are scanning for pieces to add, or modifications to make, I never get bored. Even over the winter months when the car is fast asleep, looking for pieces keeps me involved and inspired about what to do next. Holding a piece of metal formed in the '60s or '70s is palpable to the senses. Feeling that history, and imagining everything it has been through in the past 50 years is infinitely more rewarding than buying a brand new, mass manufactured part that is functional but has no story to tell. As it sits, my car is full of stories, and will continue to collect more as it evolves.

My MGB is one of a kind. The steering wheel is a 1960s Nardi Personal that was accidentally unmarked from the factory; this I bought from a fellow steering wheel enthusiast in Florida. It needed a lot of restoration but came out beautifully. The wheels are 15 inch wire spokes off of a TR250 that I drove two hours into Vermont to pick up. The radio blanking plate (still to be installed) is not a reproduction, but an actual BMC option from the '60s. This came from a huge MG enthusiast in Michigan. In the rear, my car sports the original European style tail lights, amber on the top, red on the bottom, which was in a box of parts that originally came with my car.

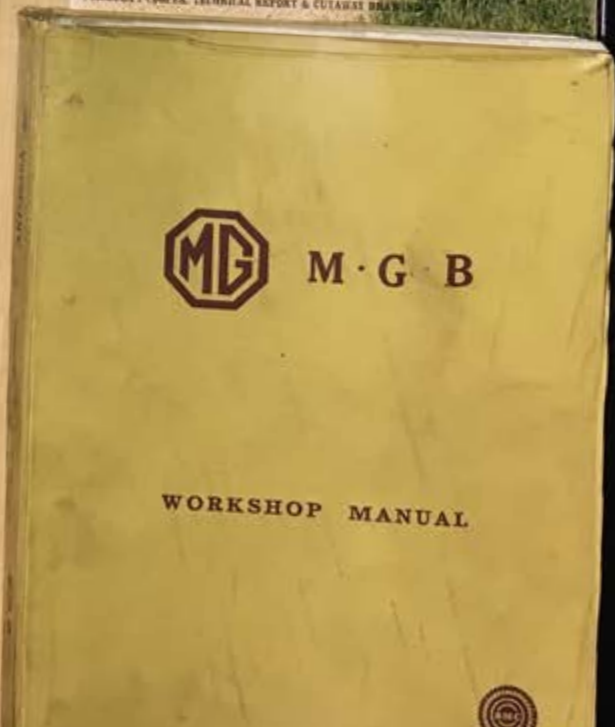
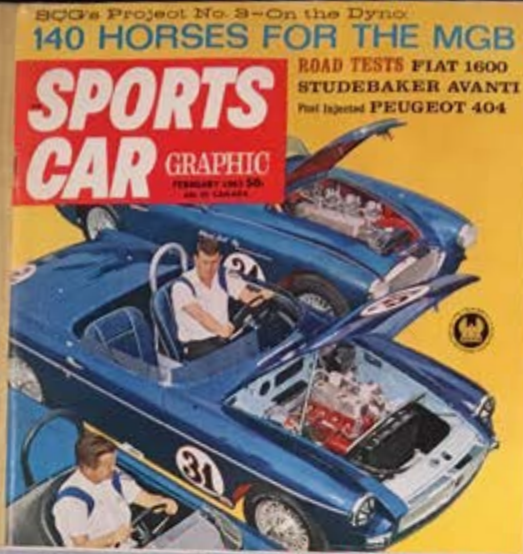
There are other treasures that won't go on the car but are incredible to own nonetheless. On the wall of my college

dorm room hung the original *Road & Track* with the first review of the MGB. Above it, a sports car magazine from 1963 details how to get 140 horses out of the MGB. These two magazines I found way up north on the Pacific coast of Washington this past summer. As for the hard goods, on my desk sat the original 1967 MGB workshop manual released by BMC, as well as a Jaeger electronic dash mounted tachometer and a Carello driving light in the original box, all from owners across the US. My centerpiece is my most prized collectors item, an original, never used, HRG Derrington crossflow head that has been ported and polished. Along with it I have a set of new old stock Dellorto DHLA 40s, used intake manifolds, and HRG valve cover.

The carburetors and head came from an old racer in Florida. Over the summer, I saw an ad for some race car bits and immediately called. I had been on the hunt for a HRG Derrington for four years at this point. When I asked if he had the rare head (only about 400 were made) I was shocked to hear him say that although he didn't have one, he knew someone down the road who did and was even the original owner. A handful of phone calls and emails later, the gorgeous aluminum head was sitting on my doorstep.

So here I have a beautiful, never used HRG head which is unusable





without the manifolds and improper without the right valve cover. Six months later I am in the car with two friends part way through a 20-hour drive coming back from a wedding. Knowing that I had to finish the last seven hours of the trip solo, I checked Craigslist pages along my route and found an MG gold mine in Syracuse. "Miscellaneous MGB parts for sale" the title read, and in the middle of the first picture sat an HRG valve cover. The post had only been listed for 12 hours, but giddy with excitement, I typed an email as fast as I could. We met at 8am the next day. All of the parts were laid out for me to see. We agreed on a price for the valve cover, but only on the condition that I took the rest of the parts with me. I was happy to oblige.

The manifold would come a couple of months later. I had put a wanted ad out on the MG forum, and after reposting and reposting, I finally had a hit. This owner somehow had two of the rare manifolds, and was happy to let one go to a fellow enthusiast.

Not all of the treasures I find stay with me—there was the SCCA spec cylinder head that I passed along, as well as the 1968 Haan steering wheel I found at a car show—in large part because I can recognize when something will not be used in my own car, and I would rather it be enjoyed by a fellow enthusiast, but also because most of the fun is in the hunt. The feeling you get when you find that rare piece you have been after for years is incredibly rewarding. Like finding that Babe Ruth in a shoebox of old baseball cards. But no matter what I have at any point in time, or what I choose to keep or sell, the hunt will continue. As for the HRG, that piece I will keep. And when money isn't my limiting factor, I plan on building a hot engine around it for my '67 MGB. *MM*



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 with that!”*

