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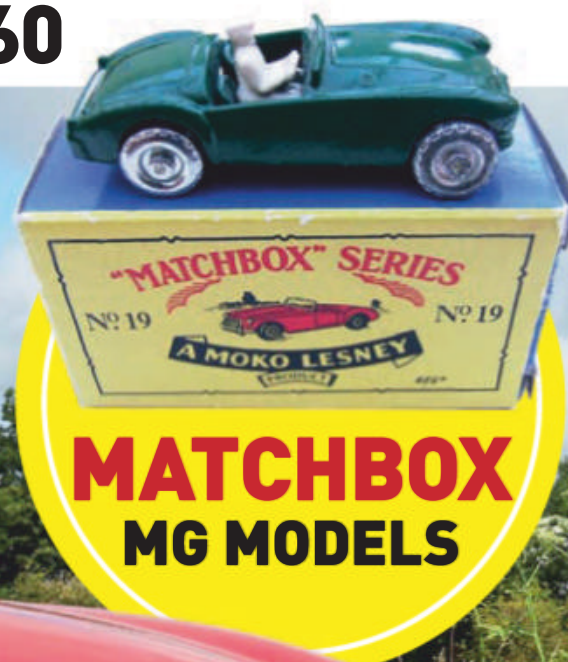
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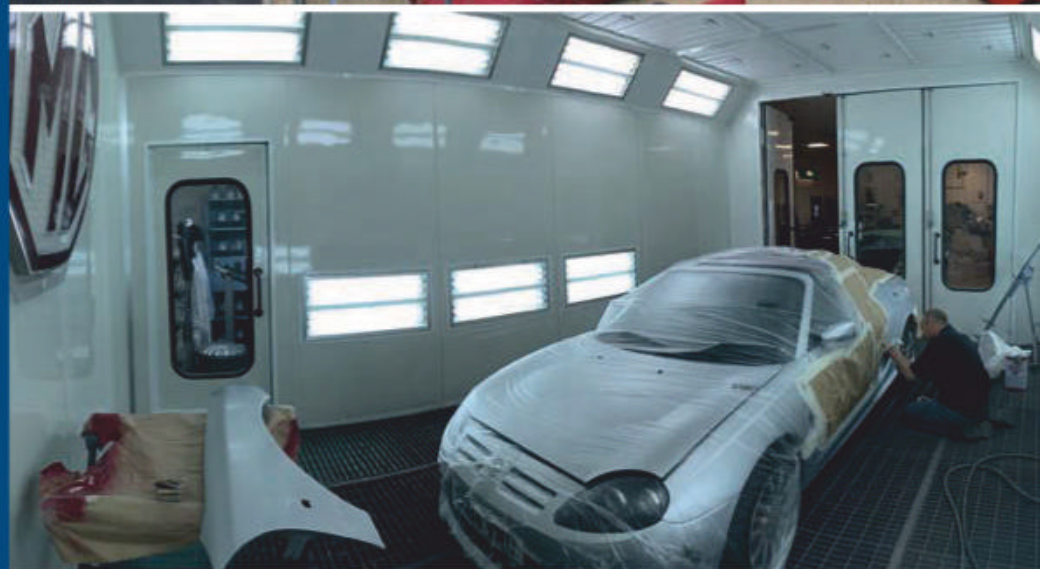
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Editor Karen and I travelled to Gaydon in our Riley Elf. It still amazes me that these 'Mins with fins' didn't end up with the MG badge-engineering treatment like ADO16s and Metros.

Globe-trotting perspective

Welcome to another lovingly-baked issue of *MGE*. This month we bring you a wide range of content for fans of both classic and brand new MGs. We kick off with news of the launch of MG Motor UK's two promising new electrified MGs: the new all-electric MG5 Estate and the HS Plug-in hybrid. And, talking of launches, we have a full feature on David Koskela's press-fleet MGF. For power-hungry MG fans we take a look at Tony and Lin Cotter's monstrous Roush Supercharged ZT and think about what could have been...

I have recently been reading the brilliant autobiography of BMC Works co-driver Tony Ambrose (ISBN 978-1-787114-60-9). It has been compiled from Tony's personal diaries and edited by his nephew, Philip Ambrose who I met at the recent combined BMC and Leyland Show / National Metro & Mini Show at the British Motor Museum (you can see photos of the event on pages 60-62). Tony is better known for his Austin Healey 3000 and Mini Cooper rallying exploits, with legends such as Rauno Aaltonen, than for his brief time in MGs. It was Tony, along with driver Peter Riley, who came up with the idea of using pace notes which were implemented when Stuart Turner became manager of the Works team. Tony's rallying exploits around the globe included the 1968 London-Sydney Marathon, which covered 10,373 miles.

What was apparent after reading the aforementioned book is how ridiculous it was to feel apprehensive about taking my 1967 Mk3 Riley Elf to Gaydon, a mere 100+ miles away. I guess my concern was that, until that weekend, it hadn't seen daylight for nearly a year. Tony was driving round the outback trying to avoid roos and I was fearful of encountering a smart motorway! Thankfully, avoiding motorways on our return reminded me what a joy it is to drive a classic.

Anyway, let's get stuck into an indulgent slice of this month's issue.

Jim Jupp, Deputy Editor



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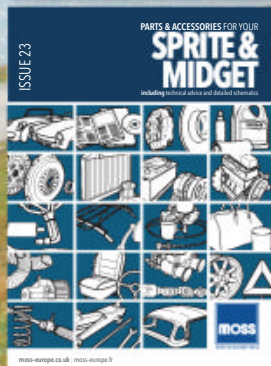
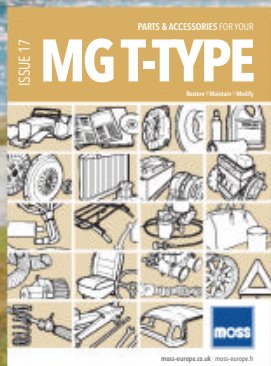
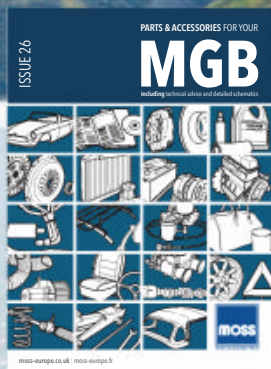
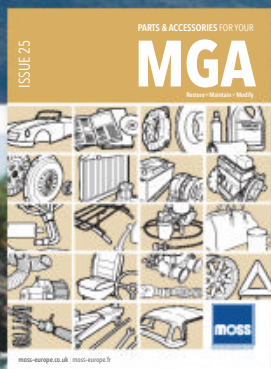
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December 2020 cover preview.

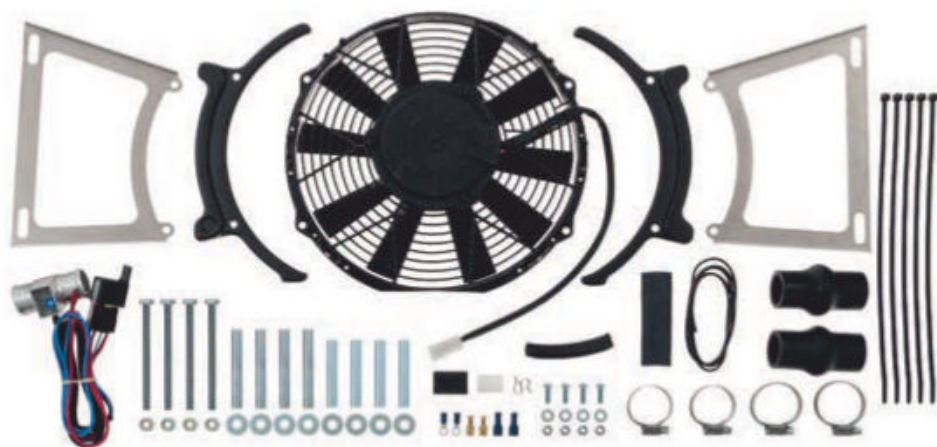
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New UK models launched: MG 5 EV Estate & HS Plug-in



The MG5 EV Estate and MG HS Plug-in were launched in the UK on 22 September. MG Motor UK's Daniel Gregorius and Matthew Stevens introduced the new models to the press via an online launch. MG Motor UK continues to push EV options, with a vision of electrification for all. Questions during the launch about a possible MG3 EV were not dismissed.

MG 5 EV Estate

The new all-electric MG 5 EV Estate is now on sale in the UK, with two trim levels (Excite and Exclusive) with a starting price of £23,995. The battery pack offers 52.5kWh and a projected range of 214 miles. The 115kW motor produces 156bhp and 192Nm, through the front wheels, and delivers a claimed 0-100kmh/0-62mph time of 7.7 seconds.

MG Motor UK see the MG5 as bucking the trend for SUV EVs, which can accommodate large battery packs, with the MG5 offering better aerodynamics which assist with both performance and handling, whilst offering the load capacity with this estate model. The 464-litre



boot can be expanded to 1,456 litres by dropping the 60:40 folding rear seats. First deliveries are expected in November this year.

The MG5 has a Type-2 plug for home charging and, as with the ZS EV, additional CCS rapidcharge connector, which uses the Type-2 part and two

additional connections, all in one plug. CCS charges to 80% in 50 minutes when you're out and about. The dual function connector is mounted in the grille. Power is delivered in three drive modes, Eco, Normal and Sport, as well as different regenerative modes and controls akin to the MG ZS EV.



MG HS Plug-in hybrid

The MG ZS EV has taken centre-stage in most of the international MG Motor camps, as it has spearheaded MG's relaunch in Europe, where the model is already shooting up national EV sales charts, being the fifth most popular EV in the UK in 2020 and with some dealerships in the UK having two-thirds of their sales taken up by ZS EVs. However, despite the obvious move towards full electrification, MG realises it doesn't work for everyone if extended range is required.

Enter the new MG HS Plug-in, which is on sale in the UK from October 2020 with prices starting at £29,995 for the Excite model. The MG HS is about the optimum size for most families, with generous interior space and luggage capacity beneath a good-



Externally, the MG HS Plug-in looks pretty much like the regular petrol model, with one fuel cap for petrol and another for its Type-2 fast-charging point (not CCS). Performance is a claimed 0-60mph time of around 6.9 seconds, alongside a potential 32 miles on electricity alone.



looking exterior. This hybrid version of the HS is already on sale in China.

This plug-in petrol-electric hybrid (PHEV) combines the familiar turbocharged 1.5-litre SAIC four-cylinder petrol engine with the addition of a 90kW electric motor and 16.6kWh battery pack that can provide around 32 miles of pure electric drive or, if used together, can boost the overall power and torque to 258PS/273Nm respectively, versus the 162PS of the standard petrol engine, with a claimed 0-60mph of 6.9 seconds. Transmission is a new 10-speed automatic system that can handle the power of both the petrol and electric motors. The Plug-in HS also has the MG Pilot driver assist and safety features, as seen in the petrol version.

As MG Motor makes plans further to expand its respective global dealer network, surely the MG HS Plug-in will be just the incentive that prospective buyers will need.



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NEW MG SUV CONCEPT AND NEW MG5 SALOON SHOWN AT BEIJING

The much-delayed Beijing Motor Show in September saw the unveiling of a new model clearly based on the current MG HS but with substantial changes to the exterior.

Also unveiled in China, just days before the start of the 2020 Beijing Auto Show, was the new MG5 sedan (saloon), which does have a resemblance to a Hyundai overall. We think the design is quite striking in the vibrant yellow and black windows, and what must be one of the biggest bonnet octagon badges in SAIC's era. The engines are less impressive than the looks: a 120hp 1.5 and a 173hp



It has been dubbed the 'Linghang' or 'Pilot' but it is as yet unclear as to whether this vehicle is intended to replace the MG HS or sit above it as a brand new model.

1.5 turbo. The MG5 had its public debut at the Beijing Motor Show from 26 September and it will launch on the Chinese car market later this autumn.

These photos are from our contacts at SAIC Design; there's no news yet about whether or not we will be seeing the MG5 sedan in UK showrooms.



Also at Beijing was the latest MG saloon offering in the form of a new MG5, which is effectively a re-skinned version of the old MG GT fastback saloon. It shares the new front-end styling of the 'Linghang' HS model above. Export potential is unknown.

MORE MG MARKETS COMING?



In the Philippines, MG customers can choose from the MG ZS, the MG RX5, MG6 and older MG5, with the RX5 and 5 being little more than rebadged Roewe models.

Recent stories have been circulating about MG moving into more new markets, some with assembly part of the deal; cue shades of the 'CKD' operations out of Cowley back in BMC's heyday. In Vietnam, for example, the government's move to zero tariffs on imports and a halving of registration fees mean that the MG importer, TC Services Vietnam, is planning to start with imports of fully-built MG ZS and HS models from Thailand, and then start local assembly of some MG models at a factory in Đà Nẵng from 2021. Meanwhile Pakistan may also see the petrol MG HS and the electric ZS EV being imported by local agent JW Auto Park. It is not clear at the moment where these models will be sourced, although Thailand seems likely. In the Philippines, MG has already become established and its importer, The Covenant Car Company, won an international award from SAIC for its efforts.

CHINA AND THE EV

In China, government incentives supporting the switch to electric vehicles have undoubtedly helped lift monthly domestic sales of EVs by 9% in July this year compared to the same month in 2019. In terms of the top 20, number one by a big margin is the Tesla Model 3, undoubtedly helped by the fact that it is assembled in China; 11,575 Chinese customers purchased this model in July 2020 alone.

Also in the top 20 were three SAIC own-brand cars, the Baojun E-Series 'city EV' came fourth, the MG eZS (our ZS EV) was 13th (with 1,752 sales) and in 20th place was the Roewe ei5 (essentially the same as the new MG5 EV just



The MG Cyberster. Our sources say that a full-size show car is in the pipeline.

going on sale in the UK). The total of these three, at 5,578 sales, was just 48% of the Tesla Model 3 but strong MG sales can be considered a good incentive to SAIC to keep expanding the range. We can surely expect the trend to continue and export markets to benefit.

We are still looking forward to the production version of the MG

E-Motion which is said to be a twin-motor, all-electric coupé likely to be capable of a three-second 0-60mph time. Beyond that it will be interesting to see if the MG Cyberster sports car concept translates into a production model too; we certainly expect to see a Cyberster show model before the end of the year.

MG HECTOR ANNIVERSARY AND MG GLOSTER LATEST

MG's history from the mid 1960s onwards is peppered with limited editions to boost sales. Now it is seen as a way of freshening up a product and MG Motor India has announced an MG Hector Anniversary Edition as an additional model. As far as we can tell, the differences are minimal; most interesting is the addition to the normal 'Super' model specification of a wireless phone charger and an air purifier said to be capable of sterilising bacteria and viruses. The new MG Gloster, which effectively is Hector's bigger brother, will be coming with autonomous self-parking.

NEC CLASSIC MOTOR SHOW POSTPONED

Seasonal favourite, the Classic Motor Show at Birmingham's NEC, will not take place in 2020. The decision was made by organisers prior to the UK government's latest increased Covid-19 restrictions, even though organisers had worked hard to put safety measures in place. It has been postponed to 2021 due to uncertainty amongst exhibitors and visitors.

• www.necclassicmotorshow.com

CONCOURS OF ELEGANCE EVENT AT HAMPTON COURT

WORDS AND PHOTOS: COLIN WITHERS

Seven MG SV and SV-Rs were put on display at the 10th Concours of Elegance event at Hampton Court, Surrey, on 4-6 September. Along with the SVs was a Sebring Twin Cam MGA, reflecting the new trend for originality and patina.

This is an extremely attractive event with the stunning backdrop of Hampton Court Palace, alongside the River Thames. Attendee numbers were limited so, with the vast gardens available, the event didn't seem too crowded. Apart from the 60 concours entrants there was a big turn-out from the Bentley, Ferrari

and, interestingly, Alvis clubs, as well as additional displays from the JEC, A-H Club and of course the seven MG Rover SV/SV-Rs.

It was a good day for SV/SV-R owners. Our 'Magnificent Seven' comprised: #111 Graeme Grove in the ex-Maidstone Sports SVs; #119 David Wood SV; #136 John Newey SV-R ex-EVO Rowan Atkinson car; #137 Gareth Hawkins SV-R ex-MG Rover Director's car; #139 Dominic Middleton SV-R ex Earl's Court show car; #144 Nigel Guild SV and myself in #151 SV-R ex-John Towers car.

• www.concourseofelegance.co.uk





MG ZS EV was the UK's 4th best selling BEV in the first quarter of 2020. It went on to sell well in Q2. Photo: Jim Jupp

MG Motor UK Q2 2020 market report

MG registrations recover strongly after the lockdown, reports Richard Colby.

As with all retail businesses that still largely rely on customers who prefer to 'try before you buy', the start of the UK lockdown on 23 March 2020 and closure of UK car showrooms on 26 March due to Coronavirus regulations had an immediate impact on the motor trade.

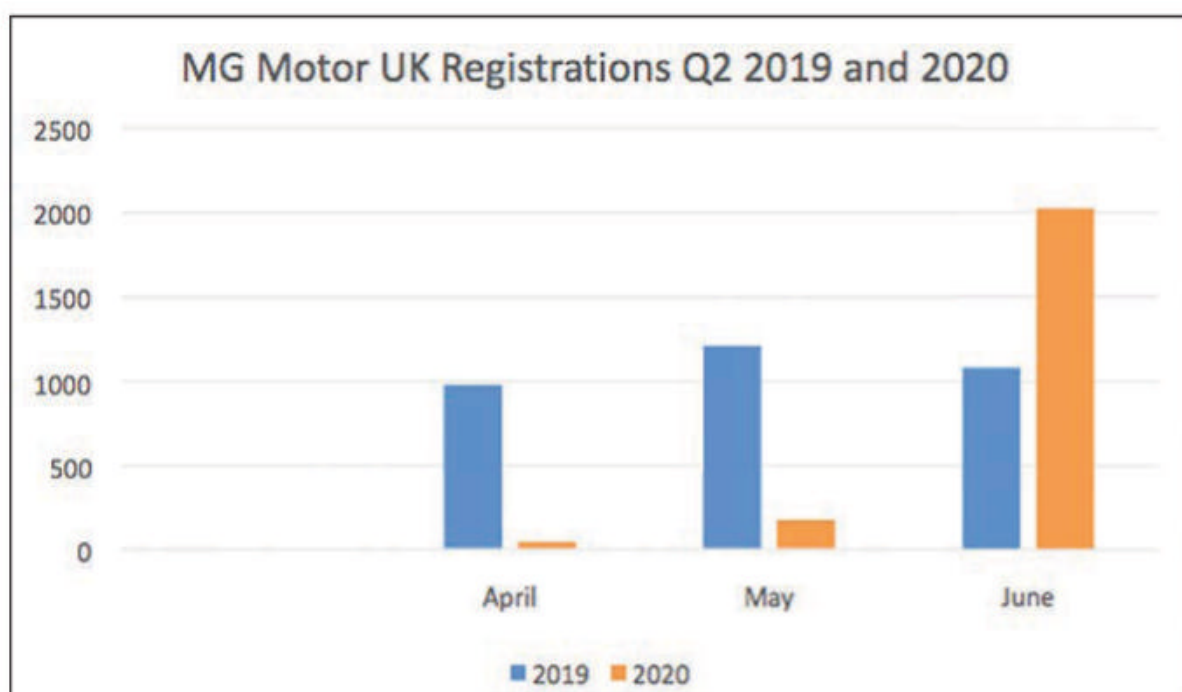
This impact was already being felt in March, which saw a 44.4% fall in new car registrations (compared to March 2019), according to the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT). In April the UK new car market all but came to a complete halt with SMMT reporting an 'unprecedented' 97.3% decrease in monthly registrations compared to April 2019.

