



The Dashpot Special 2013

**A Special Edition of
The Dashpot
to bring you
some information
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2013 British car day - east!

by Norm Mort

KINGSTON, ON - The All British Boot 'n' Bonnet Club from the Belleville-Kingston area held its 24th annual British Car Day in Kingston's city park in August.

This year there were one hundred and forty-three entries from southeastern Ontario, Quebec and New York State as well as the major centres such as Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal.

This year the B'n'B club was celebrating the sixtieth introduction of the Austin-Healey in 1953. As a result over a dozen of the big Healeys or "Handsome Brutes" were lined-up front and centre.

And, as well as your usual horde of popular British sports cars from Triumph, MG, Lotus, Austin-Healey, etc. there were some rarer English family and sporting saloon cars.

There was a good cross-section of British saloon cars including a sporting 1955 MG Midget belonging to Dave Graham, Ottawa. The Midget ZA appeared in 1953 in four-door guise only. The Midget name had originally been applied to a 1930s MG sports car. Built from 1953 to the end of 1956, the ZA was later replaced by the ZB. Both versions were powered by Morris' four-cylinder, 1500cc engine. The ZA had a top speed of 80 mph.

Another four-door sedan, very modern at the time, was the Rover 3500S which had evolved from the Rover 2000SC and 2000TC (twin carb), first introduced in 1963.

The Rover 2000 or P6 gained much acclaim for its novel and safety-oriented design.

The 2000 was also later fitted with the reworked Buick V8 engine and introduced as the 3500 in 1968. In October 1971 the 3500S was announced fitted with a four-speed manual transmission. The 3500S was popular with the British police force who appreciated its fine performance and handling.

A lovely Rover 1970 3500S was on display courtesy of Owen Evans and Stacia Jackson of Napanee.

A bright red 1961 Jaguar MkII was owned by Willem Westenberg of Westmount, Quebec. The Jaguar MkII was introduced in 1959 and was basically a re-styled version of Jaguar's first small sedan now commonly referred to as the Mk.I in retrospect.

The Jaguar Mk.II was in production into 1967 with nearly 90,000 being built in 2.4, 3.4 and 3.8L form.

In the more family oriented sa-

loon cars were two British icons.

The Austin A40 was Britain's most popular car in its day. In fact, it was sold in record numbers for Austin. It was a record that was not broken until the introduction of the diminutive A30 and A35 and later the Austin Mini.

The A40 was offered in two-door, four-door and in commercial guise - a pickup, van and Countryman station wagon or Brake. The rarest, most valuable and sought after today is the two-door Dorset, which was discontinued in 1949.

The most prolific model was the A40 Devon four-door saloon such as the one featured here. These first generation A40 sedans were built from 1947 through into 1952, before being replaced by the similar looking, but more rounded Somerset models that appeared that February. A total of 273,958 Devons were built compared to 26,587 commercials and just 15,939 Dorsets.

While popular in Britain, its colonies and most of the Dominions the Americans and Canadians found the 40 hp, 1200cc, four-cylinder engine too slow with its 0-60 mph time of 34.8 seconds and top speed of just 67 mph. The A40 was also seen as being too small with an overall length of 153-inches. As well, most North Americans saw the A40's styling as too old fashioned.

Today, the A40 is seen as being very charming and representative of traditional British values.

A fierce competitor of the popular Austin A40 was the Morris Minor which was designed by Alec Issigonis (later of Mini fame), and first appeared in 1948. Over the ensuing decades it evolved, but was the British equivalent of the Volkswagen Beetle in performance, market and even shape - although it came in four-door form.

The Minor finally went out of production after 23-years in 1971. A very clean example was the 1961 Morris Minor 1000 of John and MaryLynn Cruickshank of Kingston.

Some of my favourite British sports cars were on display and included Louis Boucher's 1958 Triumph TR3A in a lovely green tone and sporting wire wheels, a luggage rack, wind wings, and some added wood in the interior.

A very sixties style, pocket rocket was a 1966 Lotus Elan S2 driven down from Delta, ON by owner Ron Wanless. The fibre-glass-bodied Elan was built from 1962 to 1971; although it continued in production in coupe form for another two years as the Elan

All British Car Day 2013

Powered by a 1498cc and later 1558cc four-cylinder engine it had a top speed of 110 or in larger form 122 mph.

One of the nicest Morgan's was the two-tone silver 1962 Morgan +4 driven down from Toronto by owner Peter Pfahl.

A white 1956 MG MGA sporting whitewall tires and wire wheels owned by Andy Bounsall of Ottawa brought back fond memories of one I owned over thirty years ago,

which reminded me of my first car which was virtually identical.

For its 25th anniversary event next year there are big plans in the works so stay tuned.

The awards each year include some that are rather different from many car show prizes and they follow.

