

Team 51
A Race Team History
By Jim Allen

PART ONE: The Genesis

Chapter 1: The lost is found

It all begins on a lazy early fall afternoon in 1984. My brother has just done this “deal” for a whole lot of VW parts plus cars in various states of disrepair. Sure enough, when I get to his place there is about a quarter acre of VW stuff, and there he was, going through the collection and admiring the booty. It was one of those situations where the price was right but there was a hook; he had to take it all.....no cherry picking, all or nothing; “where do you want it?”

Well, over to one side of the field is this forlorn little two door nondescript roadster that obviously did not have German heritage. “As a matter of fact”, Bob says, “it was passed off as being some kind of British car”. And, I make the classic mistake of asking “so, what are you going to do with that little car?” And he says “I think you should have it”. This goes back and forth where soon enough it’s decided that the fate of the car, if I don’t adopt it, is on to the scrap yard with the other stuff with no resale or redeemable value. Well....we can’t let that happen! So, I buy it for two hundred twenty-five bucks and proceed to drag it the five miles back to my house.

Now, remember I don’t even know what this car is. During the next several days spent walking around and prodding this newly acquired prize I find indications that it has an Austin Healey badge and unmistakable British heritage. Okay, that has to be good...I’ve heard of the Austin Healey sports cars. But I had always pictured them as being bigger and sleeker somehow?

So I hit the books, start asking around and, remember this is before the “Internet”, start doing what research I can on British cars. Well, there it is, an Austin Healey Sprite! And it turns out in my subsequent exploration that it is a fairly significant car as Sprites go. This is a first edition version of the square-bodied classic AH Sprite, and a follow on from the original and most identifiable “Bug-eye” configuration. The chassis number identified the car as being produced in October of 1961 and sold as one of the early 1961 / 1962 Sprites. It is fairly obvious that it was made for the US market as all of the control systems are set up for a left hand driver.

Well, okay, I’m feeling a lot better about this. It isn’t the 100-4 I had in mind, but it is an Austin Healey and come on, how many people can say they have an Austin Healey after all!

Chapter 2: The evolution process

The next few years (yes, years) are spent continuing to study the lineage and learning the various iterations of the Sprite. This includes projecting pictures on the back of my eye lids of the wife and me tooling across hill and dale in this great little car. A lot of day dreaming goes on in this phase, actually. It is an amazing transition that occurs when you plop your butt down in the seat of a project car isn't it? The vision through the windshield (yes, it had a windshield!) changes to sunny skies, top down driving, in a perfect British sports car. Of course it's in perfect condition; and at full chat! My oldest son David actually drew a cartoon with me in the car, making motor sounds, my driving goggles onwhile the Healey is up on jack stands! True story!

We jump ahead and pick up where I have already done much of the work on the car. The body is solid now; the original 950 cc engine has been swapped for the huskier 1275. The early four-speed transmission is replaced with a newer "rib-case" version with the synchromesh gears. The Austin Healey is now in new blue paint with a white racing stripe front to back, and it actually runs up and down the road.

The plan in those early years was to restore the car back to its "original" trim and use it to go to shows and such, and just generally have fun with it. It was during this time that I attended a vintage race weekend at the famous Watkins Glen, NY track. Out on the track that day were several Sprites and Midgets, bug-eyes and square bodies, all in race trim having a really great time. They were ducking in and out of traffic; flying down the front stretch and sliding into turn one with one wheel off the track. Then and there the master plan takes a hard right turn. An idea that until that day was totally foreign to me begins to formulate. "I'm going to race the Austin Healey.....yeah, that's the ticket!"

So, the next day I'm sitting on an airplane next to the Chief of Tech for the Sportscar Vintage Racing Association. We start talking about cars, the Watkins Glen event and the vintage racing sport in general. And he says, "Why don't you join our club and we'll help you get into Vintage Racing?" Well, there you go....positive reinforcement! I am officially propelled into my own Walter Mitty adventure, and there is no turning back!

I subsequently do join the SVRA and they send me the rules and regulations promulgated to control how the various cars can be configured and what will need to be done to the car to make it safe. To make a long story longer it turns out that you can't just build up your car in any which way. The SVRA had been chartered to preserve the cars as they were raced on great European tracks and US airports dating back to the early 1950's. These guys come out and say "You can only use what was common to your Sprite when it was constructed!" My 1962 car came with a 950cc engine and other features unique to that car and that is what will be allowed to run with the SVRA by their rules.

