



*The 1955 MG ZA gives trouble-free miles; the 1923 Three Litre Bentley gets ready for the new season and the MGA has a summer holiday*

It's nearly a year since I contributed to tales from our motor house. The MGA had a rest this summer and is safely tucked up in a barn, but my other cars now have a new companion, another MG. The newcomer is an MG Magnette ZA, which I bought in October, 2007. I am delighted to say it has proved very reliable.

The first thing I did was to administer a full service at Andy's workshop. The only thing other than a faulty earth on one spotlight was a loose wheel bearing. The first trip I planned was to Woodbridge in Suffolk for the Bentley Boys' meeting at Ufford. Given that I expected to do a number of continental trips, I decided to fit front seat belts. The car had had rear belts fitted as the last owner had children. From the folder of bills and notes that came with the car I found these had come from FDOTS of Byfleet (01932 342043) at a cost of £156. They were able to supply some inertia reel ones for the front seats fitting was extra.

I took the car to Chisbon Restorations (01255 8626626) in Essex; they have worked before on my Bentley and MGA. Adrian did a super job of fitting the new belts. He had to make several brackets, for which he used the redundant semaphore fittings on the door pillars for the top hangers and reinforced the under floor for the retractable reels.

On the first trip, I found the water temperature gauge was not working. Along with fitting a rev-counter – a curious omission for a sporting car – this is now on my work pending list. The engine noise at more than 60mph was a bit intrusive, so I decided to fit better sound deadening material. Having acquired some from the local garage, it was a simple job to lift the carpets and use them as patterns. It certainly made a difference. I could now cruise at 60 to 65mph and carry on a conversation. The engine still seems a bit fussy at 60mph, so I am looking at changing axle ratios.

Between Christmas and the New Year I took the ZA to a VSCC gathering at their regular haunt in Suffolk, the Queen's Head in Hawkedon. This is usually held on the first Saturday of the month, which coincided this year with New Year's Day. There must have been more than 50 cars there. It was very much a case of the 'right crowd', albeit somewhat crowded.

It's almost two years since I last drove the Bentley any distance. I always run it up during its down time to get the oil circulating and to check everything is as it should be. I have started to dig it out of my garage to prepare it for some longer journeys this year. The only problem I have on such trips is the size of the fuel tank. With only 11 gallons I get only 120 miles before I have to start looking for a fuel stop.

The MGA took a back seat last summer; it had a new companion a 1955 MGZA. The first thing we did was to give the MGZA a 6000-mile service. No problems, other than a loose wheel bearing



Above: As we were about to take the ZA on a continental holiday, the car was booked into Chisbon Restorations to have front seat belts fitted. Adrian had to make up special metal plates (right) for the anchor points under floor and transition. He used, and strengthened, the old semaphore point for the top belt mountings



Left: My 3-litre Bentley sees the daylight for the first time in over a year. It is in need of a good service and MOT in readiness for Spring. Right: New Year's Day at a VSCC meeting at the Queen's Head in Hawkedon Suffolk, with Bentley, Lagonda, Talbot, MG, Bugatti and a Cord to mention just a few. There was space for just a few of the, possibly, 50 cars in the car park, others parked in the road. The meeting, held once a month, is famous for the number of Bugattis attending