

CHRONOLOGY

The following is an attempt to put some perspective on the sequence of events to Australia's output of MGBs. **It will be noticed that there are some significant differences with the UK introduction**

Craig Watson's well-researched article (Jan/Mar, 2013 – The BMC Experience) has been used as the main source for this article, along with Anders Clausager's authoritative book (Original MGB MBI Publishing, 1994).

Before the beginning: PMC (Pressed Metal Corporation), Enfield assembled MGAs as there wasn't enough room at the BMC plant at Zetland

1962

1962 saw the start of the MGB in the UK. For Australian production, it seemed logical to assemble these at Enfield.

April, 1963

Assembly of MGBs began at Enfield.

10 May, 1963

Official release.

All MGB engines arrived in Australia as CBU (Completely Built Up).

Initially, virtually everything was CKD (Complete Knock Down), but local input quickly grew.

From the outset, tyres, batteries and interior trim were locally sourced.

In terms of specifications, we generally followed the UK (albeit with some big delays).

Virtually every shipment contained some engineering change. eg PCV – introduced in UK in Feb '64 (18G to 18GA engines) – not introduced in Australia until Aug '64; 5 bearing engine introduced in UK in Oct '64 – not introduced in Australia until about Mar '65; push button door handles introduced in UK in Apr '65 – not introduced in Australia until Jul '65; 10 gal to 12 gal tank change in UK in Mar '65 – not changed in Australia until Jul '65; overdrive available in UK from early '63 – not offered in Australia until late 1967!

The ID plates on the Enfield cars were fairly untidily stamped from the front (whereas Zetland plates were machine-stamped from the rear).

There were interior choices in the UK. In Australia it was black with white piping or red with white piping

Some options offered in the UK were either not offered here, or made standard (eg all Australian MGBs were wire-wheeled; all had oil coolers; all had anti-roll bar) as opposed to the UK vehicles, where these were extras.

Pull-out door handles.

Trim with contrasting piping. Door panel also trimmed red when seats were red (although the top door trim roll was in black with a matching profile to that of the dashboard crash-padding).

18G engine.

Rear bumper corner infills were painted body colour.

Bonnet clamp was a metal clip, similar to the MGA.

'Jaeger' labelled instruments (mechanical drive tachometer).

444 cars assembled.

1964

During the year, 18G engine changed to 18GA (denoting positive crankcase ventilation). In the UK, this occurred in February!

Rear bumper corner infills changed to smaller alloy, unpainted infills.

Door trim panels changed to black, regardless of the trim colour.

Thread change on 'knock-on' nuts, from 12TPI to 8TPI.

Windscreen washer bottle with larger filler cap

Metal bonnet prop clip replaced with rubberized clip.

The car id plates were changed to show only the Australian car number. Prior to this, the UK serial number was also included. Approximately 975 vehicles still had the UK factory prefix, along with the Australian suffix.

802 cars assembled.

1965

Contrasting piping on red seats now red.

Mar '65 The 5-bearing engine was introduced (still with 3-synchro)(18GB/RU/H). This had been introduced in the UK in October, 1964!

Electric tachometer

'Smiths' labelled instruments.

July (April in UK) - change from 'pull' exterior door handle to 'push-button' type.

Change from 10 gallon fuel tank to 12.7 gallon fuel tank, now bolted in place rather than being supported by two metal straps.

915 cars assembled.

1966

With the new admin building, BMC official address moved from Joynton Ave, Zetland to 5 Dowling St, Waterloo (hence, the dual reference to the same site as either 'Zetland' or 'Waterloo').

Although it's not quite clear why, but early o/drive models were still designated YGHN3, even though they now had a different engine prefix (18GB/RU/H).

By now, all interiors were black.

Door capping trim altered from the previous protruding style to a more flat profile

Towards the end of the year, the riveted metal plates "MG" and "Weslake" are replaced with stick-on labels.

NB The last 500 or so Mk I Enfield built MGBs are often called Mk 1.5s, largely because they incorporated many of the Mk II improvements that were included from late 1967 (radial ply tyres, stronger anti-roll bar, reversing lights, laminated windscreen, headlamp flasher and Salisbury diff)

1084 cars assembled.

1967

Mk I cars still being assembled at PMC, Enfield.

Headlight toggle switch replaced by push/pull knob and swapped positions with the windscreen washer button.

Reversing lights fitted during the latter part of the year.

Differential changed from 'Banjo' type rear axle to a much heavier 'Salisbury' tube type rear axle/differential.

Overdrive gearboxes (with 'D' type Laycock De Normanville overdrive) became available on some cars (available in UK in 1963!)(YGHN3/ 5022, engine no. 18GB/RU/H 61942). These cars were still designated YGHN3! – the so-called 'Mk 1.5'. Modifications had to be made to the Mk I body to accommodate them (foot-well and gearbox tunnel). This was done in such a way that some cars

even got through with the now redundant vacuum inhibitor switch (beside heater), relay and harness still fitted. The manifold port was simply blanked off.

Straight, slightly more rearward-located gear lever in overdrive cars compared with bent, more forward in non-overdrive.

CAB3 cleaned out during November/December.

