



&



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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Family Affair



*Karen Walford's Mk 4 Midget pictured following its restoration.
The car's two previous owners were her great-uncle and her father.
Karen even recalls being picked up from school in the MG!*



**A Very Merry Christmas and a
Happy New Year to all our readers**

MG & RILEY FARINA REGISTER

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CAN I START by wishing all our readers a very happy and peaceful Christmas as well as a prosperous 2002!

A busy last couple of months as usual on the car front, and a very strange and uncertain couple of months as well for us all following the terrorist atrocities in America. My Magnette's restoration continues to progress and my Riley 4/68 has been giving sterling service in its absence. I am now looking to find a good home for this car, please get in touch if you are interested.

I recently dismantled a Magnette Mk 4 in a local scrapyards. I tried in vain to find a restorer for this car, as the engine had been sold it was time for me to act and rescue the parts. It is a lovely experience getting utterly soaked while dismantling a Magnette on your day off! My only consolation was that I was surrounded by BMC classics like Riley Pathfinders, A30, Morris Minor and Landcrabs amongst others. Oh, and not forgetting Alfred the friendly Alsatian! Phone Chris Watson's Yard on 01282 812400 if you need anything for vehicles old and new.

Please do support our advertisers on the back page, Autopaint of St. Helens and Steve Turner. Steve is a Farina fanatic who is trying to establish his new business. He knows our cars inside out.

Included with this issue are some business cards for the *Register*. Please take these with you to shows and do spread the word about our little organization.

We have had a few exciting car discoveries recently and an absolute flood of Magnette's coming to light. Our first known example on the island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean is great news. Also cars in Holland and Oregon, USA. The website proving invaluable in unearthing these.

Finally, I am making an appeal for material for the *Newsletter*. I have had very little in the last six months. Some members have promised me material, but please do send me anything you have.

Happy Christmas,

Mick

FAMILY AFFAIR

A COUPLE OF NOTES about my MG: it originally belonged to my Great-uncle, who I don't think used it very much. After his death in 1980, his widow sold it to my dad for a very modest sum. I remember being quite excited about his new acquisition—I'd have been thirteen at the time. My dad drove it for a number of years and I was regularly taken to and picked up from school in it. When waiting to be picked up, I could always recognise the distinctive sound of the MG before it came into view. I don't recall exactly when or why my dad stopped using the MG on a regular basis. (After a long career in teaching he wanted to move into accountancy and purchased a fairly new BMW as more fitting to the image he wished to project.)

Sadly, my dad passed away the following year (1991) and I inherited both vehicles. I still use the BMW on a day-to-day basis—I think of it as my 'new' car and get a bit miffed when people dare to suggest that it's getting a bit long in the tooth. But I'm getting ahead of myself here.

I think the MG may have spent some time outdoors before me and my then-boyfriend cleared out the garage to make room for it. Even so, it's quite a long car and it's nose protruded slightly through the doors, which therefore couldn't be closed properly. And there it stayed for the next six years, gradually deteriorating. The cost of repair and restoration seemed prohibitive, but I couldn't bear the thought of scrapping it.

Eventually, I was approached by a chap who thought he might be interested in buying it. Having looked at it more closely, he decided it needed too much work, but after some discussion, he agreed to do some work on it for me at quite a reasonable rate (old cars being his hobby rather than his profession). However, a few months later he moved away and I was left with a partially restored car and a recommendation for a local, professional restorer. This clearly meant that the whole process was going to be rather more expensive than I'd originally anticipated, but having embarked on the project, it seemed a shame not to finish it. I got married about this time, so rather than traditional wedding gifts, we asked for contributions to the MG restoration fund!

The restoration was completed in late 1999. I was now living in Birmingham and the journey up from Essex had its share of incidents—

the tail lights would not work and I spent the last ten or twenty miles of the journey, once it got dark, sitting on the back seat, shining a torch out the back window through a piece of red glass (my husband was driving). I don't suppose anyone more than twenty-feet away could even have seen it!



A sideways shot of the finished Midget.

The car is now safely housed in a spacious garage and gets taken out on sunny weekends. My husband drives it, as I'm quite short, and can't see properly over the steering wheel. (Has anyone designed a suitable non-slip bolster cushion for use in such circumstances?)

Other notable features:

- i) It's an automatic
- ii) It doesn't have the original engine (which, according to the DVLA Registration Document was 16GEAH2091). I don't know when it was replaced. My dad did have one quite nasty prang and I know the front passenger door was replaced—maybe the engine was on the same occasion.

