



&



FARINA  
REGISTER

# Newsletter

*For the enthusiast of the  
BMC Farina Riley 4/68, 4/72,  
MG Midget Mk 3 and Mk 4*

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## Going Dutch



*An action photo of Den Haag (The Hague) resident Holger de Kat's Mark 3 Midget seen cruising along a Dutch motorway. The car was formerly XYW982 here in the UK.*

## MG & RILEY FARINA REGISTER

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Welcome to our Autumn issue number 33. You will find plenty of good reading material in this edition, including the start of a serialised series on Andrew Idle's Farina memories! I hope you have all enjoyed the summer attending various events in your cars or simply working on them and enjoying them. I have been spending the summer months enjoying my Riley after lots of hard work. I am now, however, looking to find a good home for this car as my Magnette restoration progresses (see classifieds). I also found the time to get away on a few adventures in July (without Farina) to the Isle of Man, Finland and most notably the former Soviet Union state of Estonia. I can tell you I found no evidence of Farinas there, although I did see a Wolseley 16/60 in the Isle of Man.

I went down to the annual Peterborough BMC Day in my Riley which was well attended as usual along with loads of auto jumble on sale. I then undertook the intergalactic mission to Norwich in my Cambridge for the 'COOC' 21st Birthday National Rally. This was an excellent event despite the poor weather. We had plenty of MG and Riley Farinas at this one in particular.

I have been approached by the 'COOC' to become the new MG and Riley secretary for them, and have been delighted to accept the position. I feel awareness of our cars can only grow and hopefully more will be saved. If anyone is looking for cars at any time in between newsletters please let me know as I often know where a few are for sale—the same goes for any spares you may need.

Car discovery-wise, a couple of exciting ones have turned up recently. Last issue we listed a new owner for Riley 4/72 chassis 19158, BOK496C; this vehicle has turned out to be a former BMC publicity vehicle and appears in the *Observer Book of Automobiles* amongst others! Secondly, Andy Westcott from Luton informed me at the BMC Day that he had found the earliest known Riley 4/68 in somebody's front garden of all places! See inside for details

Happy Motoring,

Mick

## Webmaster introduced

*So, who is that mystery character behind our superb website?  
Well now you can find out — read on!*

MICK invited me to explain who I am and what I do. For the past three or four years I've been building up the *MG and Riley Farina Register* website. The website started just as a small page or two about my own personal car, which led to Neil Cairns contacting me. Neil sent me everything he had ever written about these Farinas as well as a mountain of pictures, technical data and information about *Register* participants. About the same time I was also contacted by Mike Plumbstead who runs [www.mgcars.org.uk](http://www.mgcars.org.uk) offering free server space. The combination of unlimited server space and a mountain of material to put on it has resulted in the website we have today.

The website has gone through three major alterations. My first attempt was done using some free webpage software that was supposed to make pages without much thought. The result was an absolute tangle of oddly coloured pages and messy 'graphics', if you can call them such. Generation two was much more successful in comparison, and this is where the web page really started to grow. A theme was introduced of an off-white 'old paper' background and burgundy and dark green typeface for the headings and subtitles. You will still find some old pages buried that use this format. The main focus was on getting as much information as possible out to owners all over the world. We listed parts sources, repair information, owner lists, articles and just basic information out of Neil's book. This would save Neil tons of money on printing and shipping expenses over having to send out this information to individual owners.

If the second generation was focused on getting information to owners, the third generation was about getting information to non-owners. There are very few Magnette/Riley owners in the world, yet the web page as it now stands receives between 150 and 250 hits a week on average. Some weeks get up in the 300's and our record stands at 450 hits in a single week. We don't have a counter any more, but I estimate using hit counts from the [www.mgcars.org.uk](http://www.mgcars.org.uk) server that the *Register* website has had over 12,000 hits since its inception. The reason for so many hits is that a great many people who are not owners are visiting the site and coming back for additional visits to see what they missed. The needs of the non-owner visitor were addressed in the third generation of the website.

