



PIT SIGNALS



LATE BRAKING NEWS FOR VARAC VINTAGE RACERS JULY 2021 - JEREMY SALE

Green!

Green!

Green!



The 2021 VARAC Vintage Grand Prix got the green flag at last, the race was on! Well done to the board and to VVGP chair Ted Michalos for pulling this off. We put in our entries in hopes that it could be done, and sure enough, it really happened! No U.S. racers were allowed but fortunately the Quebec Ontario border opened at the eleventh hour and our friends from la belle province joined us.

Below; the ever shrinking Lotus grid...lots more news inside!



The 2021 VARAC Vintage Grand Prix

By Jeremy Sale, with many thanks for the photos from our friends

John R. Walker and Peter Viccary

This event had us all crossing our fingers until the final go ahead was given! "It wasn't clear, because of Covid, that we'd be allowed to hold the event at all," said Ted Michalos, president of VARAC and VVGP chair. "In the end we had to do so without our American friends and most of the out-of-province Canadians." Fortunately in the end the VARAC Vintage Grand Prix at Canada's Canadian Tire Motorsport Park (Mosport) was on! As always it opened with a packed schedule; an optional test day, and three full days of racing, involving grids for all Vintage and Historic racing machines. The track permits run groups of up to 62 cars; but VARAC decided to limit groups to 45. So there were three different Vintage Historic groups (cars built before 1973) as well as two Classic groups (cars built before 1999) and Monoposto, open-wheel racing cars. Grids were grouped by their lap times and not by car type or displacement.

"The final entry was 150, down from our usual 250 plus, " said Michalos, "but there were enough cars to put on a good show for the volunteers and our crews. Unfortunately spectators were prohibited. But after all the craziness of the last 12 - 16 months we're just grateful to have had all these cars on track. Thanks to everyone who was able to attend. The enthusiasm, camaraderie, and sportsmanship was a welcome change from the daily drudgery of Covid restrictions."

Once again, VARAC welcomed the Toyo Tires F1600 Championship as our guests, there were also older versions of these cars running in the Formula Classic group. Also competing this year were two "extra" non-vintage grids. "To cover our costs we sold track time to a modern race promoter" said Michalos.

Happily, at the last minute on June 16th the Quebec - Ontario border was opened, and we were thrilled that some of our great vintage friends and members from Quebec, who had pencilled in somewhat hopeful entries, were able to attend the event. “Bienvenue les amis!” (At right; Alain Raymond, 1972 Fiat Abarth. below; Francoise Audette, 1963 MGB.)

And so the VVGP schedule began on Thursday, with orientation and lapping sessions for those wishing to learn or re-learn this very challenging track. Friday opened with practice, qualifying and races for all grids in on and off rain showers, finishing at 6:00pm.

The weather was great on Saturday but the MG-Triumph Challenge unfortunately turned out to be an “MG only” affair, with no Triumphs entered, as many of them are our friends from the US. The MG-Triumph race was the last race of the day on Saturday and was run as an all MG race, with 18 of the 20 MGs taking the start flag. Joe Lightfoot in his MGB stormed into the lead that he would hold until the chequered flag. Erick Levac in his quick MG Midget finished second with a pass at the very last corner over Phil Cooper’s MGB. Cooper said later “I was very happy to be awarded the Tony Simms Challenge Trophy for the “Spirit of Vintage Racing”. Long time vintage racer Frank Mount was awarded the Tommy Hoan Trophy for first MG T-series car.



Toyo Tires F1600 Championship

As always the Toyo Tires F1600 Championship displayed very competitive, nose to tail racing, lap after lap. Watching these young kids climb out of their cars, as excited and as keen as any F1 wannabe, you had to wonder which of them might be a star of the future. Other than the youngsters there were more "senior" past and present VARAC names involved in F1600, including various Bakers, (fathers and sons) Jeff Bateman, Jamie Britnell, Steve Bodrug, Bob Mason's son, Andrew, Steve Lindsay's son, James, and John Dodd's son, Mike, who claimed a welcome podium, and Tony Cove, who is a sponsor of F1600.