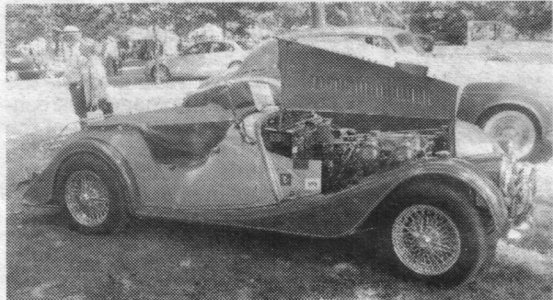
Best Boot - Ken and Barb Low, Brockville, 1960 Austin-Healey 3000 BN7, Best Under the Bonnet - David Rodger, Thornhill, 1976 Jensen

in Old Autos. Best Wheels/Tires - Claude Jauron, Trois-Rivieres, 1967 Austin-Healey 3000 Mk.III who also captured the Furthest Driven plaque covering a distance of 420 kms or 263 miles.

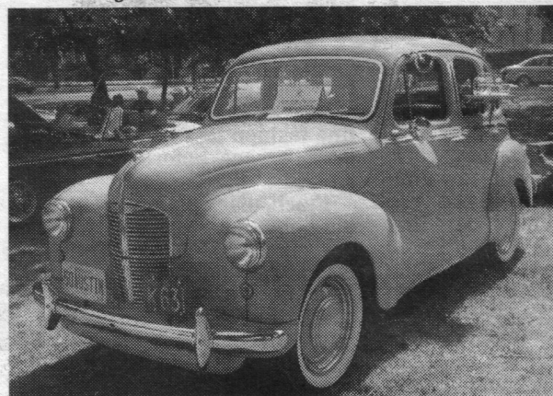
Best Exterior - 1956 MGA, Paul Hutchinson, Gananoque. Best Interior - 1966 Jaguar E-Type, Jean Gadbois, Montreal. Best Race Car - 1968 Lotus, Ed Luce, Kingston.

1923 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost, Martyn Lavolette - "Most Coveted" and "Oldest" prizes.

Best Austin-Healey at the Show - Graham Boardman, 1967 Austin-Healey 3000 M III.



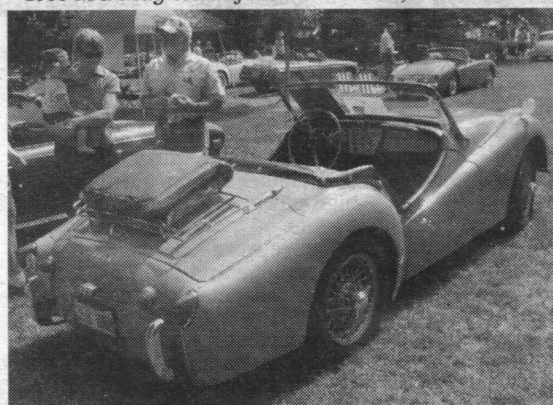
Looking ready to take flight was Peter Pfahl's 1962 Morgan +4.



Voted as the Best in Show was the mint and very charming 1950 Austin A40 owned by Janice and Ray Ward of Keene.



There was a good cross-section of British saloon cars in attendance including the sporting 1955 MG Midget of Dave Graham, Ottawa.



Some of my favourite British sports cars on display included Louis Boucher's 1958 Triumph TR3A.



This 1961 Morris Minor 1000 was owned by John and MaryLynn Cruickshank of Kingston.



This bright red 1961 Jaguar MkII was owned by Willem Westenberg of Westmount, Quebec.

