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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 37

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WORKING GIRL



Paul Cooper of Oldham's 1970 Riley 4/72 seen here earning its keep being used as his work vehicle for his business.

*See page 3 for the full story, which includes
more glamorous occasions*

MG & RILEY FARINA REGISTER

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WELCOME to the September edition of the Newsletter. We have had next to no new car discoveries of late. Have we found them all? Somehow I doubt it! I was informed of a Riley 4/72 by Keith Hutchinson, in an old mill ten miles from me. The car was falling apart, but it yielded parts if anyone needs anything.

The National Rally was a great success (more details inside). Weatherwise it was surely one of the sunniest ever days in Cumbria! We had what I believe may have been a record turnout of Rileys.

I have had more material for this edition, but could still do with some more, particularly from our overseas members. We are always pleased to hear from you!

For those not using unleaded petrol, have you noticed LRP fuel beginning to disappear from the garage forecourt? Time to convert or find a good additive. I would welcome recommendations on unleaded additives for the benefit of fellow members.

Happy Motoring,

Mick

RILEY FOR ALL OCCASIONS

I HAVE OWNED FARINAS nearly all my driving and working life as a painter and decorator. The first car I owned was an early sixties Morris 1000 which proved to be a disaster and which I got rid of in days. The next car was the complete opposite, a 1964 almond green Morris Oxford (FMA668B), bought in 1970. Does this car still exist? I sold and re-owned this car three times. I also owned an early sixties Morris Oxford between the sales.

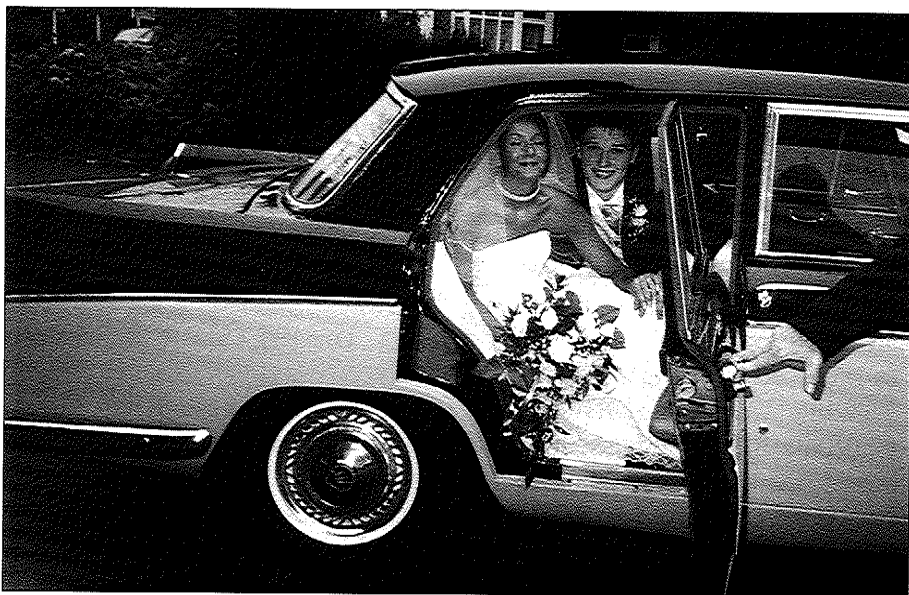
The Oxfords were then followed by a 1967 Mini, but my love of Farinas never diminished and in 1976 when my first daughter Rachel was born, I heard about a 1968 dark blue with white flash Cambridge with slightly tatty wings. I was able to buy two new wings and two rear over-riders from a local BMC dealer who was selling old and unwanted stock for something like £20. Imagine getting a bargain like that now! In late 1977, when my son Chris was born, finances became very tight and the A60 was sold. After being without a car for a while I bought a cheap but very reliable H.B. Viva and after a few job changes, but still decorating, I bought a H.C. Viva Estate. In 1981 my second daughter Alison was born and by now owning another, a Farina was all in the past and just a happy memory. The job I was now working in involved working all over the country.

While working in Ramsgate I spotted a Riley 4/72; I had always wanted a Riley or Magnette, however, this car was in need of a lot of attention. Upon making enquiries to the owner; apparently no-one had been interested in buying the car, so they decided to sell it for scrap, but still wanted £100. So after some thought and quite a bit of haggling, UFN472H was mine for £75. Once the car was back home I started to assess the work that was required to put the Riley back on the road. After a few months working on UFN472H I heard of a Riley

4/68 for sale, which I bought and ran daily whilst working on the 4/72. I was now spending every spare moment on the 4/72 and with some help from good mates and quite a few trips to a local scrapyards, and still working on a very tight budget, the Riley was back on the road.

