

MOASF News Letter (excerpt)
March, 1995

It was a great day for a drive. I had missed the last two meetings due to the storm of the century, and house guests both falling on meeting days, so I knew I had to make a showing or I would probably have my Mini impounded. The alarm was set for 7 AM, Clar and I wanted to have breakfast before we went on the tour. Terri had told me that the tour would be good one and I was ready to put the car onto the road. It had been setting too long. The day before, Saturday, I had to deal with the load of boards setting in the side yard that served as the driveway from the back carport. The best way to handle them was to nail them in place. So Clar and I finished the rose trellis Clar wanted and fixed the side fence. By the time I had finished putting away my tools and cleaning up so that I could get the Mini out I was too tired to do the pre-drive check. Well I'll get it in the morning thought I.

Clar was reading the paper as I poured a cup of yesterdays coffee and put it into the microwave. With a hot cup in my hands I went out back and uncovered the mini and climbed in, pulled the choke and hit the starter. After a few tries I knew something was not right. No tick-a-ticka. Still clutching my now cool cup of coffee I hit the fuel pump with a stick, many times. No tick a ticka. Dam! The 35 year old original fuel pump had given up. Run in and get my spare, period correct Bendix Blue Top pump I had found for my Brabham. This should do for the days run and I will put every thing correct later. Laying on the wonderful red lava rock that covers the floor of the car port I plumbed in the spare pump and held it in place with Vise Grips. Once around in the front drive I finished the mounting and wiring.

It was now about 8:45. I grabbed a quick shower and Clar cleaned the mini. We raced up to the corner gas station and filled up both tanks. I hit the starter and drove into the street and the 100 yards to the freeway entrance fighting with the manual choke while the carbs warmed up. I start looking for the on-coming traffic as we reached the freeway but the car died. The carbs ran out of fuel. I was still just on the on-ramp and I pulled off got a wrench and gave the Bendix several raps until it started ticking. The car started and we headed up the freeway once again but with less convection and an eye on the next off-ramp. We didn't make it. More hits and I can finish the ramp and head off down the road towards home. The engine quits again and we coast down the road headed back home. After pushing and coasting I am as close as I can get. I leave Clar to guard the mini, with gas leaking out of the right tank because I had just filled it and it now was setting on a tilt, and I run, walk the mile back home.

Back at the mini with a yet another fuel pump and the truck, I temporally plumb in an old killer Delco and fix it to the rear sub frame with said trusty Vise Grips. We get the Mini and truck back to the driveway. I am a mess smelling of gas and sweat from my early morning work-out. Clar is just happy that the mini didn't blow up while setting in the puddle of petrol and she now just wanted to eat. We grab the Mata and at 9:45 try again to reach the Kibor Pass or I mean Denny's in Richmond. Clar pulls into the parking lot and see minis and people milling about. We were too late to eat but not too late for the ride.

Breakfast at the B P

We grabbed two large muffins at the British Petroleum station as Jack finished tinkering with his Weber, that's carb not barbecue. Terri was in charge of leading the tour and soon started to hand out maps of the tour. Soon everyone was headed for the cars. We lined up ready to enter the traffic behind our leader the fearless, Terri in the PURPLE people eater MOKE with her purple , "it's got to match the Moke", hat, and her high speed driving

goggles inspired by the DEAD GOAT GARAGE kids of GASOLINE ALLEY'S black and white dog with the funny eye. The following members were all lined up and waiting. Jack and Jane in the "850 PLUS" the fast red 1380 cc, Fowteck flares, and fat 7x13" wheels. Willie and Sally from Berkley was in fine tune with their white 1967 Cooper S, plates, "1295 S". Willie says he's the original owner. Way to go Willie. The fine Green Wagon finished the line of minis. Clar pulled in at the end with her fast white Mata (spyder). I was in charge of hanging on and taking pictures.

We entered the traffic and headed up the road behind Terri towards Orinda. Turning we hit the twisties that lead into Tilden Park. First stop was at the garden of special plants. Parked, we all hit the walk way and wandered the narrow paths looking at the many plants. The day was misty and cold just right for a walk in this type of place. Time to go. Back in line we went off to see a man about a horse. Terri had wanted to take one cut-off but it was closed, the Newts were mating. As our Mini was miss behaving and we were in Clar's Mata, Clar was driving. This was great I could sit back and look around and take pictures. Guys give this a try. Let the ladies do the driving and sit back and enjoy the sights.

The music was typical of the old carousel, and the restoration was almost as good as our cars. Most every one got on to ride the bucking horses. Clar and I finely got our first real cup of coffee of the morning. Much picture taking, but times a-wasting, back in the cars. Follow the Moke. We made it to the animal area. I didn't see any critters but a lot of folks seemed to like seeing the cars go by. Minis make people smile. We lost one couple in their fine green panel min, seems they had other commitments. Off we went. The science museum was found and left. Willie lead the merry band to a misty over-look. We all wondered what it would be like if the day was clear. Time to go.

Steam trains. now that is more to our understanding. Bushes, wooden horses, critters, wide vistas were alright but these things made noise put out great amounts of smoke and were smaller than what most expected to see, just like Mini's. Tickets for all and we hopped the train and made the trip. Back in the cars we waved good-by to our friends. Three cars left and it was lunch time. Terri had a site in mind in old town Orinda. We all ordered food and drink. As Clar was driving I had a fine ale. A Red Wolf beer no less. Jack and Jane said good by and left Clar, Terri and I working on a coffee.

Back home I was still faced with the mini and the fuel pump problem. As the mini was in the driveway and easy to get at. I felt it would be best to get a new simple electric pump and get done with it. I did but the new pump only got the mini just to it's parking place into the back but not under the car port, the carbs ran out of gas again. I tried every way to check the pump. It made noise but put out no gas. I took it back the next day and after much maligning of the said pump I receive a like replacement. Back at the bench I made an interesting discovery. Out of all the pumps I had install during the frantic Sunday the new pump was current sensitive. My mini is positive ground and I did not take this into account when I hooked up the first new pump. It made all the right noises but it would not put out any gas until it was wired the way it wanted.

Frank Cunningham March, 1995