

WHAT HAVE I GOT MYSELF INTO THIS TIME?

Rick Swain, Caledonia NS

A few years ago I rebuilt my 1959 Austin-Healey - twice. The second time was major because it included putting a new frame under the car. I was fortunate because there was a small commercial garage near my house and the mechanic provided space and lots of help.

I had always (well since I read an article in the December, 1967 issue of *Car and Driver* magazine) wanted a Morgan Plus Four so when one became available in Nova Scotia in November 2014, I had to have it. It was obvious the car would need work: it leaked everywhere, the front end was loose and the clutch would barely permit shifting, but it looked great. I actually got to drive it around the block. My wife Wendy was skeptical but I wasn't deterred.

I bought it. This would be an easy project. Pull the engine and gearbox, rebuild them, renew the front suspension and drive the car. Talk about rose-tinted glasses.

I steam cleaned the car and quickly discovered a few more issues. The wire wheels which had been installed by the dealer who sold the car to the fellow I bought it from weren't new. Under the grease and oil I found bent rims and broken spokes.

The next discovery was a bent frame. Because of a weakness in the design the rear of the frame on Morgans often gets kicked up in the back. This was serious. I'd have to tear the car completely apart, straighten the frame and reinforce it and then start the process of putting it back together. The strip down revealed much more work.

That was 3 1/2 years ago. The car is almost finished. With a little luck it will be at BMF this summer. Wish me well.

Rick Swain



My Plus Four completely disassembled



Reassembly has begun



Almost finished