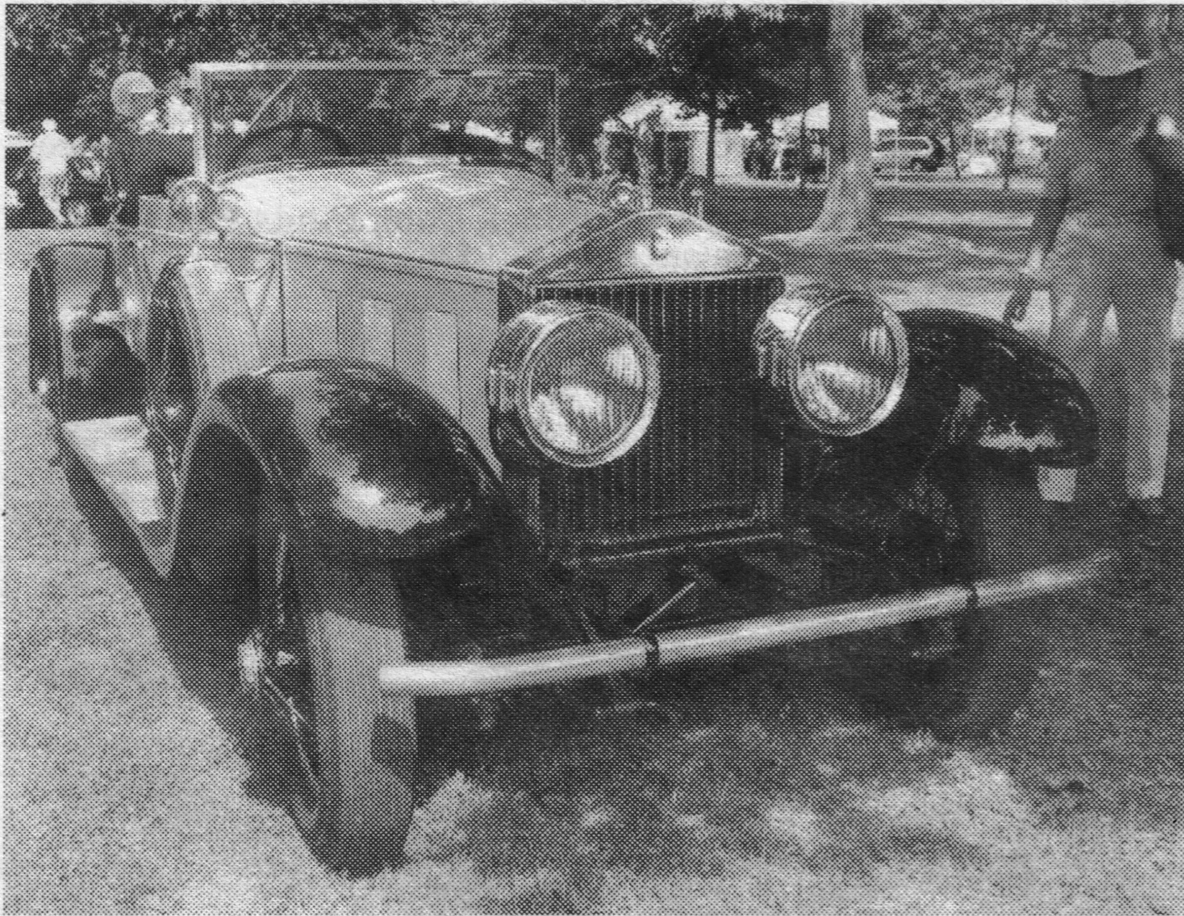


A real stylish, pocket rocket was this 1966 Lotus Elan S2 driven down from Delta, ON by owner Ron Wanless.



This white Triumph TR3A reminded me of my first car which was virtually identical.

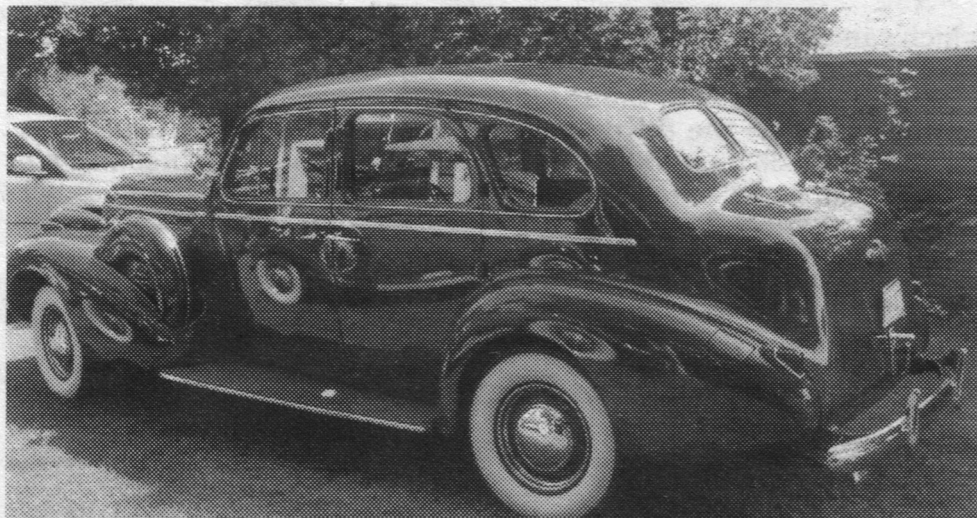
All British Car Day 2013



Winner of two awards was the stately 1923 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost of Martyn Laviolette for the prestigious “Most Coveted” and “Oldest” prizes.



Another MGA was this white 1956 MGA of Andy Bounsall of Ottawa.



Bill and Marilyn Henderson drove their regal 1938 Buick Roadmaster from Kemptville.



Stewart Wilkinson drove his 1959 Fiat Multipla 600 while Tom Wilkinson accompanied with the 1960 Fiat 600.

Ottawa CSTM show . . .

by Rheal Larose

OTTAWA, ON - Canada Science and Tech Museum in Ottawa is a keeper of many automotive treasures. In addition to its current exhibit of In Search of the Canadian Car, it also warehouses almost a 100 motor vehicles not to mention all the other vehicles, i.e. trains, buses, boats, carriages, etc.