MG Motor UK's bold plans for significant sales growth in 2020 (see *MGE*, July 2020) soon seemed a distant memory with only 45 new MGs registered in April.

As lockdown continued just 20,243 new cars were registered in the UK in May, the lowest number of registrations in that month since 1952. This number included 177 MGs of which only 17 were MG3s; the remainder were mainly HS and ZS EV models.

With restrictions beginning to ease later in May, showrooms in England and Northern Ireland were permitted to re-open from 1 June, followed by those in Wales on 22 June and Scotland on 29 June.

Anticipating a slow re-start to the car market in June, MG promoted its generous PCP deals across the range, plus a swappage scheme which had been extended to include both the MG3




2020 Q2 MG registrations bounced back after showrooms re-opened in June.

and ZS. The low-selling, entry-level 'Explore' specification was withdrawn from all petrol models in the range (it was never available on the ZS EV) so the MG3 Excite became the cheapest new MG in June at £11,895 although this increased to £12,195 on 1 July.

Surprisingly, June turned out to be a record month for MG with 2,025 registrations, an 88% increase on June 2019 and the best ever June for MG Motor UK in a market that fell by 34.9% overall. This result helped MG reach a total of 7,712 registrations for the first six months of 2020, 22.7% up on the same period last year, ensuring that MG was the only manufacturer with year-on-year growth in UK registrations in the first half of 2020.

Private sales were particularly buoyant in June with MG dealers

supplying cars that had been ordered prior to the lockdown, in addition to new sales. Dealers reported strong demand for the HS and, with demand for battery electric (BEV) models remaining strong (Tesla's Model 3 was the UK's best-selling new car in April and May), the ZS EV continued to do well after becoming the UK's fourth best-selling BEV in Q1 2020.

Although MG3 sales have climbed year on year from 2018, through 2019 and into 2020 they have fallen as a percentage of MG's total volume for some time, with 328 MG3 registrations in June 2020 representing only 16% of the marque's total registrations that month. This compares to 310 MG3 registrations (29% of the MG total) in June 2019, and 305 registrations (35% of the MG total) in June 2018. 

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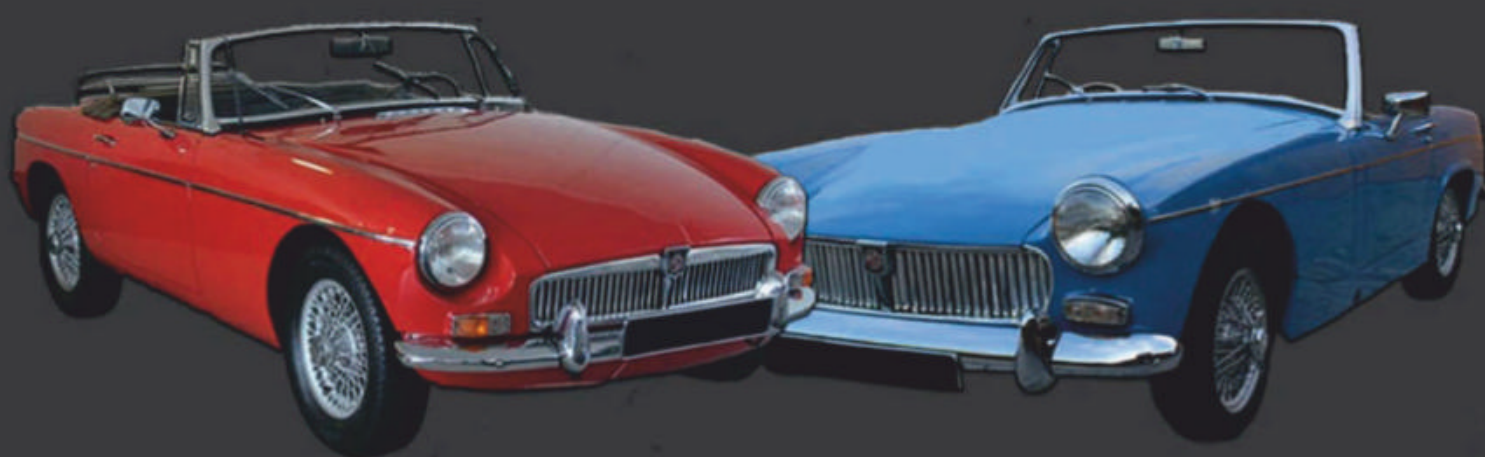
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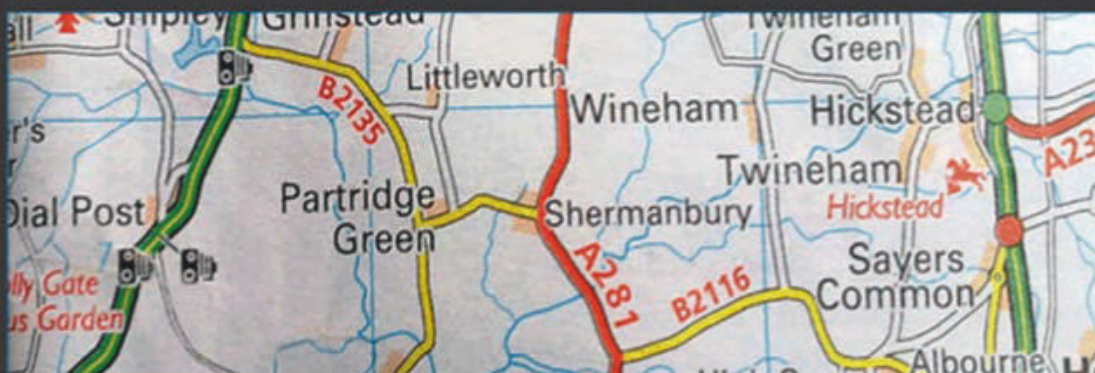


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- V8-ENGINE MGB
- MG ZS EV LAUNCH
- SUPERB MG METRO



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- FAB MG ZS V6 180
- CHEVY-ENGINE RV8
- 1972 MGB GT RESTO



NOVEMBER 2019

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- MG TF HISTORY
- ZT SERVICE GUIDE
- 1977 RALLY MGB GT



DECEMBER 2019

- RESTO 1968 MGC GT
- MODIFIED 2004 MG ZT
- TUNED L2 MAGNA
- MG HS LAUNCH



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- 2004 MG ZS180
- LOVED 1968 MGC GT
- MG ZS EV ROAD TRIP
- 1964 MGB ROADSTER



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- COOL 1933 MIDGET J2
- XPOWER SV-R BEAST
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- PROTOTYPE ZT AUTO
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- END OF ABINGDON



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- KIMBER HOUSE VISIT
- BIG-FUN 1996 MGF



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MGA

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MG TD AND TF

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MGB/C stainless grille fixing kit

£7.50 (set of three)

Available now from MGOC Spares is this stainless steel grille bracket fixing kit, suitable for chrome bumper MGB/C and GT models, which comprises a set of three polished brackets and stainless steel fixings to complement the grille surround. Ref: HZA489SS.

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Dust-free sanding kit

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Sealey's dust-free sanding kit includes an industrial 35-litre, 1000w plastic drum vacuum cleaner for dust extraction. Included in the kit are three sanders with an air-powered, variable speed, 150mm random orbital sander (GSA05) and two block sanders (RE4011 and RE4012). Ref: DFSK01

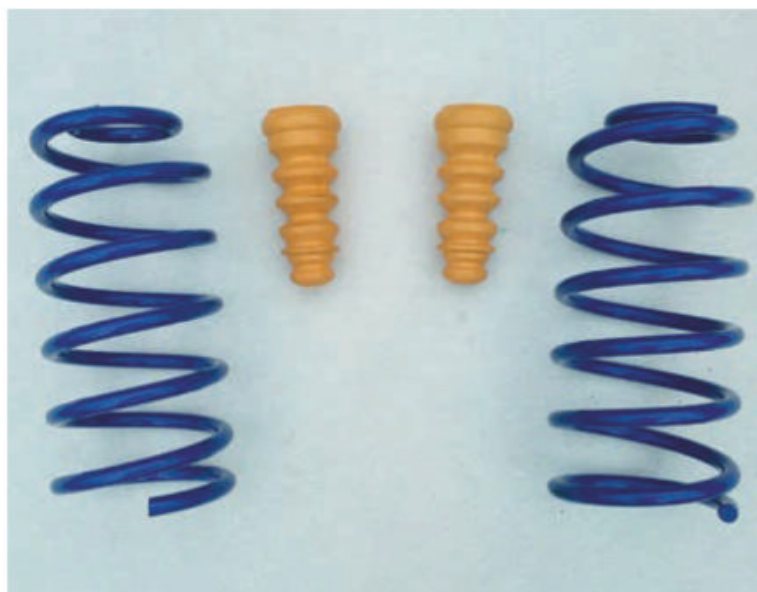
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MG3 ride improvement kit £182.40 + p&p

Vehicle Handling Solutions' ride improvement kit for the MG3 utilises a pair of tailored rear springs, which are powder coated, and upgraded spring aids with revised contact rate.

VHS says that its kit improves the MG3's rear suspension characteristics, improving ride quality whilst retaining the diminutive MG's sporty and dynamic character. The kit is a direct replacement for the OE parts.

• www.vehiclehandlingsolutions.com



Electronic ignition conversion £87.00

NTG Motor Services sells a range of electronic ignition conversions for T and Y types, MGA and Magnette, which can be supplied for either positive or negative earth. The conversion removes the need to gap ignition points and fits inside the original distributor, out of sight.

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MGF AP four-pot Black Diamond brake pads

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Available from Mike Satur are these Black Diamond high-performance front brake pads suitable for four-pot AP front brake calipers, as fitted to MGF Trophy 1.8 VVC 16v, which, Mike says, are suitable for road and occasional track day use.

Ref: BR5280APBD.

- +44 (0)1782 373547
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MGTF 'Soft Ride' suspension kit. **£435**

Rimmer Bros has invested heavily to remanufacture an OEM-specification 'Soft Ride' kit, produced exclusively for them. Rimmer Bros says that the kit can be fitted to all MGF models, including MG Motor versions (2007-2011). The original kit was fitted on MG Motor models and specifically designed to improve the ride quality without adversely affecting the handling of the vehicle. Rimmer Bros adds that installing the kit results in a more supple drive, eliminating the undesirably harsh suspension characteristics of the standard suspension whilst maintaining that sports car feel. They say it is ideal for those owners who do not use their TFs exclusively on track. Importantly, the dampers feature lower mounting spherical bearings, allowing them to pivot around the bolt centre, thus reducing the load placed on the single mounting bolt. Each kit includes four uprated, hot-forged lower damper bolts to match the bearings. Ref: RP1746.

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Past communications

My first car as a university student was an MG TD. I have had many MGs since and I currently have nine, from a 1929 MG M-type fabric body Midget to an MGR V8. I also inherited a 1947 MGTC racer with a 5-litre RV8 engine, seen at Bathurst at 200mph.

I knew John Thornley and met him regularly when I worked in Italy. I flew from Bologna to UK regularly and Mike Hawke always picked me up at the airport. John answered my letters with a typed letter each month (no email). I could make a book with his letters and also phone calls.

I asked him his opinion of the RV8. In a letter to me dated November 17 1992 JWT stated:

"Having seen the MG RV8, I can say three things:

1) I am very pleased, because it shows that Rover now recognise MG is the name for sports cars.

2) Quite clearly, the people responsible for it know what they are doing. I don't think it would be pompous or patronising to say that Abingdon would have been proud of it.



Peter's low-mileage MG RV8, pictured with his friend Carole Cooke, on her birthday.

3) It is a pity that this upmarket vehicle has had to precede the 'tiddler' which, we understand, has now gone on the back burner for obvious reasons."

The tiddlers did arrive later, of course. I own one with rego plate MGTF!

Peter Kerr,
Queensland, Australia



Want you back...

I sold my blue MGB '67 Roadster in 1999 (OYT 787F) and regretted it ever since. I've been looking to buy her back but so far can only find that she is SORN, I believe somewhere on the South coast. If anyone should know of the car I would greatly appreciate it if they could pass my details to the current owner or vice versa. I really would like her back now that circumstances allow – no matter what condition she may be in. Many thanks in advance for any help you are able to give.

Clive Austin, via Facebook

If you are the owner of this MG and want to get in contact with Clive then feel free to email us at mg.ed@kelsey.co.uk and we will pass your details on. [Jim]

Speedy MGA

Whilst browsing on the internet I came across a video of the 1991 SCTA Bonneville Speed Week, part two. Having always found these one-off cars and bikes interesting, I decided to watch it. The video is 1:03:59 long and, on the one hour mark, there is an MGA. The car is white with two purple flashes down the side, number 502 and the class it appears to be in is E/BMS, the E being the engine code and the BMS being the body code. I have tried to find any reference to the car on the SCTA website as the archive doesn't seem to go back far enough and I can't even find what the engine and body codes mean.

Dave Norfolk

If you are able to shed more light on this MGA please get in contact. [Jim]

Please send letters to: mg.ed@kelsey.co.uk or by post to: **MGE, Kelsey Media, The Granary, Downs Court, Yalding Hill, Yalding, Kent, ME18 6AL, UK.**

Letters may be edited for clarity or length. Views expressed in *Postbag* are not necessarily those of MGE.



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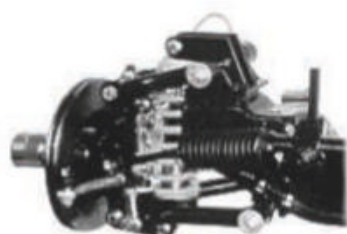
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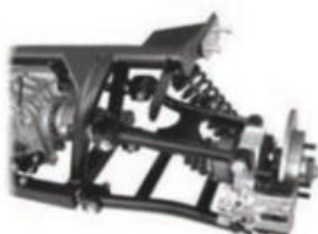
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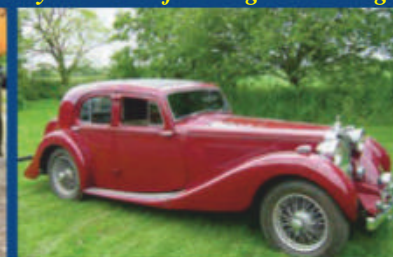
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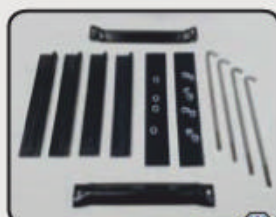
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GRAHAM ROBSON

> Graham's first car was an MG TA, which he used whilst he was a graduate trainee at Jaguar Cars. He started writing about cars in 1961, joined *Autocar* magazine in 1965, became an independent automotive historian in 1972 and has since sampled every type of MG, ancient and modern. He has also published more than 160 books and countless magazine articles.



Works rallying MGAs

This month Graham discusses the MGA's curiously patchy Works history in international rallying.

If this begins to look likely to be an 'If only...' type of column, I'd better emphasise, right away, that I was always a great enthusiast for the MGA, both as a road car and in motorsport. Looking back at the records, the various MGAs used by the Works team seem to have had very unlucky careers.

Although the Works Competitions team, based at Abingdon, produced its first MGA rally car in 1956 and its



Nancy Mitchell and Pat Faichney won the Ladies' Prize on the 1956 Alpine Rally.



1958 Liège-Rome-Liège Rally: John Gott (left) and Ray Brookes finished in ninth.

very last in 1962, this model never really got a chance to be the star member of a successful team. It arrived when the later-legendary 'Comps' department was still in its infancy and, when dedicated motorsport development had barely got started, the Twin-Cam appeared at the same time as Abingdon discovered the 'Big Healey' and, by the early 1960s, not only the Healey but the first of the hot little Minis had come onto the scene.

It didn't help, at first, that although the original MGA 1500 was sturdy enough, and handled extremely well, it was too heavy and lacked power (68-72bhp) to be competitive. In 1956, for instance, when no fewer than five Works cars started the French Alpine Rally, they were up against more sophisticated Porsches. On the

“ ...THIS MODEL NEVER REALLY GOT A CHANCE TO BE THE STAR MEMBER OF A SUCCESSFUL TEAM. ”



John Gott with a Works MGA during the 1959 Monte.

Works MGA successes in rallying: 1956 to 1962

Year and event	Model	Crew	Result
1956 French Alpine	1500	Nancy Mitchell/Pat Faichney	Ladies' Prize
1957 Lyons-Charbonnières	1500	Nancy Mitchell/Doreen Reece	Ladies' Prize
1957 Liège-Rome-Liège	1500	Nancy Mitchell/Joan Johns	Ladies' Prize
1958 Liège-Rome-Liège	Twin-Cam	John Gott/Ray Brookes	9th
1962 Monte Carlo	1600 Mk2	Donald Morley/Erle Morley	1st in Class
1962 Tulip	1600 Mk2	Rauno Aaltonen/Gunnar Palm	1st in Class

Liège-Rome-Liège, which followed, they were similarly out-paced. At least Nancy Mitchell became European Ladies' Champion that year using MGAs to help her gain the title.

1957 was something of a wash-out for the Works 1500s, for the French Alpine rally was cancelled and the team of four cars was out-paced on the Liège-Rome-Liège Marathon. If the Works team had not then fallen in love with the Austin-Healey 100/6 (later the 3000) this might have been the time for the new MGA Twin-Cam to blossom but this 110bhp-engined MG never fulfilled its promise, never won a single award and was speedily dropped.

