

Chapter 5

Bob's Memories of GB



Dad and me with our last race car, the 1972 4/4 1600 2-Seater we raced in '73, '74 and '75. I raced it in E Production and F Sports Racing. He raced it in E Improved Production. We ran three races every weekend plus numerous practice sessions for three years with no engine or transmission failures and no serious accidents!

A Few Recollections About My Dad

Few people know that when he grew up in Edmonton, he was known as "Beatty" Sterne, during the Navy years as "George," and after returning to civilian life as "GB."

He was a perfectionist, and he loved to fix things just to show it could be done. He would line up all the screw head slots on any project he was working on, and berate me if I didn't do the same. His favourite saying was "if a job's worth doing, it's worth doing right."

GB could fix just about anything, and was frustrated that car components were becoming "sealed" units that were designed to be thrown away instead of repaired. The best example I can give of this is starter solenoids. He would grind them open, turn over the contact bar, file the terminals smooth and reassemble with bolts. This doubled their useful life. He seldom threw anything out. In fact, he kept a bucket under the bench full of bent nails, which when he had time he would straighten to reuse.

When Bill or I were working on a project and got stumped, he would tell us to try again. If, in frustration, we told him we couldn't do it, he would bellow "there's no such word as can't, only won't" and send us back to try again. If we finally gave up and admitted defeat, he would only say, "you mean there is no way it can be fixed?" and if we didn't go back to trying, then God help us because in a few minutes the thing was working perfectly and we had to eat our words. I don't ever remember seeing something he couldn't fix if he set his mind to it. I've seen him take

apart many things, just to find out how they worked, and if he needed a special tool to do a particular job, he would usually just make it.

He was a very inventive guy, and often thought "outside the box." He was very creative in his solutions to problems, and like any good engineer, many things he would come up with would do several jobs using just one part, in other words light and efficient. I think he only made it to grade 8 before going out into the working world, but a lack of formal education didn't hold him back. He had more common sense than anyone I've ever known, and his mechanical ability was next to none, something he undoubtedly inherited from his grandfather, George Beatty, after whom he was named.

[GB's grandfather was George Beatty. George and Matthew Beatty founded Beatty Brothers in Fergus, Ontario, in 1874. The firm was a major manufacturer of farm equipment and appliances and an industry leader in developing an electric agitator washer. By 1925, Beatty Brothers was the largest producer and exporter of barn and stable equipment in the British Empire.]

One good example of his inventiveness and mechanical ability was the first air compressor we had in Sidney. He took a blown engine from a Model T Ford apart and converted it. Number one cylinder was unusable, so he took out that rod and piston and ran the engine on the centre two cylinders, modifying the intake and exhaust manifolds to prevent leaks. He poured the combustion chamber on #4 cylinder full of Babbitt to raise the compression and installed a poppet valve in the spark plug hole with a line running to the air tank. Then he removed the tappets from the valves on that cylinder and installed a light spring under the intake valve so that it would open under the suction of the intake stroke. Every time the piston moved down, it would suck fresh air in through the intake port and, when the piston moved up, the air was forced into the pressure tank. It was very simple and efficient. He mounted the individual spark coils on the wall and ran them with a transformer from house current. I think that compressor ran from when it was built, probably around 1947, until we moved to the second garage about 1960.

When he was growing up, he became a crack shot with a rifle and shotgun, and I still have his target shooting jacket and .22 rifle. Bill has his old shotgun. He used to go hunting with his motorcycle and sidecar and come back with it loaded with game. I can remember him telling me of getting 23 green-head Mallards (Drakes) in one morning, and his first "business venture" as a boy was shooting rabbits, skinning them, and drying the pelts. He made 5 cents a pelt for his time, because he sold them for 6 cents

and he figured he could get 25 rabbits with a box of 50 shells. At the time a box of .22 shells cost 25 cents.