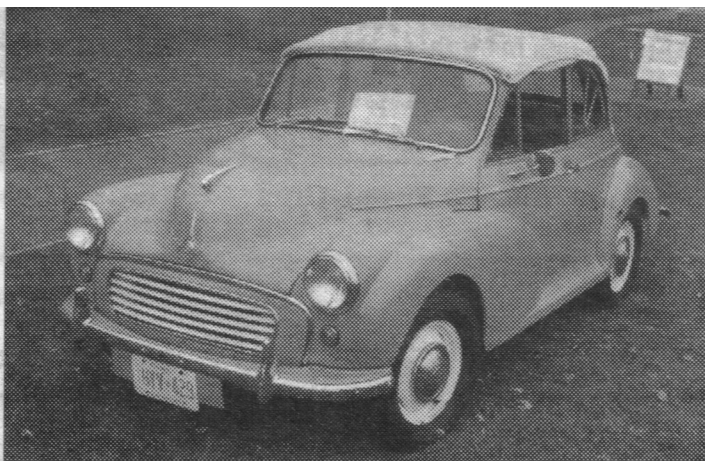
Among its many unique vehicles are the oldest Canadian car, the Taylor Steam Buggy built in 1967 in Stanstead, Quebec and a couple of Royal Tour cars, the original Popemobile, etc.

On September 7, 2013, the Museum partnered with the Rideau

Valley Region of the Historical Automobile Society of Canada and despite a cloudy/drizzly day, 25 dedicated hobbyists brought their own treasures for the benefit of the public along with access to the special warehouse vehicles and Museum exhibits. Visitors and participants alike could also ride an old steam train, or take in a BBQ under cover. Some of the special vehicles included a fabulous 1939 Buick Roadmaster, a couple of small Fiats and everything in between. Modest beginnings, watch for a repeat next year?



Andy Holdham drove his sweet 1937 Chevrolet Master sedan from Manotick.



Chris and Sharon Billings brought their 1959 Morris Minor 1000.



Bruce Pettinger from Ottawa drove his very nice 1951 Plymouth Cranbrook.



Charles Slegtenhurst drove his 1962 Chrysler 300 hardtop.



Denise Côté from Orléans drove her uniquely Canadian 1957 Monarch Lucerne.



Mike and Pauline Gosselin of Navan drove their low mileage 1959 Pontiac Laurentian.



Another Canadian product - 1958 Pontiac Strato-Chief - Denis and Rhea Larose.



This 1976 Thunderbird from Gatineau, QC was a late arrival.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

by NORM MORT



MG Midget ZA and ZB

Rarely seen at many British car shows are the MG sedans that were built by Morris and later by the British Motor Corporation or BMC into the 1960s.

Interestingly, if you do happen to see one it probably won't be the latter front-wheel-drive 1100 or 1300 sedans or the Pininfarina penned Midget Mk. III or Mk. IV, but rather the post-war Midget models known as the ZA and ZB.

The Midget name stemmed from the famous pre-war, six-cylinder MG K3 & N-Type sports cars and small coupes. The MG K3 Midget has been hailed as the greatest sports car of the era and although not fast was a tremendous success in road racing and firmly established the MG marque as a leader in sports cars. In its inaugural year of competition in 1933 the K3 Midget captured the Tean Prize in the Mille Miglia, 2nd, 3rd and 4th places in the International Trophy at Brooklands, 3rd in the British Empire Trophy, 1st in the Coppa Acerbo at Pescara, 1st in the Ulster Tourist Trophy driven by the great Nuvolari and 1st in the BRDC 500 Miles.

The first post-war sedans built were the Y-Types. The YA and slightly different mechanically YB appeared in 1947, along with the four-place YT or Tourer. These

sedans and tourers bore the looks and design features from the 1930s as designer Gerald Palmer first began the design in 1938. Had it not been for the outbreak of war in 1939 these MG saloons would have entered production in 1940.

The Y-Types were subsequently replaced in 1953 by a far more modern, envelope body design by Gerald Palmer that became known as the MG Midget ZA.

It appeared shortly after the merger of Austin and Morris and was one of the first model lines to assume the "badge engineering" that would be a common characteristic amongst the many well established BMC marques. It was really a Wolseley 4/44 with an MG grille, badges and some customary MG features and styling cues such as a semi-octagon shaped gauge.

MG enthusiasts were not particularly happy with the new car's stolen heritage, but it proved to be popular due in part to its now more powerful 1489cc, four-cylinder engine and a better rearend ratio than the previous Y-Types.

This engine provided much improved performance more in keeping with the times and would ultimately be used in many BMC models including the future MG T-Series replacement the envelope-bodied MGA of 1955.

In 1956 the ZB version appeared

which was fitted with larger twin carburetors and thus provided 8.4 hp and even better performance.

The top speed of the 102-inch wheelbase Midget ZA had been 80 mph with a 0-50 mph time of 15 seconds, while in comparison the ZB was able to reach fifty in just 13 seconds with a top speed of 86 mph.

The quarter mile was 22.7 and 21.6 seconds respectively, while fuel consumption in the Midget ZA and ZB sedan was 26-32 mpg and 24-30 mpg.

At the same time, a 0-60 mph time would be considerably more time, so the Midget in either form was no rocket.

