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FARINA  
REGISTER

# Newsletter

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

ISSUE 34

DECEMBER, 2001

## 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

Mick Holehouse

8 Appleby Drive, Barrowford, Nelson, Lancashire, BB9 6EX, UK

Telephone: 01282 605563

e.mail: mick\_holehouse@lineone.net

Website <http://www.mgmagnette.com>

**Riley Secretary:** Andrew Idle

Strathmore Grange, Lee Lane, Cottingley, Bingley, West Yorkshire, BD16 1UF, UK

e.mail: enquiries@andrewidle.co.uk

**MG Secretary:** Stuart Clarke

Stone Cottage, Saughall Massie Road, West Kirby, Wirral, L48 1PG, UK

**Di Tella Secretary:** Ernesto Gasulla

6917 W. Summerdale Av, Chicago, Illinois, IL 60656, USA

e.mail: gasullaem@teng.com

**Historian:** Neil Cairns

e.mail: neil.cairns@virgin.net

**Website run by:** John Elwood

43 Prescott Street, Apt. 10, Concord, New Hampshire, NH 03110, USA

e.mail: MGMagnette@aol.com

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 scrapyard. 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

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# 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