Salvation came, at least, three years later in 1962. With Stuart Turner taking over from Marcus

Chambers to manage the operation, at the end of the 1961 season, Abingdon was encouraged to work on several different once-neglected models, one of which was that rather rare machine, the MGA 1600 Mk2. Stuart's deputy, Bill Price, spent some time making sure that every possible piece of performance-raising equipment should be included. Not only did such a rally car have light-alloy body panels but four-wheel disc brakes and a tuned-up engine which produced at least 110bhp. During the winter of 1961, preparation work began on a brand-new Coupé, 151 ABL.

Compared to its predecessors, this particular car had a remarkable, but very short career. It tackled only three events, was piloted by

a different driver on each event, twice winning its capacity class, and was only forced to retire once.

As I noted in a previous column, Donald Morley (who had never before rallied an MGA) took it to an impressive class victory in the 1962 Monte Carlo Rally, finishing second overall in the Grand Touring category (behind David Seigle-Morris' Works Austin-Healey 3000), looking as immaculate and unflustered at the end as it had been when it started from Oslo.

Four months later, though, there was more to come for Stuart Turner, having eyed up the complex performance-handicapping system of the Tulip Rally, decided to send out his new recruit, Rauno Aaltonen, to face up to a complete three-car team from Triumph, who were trying out their new TR4s for the first time. Even though the MGA Mk2 had only a 1,622cc engine, and the Triumphs had 1,991cc, this was a case of experience-versus-novelty and, after an enthralling four-day contest from Noordwijk in Holland to Monte Carlo and back, it was Rauno who narrowly beat all the Triumphs, won his capacity class, and came close to winning the entire GT category.

Perhaps it was too much to expect the gallant Coupé to win its third outing. As it happened, the veteran John Gott was asked to take the car on the gruelling Liège-Sofia-Liège Marathon but it eventually expired on the rough and ready tracks of Yugoslavia with a badly leaking fuel tank. Rough and ready? The MGA had a tank skid guard, eventually torn off by the rough roads, after which the tank itself gave in gracefully to the elements.

This was the MGA's final entry in international rallying, though it was soon replaced by a fleet of new MGBs. However, that is a story for another day... **GR**



Rauno Aaltonen and Gunnar Palm finished first in class on the 1962 Tulip Rally.

ROGER PARKER

> Roger Parker is a former policeman whose technical skill and wide experience of MGs form the backbone of our own Technical Q&A pages.



Nobody's perfect

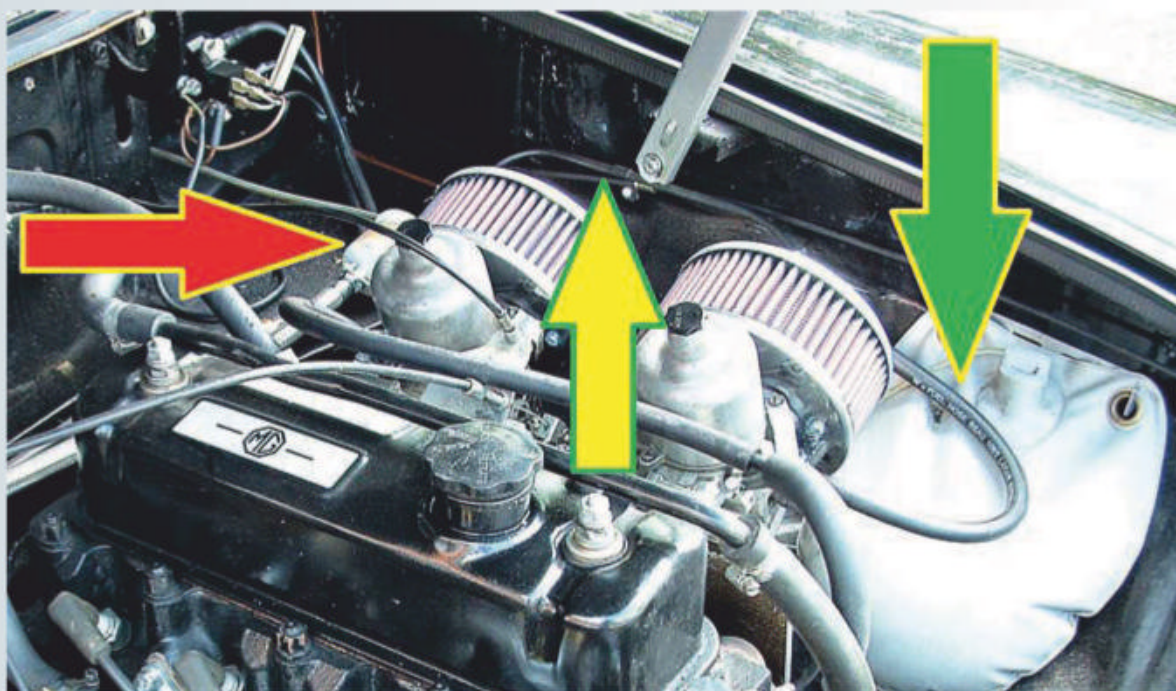
This month Roger goes to the aid of a fellow MG owner, experiences problems of his own in the process and learns a new lesson.

In the past, I have reported on a couple of silly things I have done, such as the time I replaced a failed ZT 260 fuel pump. Deciding to test the failed pump, I took it to a safe, outdoor area, armed with a battery and a pair of long wires. Sadly, instead of connecting wires to the pump first and then connecting wires to the battery a safe distance away, I connected it the other way round, which generated a spark; the pump did work enough to spit out some fuel which, of course, caught fire with camp fire level flames but did confirm the pump was toast!

Now I have a new dumb moment to add. Recently I went to look at a 1980 MGB with a fuel supply problem that saw the car run OK for a very short distance then cut out. Wait a



ABOVE: Don't leave the keys to your MG ZS in an open boot, even if you are not going to close the tailgate and even if the car is unlocked! I have learned from my lesson!

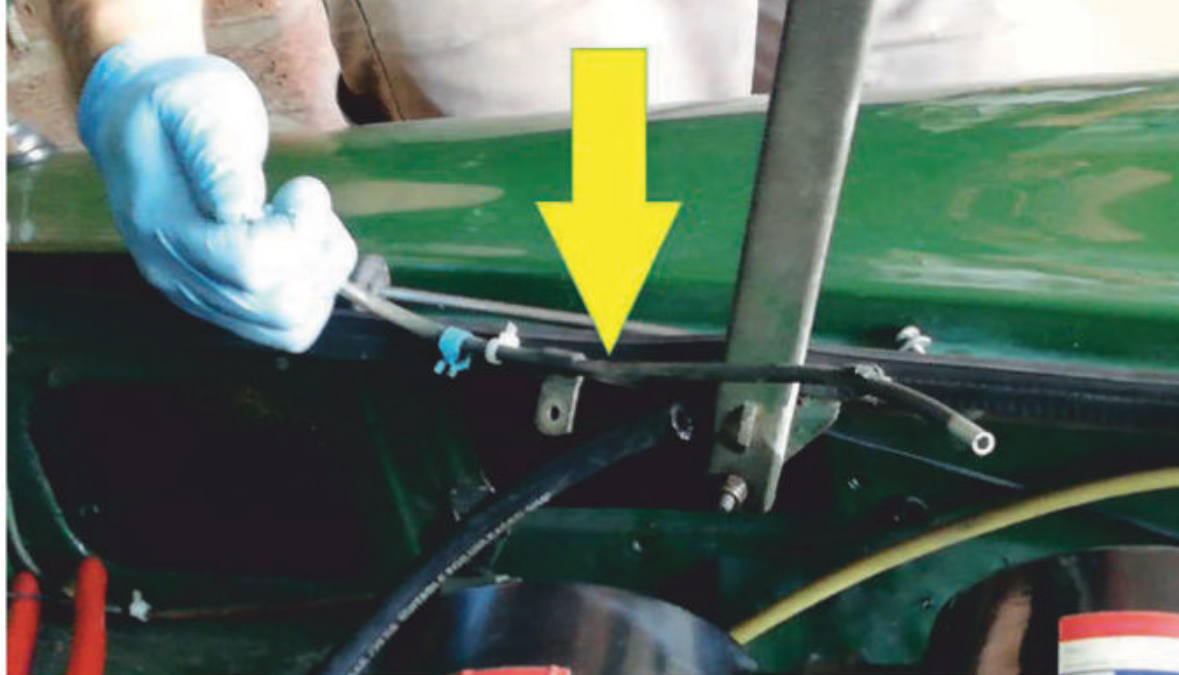


ABOVE: The later model MGBs with HIF carburettors had a fuel filter (red arrow) with $\frac{5}{16}$ " hose. The steel reducer pipe has a (yellow arrow) $\frac{5}{16}$ " hose from the filter and the other end of it is a $\frac{1}{4}$ "-bore hose affixed to the carb inlet (green arrow).

while and it would start and run for about the same distance. On arrival in my ZS I got changed and put the keys down in the open boot and then emptied tools out and left the tailgate open and the car unlocked.

The next event is probably obvious: a helper, acting in good faith, closed the tailgate. That shouldn't have been a problem as the car was unlocked and, had the fob lock button been pressed with any door or tailgate open, the car's horn sounds a clear warning. In this quiet cul-de-sac, where the noisiest elements were squeaking swallows, this would have been obvious so there had been no horn beep. However, on returning to remove additional tools I found the car locked. "Oh golly gosh," said I, in another language.

The irony is that I have always been



ABOVE: The removed reducer steel pipe (yellow arrow) also showed some resistance when blown through so was replaced with a longer hose run between filter and carb.

totally anal in respect of checking the location of keys of any of my MGFs or TFs when the boot is open and about to be closed, so frequent are the conversations I have with MGF and TF owners who have shut their boot with the keys inside. Standing outside the ZS with it locked with the keys inside was really annoying. No panic, though, as it was then just a case of arranging a kind soul to get the spare keys from home, 20 miles away, and mull over the error that led to that situation.

Once fully mulled, I later tried to replicate what had just happened with one set of keys inside the car and spares outside, which raised some questions as, however I set the scenario and sequences of door and tailgate opening and closing when the car was unlocked, it remained unlocked and I couldn't replicate that scenario. When the ZS 'locked itself' there was still a good selection of tools in the boot area and, when the spare keys arrived and the tailgate opened, a long pry bar handle was next to the keys, so the general assumption is that, after the tailgate was closed, the pry bar moved and hit the fob's lock button. The experience has created the 'once bitten, twice shy' approach to match the MGF and TF approach.

Returning to the MGB; the fuel problem was the latest of several recent running problems. It had previously had a failed original SU pump and a replacement Hardi pump had been recently fitted so system checking started at the pump end. Confirming a clean power supply and earth, with just a 0.2 volt drop at the pump, was good enough to rule out any power supply issue and no resistance between the earth terminal and the car's body confirmed that connection was sound too.

All was not 100%, though, as there was a fuel drip from one of the banjo



ABOVE: Generic fuel filter as fitted to many classics. Ensure fuel flows in the direction of the arrow and blow through it in that direction to check for any blockages. These filters have facility for both $\frac{5}{16}$ " and $\frac{1}{4}$ " bore hoses. The recently changed OE filter on this B was almost impossible to blow through.

connections to the pump; unfortunately too common a problem with both SU and the common Hardi MGB pumps, where the fibre banjo sealing washers do present many owners with difficulty in getting a good seal. Tightening the banjo bolt excessively could damage the fine threads. In this case a slight tweak on the bolt did cure the leak.

The pump was certainly responsive enough and both the hoses to and from the pump had been replaced with ethanol-resistant types, so the possibility of internal breakdown of these was ruled out at this stage. Debris in the tank was considered and, to verify this, I removed the fuel filler hose and neck of the tank and could see inside was spotless with no visible debris.

I also had a new sender locking ring and seal, specifically to allow the sender to be removed, with the tank less than half full and the right side of the car raised to move the fuel to the left side.

As this late car has the combined sender with fuel pick-up, I wanted to check the pick-up pipe was totally clear, and it was. Peering through the sender hole also allowed a different view into the tank and the underside of the top of the tank had surface rust; nothing of concern but this illustrated that, even in the fuel-laden air, rusting on the exposed underside of the top continued.

The next check was to remove the fuel hose at the front carb and place the hose end in a container, intending to time how long it took the pump to move a pint of fuel. This should be less than 30 seconds. Immediately it was clear that the flow was pitiful and, after a minute, there was barely enough to start a motor mower.

Subsequently, in the engine bay, the $\frac{5}{16}$ " hose from the under-floor fuel feed pipe from the pump was disconnected and a long run of new hose attached and run into the container. Pump on and now the flow was what should be expected, so the restriction was confirmed in the engine bay.

Separating the hoses from the filter and the short metal pipe, blowing through each showed no problem with the hoses but huge restriction trying to blow through the filter which is new one fitted at the last service. Clearly this was a major problem and it was replaced.

On these later models there is a short metal pipe that sits on the inner wing, connecting the hose out of the filter with the front carb fuel inlet. With more resistance than I was happy with I decided to replace this with one length of new hose from filter to carb. Of note here is that the metal pipe is also a reducer from the input at $\frac{5}{16}$ " to output of $\frac{1}{4}$ ", to match the slightly smaller carb inlet pipe. In this instance the new filter conveniently had alternative size hose connection stubs for simple fitting of the $\frac{1}{4}$ "- bore hose. A final flow check into the graduated container produced a more than adequate flow and resulted in instant starting and a very responsive long test drive and subsequent use.

I think the metal pipe also allows easier heat transfer into the fuel than a hose does so the hose may offer very slightly improved resistance to overheating the fuel and poor running in stop/start traffic. **RP**

“...THE PUMP DID WORK ENOUGH TO SPIT OUT SOME FUEL WHICH, OF COURSE, CAUGHT FIRE...”

JOHN NIKAS

> Born into a family that cherished the Sacred Octagon, John has dedicated his life to British sports cars. Based in the USA, he owns and races examples from various marques, has written numerous books and articles and helped create the British Sports Car Hall of Fame.



A winning combination: Group 44 and the MGB

The astonishing tale of North America's most successful racing MGB...

For over a decade, Group 44 Inc. was a dominant force in Sports Car Club of America competition, establishing a new era of professionalism in motorsport with its immaculate array of racing cars that won with impressive frequency and provided considerable value to sponsors with its accomplishments touted in regular national print, radio and television coverage. The press called them 'Road Racing's White Wave,' while fellow racers knew them as fierce competitors who offered no quarter on the track but were kind and supportive in the paddock.

Formed by Bob Tullius, Brian Furstenau and Dick Gilmartin in 1964, Group 44's racers delivered hundreds of victories and 10 SCCA National Championships. For most enthusiasts the team is most often associated with Triumph and Jaguar but, not long after the merger that created British Leyland in 1968, Group 44 applied its iconic green and white livery to cars from Abingdon too. Although Huffaker Racing and Hank Thorpe had successfully campaigned the MGB for several years, British Leyland's American headquarters wanted their premier team to race their most popular model. Group 44 soon hired Jerry Truitt, who had



Group 44's Bob Tullius standing beside Paul Brand and his wife in the B at a vintage racing event in 2012. Photo: Paul Brand's archive.

built and raced cars for Thorpe, in order to flatten its learning curve in preparing the MGB for competition.

Group 44's first two years with the MGB were good but lacked the overwhelming success which had become the team's hallmark. The tide changed when Brian Furstenau took over the steering wheel in 1973. Despite serving as the team's chief engineer, Furstenau was also

a talented driver which became clear when he dominated the competition during a season that ended with the E-Production National Championship at Road Atlanta.

Despite that success, Group 44 lavished little further attention on the MGB programme in the coming seasons due to the addition of the Jaguar E-type to the fleet. The first year with the new Jaguar ended with



ABOVE: Brian Furstenu at the wheel of Group 44's MGB, seen during the 1973 season when the team secured the SCCA E-Production National Championship.

“ DESPITE SERVING AS THE TEAM'S CHIEF ENGINEER, FURSTENAU WAS ALSO A TALENTED DRIVER... ”

disappointment due to tyre problems in the championship race in 1974, but Tullius atoned for that failure the following year with a B-Production National Championship. The MGB continued to run like clockwork, notching up the odd victory here and there, but never reaching the same heights it had in 1973.

Group 44 abandoned SCCA Club Racing at the end of 1976 in order to focus on getting the XJ-S ready for competition in the organisation's Trans-Am series. Deemed surplus to requirements, Group 44's MGB was sold to Paul Brand, the team's Public Relations Manager, who was about to depart for a position with a new race track in Minnesota. Although Brand had experienced considerable success in sprint kart racing, he wanted to race sports cars and the MGB offered impressive reliability.

It almost beggars belief to think that a front-running racing team would keep the same car for more than one or two seasons but Group



ABOVE: With so much focus on the Jaguar E-type, very little attention was lavished on the MGB during 1975, although it did receive rubber bumpers front and rear to mirror the appearance of the current road cars.

44 had run the exact same MGB for seven full racing seasons. Over that time it had completed almost every race it had entered and finished the 1975 campaign with the same engine it had started with. Rather than building a fresh example each year, Group 44 had cleverly updated their sole MGB's styling at the start of each season, altering the grille, bumpers and other details as necessary to make it appear like a new car.

Over the next five years, Brand and the ex-Group 44 MGB proved a formidable combination. The pair secured pole position 23 times and won 24 of the 41 races entered, including an E-Production National Championship in 1980. The victory in the championship race that year was especially satisfying for Brand since Tullius, his former employer, provided expert commentary for the event and was the first person to greet him in the

winner's circle. Making it even more poignant, the very last MGB had rolled off the assembly line the day before at Abingdon, marking the end of an era for MG and their legions of fans around the world. Among those in attendance were several executives from British Leyland, who recognised the importance of the win and showered Brand with praise for his poignant accomplishment.

Eventually Brand and the MGB retired from competition but the car remained in his garage, receiving a complete restoration during the 1990s. The most successful MGB in American racing annals, Brand's MGB amassed an amazing 70 race victories and two SCCA National Championships over its 14-year career. Thankfully, it remains in excellent condition and makes the occasional appearance at various vintage racing events in the United States. Kudos to Group 44 and Paul Brand for making it all possible. **JN**



ABOVE: BL often exhibited Group 44's cars at various motor shows. This photo depicts the MGB as it was when Jerry Truitt raced it during 1970, its first competitive year.

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Front fog lamps were fitted after the F left MG Rover's ownership and is one modification that has been retained.



STOP THE PRESS

David Koskela heard about the car you see here five years ago, via a fellow MGF fan and friend, who had spotted the Flame Red F on a well-known auction website. On seeing the number plate the two knew there was more to this car than just being an early MGF 1.8i.

"It was advertised on the internet as a straightforward 1995 MGF but in the photographs you could see the registration plate said SVC. Looking

at the pictures, it looked really good," recalls David. The SVC part of the plate indicated an MGR press fleet car. "Looking at the chassis number, it was no.57 so one of the very early ones, built in June 1995 and registered in the July. MG used a lot of pre-production cars for press but also dug into the productions cars. 801 to 830 were the main press cars."