Anyway, there's a brief history (slightly less brief than I intended when I started this letter) of my MG. Maybe I'm biased, but I think it looks splendid, and my long-term plans are obviously to keep it.

KAREN WALFORD

CHILDHOOD RECOLLECTIONS OF CARS

— especially BMC Farinas

Part 2

I mentioned in the first part of the article that the A55 Mk II Cambridge gave Dad very little trouble. This is not entirely true, as having checked with my parents since writing part one, they have recalled that it was in 1961 when one of the Cambridges developed a slipping clutch on the way down to Dad's cousin's wedding in Surrey. Mum knew it must have been 1961 because I was looked after at home by my Gran and Grampa, and Tim who arrived in summer 1962 wasn't even expected. It might have been in the late summer or early autumn of that year. So it was the first Cambridge that gave this trouble, not the second as Dad had thought previously. My Granny travelled with them on that long trip. They managed to get there and back as presumably the heat from the engine and flywheel was enough to burn off some of the oil that was leaking onto the clutch plate.

Dad's cousin Terry was a doctor and married into a wealthy stockbroker's family. In those days Terry drove a VW Beetle. They were one of the very first imported cars to be seen in large numbers (relatively speaking, for the day). There is a family photo showing me outside Terry's parents large house in Teesside (more about them later) admiring myself in the bright chrome of the Beetle wheeltrims.

In the early to mid 60s the Motorway network was sparse, in fact there wasn't one. The M1 was very new and work was starting on the M6 but that was about it. Not only that, but very few towns were bypassed. There had been no need because there had been few cars on the road and people were used to a slower pace of life. Most of the shops, however, and the early supermarkets tended to be in town centres which even then became quite congested. We lived within about three miles of what must have been one of the first out-of-town supermarkets with its own massive car park. I can recall shopping there at the then new Asda with Mum when she used to borrow the Cambridge on Thursdays, her shopping day.

Talking about the M1, in the early days there was no speed limit and the wealthy motorists used to try out their posh cars to see how fast they would

go. I heard one tale long after my childhood years, of a guy from down south who'd acquired a new Jaguar and drove it flat out but lost control and ended up killing himself on the central reservation barrier, his car a twisted and crumpled wreck.

There were other tragedies which I remember locally as well. I remember a family who lived on the same estate as we did in the mid 60s, the man of the house had an Oxford V in blue with a cream roof or vice versa. He was killed in a head-on smash in a section on a long straight single carriageway road notorious as an accident black spot near Thorpe Thewles, Co. Durham (as it was then).

If you had to drive down to Somerset or Devon, as we chose to go for our holidays then, the only sensible way to avoid long queues was to travel through the night. This we did for several years. My Mum and Dad look back now, recalling how, despite the fact that they shared the driving, there was a danger of falling asleep at the wheel. Also if you arrived at dawn you had to snooze in the car until the hotel had the room ready for you. I can remember Dad having to shave using the car mirror and a bowl of water on at least one occasion.

During the night hours, Tim and me slept crossways on the makeshift Farina bed. This was created by taking out the seat, placing it on the floor well and covering the then exposed floor pan with blankets and pillows. No wonder I gained an early appreciation of the characteristic Farina diff whine



Tim, Mysel and Dad in 1966

as we slowed down through the gears for traffic lights and accelerated away afterwards. I was certainly within close earshot of the diff, yes it was right below me.

My Dad has always been clever at making things, whether it is joinery or metal work or electrical jobs. I remember that he had made up a map holder with a reading light which he fitted in the Austin so that he could keep checking that we were on the right road as we drove down in the night hours. I dare say that the street lighting on the roads then was poor compared with today's standards.



4 Lealholme Grove, August 1967

Talking of my Mum sharing the driving, she must have been one of the first young ladies of her generation to pass her driving test at 17/18 and drove very confidently soon afterwards. Her father was in charge of the gas works and ran what by the yardstick of the days were impressive cars. One was a gold coloured Jowett Javelin manufactured in my home town of Bradford (in fact at my namesake, Idle). He also had one of the early 1950s Vauxhall Crestas, the one with all that bulbous chrome on it, although I've never seen a photo of it.

When I was young, Grampa used to take me out in his Hillman Minx (the Series type, dating from around 1961, Reg. 836GUP) and lift me up so that I could watch the steam trains go by . . .

