

*Enjoying*



# MGA

## Ex works Coupé



The original green log book of 151 ABL displays the first owner as The MG Car Company Ltd, Abingdon and the date of first registration as the 26th October 1961. The log book is one of many indications that this car is an historic MG but a cursory glance at the MGA gives the impression of a fairly standard MGA Deluxe Coupé. This could not be further from the truth for when you start examining the car in detail there are plenty of clues to its glorious past.

151 ABL was built up by the Abingdon Competitions Department on an MGA 1600 Mk2 Deluxe chassis and was one of only 35 cars that were constructed as Coupés (12 were 1600s and 23 were 1600 Mk 2s); 6 other Coupés joined the ranks as works competition cars, three of which were built up to compete in the 1962 Sebring race. The MGA Deluxe was the term applied to MGAs that were fitted with Dunlop centre-lock pressed steel wheels and four wheel disc brakes as an option. This was to be a considerable modification and involved no less than 190 different part changes from standard Mk2 specification. These cars were constructed on the now defunct MGA Twin Cam chassis and it is generally felt that this was an easy way to dispose of the surplus chassis left over from the discontinued Twin Cam production. The early cars also used what was left of the stock of Twin Cam body shells, these were detectable by the removable front wheel arch panels, later cars used standard MGA body shells. Other items used from the Twin Cam were the steering rack, brake master cylinder and starter solenoid, externally the cars carried standard MGA badging and it was only the centre-lock disc wheels that gave the indication that it was a Deluxe model. The Deluxe was never listed by the factory as an individual model and was only referred to as an option available on the standard MGA 1600, in all 395 Deluxes were produced, 290 of which were Roadsters. 242 of the Roadsters were built up for the North American export market.

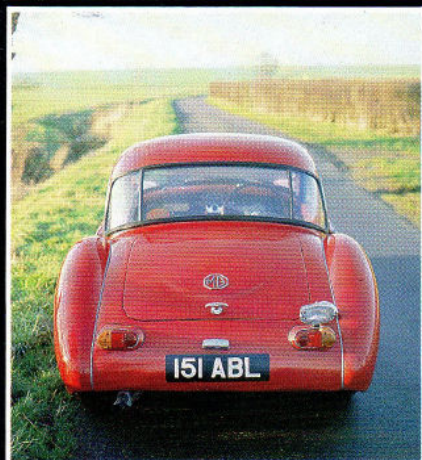
In 1962 a new manager was appointed to the Abingdon Competitions Department and this was to prove a significant year for the BMC's renowned rally team. Stuart Turner was keen to utilise the potential of BMC's more successful cars and to engage the best drivers and navigators. A thoroughly dedicated squad of Abingdon mechanics was to back up what was to become the most successful team ever assembled which helped Turner achieve as many Class wins as possible. 151 ABL was really the last of the MGA based works rally cars to compete successfully before the introduction of the long awaited MGB. The car was effectively a Twin

Cam Coupé as previously described, but had a 1,622cc pushrod overhead valve engine fitted and every available piece of competition equipment including a twin choke Weber carburettor. Its first outing was in the hands of twin brothers, Eric and Don Morley, in the 1962 Monte Carlo Rally. The Morleys' started off from Oslo with surprisingly good conditions and was not until they reached the south of France that conditions deteriorated with heavy ice and snow. A fine performance by the two brothers landed them a win in the two litre Class and second overall in the Grand Touring category behind the 'big' Healey 3000 and a creditable 28th overall. Following on to the Tulip Rally in May, the Morley brothers were to change their allegiance to the Healey camp, although still with BMC. ABL 151 was on this occasion to be driven by Ruano Aaltonen with Gunnar Palm as co-driver, Aaltonen having recovered from a horrific crash on the earlier Monte Carlo Rally. Similar to the Monte, the Tulip Rally was run on a handicap basis and again ABL won the two litre Class against strong opposition from a team of three works TR4s which ran full 2 litre engines. Aaltonen's test times showed him to be the 6th fastest car in the event but owing to a very complicated 'class improvement' handicap system he ended up 15th overall despite finishing ahead of the Morley twins in the 3 litre Healey which was the fastest car on the Rally! Notably Aaltonen's ascent of the Col de Turini was the fastest beating every other car in the entire field including Porsche and Works Mercedes and he was a clear 13 seconds ahead on this stage of the Healey and an E type Jaguar!



The third and final outing for the car was in the hands of John Gott and Bill Shepherd on the 1962 Leige-Sofia-Leige where unfortunately it was forced to retire. This rally was deemed the toughest in the world with the drivers pitting their skills against endless dust, rocks and impossible time schedules. They were not alone as most of the field were forced to retire, ABL suffered two ruptures on two separate occasions to the underside of the petrol tank by flying rocks.