Lovely to see 17-year-old Connor Clubine (left and above) winning the "Oliver Clubine Memorial Cup" named after his grandfather, Oliver (Ollie) Clubine. Ollie was well-known in vintage racing circles and won this first place trophy at a B.E.M.C. event at Harewood Acres, in September, 1957. It has been awarded since 2015. The F1600 series has put a base on it with the names of the winners each year. Congratulations Connor!

The usual popular Saturday night “Paddock Crawl” was cancelled due to the Covid situation. This has always been something to look forward to and gives us an opportunity to meet and greet with people but it was not to be. “Pandemic protocols did not allow us to hold our usual social activities” said Michalos, “here's hoping next year we've put much of this behind us and we can get together off track as well as on.”

This year's VVGP did not feature the substantial Formula Ford grid that we have had in the past. So the Formula Ford cars were folded into the open-wheel grid along with a couple of wings-and-slicks cars that didn't have the numbers for their own grid. This meant that Ed Luce in his 1968 Lotus 51 was the only Historic FF on the grid but the addition of the modern F1200 cars to the Formula Classic grid meant there were plenty of other cars to race with. Further ahead in the field, there was a clutch of more modern Club Ford cars. Other than a few local yellows due to mechanical failure the grid had a nice clean weekend of racing. Jeff Watson (below) in his 1985 Reynard SF-85 won the feature when Paul Subject had mechanical problems.



Sadly I must report that the Lotus Feature race was cancelled “as we were down to five Loti.” according to Michalos. (One loyal Lotus driver stressed that I should not put the cancellation down to the marque’s failures so I won’t mention the troubles with my Lotus Seven as well as certain other Lotus owners who would have been unable to take the feature start due to “mechanical indispositions”. Oh well, that’s vintage racing...)

How to summarize the event? It was a genuine and very welcome success. A strange VARAC Vintage Grand Prix for sure; we certainly missed our great American vintage friends, (and their Triumphs!) But we were very happy that some of the loyal Quebec vintage racing group were able to appear at the eleventh hour when the provincial border was opened. A nice bonus! Naturally with fewer entries the paddock was less crowded; but this also meant that there were not as many interesting out of town race cars to drool over!

In summary the mere fact that our incredible, all-volunteer VARAC team pulled this off at all was a major success! It was a winner. We had competitive grids and plenty of track time. And after this truly depressing year, it was a great anti-Covid shot in the arm! Well worth waiting for. Our huge, huge thanks to our wonderful track workers and volunteers who stepped up to the plate; we can’t race without these great people. Many, many congrats to VARAC’s VGP Director Ted Michalos and his great team of volunteers.



Registration for 2022 will be open soon! For more information check

www.varac.ca

The Ted Talk...

Pit Signals: *How do you feel about the Vintage Grand Prix this year?*

Ted: I thought given all of the challenges we are dealing with this year that the event was a huge success. People adapted to the extra safety precautions, social distancing, masks, etc, but still managed to get our cars on track and enjoy some excellent vintage racing. I really want to thank all of the officials, workers and volunteers that came out to support the club and made the event possible. It was great to see old friends and new friends – even if it was from a distance.

Pit Signals: *How about the turnout?*

Ted: We had 150 entries in total running in 4 groups. Vintage Historic (pre 1973 cars) , Classic (1973 to 1999 cars), Formula Classic (open wheeled cars) and our good friends from the Toyo Tires F1600 Championship. This was the first year that the Classic car entry was higher than the VH cars. Of course it took a pandemic to make that happen – we'll see what happens next year.

Pit Signals: *How did the pandemic impact the event?*

Ted: Well, the most obvious effect was we had no American and very few out-of-province Canadian racers this year. Further, due to government restrictions we had to cancel all of the off-track social activities we usually hold. To cover our costs we “sold” track time to a modern race promoter – it was a bit strange to see a race group for Radicals and another for modern touring cars running at the Vintage Grand Prix.

Pit Signals: *Was that a tough decision for the VARAC Board?*

Ted: Yes and no. We knew it would change the feel of the event, but financially it was the responsible thing to do. Without those modern run groups we would have had to charge our members \$950 or accepted a loss of many thousands of dollars. It was sort of making the best of a bad situation.