Installation of jigs, spot-weld guns and elevated track put into place late December through to early January, 1968.

1228 cars assembled.

1968

Big changes! BMC bought PMC; MGB assembly moved to Zetland in February (although production didn't get underway until August, due to set up problems, mentioned elsewhere on this website). The former Parts and Accessories Building became Car Assembly Building 3 (CAB3) for the MGBs.

Some partly finished cars and bare shells were taken from PMC to Zetland

August 1968

After much delay (some avoidable), Mk II production begins (YGHN4).

A 'pilot' build would have been done in May/June, then put back a couple of months with the set-up problems (see 'Paint' and 'Body').

The first few MK IIs were built mainly by the planning engineers and a small group of technicians

Mk I cars being assembled right through to August (virtually all of these cars were fitted with overdrive)

The colours introduced with the late Mk I cars, such as 'Special Burgundy' and 'Indigo Blue' were carried over to the YGHN4 series Mk II cars.

First saleable stock likely to have been August/September.

Stock being built up (around 1200 vehicles) for the official launch in February, 1969.

Some cars sold pre-launch (*YGHN4/572, owned by John Burns, was originally registered 24 Oct, 1968. It has a wide tunnel, 4 synchro gearbox with overdrive.*)

More robust 'LH' series Laycock De Normanville overdrive, replacing the previous 'D' type. Wider transmission tunnel, full synchro gearbox (with round gear lever knob and more rearward exiting straight lever) with auto option (Borg Warner Type 35), revised interior recessed door handles and modified door trim, negative earth electrics and alternator instead of generator (dynamo), pre-engaged starter motor, altered flywheel, altered cylinder head water outlet pipe, altered radiator, now with a central filler replacing rear facing off-side filler neck, foam packing between radiator and

diaphragm (rather cheap looking), slightly softer rear semi-elliptic springs (now, 3 thick and 3 thin), 'MK II' 'Overdrive' 'Automatic' badges, reversed front indicator/parking orientation, heater water return pipe routing changed, knock-offs changed to hexagonal style.

Cars now assembled at Zetland/Waterloo were all 'roto-dipped' – a superior method of rust-proofing.

Commencing late September, introduction of the YGHN5 series cars. Car numbering sequence continued rather than reverting to '501', as was the usual practice, perhaps because of the relatively minor changes (change from PCV valve to the ventilated SU carburettor – 18GD engine to 18GG)

1026 cars assembled.

1969

YGHN5 series continued.

February 1969 official launch of the Mk II (14 months after the UK! and 5 months after being in production in Australia)!

Front mudguards were modified late in the year, moving the indicator/parking light units closer to the grille. This was done in the UK because of legislation introduced in some European markets that legislated the parking (side) light's centre point should line up with the centre point of the headlights. Whilst the modified mudguards were introduced for the Australian-assembled MGB as these panels came on line, the indicator/parking light units remained reversed compared to the UK-built product until the introduction of the YHN9 models with their recessed black grilles.

June – Dec 1969 no id plates were fitted to vehicles until the introduction of the compliance plate in 1970.

From July, heater fitted as standard. Prior to this there was the option of having or not, followed by a period where, due to new regulations mandating a demister be fitted to all new cars, some cars were fitted with just a 'fresh air' unit, which was the normal Smiths heater box, minus the heater matrix and control mechanism; just the air distribution control knob on the instrument panel.

late 1969 Company name changed to British Leyland Motor Corporation (Australia)

NB From this time on, the 'G' designation (which stood for MG) in the car number prefix was dropped.

YGHN5 now becomes YHN5

Manual + overdrive PLUS automatic offered.

All synchromesh on manuals.

Alternator (15AC).

Gear ratios altered.

Remote-control gearshift

Borg Warner 'Type 35' automatic gearbox (specially adapted).

6 position automatic selector, allowing manual, clutchless changes as well as fully automatic.

Anti-burst door locks.

Recessed, sliding, interior door handles.

Soft plastic window winders.

1089 cars assembled.

1970

All vehicles were now fitted with the newly introduced compliance plates.

Around July, the MGB was 'face-lifted' (YHN9 for manual and YHN10 for automatics); black recessed grille, squared tail lights, fold-down Michelotti hood, revised (dark blue) trim, smaller steering wheel, non-chrome (black) gear lever, some badges changed (one-piece plastic 'MG' boot-lid badge, 'BL' badges on front mudguard sides), bonnets changed from aluminium to steel and overdrive standard on all manual cars (unofficially known as the Mk II BL)

Parking/indicator light orientation now the same as overseas (parking light outward)

1053 cars assembled.

1971

Introduction of rubber bumper overrides, self-propping bonnet and boot struts and later, the introduction of head rests.

883 cars assembled.

1972

early 1972

Production of MGBs down to one car per day.

Face-level fresh air vents in the previous radio position on the instrument panel. Radio moved to the centre console, previously used by the radio speaker. Many called this the 'BL Flo-Thru' model.

Centre console/armrest introduced.

Introduction of sun visors

6 Nov 1972

The end of local assembly of the MGB.

566 cars assembled.

late 1973

Last of the MGBs sold.



Figure 1 Advertisement - 1970