

THOROUGHBRED & Classic cars



Colour Supplement

MR MG

Never one to mince his words, former MG boss

John Thornley gives T&CC an exclusive interview

T&CC Your upbringing might be described as unconventional, yes?

THORNLEY My parents were involved in an explosive and newsworthy divorce when I was two. My father, a master tailor, was awarded custody of the child and substantial damages against the correspondent. I was brought up by three maiden aunts in my grandparents' house, and my father visited me every evening.

At Ardingly, I was thought to have a future as a mathematician, so remained there following a special syllabus for Cambridge until I was 19. Then my father started me with Peat, Marwick, Mitchell to become an incorporated accountant, and in the evenings I studied at the LSE for a B.Comm. degree. I fear I didn't take either very seriously, because I'd been riding ever more lethal motorbikes until my 21st birthday came along, and I chopped the last one in against an M-type Midget. The rest is history! But it did mean that when the MG chief accountant brought me some figures to approve, as general manager, I could unflinchingly put my finger on the one he didn't want me to notice...

T&CC How did you get involved with the MG Car Company, exactly?

THORNLEY Five of us founded the MG Car Club in 1930, and as General Secretary I was charged with seeking the approval — the co-operation, if possible — of the MG Car Company. There was a subsequent meeting at the King's Arms in Berkhamsted, attended by Kimber and several other MG people. Then began my attempt to blackmail Kimber into giving me a job — it took me nearly a year to do it, but on November 3, 1931, I started at Abingdon as a service department interviewer. Kimber said: "Your job is to run the MG Car Club and help in the service department in your spare time." The General Manager, George Propert, said: "Your job is to work in the service department and run the MG Car Club in your spare time." What actually happened was that the service manager was made competitions manager a few weeks after I went there, both his successors were duds, and I had so much to do



JOHN William Yates Thornley, OBE, was born in London on June 11, 1909, trained in accountancy, and was the founding General Secretary of the MG Car Club in 1930. The following year he joined the service department of the MG Car Company, becoming Service Manager in 1933. He also managed the Cream Cracker and Three Musketeer teams of MG trials cars.

After wartime service with the RAOC, reaching the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, he returned to MG and became Assistant General Manager of both the MG and Riley companies in 1949. His pioneer work on MG racing history, *Maintaining the Breed*, was published in 1950, and he managed the successful Goldie Gardner record attempts of 1950/51/52, followed by the 150mph Eyston/Miles long-distance run at Utah in 1954. He then established the BMC competitions department at Abingdon in 1955 and inspired the racing debut of the prototype MGAs at Le Mans and Dundrod.

In 1952 he had been appointed General Manager, and the first seven years of his administration saw a five-fold increase in production at Abingdon. But the OBE awarded to him in the New Year Honours List of 1964 was not for services to industry, as it might well have been — it was for his youth training work with schools, boys' clubs and especially the Air Training Corps.

Late in 1966 an operation was followed by near-fatal complications and a lengthy convalescence. In June 1969 he retired at the age of 60. Following the sudden death of his first wife in 1976 he married again, and now, except for his work as President of the MG Car Club, he prefers not to be deeply involved in the motoring world. His daughter lives in Canada, his son in the USA.

that I had to drop MG Car Club work altogether.

I left my digs in Abingdon early every morning, and drove my 18/80 to pick up Joanne [his future wife, who worked in the MG drawing office] in time for us both to be at the factory by 8.30am. At 5.30pm we'd finish work and go out on the town. At 10pm I dropped Joanne at her digs near Oxford, drove back to the factory and worked in the service department office until 3am. I pinned longhand notes to each customer's inquiry — "Give him a new cylinder head" or "Tell him to get stuffed" — and my secretary, Gracie Lewis, turned them into letters. She was a marvel.

T&CC What was it like, dealing with MG customers in the Thirties?

THORNLEY First and foremost, I became a complete fatalist, having to sit beside 'em while they demonstrated a possible front-wheel wobble at 68mph on a foggy November morning! Can't do that any more, but I can still tell whether a chap is a driver or not, almost before his car's turned a wheel. I was the MG Car Company's front line from the moment I got to Abingdon. From my first day there until the outbreak of World War Two, warranty expenditure was entirely under my control. I used my own judgement, and my

interpretation was always very generous, but I was never once pulled up about it. I didn't have any contact with the racing crowd: they generally dealt with Kimber.

T&CC Kimber has been described as a very complex personality. What was he really like as a boss? Or as a designer or administrator? Did Miles Thomas do wrong when he fired him in 1941?

THORNLEY Make no mistake, I admired Kimber for what he did. He had the imagination and drive to start it all. He was a visionary, and he had the ability to install his enthusiasm into others — take those two things together and that's enough, really. What Thomas did to him was shameful, the toffee-nosed bastard: I suppose he saw Kim as a chap who'd once had Nuffield's ear to a dangerous extent, so he couldn't go wrong by wiping him out. But it stank.

As a boss, Kim was demanding, but if you were straight with him, he was straight with you. I don't think he even began to be an engineer — he leaned on H.N. Charles for that. But he... Well, every morning all the heads of department assembled in his office at 8.45 and we went through the incoming mail. So if there was a hot, stinking complaint about a car, Charles was involved, I was involved, immediately. I had designed a special switch-panel for my Midget — three rows of three, so that you could use it without looking at it, like the keys of a piano — and I was showing it to somebody at one of these meetings. And Kim said: "Let me see that!" His enthusiasm bubbled over — he saw the point at once.

The fact that the MG design centre was shifted from Abingdon to Cowley in 1935, I think that upset him a lot. That was his main interest: overseeing the design, what's the next car going to look like, how's it going to behave? That was his life. It's very difficult to see where he could have gone, the R-Type design being cut off as it was. That was 20 years ahead of its time, in some ways, and I'm sure he saw it as the forerunner of a road car. I'm afraid it was an inevitable part of Kimber's approach that he kept on running out of money.

T&CC But you yourself believed in competitions?

THORNLEY Yes, certainly, but I had better control over it — though I suppose it was imposed on us from above. We couldn't go wild as he did, do things regardless of cost. Latterly I did have a great deal of latitude to lay on trips to the Utah Salt Flats, etc, and tell the hierarchy afterwards.

T&CC Wasn't that dangerous, with BMC?

THORNLEY Dangerous? If you knew the background! I lived *very* dangerously

sometimes, trying to ensure that MG stayed on the map!

T&CC And you feel that Kimber's enthusiasm sometimes ran away with him?

THORNLEY I think so, yes. During 1936 we wanted a competitor specifically for the SS Jaguar 1½-litre saloon, and in prototype form the car that was produced — mostly from Nuffield parts — was very competitive, pricewise. This was the MG VA. Then Kimber hung *forty-seven* octagons on it — special door-handles, special bonnet handles, octagonal horn-push, octagonal instruments, monograms on this, that and the other. And octagons cost money. So we ended up as no competitor for the Jag, pricewise.

***"I'm probably the only senior
executive in BMC that never had
a thick ear from Leonard Lord."***

Oh yes, he was an odd bird, Kimber... But let me tell you something else as an insight into his character. When WW2 came in September 1939 and car manufacture ceased at Abingdon — when the war was about six weeks old, before he got the ill-fated aircraft contract that caused Thomas to fire him — Kimber had all of us into his office, one at a time. He said: "We don't know where we're going, we can't keep you all on indefinitely, so some can stay but some will have to go." When he saw me, he said he'd decided to keep me on, and I said: "Thanks very much." The following morning's post brought my calling-up papers — Army Officers' Emergency Reserve. So I went up to Kim and he said: "Get out — I don't want to see you!"