It had clearly collected a few additions over the years, including a

white hard top, but David wanted to know more. "I started to wonder if it had been re-sprayed or bodged. I phoned the people, who were really nice and were based in the north of England. They had to travel down to Staines regularly, for family reasons, but lived miles away up the M1." Staines isn't that far from David's Churchill Square Autos base in Shepperton and, after agreeing to buy the F, David met them locally



David with one of his many MGFs.

When David Koskela heard about what appeared to be an early MGF press launch car he decided it was an MG that he really had to have.

• WORDS AND PHOTOS: JIM JUPP

on a Sunday lunchtime. "I assumed they'd meet me with the car there but no, that was to give me a lift back up the M1 to collect the car, which took about six hours, but it was lovely. The only downside was that it was produced without powered steering but, on the motorway, it was fine."

It does seem quite odd that MG Rover would send out cars to the press in other than the top spec. Currently MG Motor uses high-specification

cars as a matter of course when demonstrating to the press, as surely you want the press to rave about your new car. When the F was launched you had to pay extra for Electric Power-Assisted Steering (EPAS) if you opted for the non-VVC model and without it at slow speeds, particularly when parking, quite a lot of effort is needed to steer those 185/55V15 front tyres.

It may have been lacking EPAS but it did have a few extras, as David

explains: "It had a passenger's air bag and ABS. It was a weird spec."

David knew the MG was from the press car pool by its original registration number but he had no idea if it had ever appeared in print, even after conferring with the then MG Rover Press Officer, Martin Cox, as he explains: "The MGF/TF Register know Martin well and he racked his brains but couldn't remember what publications had used it, but then

»



ABOVE: The steering wheel matches the red Fusion seats, yet no EPAS – but steering feedback is much improved at speed.

« some of the cars just went abroad. The press office had lots of cars and would pick the nicer one to send out,” which makes sense as you clearly want your product looking its best when splashed across a glossy magazine spread or in a broadsheet paper.

Eventually he located one review his F had been used in, which turned out to be a broadsheet newspaper. “It was in the Saturday motoring section of *The Times*, on 23 September 1995.” And the front-page *Times* report was quite rightly enthusiastic, even if the press car did not have all the bells and whistles. Journalist Kevin Eason declared MG’s return to sports cars



ABOVE: The Fusion cloth interior is really quite striking and is a rare colour option.

as “Brilliant” and asked the question “Could the MGF be another classic?” MGE readers already know that it is.

Locating the review also provided the opportunity to confirm a few more details about the car’s original specification, as he suspected some parts had been added over the years by different owners. *The Times’* review confirmed it had since acquired foglights in the front bumper and it

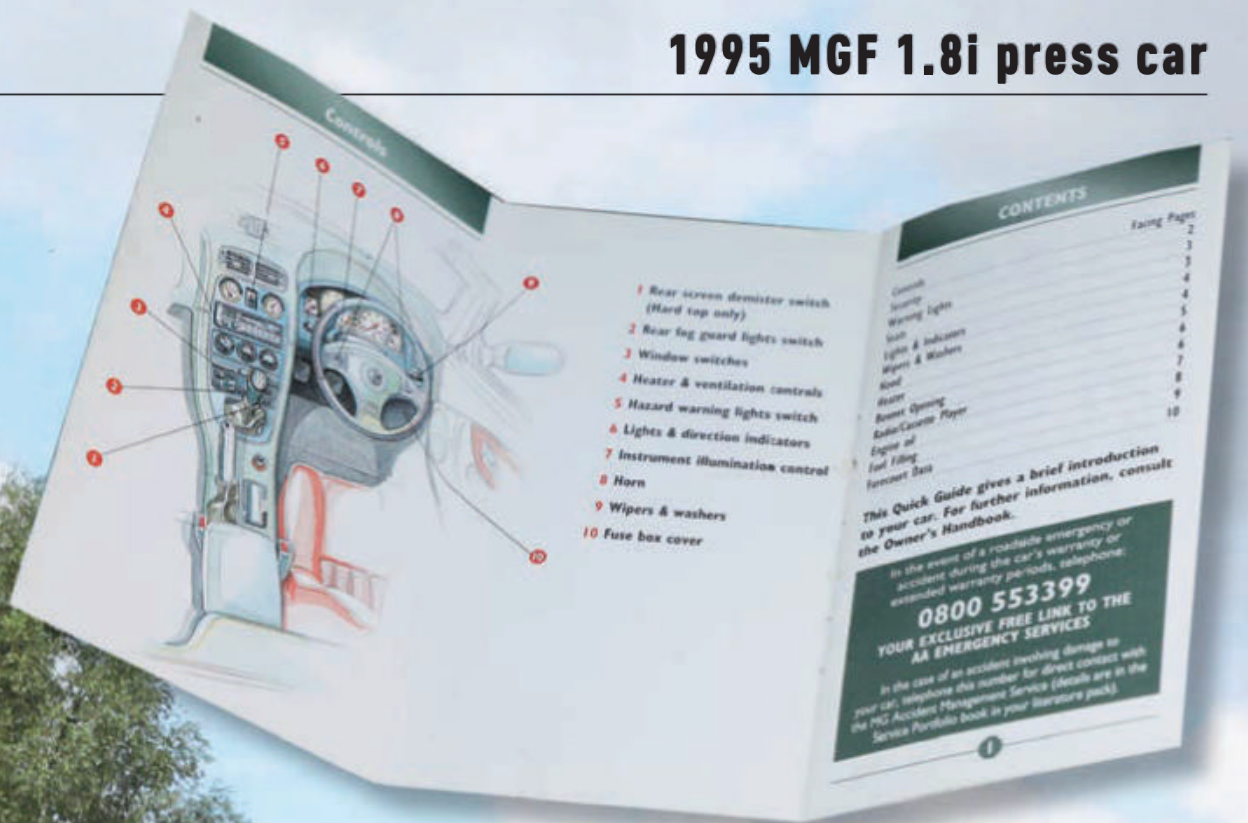
no longer had the striking red Fusion cloth interior, which David managed to reinstate. We wondered if he had any idea why that had changed. “I think the last owner bought it like that. In fact, I’m the fifth owner and you can trace the history quite nicely.”

Interestingly it remained with MG Rover for its first three years, as the documentation with the car has revealed: “It was a Rover Group car

»



David holds a copy of The Times motoring section, with the review of this partiular press-launch MGF.



The controls leaflet isn't something you see every day as it is the kind of documentation MG Rover produced and owners promptly misplaced.



“ IT REMAINED WITH MG ROVER FOR ITS FIRST THREE YEARS, AS THE DOCUMENTATION REVEALED. ”



“ HE ADMITS IT IS GETTING HARDER TO LOCATE PARTS, PARTICULARLY FOR SUCH A LIMITED OPTION. ”

« at Cowley, in Oxford, then at vehicle Operations in Gaydon and then back to Oxford before being sold to Fairways of Gillingham, Kent, which became Beadles. They must have picked it up from an MG auction. It would appear Fairways sold it but put all the goodies on it, like the white hard top, boot rack, front fog lamps. It had VVC alloys on it instead of the correct alloys it has now and full leather, to sell it I suppose. And the lady I bought it from, who was the second private owner, had it for a very long time.”

Tracking a car's history has become nigh-on impossible for some owners, with the tightening of data protection laws in recent years as well as lost records at the ministry. Thankfully, things were easier in the case of this F as the car came with a full service history. “I also have all the handbooks, in fact everything that goes with it, even the little stereo security box.” But things could have been quite different, having sported a private number plate, M6 ROV, at one point. Thankfully the original number had been reinstated.

We wondered if any of the owners knew it had been a press car? “I



ABOVE: The MGF's under-bonnet presentation is immaculate.
LEFT: The car was reunited with OE six-spoke alloys specific to the MGF 1.8i, as it had been fitted with VVC alloys by a dealer.

don't think so, definitely not the people I bought it off.”

To replace the VVC alloys the dealership had fitted, a correct set of Mk1 6x15” 1.8i-specific alloys was sourced and refurbished before being fitted with new Falken tyres. David wanted to reinstate more of its original spec., as he explains: “We got rid of the boot rack, which had needed holes drilled to secure it,” which isn't ideal. Once the rack had been removed, David had the holes welded up and the boot lid repainted.

“It was easier to do that than replace the boot, because of all the wiring.”

The interior was a nightmare to source as it's quite a rare colour. “It is very rare and I'm still trying to find a better driver's door cover. The seats I found on eBay, as well as just the passenger door cover.”

He admits it is getting harder to locate parts, particularly for such a limited option. “A lot of people commented at Stoneleigh that they'd never seen an interior that colour. We do have another F of that colour

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which, even though it's done 10,000 miles, looked totally brand new." Being red cloth it may not be the easiest colour to keep from fading, which may explain its rarity.

David has sourced quite a rare optional extra which neatly sits in the base of the boot, but it didn't come with the car. "I added the tool kit, which is getting expensive to buy. I think it makes a nice addition to the car."

Two minor additions remain, one from the car dealership's enhancements: "I left the foglights on it but, other than that, it's back to how it was the day it was tested by *The Times*." The other is a wind deflector which can be removed with no effect on the interior. "It's an after-market one which I put in there for motorway driving, which bolts in under the T-bar, so you don't have to drill any holes in the rear cover."

Red can be a bit of a nightmare colour for paint too, as it can fade rapidly in sunlight – something a lot of UK Post Office vans bear witness to. We wondered if much attention needed to be paid to the paintwork, other than sorting the holes from the unwanted boot rack. "Not until a shelf fell down in my garage and hit the nearside wing. I also had to have a corroded sill end repaired."

Having raced MGFs, David specialised in dealing with them and has owned countless examples. He is quite taken with how well the car drives. "It's lovely. The last owners said they'd had the engine re-built and



ABOVE: The *Times* review did highlight the great security the MGF boot offers, reminding owners to check the location of their keys before closing the lid down.

obviously you never know what they've had done but it's never failed to start first time. It's been to Gaydon twice with no problems, including when I came back from one of those trips to Warwickshire in a terrible storm. It was better not having the powered steering as the car was just more solid on the road and I'll happily jump in it and drive it anywhere." Show-goers may have spied it at Stoneleigh MG Spares Day on several occasions.

"And I think the hood is original and under the bonnet, as you can see, it's immaculate. I think it's been garaged all its life. In fact, I don't think it would have been the same colour if it hadn't been garaged." Amazingly, the

bodywork didn't even need buffing as it has retained its bright hue of Flame Red, of which apparently there are two versions in the MG Rover range. This can be quite frustrating, particularly when it comes to paint-matching.

One thing Martin Cox has unearthed from his archive is the press driving route in 1995, from the MGF's launch. "It shows the route that the car took and, if the 25th anniversary had happened at Gaydon this year, then there were plans to do as much of the run as possible." Hopefully 2021 will see another chance to test out the route and we suspect David will be there with his former press fleet MGF. 📍

David suspects that the exhaust is the original from the factory.



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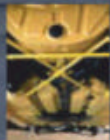
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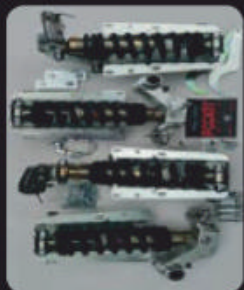
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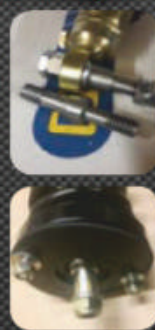
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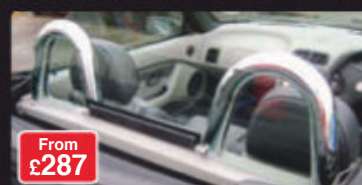


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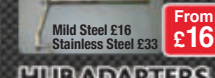
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1974 MIDGET V 1979 MGB



If you are wondering which model is the best introduction to the world of classic open-topped MGs then consider a Midget or an MGB. Here we help you choose between these popular models.

• WORDS: AARON MCKAY • PHOTOS: GREGORY EVANS

People mourned the loss of the elegant MGA in 1962 but the reality is that MG sports car customers never had things better. Rather than just one option for those looking for open-top thrills, there were two as the year before, in 1961, the latest Austin-Healey Sprite had been given an MG twin: the Midget. The MGA's replacement was a new car with sleek bodywork over an advanced monocoque structure: the MGB Roadster.

The Midget offered surprising practicality and performance for such

a small, affordable car. Both proved to be wild successes, particularly the MGB, and today they both remain hugely popular choices for classic car enthusiasts. The MGB is the more expensive car, as it was then, of course but, if you have the good fortune to fit into the Midget cockpit, your choice is not so simple. I took a Mk3 (GAN 5) 1974 Midget and a 1979 MGB Roadster out for a spin to highlight the differences.

MG Midget

The 1961 (£669.15.10 at launch) MG iteration of the Spridget pairing

was positioned as the better-equipped model but that's not to say the Midget is a car laden with frivolities. It's charmingly basic in the tradition of the MG T-series and it feels the kind of car best driven while wearing gloves and a scarf.

From October 1962 early Midgets had a torquey 'small-bore' 1098cc version of the BMC A-series unit, producing nearly 60bhp; a decent improvement over the 48bhp 948cc unit offered in 1961. It wasn't long before a revised Mk2 model hit the streets and, in 1964, this new Midget offered refinements for passengers



“ THEY BOTH REMAIN HUGELY POPULAR CHOICES FOR CLASSIC CAR ENTHUSIASTS. ”

and drivers alike. Improvements, some introduced the previous year, including front disc brakes and improved interior trim were built upon for the new Mk2; a whole new dashboard was accessible now via doors with exterior handles, wind-up windows and even quarter-lights.

The 1098cc engine received stronger 2" diameter bearings and a freer-flowing head, including a new three-branch exhaust manifold. Despite all this, the biggest change is said to have been the switch from quarter-elliptic to half-elliptic leaf springs for the rear suspension, which improved the

ride drastically as well as curtailing some of the early models' twitchy handling characteristics. Along with a stronger heater, owners of the Mk2 Midget had plenty to be happy about.

Until, perhaps, the 772kg Mk3 (GAN 4) came out in 1966. This addressed the last of the criticisms anyone could muster about the Midget. There was now a vastly improved roof that was significantly easier to erect, a larger fuel tank (from 6 to 8 gallons, 27.3 litres to 36.4 litres) and the big headline: the 'big bore' 1275 A-series from the Cooper S (actually 1273.11cc). Except it wasn't quite

an S engine because, in lacking the more exotic S head and crankcase, this version produced 65bhp, 10bhp less than the hot 698kg Mini. Still, it is an engine worth considering when chasing a Midget because it makes the little rear-driven sports car livelier than any other that was made available, including the 1500 model with the slower-revving Triumph 1493cc engine.

Other detail changes were made during the Mk3's tenure, most notable being the introduction of rounded wheel-arches in 1972. While this new design compromised bodyshell



This 1275cc MG Midget is a fine choice for spirited driving but the MGB does afford more cockpit room if that's important to you.



« torsional rigidity, these models tend to be some of the most desirable today, even if they also lose the charming toggle switches in favour of 'safe' plastic rocker switches.

Sit in a round-arch Mk3 Midget and you'd be hard pressed to criticise it for lack of charm, though. It's wonderfully cosy, without being cramped, and the old-fashioned style of 'arms crooked to twirl the tiny steering wheel' seating position is far from uncomfortable. The seats are reasonably well padded, although there is a sense that there isn't much at all between you and the floor. All the necessary amenities are present, from backlit dials to a full suite of the basic controls. Luxuries like intermittent wipers, face-level vents and even a glovebox are simply not there.

Turn the key in the dashboard-mounted slot and the 1275cc A-series thrums into action. There's plenty of travel in the choke to deal with cold starts, and it settles well to idle right up to running temperature. The



gearbox appreciates gentle working until warmed through but, even when cold, the Midget's joy of operation is obvious. Controls are nicely weighted and move with well-oiled precision.

The de-tuned Mini Cooper S

A-Series is punchy and provides a suitably classic soundtrack combined with the whir from the non-sound-deadened gearbox. First gear is non-synchro but the others have synchromesh which can only occasionally be beaten. Get moving down a country road, snicking the gears in and exploiting the mid-range torque and the Midget is in its element. Sharp steering, strong brakes and a perceptive chassis give you everything to keep the tiny wheelbase (80" or 203.2cm, the same as the agile Mini saloon's) working in your favour, and it just seems to get better the faster you go.

It's surprisingly good when the roads open up, too. The prospect of a big tour



in a Midget shouldn't be as daunting as it might seem; wind noise is impressively low, all things considered, the ride is pretty good (although the rear suspension can run out of travel when fully laden), especially with the post-1966 model which had a taller final drive ratio with a top speed of 95mph so motorway speeds are well within the Midget's unstressed range.

MGB

Stepping into this 1979 MGB Roadster (£949.15.3 at launch in 1962) it immediately feels a 'class above'. This is down to the multitude of buttons and switches now at your disposal, as well as the noticeably bigger cabin, most remarkably in width, and because the seats literally put you above the seating position of the



Midget. The MGB's party piece over the MGA is its monocoque construction, which should, in theory, endow it with less structural compromise between body, frame, and cabin.

What it does achieve is an impressive set of dynamic qualities that sets it apart not only from

its cramped MGA predecessor but many other competitors that you might care to mention.

The ride is remarkably smooth, with few bumps able to cause any of the scuttle shake usually expected of an open-top car. Whereas the Midget can skip, wander, and even thump

»

“ MOTORWAY SPEEDS ARE WELL WITHIN THE MIDGET'S UNSTRESSED RANGE. ”

THE FACTS

MG Midget Mk3 (GAN 5)	
Engine	1273.11cc
Power/Torque	65bhp/72lb/ft
0-60mph (0-96.6kmh)	14.6secs
Top speed	95mph (152.9kmh)
Economy	34mpg



1979 MGB v 1974 Midget

MGB Roadsters like this are quite readily available and have great after-market support but the Midget provides a more untamed motoring experience.



« over rough roads, the MGB simply absorbs the punishment and remains calm. This isn't at the expense of body control either, since the MGB turns in and controls its mass through corners at speed with confidence and a good amount of poise. What it doesn't do, though, is inspire the driver to explore much farther than stable cornering. The MGB is a thoroughly pleasant way to blow the leaves away from a country lane but it's not the search-for-curves thing that the Midget is. Fear not, the after-market offers all the tweaks needed to cure any B handling limitations.