The 0-50 mph time in an MGA 1500 was 10.2 seconds with a 0-60 mph in 14.5, so add another 5-7 seconds for the 3,300 pound Midget verses the 2,340 pound MGA 1500.

The Midget ZB was offered originally in similar ZA colours, but the last variation was as a stylish varitone (two colours separated by a chrome strip encircling the body) with a slightly larger rear window.

Inside the Midget ZA and ZB were all leather and wood providing very comfortable and luxurious surroundings for four or sometimes up to five. The spare tire sat vertically on the left side of the wide-opening, generous trunk which allowed enough space for four or five suitcases. Full instrumentation and a floor shift proved to be popular with sporting enthusiasts.

Other mechanical features of the ZA and ZB included rack and pinion steering, an independent front suspension, a live rear axle, a 37.5-foot turning circle, Lockheed hydraulic brakes on all four corners, a 12-volt battery, a clock, and unitary construction.

Total production was 18,076 ZA Midgets, 10,722 solid coloured ZB models and another 7,803 varitone models for a grand total of 36,601 saloons.

MG Midgets were seen in rallying events, but there were few outright successes, although the cars usually finished. Nancy Mitchell in 1956 in her "Works" Midget won the Ladies' Cup in the Lyons-Charbonnieres Rally. Midgets did better in touring car races including a second place finish in the 1956 Silverstone race.

Few MG Midget saloon cars have survived. Many became parts cars for the more popular MG sports cars. Yet, according to MG expert Richard Knudson the Midgets "...were great rust developers. While these sedans may not be the all-time MG rust champs, they certainly must rate in the top three."

The 1954 unveiling models at the Toronto Auto Show at the Canadian

MG Midget

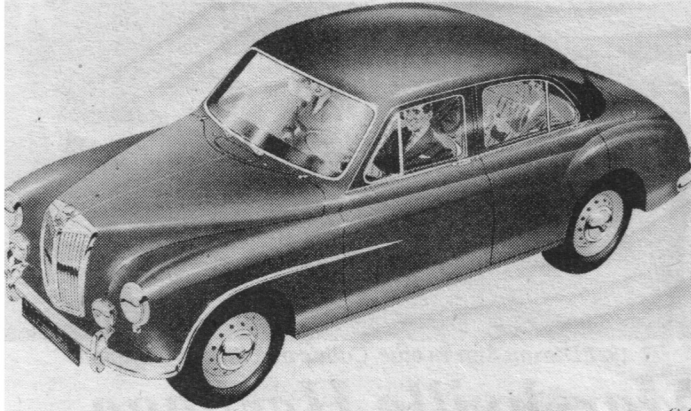
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ational Exhibition featured a green Magnette with a green leather interior and a grey model with grey leather.

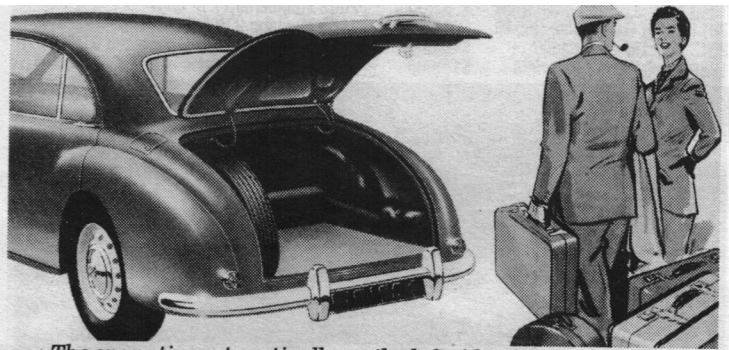
Many felt the MG Magnette ZA and ZB were the best saloon cars in their class in its day, although some felt the use of the Magnette nomen-

clature on a sedan was an insult.

For those interested in the MG Magnette sedans or other MG family and sporting sedans buy a copy of "MG Saloon Cars" by Anders Ditlev Clausager which outlines all the models in good detail throughout the decades.

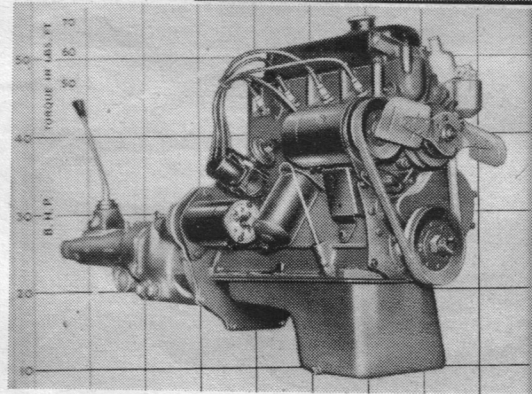
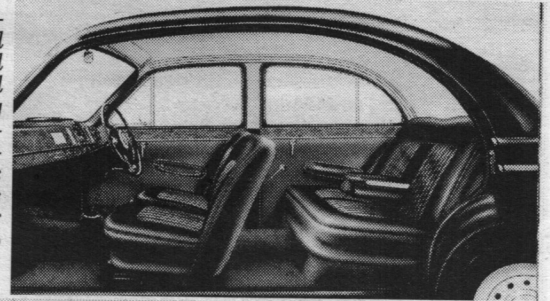


The Magnette ZB was offered originally in similar ZA colours such as this popular maroon example.