I thought: "What the hell's the matter with the old boy this morning?" Went back to Service Department, very bewildered. About an hour later, a special messenger brought a memo from him: "Further to our conversation of yesterday afternoon, I am very much afraid we shall have to dispense with your services. Herewith is a cheque representing one month's salary for each year of service." The Nuffield Group's policy was that if you were called up, you were going from one job to another, so there was no financial adjustment — but if they fired you, you got a handout. Kimber had worked things so that I got the money: it enabled me to pay off all my debts before I left Abingdon, go off to war without a stain on my character. This was Kim's essential kindness.

T&CC Presumably, MG pay was never exactly impressive?

THORNLEY Oh, it was ludicrous! At that time, as Service Manager, I had a salary of £500 a year. After the war, as Service Manager and Sales Manager, I got £700 a year.

T&CC You had a good war?

THORNLEY I had a very hard-working war but I wasn't exposed to danger, much — bombing, of course, but we all had that. And it taught me to think big. As a Lieutenant-Colonel, General Staff Officer Grade I at the War Office, I had the buying of *all* Signals equipment for the British Army — a bill of about £200 million. And although we worked to various rules, of course, it was entirely within my purview whether the final bill was £175 million or £225 million. For that, a grateful Government paid me £918 a year.

T&CC Your appointment as General Manager of MG in 1952 coincided with the formation of the British Motor Corporation under Leonard Lord. You must have really walked a tightrope to keep him satisfied — even to sell him the idea of a competitions department?

THORNLEY I think I'm probably the only senior executive in BMC that never had a thick ear from Lord. I never had any difficulty with Longbridge, never had any difficulty with Lord. It was a sad day for me when he went, because George Harriman was *nothing* of a man by comparison. A terrible dead loss. But Len Lord... I think it was like dealing with a dog, in a way — I wasn't afraid of him, so he wagged his tail. If I'd got myself on the wrong side of him, I reckon Abingdon would have been snuffed out very soon.

Nothing succeeds like success, of course — we were doing so well, and the big upturn in production coincided with my period of office. That was me life's work, mate!

Lord and Harriman both had the same delusion, that they were chief engineer as well as chairman of BMC. But Lord's philosophy was that if he was right 51% of the time he was scoring above the line. Harriman tried to do the same but he *didn't* get it right, ever, and BMC went steadily down the hill. So by the time of the negotiations with Tony Benn, BMC was virtually bust. Harriman was a menace: I blame him entirely for the whole debacle of BMC.

T&CC By that time, of course, your illness had put you on the sidelines?

THORNLEY That was strange, in a way. When I was 14 I very nearly died of peritonitis: six weeks in hospital, two bloody great drain-tubes coming out of me — in that period I consumed half-a-bottle of champagne by mouth, and was kept alive by saline solution squirted up my fundament. Weighed less than six stone.

In the Fifties, shortly after achieving the hot seat at MG, my guts started playing up



Above, two of the 'Cream Cracker' supercharged PB Midgets. Maurice Toulmin, on the left, is passengered by John Thornley, then service manager



Left, MG founder Cecil Kimber (left) with WR Morris

Below, John Thornley accompanies his son Peter in a TD Midget at an MG Car Club gymkhana at Beaulieu



again: I have conducted works conferences, with the unions, lying flat on my back on my office floor because it was the only way to relieve the pain. Eventually I asked the guts man to sort it out. He found I had, in effect, grown another appendix, so he tied it off. Two days later I coughed and blew it open, got peritonitis again. Then things got *really* complicated and they had to open me from top to bottom. The whole thing lasted about eighteen months and I don't know that, with MG, I never really worked again.

T&CC It might be considered a tragedy that your ill-health coincided with the period leading up to the Leyland takeover — when MG sorely needed a champion to counter Donald Stokes's bias towards Triumph...

THORNLEY I... Well, yes... I think you're absolutely right... I was so

numbed, really, so bemused, out of touch — I doubt that I realised the seriousness of the situation...

But I couldn't have done anything. The chips were down. I think I knew Abingdon's days were numbered from the time when I had the MGB body tooling bill from Pressed Steel. I knew then that BMC would never tool us another metal sports car. So I started looking into plastics, as you know, but my illness put a stop to that.

And really, the product became appalling when the full effect of the US regulations took hold: the things that went wrong — the auto choke pouring neat fuel onto the exhaust — I got all this feedback from Peter [Thornley's son, then working for a leading MG distributor in the USA] who was still trying to service the bloody things. They were hideous-looking by that time, anyway.

T&CC Are you saying it was an inevitable decision, to shut down Abingdon?

THORNLEY As seen from the middle, it was *absolutely* the right thing. There was no room for little offshoots like that, and we happened to come in the first batch. Really, Lord made a cock-up of it in the first place. Wolseley and Riley ought to have gone straight out the window, he should never have had any truck with Healey — he should have rationalised to a degree, immediately. Austin, Morris and MG would have been quite enough to keep BMC going.

T&CC The retail dealers would have gone mad if that had been done.

THORNLEY So you present them with a *fait accompli*, that's all. They'll do what you tell 'em. Look at the way they messed us up with the Midget. The Frogeye Sprite — the Buzzbox, as we called it at Abingdon — was the ultimate minimum sports car. Then when we put everything on it to make the MG version and get a substantial price differential, the idiot Austin distributors moaned that they couldn't sell *their* version. So we had to tart up the Sprite as well, and the bottom very nearly fell out of the market.

T&CC You accept the post-Abingdon MG models of today, do you?

THORNLEY Yes, surely — this is where MG came in, in 1923/4, isn't it? And it's early days yet. The EX-E indicates a line of thought — at least *I hope* they learn something from it, or it remains a bullshit wagon.

Overall, BL is in such a financial mess that it can't afford to fool around with real sports cars. So forget them for the time being and be grateful for what you've got. This is the best we can expect in the circumstances — and I'm mighty glad it really is such a good best, with some of them: they really are such thundering good motor-cars and they go like a bloody flash. The later they are, the better, so they're learning all the time.

T&CC And the 6R4 rally car?

THORNLEY Oh yes, I'd have been delighted with such a thing in my own time. I don't know that *I'd* be very interested in competing in today's rallies, though. I mean, Formula One has become an absolute nonsense, with vehicles that bear no resemblance to anything on the road, or anything that ever *could* be used on the road. And I'm afraid rally cars, cars like the 6R4, are going the same way.

The immediate problem is to pull BL back to financial viability, before you begin to think what to do with MG. After all, MGs will never be the quantity-production vehicle that will put BL on the right side of the hill, so we must be grateful that they still think of MG at all. If I were boss-man, I'm afraid *I* wouldn't be thinking of MG. ♣

A-1 AT ABINGDON

*Wilson McComb remembers his 10 years
at the MG factory where he enjoyed first hand
the last of the good old days*

FOR a motoring writer who loved sports cars, it was a recipe for bliss: producing a monthly magazine from within the world's biggest specialist sports car factory, surrounded by Sprites (and, later, Midgets), MGAs (later succeeded by MGBs and MGCs), and big Healeys. I can still recall the Abingdon atmosphere, as we called it, even after seventeen years. But can I convey what it was like? I'm not so sure about that...

We came in for many predictable jokes, the place being situated between a hospital and a cemetery. In 1929 the Morris Garages had leased a disused extension of the Pavlova Leather Company's premises; when I went there thirty years later, some of the men still remembered the amazing smells they encountered on first moving in. By 1939, MG were able to buy the place at last, paying £23,315 for it, and four years later they bought a little more land for £603, but Pavlova continued to use one of their own buildings on what had now become MG land. Nobody minded; they were the best of neighbours.