Pit Signals: *How did people re-act?*

Ted: We have a good group of people in our club. Most told me that between

The Ted Talk...

...the Radicals and the cancelled social events it didn't "feel" like the VGP, but they were so grateful to be back on track and running their cars that they still thought the event was a great success. I tend to agree...

Pit Signals: *What's next?*

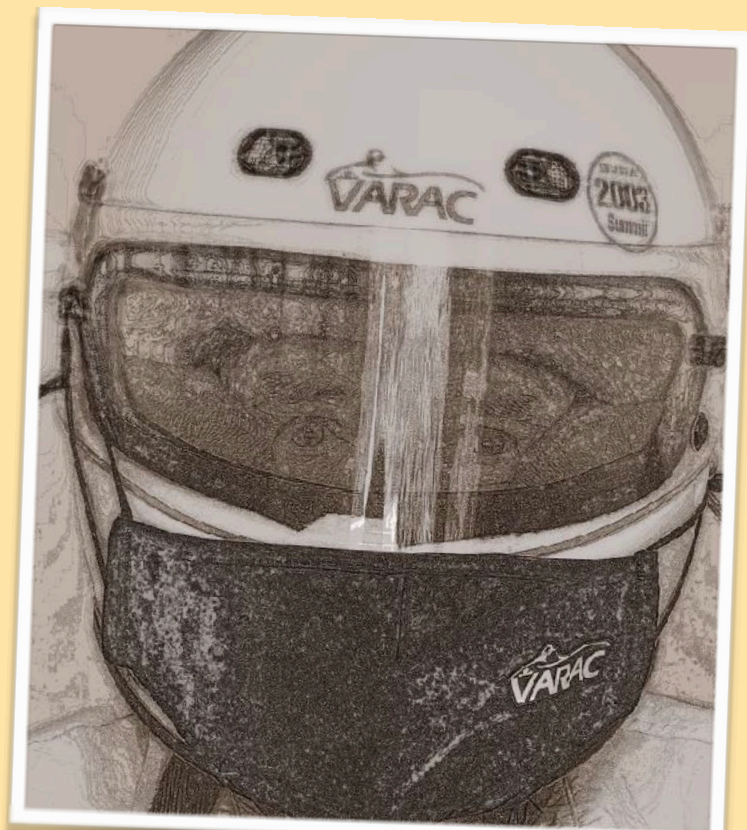
Ted: The club has a 1 day event at Shannonville Motorsports Park Aug 7. We tried this two years ago and people enjoyed it, so we're trying it again this year. Run groups for VH, Classic and Formula Classic. It should be a lot of fun.

Pit Signals: *I am sure it will be, but I meant for the Vintage Grand Prix?*

Ted: Oh, well this was my last year as VGP Chair. For 2022 Peter Lambrinos is stepping up. He has been involved on the committee every year I have run things so I am confident he and his team will do a great job. The event will be June 16 – 19 on the Mosport Grand Prix Track at the Canadian Tire Motorsport Park. Assuming there are no travel restrictions we hope to have the Formula Ford Challenge Series back next year, the Toyo Tires F1600 Championship has already signed on, and the MGVR has selected the 2022 VARAC Vintage Grand Prix as a focus event, so we expect a fabulous turnout of MGs!

Pit Signals: *Sounds great, any last words?*

Ted: Thanks to everyone that helped out this year and all of the previous years I was VGP Chair. It's easy to put on a great event when you have the support and assistance of great people. I suspect 2022 may be our best year ever...



Classic...

Blaise Csida won the Classic Group 4&5 Feature Race in his 1999 Ford Taurus. Come to think of it he won every race in this group...



(Left) Stephen Di Cesar's nice looking 1990 Mazda Miata was a welcome sight on the Classic grid. Will we see more of these?

(Right) Ian Crerar's 1989 Porsche 911.





Above; not
another double
yellow...

(Right) Rob
McCord's 1972
Porsche 914/6



What can you say
about this beast? Russ
Bond's Mazda RX3
Fahren...