When we lived in Sidney, he and Bill hunted pheasants regularly. I can remember having a goose dinner when he he downed a goose with a single shot in the head with the .22 while leaning against the office door in Sidney. He paced off the range, and it was just over 100 yards!

When the Morgan business declined because we could no longer bring in cars, dad looked around for something else to sell, and his love of the sea brought him to sailing. He became a dealer for the Matilda trailer-able sailboats, made in Ontario, and had one himself named the "Lydiatoo." He never did as much sailing as he would have liked, but the few times I was out with him he really enjoyed it. It is strange how many people who raced at Westwood went on to take up sailing as a hobby. From the noise and competition to the serenity of wind and sail, quite a contrast! Maybe it's because once you have tasted throwing a Morgan around a racetrack, nothing else can compete, and so a complete change of hobby is necessary.

During all the years my dad raced and sold Morgans, he tried to get a club going for enthusiasts. It never happened until after he retired, when a few local owners got together and formed the Morgan Owner's Group Northwest. This group has grown and grown over the years, and happily, before my father's death in 1990, they were able to see a large group of Morgans gather at their retirement cottage in Qualicum on Vancouver Island. *[See the photo on page 1 of Chapter 2.]*

The warmth and fellowship of that happy occasion, the stories told, and the memories relived, only dent the surface of our deep involvement and love for the Morgan and the special people who own them. The one quote I remember from that day is, "you can ask to borrow my wife, but NEVER ask to borrow my Morgan!" It is this type of camaraderie, this intensity of the love of the Morgan, which is the Morgan factory's enduring legacy.

The last Morgan my father owned was a 1972 Plus 8, white with black wings, of course. It was never raced, and is now lovingly owned by my brother Bill. He attends many of the MOGNW events, as does my long time friend, Dave Collis, who served his apprenticeship as a mechanic under my dad at Sterne Motors. Dave still has the blue and black 4/4 2-Seater which he raced for many years.

Unfortunately, I have been without a Morgan since 1980, when as a young married man, I gave up my beloved Mog to renovate my parent's house which I had purchased to raise my young family. My life took another path, designing and manufacturing radio-controlled racing yachts, at which I have been most successful. My designs have won many national and international events, including a world championship in 1980 and a string of seven U.S. national titles in a nine year period. However, there is hardly a day goes by that I don't fondly remember being

behind the wheel of my 4/4 2-Seater or my dad's Plus 8, blasting around the Westwood racing circuit, which is now a subdivision covered with very expensive homes only a few minutes from where I live today.

Dad's Navy Days



Photo by Gilbert A. Milne. Department of National Defence / National Archives of Canada, PA-134191.

There are so many stories I can't remember them all ...

Convoy duty in the Gulf of St. Lawrence: Their tiny wooden Fairmile sub-chaser sandwiched between massive freighters. Total blackout, and being able to reach out and strike a match on a rusty hull. Seas so rough he was able to see the ASDIC dome underneath another Fairmile in their flotilla, as the ship leapt off a huge wave. It was a third of the way back from the bow, and four feet below the hull.

Refueling in Cuba by "bucket brigade" in the hot tropic sun: The Fairmiles used aviation gasoline. An order coming down after a tragic explosion and fire on a Fairmile that when refueling, the main breaker was to be pulled. This, of course, would disable the fans that vented the bilges and tank compartments. My dad disregarded the order, and was nearly court-martialed over it. When an officer "with eggs all over his cap" (i.e. high ranking) told him to pull the breaker, he refused because it was too dangerous. The officer told him to have one of his men do it! My dad told the officer that he would not have any man in his command do anything he was not prepared to do himself and told the officer he could pull it himself. After all hell broke loose, eventually the order was rescinded.

While on shore leave in the Southern US: My dad was hassled by the Shore Patrol for being out after curfew although the curfew didn't apply to the Canadian seamen. An argument ensued, resulting in two large SPs on the ground, and my dad limping back to his ship. He lost a prized fountain pen in the scuffle, and was called to the headquarters of the U.S. Shore Patrol the next day to have it returned. The C.O. wanted to see the "man who tangled with his SPs and lived to tell about it."