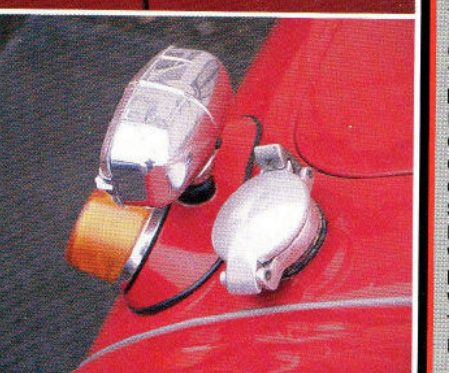
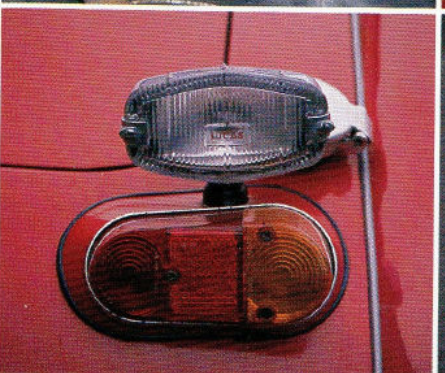
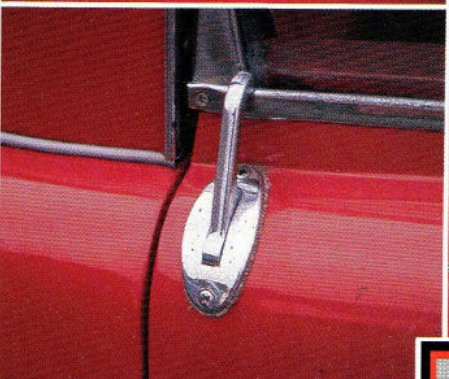
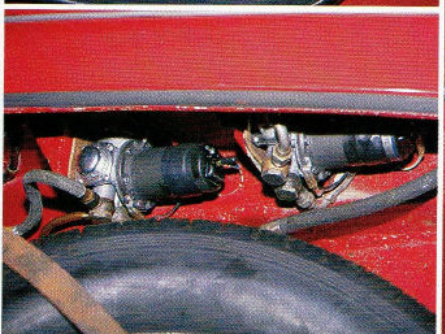
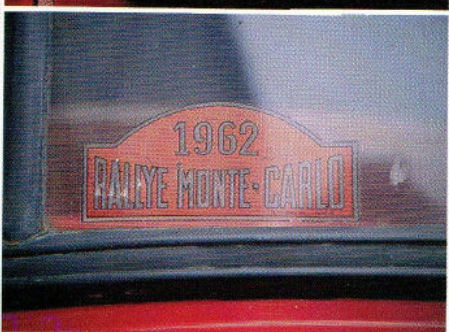
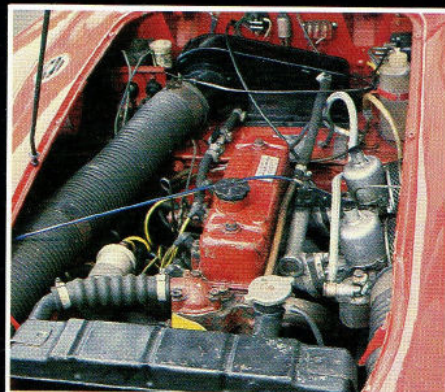
It is by good fortune that 151 ABL survives today having been in the hands of many different enthusiasts throughout the years. Currently the car is owned by Cambridge businessman and MGOC Member Peter Clark who recently purchased the car at auction in order to compete with it in historic rallying. Peter has over the years been very active in National and International rallying but has decided that a more sedate and enjoyable pastime would be to enter such rallies as the Classic Marathon, Coppa d'Italia, Coppa delle Alpi and the Historic Monte Carlo. He felt that as the sport was becoming more and more popular the only way to secure entries on such events was to have the 'real thing' and this he certainly has in 151 ABL. Peter is fortunate that one previous owner, Gordon Ogilvie, painstakingly researched and documented the history of the car and was keen to return the car as near as possible to its original rally specification and as can be seen the car looks the part. Original features include a tuned 1622cc engine with raised compression, high lift camshaft, oil cooler, close ratio gearbox and free flow exhaust. Other clues to its past are the Monte Carlo and Liege transfers on the rear screen, navigator milometer, auxiliary lighting, spare wheel bulge in the boot lid and twin boot well-mounted petrol pumps. Peter also proudly owns another Ex-Works MGA, MRX 42 and it is his intention to restore both cars to as near perfect condition as possible and to use them as they should be used on the historic rally circuits in Europe.





# MGA

## Ex works Coupé



### SPECIFICATION:

Engine: 4 cylinder in line  
 Capacity: 1,622cc  
 Valve operation: Pushrod overhead  
 Bore and Stroke: 76.2mm x 89.9mm  
 Power Output: Approx 110 @ 5,500rpm  
 Carburation: Twin 1 1/4" SUs  
 Gearbox: 4 speed, part synchromesh  
 Clutch: Dry plate  
 Suspension: Front: Coil and wishbone. Rear:  
 Half elliptic  
 Wheels: Centre lock pressed steel  
 Brakes: Dunlop disc front and rear  
 Wheelbase: 7' 10"  
 Track: 3' 11 1/2" front; 4' 0 3/4"  
 Number built: 325 (in 1600 Mk2 Deluxe form)