Report from the Formula Classic Grid



Ed Luce: "Due to the ongoing closure of the Canadian border, this year's VVGP did not feature the substantial Formula Ford grid that we have had in the past. So the Formula Ford cars like mine were folded back into the open-wheel grid along with a couple of wings-and-slicks cars who hadn't the numbers for their own grid either.

Sadly, I was the only Historic FF on the grid but, happily, the addition of the modern F1200 cars (with whom I have similar lap times) to our burgeoning Formula Classic grid meant that I had people to race with early in each race over the weekend. Farther ahead in the field, there were a clutch of more modern FF cars (Club Ford) and the fast Formula Mazda of Paul Subject kept things interesting as he lapped me at least twice in each race.

The Formula Juniors had a bad luck weekend. Doug Elcomb's Dreossi broke an upright during qualifying and that put him out for the rest of the weekend. Ted Michalos' Lotus 18 broke a gearbox a few laps into his Sunday morning race so he was out as well.

Formula Fords fared a little better. The points in my distributor failed (broken spring!) in the first race, and I struggled to get the car back together for the afternoon race (brand new points were physically closing, but not making electrical contact!) but did show up to grid in time to start from the back. The car worked well for the rest of the event. "

More from the Formula Classic Grid...

“Shane Viccary (right) struggled with water pump issues in his Formula Ford for a few days, but the replacement that he installed on Saturday night clearly worked, as he went sailing past me on Sunday morning glued to the tail of a wings-and-slicks car who was himself glued

to the tail of either Steve Wagland or Steve Adams (below) Club Ford - I couldn't tell which as they were moving too fast! I don't think any of the faster guys had any issues.



Our group got lucky with the weather, as our only wet session was Practice on Friday morning, so no complaints there! And other than the odd local yellow due to mechanical failure we had a nice clean weekend of racing.

Two thumbs up! I would definitely do this again.” **Ed Luce**

The MG-Triumph Race

by Phil Cooper

“The MG- Triumph race was the last race of the day on Saturday. Unfortunately there were no Triumph cars entered this year at the VVGP so the race was run as an all MG race with 18 of 20 MGs racing. The starting grid was first come first start with Jason Di Cesar on the pole with his MGA. I started sixth with my MGB and was leading on lap two when Joe Lightfoot in his MGB passed me into the lead that he would hold until the checkered flag. I had a great race long battle with Erick Levac in his MG Midget; we passed each other numerous times until the last lap where he got by me at the very last corner to finish second while I finished third.

After the race two awards were given out. I was very happy to be awarded the Tony Simms Challenge Trophy for the “Spirit of Vintage Racing” and Frank Mount was awarded the Tommy Hoan Trophy for first MG T-series car. What a great finish to a terrific day of racing at CTMP and there was still one more day to go and two more races!”



The Tommy Hoan Trophy

Awarded to Frank Mount

"This trophy was created by VARAC and MG Vintage Racers" said Frank Mount, "it was to honour the tremendous success that Canadian Tommy Hoan had racing his MGTC in Canada and the U.S.A. from 1948 to 1953.



Frank and Connie Mount.

His will to win and ability to win over superior equipment is recognized in this lovely trophy, however my winning this trophy was a given, as I was the only "T" Series MG entered!

For me, participating in this event had special importance because it was the 60th anniversary of the opening of the track and I was a participant in the very first race held here! In fact I had the good fortune to be the driver for the initial press day for Mosport, which involved driving each of the press guys around the track. I used the Austin Healey 100-6, which was owned by my friend Don Chambers, prepared and sponsored by Austin of Canada. It was a fun day on the brand new Mosport track, before the first race was held.

As for that very first race, I don't remember any of the details, other than it was super exciting to drive on our own race course for the first time!"

Frank Mount

MG-Triumph Challenge-by Dave Good

“The last race of the day Saturday at VVGP was the traditional MG-Triumph challenge pitting the “steadfast and determined” competitors of these rival marques of British sports car against each other. Note “steadfast and determined” refers more to the efforts in keeping these cars running and the oil topped up than the driver’s skill and prowess!

The last few seasons, Triumph, boosted by a very fast TR8 and (as us MG racers lament (over our warm British post race pints) an obscure rabbit/hare race formula, have “Triumphed’ over the underdog MG’s. Well not this year! The MG’s drove brilliantly and secured a dominant victory! Well, some might point out this was due to no Triumph’s being present at this year’s event, but “who’s counting ?”.