When I started in February 1959, it was long before the damfool boundary change that put Abingdon into Oxfordshire — it was still Berkshire, and somehow that emphasised the gap (in every sense) that existed between us and Morris Motors at Cowley, a bare half-dozen miles away on the other side of the Thames. Recently I read in a wartime magazine a piece by Jack Daniels, who had

been a member of H. N. Charles's small MG drawing-office staff until the 1935 Morris Motors takeover shifted them to Cowley, there to design a rather boring 2-litre saloon as part of the Nuffield rationalisation policy. Daniels was still in digs at Abingdon, and had just swapped an ancient two-seater for a fast but unreliable 1927 Talbot 14/45 saloon. "It was parked at night in the MG staff car park. To get it started in the morning took the combined skill and pushing power of the entire racing department. During that first week of ownership I really learned the art of asking onlookers for a push, as, although the MG mechanics were always willing, the Cowley bunch regarded me and my Talbot car as just an importunate stranger."

Thoughtful People

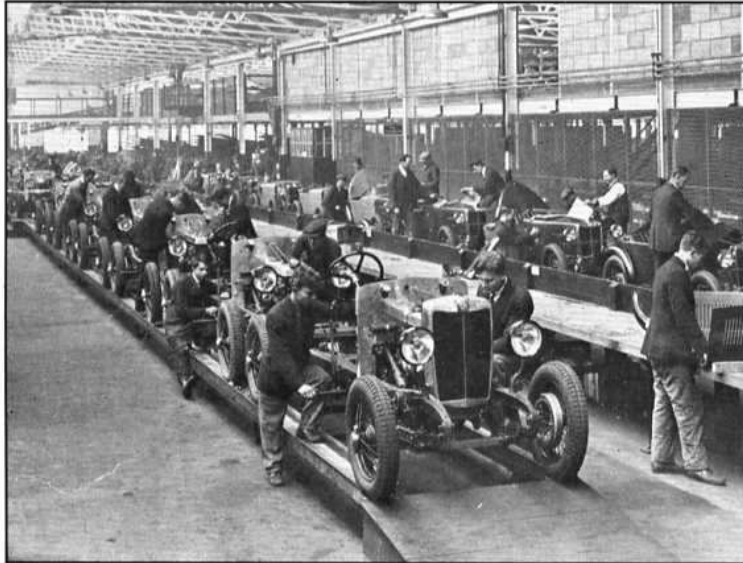
My experience exactly, a quarter-century later. Suffering one of my periodic financial disasters at the time, I too had as my only vehicle an ancient two-seater (it had cost me £25) with a hood so tatty that I never troubled to erect it. On my second day at Abingdon I came out in the rain to find one of the MG workers had put a cover over the cockpit to protect it. That would never have happened at strike-happy Cowley.

North Berks was still a mostly rural area then, apart from MG, Esso Research at Steventon and the big AERE establishment at Harwell. So there wasn't much choice of jobs in the neighbourhood, and the Mrs This behind a desk in

Accounts might well turn out to be a sister of Mr That in Service. You learned to be cautious — especially as long service was the norm at MG. The chief process planner, who retired shortly after I arrived, was Frank Stevens; he had joined Morris Garages in 1922 and helped to build the 1925 trials special generally (and erroneously) known as MG Number 1, along with Charlie Martin, who joined in 1924 and was now head of Progress Department, assisted by Stan Saunders — Stan had joined in 1923 and was one of the original trio detailed to work on MGs in February 1923. The other two were Cec Cousins, who had started at "The Garages" in 1920 — even before Kimber himself — and was now works manager, and Jack Lowndes, who had joined in 1922 and was now works engineer in charge of plant and equipment.

Syd Enever, who had come to Morris Garages as a shop-boy in 1920, was now chief designer, and the foreman of his development workshop was Alec Hounslow, riding mechanic to Nuvolari when he won the 1933 TT in a K3 Magnette. Reg Jackson, one-time chief mechanic of the racing department, was now chief inspector, and his former assistant, Gordon Phillips, was service manager. The personnel manager, Jack Gardiner, had been (in 1924) the first private owner of a four-seater MG, and the superintendent of rectification and finishing, over in 'B' Block, was George Morris (no relation to Nuffield) who had joined the Morris Garages in 1918. I was





Above, the main MG assembly building in 1930 with 18/80s on the left and M-types on the right

Left, the Abingdon office block in 1930 with M-Type Midgets on delivery

Below, sad day for the MG factory as the last MGB leaves the line at Abingdon



very, *very* impressed to find myself in such distinguished company — and not a little overawed.

John Thornley was, of course, a remarkable boss to have — full of enthusiasm, and so bursting with energy that I never found him behind his desk — he was always pacing the floor, firing questions or instructions from different parts of his office, which had once been Kimber's. Early on, I asked if I and my art editor might familiarise ourselves with the cars built at Abingdon. "Of course — you can't write about them if you don't know 'em," was the immediate reply. So he arranged for us to borrow press demonstrators each weekend until we could afford to buy sports cars of our own — and this, too, was made easy for us because, as he frequently remarked, "Charity begins at home." The salaries of departmental heads were incredibly low (our competitions manager, for instance, was paid substantially less than his own competitions workshop foreman), and Thornley could do nothing about this, but he could and did arrange for ex-works cars to be available at the lowest possible prices.

Tail-out MGA

Thornley's office was in an aged office block that looked just as it did in photos of the early Thirties, with Cec Cousins just below him, and a tight S-bend leading past them to the main gate and a dozen parking-places for departmental managers (it was typical of Abingdon that the office block was outside the gate instead of inside). Taking this bend with the tail of my MGA hung out brought a sharp reprimand from Coz. He didn't tell me that Thornley, doing exactly the same thing in *his* early days with his 18/80, had once wiped out a fine row of potted plants on the outside of the bend.

My own office was a partitioned-off space in 'A' Block, the main assembly building, just beside the unloading bay where engines were delivered to the accompaniment of an ear-shattering din that we soon learned to ignore. MG's position as Cinderella to the entire British

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Motor Corporation was underlined by the general atmosphere of slight shabbiness, the timeworn furniture and antique office equipment, each piece carefully identified by a number-tag. One of the Dickensian account-books records a telephone table bought new by Riley Motors Ltd in 1938, transferred to Abingdon when Riley moved from Coventry in 1949, bought by MG for £1 in 1952, and meticulously depreciated down to zero value over the next 20 years. I'll bet it was still there when the place closed in 1980.

Comps Dept

Across the yard from my office was the BMC competitions department — the world's most successful by far, in the mid-Sixties. "Comps" was presided over by the amiable Marcus Chambers, later by the tough and capable Stuart Turner, and finally by Peter Browning, whose BMC career had started in my department. Along with the usual workshop girlie pictures, the walls were hung with rally plates and souvenirs. Elsewhere in the factory, the older foremen and supervisors had *their* offices decorated with Brooklands photographs. Twenty years after Kimber had been ruthlessly dismissed from the company he founded, his favourite cream-and-brown paintwork still lingered in odd corners. One of the extravagances that earned him his disapproval, it was said, was the panelled boardroom where departmental managers lunched each day at a long table with a beautifully-starched white linen cloth. Each of us had an octagonal napkin-ring, with our own initials. At one end of the room hung a portrait of Lord Nuffield; at the other, one of Cecil Kimber. No BMC or Leyland boss ever had *his* portrait on those walls: not Lord, not Edwardes. I suppose we paid for that gesture in the end — but there are limits to subservience.

