

RALPH POUPARD'S 1957 MGA (HDT43/18514)

I bought this car from an English fellow in Amherstburg, Ontario. He had intentions of restoring it and had stripped much of the car, but was just too busy with his new business to work on it. That was the fall of 1992, a few years before I joined this club.

I had always loved MGAs since school when my grade 8 teacher, Mr. Zimmerman owned a black MGA coupe. While my friends laughed at his little car, I thought it was fantastic. The following is a condensed version of the first, (and possibly last) car I have restored.

When I brought it home this car was basically a rolling tub with the drive train mounted. The rest of it was in boxes, plastic dish pans, coffee cans, and assorted piles. Fred Flintstone would have loved the floor (not there). The car came with a full set of fiberglass fenders, which I did not use since I wanted to keep it as original as possible. I soon began to wonder what I had started.

While the engine was out being redone and the gearbox checked out I removed the body. At the time I didn't know you were supposed to replace the sills and brace the top so you could keep the doors aligned, but really there was nothing to keep aligned anyway so off it came. The frame was repaired and painted. The trunk (boot) floor was replaced and the underside of the front and rear shrouds painted and replaced back onto the frame. Then I replaced the driver's side sills and pillars. This of course requires fenders to adjust the alignment of everything, so I repaired the fenders at the same time. It took many tries to get the alignment reasonably close.

All this transpired over years, not months, as family, work, other projects, and taking care of a house and a cottage, and just plain getting frustrated with it slowed progress. Pages were falling off the calendar like leaves in autumn.

Fast forward to January 2001. I had just had a health scare in late December, and it seemed to kick start me. The engine and gearbox were done, but the body was only about 50% done. The passenger side went much better as I now had a sample side to take measurements from and this was a huge help. In May 2002 it was ready to go out for paint. I had sent away to BMIHT for one of the production trace certificates and found that the car was originally Tyrolite green with a black interior. I just couldn't paint it this pastel green, so eventually decided on Old English white with a red interior. During the remainder of 2002 and early 2003 I finished putting it back together.

On a Friday in mid April I started the engine. After a few adjustments to the sticking chokes and cleaning the voltage regulator contacts it sounded OK. The next morning I started it, put it in reverse let out the clutch and all of a sudden it moved, the first time under its own power since 1972 as far as I can tell by the license plate that had still been attached to the original rusted, bent rear bumper. I took it for a short drive and what a thrill it was.

In June it passed the Ontario Safety Check and so far it has been a blast to drive.



Ralph with his daughter and MGA



The car is smart and clean under the bonnet too