

JOHN NISSEN

Pioneer - Sports Car and Road Racing - Inducted 2009



By Vince Howlett, 2009

One of the early “spear-carriers” in the sports-racing ranks was John Nissen. John was born in 1937 in Denmark.

At Abbotsford, July 21, 1957, John was 10th overall and first in class H in his MGTC.

In his own words:“...one of the only MG TCs with 16 inch wire wheels...at the Bremerton Evergreen Trophy races, I took first in class H...”. “...Then the next year, I scrounged up an Austin Healey 100—still the best highway high speed cruiser ever built for the money. I raced that down in the States, at Arlington, and Abbotsford....I raced (Joan Goodridge’s) 100M a few times but always found my own 100 a little faster or better handling, perhaps because I was more used to it.”

At the Abbotsford Swan Song, John finished third overall and second in class in the small bore production race, and won class D in both the Modified and Le Mans events.

“In the ‘57 MGTC and ‘58 Austin Healey 100, I would always enter production class as well as enter modified class with the same car, just to get some more racing in (double the races in one day) to further confuse the number problems, and trophies of course... My number was usually 66 and could be 166 in SCCA. Also I used 85 and 666”. John was forth in the 1958 Conference championship in F production, as well as SCCA champion in D modified.

For 1959, John purchased the Pilkey MG Special, now Consul-powered, in pieces from Ed A’Court. He put the car together, completed the Mistral body installation, and raced it for the 1959 season.

For 1960, John installed a TR3 engine (with exhausts now out the driver’s right rather than driver’s left as with the Consul engine), transmission, rear end and front disc brakes with TR3 disc wheels. In that year, he finished second in the SCCBC Modified championship, second in D modified in Conference, and first in D modified in the SCCBC. At the season ender, “...I saw the odd



Nissen in his Triumph powered special in action at Westwood (SCCBC archives)

car off the track where they spun out...Next thing I know someone waved a checkered flag and when I returned to the pits, damn if they gave me the flag to go around once more...”

“Fred (Falkins) knew how to tune these darn cars and he taught me a hell of a lot actually...I do believe that I could tune an SU carb pretty good to this day just using a 3/8” drive extension bar...”

John quit racing at the end of



John Nissen, 1960 (SCCBC Archives)

1960. “I sold it when out of money; we were gonna get married and I bought a house... Hobbies then were building and flying my own two seat aircraft, then building a 51’ sailboat that I and my wife Carol lived on board and sailed around the coast. Nowadays, when we are not out in the bush on our ATVs and doing a little fishing, my main hobby is building and flying radio controlled model airplanes, and also a bit of air rifle target shooting, although I assure you that targets have nothing to fear from me.” John has been married to wife Carol since 1974, and they live in Vernon, BC

“P.S.

I do believe that I hold a record of sorts at Abbotsford Airport. I don’t believe anyone will ever break that record. I’m the only one, I think, that has:

1. raced sports cars there
2. participated in Abbotsford full scale Air Show
3. participated in Abbotsford Air Show with radio control model airplanes

Think anyone will ever top that?”