“Racing Fairmiles on the West Coast” was my favourite Navy story: The War never really touched those on this Coast, at least in terms of action. The Fairmiles would patrol the Straights of Juan de Fuca, and then be relieved by another flotilla. They would then race all the way back to the Victoria breakwater, for bragging rights, and to be the first to refuel and take on provisions - and hence the first to get shore leave. My dad won every race (what a surprise), and it was said that “Sterne’s crew went ashore on the heaving line” (i.e. the first thing to hit the dock).

I’m sure that this success was due in no small part to his savvy with engines. The engines in the Fairmile were converted aircraft V-12s and didn’t take kindly to running at low throttle for extended periods. My dad would simply shut one off, and could thereby run the other engine up higher in the “power-band” while cruising with the convoys or patrolling. It made the boat a bit slower off the mark, and was completely in contravention to regulations, but if you had to go any distance, both engines pulled cleanly, and without fouled spark plugs. The dual plug arrangement had a nasty habit of drilling a hole right through the cylinder head if one plug fouled, causing the engine to ping.

One winter, my dad’s Fairmile flotilla went to patrol the Caribbean. He got off watch after they had anchored and decided to go swimming. He got in his bathing suit and went up on deck and looked over the side at some of the guys. The water was crystal clear and you could see the bottom very clearly with all the rocks and coral. He dove in and swam over to the guys, and they asked him if he thought he could dive to the bottom. My dad used to be on the swim team in Edmonton, and I have seen him swim the length of the Crystal Garden’s pool in Victoria underwater, which is 50 metres, on one breath, and that was when he was in his 50s.

The bottom looked like it was maybe 15 feet down, so he said “no problem.” He took a normal breath, did a duck dive, and down he went. Well, needless to say, the other guys already knew that it was really deep, and the clear water fooled you into thinking it wasn’t, and they figured there was no way that he could make it.

After he was down about 20 feet, he realized that it was a lot deeper than he thought, but he kept going. He swam on down, feeling the pressure building, and grabbed a handful of sand to prove he made it and started back up. By the time he reached the surface, he was nearly unconscious, but held up his hand and let the sand trickle out. He told me “there was no way I was going to come back up without proof I made it.” Now THAT’s determination!



Lydia and GB in 1945, likely taken in Beacon Hill Park in Victoria right after the War ended, as they were coming west on the train on VJ Day.

Edmonton Police Days

Regarding the motorcycle accident which nearly took dad’s life while he was in the Edmonton Police Force, I heard the story as follows: He was returning from a first aid course and a girl ran into the street. Dad nearly got stopped, but the girl ran into the corner formed by the front wheel and handlebars and twisted them sideways, throwing him over the handlebars. He was quite experienced in tumbling as a kid and had fallen off motorcycles enough times, so he braced himself for a “tuck and roll” landing.

Unfortunately, there was a fire hydrant in the way, his hands straddled it, and it caught him in the forehead. He was taken to hospital and not expected to live. There just happened to be a brilliant neurosurgeon on call that night, and they took him immediately to surgery. After a few days in a coma, he regained consciousness and was eventually released from hospital. The first thing he did when he got home was fire up the motorcycle and ride it around the block to make sure it was OK!

Three Edmonton newspaper clippings:

Motorcycle Hits Auto: Rider Hurt

George Sterne, 10159 118 St., received slight injuries when the motor cycle he was riding down Portage Ave, at 2:30 p.m. on Monday, near 130th St. intersection, crashed into the rear of a car driven by A. N. Brownlee, 11234 127 Street. The rear end of Brownlee's car was somewhat damaged. According to witnesses, the motorcyclist was looking down to examine something on the left side of his machine when he crashed into the rear of the auto.