Now I had to decide what to do with the 4/68. The car was basically very good, but still needed some work doing on it, and as this involved quite a bit more money I decided to sell it. This proved much harder than I imagined and so with much regret ended up breaking her for parts, and so looking back with even more regrets — it was 1981 with hindsight . . . Well, back to UFN472H; she was then used daily for the next few years, having work carried out where and when necessary to keep her mobile.

The year of 2000 arrived and my daughter Alison decided to get married—a date of October 2001 was arranged. I thought it would be a good idea to use a 'club' car, so I decided to ask a friend of mine, Mick Holehouse, if he would be willing to use one of his cars because my Riley was looking rather tatty. On reflection, it suddenly occurred to me that I had bought my Riley in 1981, which was the same year that Alison was born, so it now seemed only fitting I use my own car.



Paul's 4/72 performing wedding duties for his daughter Alison and her new husband, Mark.

The bulk of the work was bodywork and the interior, which was very bad, mostly due to using the car daily as a workhorse. The Riley had, for a long time, rained in on front and rear screens, despite numerous attempts to seal them. So Mick then suggested new seals which I got from Earlpark. With Mick's help and experience on a very damp Sunday, the seals were successfully fitted. The bodywork was now progressing well and with the car now being dry, work could begin on the interior. By now it was the start of the summer, one of my busiest periods at work and the wedding day seemed to be approaching faster than the time needed to finish the car. I decided to just concentrate on work and put in as many hours as possible to try and get in front, and then take time off work to finish the car. There were only a few weeks to go, so I left the car with a few finishing touches to do and went back to work.

The final week I spent every spare moment on the Riley with just a few hiccups and some help from my son Chris. The day of the wedding arrived and went without a hitch, apart from it being rather damp; and the Riley ran superbly.

My Riley is still working every day and is seen regularly around the Greater Manchester area, often loaded up with ladders and decorating tackle!

PAUL COOPER
Oldham

MORE ON ANTI-ROLL BARS

DAVE ATKINGS, in issue 36 of the Newsletter, was apparently unaware that the front anti-roll bar clamps are each secured to the underside of the front crossmember by two $\frac{5}{16}$ " UNF setscrews which can be slackened off! When you've undone them, the split rubber bushes lose their grip on the anti-roll bar, the ends of which can then be swivelled up and down to reach the link pins as necessary. Naturally, after fitting, the car needs to be lowered onto its road wheels with the front coil springs slightly extended, that is, with about 95% of the car's weight on the road wheels and 5% supported by the jack, then you tighten the anti-roll bar clamp screws and let the car fully down.

NOËL A. SHAW



1.5 MILLION MG's

THE NEWS THAT MG have produced 1.5 million cars since the firm started back in 1923 is very good news. But one thing that the news did not make clear was that half a million of those cars made by MG and wearing that proud badge were saloons. It is interesting that Riley enthusiasts do not face the same problem of "is it a real Riley?". Within the ranks of the Riley enthusiasts there are those who say the RMA and RME were the last real Rileys, but that is really splitting hairs. Riley cars were always good quality, fast saloons of a sporting nature for the better off. The MG was safe, fast and affordable, but still well made of quality materials. It was, after all, based on production Morris vehicles, no matter how much they were dressed up. To the young man of 1930 this was unimportant; his little MG Midget went like a rocket compared to the four-seater Morris saloon using the same engine and chassis. Cecil Kimber always wanted to break into the exclusive market of the fast, sleek, sporting saloon car. After all, the very first production MG's were better quality Morris bull-nose Oxfords and Cowleys. He was able to charge a premium on these up-graded saloons. Mr Middle Class liked them and purchased them, as they were different to the run-of-the-mill family car.

Of course, MG's sporting history is something to be proud of, as is that of the Riley. No one is going to denigrate the MG Midgets of various vintages, or the larger pre- and post-war sports cars. But within the production of these sports cars were quite a number of saloons. As mentioned above, one third of all MG's ever produced were in fact saloon cars. The numbers of some of the saloons produced under each marque, such as the ADO16 and the Metro, consistently beats the sports car production figure. Here, the MGB is the exception; it had a very long production run.