It was a great field of MG’s-10 MGB’s, 1 Midget; 4 A’s and a TC. 16 MG’s started-and all but one finished! This must be some kind of record! Seriously, it was a great race well-driven by all--clean, and with some great battles.

Joe Lightfoot (right) drove a great, charging race to win overall followed by Erik Levac in his very well prepared and well-driven Midget. Phil Cooper (MGB) was a well deserved 3rd followed by the B’s



of Richard Navin , Bob Eagleson and Gord Ballantine. It was great to see the “semi-retired” Richard back in Gary Allen’s B and driving very well in a car that was at the same time “familiar but not”, Gord is now running Richard’s #246 B and was charging and driving well in a new (to him) car. There were also some “new to VARAC” MG cars racing this weekend-a hearty “Welcome!”

...More on the MG-Triumph Challenge by Dave Good

“Besides the overall placing, VARAC has some very significant awards that are part of this race, the Tony Simms and the Tommy Hoan trophies.

The Tony Simms Trophy is awarded to the MG competitor in this race who demonstrates a high level of driving skill in a very well-prepared car and supports the “spirit” of MG Vintage racing. This trophy has a very significant history- it was originally awarded in the 60’s as the Alitalia Trophy to the CASC Sportscar Champion. It was won by Tony Simms, a longtime, very quick competitive MGB racer in that period. This trophy/award over the last 2 decades was awarded by Tony himself at the VVGP to some very significant MG Vintage racers. This year, VARAC, was honoured to award this trophy to Phil Cooper, Phil is a well known VARAC racer -drives extremely well , does his own car prep and is a well deserving winner-congrats , Phil!

The Tommy Hoan Trophy’s namesake was a very well known, highly competitive Ontario MG-TC racer in the early to mid 50’s. There are some great stories of Tommy running with and topping the big international names on the street circuits at Watkins Glen and Grand Island. This trophy is awarded to the top T series MG at the VVGP. This year, VARAC, was honoured to award this to Frank Mount (below). Frank ran his ‘46 MG TC at this event and is the last of the T series cars in VARAC. Frank has been in racing since the 50’s and

has been racing in 8 decades! Frank noted in his acceptance how much this meant to receive this in the 60th anniversary year of CTMP Mosport since he was at the first event in ‘61. Congrats to Frank-well done!



In closing, a great race, and the MG racers look

forward to ‘laying a whooping” on the Triumph contingent again next year!”

Ted's PS...



“The plan for this year was to run the Lotus 23 in VH and the Porsche 993 in Classic, keeping the Lotus 18 as a spare in case something went wrong with either of the other cars (hey, it is good to have options). Well the Lotus 23 wasn't quite right and by Saturday afternoon

reverse gear had “disappeared”. That's not a problem you say, but we were worried about whatever might be floating around in the gear box – better to park it and switch to the spare. Unfortunately, on lap 4 Sunday morning the transmission case of the 18 broke – looks like an old repair finally gave up and that was the end of my vintage cars for the weekend...

The Porsche on the other hand just soldiered on and on. People may remember last year it wasn't quite right, but this year she is running fine. The Classic grid was an interesting place – with a couple of stock cars turning in the mid 1.20s and a swarm of 944s like we haven't had out in years. For the Sunday feature we ran clean – no yellows – and there were quite a few close battles. I know I spent the race chasing Andrew's Mustang. Good, close racing, even if the \$#@%*# beat me...

Looking forward to the rest of the season – particularly our event at SMP in August. It great to be able to be on track and see our friends, even from a distance.” Ted Michalos

PPS...

Joe Lightfoot (right) started in 11th in the MG Feature Race: "I don't know how I did it, but by the end of lap 1, I was in 3rd place. By the end of the 3rd lap I was in 1st. In the end I had "fastest lap", 1st place and most positions gained!" Not bad for an old guy! Gary Magwood (right centre) arrived in style in his Citroën Traction Avant. Bottom right; Robin's very nice, but if you met her on the weekend you were probably on the wrong end of a tow rope. (Below) Jason Di Cesar on pole. (Well, he did get there first!)