Abingdon was of course an assembly plant, where comparatively little was fabricated (except parts for prototypes and the like). Besides the engines that crashed into 'A' Block beside my office, there



A shot taken in 1960 but looking more recent, showing MGAs having their bodies fitted on the production line at Abingdon

was a steady stream of components into Goods Inwards Inspection, elsewhere in the same building, and special trailers delivered painted bodyshells at high level to the Trim Deck, where the interior was fitted out before they dropped onto the suspension assemblies that awaited them at the start of each production line. With a total payroll of 1,000, office staff included, we averaged 1,000 cars a week, and every one of them was tested on the road. Before the war, Abingdon built MGs — just over 20,000 of them. From 1949 to 1958 it also built virtually all the Rileys that were produced, and from 1957 to 1971, all the Austin-Healeys (including Sprites). The total production of sports cars — MG and Austin-Healey — was well over a million when the

plant closed in 1980, and 879,620 of these cars were exported. Add in the Rileys, a few Vanden Plas built in the closing stages and a surprising 20,000-odd Morris vans and estate cars, and you get a grand total just short of 1.2 million cars, assembled at minimal cost in surroundings that your average modern farmer would dismiss as tatty-looking.

Overseas Visitors

They certainly seem to startle the many visitors we had from America, Australia, Scandinavia and many other parts of the Continent, whom I frequently conducted around because there was no one else to do the job. Visiting pressmen and MG Car Club members got

a free lunch as a matter of course, usually in a pleasant local pub called the Dog House. So did the more important visitors to Service Department, until BMC closed it down, and we lost that valuable direct contact with owners of our cars. When the Publicity Department was also transferred from Cowley to Longbridge, it was obvious to me where I *should* go to further my career — but equally obvious that wild horses wouldn't drag me there.

So I remained at Abingdon, sliding steadily down the pecking order as more and more geniuses were imported from outside, until in 1969 there was only one place left to go — and I went, happy to have known what were undoubtedly the last of the good old days at the MG factory. ▲

MG TODAY

A line-up of sporty saloons worthy of the Marque, concludes
Brian Palmer

THE MG name is almost a household word. Correction it *is* a household word. MG is synonymous with the sports car just as Hoover replaced the word vacuum cleaner in the English language. And that's a powerful promotional tool for any company to have; an asset if ever there was one.

So why do Austin Rover, current MG title holders, not make a sports car? The answer is that they do; several in fact. Not the open, wind-in-the-hair sort, I grant you, with only a pram-type hood to keep out the rain, but modern, fast, and good handling saloons that do the job as well as or even better. It took a foreign manufacturer to bury the old and bring in the new approach with their Golf GTi, a successful formula that brought fun back into motoring and has been endlessly copied since.

And, you know, in being nostalgic about MG's past heritage we are often guilty of being selective in our recollections. Right from the earliest days of the marque saloons bearing the sacred octagon were produced and have sold in good numbers. The post-war Midgets ZA and ZB being a case in point. A great deal of fuss was made at the time because they dared to adopt a model name of one of the marque's most successful sports racing cars from pre-war days. Now they are highly regarded Classics in their own right.

What of today's range? It consists of Metro, Maestro and Montego derivatives but these are quite distinct models not the badge engineered concoctions of old. The Metro started it all, back in 1982, and since that time the MG has enjoyed a popular following. Not surprising really because, as Austin Rover proudly trumpeted at the launch, the 72bhp MG Metro zipped up to 60mph in 10.9 seconds and exceeded the

magic Ton (just) making it faster overall than the Mini Cooper S — a firecracker if ever there was one.

The great attraction of the MG Metro is its ready performance allied to razor sharp steering and a great deal of character in an age when this supplanted by anonymous computer-designed virtue. I've had first hand experience of an MG Metro, and if its detractors knock it for being old fashioned, for having a poor ride and for having a steering wheel angle more akin to a bus, I say Tosh! Taken overall, I find the ride as good as many of its more recent competitors and not all owners of small cars are themselves only 5ft 2in tall — at least I can drive a Metro comfortably. It could do with a five-speed gearbox and a more refined engine would do wonders for it but there have been a lot of changes that are more than just cosmetic.

Aerodynamic

That new more aerodynamic nose hides the fact that the grille can now be removed with a couple of screws to allow easier servicing access. The new headlamps are considerably more powerful than before. Inside a new fuller instrument display is immediately noticeable with the minor controls, once relegated to knee height brought up to edge the instrument binnacle. The heater control is likewise raised to a similar position opposite. If there's a gripe born out of continued experience it is that the rear heater switch is almost hidden down by the steering column. It should be swapped with the rear guard lamps switch where, hopefully, most people will forget about it.

Now the Maestro has had a less than happy adolescence. The basic Metro is thoroughly worthy but a little lack-lustre,

perhaps? Not so the MG Maestro 2-litre EFI. Trouble is, too many potential buyers will remember Austin Rover's first disastrous foray with the 1,600cc R-type engine allied to those troublesome Weber carburettors. Reliability was not a strong point.

However the latest manifestation is totally different and is worthy of serious consideration. Dressed up in its colour-coded addenda, it looks the part and has the performance and road manners to back up the promise. There's only a cat's whisker of a difference in performance between it and the industry benchmark Golf but a cool £1,220 lies between them on price.

I've only managed a brief drive on the launch with the latest MG Maestro but it was enough to convince me that AR have a powerful contender with strong performance right across the spectrum. The ride and handling was always a



Maestro strongpoint and is well up with the leaders in its class. The low profile tyres cling to the tarmac but you are not jolted out of your seat over rough going which is often the price you pay these days when family cars are turned into pseudo-rally contenders. The MG EFI is a car that you feel you could turn in a day's spirited motoring without booking an appointment next day with an osteopath.

The Montego is another AR product facing a lot of tough competition and when the attractive MG appeared it im-

pressed with its comfort and high equipment specification. The performance was good overall, even if it lost out in the meaningless 0-60mph dash, but was never going to hit the

Trump card

headlines. The Montego Turbo changed all that. With a top speed of 127mph and zero/60 barrier broken in 7.2 seconds, this MG can mix it with the BMWs and SAABs of this world and win. At £10,598 it offers exceptional value too.

However, this MG does display a slightly split personality. As a fast, quiet, refined straight road cruiser it is without peer in its class. Only on cross country high speed runs does the problem of putting 150bhp and 169lb ft through the front wheels become apparent. Apply that under turbo boost on a greasy surface and you'll probably stay where you are with the wheels spinning furiously.

Overtake too spiritedly in narrow confines and you find the car feels less stable than you would like. Part of the reason is the relatively light power steering which does make for a delightfully fluid-feeling car at lower speeds, especially as the MG Montego has good chassis balance and grip. But combined with strong torque steer characteristics under power it does take some getting used to and in the wrong hands could be dangerous. With a shade more development this MG could be a trump card in the range — as it is it is still highly competent.

The time may still not be right for an open sports car and, indeed, may never again be right for MG but that does not mean that the MG name has no place in today's marketplace. Given continued encouragement tomorrow's MG could be all that the marque's pioneers ever dreamed of and more. ▲



Buying an MGB is all very easy in theory but what's it like in reality?

Keith Haberson speaks from experience . . .

SOME of my friends fell about when I said I was hunting for an MGB. I suppose they'd been reading these motor magazines that have developed 'B-bashing' into a fine art, telling us that this 24-year-old design is lacking in performance by modern standards, heavy, harsh-riding — all the usual statements of the blindingly obvious. One that I read recently went even further, calling the B: "The ubiquitous British sports car which, in truth, never performed as a sports car should." In a pig's ear it didn't — did nobody ever tell him how it beat all other British cars at Sebring, Le Mans, the Nürburgring, Brands Hatch and elsewhere in days gone by?