(to be continued)

ANDREW IDLE

Celebrity Magnette

Many of you, as readers of *Practical Classics*, November edition, will have seen Stan McGeorge from Sale near Manchester putting his 1966 Mk 4 Magnette through its paces in front of the camera. Stan is a *Register* member, and along with his son Steve, they own a fleet of Farinas. The article featured badge-engineered MG's (Farina, ZB, Maestro, 1300 and the latest ZT). The cars drove from the Abingdon MG Car Club HQ to Longbridge Rover factory in Birmingham, stopping off at the **British Motor Heritage Centre** at Gaydon and Cowley. The article made a mistake with the caption under the Farina engine picture, describing it as 1598cc! Stan and Steve had a thoroughly enjoyable day out on the photoshoot, but were just a little concerned with a fair amount of journalistic licence used in the article! I was pleased we got a Magnette for the feature and hopefully it has given our cars some much needed publicity.

RENEWALS

Many members have been slow to renew their Newsletter Subscriptions. In many cases I am sending out second and final reminders before I receive payment. Can I urge you to renew at your earliest convenience please. Your renewal is due when a small piece of paper is enclosed in your Newsletter informing you. Late renewals are backdated to when they were due.

NEW ROVER MG's

I keep scouring the motoring press, when reading reports on the new range of badge-engineered MG's. This really has to be history repeating itself 40+ years on. If the latest ZT, based on the Rover 75 isn't a modern day Magnette I don't know what is! Alas, the newspapers I have read are yet to acknowledge our Farinas and the sense of history repeating itself. I can't stop myself hoping that other great names like Riley and Austin etc can be revived in the future.

ALADDIN'S CAVE

THE OWNERS of 'real' Rileys should stop reading at this point as Val and I head north from Worcestershire to Lancashire to consort with Mick Holehouse, the registrar of the *MG and Riley Farina Register*. For those of you that own or aspire to owning a 'badge engineered' Riley read on!

Some of you will know that my shed harbours what is believed to be the only surviving example of a Farina Riley in Western Australia. Chris Gilbert encouraged me to buy the car from Ken Howell of Beverley who had pulled it to pieces and it had been sitting in his (Ken's) shed for many years.

Chris did a great job removing the rust and preparing the car ready for the final colour when I decided to put the restoration on hold pending my Lotto number coming up, so the car has languished in my shed for the last few years while I've played with the Pathfinder and the One-Point-Five.

This visit to the UK removed any excuse I had had about trying to find various bits and pieces so that the project could proceed. So on the 12th July we headed north up the M6 for a few hours and then across to Skipton in Yorkshire, where we booked into the Woolly Sheep pub in the centre of the town. What a great little town! A few years earlier we had been in East Yorkshire doing the *All Creatures Tour* and had missed out on visiting the west of the Dales. In hindsight we now wish we had set aside some more time for Skipton and the canal that flows through the town.

We spent the rest of the day looking in all of the tourist traps in town, Val for Teddy Bears, and by that time I had given up looking for a model shop, let alone finding a Riley model. When, lo and behold, there was a sign pointing down a lane advertising full body massage and model shop—well, I had to check that out!

My luck was in, as at the end of the lane was a real hobby shop with model cars, and yes, a Matchbox Models of Yesteryear Grand Prix ERA. A swipe of the plastic and it was mine.

The next morning we set off for the village of Barrowford near Nelson in Lancashire, where we met Mick, who treated us to morning tea and a look at his Farina MG project car. We were soon heading for his lock-up garages in the nearby village of Blacko, with me struggling to keep up with Mick in his Riley 4/68. The lock-ups were two of a row of about ten that were on the edge of the village, and Mick opened them up to reveal a treasure trove of new and used parts that equalled our Club's shed at Cliff and Beryl's.

While it's easy to cart bits down the road from Cliff's, it's a bit further from Blacko to Casuarina, and sadly common-sense prevailed as I selected the front panel and grille only and had to leave a complete dashboard behind for next time.

Mick kindly took us down to the on-ramp for the Motorway and we were on our way back to the Midlands to see another BMC Riley owner who lives in the shadow of the best tourist attraction in the UK, and if you said Madame Tussaud's you wouldn't be wrong.

BOB and VAL SMILLIE,
135 Mortimer Road, Casuarina, 6167, Western Australia.