I gave up using web page generation software and decided to write the code myself, raw, in 'Notepad'. The web page was redesigned with a more modern look, complete with a typeface stolen right out of *Classic Cars* magazine. Where

previously the website was known as [www.mgcars.org.uk/farina](http://www.mgcars.org.uk/farina), the website now uses the more memorable domain [www.mgmagnette.com](http://www.mgmagnette.com). It costs \$50 a year to use the name, but Mick makes up for it by having not charged me for the Newsletter and loading me up with beer last time I visited the UK. Almost everything done to the website in this third generation has been to generate interest and awareness in these cars by non-owners. Of interest to non-owners especially has been:

- ◆ Internet Movies showing moving video and audio of a Magnette in Virginia.
- ◆ Java Scripts that allow webpage viewers to mutate a picture of a Magnette or use a Magnette image as a puzzle.
- ◆ The Tour of Great Britain showing Neil's car in front of famous UK sites.

Attempts have been made to make somewhat dry topics more interesting. I have accumulated a large amount of things that would ordinarily appear in a Magnette's glovebox. Rather than just have a page of scanned pictures the items were arranged in a tour. You click an image of a Magnette's dashboard and the glovebox door opens! You then proceed to be shown items like owners' manuals, warranty papers, etc, and at the very end you click the glovebox door and it closes.

The website also has a lot of obvious, but still interesting material. We've reprinted road tests, included owner's stories, scanned in pictures. We've got brochures displayed; sections on Frank McKinney's Farina Farm in Kansas; information on Ernesto Gasulla and the Argentinian Magnostes, and it really does go on for ever.

Basically, if the information is not on the website you'd have a hard time finding an answer. Still, you could always ask Mick or Neil! In the future I hope to get a backlog of stuff up on the pages. I still have a pile of interesting brochures and dealer material to scan in that I just haven't gotten around to. (*I hate my scanner . . .*) The section on restoration is pretty weak. There is a great little bulletin board where you could post cars that are for sale, but the website really does need a separate 'cars for sale section'. I also have a chunk of half-finished pages from last summer that I just haven't bothered uploading yet, on trim combinations and paint finishes. These websites really are never done—and when they are, you find something you screwed up or could improve. But for a club of this size, and for a following of our size, I'd say we've got a bang up site, if I do say so myself.

JOHN ELWOOD

[www.mgmagnette.com](http://www.mgmagnette.com)

# MAGNETTES IN PRINT

The MG Magnette and Riley Farina's are now in quite a number of books. Compared to only a few years ago, when very little could be found, today you can delve into the nostalgia of yesteryear with your Farina. Back in the early 1990's, if you wanted to read anything about your MG or Riley, you would have had to have written it yourself.

Perhaps the book that heralded the fact the Farina MG's and Riley's were now to be noticed, was the book by Anders Ditlev Clausager, *MG Saloon Cars*. In this, the chapter on the Mk3 and Mk4 Magnostes is full of detail and data. PHV813E is the star and photos of Andrew Brock's car are now there for everyone to see for posterity. ISBN number is 1 901432-06-8, printed by Bay View Books.

An earlier 'paper-back' fact file of tests and technical articles is that published by Transport Source Books as TSB137, with reprints of road tests of the cars when new. The title is *Plush Farina 4's*, and includes the Wolseley version as well as MG and Riley Farinas. You can get copies from 01473 212912.

The history of the car is published in the soft-back booklet, *The Cinderella MG and Riley*, written by myself. This has all those bits in missing from things like official histories, road tests, and workshop manuals. There are still copies left for the enthusiasts library available from myself. Along with this booklet are smaller individual booklets on specific jobs, available from Mick Holehouse. These include assistance with fixing the brakes; modifications like fitting the 1800cc engines; rebuilding the suspension, etc.

The latest addition is a mention in the hardbound book, *The First Seventy Years*, an official history of the MG Car Club. Every MG register is mentioned, including ours. It is only available from the MGCC offices in Abingdon on 01235 555552, and is a good read if you take it in instalments.

Another compilation of the lesser known articles on the Mk3, Mk4, 4/68 and 4/72 can be found in another soft-back edition from Unique Books. These can be hard to find as they are out of print. They come under the Master Portfolio series and are on 01702 207384.

If you need a workshop manual, there are plenty of Haynes copies about at auto jumbles, but original BMC versions are scarce. The MGOC was selling copies some while ago, but these were unauthorised photocopies of the official BMC version.