The MGB is a quiet and easy cruiser with a 91" or 231.1cm wheelbase. The only thing that could put an urban driver off is the steering, which may be too heavy for some to manage at low speeds. This is made worse, of course, by smaller steering wheels that are popular after-market purchases. The rest is easy enough to not think about. The gearchange is slick, the pedals nicely weighted, clutch light and the



B-series engine provides spades of torque, enough to forgive almost any degree of gearchange laziness.

The MGB's ergonomics aren't anything to write home about but the cabin certainly feels more grown-up

and modern than the Midget's. This is especially the case with the post-1972 models with new dashboards. In these you get face-level vents, a map light, a half-decent glovebox and a neat provision for a radio. Temperature controls provide options beyond on and off, although much of this can seem illusory as you twist and turn your way through a variety of settings that don't seem to tally up with reality. However, there is naturally better cabin ventilation and you therefore have less need to open a window to the rain.

The seats are considerably more comfortable than the Midget's too, thanks to more generous padding, and the whole cabin is trimmed more comprehensively, including the



soft-top, which is well-insulated and weather-proof. There's lots of space, too. The boot offers roughly twice the luggage capacity of the Midget's and there are provisions for oddments that simply aren't feasible in the smaller MG. With overdrive (giving 70mph at 3,200 rpm) and a fuel tank capacity of up to 11 (imp.) gallons, the MGB overall presents a more practical option as a long-distance tourer.

There is arguably a greater variety of models in the MGB range, too, with the two highlights being the fixed-head GT and the GT V8. Various improvements were made through the model's production run, most significantly perhaps starting in 1966 when a front anti-roll bar was fitted. In 1967 there was a new Salisbury-type rear axle. Even more changes were introduced in 1967 for the Mk2 MGB



range, including four-synchromesh gearboxes, five-bearing B-series cranks, alternators replacing dynamos and updated starter motors.

The following year, dual circuit brakes were added and then, as it turned over into the 1970s, the styling changes came thick and fast. The most controversial, infamously, was

the so-called rubber bumper MGB of 1975. What made this new look worse to some was the hastily raised suspension which not only disrupted the profile of the MGB but also the handling. Revised geometry and a rear anti-roll bar were finally added in 1977.

While the 3.5-litre V8 GT offered a relaxed 137bhp and a huge 193lb/ft

»

THE FACTS

MGB Roadster (1979)	
Engine	1799cc
Power/Torque	84bhp/105lb/ft
0-60mph (0-96.6kmh)	14secs
Top speed	104mph (169kmh)
Economy	26mpg

“ THE MGB PRESENTS A MORE PRACTICAL OPTION AS A LONG-DISTANCE TOURER. ”



1979 MGB v 1974 Midget

« slug of torque, the 1.8 litre 1798cc B-series, officially fitted to all Roadsters, offered only as much as 95bhp and 110lb/ft. The BMC Competitions Department and aftermarket tuners have taken it out as far as 2.1 litres. Awaiting the new BL O-series SOHC engine that never came to the MGB, the B-series was slowly strangled in its later years so that, between 1973 and 1975, it lost a total of 10bhp. Even so, the MGB remains a car that will sit at motorway speeds quite happily.

Buy one

When it comes to buying either of these cars, your budget will lead you to two primary considerations: condition and age. Either early or late, but not too late, Midgets are the ones that prove to be more desirable; the former for their charming originality in design and the latter for their perfect blend of equipment and style. Today, many enthusiasts even appreciate the once looked-down-upon plastic grilles and Rostyle wheels with which the 1970s models are fitted.

Much is the same with the MGB, although the sweet-spot in equipment and styling perhaps came earlier, just before the black grille of the 1970 models but after the mechanical features added in the mid-60s. Early, original and exceptional condition MGBs can fetch above the top end of almost all the MG Midget market. Across the board, MGBs are generally that little bit more expensive.

At the low end of the market you'll only need a sum of four figures,



although it can be tough to buy in at less than £5,000 without a good amount of work waiting for you. Of course, with either of these two, there is a strong after-market that can supply anything from headlight units to new bodysells. In the case of the two tested here, a late MGB in superb condition and benefitting from lowered suspension, and a beautiful example of a round-arch Midget with desirable Autumn Leaf interior, it's the MGB that is actually the more expensive car owing to its incredibly original and unmarked condition, while the Midget is held back more by the market as a whole, despite being in almost as good condition and, arguably, with the more desirable specification. These are both unusually nice cars, at the top of the market, but that's

just because I was lucky enough to borrow them for this feature from MG specialists Brown and Gammons.

Verdict

It would be fairly easy to argue that the Midget earns an advantage over the MGB, for those who can fit into one, for being that little bit more affordable. For a hypothetical £10,000, you'd get one in better condition, with the right equipment, and with the just-so aesthetic. But the MGB is more car for the money and, these days, there isn't as much between these two as there once was. Maybe the MGB actually has the edge for value and we even started to appreciate the style of the later, rubber-bumpered example on test. Throw in some 1970s deckchair-striped seats and, like many others, I could be swayed.

Except the sheer pleasure of driving the nimble MG Midget down a country lane has probably won it for me on this occasion. The cohesive blend of controls, chassis and drivetrain are all spot-on, especially in the 1275cc Mk3, while its refinement and practicality are good enough to deal with a long weekend away. There's not the blatant compromise you would have had with something like a Frogeye Sprite. Unless you absolutely need the extra practicalities, size or crave the slightly more elegant lines of the MGB, for me, at least on the twisty autumn lanes of Essex, I couldn't help falling for the 1275cc Midget. 🇬🇧

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AUTOMOBILIA

> **Andrew Ralston** is a retired teacher who has published many books on educational and historical subjects. He has a lifelong passion for cars and has collected car models since childhood. He has written a series of books on diecast, plastic and tinplate cars, published by Veloce.



MG pocket money toys by Matchbox

Sorry, we can't sell these. People say they look like they come out of Christmas crackers!" That was the reaction of the toy trade to the first Matchbox models before Christmas 1953. But, by January, things were very different. Selling at just one shilling and sixpence each (7.5p), these little diecast metal vehicles were cheap enough for children to buy with their own pocket money and they soon caught on. Packaging them in cartons that looked like boxes of matches was a simple but highly effective way of giving the Matchbox series a recognisable identity and sales rocketed.

Early subjects tended to be commercial vehicles and road-building equipment but the first car was added to the range in 1956; it was an MG, based on a TD



ABOVE: The first car in the Matchbox range was an MG, introduced in 1956.



Matchbox Superfast cars were introduced to compete with the Hot Wheels of America car models. The MG 1100 was one of numerous existing models that were redesigned and fitted with low-friction wheels.


finished in cream with red seats and fitted with a separately cast driver. To keep things simple, the 'windscreen' was solid and cast as part of the body, but there was a separate spare wheel on the boot. It was a popular model but 1956 happened to be the year that MG brought out the MGA so the Matchbox quickly dated. Thus, in 1958, it was replaced with an MGA in a similar colour scheme.

Another eight years passed before the next Matchbox MG; this time an 1100 saloon. By now, Matchbox had followed Dinky and Corgi with the fitting of additional features like window glazing, seats and a nice touch in the MG is that there's a driver inside and a dog in the back looking out of the window. This model, in green, was later revamped and fitted with low-friction 'Superfast' wheels – a hastily-devised alteration necessitated by the huge success of the American 'Hot Wheels' series which rapidly ate into Matchbox sales.



“ THESE LITTLE
DIECAST METAL
VEHICLES WERE CHEAP
ENOUGH FOR CHILDREN
TO BUY... ”

logo on doors and bonnet being the first of several variants, including some in Coca Cola livery for the American market. Also worth mentioning here is the dark green replica of the MGA produced in the 1990s as part of the 'Matchbox Originals' series. Though primarily appealing to adult nostalgia for the first Matchbox series, this was cheap enough to be classed as a 'toy'. Similarly, there's a slightly larger 1/64 scale MGA from 2000 which straddles the toy/model boundary, as it was not only available separately but also sold as part of a series of models representing cars once owned by Elvis Presley.

Finally, the good news is that for 2020 Matchbox has just brought out a 1971 MGB GT, described as a 'Coupe'. It's a simple toy, sold at a pocket money price, just like that first Matchbox MG TD 64 years ago. 

A replica of the 1950s Matchbox MGA, produced in 1992 with adult collectors in mind.

From then on, the Matchbox success story, which had made fortunes for founders Rodney Smith and Jack Odell, hit a rocky patch. The tale is too complicated to recount here (those interested should get hold of *Collecting Matchbox Diecast Toys: the First Forty Years* by Kevin McGimpsey and Stewart Orr). Suffice to say that the brand has seen various changes of ownership and is now in the hands of Mattel who, of course, are also the makers of the rival Hot Wheels cars. Changing trends in children's tastes with the development of character merchandising, computer games and so on, have also made the market for toy cars more challenging.

As a result Matchbox, like many other diecast manufacturers, began to cater more for adult collectors than children. In 1978 a 1945 TC joined the Yesteryear series, made to the rather large scale of 1/35. Later ventures included a short-lived attempt to revive the Dinky name, which included two 1/43 scale MGB variants. We've already examined these in this column in previous issues but we're only looking at the 'pocket money' toy Matchboxes this time.

Throughout all these changes Matchbox has continued to make affordable toys. 1998 saw the arrival of an MGF; a yellow finish with the MG



ABOVE: MGF, in the current style of packaging that is used for Matchbox model car toys.

RIGHT: The latest addition to the Matchbox model range is this MGB which is sure to be popular with MG fans of all ages.



XFACTOR V8

Tony and Lin Cotter loved their ZT 260 but didn't hesitate to turn it into the 385bhp X-Power monster that never was.

• WORDS AND PHOTOS: ANDY STARKEY



I'm pretty sure that everyone reading *MGE* magazine will have lamented the passing of the MG Rover brand back in 2005. The sadness for many will have been replaced by disappointment and anger when we all learned how the demise came about. I'm not going to go there again because it gets my hackles raised and we should be thankful that the marque still survives through our friends in the Far East. However, what does irk me somewhat is knowing that MG was in the throes

of boosting its vision of the future with some 'halo' models that were set to raise the profile of the company; ideas that were tragically cut short.

One such project was the X-Power 385: a car that was to put the spotlight onto the larger car of the popular 'Z' range, the ZT. V8 models of the ZT and ZT-T estates came to fruition towards the end of MGR's life but they were not like the 385 was going to be. This car aimed to soak up the glory earned by what was to be a range of 'Extreme' MGs also, unfortunately,

ill-fated and never to appear beyond a concept. The job of making the Roush-tuned, supercharged Mustang V8 which, incidentally, was also used in the MG SV-R, fit into the ZT went to Prodrive, the Subaru WRC people who were heavily involved in the initial stages of adapting the ZT to accept the Ford V8 and to run rear wheel drive with the ZT 260 but this was a big leap in power and the car needed to look like it had that extra grunt.

The concept car was given back to Longbridge to complete, which



Tony Cotter.

we all now know they didn't do. The only official 385 considered anywhere near finished was an Estate version which was bought by the MG Owners Club and they would be the first to admit that this car had a long development road ahead of it.

Another wonderful idea and opportunity to revive the brand was lost to the confusing and somewhat irritating saga that was the collapse of MG Rover. Or was it? Someone who would have been first in line to buy a 385, if it had come to fruition, is

Tony Cotter, a fervent fan of MGs and particularly the ZT V8. Fortunately for him his wife Lin is equally passionate about them. They owned a 2003 ZT190+ but each time they went to shows Lin always drooled over the ZT260s. "She loved them so much I decided to buy her one," Tony explains. "I'd got a good bonus from work so thought I'd find her one for a Christmas present. I found one through the Two-Sixties forum. It matched the colour of the 190, Trophy Blue, and was the SE version I ideally wanted, so I did the deal and got the

car on 29 December 2010." Tony and Lin must have a sea of blue on their driveway as they not only own two lovely ZTs but they have a little TF160, also in Trophy Blue, just for fun.

The motor in a 260 is a lusty one; a grumbly 4.6-litre straight out of the Mustang GT which would normally be enough for most people. It was plenty for Tony and Lin too, well for a few years at least, until Tony spotted something interesting for sale on the Two-Sixties forum. There was an engine, another V8, but no ordinary V8. »

Supercharged 2004 MG ZT 260



« This one was a brand new and unused quad-cam V8 straight out of the Roush workshops and still in the crate that had a label showing that it had been destined for Prodrive in Warwickshire. This was one of the specially-prepared, supercharged 385hp engines that would have been destined to sit in the ZT385, should they have materialised.

This was an opportunity not to be missed, not only because they were like hen's teeth but because the thought of having the closest thing to what would have been an ultimate ZT was just too good to pass up. The engine was advertised by John Newey, of the MG dealership Summit Garage, and he had bought it as part of a job lot with a prototype ZT-T 4x4. He decided to keep the 4x4 but sell the engine and our Tony and Lin were to be the happy recipients.

With the deal done with John, Tony needed to get the new motor into

their beloved 260. The couple's fleet of MGs is cared for by Nick Bonthrone at Austin Garages, in Burton on Trent, so the transplant was discussed with him and he willingly accepted the challenge. Taking one V8 out for another did at least suggest that there was no major surgery required to the shell, albeit a single spar was removed from the underside of the bonnet to ensure clearance of the 'charger'. It was already rear wheel drive and running the Tremec TR3650 gearbox which would bolt straight on to the back of the new quad-cam engine as it has the same block as the one coming out. Another fortuitous aspect of the new engine was that it came complete with its own ECU.

Attempting to run the supercharged unit from the original brain obviously wouldn't have worked and programming a new one from scratch





ABOVE: Interior remains standard ZT 260 but occupants benefit from improved ICE.

would have been time-consuming and expensive. Having one for the new engine wasn't without its pitfalls though, as Tony recalls: "The mapping that was already in there runs the car really well but it threw up an engine warning light immediately. After lots of head scratching and testing, it was decided that the ECU was probably

looking for emission sensors on the Mustang that simply weren't there on the MG. The other train of thought was that we were expecting the Ford brain to communicate with the MG and BMW electronics. Whatever it is doesn't affect the performance and it sails through the MOT." The Roush motor with its Eaton M90 supercharger

not only hikes the horses up to a tad over the 385bhp mark but the torque figure is hauled up with it, also close to 390lb/ft. That makes for a really entertaining drive. "I'm no speed merchant," says Tony, "but all that torque lets me push the pedal in any gear and the car just surges forward" The noise is fantastic too.

»



« The rest of the mechanical components of the car have remained the same as they should be on a 260. There's already a Dana Hydratrak limited slip differential, uprated suspension and, of course, great brakes. There's a set of 325mm discs at the front with sliding calipers and then, albeit a little strangely, an even bigger set of 332mm discs on the back with AP two-pot calipers, all of which were deemed sufficient to control the extra 125bhp should the need arise. The interior remains as it came from the factory, plush yet sporty, although Tony has had a tinker with the entertainment system. "All the in-car entertainment was BMW so was easy to upgrade. I've changed the analogue TV module to a newer digital one. The tape deck went, along with the standard BM24 tuner, and was replaced with the much better BM54





“ I'M NO SPEED MERCHANT BUT ALL THAT TORQUE LETS ME PUSH THE PEDAL IN ANY GEAR AND THE CAR JUST SURGES FORWARD... ”



Becker version along with a 16:9 aspect screen. I upgraded the CD-driven sat nav to a more up-to-date DVD version.”

The exterior of the ZT385 would have stood out from the crowd with extended arches, a deeper front bumper and a large boot spoiler; things that, unfortunately, didn't get beyond the conceptual stage. This of course means that Tony can't quite replicate what the 385 should have been, although that hasn't stopped him making sure that their version differs from the standard 260. There is now a nice, subtle bib spoiler. Not quite so subtle, and rather striking, are the angel eyes daytime running lights which certainly do the job of making you notice the car coming at you. Another eye-popping addition are the Alloy Gator rim protectors that mirror the bright Trophy Blue of the bodywork. A pair of MG7 tail lights has replaced the originals at

»

Supercharged 2004 MG ZT 260



« the rear. To complete the blue theme there's a set of specially customised LED illuminated kick plates emblazoned with 'MG ZT 385' in bright electric blue.

All in all, this car must be the closest anyone is going to get to owning what should have been a ZT 385. Even the only 'real' version, owned by the MGOC, is far from the finished article and, by all accounts, was a nightmare to drive and only the bravest of pilots was prepared to drive it at speed. At least with this converted MG ZT 260 you are able to get a glimpse of what the 385 could have been. In some ways I think the vehicle we see here



ABOVE: The boot has been fitted with electronics: CD, DTV and an amplifier. **LEFT:** AP two-pot calipers have been fitted at the rear.

represents something of a rolling memorial to the ill-fated ideas of 'the few' at MGR who saw a viable future in the brand. I, for one, take great pleasure in coming across wonderful individuals who are prepared to give life to projects that 'could have been'.

Tony Cotter would like to thank: "Nick Bonthorne (www.austingarages.co.uk) for the trusted spanner work; Rick Bhullar (www.mgrovercustomcarparts.co.uk) for the bling; Steve Dobson at Steeves Cleenz www.steevescleenz.co.uk for detailing; Lin for inspiration and support during the project."



ABOVE: The new Roush power plant, with Eaton M90 supercharger, boosts the ZT into the realms of the shelved X-Power 385.