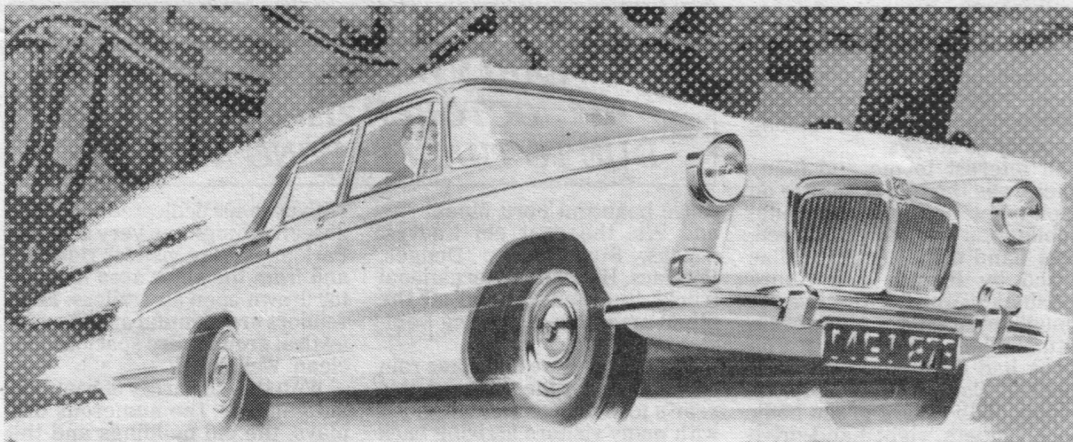


The spare tire sat vertically on the left side of the wide opening, generous trunk which allowed enough space for four or five suitcases.

Inside the Magnette ZA and ZB were all leather and wood providing very comfortable and luxurious surroundings for four or sometimes up to five.



The ZA was powered by a 1489cc, four-cylinder engine.



Pininfarina penned the next generation Magnette Mk. III and Mk. IV MG Magnette of which few have survived.

MG Magnette

Austin-Healey Sprite/ MG Midget . . .

1961-1979

So you attended one of the many British car days across the country and now you want an inexpensive to buy and run vintage British roadster. Take a look at the MG Midget or an Austin-Healey Sprite.

Built by the same company - BMC (British Motor Corporation), then later BMH (British Motor Holdings) and then finally BLMC (British Leyland Motor Corporation), the Austin-Healey Sprite and MG Midget were examples of "Badge Engineering" at its worst. (This blatant practice was perfected first by BMC and followed as gospel by the evolving corporations until rationalization finally took place in the last half of the 1970s and early eighties).

In 1961 just three years after its introduction, the Austin-Healey Sprite created by Donald Healey was thought to be ready for a facelift. The bug-eye headlamps, one-piece bonnet, and lack of opening trunk had been a major criticism, so the new second generation Sprite; which would also appear in Morris showrooms in the form of the MK I MG Midget, addressed all these problems.

When this new generation was announced the press did note it had lost some of its unique styling, but declared the new Sprite/Midget was overall far more attractive, modern and practical despite it's rather generic look.

In fact, many felt the new Austin-Healey Sprite MK II and MG Midget MK I were really quite handsome. The new design

TRUTH OR DARE!

by NORM MORT

was a collaboration between the MG and Healey styling and design groups and numerous improvements were made.

The rear cowl was cut back to provide more interior room and a handy storage space behind the twin front bucket seats and there was enough space for a new optional jump seat for tiny children or a dog.

The original Sprite suspension and drivetrain were carried over, but the 948cc A-series engine was overhauled, which included a strengthened crankshaft, a new camshaft, the fitting of twin 1-1/4 inch HS2 SU carbs, a redesigned cylinder head, and increased compression.

The power output rose from 42.5 hp @ 5000 rpm to 46.4 hp @ 5500 rpm and as a result the top speed increased from 83 mph to 86 mph. This minimal increase in performance meant fuel economy suffered slightly. Testing concurred fuel consumption increased from an average 43 mpg to 40 mpg.

Throughout the next eight years of production the Sprite and Midget differed only in detailing. Apart from the badges, the most distinguishing features were the chrome strips added to the MG along the flanks and on the hood. In addition, Midgets were fitted with a vertical slat grille and had a slightly nicer interior and dashboard finish with

better seats. The term "Spridget" was born as a common reference due to the similarity of the two lines.

The new Spridgets were officially announced in May 1961 and Car & Driver (Feb 62) stated, "No matter how you look at it, the new Midget's a real fun car." They went on to say, "The handling cannot be faulted. The combination of quick steering, powerful brakes and a roadworthy chassis add up to pure fun on virtually any road."