Constable Sterne Fights for His Life

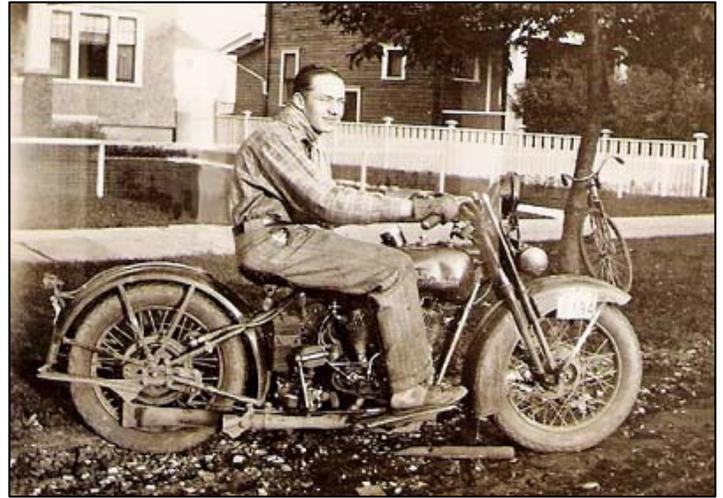
Constable George B. Sterne was injured Friday when he toppled from his motorcycle on 99 Street opposite the old E.C.D. building, was still in serious condition at the Royal Alexandria Hospital. Neither his parents or his wife are allowed to see him. Constable Sterne suffered a fracture of his skull across the forehead and concussion when his head struck the curb. The accident occurred when the motorcycle knocked down a woman and upset.

Report No Change on Sterne's Condition

The condition of Constable George B. Sterne, injured Friday night when he toppled from his motorcycle on 99 St., was reported unchanged Tuesday morning at the Royal Alexandria Hospital. He was hurt seriously when his motorcycle struck a woman and fell heavily on a curb.

A few days later, he went to see the doctor for a follow-up. When the doctor asked him how he got there, he said "on my motorcycle." The astonished doctor explained to him that after such a serious head injury he shouldn't be riding, but I can imagine how much my dad would have listened to that advice. His only complaint was the huge scar on his forehead, and the doctor simply said, "Well, when they walk past the coffin to pay their last respects, they don't look very close." He had never expected my dad to recover. They later removed most of the scar, and my dad had what looked like a premature wrinkle on his forehead ever after.

A while later, my dad got a bad cold, and the centre of his forehead began to swell up. Apparently one of his sinuses was damaged and couldn't drain properly. Eventually, the abscess broke and collapsed inward, causing what my dad described as "another belly button" in the middle of his forehead, a feature that he had the rest of his life. Occasionally, during a bad cold, it would discharge slightly, and you would see him wiping it. Other than that, it never caused any problem, and he never, ever, had a headache, from the accident onwards.



This was either my dad's 2nd or 3rd Harley. He had a 1917 (ex-Army, it was a 45 cu. in. flathead) which he called his "runabout" model because it would run about a block. Then he bought a 1929 61 cu. in. flathead, and then a 1931 Police Special (with a large speedometer, which this photo seems to have). It was a 61 cu. in. "L" head (overhead intake, side exhaust). This was the bike he won the 1931 Canadian Hill Climb Championship with. If this photo is from 1931, he would have been 19 at the time.

Police Story #1

My dad and I were on a business trip in the Plus 4 Plus, in the mid-1960s. If I recall, the purpose of the trip was to try and establish, or visit, dealerships in the Northwest. We visited Edmonton, Spokane, the Tri-Cities, and the Seattle area, on a circle tour of the Northwest. I can remember dad carving through the Thompson River valley, thoroughly enjoying the winding road.

The only other part of the trip that sticks in my mind shows a lot about what my dad, an ex-policeman, thought about your average traffic cop and their equipment. We were somewhere in Washington state and he noticed a police cruiser in the mirror. From what I remember it was a mid- to late-50s sedan (no doubt with drum brakes all around, and probably smaller than those on the back of the Morgan). We drove for a long time, right at the 70 mph speed limit, and eventually the cruiser pulled up on our left on the freeway.