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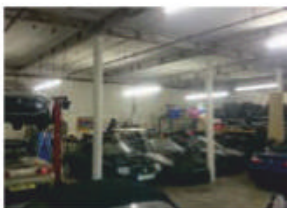


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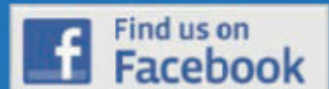
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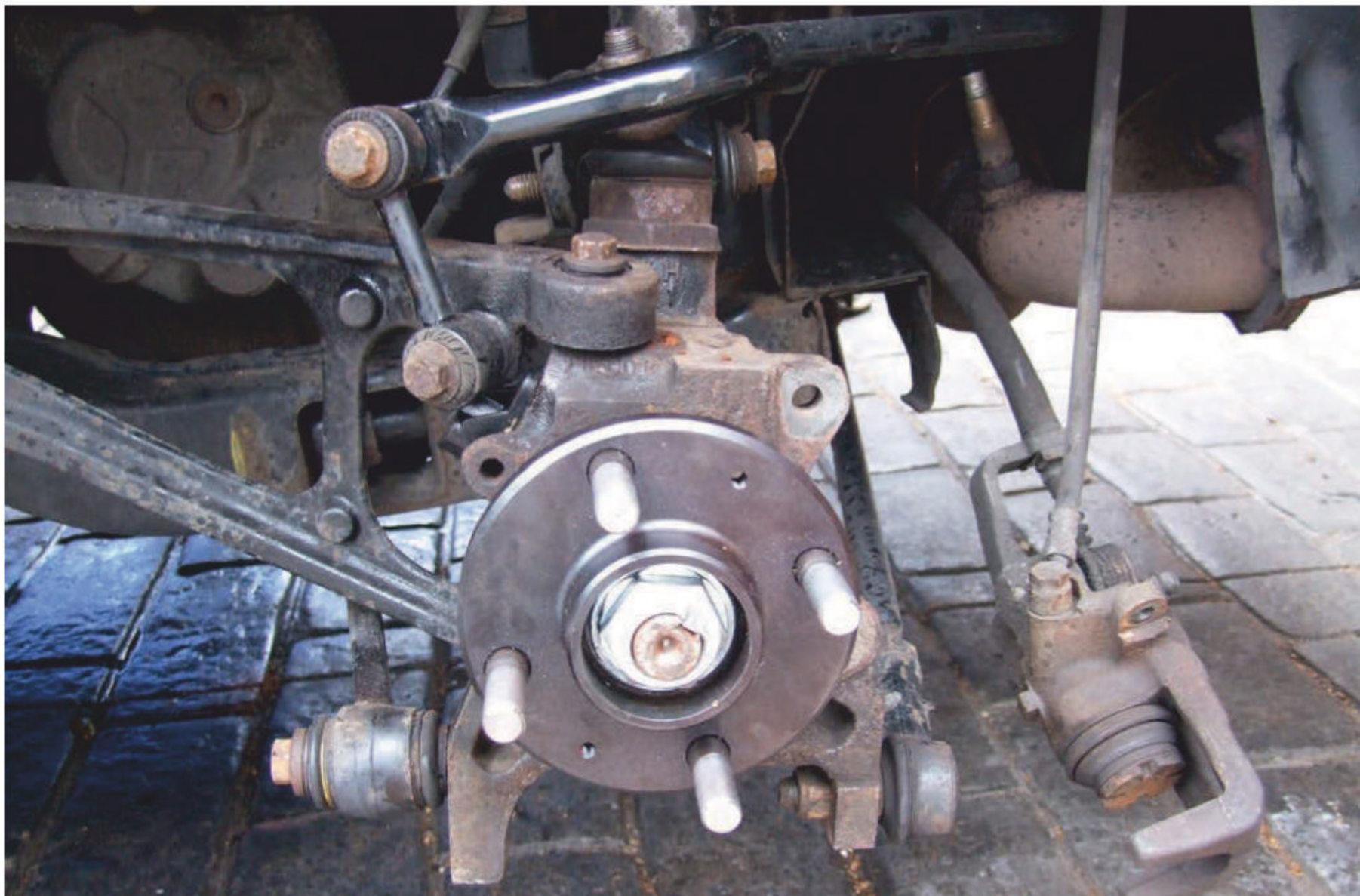
Model shown: MG ZS Exclusive manual with metallic paint (optional extra £545) in Battersea Blue at £18,340 OTR. Offer shown available on MG Excite manual with solid paint at £15,495 OTR. Customer deposit of £1,382.25, 48 monthly payments of £179.00 per month and final payment of £5,520.75 based on 8,000 miles per annum. 0% APR, total amount payable £15,495. OTR prices include VAT where applicable, vehicle first registration fee, delivery, number plates and 12 months 'Vehicle Excise Duty'. Fuel consumption values shown are based on official EU test figures and are to be used as a guide for comparative purposes and may not be representative of actual driving results. Offer terms and conditions apply. *0% APR: Personal Contract Purchase. Finance by MG Motor Financial Services is provided by Santander Consumer Finance, 86 Station Rd, Redhill, Surrey, RH11 5SR. Subject to status, availability and terms and conditions. Applicants must be aged 18. Summit Garage (Dudley) MG Registration number 0651648. Summit Garage (Dudley) MG is acting as a credit broker and not a lender. We can introduce you to a limited number of finance providers, commission may be received.



Q&A

Have you got a technical problem with your MG? If so, the combined expertise of Roger Parker and the MGOC Workshop may be able to help. For details of how to access this free service, see p59.

DID MG ASSEMBLE MY SUSPENSION WRONGLY?



A 2003 MG TF, seen during a wheel bearing and drive flange renewal, showing clear access to the lower drop link bolt when the brakes are removed. Note that the upper link bolt to this anti-roll bar has been refitted from the front during this procedure.

Q With my cars I have always adopted the general principle of: when mechanical items are in need of being replaced, fit uprated parts if they are available. I used this principle with my previous MGF and found it worked extremely well especially with the suspension bushes when using uprated polyurethane types. I now have a low mileage 2005 TF that I bought from a friend, the first owner, so I have known it from when it was new.

Recently I noticed cracking and degradation of the rear anti roll bar drop link bushes so, having obtained some uprated polyurethane replacements, I anticipated a simple change with just removing the rear wheels, removing the bolts and

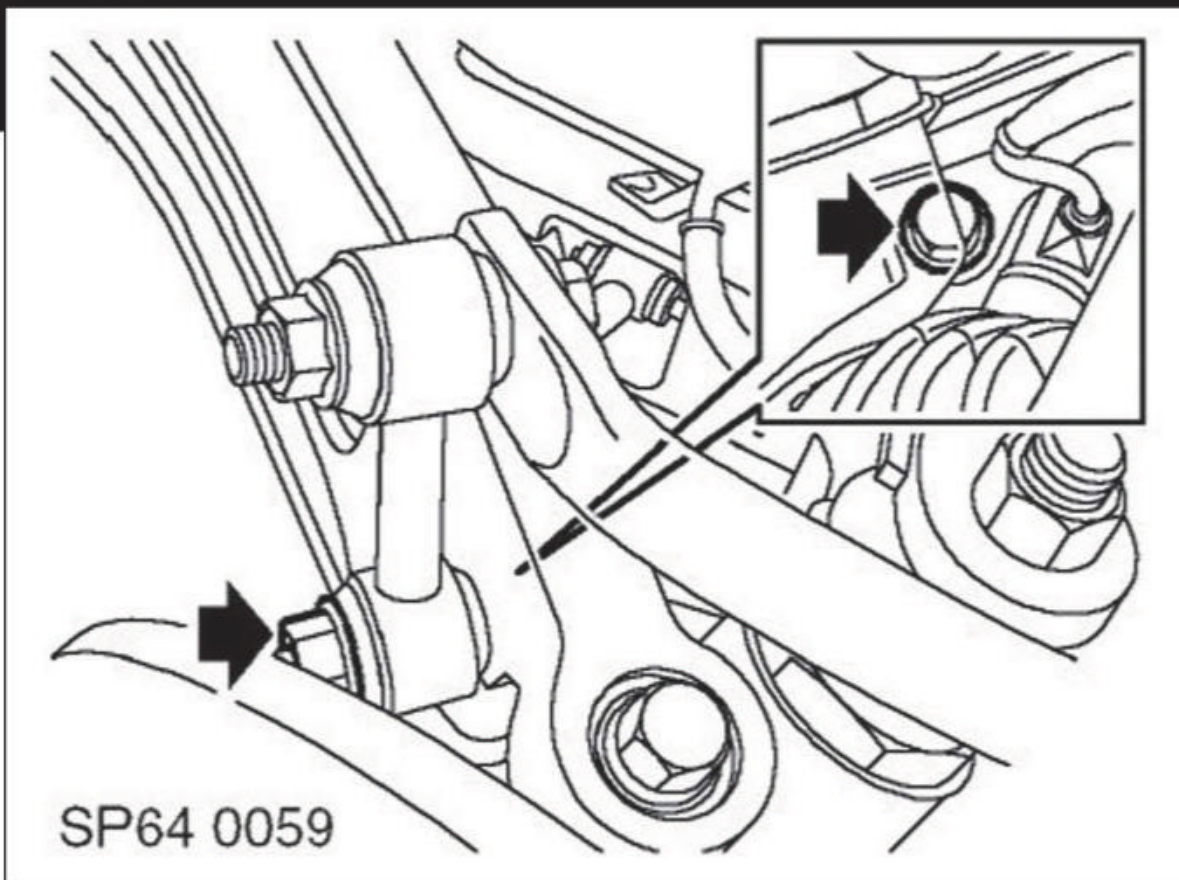
bushes, fitting the new bushes and sleeves and refitting to the car, just as applied with my previous MGF.

However, I found that I couldn't remove the lower drop-link bolt as it is mounted from the front and is too long to withdraw before it hits the back of the brake disc. This is the same both sides. I have since looked at a number of parts diagrams and see that the bolt is shown being fitted from behind the suspension's trailing A-arm, which makes sense as that means the bolt can easily be withdrawn and the drop link removed.

As I have known this car from new I know it has not had any suspension work so it must have been like this when originally built, so I am now

faced with a need to cut the bolt head off to be able to get the bolt out, then buy two new bolts and refit as it should have been originally. I wonder how many other cars have been assembled wrongly.

A I agree with your thinking in that it is much more logical to have the bolt inserted from the back of the arm. Looking at the parts drawings on the original MG Rover-derived parts pages shows this with rear fitting. As all other parts images will be created from the original MG drawings then they will naturally be the same but, of greater interest, is that the workshop manual also presumes that both bolts are fitted from the rear, so its removal instruction: 'Remove



TF workshop manual: rear anti-roll bar (ARB) drop-link, with specific bolt arrowed.



The bare subframes were loaded onto the production line and the first major component fitted was the engine and gearbox unit. Only then were the suspension and remaining parts fitted.

nut and bolt securing anti-roll bar link to trailing arm and remove link.' is incompatible and will lead to the same problem you have.

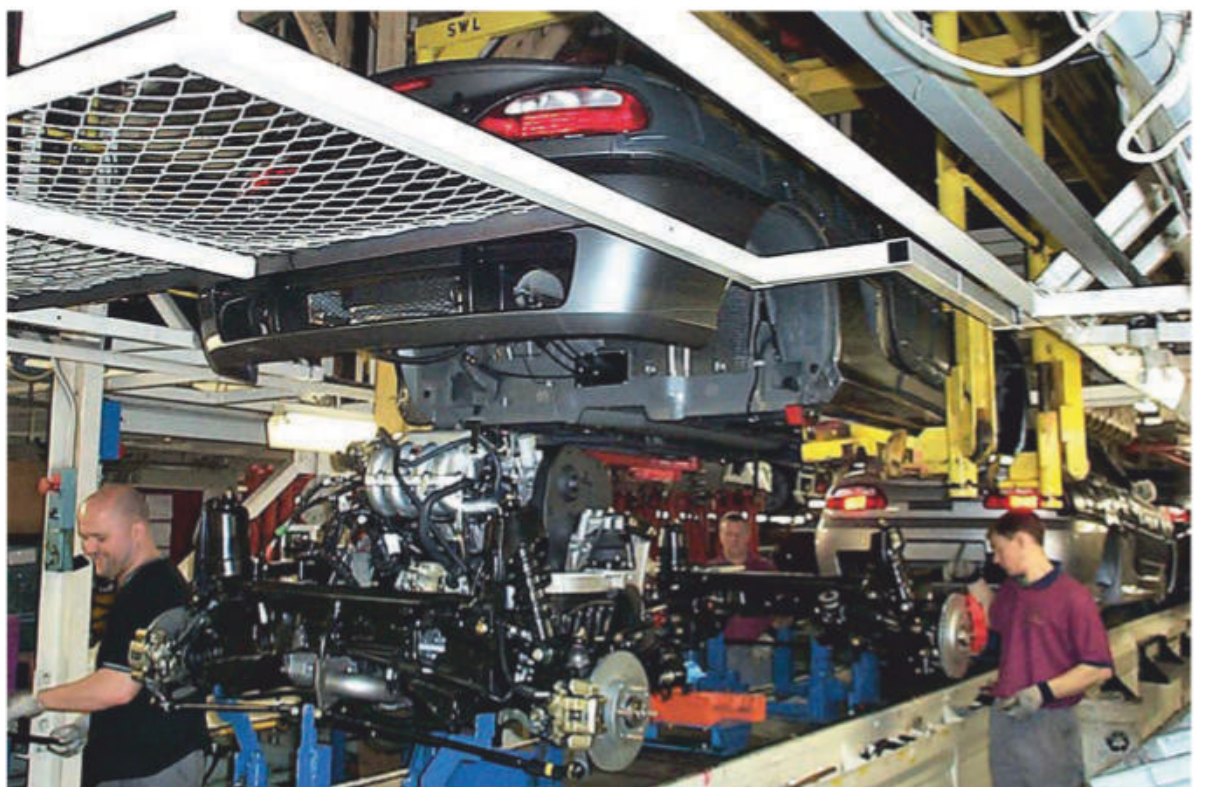
This is easily overcome and removal of the bolt and drop link doesn't need the bolt head cut off, just the additional inconvenience and work needed to remove the brake pads, caliper, caliper carrier and the disc. Then you have full access to the bolt. Of course, when refitting the bolt, you can fit it from the rear.

The reason for fitting the lower bolt this way is simply related to the production line set up, something I was able to witness when I was lucky enough to follow my own TF being

“ I WONDER HOW MANY OTHER CARS HAVE BEEN ASSEMBLED WRONGLY. ”

built on the Longbridge production line in March 2002. The relevant part of the build was during the subframe fit-up, before the marriage of the fully-trimmed car with its subframes and mechanical parts. Here the images help illustrate the process with engine dropped in and the rest of the suspension, drive shafts and hubs built up afterwards. The drop-link lower bolt was secured into the A-arm from the front, before the hubs were fitted. The rear anti-roll bar is, of course, fitted to the underside of the body before the exhaust and heat shields and all these were fitted later down the production line.

There are situations where streamlining of the assembly process doesn't allow the easiest removal of a part once the car is fully assembled, such as here, involving a conflict with the MG workshop manual. With the speed of individual operations on a production line being critical to smooth progress down the line, that sort of change took priority. »



Here, at the 'body drop', the trimmed body was first married to the two subframes. The rear anti-roll bar was fitted to the underside of the boot area a few stations down the line and, at last, the drop link upper connection was finally attached to the ARB.



SCU electronics investigation

Q I am currently running a 2004 Rover 25 (late model five-door) but I am sure my problem may also affect MG ZR. On arriving home, the door unlock button was pressed, to allow one to escape to open the garage door. Unfortunately the doors didn't unlock but the hazard lights started flashing. Pressing both the hazard light and the door lock/unlock buttons had no effect. We could not even unlock the doors using the internal button, although we did manage to unlock/relock the doors using the door 'knob'.

Eventually the battery was disconnected, as it was not possible to stop the flashers from working, even continually operating the flasher button only made it flash a bit quicker or slower. Sometimes it decided to stop flashing, only to start again seconds later.

Having spent some time under the bonnet checking fuses and applying a bit of WD40 on various connections, thinking perhaps water ingress might not have helped (although there were no visible signs of water) the battery was reconnected, the flashers were no longer flashing and everything is now working correctly. Have you heard of anyone else who has had this problem? Oh how I hate modern cars and electronics.

A This is an odd one at first glance but it highlights an historical weakness with the Rover 25 and MG ZR and specific wiring runs and positioning of the SCU (security control unit), which is the main body electrical control, distinct from the engine management ECU. The SCU is a very good candidate for this odd reaction.

Essentially on these two models, from the start of the 2004 model year (in mid-2003), the electrical system and wiring was substantially changed and this was when functions of security, window lift control and other electrical functions were condensed from three control units into one: the SCU. This change also applied to MG TF, MG ZS and Rover 45 at the same time and, as most well-informed owners and MG enthusiasts know well, this change has seen a number of SCU-specific weaknesses. The most common is a failure within one



This photograph shows the circuit board when it is removed from its protective casing with the five black, square, double-action relays which can be seen towards the base.

of the five double-function relays mounted to the SCU circuit board.

Common issues associated with relay failure are: doors lock but won't unlock, windows drop but won't rise or the opposite for both. In this instance I think that the specific Rover 25/MG ZR water ingress weakness may well be present. The position of the SCU in these cars is low, behind the left side of the dashboard (on right-hand drive cars, opposite for LHD). As the image (opposite, top) shows, the unit has the four multiple wiring plugs facing upwards, with the wiring coming in from above. In normal circumstances this is not a problem but, occasionally, these cars develop a rain water leak around the windscreens, and the instances of this appear to be much more frequent after a screen has been replaced. A leak sees water track


down the wiring and straight into the SCU! I am no electronics engineer but the result of water entering electrical circuits is a big problem.

Now, if MG Rover had been healthier and survived, it is certain that they would have introduced a modification to reposition the SCU so that it had the wiring coming in from underneath, so that any water leaking in would track down the wires, but wiring that then bends back up to connect into the SCU would have created a drip edge, so the water doesn't get into the SCU and just wets the carpet. Unfortunately MG Rover didn't survive to achieve this so owners ideally need to try and create their own version with the length of the wiring, and this means moving the SCU upwards to create the drip edge and avoid the water entering the SCU. It is not a simple job when the dashboard



Here you can see the SCU (security control unit), arrowed, and the wiring loom during the build of our facelift ZR, prior to the air conditioning and dashboard being fitted.

that stops access other than via dealer diagnostics. Unlike dealer diagnostics, the programming can also be copied, accessed and then pasted onto another SCU to make a clone which, for those with damaged SCUs, means that, if the data are still accessible to be copied, then it is just the cost of a good, second-hand SCU and finding someone with the equipment. This can be much cheaper and a simpler plug-and-play repair option but any water leak must be addressed to avoid ruining the replacement SCU.

There are of course other potential electronic failures that can affect the operation of the SCU and this is where I would suggest asking for help from a specialist who deals with these units. An internet search for 'MG Rover SCU repairs' gives a good result and most work can be carried out by sending the SCU, and fobs, if requested, to the specialist who can diagnose and suggest solutions. 

is in the way, and it is worse if the car has air conditioning as part of the air con makes access even tighter still and would normally demand the air con be drained to remove that section.

Water contamination into the ZR's SCU can cause a number of weird conditions, such as the one I reported in my column a while back, where my old facelift ZR 120 was hit by a huge bow wave of flood water from an HGV ploughing through a flooded road in the opposite direction. Whilst it almost physically stopped the car in its tracks, everything kept working except that around 50 miles later, with no rain, the rear wiper and washer came on, on their own, and stayed on.

Irrespective of what I did with the rear wiper control, only switching the ignition off stopped both. I was still only half way on that journey so had to continue with the wiper polishing the rear screen and the washer pump motor dying through a soon emptied

bottle. My screen was still sealing properly but I suspect the bow wave allowed water into the heater air intake system. Before it could all drain out through the clear drain hole, some percolated into the SCU and tripped the unintended operation. I hoped my theory was right and that the car would dry out during the day and normal operation would return. Four hours later, wiper operation was now back to normal but the washer pump was deceased. A new washer pump restored normal operation thereafter.