The chap who came up with that sweeping assertion was, I think, seven years old when the MGB first came out. If he'd taken the trouble to check the figures, he would have learned that the old girl compared very nicely, thank you, with such exact contemporaries as the Lotus Elite, TVR Grantura, Sunbeam Alpine and Harrington Le Mans, Triumph TR4, Morgan Plus-4 and Porsche Super 75 — every one of which, by the way, cost more than an MGB. Therefore BMC and BL sold more than half-a-million and the B paid a heavy penalty for its success, production dragging on until the poor beast was virtually a laughing stock in the sports car world.

A very dear friend in the West Country was sufficiently well off to include in his stable such exotica as a Dino Ferrari and an Aston Martin Volante, but the cars he used most were his three MGBs — a V8, an ordinary 1800cc GT and a roadster. My wife and I had each had several Bs when they were new, but didn't care for them when their appearance, roadholding and performance were spoiled by increasingly absurd regulations. Our friend's sudden tragic death, last summer, made us think of his three pre-1975 MGBs and wonder if we, too, would like to have a B again.

The ordinary GT had already been sold, and his widow was keeping the V8, which she loved. That left the roadster, which was a late 1970 car (1971 model) that had been bought from the original owner. No overdrive, alas, but there was a hardtop, and with 21,300 miles on the speedo it sounded great at £750. But my visit to Somerset left me doing a lot of thinking. The car was delightful to drive, its engine, 'box and back axle all quiet, but when I put it up on a lift at a nearby garage I found a rusty hole where the offside castle rail should be, running from the jacking-point almost to the front wheelarch. If this had gone, it was a fair bet that both diaphragm sills had had it, too, and of course the

wings were starting to rust nicely — so I was looking at a minimum outlay of £1,000 on bodywork. Fair enough, if I wanted a roadster — but did I?

My wife and I were beginning to realise that our B would have to be Number One car, not Number Three — we already had a Vintage beast Number Two — and the existing Number One would have to go. On that basis, we decided on a GT — the lines of which we both prefer. So I started a hunt that lasted three months, took in 850 miles — say £60 in petrol, some of which I hope to save *you!* — and involved about a dozen cars from late 1969 to late 1973.

No Offers Please!

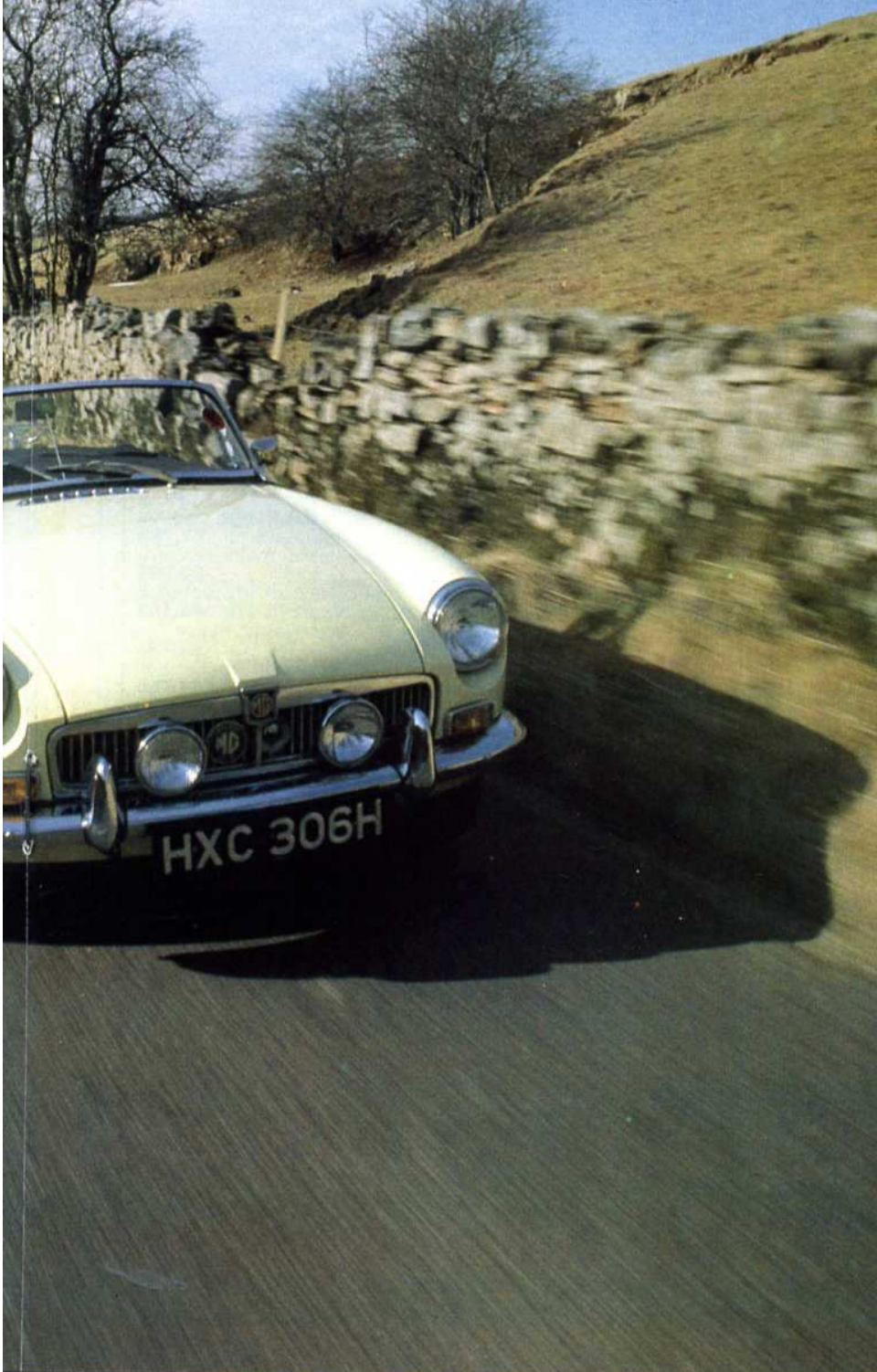
By chance we encountered a handsome-looking 1973 Harvest Gold GT in a London car park. "Take the keys and try it," the man said. "The price is £2,000 — and no offers." But it had been resprayed extensively, if not completely, and the background story didn't seem to ring true. Very, very different was another 1973 GT in the local paper at £1,200: "Some rust on the doors but the underside's okay," said the owner on the phone. He lived at Bracklesham Bay, not a hundred yards from the sea, and I have never seen a rustier car. Tipped off by a friendly postman, I located another GT on the way home — but it was not for sale. Yet another 1973 model at £2,000 was said to have had more than £1,000 spent on its restoration, but had no overdrive, and I didn't fancy the painted headlining. There was supposed to be an outstanding GT at £2,500 which was close to home — but the owner wasn't; he was wintering in Florida and I never did see the car. The same price was being asked for an early 1970 car that really *was* outstanding, the one-and-only owner a fellow VSCC member who had maintained her car lovingly for 100,000 miles, fitted a new engine and then done another 16,000. Mechanically, everything that needed renewing has been renewed as necessary, with a sheaf of receipts to prove it. Some patches on the underside had been done neatly and well, but patching a B is seldom a good idea, and the receipts didn't tell the body story in detail. Reluctantly — for the owner had been wonderfully helpful — I turned it down.

Funny how you start looking at cars at a certain price level, and before long you find yourself contemplating them at three or four times that price. The next two were professional restoration jobs, seen before completion. One was a crashed J-registration example that had done 12,000 miles on a Gold Seal engine and was going





Left, Eric Tilt's smart '69 MGB roadster. Above, if you like to go faster the V8 is the MGB for you. Below, post-'74 engine bay



to cost £2,850 when finished: this was the first time I'd seen a crashed GT with a sunroof, and it quite put me off sunroofs. The other car was K-registered and the basic body structure had been superbly restored, so it was going to cost something the wrong side of £3,000 although it still needed mechanical attention and a lot of detail finishing. Like the first GT we'd looked at, it was Harvest Gold. My wife now revealed that she didn't actually *like* Harvest Gold.