So, if you want something for Christmas, here is a list to leave lying about.

NEIL CAIRNS

# CHILDHOOD RECOLLECTIONS OF CARS

— especially BMC Farinas

**Y**OUR EDITOR, MICK is aware that I grew up in an era when BMC Farinas were a common sight on our roads in the UK. In fact I arrived in the long, hot summer of 1959, the year which apart from seeing the launch of the MG and Riley Farinas, also witnessed the launch of the Mini and Ford Anglia.

At that time, my dad had just bought a second-hand Morris 10, dating from 1948. Its registration number was GUE746. It provided trusty, if leisurely family transport, with the best speed being 40 mph flat out. It was dark green or black, I think, and the gear stick had a tendency to jump out of third gear, especially when whining its way down hills. It was necessary to place a firm knee against the gear stick to stop it doing this.

My mum and dad have lived in Teesside all their lives. My dad joined Head Wrightson Engineering, then a major employer in the area. They had a large works on the south bank of the Tees, which has since been redeveloped for a business park. He was a Chartered Civil Engineer and at the age of around thirty was promoted to Manager and allotted his first company car in early summer of 1961. This was a brand new Austin A55 Cambridge Mark II, in what even then was considered very fashionable Farina coachwork. The car was finished, I think, in Farina grey with red leather upholstery. He sometimes mentioned that this was his favourite car. It seemed so refined and luxurious after the old Morris and the Austin was linked to a period of happy family memories, with me as a chubby toddler and then my brother, Tim, who came on the scene in 1962.

I was mad on cars from an early age and it is reputed that by the age of two could identify many cars then on the road. Not that this was difficult, because in those halcyon days the shapes were so distinctive. You couldn't possibly mistake a Ford Popular for a Hillman Minx, just as a Vauxhall Victor looked a lot different from a BMC Farina or a Ford Consul. Also at that time there were still many cars on the road dating from the 1950's. They were generally much boxier or had more of a pre-war shape about them. An example was the Morris Oxford which my uncle Ken had then and which I rode in one day when we went to visit them, when they lived in a local authority house in Carlisle. This was the Oxford 'MO' which looked like an enlarged four door Minor. All this is a far cry from today, when manufacturers deem it necessary to spend billions of pounds trying to brainwash us all into thinking that each modern car is distinct from the competition. The reality is that the shapes are all standardised for wind tunnel tests, even though you've got to be driving at least 60 mph to take advantage of this in fuel economy terms. Yet the motorways are so crowded now that often you can't exceed this speed. What a crazy world!

But in the early 60's it was a golden age in motoring terms at least when, to use Harold McMillan's famous phrase "We never had it so good". Consumer choice was

opening up rapidly and at last the austerity of the post-war years was reaching its end. Many people progressed in material terms from travelling to work on a bicycle to buying their first car.



*The photo shows me toddling and admiring the reflection of myself in the sparkling Farina chrome in June, 1961, when we were in Dunoon, Scotland for a family holiday. The Cambridge was then brand new.*

Dad was very proud of the Austin and it must have caused him some anguish to have to take it out in all weathers for his then frequent site visits, often journeying up to Scotland in the winter. On one of those journeys, the driving snow flakes came straight through the front grille and started to settle on the leads, causing the electrics to keep shorting. Dad and a colleague did a make-shift repair on his arrival at Ravenscraig steel works and a complete breakdown was avoided.

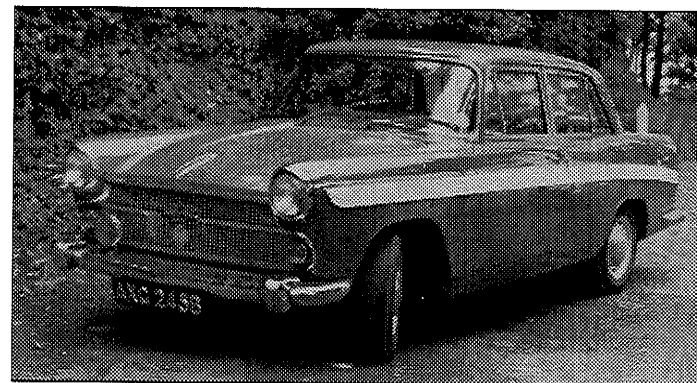
The first Austin gave Dad very little trouble and he remembers it being put together beautifully and with a lovely sweet engine. However, the windscreen seal was appalling and Dad had to put newspapers under the carpets to soak up the rainwater, these being changed every week.