My dad had a suspicion that they were going to pull us over and warned me that he might make a pretty quick stop. There was a light on the right front fender of the cop car pointing backwards, with the word "Police" on it. My dad had already determined that there were no other cars close behind us, and sure enough the light blinked on. Dad made a perfectly controlled panic stop, pulling over onto the shoulder of the road at the same time, the disc brakes on the Plus 4 Plus hauling us from 70 to zero in probably about 170 feet, tires complaining, on the verge of locking

up, just the way you would brake going into the hairpin at Westwood.

The surprised and astonished cops hit the brakes, locking up and releasing the brakes several times, and finally slid to a stop what looked to me like a quarter of a mile down the road. The two cops got out of the car, and walked all the way back to us. By the time they got there my dad was sitting on the fender of the Plus 4 Plus, his wallet out and waiting, and smoking a cigarette! When the cops got close enough, the first thing out of their mouth was, "What the hell kind of brakes have you got on that car?" It was all I could do to keep a straight face. It turned out that they had stopped us because we were driving in the USA with a BC dealer's plate, and they wanted to know why. To this day, I think it was because they wanted to know what kind of car it was. They, of course, did nothing but bid us a pleasant day, and walked back to the police car to the tune of the Plus 4 Plus accelerating rapidly past them.

Police Story #2

Dad and I were in the Super Sport, coming back from Spokane. Dad had lost the rear license plate during the race, and took the front plate off and put it on the back (there were no decals in those days), as he figured he was less likely to attract attention that way and we couldn't get a new plate until Monday anyway.

We were in downtown Vancouver on the way to the Tsawwassen ferry to go back home, and a motorcycle cop pulled us over. When he got off the bike, he came up to dad and asked where his front license plate was. Without thinking, my dad says, "It's on the back." The cop, fortunately one with a sense of humour, said, "that's an Irish answer if I ever heard, one. Try again!" So my dad explained what happened. We got a warning ticket for no front plate, and a reminder to get one on Monday.

While this was going on, two beat cops stopped to see what was going on and to look at the car, of course. They insisted on looking at the engine, and my dad, growing anxious because we had a ferry to catch, grudgingly obliged. Then another cop car pulled up alongside, lights flashing, wondering why three cops had gathered. When told (in jest) by the original motorcycle cop that he had caught my dad going 80 on Granville St. and asking what should he do, the new arrival said, "Well, at least give him a warning." Soon, dad was showing off the Weber carbs to all five cops, giving his usual sales pitch! When the cops finally left, we had the wildest ride to the ferry you can imagine. I remember seeing nearly 6000 rpm in top on Hwy 17 a couple of times. Good thing there were no police around then! We barely made the last ferry of the night.



Plus 4 Super Sport: 1963 low-body, #5330, the first of dad's white and black Mogs and his first 2-seater, originally a 1991 cc TR3 Lawrence-tune engine. It was raced in "C" Production (which later became "D" when they were renumbered) and also "E" Sports Racing (under 2 Litre class). In 1965, dad bored it out to TR4 specs plus 1mm (2188cc) and raced it in "D" Production and "D" Sports Racing. The sign on the roll bar says, "Look but don't touch - it's ALUMINUM - thanks."

Police Story #3

Actually, this is more of a court room drama. My dad was once called to court to testify on behalf of a Victoria Motor Sports Club member who was accused of dangerous driving after being stopped on the old West Saanich road for driving his Austin Healey much too fast. The police chased him, no light on, for several miles before finally catching up to him at a stop light and pulling him over.

They were driving a very old tank of a car with nearly bald tires, and it was raining. In those days, the twisty old West Saanich road was posted at 50 mph, and it took a very good car to average that, especially in the rain.