It was probably desperation that made us agree to buy the next car we saw, since we both disliked the interior (Autumn Leaf, which is brown) *and* the exterior (that strange green called Tundra). It was a three-owner 1974 model with 41,000 miles on the clock, late enough to have a brake servo as standard, amazingly original, and so untarted that it didn't even have a radio. The price asked was £2,300, the owner telling us he'd had an MGOC valuation of £2,600. But it seems you get an MG Owners Club valuation by sending a \$5 fee and a photograph, and the well-known MG *Car Club* personality who actually examined the car valued it at £1,000 less. I saw his point when I looked at it myself, for there were clear indications that the car had been neglected, and was ready to explode with rust in a year or so. Against my better judgement I offered £1,850 and was beaten up to £1,900, which I agreed to if the car was delivered. Thank heavens, it

(Blank)

developed mechanical trouble on the way, the owner drove it back home again, and I was saved from making an idiotic mistake.

On Christmas Eve we did a round trip of 150 miles to see a 1972 GT with 70,000 miles on the speedo, asking price £2,200. There was no visible rust anywhere — the owner worked in a body shop, and the paintwork was immaculate — but when I finally found a garage that would put it up on the lift, I was able to put my finger through the nearside castle rail.

I had gone from £750 to more than four times that price, and finally learned for myself what various good friends in the business had been trying to tell me. Buying a B is a very tricky business, described by one expert as: "The surest way to lose money." By and large, the recorded mileage and mechanical condition scarcely matter a damn, for most replacement parts are cheap enough and an MGB is about as complicated, mechanically, as a garden wheelbarrow. If you want a chrome-bumper car with all-synchro gearbox, AC generator and tube-type axle, anything from late 1967 onwards will do: you get reclining seats and a smaller steering wheel (but this will have been changed by some owners) from late 1969, an allegedly better heater (but a steel bonnet) and a Michelotti hood on the roadsters from late 1970, a central console from late 1971, armrests and a honeycomb



This is the car that Keith Haberson bought for £500 at the end of his search, a sad-looking BGT for restoration

grille from late 1972 and a brake servo as standard from late 1973.

But none of this is important. What *really* matters is the condition of the body structure, which can let you in for an additional £1,000 whether you pay £1,000, or £2,000 or even £3,000 for a car. How do you know its condition? Well, there are a few pointers, but even the experts admit that if the faking had been skilfully done, there's just no way of being sure.

Finally I went to see a tatty late 1969 (1970 model) GT which had had seven previous owners, had done 111,000 miles on its original engine, and been fitted with glassfibre front wings; the asking price was £850, but my offer of £500 was instantly accepted. Even at that I boomed, for the inner sills were beginning to go and the offside rear spring hanger had had it. It's going to cost me a packet to restore, dammit... ▲

HUNTING FOR A B

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MG Car Club chairman Ron Gammons with the latest club news

IN 1930 a chap by the name of Ray Marsh had a letter published in the magazine *Light Car*. Its editor Harold Hastings and John Thornley met as a result and the MG Car Club was formed with John becoming the first general secretary.

With the infectious enthusiasm which MGs breed, the club took off and before long the young John Thornley made his way to Abingdon where he shortly joined the company as assistant service manager, and the club was taken under the wing of the factory, as recounted elsewhere in this supplement. With this support, the club rapidly blossomed and gave tremendous support to the racing and sporting efforts of both the factory and the numerous private owners who were driving the exciting new cars such as the K3.

Post-war motoring was fairly restricted with the majority of MG's production going to export; nevertheless the club rapidly went from some 385 members in 1947 to four figures by 1950. In 1951 the club took a major step forward and ran a race meeting at Silverstone — an event which has continued to this day.

Now what of the club today? Well, we are now approaching our 10,000th UK



member whose needs are served through the 11 regional centres spread around Britain. The sporting side is covered by a range of events from trials and autotesting to motor racing.

The club recognised early on that with a range of models from 1925 to the present day something must be done to meet the needs of technical enquiries and the like. Accordingly there are now some 13 registers within the club whose task it is to cover the requirements in this respect. The registers maintain all historical records and libraries.

Our range of overseas contacts is enormous with some 66 affiliated centres and clubs spread over the world. Those owners too far from direct contact are

offered overseas membership and receive, as do all members, the club's excellent monthly magazine *Safety Fast* which, in 1982, was honoured to be presented with the *Thoroughbred & Classic Cars* award for the best club magazine.

In 1936 the club will organise, among some 250 events, major race meetings at Silverstone (May 24/25), Donington (June 28/29), Brands Hatch (Sept 21) and Oulton Park (Oct 11).

The Silverstone event draws visitors from all over the world who gather to watch the Car Club's many exciting race championships. Handicap events and high-speed trials will give both novices and experts an opportunity to try out their skills while the evening supper and prizegiving with jazz band and disco will round the day off. On the Sunday the major concours event gives those with polishing cloth a chance to dazzle.

The club's office at Studley, in the grounds of Studley Castle by kind permission of British Motor Heritage, looks after the administrative needs of members far and wide and serves as a focal point for contact. The address is PO Box 251, Studley, Warks B80 7AT. Tel: 0527 85 3666.

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MG SPECIALIST

PRIDE OF OWNERSHIP

Four enthusiastic MG owners joined forces to talk to Paul Clark about their cars

BEAUTIFUL," murmured the pub regular as he looked out into the car park one notably overcast March lunchtime. In that car park were four of the best MGs one was ever likely to see together in a South London suburb. The cars spanned nearly 30 years production of the famous British sporting marque but each one was very different from its neighbour.

Oldest of the quartet was Peter Rogers' beautifully preserved 1958 MGA 1500 coupé, unbelievably a virtually original car. Peter discovered the A advertised in a local free newspaper where it was being sold to make way for the owner's newly acquired Mini. Although it was in reasonable condition overall with a sound chassis and body, and the engine had been rebuilt to quite a good standard, Peter decided a complete respray and general tidy up was in order so that the car would be returned to a condition befitting its sporting image. The work was entrusted to Southampton-based BHP Engineering and the results speak for themselves. The red paint gleams and there isn't a ripple or dent in sight, remarkable when one considers the alloy bonnet and door panels which are so susceptible to damage. Peter reckons he is not a concours 'freak', merely intending to have a very good usable car that is above all pleasant to look at and own. "I've always had a thing about the MGA ever since a friend of mine had one years ago. To me it's the epitome of the Classic British sports car and so pretty with its curves and graceful good looks. I wanted a roadster at first but when the opportunity of buying this one came up it was too good to miss so a coupé it had to be," says Peter.

Fortunately mechanical problems have not befallen the car to any great extent and the only concessions to originality have been the addition of chrome wire wheels in place of the original steel disc type. Peter carried out the conversion to splined hubs himself maintaining that he is the owner of the car so why shouldn't he have what he wants...? I'm sure no one

would complain about the aesthetic appeal of those wires — they certainly set the stunning bodywork off.

The MGA's timeless appeal and character have found a special place in Peter's heart. "I've often thought about selling it but nothing else I've found can touch it for sheer nostalgia. I love it,"

Paul Collier's 1965 MGB roadster is a classic case of the true home restoration. Rebuilt from scratch in the confines of a one-car garage. Paul bought it in 1983 after seeing it advertised locally for £350. "I'd been looking for some time for a good B to rebuild and this seemed to fit the bill being a non-MoT'd runner, albeit very tired. It was in a pretty bad way bodily and had been painted various shades of red and black. Eventually I paid £125 for it," says Paul.