Likewise, Road & Track's first impression of the new Austin-Healey Sprite II (Road Test 1962 Annual noted, "New look plus added convenience, equal more desirable car. It offers more fun per dollar than anything we've driven for along time.")

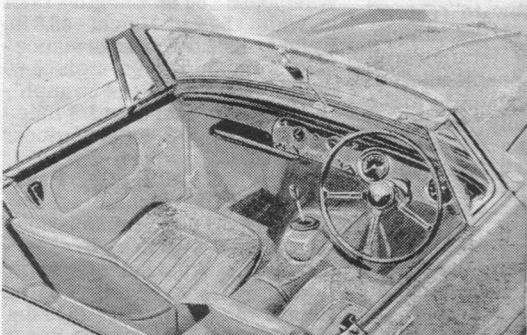
Despite being just introduced there were continual improvements incorporated in the Spridget's design. In 1962 the Spridgets were fitted with the refined 56 bhp, 1098cc engines and Lockheed front disc brakes.

A more sophisticated Sprite MK III/Midget MK II was unveiled in March, 1964 and although the four-cylinder engine displacement remained at 1098cc there were substantial improvements. Larger main bearings and a strengthened crankshaft combined with an improved head design, larger inlet valves and better porting resulted in a smoother and more flexible engine for tuning. Comfort was greatly improved with the advent of wind-up windows and side vents rather than detachable Plexiglas side curtains. As well, a new folding top, improved windscreen, a re-designed dash and a parcel shelf on the passenger side were welcome additions. The ride comfort was also enhanced with the move from quarter elliptic to half elliptic springs.

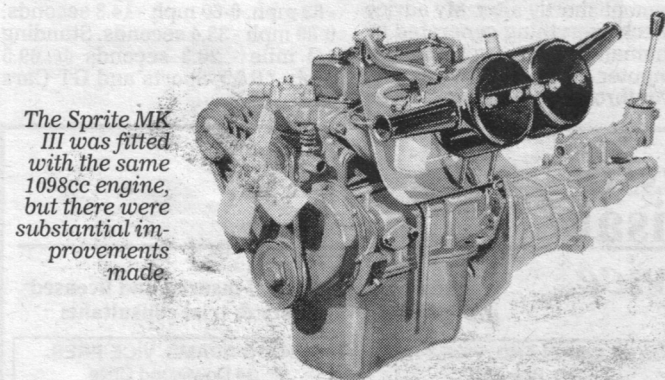
In 1966 the MK IV Sprite and Midget MK III were introduced, powered by a more powerful 65 bhp, 1275cc version of the A-series unit with an Austin gearbox.

Some of the more popular options for the Spridgets included wire wheels, a hardtop, a tonneau cover, an anti-rollbar, laminated windscreen, and an oil cooler.

In 1968 the Austin-Healey Sprite and MG Midget were given a fresher appearance thanks to contrasting matte



The Sprite MKIII was fitted with fairly complete instrumentation including a tach, generator warning light and a full vinyl interior.



The Sprite MK III was fitted with the same 1098cc engine, but there were substantial improvements made.

Midget

ack rockers, grille, and wheels. According to Geoffrey Healey it was an American idea that fortunately lasted only for a short time. "The general effect was a general, and sales declined alarmingly as there were few undertakers wanting to buy Sprites or Midgets for their business."

With the merger of Leyland and BMH to form BLMC the Healey ties were severed and in 1969 the Sprite was dropped in favour of the MG Midget. BMC had been paying Healey a consultants' fee on each and every Sprite and Midget built, but there was no agreement for the production of the MG Midget on its own.

The MG Midget was to continue on in production for another ten years with the biggest changes coming in 1975 with the fitting of heavy rubber bumpers to meet the new government crash regulations. To help compensate for the added weight the MG Midget was fitted with the longtime rival Triumph Spitfire 1500 (1491cc) four-cylinder engine. Unfortunately, the 1500cc unit was two horsepower less due to the changes required in the manifold because of the Midget's tiny engine compartment.

Production drew to a close in 1979 and in total just under 10,000 Midgets were built and around 70,000 1961-69 A-H Sprites.

Today the Austin-Healey Sprite and MG Midget are not popular with the bulk of British car enthusiasts for a number of reasons.

These Spridgets were well used in their day and often run into the ground. Few good, clean examples survive; especially 1960s Sprites and Midgets. These were basic sports cars that were rarely babied and driven hard and fast.