If it happened in wet weather and cleared once the car dried, this possibly indicates a leak. If the leak is not addressed, more water dripping into the SCU will be terminal. Sometimes, following water damage, the internal programming of an SCU can still be read and copied with special Avon Diagnostics equipment that contacts specific points direct on the SCU circuit board and bypasses the SCU security



This photograph shows a removed SCU circuit board mounted on special equipment to allow reading, copying and pasting of the internal programming.



The MG Owners' Club Workshop is based at the MGOC Headquarters at Swavesey, Cambridge and offers a complete range of services to meet all your MG requirements. Tel: 01954 231125 www.mgownersclub.co.uk




The *MG Enthusiast* Helpline is brought to you by Roger Parker and the technical team at the MGOC workshop, who kindly provide the expertise to solve your problems. So, if you are having trouble with your MG and need some help, please send full details and photos, if possible, to:

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We will reply to all queries as quickly as possible but some questions may require research so please allow up to 28 days. Please note that this is a free service. Some complex questions may require more time than we can reasonably allow, in which case we will let you know.

Neither *MG Enthusiast* nor the MGOC can accept liability for loss, damage or injury resulting from replies to readers' queries.



• WORDS: KAREN DRURY.
• PHOTOS: JIM JUPP

NATIONAL METRO AND MINI SHOW & BMC AND LEYLAND SHOW

On Sunday 6 September, UK-based MG fans were at last able to enjoy a visit to a classic car meet after many months of cancelled and postponed events since the start of lockdown.

The British Motor Museum, in Gaydon, Warwickshire, was the location for the BMC and Leyland Show which ran alongside the National Metro and Mini Show. The events had been rescheduled from earlier dates in the year. This meant that there was a great turnout of MG Metros and MG Metro Turbos as this year is the 40th anniversary of the launch of the Metro.

The huge variety of MG and other vehicles on display and in the car park was a joy to see. It was of course wonderful for friends and car club members to at last meet up who would usually see each other many times during an average year.

A number of MG clubs had stands



Great display on the Arden MG Club stand.

in the large area in front of the museum's main building but MGs were also dotted around the site. There were several motorsport MGs on display including the Jean Denton MGB, a Works rally MGA and an original Computervision MG Metro Turbo, which has not been seen in public for some years. MG motorsport legends Paddy Hopkirk and Alec Poole were spotted at the event too.

A huge advantage for events at the museum is that your entry fee allows you access inside to see the cars on display. The collection of MGs inside is fantastic and well worth a visit. An array of traders was in attendance, some selling autojumble items for a range of marques.

The museum had plenty of precautions in place to allow for social distancing and face masks had to be worn inside. It was a popular event, so much so that organisers had to close the gates to visitors at 12.30pm as the safe capacity on-site had been achieved.

The event bodes well for future classic car events. Sadly, in order to keep everyone safe, a concours was not feasible, although a few spot prizes were handed out, including one to John Weston for his stunning MGC GT. Absence of a concours is a small price to pay to be able to get out in our cars and meet up with friends. 🇬🇧

Find out more about the museum at: www.britishmotormuseum.co.uk



John Weston's superb MGC won an award.



1956 Works rally MGA. Rallied by John Gott and Ray Brookes in the 1956 Apline Rally and raced by Pat Moss at Silverstone.



The museum has a fine selection of MGs.



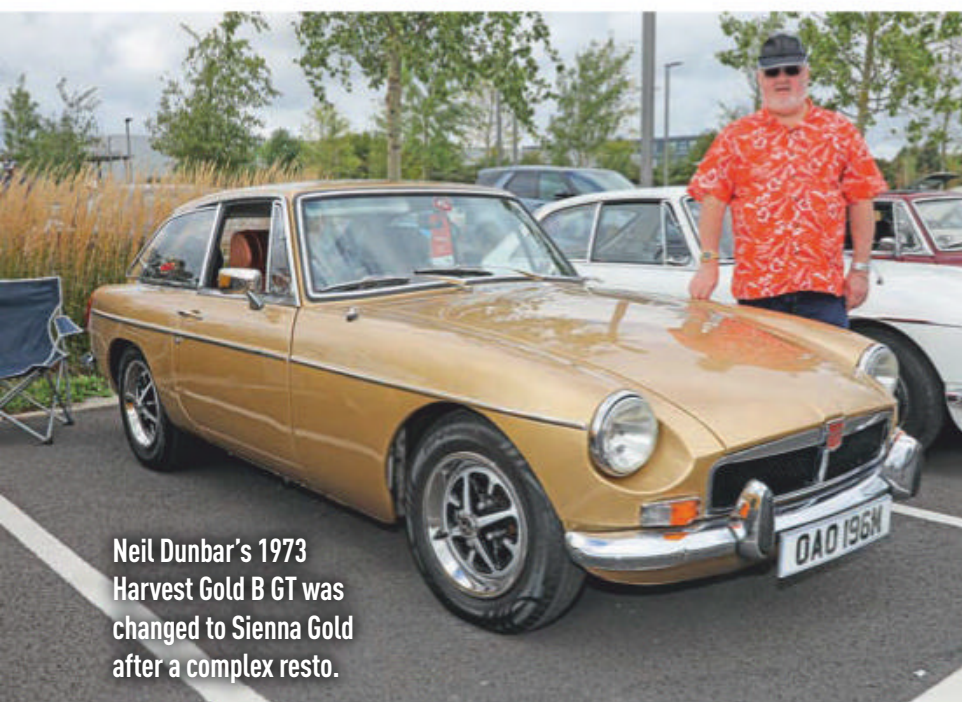
Computervision MG Metro Turbo racer with Williams-tuned suspension.



Barry and Sue take a break.



Steve George's MG Metro Turbo.



Neil Dunbar's 1973 Harvest Gold B GT was changed to Sienna Gold after a complex resto.



The event celebrated 40 years of the Metro.



A browse of the car park was essential so that you didn't miss some stunning vehicles.



Very neat Mazda twin-cam install!



mmm.....these look rather tasty – as do the prices.....



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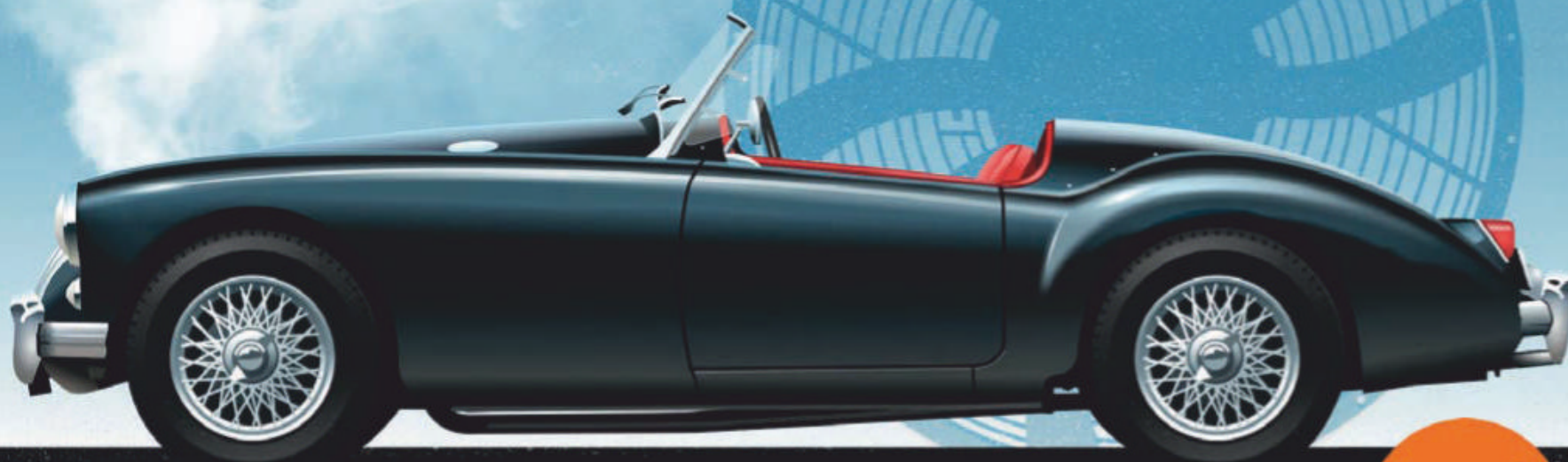


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Even on the back of a recovery lorry, the ZT-T 260 is a handsome vehicle.

Spring into spring

As Australia moves into spring time, metal fatigue sidelines 'Old 206' and Malcolm contemplates the ZT's numerous development and quality issues.

The latest issue to raise its head recently on 'Old 206', our ZT-T 260, culminating in the 'Drive of Shame' on the back of a recovery lorry, was a collapsed front coil spring. Many a ZT, and not just the 'Two-Sixties', suffer the collapse of the spring pan on the Macpherson strut front suspension due to the pan rusting away under a build-up of salty dirt and grit. Coil-spring collapse, due to the spring steel fatiguing and breaking seems to be a less common occurrence though, from comments on the forums, not that uncommon. Coil springs on the Two-Sixties have been a problem since Day One. More on this in a moment...

On the same day that Old 206 and I arrived home on the recovery lorry, my August issue of *MG Enthusiast* arrived in the mail with a lovely Chequered Flag piece by Andrew Roberts musing eloquently on the introduction of the Two-Sixty back in 2004. There is no doubt that the specifications of

the Mustang V8-powered car, when introduced, were impressive and Andrew explained how the front-wheel-drive ZT platform was transformed into the rear-wheel-drive ZT 260. He asked: "How well did the package work?"

Well, despite Old 206's recent drive of shame, we owners know that the cars generally work well and are a joy to drive: fast, powerful, impeccable handling, no bells dinging or computers offering advice or demanding your attention; a true-spirited driver's car. "A transformation" was how Andrew described his own test drive. "Totally sure-footed and predictable". He goes on to lament the frustration that its production life was so short and its potential unrealised as a result of the MG Rover collapse, to which I add some further frustration that we owners have had to finish off the development of the car, fixing things that would have been done via a recall, or at least repaired under manufacturer's warranty.

**2004 MG ZT-T 260
(VIN 206)**

OWNED BY:
Contributor
Malcolm
Robertson,
Australia

OWNED SINCE: 2008
CURRENT MILEAGE: 238,500
kilometres (150,000 miles)



▲ *The front right-hand coil spring broke in two places which led to the collapse of the suspension.*



▲ *The new coil springs by Suplex come as a boxed pair and certainly look the part.*

“What sort of things?” you ask. Well, when I wrote a feature on the Two-Sixty for *MG Enthusiast*’s January 2014 issue, I included what I call ‘Scooter’s List’: a list of things that urgently need to be fixed, or at least checked and, if necessary, dealt with to keep your Two-Sixty safely and reliably on the road. Scooter is the on-line nickname for Brian Luti, the revered owner of the family-run Dreadnought Garage in Callander, Scotland, which specialises in looking after the Two-Sixty, especially supercharging and racing them. The Two-Sixties website even has an ‘Ask Scooter’ component where any tricky question is sure to get a straight answer. Scooter’s List is presented as a buyer’s guide in the public area of the Two-Sixties website (www.two-sixties.co.uk/mgoc260/html/f0rum).

Some of the items on Scooter’s List were issues common to all ZTs but many were uniquely Two-Sixty, such as the heater hose, the independent rear suspension’s lateral links and, yes, the coil springs. The OEM heater hose was produced with a couple of bends and kinks in it to connect the mighty Mustang engine’s superheated coolant to the ZT’s heater matrix under the dash. Unfortunately, one of the kinks was not up to the pressure in the Mustang’s cooling system and, after a few short miles on the road, would burst, leaving the car stranded in a cloud of steam. The Two-Sixties collective has had a stronger replacement available for many years now.

Similarly, the unique rear end for the Two-Sixty has created a few headaches for owners over the years. Significant rusting due to poor manufacture has been

a major MOT failure problem. Random breaking, due to poor OEM welding, of the four lateral links that hold the rear wheels in their correct alignment has been a cause for concern on the safety front, a concern that, in happier times, would have been dealt with under a manufacturer’s recall. Anyone who owns a Two-Sixty should have replaced their lateral links by now. If any one of the four breaks while driving at speed, the car will become uncontrollable due to the relevant rear wheel taking over the steering of



▲ *It’s a simple process to dismantle and re-assemble Macpherson struts on the MG ZT with new coil springs...*

the car. Fortunately, due to the way the loads on the links vary, most breakages occur at parking speeds but one on Old 206 did break at high speed and, I can tell you, it was the stuff of nightmares.

But back to springing into Spring. All the pre-Facelift Two-Sixties (the first 200 or so cars, Old 206 included) had their rear coil springs break. I suppose many were replaced under warranty because, when the Facelifted cars came out (the balance of the 883 production run), the rear coil springs had been redesigned and seemed to be lasting the distance. Regular readers with long memories will remember how I imported a replacement set of rear springs for my car only to have these sag alarmingly after a few months on the road, leading to a blow-out on the rear tyres as the inside edges wore down quickly. A new set was commissioned locally in Australia from King Springs in Brisbane and these have been fine ever since. So I am a bit sensitive about springs and this episode with the front coil spring breaking raises questions about the OEM manufacture in the closing stages of the factory in 2004 and 2005. Were suppliers cutting corners in response to being squeezed by the bean-counters? Was quality control slipping and poor products being accepted in a last-ditch attempt to stay afloat?

I suppose we will never really know and, in relation to the front coil springs,

»



▲ *...and it’s an even easier process to then put them back on to the car.*



LEFT AND ABOVE: *An excursion into the scrub or on-coming traffic awaits the unwary Two-Sixty owner who doesn't check the lateral links on their ZT 260's rear suspension.*

► *Poor OEM corrosion treatment on the rear subframe has left many Two-Sixties with an MOT failure and an expensive repair bill.*



perhaps 230,000kms on rough Australian roads is not unreasonable for a modern sports suspension spring (though I doubt it). At least I was able to buy a correct set from Rimmers, sourced from Suplex who seem to have a good reputation, and these arrived in Australia, in these virus-limiting times, within a week of ordering so we were back on the road quite quickly.

Andrew Roberts' nostalgic article concluded with the lasting regret that the entrepreneurial spirit and engineering genius of the Longbridge team behind the Two-Sixty have been extinguished. I'd like to think that, somewhere in the British Isles, this spirit and genius remains and will one day emerge.

We do see glimpses of it still in our tiny Two-Sixty world with some amazing work being done by the likes of Dreadnought in Scotland (Scooter's outfit), other companies and entrepreneurial individuals such as Manjit Singh, and of course within the Two-Sixties club, to keep our cars on the road, going faster and electronically up-to-date. Long may it continue. 🇬🇧

SCOOTER'S LIST*

Some of the must-do inspections and modifications to keep your Two Sixty on the road and your mind at ease, taken from Scooter's and the collective's experiences shared on Two-Sixties website (www.two-sixties.co.uk):

- Fit the orange clip to the fuel filter**
- Fit the Two-Sixties replacement heater hose
- Modify the block on the bonnet-opening mechanism**
- Fit the Two-Sixties 'Black Olive' replacement heater tap
- Check your spark plugs. They are known to work loose, or worse, blow out of the head. Take them out once a year regardless of mileage, lube the threads with a LITTLE copper grease and replace. DO NOT OVER TIGHTEN as there are only a few threads in the head. Torque them to 12nm (8lb/ft) no more
- Fit a lighter throttle return spring
- Fit the second horn, originally removed by the factory as a cost-saving measure
- Service your air-con compressor and especially replace the original refrigerant/oil mixture
- Fit the Two-Sixties magnetic hex-head sump plug
- Adjust the handbrake carefully. You may have to replace the handbrake "compensator", the handbrake shoes** and possibly the backing plate
- Check rear subframe cross-tube for rust
- Check welding on the four radius arms on the rear subframe
- Check the Macpherson strut spring pans for weakness due to corrosion
- Fit Scooter's rear wheel alignment replacement bolts and bushes kit (and new radius arms if needed)
- On pre-Facelift cars, check rear springs for broken top coils
- Throw away the four locking wheel bolts** and replace with standard ones
- Upgrade the cooling fan resistor (or the complete cooling fan unit)**
- Keep an eye on the alloy wheels as they are known to crack at the rim and cause slow leaks – they can be welded to make good**
- Replace your brake hoses if they are more than 10 years old

* Brian Luti, known as Scooter on the Two-Sixties forum, runs the Dreadnought Garage in Callander, Scotland. ** Common to all ZTs



▲ *Poor robotic welding on some OEM lateral links has led to failure on the road. A visual inspection does not reveal the lack of weld penetration. The only sensible solution is to re-weld all eight welded joints on all of the four lateral links.*



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Ground-hog day

In our latest update on Roger's MGA Coupé rebuild, he investigates the small issue of getting it to move under its own power, more than once.

**1957 MGA
1500**

OWNED BY:

Roger Parker

OWNED SINCE: August 2019

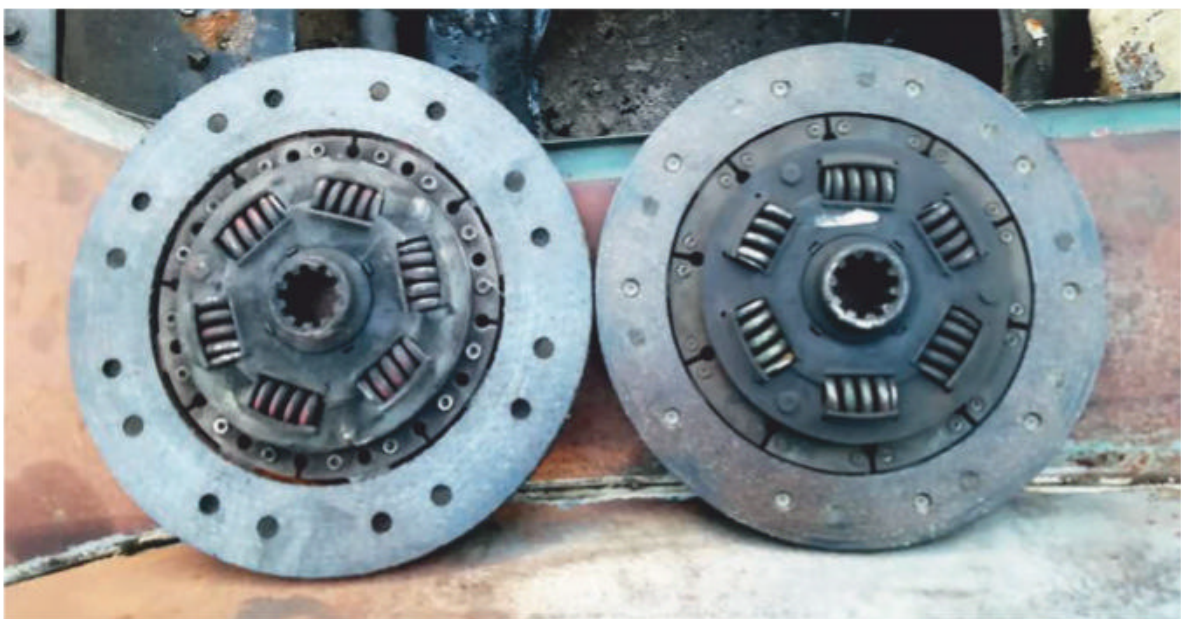
MILEAGE: a doubtful 4,827



In my last report we had reached an impasse in our attempts to get the car driveable with what was, hopefully, just a clutch issue causing the loss of drive. Engine removal wasn't complex on the MGA although, as anyone who has done this will know, there are some tight nuts and bolts to access and remove. This is made worse when non-original, longer bolts, with odd head sizes, have been substituted and there isn't the room easily to remove them. It also added to the growing list of parts to be bought before refitting.