By the spring of 1964 the time had come for Head Wrightson to renew the Austin. I remember standing excitedly at the bay window of our 1958 semi with Mum every evening, waiting to see if Dad arrived home in his new Cambridge. I also remember him bringing home a sales brochure showing one in Persian blue, which was also to be our colour. And yes, one tea time I saw this handsome A60 in blue with a white stripe entering the drive. The second Farina was our family car for over five years and as a five-year-old I was really getting to be a huge Farina fan.

*(To be continued)*

ANDREW IDLE

*The A60 in Minehead, Somerset in the summer of 1964.*



# OLDEST 4/68 UNEARTHED

**M**Y FASCINATION with Riley Farinas started in 1989, when I was seventeen. I'd bought an ex-taxi Austin A60 with 240,000 miles on it and went to a scrapyard for a new bumper. They had no bumper, but they had a 4/72 which they had just bought in. Obviously, I bought CGC666H and in the ensuing few years I seemed to attract all things Farina — buying, selling, locating or scrapping several MGs and Rileys. At one point I owned the oldest known 4/72 (OYM382A), but haven't seen it since I sold it — has anyone else?

But it was a chance visit to a local yard that prompted the latest addition to the Westcott fleet. I'd popped in after hearing of a Standard Vanguard Phase IV, and a friend of mine likes them. Sadly the yardman informed me of the car's demise, stating that it didn't make economic sense to keep old cars in. "Long gone" he continued, "are the days when you could find a Riley 4/68 in a scrapyard". I commented that his choice of car was rather bizarre, and he said, "Well, I've got one in my garden". "Any good?" "The engine's been rebuilt, but it needs sills". "How much?" "The plate's worth £400". "How much?" "£250". "Does it run?" "Oh yes, beautifully".

One hour later I am standing in his garden next to a jump started 4/68, £225 lighter of wallet! She's a bit ropey, with a fibreglass wing, good doors, engine, seats and acceptable brightwork. She has a post 1960 bumper fitted, along with air conditioned sills, arches and front heelboards and a load of early 1980s banger racing stickers. It turns out the vendor's son was given it to race, but he used it to trailer other cars to the track. A close escape.

On closer inspection, the chassis number is RHS1-197, making it older than the oldest known Riley Farina, and only the 96th off the line—it was registered on 1st May, 1959. The added bonus is the registration: UER468. Currently the car is dark blue over white. This might yet get changed to Fiesta yellow over Old English white a la A55 Mk II. I probably won't fully restore it, but will do inner and outer sills, floors, outriggers, arches and rear under bumper sections to make it presentable, saving my efforts for my sleeping 4/72.

I intend to use it as an every day car, so I will probably keep the front seats in storage, substituting a pair of more disposable late seats. The hunt is on, however, for an original set of 4/68 flecked carpets. Keep an eye out and please have a chat if you see me at any shows. It won't be the prettiest car locally (Cameron Robbins lives two miles away with one of the nicest 4/72s I've seen for ages) but

hopefully it will be mobile, which in itself makes it a rarity. I have a lot of enthusiastic helpers locally, including Cameron and Vince 'let-me-arc-weld-your-wheelbarrow' Pryke, whose every day fleet includes a Series V Oxford and the ropiest 16/60 in the country. This particular car was put back on the road purely to annoy someone who thought it was fit only for spares. The body has remained totally fossilised.

On a final note, I have found a Mk 4 Magnette in a hedge (visible only in summer due to foliage). It's been there since the late 1970s and Vince is interested in acquiring it, purely as a 'challenge' — nothing is impossible, but this car makes Peter Kenny's Riviera look like concours. Still, if Peter's having second thoughts . . .

ANDY WESTCOTT



## COOC Annual General Meeting and Rally

at Yorkshire Air Museum,  
Elvington, near York.

**Sunday, 7th October.**

Contact Steve Turner on 01653 693183

## CLUB MG CATALUNYA

are holding a Three Day

## INTERNATIONAL MG EVENT

at Sitges, near Barcelona, Spain

on 12th - 14th October.