Some very bigoted so-called enthusiasts will spout out things like, "The only real MG is one built at Abingdon". The saying that hollow vessels produce the most noise is here very true. (a) No cars were built at Abingdon, they were assembled. All the work on building the engines, ancillaries and bodies was carried out by other parts (depending on the year), of the Morris, Nuffield, or BMC company. Abingdon was an assembly plant, not a complete factory, like for instance, the Ford factory at Dagenham. Ford had iron ore delivered, smelted it, made it into steel or cast iron, rolled or cast it, pressed

or machined it, and built engines and cars complete. So they really did *build* cars at Dagenham from ore to the shiny finished model. (b) If only real MG's were built at Abingdon, what does this mean for the MG Midgets assembled at Cowley in 1966? Or what about all those pre-Abingdon MG's built in Oxford at places like Longwall Street? There is nothing wrong with Abingdon; it was an excellent and very famous home of MG. The bigot now has some serious worries, as production of MG's pours out of the old Austin factory at Longbridge, Birmingham. These are not the first MG's to come from that area, as the ADO16, the MG 1100 and 1300 were built there in their tens of thousands.

Abingdon was also the final home of Riley, with the RME and RMA being assembled there, followed by the assembly of Morris 1000 Travellers and some Austin Allegro's. Like MG, Riley then had to accept the fact that their marque could be produced at Cowley or Longbridge. Like MG, the ADO16 Riley 1100 and 1300 Kestrel, and the Elf version of the Mini came from Longbridge, whereas the Farina models came from Cowley. Cowley is the original Morris production plant, and late Farina Riley and MG saloons have a prefix to their chassis number. This is an M for Morris, indicating a Cowley assembled car.

The Farina MG's come from Cowley and follow on from the MG 'Z' Magnette series. The only reason saloon production was moved from Abingdon was because of the success of the MGA, and the limited space of the small factory cum assembly shop. More space was needed to assemble the sports cars.

Whilst today it may seem a little odd that one model wore five badges: Morris, Wolseley, Riley, Austin and MG, this was nothing new then, and is even more common today. It enables the car to cover a much larger market. The basic 61bhp Morris Oxford with its plastic bench seats, pressed steel dash and single carburettor engine is a long way off the plush 72bhp Riley 4/72 with its individual leather seats, full instrumentation in its polished wooden dash and twin carburettor engine. They were aimed at a completely different clientel.

In order for large car makers to be able to stay viable and to attack world markets, commonisation was a necessity. BMC itself was set up to give the UK a company of a size to be able to challenge the huge USA car builders. The merger of Austin and Morris empires succeeded, as BMC plants grew in Argentina (under licence with Di Tella), South Africa, Australia and in smaller countries they aligned with the local car maker. An example of this are the Italian and Spanish connections where a local company built under licence, giving the cars an independent model name. It just seems odd that the British will run down a particular model simply because it follows the trend of its age. No car has suffered this as much as the Farina MG Magnette. It is

a damned good, solidly built family car, with good appointments. It is true that the arrival of the Ford Cortina should have made BMC either update the Farina range, or trimmed its weight.

All this has little effect on the fact that one-third of MG's 1.5 million cars to date are saloons. The current production of MG's has no less than six sporting saloons on its listings, including the turbo models. One is even an estate car. There are only two sports cars in the model range. **500,000 MG saloon cars** is a lot of MG's. Why, oh why, do the historians ignore the facts put in front of them?

Perhaps history will shine with a more moderate and understanding light upon MG as time passes. Perhaps the bigot will fade into the shadows, and the harm they do to the union of enthusiasts will be forgotten. Luckily, the majority of **REAL** MG enthusiasts are happy with any and every MG. The more the merrier!

NEIL CAIRNS
MG Enthusiast

Definitely the Oldest 4/68 of all time this time!

IT IS with great pleasure that I write to inform the club that, owing to the repeated severe disappointments of seeing my car, chassis number 666, dropping down the veteran's league like the proverbial stone, I have now successfully applied for and been issued with a new chassis number for my Riley. The new chassis number is 0001.

Not true! Fantastic news that more and more oldies are appearing out of the woodwork. It seems that many of the first batch of 1959 cars of both marques made their way to Sweden. Bearing in mind that the roads here are heavily salted in the winter months and also bearing in mind that the three main Swedish population centres, and therefore also the three biggest markets for our cars (Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmo) are all located on the coast with all that means in rust-promoting salty sea air, it is truly remarkable that so many Midgettes and 4/68's still survive in this part of the world.

A few years ago I inspected—and politely declined—a 1959 Wolseley 15/60 that was solely held together by virtue of its rust. The panel gaps and rust-induced holes were so large, this must surely have been the world's first Farina with rudimentary air-conditioning.