The police testified in court that they had nearly lost control several times trying to apprehend the driver of the Healey, and described the conditions. When my dad took the stand, he testified that he had recently fitted the Healey with Michelin X tyres, renowned for their performance in the rain. When he was shown pictures of the tyres on the police car, he apparently laughed out loud in court, berating the officers for driving such a dangerously equipped vehicle. He said that if anyone was driving dangerously, it wasn't the accused but the cops!

Apparently, when pressed, the officers admitted that they were never really close enough to the Healey to clock him properly. Not only did he get off on the dangerous driving charge, he even beat the speeding ticket!

Bob Meets Peter Morgan

I met Peter Morgan in person twice. The first time was in the summer of 1964, when I was fortunate enough to tour through Europe with a group of 250 Canadian high school graduates. I was only 15 at the time, and I can clearly remember the highlight of my trip being my visit to the Works. I was staying in Bristol at the time, and caught the train to Malvern to be met by Mr. Morgan in a Plus 4 Plus. We drove to the factory and he gave me a personal tour. I remember seeing a couple of Morgans under construction for my father's company. I still have vivid memories of watching the cars being built by hand; the body framing parts being made in the woodworking shop; the kingpins being turned on a lathe while the machine operator dialed in by hand a "bit of correction" for the taper the old machine was producing; a craftsman installing the wire edge in the bonnet by hand; and the elderly gentleman building a grille, bending the bars by hand and laying them in the old jig for hand soldering. I still get a smile when I think about it.

Mr. Morgan retired to his office and assigned a worker to follow me around and answer any questions, and then we went to the Morgan home for a late lunch. I met Charles Morgan and his mother, and remember seeing Charles's large model railroad layout. I had never seen anything like it. It was very impressive! After lunch, we returned to the factory, and I wandered around, surrounded by the wonder and mystique that only the Morgan factory can provide, seen through the excited eyes of a teenager who had been around Morgans and racing as long as he could remember. I knew then that I would someday own and race a Morgan, and eventually that dream came true for me. The Morgan family have made this dream possible for so many over the years.

When it came time to leave, I remember shaking Mr. Morgan's hand, and I remember the kindness and friendship in his voice and eyes, and that wonderful smile. He called in a young draftsman and threw him the keys to the Plus 4 Plus, and said, "Take Mr. Sterne back to his place in Bristol, and, by the way, I have a dinner appointment this evening and need the car back by 5:00 pm." I didn't know it at the time, but it was apparently a 40 mile trip to Bristol, and it was 4:00 pm.

After blasting along at speeds up to about 110 mph over three lane country roads, with passing in both directions in the centre lane, we arrived at my hotel in Bristol in just 28 minutes, an average of over 80 mph. I'm sure the young man had no trouble having the car back at the Works in plenty of time Mr. Morgan's dinner appointment! That ride is forever burned in my memory, along with some of my many race victories driving my own Morgans in later years.

I met Peter Morgan again, many years later, when he came to visit us here in Vancouver. This was after the Morgan could no longer be imported into Canada, and my

father and I discussed with him the possibility of altering the car so that we could continue to import them. Although Peter sympathized with us, the factory was, of course, so busy that he couldn't possibly produce a variant just for us. Canada, at the time, had a special exemption for limited production vehicles, but the car had to have a placard affixed that stated that the vehicle did not comply with such and such safety standards. Peter Morgan felt that this was like saying that the Morgan wasn't safe, and we all knew that this simply wasn't true. He had no intention of affixing such a plaque, and although this meant the death of the Morgan in Canada, both my father and I admitted that we could understand his position and respected and shared his pride in the marque. The final number of Morgans imported by my father stood at about 160 cars during the period from 1955 to 1972.

The three generations of the Morgan family can take extreme pride in the legacy they have left to the world of motorsport, and to Morgan lovers everywhere. Every time a Morgan owner turns a key, and that glorious exhaust note rises to his ears; every time he bends it into a corner and feels the car respond as if it's a very part of him; and every time he smiles as he washes his precious Morgan, rubbing his hands over her sensuous curves; Peter Morgan will feel the warmth, love, and admiration of his extended family.