Anyone who is holidaying in the area may like to attend.

Contact Mick for Entry Forms and details

## CLASSIC CARS on BOURNEMOUTH PROM

A new idea in the the Bournemouth area. Meet every Sunday evening until the end of October. Entry from the Boscombe Pier end of the Prom.

More details from Graham Robinson on 01202 430009

## CHANGES TO CAR LISTS

### MG

New car: mk 3, chassis 2161, 449VMT. Owner: P. Needs, Lowestoft, England.

New car: mk 4, chassis 18821, S00761. Owner: K. Walford, Birmingham, England.

New car: mk 4, chassis 29730, UUR115E. Owner: S. Baines, Hitchin, Herts, England.

Mk 4, chassis YGV500. New owner: B. Morgan, Spalding, Lincolnshire, England.

### RILEY

New car: 4/68, chassis 197, UER468. Owner: A. Westcott, Luton, Beds, England.

New car: 4/72, chassis 24406, VGT211G. Owner: B. Hall, Horham, Suffolk, England.

New car: 4/72, chassis 23319, JLJ267E. Owner: N. Pendlebury, Croston, Lancs, England.

New car: 4/72, chassis 18644, DWB400B. Owner: D. Williams, Hereford, England.

New car: 4/72, FJK483G. Folkestone, England. No more details known.

4/72, chassis 24847, XYK847G. Owner is H. Shannon, Ballymena, N. Ireland.

4/72, chassis 25150, VTJ538H. Owner is E. Smith, Auchleven, Aberdeenshire, Scotland.

4/72, chassis 21384, EDV724D. Now in Scotland. Owner unknown.

## NEIL CAIRNS' BOOKS

*Neil has passed on the copies of Farina books he has written.  
I can now photocopy these for members.*

*Titles include:*

**Fitting an 1800cc Engine to a Farina**

**Tuning a 1622cc Engine**

**Updating the Breed**

**Tracing Troubles and Faults**

**Fitting Disc Brakes**

**Steering and Suspension—Faults and Cures**

**BMC Chassis Numbering**

**Buying a BMC MG or Riley Farina**

**Nuffield and BMC Engine Numbering**

*Prices vary, depending on amount of photocopying involved.  
Please contact Mick Holehouse if you want any of them.  
They also appear on the website.*

## CLASSIFIEDS

### CARS FOR SALE

**Riley 4/68, 1961.** Finished in smoke grey. 1622cc with twin carbs fitted, very good chromework. Runs well. Good home sought for this clean, tidy, restored example. MOT and Taxed to March 2002.

*Offers to Mick Holehouse. Tel: 01282 605563.*

**Riley 4/72, 1968.** Green. In need of some work. £400.

*H. Ashby, Blackburn, Lancashire. Tel: 01254 663043.*

**Riley 4/68, 1960.** In very good condition. £2500.

*Available from John Seigel, 21 Abbey Road, Bourne, Lincolnshire, PE10 9EF.*

**MG Magnette Mk4, 1964.** Connaught green. Rare automatic. Requires sills and doors. Reasonable panels are supplied. This car is free to a restorer, but no breakers please!

*Matt Pearson, West Midlands. Tel: 01564 778187.*

**A60 Cambridge saloon, 1966.** Maroon with snowberry white flash. Automatic, reg. LGP884D, 51000 miles, MOT August 2002. Car in good condition and has been garaged most of its life. Well maintained with some spares supplied. £1800. Photos available on request or see <http://freespace.virgin.net/jason.darwin/farinas/main.htm>

*Jason Darwin, London. Tel: 0208 883 4435 (home) or 0207 435 0070 (work) or e.mail Jason.Darwin@virgin.net*

Gary Tinsley of Walthamstow, London has a Cambridge with a sweet 1622 engine, surplus to requirements. £60. Also wanted is an auto Farina diff.

*Tel: 0208 521 0208.*

### PARTS FOR SALE

Mr E. J. Theobald of Lincoln has what he describes as 'two front wings' for sale.

*Tel: 01522 870136.*

Martin Constant of St. Genny's, near Bude, Cornwall has 'some BMC panels' for sale.

