



# ME AND MY MGB

By Tom Aczel

## 40 (plus!) years with the \*‘Little White Car’



**Tom Aczel, from Australia, recalls some of the highlights from the last 40 years with his MGB**

About 40 years ago, (on January 17 1970, to be precise), as a young car nut I bought a somewhat tired four-year-old 1965 model MGB. It was the best I could afford at the time as a 17-year-old, who'd saved up his money, mainly from summer vacation jobs as a builder's labourer. I'd originally wanted a Healey but my (motor mechanic) father did not think they were suitable for a daily driver. (In hindsight it would have been a poor example on my budget.) My next choice was a TR4. We spent quite some time looking at potential buys, but my father found problems with each one we looked at. I'd never really considered an MGB, probably simply because MGs were so common on our roads compared to (big) Healeys and TRs. We happened on this MGB almost by accident (parked in a back corner of a car auction sales business, having been 'passed in' at a previous auction). My father liked what he saw and asked if he could have a better look at his workshop. The car was brought over a couple of days later. Up on the hoist and elsewhere it looked good mechanically. We set off to test drive the car, but within 200 yards my father turned to me and said "Buy THIS car"! \$1,675 later, the car was mine!

Never did I imagine I'd keep this car so long, but it just became part of me, a never-ending project. In retrospect, however, no other sports car would have fulfilled all that my MGB ultimately delivered. My daily driver, even in summer heatwaves and in heavy rain, on highways and rough country back-roads for the next 15 years, (till it came off the road for its second series of rust repairs), it was always completely and utterly reliable and totally oil-tight. The amount of space in an MGB



Me and my MG family, at home.



The Little White Car emerges after its third restoration. (Won its class at the Sydney Concourse 6 months later!)"

is extraordinary for such a small car, and the car has carried endless bulky items over the years, including camping gear, massive hi-fi speakers, even a large part of my worldly possessions when I had to move interstate in my twenties (the rest went onto the

train). I've lost my license for speeding in that car, carried endless passengers (often several at a time), covered most of Eastern Australia, and, eventually, left on my honeymoon with my new bride in the same car.



Tom with his MGB aged 21.

Prior to me leaving to work interstate in 1979, my father decided to redo my car for the period I'd be away. Even though the car didn't need it yet, at 91,000 miles it received a complete engine rebuild including a re-bore. He then put a couple of spare radiator hoses and a fan belt in the boot for me, "just in case". In 1989, eight years after my dear father had passed away, when refilling with fuel, a puddle of water appeared under the car. A quick inspection showed my fan belt had disintegrated. Out came the spare fan belt, still in the boot where my attentive father had placed it ten years earlier, and in a matter of minutes I was on my way again. It was as if he was still around, keeping an eye on me and the little white MGB!

Countless memories, as you'd imagine, are associated with this MGB. I've torn the exhaust off on rough back roads three times. The most memorable time was on a level crossing at night on a side road. We were well and truly stuck; if I edged forward the engine pipe dug in, edging back, the tailpipe dug in. My girlfriend of the time became completely hysterical! Finally, I hitched the tail pipe up with something I found in the boot, allowing us to creep back off the tracks. The exhaust got welded up in the nearest town the next morning. The little white car and I had survived again. (The girlfriend didn't; we parted company a year or so later!)



Almost completed engine bay; bonnet cable P clips and spark plug leads still to do.



Ned, number two son, resident petrol head and MG buff with the MGB at home.



Youngest child, Ursula, (another petrol head in the making), inspecting the restoration progress.

## Would you like your MG featured in Me and My MG?

If you would, then please send us a write-up of no more than 1000 words and six photos to [andyk@mgcc.co.uk](mailto:andyk@mgcc.co.uk) or The MG Car Club, PO Box 251, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 1FF. If you are lucky enough to get chosen for this feature, we will send you a Meguiar's NXT Wash and Wax kit by way of a thank you.



\* 'Dad's Little White Car' comes from the title bestowed on the MGB by my older daughter when she was about 10 years old.