PPS...

Happy to hear that Jim Biscoe is well and racing. VARAC members will remember the story in Pit Signals last May about Jim contracting Covid. He was taken by ambulance to hospital where he was in a coma for four weeks.

"I left the hospital in July, 2020," said Jim, "Went into rehab full time with no visitors. I was in a wheel chair, and doing strength exercises for three weeks. When I left I could walk on my own, but it was tiring. I walked every day to build my leg muscles. I went back to work going on light duty, no service calls, and no visiting customers. "

"I spent some time putting my car back together, also I had to shift energy and time getting my business back on track; we were shut down while I was away.



Later on I was very happy to meet people at Celebration 2020; enjoying Ted's chili and talking to the other racers. "

"This was a very tough time, nothing like it, I had never been in a hospital before. My mum had both kids in the hospital on ventilators at the same time. The nurses said they thought I would not make it, being in a coma for that long. I still have pins and needles in both legs from knees to hips and will be working out again as soon as the gyms open." Best news of all, Jim did the Test day, July 16, and went back to racing at the BARC event July 17 and 18. Good to have you back, Jim!

PPS...

THE REAL VINTAGE SPIRIT!

This story is about Bruce Houlden, who towed his Mini all the way from Saskatchewan to the VVGP. (He actually hit the Ontario border 24 hours before it was supposed to open but somehow was let through.) He then encountered problems at the test day on Thursday. Sitting in his car by the back straight, with the super fast non-vintage cars racing by, "Was not fun!" he said.

Having been towed in, it was time to assess the damage. Bruce changed the ignitor, rotor, etc, but the distributor shaft was not turning. It appeared that the timing belt had broken. A spare one was installed but nada. Fortunately fellow Mini racers Dave Morgan, Andy and Rachel Nelson were right there offering assistance. The head was taken off and more damage was apparent. "Guess I'm done", said Bruce. "No way!" said Dave Morgan, who then made a two-hour drive back to his house and picked up a spare engine; while Rachel and Andy offered "push rods, plugs and beer!"



Al Weller was also attending, as crew for Dave Good, and he graciously offered his engine lift to support the effort. The Nelsons drove to Al's place to pick up the hoist and it wasn't too long before Bruce had the original engine out and Dave Morgan's spare engine in place.

Somehow Bruce cobbled everything together and off he went to tech. On Friday afternoon he was back on track. "The rest of the weekend went great," he said, "I got down to a 1:45.7. It was all worth it. I love this track and especially the vintage attitude of the VARAC people! Thanks a million! You folks are the best!"

Well done to all involved, you showed the real VARAC vintage spirit!



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1980 Tiga Sports 2000

MOTOR: 2 LT Ford single overhead cam. TRANSMISSION: Hewland 4 speed. CHASSIS: Aluminum monocoque. SUSPENSION: Custom 2 way KONI shocks, built by Koni NJ for my Tiga. Multi link suspension and fully adjustable sway bars. Spare coil over springs from 325 to 550 LB. SPARES: 2 sets of Compamoto 3 piece wheels, plus many spare half rims. 1 front nose panel. Many suspension and drive train parts. Dry sump pump. 1 set of AVON rains and dry slicks, used. Many more spares, too numerous to mention. I have all log books for SCCA FROM 1980 TO 2016 and CASC from 2007 to date. 1,350 lb. with driver is the race weight to run in SCCA S2. Car is capable of low 1:30s at Mosport.

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1971 MG Midget

Former Ken Nesbit
and Peter Jackson car.