*Tel: 01840 230459.*

### WANTED

Andy Westcott of Luton is looking for some carpets for his Riley 4/68.

*Tel: 01582 480773.*

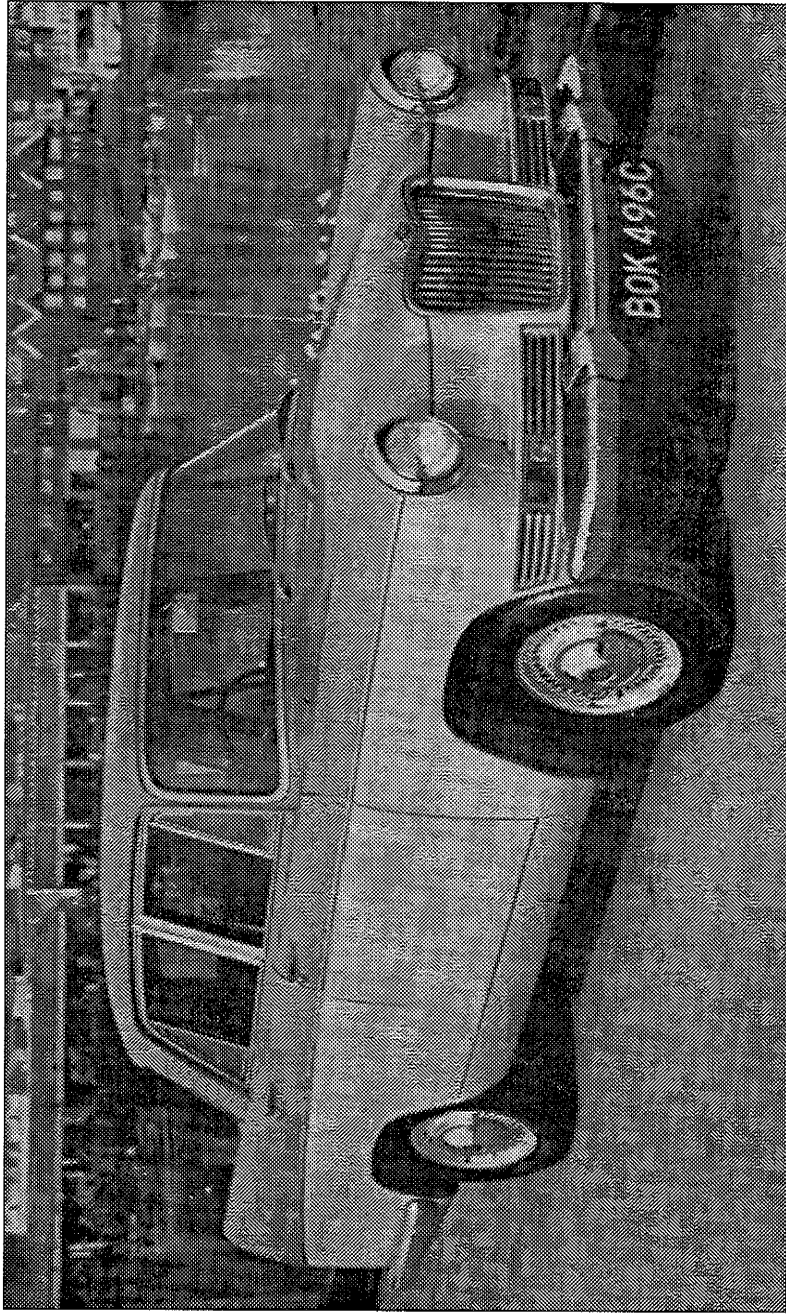
### SERVICES

**www.hireyourcar.com** of Hayle, Cornwall, are a company who register owners wanting to supply their cars for weddings or filming, etc.

*Tel: 01736 759443.*

**www.cccinsurance.co.uk** of Coleraine, Northern Ireland can supply competitive multi vehicle insurance policies.

*Tel: 028 7034 4321.*



*This is BMC Publicity Vehicle, BOK496C, currently being restored by Geoff Ward in Darlington. Shown here in Pearson's Illustrated Car Servicing Series for Owner Drivers. The same shot also in the Observer Book of Automobiles. Does anyone recognise the seaside location?*