It's about this time that my youngest son, Mike, develops an active interest in the Sprite. He has been watching from a safe distance to see if this conversion plan will really happen, taking clues from his mother's posture, not sure if Dad can pull this race car thing off.....go figure! But as it turns out his elevated level of interest becomes a critical

and important turning point in this little saga. Mike will rapidly become engrossed in the workings of the small bore British engines and the mechanics of the Sprite in particular. He reads and absorbs everything he can get his hands on. His new mentor is some guy named Vissar, supposedly a guru on the little BMC engines. His mother and I buy him Mr. Vissar's technical manual, among others, and he commits sections of these to memory. He haunts the race circuit pits and paddocks, asking questions of other Sprite owners and builders. He begins to build a wealth of knowledge that ultimately will help take us to the next level of performance.

By the way, this is not an epiphany moment here; no bolt out of the blue thing; no classical music building in the background. Mike had developed and honed his mechanical skills keeping his daily drivers, not to mention farm tractors, running through his high school and college days. His hand-me-down Porsche Yellow VW bug was the source of legends.....and that is a whole other story!

After a less than auspicious race debut in the fall of 1990, racing with the SVRA at Watkins Glen, a long range plan starts to take root relative to the Sprite's future. Okay, so far we are getting by using recycled parts with only a minimal investment in the primary running gear, just barely meeting the SVRA regulations. We are feeling our way through this early phase while looking at the back end of a lot of cars out on the track! Don't get me wrong here. No matter how poorly we did in our first outings it was more fun than I could have ever imagined! I mean, come on, we are actually racing an Austin Healey on the same tracks where Jackie Stewart, Sterling Moss, Mario Anderetti and other great drivers performed feats of legend in road racing history. But, come on, let's get serious, huh?

Chapter 3: We get serious

Right about here Mike makes a basic fish-or-cut-bait statement, something to the effect "...if you want to get up in the pack and really be serious about this racing thing you need to get more power". Translated loosely this means we have to spend some money (actually lots of money) to improve the basic elements of the car that yield performance and reliability. The operative word here is money. In the world of racing at any level there is a direct correlation with speed, performance and the dollars invested.

We put into practice what Mike has been researching, planning and preaching. We acquire a 1098cc long stroke engine with the preferred 2-inch main and Mike begins to mold it into the form that will take us well into the future. Oh yeah, a long way back I said that the car came with a 948 cc and it basically had to stay that way to be period compliant? Well, we discussed this with SVRA and in the Group One car specifications we find some wiggle room. It states that this car, in this body style actually was produced with the 948 and the 1098 engines prior to 1965 / 66. This opened the door for the development of the 1098 drive line.

Mike employs Carrillo rods, aluminum pistons, hardened crank, a tuned head from England, larger SU carburetors, Cooper-S distributor and more goodies designed to coax horsepower from the engine. The suspension parts of the car get redone as well...down it goes. A lower center of gravity is critical to handling after all. We take out anything that translates into unnecessary pounds. We try to achieve a front to back balanced weight. Words like caster, camber, under steer, over steer and power band start to sneak into my vocabulary; words that I have never even uttered, let alone understood until now, become common place.

Two seats? No, no; this just won't do! Forget the thought that we may be able to use this car to race on weekends and drive out to the country orchard for apples in the fall. It isn't going to happen. In place of the second seat a battery box goes in. More roll bar structure is added. Stiffen this, replace that. Get rid of those steel wheels; add fatter tires with softer rubber compounds. More and different gauges; "we need accurate telemetry! This is an expensive engine and feed back is critical" I'm told. And so it goes.....

We learn from the previous race season's efforts and every year we add here and tweak there. The lap times begin to reflect our collective efforts. With Mike's input we are now consistently in the middle of the pack, up in the top of our class and racing competitively. My driving skills are improving. We begin to collect the hardware to show for our efforts. First, second and third place ribbons and medals start to adorn the office wall. We concede that in a real world we probably will never have a Group winner, but no matter; my original vision has been met, and exceeded. How could this possibly get any better?

But it does get better....my entire family begins to get more involved. My wife, Gale, begins to do timing and scoring and develops her own circle of friends from that side of the track. My multi-talented daughter-in-law Julie, gets her competition license and is driving with us from time to time. Our west-coast family (you remember Dave the "cartoonist") gives us lots of moral support from afar. Our grand daughters pitch in to help in the pits and with the timing and scoring duties; and, of course, Mike keeps everything working mechanically. Man, is this fun or what!