Home Rebuild

I've always been amazed at the standards of restoration achieved by owners in their own garages and Paul's efforts are no exception. Suspension, engine and drivetrain were all subjected to complete overhaul and most of the body panels were renewed, the specialist welding being the only work contracted out. Finally, after two years hard work, out of the garage emerged a pristine MGB roadster, resplendent in new Tartan red paint and with all the correct new parts in place. "The only problem was, I had to push start it!" quips Paul.

Strictly speaking the car is still being restored even though it has been on the road for more than a year now. The next job on the list is the replacement of the top half of the rear offside wing which is original and justifiably showing signs of rust. The bottom half has already been replaced with a half wing repair section but Paul doesn't recommend using these except as a last resort as they are an enormous fiddle to fit and line up correctly. In any case he's now got to remove it all again to do a proper job on the top half.

In his work as a chartered surveyor,

Peter Rogers and his lovely 1958 MGA coupé



Peter Allen with his 1968 Brooklands Green MGC



Colin Light with his 1973 MGB V8



Paul Collier with his home-restored MGB



Paul has no qualms about using the B every day. It has been on the road all through the winter as reliable transport, but with no hood at all it does get a little cold at times! An Old English White hardtop is kept in the garage at home for when it gets *very* cold. "I'm a fresh air fanatic at heart," says Paul. "It's really depressing to see how many Bs drive around with the hoods up — even in summer!"

Now that he's bought an MG Metro Turbo as his everyday workaday car, the B will probably have a less hectic life than it does at present, but expect to see it at many open air club meetings and national events in the future. Perhaps now the car is having the kind of life it deserves. "There's nothing better than a good day out in the B. I love driving it and meeting other like-minded enthusiasts. That's what real sports car ownership is all about." Our sentiments exactly, Paul.

I suppose owners of MGCs and MGB V8s have always been at odds with each other over whose car is a 'real' MG but nowadays it's more a kind of friendly rivalry really — the cars are so totally different in character that it is hard to compare them back to back.

Peter Allen's CGT must be one of the best of its type in the country but for all that is a car that is regularly driven. "It's a wonderful sensation to come home from work one evening and climb into the C for a long drive into the country. The car's such an effortless cruiser and quite entertaining on the more twisting roads with all that torque."

Just how different the C is from the standard MGB is evident with just a glance under the bonnet. The big C-Series 3.0-litre straight six is a very tight fit indeed in the engine bay; the front suspension mountings and bulkhead had to be modified considerably to accept it. Line a C up against a normal B and the difference in appearance are immediately apparent; for a start the C sits much higher on the road owing to its larger wheels and altered suspension, and the bonnet has

various bulges in it to accommodate the relocated radiator and the twin carbs.

"It's a very lazy engine in the C, but to make it a bit more willing I've had it balanced so it's now even smoother than the production engine," says Peter of his car. "Now it's quite happy at 120mph, conditions allowing, but I'm confident it's capable of much more."

The previous owner bought the car after it had been stored in a garage for eight years, and it had done only a few thousand miles more when Peter bought it in 1982. Thankfully the bodywork was excellent though a small amount of welding and a top class respray brought it up to the condition it is in today. "Originally the car was painted a pale green but I decided to change it to its present Brooklands green with matching wire wheels. The combination suits the car extremely well even though it is a non-original colour, and the painted wires add a subtle dimension that is aesthetically very pleasing.

"The thought of selling the C has never entered my head," says Peter. "I've even tried E-Types and the like with a view to buying one, but in the end I always come back to the MG. It's rarer than just about every other fast British GT and I love it."

Colin Light is well known in the MG Car Club for his tireless work in Classic car show circles and it didn't really come as a surprise when he told me that he used his immaculate B V8 to cart all the show equipment up and down the country. "I even had a roof rack at one time though since I've had the car resprayed I've had to draw the line at that."

"ON STRIPDOWN ONE OF THE CAMSHAFT LOBES WAS ALMOST ROUND"

In a sense, Colin's car is a really hard worker. It's never been off the road for more than a few weeks in the five years he's owned it and reliability is second to none. The car has that pleasant 'used' air

to it — a little grime on the wheels, a crease or two on the seats — but close inspection reveals the sheen on the paintwork and the fine state of the engine. It would not take a lot of work to bring this car up to show standard, but then that's not the point of it for Colin.

With some 90,000 miles on the clock, the car has had new sills, doorskins, and front wings, and Colin rebuilt the engine himself because it was getting a little tired. "One of the camshaft lobes was almost circular," he recalls, but apart from that it was just a case of renewing the timing chain and various other ancillary parts. "I put in a Rover SD1 cam to replace the original item," says Colin. "It's probably upped the power output marginally but I'm not going to put it to the test."

A renowned weak spot with the V8 was the gearbox which has been known to crack in half with savage use! "I was in the middle of Brixton one day, went to select first gear and crunch, that was it. Very embarrassing!" That little episode meant a complete stripdown and rebuild with a revised layshaft. The work was carried out by a friend and now the change feels just fine.

Colin is convinced regular maintenance is the key to long life and he confidently expects his car to last many more thousands of miles before it needs any more work doing to it. "Perhaps I'll rebuild the back axle before long, though. Not that it whines or rumbles, it's just that at that sort of age it's bound to be a bit worn and I'm all for a bit of preventive maintenance."

Its gratifying to know that all these cars are used regularly and without worry. Their owners' enthusiasm is heart-warming. All are members of the MG Car Club which has registers catering for each model and the sort of *camaraderie* one expects for such a fine British marque. I wonder whether any readers remember these particular cars from days gone by? I know their present owners would love to hear from them. ▲



Members only



Now in its 13th year, the MG Owners Club is still expanding. Club secretary, Roche Bentley, brings us up to date

WITH more than 50,000 current members and easily the largest one-make car club in the world it would be logical to assume that the management and staff at the MG Owners Club headquarters could relax and simply continue to supply magazines and benefits to its large membership. But that would not be in keeping with the professional and determined style which has seen this club grow in twelve short years to such a large size. With 78 full and part-time staff the resources of the Club are constantly stretched and additional benefits for new and existing members are continually being introduced.


MG News: April 1986 saw the launch of a free newspaper published in addition to *Enjoying MG*, the club's colour monthly magazine. The newspaper keeps



members abreast of the latest prices and availability of parts and accessories.

Spares availability: As a result of bulk buying on behalf of the club and MG specialists, and because of the growth in the restoration of MGs, prices now for MG spares are lower generally than they were five years ago. The costs of running and restoring MGs have not risen as they have for many marques and MG ownership is still within the easy reach of most pockets.

MG owners abroad: In 1986 the club has found there is a keen demand for spares, accessories and advice from North America, Canada and Australia in particular. Prior to this year the cost of obtaining spares has been prohibitive due to transport expenses but now MG owners are benefiting from an exclusive arrangement between the club, the Post Office and a major carrier. Members in Australia, for example, can make a local telephone call to order parts and accessories from the club's catalogues. Credit cards are used and the orders are transmitted in seconds via computers and electronic mail. The goods are mailed within hours and are delivered airmail direct to the member's home.

As the club's MG insurance scheme continues to expand (more than 22,000 members on cover) other club benefits are steadily improving as well. Any MG owner anywhere in the world not in regular contact with the club should write for more information to The MG Owners Club, Cambridge CB4 5QJ, or telephone 0954 31125 any time. 

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WHAT'S AN MG WORTH?