ILYA MEYER

NATIONAL RALLY REPORT

SUNDAY 21st JULY was the big day for the 'COOC' National Rally at Holker Hall in South Lakeland, Cumbria. Myself and Andrew Idle spent many months planning the event and were not disappointed as 88 cars attended with the vast majority being Farinas. Four Midgettes (three Mk 3's and one Mk 4) came along as well as what I believe was a record Riley turn out of ten cars (nine 4/72's and one 4/68). The Rileys even outnumbered Austin Cambridges!

As well as the cars and lovely location, the best thing was the weather. Cumbria is a notoriously wet place and I must confess it is a while since I have burnt my face up there!

Cars attended from all over Britain, as well as Ilya Meyer coming from Sweden. Ilya won Best MG with his Mk 3, and Keith Hutchinson scooped the Riley honours.

Thank you to all who attended as well as our great team of helpers and the Holker Hall staff who were superb.

MICK HOLEHOUSE



*Record breaking line-up of Rileys at a Rally?
There were ten at Holker Hall!*

CHANGES TO CAR LISTS

MG

Mk 3, chassis 4391, YAD567. New owner: B. Jobling, Bedale, North Yorkshire, England.
Mk 3, chassis 12516. Reg. should read LFF888. New owner: S. Spalding, Ipswich, England.
New chassis: Mk 3, chassis 15904. Owner: B. Hock, Cambewarra, New South Wales, Australia.

RILEY

New car chassis 23329, FTE714E. Oswaldtwistle, Nr Accrington, Lancs, England. Car scrapped for spares.

DI TELLA

New car: Argenta Pick-up, VAQ312. J. Dominguez, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

CAR HISTORIES

As I now have the records filed in order it will be possible to assist members with information on their car's history. I have numerous forms and documents from ourselves and the COOC stretching back to the early 1980's, so if you are wondering where your car has been, then maybe I can help.

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CLASSIFIEDS

CARS FOR SALE

Riley RME, 1954. Excellent condition, complete bare metal rebuild. New carpets, headlining, rewired etc. Guaranteed exhaust, excellent chrome. Maroon and cream. £5500 or near offer.

Contact John Bishop, Crewe. Tel: 01270 820403.

Wolseley 16/60, 1971. Two owners from new. Tax exempt, MOT April 2003. New wings and sills 1998, unleaded conversion, rewired, new windscreen and seats plus large amount of new spares. For sale due to ill health.

Contact Rod Gair, Hexham, Northumberland. Tel: 01434 674364.

WANTED

Driver's side front wing for Magnette Mk4.

Contact Brian Morgan, Spalding, Lincolnshire. Tel: 01775 670330.

Telescopic dampers for Farina Magnette.

Contact Norman Green, Skegness, Lincolnshire. Tel: 01754 768809.

SERVICES

Stondon Museum, Henlow, Bedfordshire. Tel: 01462 850339.

Over 400 transport related exhibits. A great day out.

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Contact Martyn Williamson. Tel: 0118 967 5246

MG and RILEY SPARES

All in good, used condition. Contact Mick for details: 01282 605563.

RILEY

Front wraprounds; Sidelamps; Rear lamps; Headlining; Blue rear seats; Gauges; Bonnet; Grille; front panel; Dashboard.

MG

New BMC Magnette bonnet; Dashboard; Front panel; Clocks and Gauges; Speedo surround.

BOOKS ON MG'S

by Neil Cairns

From time to time I will run off a number of books after people have contacted me asking for copies. It is not a business, just a hobby, so you pay just a bit more than the cost price plus p&p.

The following are now available:

- 1 **Post War MG Saloon Cars**
126 pages with b/w photos of the saloons, 1947 to 1990.
£9.00
- 2 **MG Engines, 1935-1998**
181 pages with b/w pictures covering the XPAG to the O series.
£11.00
- 3 **Living with the MG Metro 1300**
Articles on this nippy little hot-hatch. (Good for any pre-1990 Austin Metro as well.)
£9.00

The price includes p&p. If you would like a copy, please make your cheque payable to Neil Cairns, and enclosing your name and address, send to:

44 Highfield Road, Leighton Buzzard, Beds, LU7 3LZ.

If OOP is on the price list it is out of print, but if you are interested in obtaining a copy, e.mail me and I will inform you when enough people have asked for copies and it is viable to run off more. Note, the price is written in, as small batches cost more per unit to run off. All prices are for UK mainland only.

NEIL CAIRNS, MG Enthusiast
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