And so it goes; Team 51 and that wonderful little Austin Healey Sprite make their way to such tracks as Mid-Ohio, Watkins Glen, Pocono Raceway, Summit Point, Roebing Roads, Virginia International and other great and historic venues. From our rather weak beginnings in 1990 and on through the 2002 season our little troop grows in experience and level of performance. All this, having more fun than I could have ever imagined when I reflect back to that first fall day at the Glen and said to myself..."I can do that!"

Chapter 4: Transitions

The number 51 Austin Healey is still performing as I write this, but step back to 2003 and now the car has undergone another transition. The Healey is now a right hand driver, Mike having changed the configuration to suit Julie's driving preferences. The Healey

has officially gone over to Mike and Julie and she will campaign the number 51 car with SVRA and other Vintage venues from now on. Julie has a race team now; DWD Racing (Damn Woman Driver) with her own web site and way cool merchandise by the way. A blatant plug for DWD here! Go buy her stuff!

What about me? What am I doing now that the Healey has moved on? Well, that will be the stuff for the “rest of the story”. Up to this point this has been more a history of the Healey Sprite than of Team 51, but it was always homologous.....you didn’t get one without the other. Now comes a fork in the road where Team 51 diverges away from the Austin Healey and moves on to new adventures.

Oh, by the way, did you ever wonder where the Team name came from? It doesn’t matter; you’re going to hear anyhow. Back in the days when we decided that we would race the Austin Healy I had a goal to be racing the car by my fiftieth birthday. We missed it by one year and hence the name. Ok, so now you’re doing the math.....everyone does it. And, yes it’s 2009 and I’m still actively in the sport, driving as often as I can. Dreams never die.....after all, we’re not old, we’re Vintage!

PART TWO: A New Car for Team 51

Chapter 1: An MG?

When Team 51 was campaigning the Austin Healey we were constantly correcting those people that thought the car was a MG Midget! Come on, how could anyone make that kind of lame brained mistake! There is a winged badge on the hood that says Austin Healy for heavens sake! Okay, okay, the two cars were virtually built on the same chassis, with many common parts. But, an MG? We wouldn’t be caught dead in a MG! Yeah, we are die hard Group One small bore guys, plus being loyal to the British marque; cut us and we bleed red, white and blue (in a Union Jack pattern of course). But a MG.....come on!

Then it happened.....bear in mind, one of the ways that I have always supported my addiction to my British cars was to buy, sell and trade parts at flea markets. Most notably was my yearly exodus to the Carlisle, PA foreign car spring swap meet and flea market. There I was, nearly through with my wheeling and dealing this one year (1998 as I recall), ready to pack it in, when I eased into my friend Jack Whorley’s spot. He was there peddling some MG parts and other “stuff”. Jack is the Technical Director for the SVRA, and it was natural that we had things in common, so chatting with him would be a good way to wrap up the weekend; right?

Out in front of his hauler is this body shell for a 1967 MG/B GT. He didn’t relish dragging this back to SC, but it looked like this was going to be the ultimate out come. In our prattling we mutually decide that this would make a great Vintage racer and endurance car. I had always been a big fan of this GT body style and after driving an open Roadster for years I could see some distinct advantages to having an enclosed car.

Well, one thing led to another, a few more back and forth exchanges and, well you guessed it, I own it!

And, can you believe it? Because I didn't have a way to get it home Jack hauls it back to South Carolina for storage until I can make arrangements to pick it up. What a guy, right? Well, he and I both know that I have reasons to be in Georgia from time to time, because Mike and his family are living in Atlanta at this point. After all, Jack's garage was a manageable drive from Atlanta, so the plan kind of worked for both of us, in a convoluted way.

One positive thing did occur while the body was in Jack's SC shop. He had a roll cage installed, so that was done when I picked up the body shell. And because he is the SVRA "Tech-guy" I knew it would be right!

Are you starting to get the picture here? Ok...ok...there you go! Put the GT in front of Mike and our collective creative juices begin to flow. A plan is born right then and there. The car would be built up to resemble one of the factory "works-cars" that had so much success in European endurance and road racing. Well, yeah, I can relate to that. And why not...a car that I can stay dry in, will have lots more power, and has the potential of netting more track time; how can this be bad? The die is cast and the wall that once separated us from the stigma of MG ownership is tumbling down. (What the heck, it's still a British car isn't it?).