The first job, after lowering the engine onto the floor, was to go straight to

“ THE RELEASE BEARING, THOUGH, WAS SO WORN THAT IT WAS WEARING THROUGH THE CAST METAL... ”



▲ *The removed standard 8" clutch plate (right) didn't show any excess signs of wear. Indeed, the second-hand 8.5" replacement looks more worn but it worked.*

the gearbox input shaft and turn it, in neutral, then to try the same in each gear. I wanted to be unable to turn the input shaft when in gear but vice-versa when it was in neutral. Things seemed OK. Hand-turning the gearbox input shaft isn't easy, even with the old clutch plate slid on the shaft, but it seemed to confirm the gearbox was OK.

Removing the clutch from the

flywheel revealed that, whilst the driven plate wasn't excessively worn, it didn't look as though it wouldn't transmit rotational movement. The release bearing, though, was so worn that it was wearing through the cast metal, way beyond where the carbon thrust material originally finished! Finally checking the cover's spring pressure showed it was weak. Hopefully all this was enough

“...I SPIED ONE SITTING ON A SMALL TRADER'S TABLE AND I PROVERBIALY BIT THE SELLER'S ARM OFF WHEN HE SAID £5.”

cumulatively to lay the blame for lack of drive at the door of the clutch.

Clearly the simplest fix would have been to just go out and buy an original-format clutch kit including cover, 10-spline friction plate and release bearing. However, as this engine and gearbox is not the intended powertrain for the car, (more on that soon as I have quite an unusual engine lined up for the MGA plus a change of transmission), spending around £230 to give it the ability to drive onto a trailer, off and in and out of an NEC hall wasn't good value for money.

Now, over the years, a fairly large spares pile has built up with the excuse that saving this, that and the other would come in useful one day. Perhaps today was that day? In that spares pile was an Austin-based B-series, three-main-bearing flywheel that was basically identical to the one on the MGA. It was



▲ The original, removed, MGA clutch cover on the right. When comparing it to the second-hand MGB type of cover used (left) we can clearly see the difference in height between the two that will require further parts to also be changed.

fitted with a serviceable MGB-pattern clutch cover that was using a three dowel location (MGA uses two dowels). Then there was a 10-spline used, but serviceable, 8.5"-diameter driven plate. As the flywheel is the same as the one on the MGA, and the 10-spline plate matching the gearbox shaft and sliding straight on, was this a viable match?

The 8.5" aspect I suspected was similar to the same-sized, uprated clutch I used on my MGB in the 1970s. The parts I had used were listed for a Commer 2500 van and, as my driven plate fitted the cover and flywheel with



▲ The cleaned out clutch housing. You can see the original MGA clutch release arm and pivot fitted.



▲ The replacement early MGB three-synchro gearbox front cover is pictured here on the left and the MGA one on the right. We can see that the differences between them include the extended clutch pivot arm mountings on the MGB cover.



▲ **LEFT:** Here's the MGB front cover and associated clutch release arm now that it is fitted in situ to the MGA's gearbox. **RIGHT:** This image shows the small degree of grinding of the ridge adjacent to the starter motor hole for the MGB clutch cover clearance. When comparing the two photographs we can note that the degree of metal removal is small.

« no issues, it meant these were suitable and at zero cost. However, with the cover being the same as an MGB there was another basic issue as it has a lower 'height' than the original MGA clutch cover, which means a bigger gap between the positions of the release bearing and cover that is too great for it to work. As this road has been trodden many times, over a very long time, by other MGA owners their well-documented route needed to be followed.

That route is fully discussed on Barney Gaylord's excellent MGA Guru website: www.mgaguru.com. This confirmed that two additional parts needed to be changed to overcome this excessive gap: one was an early three-synchro MGB clutch release arm that I didn't have and, second, the early MGB gearbox front cover, which I did. My search for an early MGB release arm didn't get off to a very good start, with relatively high eBay asking prices. With

the approaching MG and Triumph Spares Show at Stoneleigh there was a reasonable chance of finding one amongst the many stands' piles of spares. In fact, within the first 10 minutes of the show, I spied one sitting on a small trader's table and I proverbially bit the seller's arm off when he said £5.

The last clutch-related items needed were a new MGB release bearing, for the new arm, so I chose the conversion roller bearing type. I then added a new slave cylinder pushrod and end pivot pin as the originals were both seriously worn. Overall the total cost of clutch parts needed for this conversion was just over a tenth of the cost of the standard replacement clutch kit, so good value. It just needed to be proven to work.

Fitting the replacement parts was the same as it would be with the standard parts, as was fitting the engine back into the car and onto the gearbox. Initially the engine was secured by two bolts to

“ FLUSH OUT THE CLUTCH HOUSING, REFIT THE ENGINE AND CHECK ROTATION AGAIN; PROBLEM SOLVED. ”

allow a clutch check, by cranking the engine with a ratchet and long lever whilst in gear, finding resistance, then operating the clutch pedal and being able to continue turning the engine. All seemed fine but, at the same point in every revolution, there was something catching inside the clutch housing area... clang, as the dustbin-lid-sized penny dropped. I remembered there was a need to grind a small amount of the gearbox casting away near the starter position as the wider MGB clutch cover just caught it. Something I had completely forgotten to do, even though it was covered on Barney's website. So, remove the two bolts and lift, separate and move the engine forward enough to allow access for an air grinder to just take the edge off the ridge in the gearbox casting near the starter aperture. Flush out the clutch housing, refit the engine and check rotation again; problem solved. The full engine and ancillaries could then be refitted.

Before it goes back in, though, I'll be addressing a few other jobs. More on that next time... 🛠️



▲ Here we can see that the clutch slave cylinder pushrod hole, and also the pivot pin that passes through it, are both showing signs of significant wear.

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102139

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102170

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103186

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102938

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102371

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102577

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103174

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1972, 7000 miles, POA. Old English white, wires, overdrive, mohair hood. Please call 01844 281700, South East.

102936

MGB ROADSTER



1963, 54000 miles, £17,995. This vehicle is still supplied today with its two 6 volt batteries as per factory spec. There is a full detailed breakdown of a full engine rebuild undertaken within the last 1500 miles of use) where no stone was left un-turned along with a gearbox rebuild around the same time. Please call 01623 411476, East Midlands. (T)

103034

MGB ROADSTER



1965, £19,950. Mk1, Pull door handle with overdrive. Fully rebuilt to show standard with detailed engine bay, comes with all its awards. Immaculate paintwork, mohair hood. Tartan red. Please call 01844 281700, South East. (T)

102937

MGB ROADSTER



1973, £13,995. All MGB utilised the BMC B-series engine in 1.8 litre form mated to a 4-speed manual gearbox with optional overdrive which was uprated to full synchromesh in 1968. Please call +44 (0) 1234 240 636, South East.

MGB ROADSTER



1980, 9000 miles, £13,950. Unique original unrestored example. Vermillion. The last owner upgraded it with new leather seats, mohair hood and minilite wheels. Heritage certificate. Drives as new. Please call 01844 281700, West Midlands.

102137

MGB ROADSTER



1972, £8,450. British Racing Green, wooden dash, overdrive and alloys. Full body repaint in 2002 and body shell in excellent condition. Please call 01844 281700, West Midlands.

102138

MGB GT



1973, £9,500. Chrome rostyle wheels, full sunroof and new seats. Very clean engine bay. Please call 01844 281700, South East. (T)

102940

MGB GT



1980, 52000 miles, £10,000. British Racing Green, Black interior, Full Service History, Excellent condition - 35 MOTs. Please call 01833 660366, North East.

102558

MGB GT



1976, 71,700 miles, £24,995. This exceptional example offers an exciting chance to own a true piece of 1970's Britain, one of the most original factory MGB V8's we have ever had the pleasure of owning in our 30 years of business. Being one of only 742 rubber bumper V8 models produced, it could be difficult to come by such a lovely time warp MGB again, especially featuring the provenance and originality of this example. Please call 01944 758000, Yorkshire and the Humber.

102306

MGB GT



1971, 116.452 miles, £6,995. Automatic owned by us since 1991. Bodily restored and waxoiled 1992/3. Bare metal respray in original colour "Blaze". No rust. Paint getting a little tired. Suspension and brakes rebuilt. Comes with refurbished original RoStyle wheels with new tyres and set of chrome wires in photos. New interior fitted.(except roof lining). Reason for sale - I have difficulty getting out of it now. Please email candc@lineone.net, South West.

102379

MGB GT



1973, £28,995. The is a genuine chrome bumper Factory V8. Finished in blue with grey leather trim. Car has had both front and rear wings made wide by about one inch for a subtle but extremely attractive look. Great number plate included in sale. Work carried out at Brown and Gammons. Extensive history file - a truly lovely car. Please call 01462 490049, South East.

102157

MGB GT



1968, 32000 miles, £9,995. Fully restored in 2015, keeping its original Tartan Red finish with the added attraction of chrome bumpers and wire wheels, stainless steel exhaust and aluminium bonnet. All paintwork and interior trim is in immaculate condition. Please call 07843981303, East Midlands.

103302

MGB GT



1969, 57790 miles, £10,750. Sandy beige, wires and overdrive. Major recent restoration. VGC, new interior and seats. Please call 07778464521, South East.

103085

MGB GT



1973, £25,950. Great condition 1 body, paintwork and structure. Believed original 41000 miles from new and retaining original engine bay features including cast iron manifolds. Please call 01844 281700, East Midlands.

MGC GT



1969, 25600 miles, £20,500. This car needs to be seen and driven to fully appreciate how great the all round condition is, the interior, bodywork and mechanics. Recent 250 mile drive where all worked well, a pleasure to drive with Webasto sun roof, chrome wire wheels., etc. Please email djbrant@btopenworld.com, South East.

103331

MGC ROADSTER



1969, £27,950. Previous bare shell restoration, original UK car with matching Heritage certificate. Overdrive, chrome wires and leather seats. Rebuilt engine, body colored underside. Immaculate paintwork. Please call 01844 281700, East Midlands.

MGF



1996, 77000 miles, £1,950. MOT Mar 21. Hd GSKT.Cam Belt.W/pump.Hd Top. Soft top. Wind stop.HRW.. SS coolant pipes.Suplex/Xpartsuspension.New tyres. Black alloys.GOSPORT. Please call 07714137009, South East.

103095

MIDGET



1970, POA. Well restored example with excellent paintwork and panelwork. New front wings and doors. Brand new interior and hood. Please call 01844 281700, South East. (T)

102941

MIDGET



1978, 18000 miles, £8,995. This Midget was part of the Jaguar/Land Rover collection with only 18000 miles recorded. It comes with MOT's dating back to 1993. Apart from the paint work the car looks to be original and in very good condition in keeping with the mileage. Very attractive and fun car. Please call 01485 541526, East of England.

102117

TD



1952, £23,000. Red with beige trim. No rust. Runs and drives beautifully. S.S exhaust. Good oil pressure and bright work. Please call 01452780617, South West.

103013

TD



1953, £9,750. Bodywork and underside is exceptionally sound, as is often the case with an import from a dry climate, paintwork needs some work, chrome is pretty good; runs and drives well but engine not thought to be original Please call 07711 509600, South East.

TF



2003, 67000 miles, £3,795. MLS head gasket, New cam belt, Stainless cooling pipes, Half leather trim, Front fog light, 4 pot brakes, 16 inch 11 spoke wheels, 12 months, MOT and gasket warranty, 3 month warranty. Please call 01993778060, South East.

102123

TF



2009, 26800 miles, £7,995. 2009 MG TF 85th Anniversary. In Enigmatic Silver, with Aubergine seats and door casings. Only 50 Built. Only 26k miles from new. 2 owners. 1.8 liter 135 BHP N series engine. Other extras for the 85th Anniversary model include, 16" Twist of Pepper Alloys, Bilstein Suspension, and much more. A chance to own one of the last beloved MG TF series sports cars. Please call 01636812700, East Midlands.

103208

TF



2004, 65000 miles, £2,295. Stainless cooling pipes, Recent cambelt and MLS headgasket, Fully Serviced. Please call 01993778060, South East.

102126



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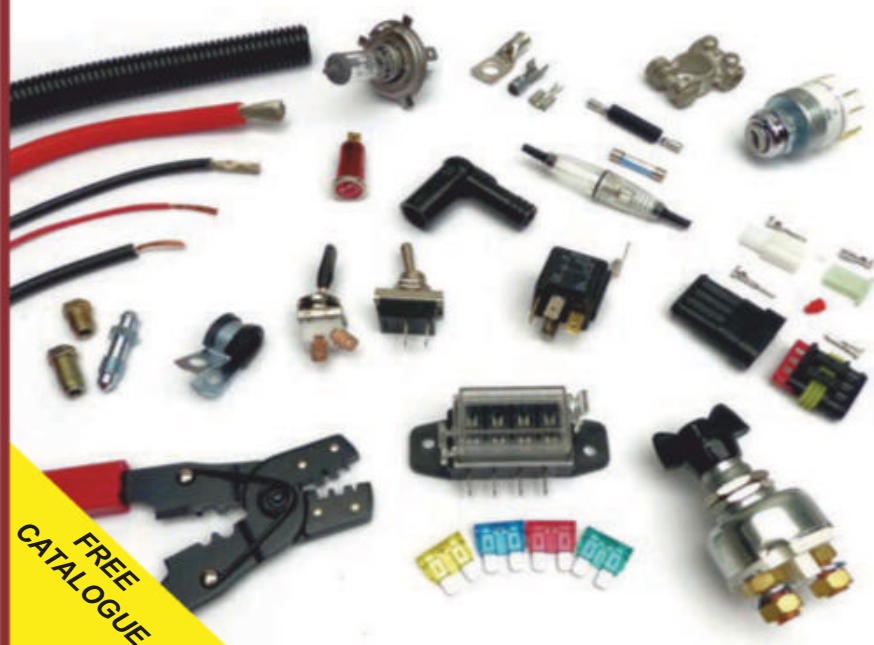


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CHEQUERED FLAG

DOES MG STILL HAVE A SPORTING HERITAGE?

THE LACK OF CURRENT MOTORSPORT EXPOSURE IS FRUSTRATING.

It has long been acknowledged that motorsport is a fundamental element in the MG marque's DNA. Indeed, SAIC/MG Motor are more than happy to play this card whenever it suits but lately there has been little apparent motorsport-linked activity. Even the Le Mans successes of double class wins for MG Lola EX264 have now become recent history, the cars appearing only in period events. With the demise of the MG6 in the BTCC there is no focus on the here and now in the UK.

So, where does this leave MG's heritage? Cynics may argue that the past is irrelevant but, like it or not, its influence is deep-rooted. Even in today's product-led range it makes its contribution. In this currently troubled market, the objective must surely be sales volume, hence the concentration on the most profitable sectors. The real problem for SAIC must be how to differentiate MG in what has become a universally SUV-dominated market, where grille badges are the only brand identification. While the proliferation of 'me-too' models with similar specifications remains an underlying problem for every manufacturer, MG has a unique weapon in its armoury, namely its sporting heritage...

In the past, motorsport would provide a convenient peg. You don't have to look very far back in octagon history to see the impact of motorsport success on brand perception and recognition. Under MG Rover, the Le Mans programme and BTCC successes, together with international and national rallying, gave MG the highest possible profile. It ultimately translated into showroom



Post MGR collapse, privateer campaigns netted two class-winning Le Mans victories to keep MG in the international spotlight. When will the octagon return?

sales. Both Ford and Porsche have long committed resources to competition, as indeed have Audi and, of course, Mercedes Benz. Expensive as these programmes are, they remain essential to the success of their parent brands.

So, where is MG today? Certainly it is no longer punching above its weight, as once befitted its competition history. Indeed, you could argue that this is seemingly long forgotten. But not, I think, at SAIC/MG who recognise the significance of the MG marque and how it can springboard their global expansion

ambitions. Exciting upcoming products like the MG E-Motion electric coupé not only demonstrate radical thinking but they also have clear motorsport potential – think of a possible return to Le Mans – and the huge international marketing impact that could have. Why doesn't MG do something very different by taking the E-Motion to the Bonneville Speed Week and setting some electric vehicle records? The MG ZT-T showed the way a few years back... While all this may seem a far cry from the current product range it could well be a new beginning for the octagon. 🏁

“ WHY DOESN'T MG DO SOMETHING VERY DIFFERENT BY TAKING THE E-MOTION TO THE BONNEVILLE SPEED WEEK AND SETTING SOME ELECTRIC VEHICLE RECORDS? ”

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MG B GT 1970. Iris Blue. Wire Wheels. Total bare metal respray with photographic record of work. Body and paintwork rust free! Rebuilt engine fitted with overdrive gearbox which functions in 3rd & 4th; Fully serviced, new oil cooler, brakes, etc. Stainless steel exhaust. Black original spec interior, new carpet all in very good condition. Looks stunning and drives really well. **£10,500**



MG B GT, 1968, 1950cc Oselli. Tartan Red, Wire wheels, Stage 2 1950cc Oselli Engine, Weber DCOE 45 Duel choke carburettor; New engine in 2009, approx 10k miles; Upgraded brakes. Lots of invoices, body restoration around 1999-2000. The interior black leather piped in red, black trim and carpet, wooden Mota Lita steering wheel. **£10,500**



MG B GT Mk1, 1967, Mineral Blue, Overdrive, Wire wheels, Leather. Rare Mk1 which are appreciating in value! Body restored condition, underwent large amount of restoration; Photo record of restoration, with invoices and MOTs dating back 30 years! Lovely Mk1 leather interior in very good condition; Just serviced, drives without gearbox issues. **£9,500**



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