CHANGES TO CAR LISTS

MG

- New car: mk 3, chassis 6460, 2R9682. Owner: B. Vifquain, Cornelius, Oregon, USA.
New car: mk 3, chassis 8873. Owner: K. Seetohul, Bon Accueil, Mauritius.
New car: mk 4, chassis 24247, ADP400B. Owner: R. Hawkins, Tilehurst, Reading, England.
New car: mk 4, chassis 30034, LRC307D. Owner: T. Saul, Sheffield, England.
New car: mk 4, chassis 27814, HNN678D. Owner: Sturgess, Notts, England.
New car: mk 4, chassis 28620, MPP634D. Owner: L. Richardson, Loxwood, W. Sussex, England.
New car: mk 4, chassis 28685. Owner: K. Vermeer, Lekkerkerk, Holland.
Mk4, chassis 21270, is now registered BSJ684.
Mk4, chassis 22536, KGU734A. New owner: B. Alexander, Faversham. Kent, England.
Mk4, chassis 25361, PRE799B. Scrapped October 2001.
Mk4, chassis 25860 is now located in Dompierre, Normandy, France. Same owner.

RILEY

- New car: 4/72, chassis 14912, 135ETR. Owner: D. Baker, Horncastle, Lincs, England.
New car: 4/72, AZK718. Owner: Foster, Huddersfield, England. No more details known.
New car: 4/72, chassis 17474, 645MOU. Owner: C. McGann, Aldershot, England.
4/72, chassis 23939, KTC758F. New owner: S. McGeorge, Sale, England.
4/72, chassis 25165, NRO243H. New owner: F. Kirkham, Hook, Hants, England.
4/72, chassis 24441, CWC347G. New owner: R. Fuller, Chelmsford, England.
4/68, chassis 3620, UNT431. New owner: F. Barkham, Littlehampton, England.

COPIES OF CAR LISTS

I will mail out a copy of the car lists to any members who require them upon receipt of a cheque for £2 or eight First Class postage stamps. Please place your orders before 31st January, 2002. This service is only available at this time each year

REGISTER REGALIA

A company called *Southern United* of Portslade, East Sussex, have informed me of their product range which includes items such as Car Club Front Grille Badges and Window Stickers. They also do things like Rally Plaques. Is anyone interested in having a run of Register Stickers or Grille Badges produced? Obviously we would need a decent amount of interest to go ahead with such an idea. Please contact me if you are interested in this idea.

*For anyone requiring the services of Southern United,
contact them on 01273 418636.*

E.mail: sales.sunited@btinternet.com
www.sunited.co.uk

CLASSIFIEDS

CARS FOR SALE

1961 Riley 4/68. Smoke grey. Clean, tidy useable condition, runs very nicely. Twin carbs fitted to 1622cc. Good home required—£1695.

Tel: Mick Holehouse on 01282 605563. E.mail: mick_holehouse@lineone.net

1967 MG Magnette mk 4. Conaught green with grey leather interior. In need of some bodywork restoration, comes with many spares along with original power unit and heritage certificate. £300 to a good home.

Tel: Martin Constant on 01840 230459 (near Bude, Cornwall).

E.mail: mconstant@trevelyanmg.freeseve.co.uk

1968 A60. Carlton grey with Cardinal Red trim. Rare fleet model, 69000 miles; excellent all round condition; 10 months MOT. £1750.

Tel: Steve Turner on 01653 693183 (Malton, N. Yorks).

PARTS FOR SALE

Most parts available from 1964 Mk 4 Magnette, including dashboard, doors, fuel tank and all small bits and pieces.

Tel: Mick Holehouse on 01282 605563. E.mail: mick_holehouse@lineone.net

New BMC panels, pair of Magnette front wings, front valance, pair of outer sills, also a pair of new Magnette rear lamp units and nearside front sidelamp unit.

Tel: Martin Constant on 01840 230459 (near Bude, Cornwall).

E.mail: mconstant@trevelyanmg.freeseve.co.uk

Fibreglass front wing, bonnet, carb and manifold, front grille and clocks from 1968 Morris Oxford—offers.

Tel: John Dodsworth on 01325 352596 (Darlington).

SERVICES

For anyone interested in downloading a FREE nostalgic, good quality, full colour copy of a UK car tax disc with choice of dates from the 50's, 60's or 70's. Also check out details of car restoration courses (UK).

www.restoredclassic.cjb.net

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