Chapter 2: Another car, another build

Building a race car never moves as quickly as you hope, especially when this is strictly a hobby and you have very limited means to bring it all together. The time to prepare this car for its racing debut took about four years. During that time the car moved from Jack's garage in South Carolina to storage in Georgia for awhile, moved up to PA, down to VA, back to PA and ultimately settled in Virginia when we physically relocated there. So, this car probably has more miles being hauled around the country on a trailer than it did as a "runner".

But the time spent building the GT was well worth it. The plan to develop the car to a "factory-works" look alike strayed somewhat but the end results is pleasing just the same. And with the 1800cc plus displacement it really turns up the dial on the old fun-factor gauge! And, in the end, this is what it's all about, right?

But, I digress. Let me step back and walk you through some of the build process. I do this knowing that you die-hard motor heads relish the details. And for the non-motor heads reading this? Well, don't leave me just yet. Remember, Mike is the detail guy; I'm the dreamer. I don't do real well when it comes down to the minutia! (A.D.D. you know?) Like, I know the engine is an 1800 series, but the calculations of over-boring to

compression ratios, etc, etc, etc? Give me a break! I'll turn wrenches with the best of them all day long, but I need written directions to do it!

The process for building up the GT was not remarkably different than the Sprite in many respects. True, we had the advantage of almost ten years in the hobby plus lots of hours on the track to fall back on. Plus we had the support of the SVRA and our vintage racer network. But we still needed to go back to the basics, researching the lineage of the car, asking lots of questions at the tracks, reading everything we could get our hands on. We started buying technical manuals all over again, but for MG's this time. Lessons learned from building the Sprite were incorporated, mistakes of the past are avoided and we adopt the "plan before you execute" culture. These decisions not only help in cost savings but ramp us up the learning curve much faster.

So, now the car goes back to Pennsylvania where the body and suspension become the thrust of my early contribution to the build...because I can; I have written instructions now. Bear in mind; this was hardly a "car" at all. It was a shell with no running gear when I bought it. It did have the beginnings of a rear suspension but no front suspension, zip....zero. There were no front fenders or "bonnet" and the interior had been stripped clean. But you know what? That's a good thing! When you start out to build a race car generally you begin by the stripping the car down to its basic components anyhow. It's been my experience that a master plan always works better when drawn up on a clean slate.

First thing I did was to put out feelers to my usual "parts finder" network looking for suspension and body panels. This netted a bunch of good "stuff" including fenders, hood, suspension parts plus some goodies to swap or sell! The search also yielded a donor car that was virtually complete but rough. I took off all of the parts that I needed and scrapped the rest. About this time my good friend Al Liporini, in downstate PA, found some key parts that I could not seem to locate. Hey, what are friends for if not scavenging parts! (Al and I go way back and our relationship could make a whole other chapter to this story! And maybe it will.)

At some time during this phase Mike starts thinking seriously about the drive train. Then we get a call from Bob Woodman who has a race tire and car prep shop in Charleston, SC. Bob says he has a MG race engine and lots of performance parts he wants gone. He's "going to move over to Porsche" he says. Whoa....what is wrong with this picture? But never mind, you never look a gift horse in the engine bay, right? So we jump on it; the price is right and we know the shop because Mike worked with Bob for awhile when they lived in Charleston.

Mike's skills as an engine builder and his knowledge of performance engines have grown exponentially since that time and especially since we have been in this sport. He continues to boggle my mind with his knowledge and comfort level working with these small bore engines. He is now fine tuning where once he would be experimenting or adjusting. We are reacting to the results of positive or negative feed back from the track and working in a corrective action mindset. So it's no surprise that the new engine comes

together quickly on the first pass. Given that it was mostly built up and Mike had a hand in the original effort also plays a contributing factor in the quick turn around.

Oh yeah, that is an interesting note to inject here....while Mike is evaluating the engine we acquired from Bob he realizes that he built a lot of this engine while working for Bob in the Charleston shop! And because of his involvement he knows much of what went into the build. He is feeling pretty good about this revelation. Maybe it's fate and not just luck that has played into our hands this time. Re-connecting with this engine is seen as a very good thing.

The engine may have come to us "done", but it did not have Mike's personal signature on it yet. We made several changes and adjustments with the original build up, but none the less this configuration was slated to take us through the debut outing pretty much as-is. However, in one of our initial race sessions we spun a main bearing in the engine. After that minor set back we returned to the drawing board and made more improvements, like adding roller-rockers and such! We toyed with other performance upgrade ideas, especially with induction and electrical but we ultimately decide to stay with much of the original SU fuel delivery and Lucas electrical systems.....it worked in the Sprite, why mess with success? Retaining the "original" MG/B configuration also insured that we would be slotted in with similar Group 3 cars as an E-Production car. This is seen as a distinct advantage during this new learning process on the track.