The 1275 engine was
originally built by Will
Speed and since had
a complete rebuild by
Hap Waldrop at Acme
Speed Shop. Cam is a
computune CT250, 3.50 lift, 261 duration at .050"

advertise duration of 298, centerline is 102 timed at 99, 3 %
advanced, accu sump system.

onboard fire extinguisher system

Cose dog gearbox, fully adjustable
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system, dual fuel pumps, 1 set
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tires, molds for rear flares,
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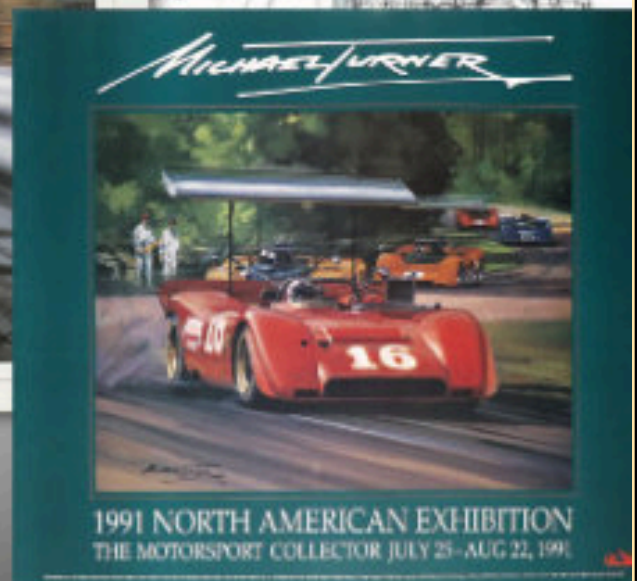
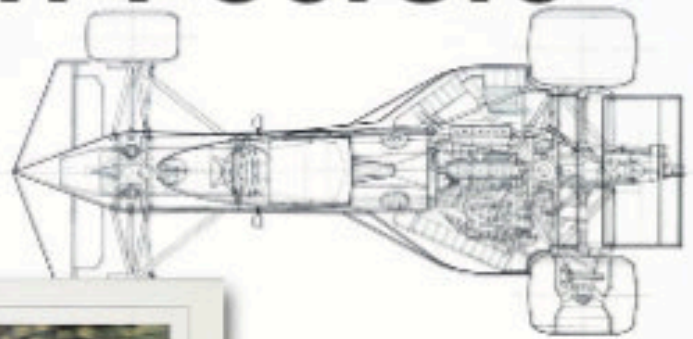


1958-59 Bugeye Sprite

948cc, straight car, solid body, floors professionally welded and replaced in steel. Needs seats re-upholstered and interior trim. No missing parts. Interior metalwork looks great. In other words it's a decent little car that runs good and needs a good home. Good rip free soft top (with smokey plexiglass windows). I can make this car available for sale as a race car candidate at \$9999.00 or I can refinish interior as a really neat little fun car, price on request. Or I have a nice REBUILT 1275 Midget motor with rib case trans available if needed, price on request.

John Greenwood. 905 723 9334 haggisbasherjohn@gmail.com .

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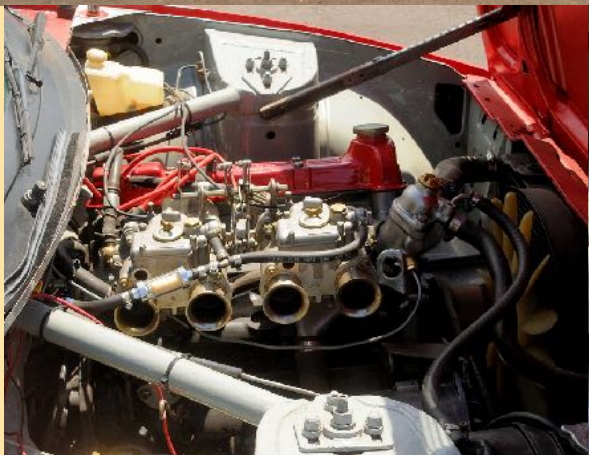


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1974 Triumph TR7

Documented race history. Raced successfully in the day by Cullingford Motors, a BL dealership in Barrie. Restored to near show condition. Tricked out with many rare competition parts. 5 sp close ratio, fully adjustable rear suspension, etc. My intent was to convert to TR8 but have lost interest. Two V8 engines, Holley 4 bbl, comp headers, comp engine parts. Many spares including body panels. Two comp wheel sets. Way too much to list. 90% finished. Custom tow bar to get home if you don't have a trailer.

\$8500 for everything. \$6500 if you only want TR7.

Price is firm. I live near Belleville, Ontario 613-478-1089

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