

## My life's journey with Little Girl. Part 1: Where I am today

By Bob Holt

*This is the first of a series of articles from Bob Holt about his life with "Little Girl", his beloved 1960 Triumph TR3A.*

I have been an owner of a 1960 Triumph TR3A, since August of 1969. I have had many experiences with my car over that time frame, however, they were in between major periods of her just sitting in storage. I am at a loss to say how many times, I have heard my car (I named her "Little Girl"), calling out to me to come visit with her and give the much needed love, we both desired. I was only able to give her short amounts of attention and I know we both went away from these visits, feeling sad. Married life, career decisions and many moves to other areas of the Midwest, children, their sports activities, their education, college tuition and many other things pulled at my time and finances, which kept 'Little Girl', at arm's length. This frustrated us both. However, over the years, when the time and money coincided, I would take on small projects with her. How glorious that time spent together felt!

My last day of work, was on August 31, 2011. I retired from the Paper Industry and vowed to take 'Little Girl', out of her prison dungeon and treat her as the sophisticated lady, I always knew was under her poor and shabby looking appearance. In February of 2012, I built a small shop, to my specifications, which had been in my mind's eye, just waiting for this time to come. It has a cathedral ceiling, which would allow the height necessary to install a 2 post symmetrical car lift and sky lights to illuminate the shop with natural sun light. Both of these were on my priority list as I needed these to assist in helping me keep active and do the things that I love.



*"Little Girl" work in progress.*

After moving to Apache Junction, Arizona from Fremont, Wisconsin, upon retirement, I joined the DCTRA (Desert Center Triumph Register of America), car club. I was not a real active member at first, due to setting up our household, doing landscaping, fixing things around the house, overseeing building my new shop and getting to know people in this new desert area. At the end of 2014, I found out that my brother Tony (who was my 'best friend'), was diagnosed with brain cancer. I took many trips back to Oshkosh, Wisconsin to visit with him and we had many, many discussions, laughs, sad and quiet periods along with tears of anguish. He passed away in July of 2015. This put me into a very dark period of depression, which lasted until September of 2016, when my wife Mary pushed me into going back to the club meetings. She said; "you need to do something that you love and I believe this will help you move out of your depression". She was right! About 3 years went by without much happening towards my goal of working on my TR3A.

The attention I received from the club members was just what I needed. I started working on my car in earnest and have made tremendous progress.



*Bringing "Little Girl" at the Triumphest.*

There are 4 different Triumph registry of America car clubs here in the Western States of the USA. Each club takes their turn and sponsors the 4 day *Triumphest*, by hosting and running the event. This year of 2017, our DCTRA club sponsored it and it was held in Flagstaff, Arizona. I volunteered to run the Photography/car model/Craft booth and my wife, Mary was gracious enough to help me. I also was asked, if I would help one of our club members, with setting up the necessary documents needed to run the Autocross event. I must take a moment here to say that I had never been to a *Triumphest* before, or even to any other type of event that came close to resembling one, and I had never been to an autocross, let alone be involved in one. This entire 4 day event was completely new to me and my wife. We had a great time there at the Little America Hotel, where it was held.



*Bob's daughter, Aimee, and her husband Frank looking at a 1936 Triumph Gloria Southern Cross.*



I spent many months, out in my shop, working on 'Little Girl' and was hoping to have it at least running, but I was only able to complete the majority of the body work and get it painted with a 2 part white epoxy primer. Because I didn't meet the 'milestone' I was after, I decided that, was not going to take it there. However, once several of the club members heard that I was not planning on taking it, they convinced me otherwise. They said; "There are many Triumph enthusiasts who like to see cars in progress, not just those that are complete". So I did. This allowed me to meet many other Triumph owners, get encouragement from them and receive a lot of compliments on the Quality and Caliber of my restoration efforts.



*Left: Mary Holts at the Little America Hotel. Right: a map showing how far the participants came to join the Triumphfest.*

There was only one negative, I experienced throughout this very pleasant, fun and exciting encounter with Triumph related people and cars. Upon arriving at the Little America Hotel, on Thursday morning, those of us who brought their cars on trailers were told to park their trailers within the large Semi truck parking lot. It was announced, about 9:00 pm, during the Banquet dinner on Saturday evening; that someone's car trailer was damaged. Several people spoke up wondering if it was theirs. I told the group at my table that I thought that it might be mine. I went over to the truck lot and saw that my trailer had been moved forward about 30 feet and there was a green 'glow stick' light on the front of my trailer. The lot was dimly lit and after hooking up my truck to the trailer, and turning on the truck lights, there were no lights at all operating on the trailer. So I moved my trailer back over to the Hotel car parking lot and parked behind another truck and trailer. In the morning light, I went out to see what damage had been done to my trailer. I noticed that the owner of the trailer, I parked behind was doing work on his trailer lights. He was the one who had the most damage. His front support frame and lifting device had been badly bent; luckily mine did not. After looking over my trailer, we compared notes and we both had the following damage; the electrical connection from the trailer to the truck had been cut in half, the wiring to both tail lights had been forcibly pulled out of the light housings and the license plate frames were broken off and both of our license plates were stolen. He was kind enough to lend me his electrical wiring tools so I could make the needed repairs to my trailer, while several other Triumph owners stopped by and offered to help and lend the use of their tools also.



*The damages at Bob's trailer.*

We checked with the Hotel management and they were apologetic. They said they had numerous complaints from the truck drivers, that the car trailers parked there, were taking up 'their spots' and they told us that they could not help us as we were; 'parking at our own risk'. I am saddened by the reasons that these truck drivers would take out their anger on individuals, who were told to park their trailers there by the Hotel Management, in the first place. However, I was redeemed and kept my faith in my fellow man, by the kindness of all the Triumph car owners who stopped, shared their feelings with me at my misfortune and stayed to help until I had made temporary repairs. I felt that this was only a small hiccup in a glorious event. I plan on having my car complete and taking it to the 2018 *Triumphest*, that will be in Sacramento, California in September of next year.





Here and in the next pages, some photos from the Triumphest 2017.