Somewhere in the process of the build-up a straight-cut gear box becomes available and through one of Mike's contacts we pick up the lead. Shortly after linking up with the seller we own a real race bred gearbox and our transmission issues are resolved. The rear end and final drive is rebuilt from the original cars components plus another donor MG rear acquired from a friend of a friend. My brother-in-law Wayne (a successful Stockcar driver in his own right) offers his help to modify the rear hubs giving us a later MG/B set-up improving the rear braking and axel system. This modification also allowed us to retain the changeable rear differential center section. In the long range plan this was considered to be a positive benefit, because we would be able to swap out gear ratios to suit the track configuration or specific race type. Pretty high-tech stuff, huh? We haven't taken advantage of this feature yet but we can, and that's what counts.

The rest is pretty usual in the world of final preparations. The bodywork gets finished and painted....Team 51 blue, of course. A dry-sump system for pre-lubrication of the engine is opted for. We install a fire bottle system because it's a closed car. A new dash panel with better gauges and a race seat with five point harnesses are next. A fuel cell is selected and installed.....and on it goes! These are but a few of the final details that are decided on and executed. Our good friend Tony Dix dips his fingers in the water during these final assembly stages and he sorts out an electrical scheme, plus helping with many other final details. And then it's done! (Well, it's never really done-done!)

We get our first real race laps in the car at the Virginia International Raceway, which is now our home track. We use this time to shake down the car and the internal race systems. This initial track time gives Mike the time to play with the timing, carburetion,

valve settings and a dozen other things he plays with to maximize performance. The next race event is in June of 2004 and I start to get the feel of the car, adjusting to the increased power, weight and handling characteristics. Understand; this part of the preparation never really ends. Staying on top of the game is important to remain competitive. After all, we are not “back marker” racers anymore. We have a reputation to live up to.....we are Team 51 Racing for heavens sake!

We have about a dozen races in the MG/B now and it is still a rush to climb into the seat of this car and crank it up. It is a lot more brute-ish than the Sprite and is absolutely deafening inside of the drivers compartment. The handling is a little less forgiving but not uncomfortable. It is still a fun drive and can run with the best of the E-production cars. Mike and Tony think it may have a lot more potential in the hands of a real driver! Hmmm...what do they mean? Come on, I did get Best in Class in the Collier Cup at Watkins Glen, didn't I?

Chapter 3: The Virginia saga

I “retired” in 2003 and we moved to Danville, Virginia lock, stock and barrel in 2004. When we knew that we would be living in VA we decided that we would need a home with more room than the normal two-car garage and full basement. We had to make space for our everyday cars, room for Gale's hobbies, the race cars and an accumulation of twenty years worth of car parts, tools and all kinds of “stuff”. Well, again fate steps in and offers the perfect solution! It seems that friends of Mike and Julie (they are now living in Danville, too) have this property in the Historic District of Danville that would be perfect for our burgeoning space dilemma!

The property has a four bay garage plus a rather substantial warehouse building. And, the sale price offered is right. We quickly calculate that we can probably buy this property cheaper than we can build a second garage at our future home. So, we make the deal and the short term storage problems are solved. We ease the burden of the final relocation by moving all my worldly possessions to Danville where it finds a prime spot at the Lynn Street property.

Have I mentioned that this property is a vintage 1910 ex-fuel depot that hasn't seem any real maintenance in many, many years? I Haven't? Well, let me give you a sense of what Gale and I saw the first time we visited the site. The doors on the garage were falling off and only one pair was functional. The roofs were in need of replacement; no bad leaks but they were iffy at best! Mother Nature had begun her intrepid process of reclaiming the grounds. Everything was overgrown or falling down, engulfed under vines, trees and an unimaginable tangle of weeds. The warehouse was in pretty good shape as these things go. Our new friends, Dan and Vicky Vaden (they sold us the property), had started to fix up this building thinking that they may locate a business there, but in the end thought better of it, I guess.

Now, in a past life I had dabbled in architectural design and I had no problem seeing the potential of the property the first time I laid eyes on this place. This was the proverbial diamond in the rough (with the emphasis here on rough). I immediately began to render sheets of drawings that reflected my visions for the two buildings. We began the conversion process in earnest. My skills honed in the construction industry are put to good use under the banner of sweat equity. Several of the BIG dumpsters are filled and hauled away. We beat back the incursion of Mother Nature and expose more of the buildings and the concrete pad in front of the buildings. It was a busy and productive time.

