

## Restoring Minis back in 1995

At our MOASF June meeting at the "return to San Jose place" we had been talking about what the club was going to do about replacing the News Letter Editor, (Any help from the members at large? This is your club.) and what events were important to the club. At one point the attention was turn to a infrequently seen member. (sorry I failed to note your name) I believe I asked him what he would like to see from his club. He said that he was disappointed in the items being discussed so far in this meeting as he really came to talk MINIS. Well this being a table of gearheads and miniacs every one raised to the challenge. Our member pointed out that he had a very fine Honda but really wanted a Mini. He had been disappointed in the cars that he had found to date. Seems, as I recall, he could only find minis with problems or rather expensive ones. \$4,000.00 and up. I will guess that our friend was looking, and aren't we all, for that "just-discovered-like-new-cooper-under-a-cover-since-1964", deal, from the little-old-lady-down-the-street that just-wants-it-out-of-her-yard and will-you-please-take-it-out-of-here. Well we all put in our two cents worth, our best comments and suggestion to help our fellow member on to being a proud parent of one of the mother lands finest products, the MINI. Of course yours truly had to also put in my large copper penny worth also. I said that my fine shinny red mini had only cost me, and I believe I said only \$2,000. This brought out some comments from Darryl Chandler, who is presently restoring his Cooper that this figure was too low. Well the discussion shifted to the ways to put a mini together. The prompt and proper way that Darryl is presently pursuing to the long and thrifty way that I had chosen. It is this latter approach that I will elaborate some what on.

What does someone do that wants a mini and really doesn't have that \$6,000 to \$10,000 that an excellent Cooper will bring. One possible approach would be borrow the money and go on record to pay \$xxxxx every month to "Larry" down on the street corner. Another would be pick up a rotter for cheep and haul it off to some kind and willing restorer that will charge you big bucks to do the work and store your box of parts on money-available terms. The first approach is probably the "best" way because one can drive the MINI of YOUR DREAMS while you pay. That is providing you don't miss a payment and LARRY brakes one of your arms for a reminder of your contractual agreement. The second approach is also a preferred way as you can avoid the fear of broken arms and pay as you go, however you can not do much driving while you do the paying. I the fool that I am chose yet another way.

I did my own work over a period of several years and in two different states. I do however now have a shinny car with 4 new Pirelli tires, light weight racing type seats, new interior, a 1300 AA motor, new, back then, battery. I had to do two different paint jobs. the first was not the red that I wanted. for all this my receipts add up to \$1,968.71. This includes the original \$200 that I paid for the car. Sorry sight that it was. It was not easy. I had to go through three different motors, several attempts to get the body straight to paint and the two different paint jobs to get the red that I wanted also I had to repair a "wreck" that occurred in my garage when the Brabham attacked the Mini. This dollar amount doesn't include some of the spare parts that have accumulated, just because I happen to own British car, we also have a MG midget. The cost also doesn't include the truck load of tools

that I have picked up since bring home the Mini. But these last items really don't count, do they. The swapmeet great buys will happen and the tools are a must if one is a toolnut regardless weather one is restoring a Mini or not.

I know that I went about this thing all in the wrong manner. First I bought the first Mini that I saw, the only one that I saw. (Read MY FIRST MINI story in an earlier issue. If you cant find your copy send \$20.00 for a new one. We will renew your Club membership for an additional 12 months and send you a copy of this first mini story. Even if you don't want a new copy of this article send in your \$20 any way we need the money.) I did not worry about rust rot, there was no floor and I couldn't do a compression test as there was no battery and these things really didn't seem important at that time. I reasoned that there wasn't any thing about a Mini that couldn't be put right, Mini Mania, Lucas and the Queen willing. My high school welding and the patients brought on by old age would see me through this test.

This little red car, it had been spray can painted maroon when I found it, had been saved from a wrecking yard, by a fellow who then up and died. I took it over and put it on the road. There is no great history nor is this a land mark car. It is not even a cooper, It's a MINI. Its fun to drive and if some neighbor tees me some day that there's a Mini in his barn that he wants me to drag off I will be there. But in the meantime I will be at the Mini Club meets with this commonly little car, having fun.

Frank Cunningham, June, 1995

PS. send in your "FIRST MINI STORY" and become famous as it is read around the world. We are still mailing this rag to all the foreign clubs aren't we?

PPS. I do go on don't I. But this reminds me of a couple of things about restoring cars. Story # 1. The man is standing in front of a display that has an ax with a plaque saying that this is George Washington's famous ax. The man calls over the curator. "Is this really George's actual ax? It looks new to me". "Of course it is" says the curator. "But it has had two new handles and a new head". Story #2. This is from a recent Road & Track article by my favorite writer Peter Egan. It is about a Lotus 23 that a Napa area owner has restored and is racing in the Historics. The Owner is claiming that the old wimpy frame has been totally replaced by a state of the art chrome molly one, the motor has ben rebuilt using all of the modern racing tricks, and it puts out much more HP than the original one did, also he had replaced the frail light weight body that was a maintenance problem and the Napa guy still thinks he has a Lotus.