

From The LITTLEMORE GARAGE

Hi Folks:

I have started writing about several subjects and seemed to have left them in limbo so thought that I had better make some progress on . . .



BACK IN TIME . . .

The ongoing saga of the various cars that I have owned. I left off with my ownership of a brand-new MGB.

#6.- (Lic.1966 XV5084): – I decided to go back to school and needed the money that was going into the monthly payments on my MGB so I sold it for what was left owing, plus a trade-in of a 1959 Riley 1.5; a fun little sedan that was powered by an MGA engine and transmission.

Since I owed no money on the Riley, I looked at it as the replacement of my Sprite that had been paid for when I traded it in on the MGB.



Since the Riley was valued at more than the Sprite, I came out not too badly in the deal.

I named it “*The Life Of Riley*” which is an old idiom meaning “*a carefree comfortable way of living*”. It was well appointed with leather seats, burl walnut trim and dashboard and red wool carpets, it was comfortable, luxurious and fashionable; the girls loved it more than the MGB. The 1600 engine, 4-speed transmission and differential were MGA components that were fitted out with a longer stick shift, and a lower final gear ratio.

The Riley was a perfect little economy car for an economically deprived student.

#7.- After my year of studying I got a job working as a printer in Sun Publishing (Not the Edmonton Sun) and decided that I should in order to get back

into a Sports Car, however, I had no savings. I dropped by 4-STAR Motors and asked Jack what he could do for me.



He showed me an Austin Healey 3000. The “Big Healey” was a

race car that he had just bought. My heart did a flip-flop that was strong enough to blind me to what I was looking at. The car was being trailered back from a race in Calgary when the trailer broke an axle and the owner had to leave it beside the highway that then ran through Hobbema. When he returned with a rental trailer it had been so badly vandalized with an axe that it was a write-off. Jack offered to trade me straight up for my, by-now slightly tatty Riley, plus he had a buyer for the Healey’s roll bar who would pay me \$200 for it. I jumped at the offer and, with a friend’s help, I towed the car home to my parents’ house; it was common practice back then to tow a vehicle through the city behind a vehicle with a rope.

#8.- Once I got it home, I soon realized that much of the Healey’s body was made of Aluminium and that my primitive body skills of



hammering and pop-riveting were not up to repairing it; but I was committed and had to do the best I could. I phoned around and found that there was a crashed, 4-year-old, Austin-Healey 3000 Mk I BN7 2-seater in *Jasper Auto Parts* so my dad and I headed out to have a look at it. After pricing all the parts that I required from the car my dad suggested that we ask how much the entire vehicle would cost. After some haggling, I got it for \$250 including them towing it to the south side of Edmonton.

When I took into consideration the \$200 that I had got from the sale of the roll bar, I now owned a Mk I BN7 and a 1959 Austin-Healey 3000 that had a Tri-Carb, race prepared engine all paid for, except for the \$50 that I had to borrow from my father to close the deal at *Jasper Auto Parts*.

When I examined the BN7 luck was with me – it had a damaged front fender, bonnet, bumper and grill – all of which were good on the race car. The



only problem was that one front wheel was skewed outwards because of a bent frame. I decided that it was easier to fix than it was to try and repair the race car.

I phoned a few body shops and they were not very encouraging about my chances of having the frame straightened. There was a spring and frame shop just a few blocks south of us and I dropped in on them and explained my problem. The foreman told me that they had an apprentice, who was very good at that type of work, and that if I was willing to let him try to repair it the cost probably wouldn't be too much. I had it towed to their shop and within a day they called and said that it was finished; the bill was for one hour at the reduced rate of \$15 because the work had been done by their apprentice who had amazed them at how quickly he had accomplished the fix. A number of years later I was to meet that apprentice – Phil J.

With the car back home, I used the parts from the race car and replaced the fender, hood, grill bumper valence. A rattle-can spray of the replaced parts gave me a quite presentable sports car.

I pulled the Tri-Carb engine and transmission from the race car and sold the remains for \$150 to a chap who wanted to build a V8 sports car. When all was said and done, I was money ahead and I owned an operational 1961 Austin-Healey 3000 Mk I BN7 that was paid for. After a catastrophic missed-shift in a stoplight drag race with a Mustang, I changed-out the original BN7's engine/transmission with the spare Tri-Carb engine tranny from the race car. The resulting combination gave me a street machine that was quite quick. I sold the original powertrain, but was soon sorry that I had because the reverse went out on my Healey. I didn't have the money to get it fixed so when I met a chap who had a two-year-old VW Beetle that had a blown engine I traded the Healey straight up for the VW.

#9 - #31 – VW Beetles



Soon after the trade I came across Basco Auto, that was just starting out in business on White Avenue, specializing in VWs. I bought a rebuilt engine and transmission from them for \$165 and soon had my two-year-old Beetle operational.

Now I wasn't enamoured by the VW's 40 horse engine so put a For Sale sign on it and parked it in our driveway. I was surprised when a



guy came by and, without blinking an eye, gave me \$900 plus his 4-year-old VW that had – you guessed it – a blown engine. It turned out that the previous winter had dropped to -40 degrees and VW engines, by the dozen, seized because of oil flow problems. I soon fixed this car with a \$165 Basco deal and then it sold for a nice profit.

I now had my eye on the brass ring and soon amassed 22 very low-cost VW Beetles. Almost every neighbour in our area had at least one of my VWs parked in their garden or on their driveway. I was soon buying Basco powertrains for a \$20 discount and could change-out a powertrain in a couple of hours – the bank balance mushroomed.

I hope to see you all soon, so follow-on next time on The Open Road...

Godspeed In Safety Fast,

Jc&Dee