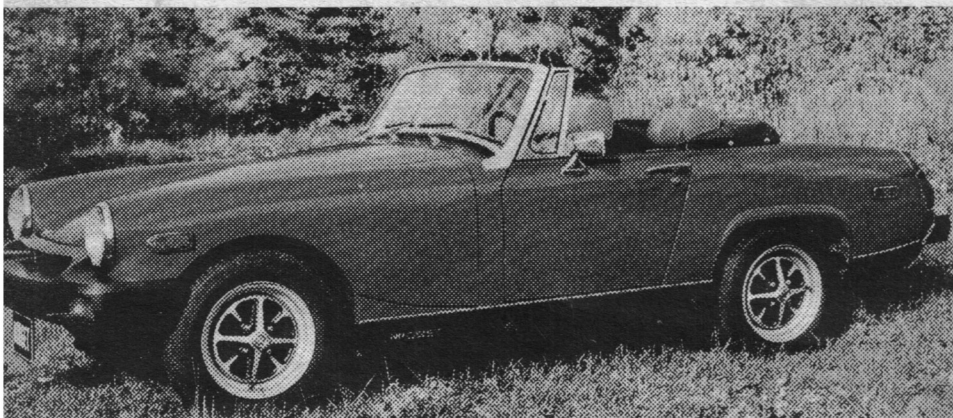
As well, for similar money one could buy a more powerful MGB or for about the same price the SCCA winning Triumph Spitfire. And, in today's fast-moving world the Spridgets are slow and not considered comfortable.

Mechanically, cold weather starting and an ill-fitting convert-

(continued on page 14B)



Many felt the new MG Midget MK I was really quite handsome.



The MG Midget's biggest change came in 1975 with the fitting of heavy rubber bumpers and a Triumph 1500 engine.

Midget



In 1968 the Austin-Healey Sprite and MG Midget were given a fresher appearance thanks to contrasting matte black rockers, grille, and wheels.

Truth or Dare . . .

(continued from page 13B)

ible top were a common source of complaints when new, but less of a problem today thanks to better batteries and electrics. A fine weather car, most Spridget owners aren't too concerned with a few drafts.

The more powerful and refined 1275cc Spridget is a better choice as it offers sufficient power, fun driving and decent handling.

Regardless of the vintage you choose, Spridgets tend to have very rusty floors, rockers and spring hangers. A solid body makes the Spridget easier to restore/refurbish than a rusty example with good mechanicals. Ninety percent of the body parts are readily available. Gearbox parts for the original smooth case on the early 948cc models are difficult to locate. Overall though, donor cars remain plentiful.

Prices for parts are comparable in most cases to an MGB and occasionally less. There are some exceptions. For example the earlier Spridgets were fitted with dual bore master cylinders like those used in the MGA and are rather pricey.

Spridgets are rare sights in most sports car restoration shops due to the high cost of restoration verses market value, thus a well maintained original is the best bet.

As a do-it-yourselfer a Spridget is a good first sports car to buy and learn how to restore. These sports cars are simple, straight forward restoration projects that are reasonable alternatives, just don't expect to make any money - actually you should expect to lose money if you are restoring just to sell. Settle for an MGB instead, but even with this

popular British sports car you can easily lose money.

A very good #2 Sprite or Midget may cost you as much as \$8,500, but better to pay this than buy a #3 at \$6,500. The difference in the long run will be far more than two grand.

Specifications for Comparison

1961 Austin-Healey Sprite II

- Price New: \$2045. Engine - 50hp, 948cc - 4 cyl, ohv. Transmission - 4 speed synchro on top three. Brakes - 4 wheel drum. Wheelbase - 80 in. Length - 136.25 in. Width - 55 in. Height - 49 in. Weight - 1540 lbs. *Performance - Maximum Speed - 84 mph. 0-60 mph - 19.6 seconds. 0-80 mph - 49.0 seconds. Standing 1/4 mile - 22.8 seconds @ 62 mph. *R&T 1962 RT annual/C&C Feb. 1962.

1968 Austin-Healey Sprite

- Price New: \$2262.00. Engine - 65hp, 1275cc 4-cyl ohv. Transmission - 4-speed with synchro on top three. Brakes - disc/drum. Wheelbase - 80 in. Length - 137 in. Width - 56.6 in. Height - 48.6 in. Weight - 1560 lbs. *Performance - Maximum Speed - 93 mph. 0-60 mph - 14.7 seconds. 0-75 mph - 25.6 seconds. Standing 1/4 mile - 19.9 seconds @ 69 mph. *R&T 1969 RT annual.

1971 MG Midget - MK III

- Price: approx. \$2500.00. Engine - 64hp, 1275cc - 4-cyl ohv. Transmissions - 4 speed synchro on top three. Brakes - disc/drum. Wheelbase - 80 in. Length - 137.4 in. Width - 54.9 in. Height - 48.6 in. Weight - 1546 lbs. *Performance - Maximum Speed 94 mph. 0-60 mph - 14.1 seconds. 0-80 mph - 29.7 seconds. Standing 1/4 mile - 19.6 seconds @ 69 mph. *Autocar Feb. 4/71.

1979 MG Midget - Price:

\$4850.00 POE. Engine - 50hp, 1493cc - 4 cyl ohv. Transmission - 4-speed all synchro. Brakes - disc/drum. Wheelbase - 80 in. Length - 143 in. Width - 54 in. Height 48.3 in. Weight - 1835 lbs. *Performance - Maximum Speed - 83 mph. 0-60 mph - 14.3 seconds. 0-80 mph - 33.4 seconds. Standing

Midget

OTTAWA



CLUB