You don't drive a Morgan - you put it on - it becomes a part of you forever.

GB's Trophies

When my dad's race wins got to 200, we applied to the Guinness Book of World Records for recognition, with all the appropriate documentation and supporting letters from the ICSCC and the SCCBC. We asked for TWO records, one for the most race wins by a driver (since broken by Richard Petty at 201) and the other for the most race wins by a single driver in a single marque (a record which would probably have stood forever). Their answer? Stirling Moss was a professional driver and they weren't interested in my dad because he was an amateur! So much for "World Records." The record did NOT state it was for professional drivers, and you can bet that both Moss and Petty included many victories that were NOT achieved during their professional career.

By the way, were you aware that when Stirling Moss was at Westwood, he REFUSED to wear any helmet except my dad's? Check out the photos of him driving Bob McLean's Lotus 23B against "Flying Phil" Gagliardi who drove my dad's Super Sport.

The Windmill Story

As a teenager, my dad was sent to the Peace River country in Northern Alberta to install the biggest windmill Beatty Brothers made. *[GB's grandfather was George Beatty, a founder of Beatty Brothers in Fergus, Ontario, a*



Stirling and the Helmet

Stirling Moss sitting in Bob McLean's Lotus 23B and wearing dad's famous Herbert Johnston helmet. Stirling REFUSED to wear anything else, even thought the helmet was too big for him. Pretty funny, when you consider Dave Ogilvy's story about the CASC not allowing dad to race at Mosport with the same helmet!

major manufacturer of farm equipment.] I think the tower was 70 feet, and was made in 6' 7" sections and assembled from the ground up. Once the tower was completed, with its tiny wooden platform at the top, the gearbox, fan and tail were hoisted up and assembled. Normally my dad would have another chap help him, but in this case the farmer didn't want to pay for a second man and told my dad he would help him.

The two of them climbed the tower, and spent quite a long time assembling the power head of the windmill. The farmer seemed fine, but when he climbed down off the tower, he knelt down, kissed the ground and told my dad that if "that contraption" ever needed servicing he would have to bring someone to help him because, "I'm



Phil Gaglardi

As a publicity stunt for the press in connection with the "Player's Pacific" one year, Gaglardi drove dad's Super Sport against Stirling Moss in Bob's McLean's Lotus 23B.

[MC: Flying Phil Gaglardi, for those not familiar with British Columbia's political history, was the Minister of Highways in the days of the Social Credit Government (1950s - 1970s). Not only did he deserve to be in the Political Hall of Fame but also the High Speed Driving Hall of Fame. This minister of the gospel who ran a gospel radio program based out of CJCD in Kamloops was nabbed more times than any MLA ever for speeding on provincial highways.]

NEVER going back up there." My dad had a good laugh, and went on to the next installation!

I have found a vintage Beatty Pumper (windmill) just north of Kelowna and I am installing it on our property in Coalmont, just west of Princeton, BC. It will be dedicated to my great-grandfather, George Beatty, my grandfather, W.H.S. Sterne, and my dad. The road to Coalmont is a fabulous, twisting road which, along with many other roads in the Princeton area, is deserving of a future MOGNW tour.

Early days at Westwood

Before my dad got the number 4, he raced as number 94 (or possibly it was at a CASC race and there was another

car #4). I can remember a story of my mom lap scoring at Westwood in the early days, and he was having a real battle with someone driving a car number 90. Every lap, they passed the finish line with dad in the lead, just feet apart, and the lap scoring girls called out “94-90” in one breath. This got to be a habit, of course, but on the last lap, dad goofed somewhere, and the other car got by. My mom and her partner (they had one girl calling numbers, the other writing) were the only team to get it right! She got a heck of an argument from the other girls, who thought she was an idiot for saying that her husband had lost. She eventually had to get the Chief Scorer to go and ask the drivers, and of course, mom was right, the other guy won. That was the last time she ever lap scored one of my dad’s races for the race officials. She figured, correctly, that if the situation was reversed and dad had passed the other car on the last lap, that nobody would believe her! My mom would lap score his races from our pits, and many times, when the officials got it wrong, or some score sheets showed one result and others a different one, the officials would come to her as a “tie-breaker.” She even used to lap score the seven hour endurance races, and ALWAYS knew exactly where he was running throughout the race.

