

MGB

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Our MGB 'gate-crashed' an Open Day at Aldon Automotive Engineering in the West Midlands for any Midget or Sprite owner who wished to put their car on the Rolling Road to see what sort of power output their car was producing. A Rolling Road is basically a set of rollers set into the floor linked up to a computer. The car's driven wheels are placed in the rollers and the car strapped down. The technician then starts the car and accelerates through the gears all the way up to maximum revs to establish how much power is being put out and how much torque the car is producing at given revs.

If you've never been before it can be quite alarming standing next to a car doing 90mph in top gear which is not actually going anywhere! The noise, even from a standard road car with proper silencing, is quite astonishing.

You could opt for a basic £25 Power Run which was just a blast on the rollers to give you a printout report of your car's performance or, for £40, the technicians would fiddle about with your car's ignition and timing to see if a better reading could be achieved.

Soon it was our car's turn and we were a little apprehensive as our MGB is never pushed to its limit (or so Nigel thinks!) and as he had rebuilt the engine in our garage 10 years ago he crossed his fingers it wouldn't blow up!

It's pretty much a standard 1800 MGB with only a slightly hotter 717 camshaft, giving 280 degrees of lift, tubular manifold and large bore exhaust worth mentioning as performance modifications. The first power run showed 92bhp at 4,850 rpm. Not bad as I think the MG Factory figures are 95bhp for the 1800 B series.

The technician had a bit of a play with the timing as it was set at 35 degrees maximum advance but dropping this to 32 lost us 5bhp so it was put back where it was. The next couple of runs showed a best of 96bhp at 5,034 rpm but a bit of a dip in power at 2,200 rpm, as expected with the hot cam with its longish duration. The next thing to do would be to modify the cylinder head to make the most of the high lift.

The day was finished off with a lovely 134-mile run home in the autumn sunshine and the B still managed 33mpg with some rather more exuberant driving on some great British A roads!

A very interesting day out and special thanks to James Thacker and his son John for their expert help and advice. Thanks also go to Alan Goodwin and all at Aldon Automotive.

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