

I was requested to write this by Jerry Powarski so he could put it with the video. This is as much of the history of TC8951 as I know.

MG TC 8915

Jay Lockrow

Most owners of MG TC's do not know the history of their car including myself. I have a few sketchy sightings but the whole story remains a mystery. This is not about my TC but TC 8915 that at one time belonged to my dad. Oddly enough I seem to know most of this cars history and it is mostly from paying attention and keeping your eyes and ears open.

In 1965 I was just out of the Navy and the one thing I wanted was a TC. My dad and I tracked down several and looked at a few. One of the cars we looked at was in Detroit in an alleyway off Wyoming Street in Detroit behind Bill Bradley's professional photography shop. We went to look at it one weekend and decided it was not what we were looking for. It had a TF 1500 engine, sixteen inch rear wheels, some kind of a funny aluminum cylinder head and running a magneto. All of this was covered with half an inch of dust and bird dung. Underneath it was a rather ugly shade of blue.

Later that summer I was able to purchase the TC I have now and come spring of 2015 I will have owned it 50 years. All that summer and winter my dad kept thinking about the TC in Detroit so we decided to go get it. After all we discovered the Laystall Lucas Aluminum cylinder head was a find in itself.

Sometime in about 1967 or 1968 my dad called the owner of the TC to see if it was still available. It was, so we went back to Detroit and asked to see it run. They put a battery jumper on the car and it fired right up after standing who knows how long. How it ran we will never really know as the SU carburetors were full of dirt and grit. When we put the car on a tow bar I was talking to the owner Bill Bradley. He told me he purchased the car from a young Asian fellow that was getting out of racing but could not remember his name. I asked if it could have been Tommy Hoan and he immediately said yes. At that point I already knew some of the cars history. Bradley owned and raced the car for several years including Harewood Acres near Jarvis Ontario and also Watkins Glen. He told me he was once clocked at 111mph on the back stretch at the Glen. I find this a little hard to believe but the current owner has a similar story. Bradley also told me he won a SCCA class championship with the car in 1957. He was always supposed to send us some pictures of the car during this time but never did. I wonder if the photography business is still around the negatives might be there.

The original owner of TC 8915 will probably never be known. I do know that Tommy Hoan bought the car used in the very early 1950s and decided to go racing. My first sighting of the car was in 1952 at the Grand Island Grand Prix in upstate New York. This event was run only one year but it was quite successful. I was 13 years old at the time and vividly recall Tommy Hoan and his black TC screaming down the finishing straight. I was perched on the front of a tow truck and had a great view of the happenings. Tommy was giving a Lea Francis a good run for the next position and I was fascinated with the car because of the way it would go and also it had a radio aerial on the car with a couple of streamers on the top. I was told by someone that this was some sort of oriental custom to ward off evil spirits. It must have worked because he won his class that day but never did pass the Lea Francis. One of the rear seals on the TC axle gave out and Tommy finished the race with "oil cooled" rear brakes. On a little side note a friend of mine, now deceased, was technical inspector at that race and he told me that he made them replace a bent tie rod on the TC before it could race on Sunday. Where or how they found one it in those days is not known. It is also interesting to note that he raced against Tommy Hoan with his at Edenvale Ontario some time in the early 1950s. Tommy also ran at least once at Watkins Glen and hit a hay bale and sent it flying through a store window on the old circuit.

We did a lot of work on TC8915 but my dad used it as a road car. We, sadly, never did go racing but it was always in the back of my mind. We had to remove the magneto as we couldn't find parts for it but kept the Laystall Lucas aluminum cylinder head. Anyway one day I was working under the dashboard and made a serious effort to look for the holes where the aerial would have been. They were there and in later years it was used to help authenticate the car again when Tommy Hoan came to see it.

In the about 1956 or so my dad and I went to Harewood acres to watch some Sports Car races. I can recall a black TC giving a Mercedes a real run for the money. I do not know if this was the same car but later on my dad was given some slides that showed the Hoan car and at this time it was painted blue and owned by Bradley.

My dad passed away in 1992 and just a few months before that he sold the TC to an old friend of mine named Dave Hughes. (See my column Tenderly by TC or, TC Track to Texas about 1968) Dave trailed the car back to Texas and had it there for a few years before moving back to Western New York. Dave used it as a road car and never raced it. Dave became interested in steam boats and sold the TC to Gary Dreyer. Gary was a first class mechanic and got the car running extremely well. He decided to go racing and did so with the Vintage Sports Car Club. Sadly Gary died very suddenly after owning the car for a few years. His wife kept the car racing for a year or so but eventually decided to sell the car. The car is now in the hands of David Holmes from Ontario and is the car you see in the video. Here is a car almost 70 years old still being actively campaigned. I just love it!!!