Racing in the Glory Days at Westwood

There was a prank my dad and Jack Murray (with my mom’s help) pulled at Westwood in the early 1960s. Jack was from Seattle, and raced against my dad with a TR3, and later with a black Plus 4 2-Seater, beating dad in nearly every race after he bought the Morgan. Then he bought the first Super Sport we brought in, a high-bodied 1962, flame with black wings. I have a photo of Jack and dad in the hairpin at Westwood in about 1961.

Anyway, Jack got dressed up as a woman, complete with dress and wig, donned my dad’s helmet, and entered dad’s 1960 4-Seater in a novice race at Westwood. So that nobody would know what was going on, he waited until the cars went from pre-grid out onto the grid, then came flying down the hill, through the pits, and right out onto the track just in time for the starter (who was in on the gag) to drop the green flag. The announcer wasn’t in on the gag and started talking about this woman in dad’s car that suddenly joined the race. He went by the name of Mary Williams.

Being a fabulous driver, Jack, skirt billowing and curls flying, overtook the field and was soon in second place. When he got close to the leader, the guy started to drive harder and harder, so much so that Jack got worried about the guy crashing. Jack decided that if he passed him, he might calm down, so going into the hairpin, he dove down the inside and flipped his curls at the guy on the way by. The guy went nuts, and Jack became so concerned about his safety, he backed off and let the guy by and things calmed down. In the meantime, the announcer was going

nuts, and everybody was coming to talk to mom to try and find out who the gal was. Mom mumbled something about “some friend of GB’s” and stomped off. Dad just grinned and kept quiet.

Now Jack didn’t belong in the Novice race, and didn’t want to take anything away from the new drivers, so on the last lap he came out of the hairpin and started turning the key on and off to pretend the car was cutting out. Coming out of the esses, he coasted to a stop on the infield side, got out and started pushing the car to the finish line. All those in the pits could now see Jack’s long hairy legs and started to laugh, but the announcer (on the infield) was going crazy, talking about this poor woman trying to get her car to the finish. A very gallant Roy Curtis, who handled the communications system, came dashing over from the infield to help push, and Jack, trying not to laugh, looked away from him and continued to push. After they crossed the finish line, Jack took off his helmet, flipped his curls at the gallant gentleman, and said, “Thanks, Roy.” All a very flustered Roy Curtis could managed was, “For Christ’s Sake! ... Jack Murray!”

Surely this, better than any other story, tells of the fun it was to race sports cars in the glory days. I have a photo of Jack, wearing dad’s helmet, complete with flowing curls and a dress, standing beside dad’s 1960 4-Seater. It was taken after the race.





Jack and GB in 1959

Jack Murray, #10, leads dad around the hairpin at Westwood. The car on the inside must be an MGA Twin Cam, because the standard model raced two or three classes lower than "D." Jack, from Seattle, drove a TR3 before buying the Morgan. He later bought a 1962 high-body Super Sports, flame with black wings.



Three Mogs

This is not a photo of dad, but of myself, Stu Rulka and Dave Collis in the hairpin at Westwood. Stu's #2 was silver with black wings. Dave is driving the same blue and black car he has today. It started out as a 1500 Series V and after racing it that way for a year or two, Dave updated it to 1600 Competition Model specs with the 1600 GT Cortina engine, close-ratio gearbox and 4.1:1 rear end (it originally had a 4.56:1). This moved him from "F" Production to "E," of course. After he quit racing, Dave modified the engine for the street with twin Webers, higher compression, and a hot camshaft. This photo dates to 1973-74.