And so we cut to the chase, where we collectively spend a year or more in an aggressive restoration project, and the property is brought back from the brink. It's during this time that another of my fantasies begins to take root. We have this terrific building that looks kind of like an old British Garage. So, why not take advantage of this perception? After all we have the space, the knowledge pool, a bunch of parts, not to mention the need to store and service our race cars. Why not offer our talents to the rest of the world? Mike, Tony and I are sitting in the office one day and out of our ramblings is born the basic concept and a loose plan for the business. It was at that time that the name was chosen and Southside British Cars became a reality, at least in our minds.

In those four years after the formative stages Southside British Cars, LLC began pursuing new business in a low key manner. We ultimately put a bunch of cars through the shop. Mostly journeyman work, general repairs, upgrades and the like. But you have to start somewhere. We intend to create a niche business dedicated to the restoration of British cars of the fifties, sixties and seventies. That's the master plan and our mission is to save as many of these great old rides as we can. There is a TR3, Austin Healey 3000, MG/B and TR6 in the garage as I write this chapter. We now have a web site that is beginning to be "user friendly" and can be accessed to follow the progress of the restorations or track our racing activities. Hey, as I said, it's a start! Oh, by the way, you can see the fruits of our labors if you visit that web site at (www.southsidebritish.com.)

We have acquired several "new" cars since we established the Southside digs. Mike now has his MG/C GT and I truly believe he will eventually achieve his dream of having the "works car" he envisioned years ago with the MG/B race car build. Tony has a Morris Minor convertible that I found in a barn and it is undergoing a restoration at his hands. We bought a Triumph GT/6 out of a guy's basement that is another classic "barn-find". Another of our acquisitions is a late sixty's MG Midget that has undergone a retro-transformation at our hands from a rubber bumper style car back to the steel-bumper version that is more desirable. It looks so much better now and still retains the benefit of the 1500cc drive train available in the late Midgets!

There are currently two AH bug eye race cars on our horizon and the potential of a trade pending with the TR/6 for an MG/A. Not to mention the MG/B roadster and a round wheelarch Midget sitting patiently next to the fence awaiting our ministrations. We intend to breathe new life into these two tired warriors in the near future. The MG/B will incorporate many upgrades and modifications designed to demonstrate the offerings of

the business and will be our moving billboard for the shop. The Midget is on the way to being an entry level vintage racer. Someone will buy this car eventually and will begin to build there own Vintage racing legacy.

It's 2008 and I'm "working" in the shop most of the time now where the real learning process continues. We recently finished a partial restoration of the '59 TR3A. Tony and I gained a lot of insight on early Triumph suspensions with this work. Mike rebuilt the engine for this car and it's a great runner with lots of snap.

Mike is also well down the road on an AH 3000 six cylinder engine. This engine is getting quite a bit of a boost over the original specifications. The engine in many ways mirrors the six that will go into the MG/C and is the perfect model to learn from as a preamble to that build. The AH will eventually be totally restored to original which may take a couple of years. Mike also wrapped up a rebuild on a TR6 engine recently and is currently reworking on a 1275cc that will end up in a Morris Minor over in western VA. At least six MG/B, Midget or TR engines have gone through our engine shop so far. Not to mention three MG OD transmission conversions. (I said not to mention it!)

We've also added to the race car corral. There's another MG; a Midget racer this time. We converted it from an SCCA H/Production into Vintage competition trim and have had it out a couple of times with the SVRA. The two bug-eyes we are about to acquire both have race history and one of these may end up being driven by our grand daughter, Ashley. She is entertaining the idea of getting her competition license and may well be driving with her mother and me. The thought of having three generations of one family on the same track at one time is just plain exhilarating. So, Team 51 is alive and well. And we're right beside DWD Racing in or little piece of British real estate in Southside Virginia.

I realized that the previous Chapter of this tale began to sound more like a news letter than a running history. But then history is made from current events worthy of retelling after all. But for the sake of the real Team 51 history I feel compelled to once again step back and pick up the threads of the early years as we ventured into the realm of Vintage Racing. There are a great many anecdotal moments that define our past in the sport and some of them are worth retelling here.

PART THREE: People, places and things

Chapter 1: The people

(To be continued)