IN an attempt to establish a pattern of values for post-war MGs, we contacted two dozen experts in the MG world including dealers, parts suppliers, club members, writers and enthusiasts. We asked them to give us their best estimates of current market values for 20 MG models, each divided into three condition categories.

We fed all this information into our prices computer and the results are shown below. Some of the results surprised us but what also surprised us was the consistency of price estimates for various models.

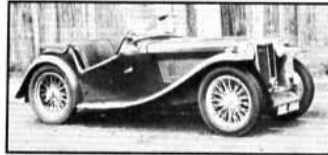
As any Classic car enthusiast knows, there is no sure way of defining the exact condition of a car as there are so many variables involved. However, we feel that we have come up with sensible guidelines to current values, but in the end it's down to the buyer and seller to thrash out their own deal.

The condition categories that we adopted were as follows:

Condition 1: An all-round sound car with body, mechanical components and trim in very good condition, but not a true concours car which is considered beyond the bounds of this survey.

Condition 2: A useable roadworthy car with MoT but needing work to take to condition 1.

Condition 3: A car suitable for restoration. Probably without MoT, not mechanically roadworthy and with decayed bodywork. Points to bear in mind include: roadsters tend to fetch more than GTs, prices in the north of England tend to be lower than those asked in the south; assuming equivalent conditions, rubber bumpered cars fetch less than chrome-bumpered versions.



Model TC Midget 1945-1949
Number prod 10,000; Capacity 1250cc 4 cyl; Power 54bhp; Top Speed 73mph; 0-60mph 22.7sec; Av fuel con 33mpg; Tested 1947; Values: Condition 1 \$8,000; Condition 2 \$5,675; Condition 3 \$3,575



Model MGA 1500 1955-1959
Number prod 58,750; Capacity 1489cc; Power 68bhp; Top Speed 98mph; 0-60mph 15.6sec; Av fuel con 27mpg; Tested 1955; Values: Condition 1 \$4,200; Condition 2 \$2,500; Condition 3 \$800



Model Magnette MkIV 1961-1968
Number prod 13,738; Capacity 1622cc; Power 68bhp; Top Speed 87.5mph; 0-60mph 17.3sec; Av fuel con 25.2mpg; Tested 1962; Values: Condition 1 \$1,350; Condition 2 \$745; Condition 3 \$200



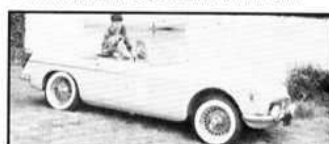
Model MGC 1967-1969
Number prod 4,524 (Roadster), 4,457 (GT); Capacity 2912cc; Power 145bhp; Top Speed 120mph; 0-60mph 10sec; Av fuel con 17.5mpg; Tested 1967; Values: Condition 1 \$3,250; Condition 2 \$1,675; Condition 3 \$875



Model Y-Type or 1/4-litre 1947-1953
Number prod 8336; Capacity 1250cc; Power 46bhp; Top Speed 70mph; 0-60mph 29.3sec; Av fuel con 30mpg; Tested 1951; Values: Condition 1 \$2,675; Condition 2 \$1,725; Condition 3 \$650



Model MGA 'Twin Cam'
Number prod 2,111; Capacity 1588cc; Power 108bhp; Top Speed 113mph; 0-60mph 13.3sec; Av fuel con 21.8mpg; Tested 1958; Values: Condition 1 \$5,100; Condition 2 \$3,200; Condition 3 \$2,375



Model MGB MkI 1962-1967
Number prod 115,898 (Roadster), 21,835 (GT); Capacity 1798cc; Power 95bhp; Top Speed 108.1mph; 0-60mph 12.1sec; Av fuel con 28mpg; Tested 1962; Values: Condition 1 \$3,000; Condition 2 \$1,425; Condition 3 \$425



Model MGB MkII 1967-1980
Number prod 375,147 (chrome bumper and rubber bumper), Capacity 1798cc; Power 95bhp; Top Speed 105mph; 0-60mph 12.1sec; Av fuel con 26.1mpg; Tested 1975; Values: Condition 1 \$3,375; Condition 2 \$1,875; Condition 3 \$675



Model TD Midget 1949-1953
Number prod 29,664; Capacity 1250cc; Power 54bhp; Top Speed 73.5mph; 0-60mph 23.9sec; Av fuel con 25mpg; Tested 1953; Values: Condition 1 \$8,700; Condition 2 \$5,825; Condition 3 \$3,675



Model MGA 1600 MkI/MkII 1959-1962
Number prod 31,501 (MkI), 8,719 (MkII); Capacity 1588cc; Power 80bhp/90bhp; Top Speed 96.1mph; 0-60mph 13.3sec; Av fuel con 29.7mpg; Tested 1959; Values: Condition 1 \$4,500; Condition 2 \$2,450; Condition 3 \$875



Model MG 1100/1300 1962-1971
Number prod 116,827 (1100), 26,240 (1300); Capacity 1098/1275cc; Power 55/70bhp; Top Speed 82mph; 0-60mph 22.5sec; Av fuel con 28-36mpg; Tested 1962; Values: Condition 1 \$1,000; Condition 2 \$450; Condition 3 \$125



Model MGB GT V8 1972-1976
Number prod 2,591; Capacity 3528cc; Power 137bhp; Top Speed 124mph; 0-60mph 8.6sec; Av fuel con 23.4mpg; Tested 1973; Values: Condition 1 \$4,325; Condition 2 \$2,700; Condition 3 \$625



Model TF Midget 1953-1955
Number prod 7,600; Capacity 1250/1500cc; Power 57/63bhp; Top Speed 85mph; 0-60mph 16.3sec; Av fuel con 29mpg; Tested 1954 (1500); Values: Condition 1 \$9,350; Condition 2 \$6,375; Condition 3 \$4,825



Model Magnette MkIII 1959-1961
Number prod 15,676; Capacity 1489cc; Power 66.5bhp; Top Speed 83.6mph; 0-60mph 20.6sec; Av fuel con 26.6mpg; Tested 1959; Values: Condition 1 \$1,300; Condition 2 \$700; Condition 3 \$175



Model Midget MkII 1964-1966
Number prod 26,601; Capacity 1098cc; Power 59bhp; Top Speed 91.8mph; 0-60mph 14.9sec; Av fuel con 29.2mpg; Tested 1964; Values: Condition 1 \$1,925; Condition 2 \$875; Condition 3 \$425



Model Midget MkIII 1966-1974
Number prod 100,372; Capacity 1275cc; Power 65bhp; Top Speed 93.5mph; 0-60mph 14.6sec; Av fuel con 28.5mpg; Tested 1967; Values: Condition 1 \$2,225; Condition 2 \$1,075; Condition 3 \$450



Model Midget MkIII 1974-1979
Number prod 72,185; Capacity 1491cc; Power 65bhp; Top Speed 101mph; 0-60mph 12.3sec; Av fuel con 27.9mpg; Tested 1975; Values: Condition 1 \$3,375; Condition 2 \$1,875; Condition 3 \$675



Model ZA/ZB Magnette 1953-1958
Number prod 12,754 (ZA), 23,846 (ZB); Capacity 1489cc; Power 60/68.4bhp; Top Speed 79.5mph; 0-60mph 22.6sec; Av fuel con 25.3mpg; Tested 1954 (ZA); Values: Condition 1 \$2,575; Condition 2 \$1,275; Condition 3 \$400



Model Midget MkI 1961-1964
Number prod 25,681; Capacity 1098cc; Power 46.4/55bhp; Top Speed 89.5mph; 0-60mph 17.2sec; Av fuel con 29.1mpg; Tested 1963; Values: Condition 1 \$2,325; Condition 2 \$825; Condition 3 \$325