

***The attached summary is EXACTLY what I hoped this site would achieve:***

*I send a copy of the spreadsheet I'd prepared to Garry Kemm, who has generously offered to insert over 2 000 registration records of mgbs from Victoria. Simultaneously, I receive a copy of an article from Gazza ('Birth of a B'; Sports Car World, Oct '68). I send a copy off to Tom Aczel. A day later, I get an email from Garry, suggesting that his details don't quite gel with what I had listed and that perhaps the MkII came out earlier than thought. Tom then writes down his thoughts. Stuart Ratcliff then enters the debate with his thoughts. Meanwhile, up pops John Lindsay with some real 'insider' information and an insight into the process at Zetland. Along with this he sends some data, including a BMC press release highlighting some data that didn't appear to be common knowledge. Both John and Stuart promise to send additional data as they get time to dig through old records.*

***"and the winner is... EVERYBODY!"***

*We all benefit in different ways through this shared knowledge (personally, general interest, recording of a part of motoring history).*

*Many thanks to those involved in this simple exercise, and I invite more people to make this a truly expansive history of the MGB in Australia.*

*Roger*

***Tom writes...***

Garry and Roger,  
The Press Release announcing the introduction of the (Australian) MGB Mk II is dated January 1969. (John Lindsay has procured a copy recently and has promised me a scanned copy). However the attached article by Mike McCarthy in the October 1968 edition of Sports Car World ("Birth of a Bee") describes the establishment of the MGB assembly line at the Zetland plant, taking over from Pressed metal. There is also a detailed description of an MGB's assembly which certainly strongly suggests that series assembly was indeed underway by this time. While the photos seem to show a mixture of Mk I and Mk II cars, there's a photo of an MGB going through the Roto Dip, which therefore must have been photographed at Zetland, and therefore before October 1968!  
So, it would seem that MGB production was underway at Zetland by the second half of 1968. We know that some partly finished cars, and bare shells were taken from Pressed Metal back to Zetland around this time for completion, and the hybrid MGB narrow tunnel shells with the four synchro, MkII gearboxes would have been amongst these. (It now would seem that there were at least three of these). I would imagine once the few cars brought back from Pressed Metal were completed, they would have started to build the Mk II, building up stock numbers in readiness for its public release in January.

I expect John Lindsay would be our best bet here, using the above to assist with his first hand recall of the events. Hopefully he'll respond.

Tom

***I send a copy to Stuart Ratcliff.***

***Stuart replies...***

I must fill you in. I started in 1975 as an apprentice panel-beater with a chap doing only MG and Jaguar work, I moved on to my own business in the early 80's doing the same thing. I moved to mechanical work on MG's only and kept records of vehicles I'd seen over the years for my own

interest. I still have a lot of info and will see what I can find and pass it on as I get the opportunity and time. I have been in the MGCC since 1977 and I am currently the president of MGCC Sydney.

The article you attached is interesting in that the heading car is a pull door handle car (stock file photo I guess) . All the other pictures are mk1's of later production as reversing lamps are evident in the body jiggling picture. Mk1's were produced in 1968 at Zetland and I would agree that introduction of the Mk2 in January 69 would have seen Mk2's in production late in 1968.

I would put to you that Mk1 mgb's with reverse stamped ID plates were made at Zetland and punch stamped plates came from Enfield (just an observation at the moment !) I have a few things found over the years that you may find interesting that I will get to you over the coming months.

***Tom responds...***

Hi guys. Regarding "Birth of a B":

The first photo is a pull handle Mk I as Stuart says.

The second photo seems to show a white Mk I (eared knock offs) behind the pallets of Midget panels at Zetland. Can't comment about the other three MGBs glimpsed in the background.

Like the previous photos, the next photo would be at Zetland too. The substructures in the "Dorman" jigs are likely to be Mk II cars. I don't think they did the Mk I platforms at Zetland for the Mk I cars.

The " hot run" photo looks to be a Mk II box with a FWD engine behind.

The next two photos interest me, as I don't know if they're taken at Zetland or Enfield, but I suspect it's Zetland (I'd asked John Lindsay in the past but he never responded). However the car in the second last photo, with the inspector and two assembly line workers appears to be a Mk I O/D (YGHN4) car. It's DEFINITELY a Mk I, and the gear lever has what looks to be a Mk I knob on a straight gear lever (= Mk I O/D)! So Mk I cars it seems were indeed assembled at Zetland as we'd all assumed if the photo is indeed Zetland as seems likely. The question is how many and from when to when?

The Roto Dip photo MUST be Zetland and I'd assume a Mk II body.

***Tom sends a copy to John Lindsay***

***John Lindsay replies (with a copy of a 1969 press release and some other data attached)...***

Hi Tom,

I have attached a copy of the press release which you should find interesting, including the fact that several "MK II" features were introduced earlier.

Isn't it really great to see a message without any detail in regard to a website, email, Twitter or Facebook. Bring back the good old days, although I still like my iPad.

With regard to when cars were produced at Zetland:

Planning would have been well under way before production stopped at Enfield.

Traditionally, everything in regard to new model planning started over the Christmas break.

Therefore the area in CAB 3 would have been cleaned out during November/December 1967 and the installation of jigs, spot-weld guns and the elevated track would be put into place from late December 1967 through to early January, 1968.

I was transferred into CAB3 to concentrate on the assembly of the MGB. I had my own cell with a large surface table where I gridded up all the individual components to ensure correct assembly. I also marked out the panels for the drilling jigs for the badges, hood clips etc.

We did not install anything from Enfield. Everything was new, all jigs and fixtures, track, welding bays, final assembly etc. One of the problems we had was that the assembly jigs supplied by Dorman were over-engineered (they hadn't built anything like this before) and damaged the panels

and to top it off, the completed assemblies were hard to remove (we had to cut off some location forms with an oxy cutter to get them out). I did a lot of work with the toolmakers and planning engineers resolving some of these issues, all of which made everything fall behind in timing. Then there was an issue with painting, where the areas of lead loading blew out with the extreme heat in the paint ovens. It took weeks to redevelop the lead loading technique to eliminate most of the beeswax from the paddling operation, use of extra heat to allow the minor air bubbles to explode and finish off with an epoxy filler. If you look at the photos from Zetland with the chap buffing the bare metal body, this is Peter (?) who was an absolute expert with a blow torch and the lead loading –too much heat and the whole lot melted and fell on the floor –too little and it was start again when the body came back from the paint shop.

Then we had the problem of the first batch of bodies jamming the doors in final assembly when they were lowered onto the drive train. Off with all the doors (probably 12 or more cars, rework and refit the doors, then back to the paint shop again. Some of these early cars could have up to three coats of enamel. This build up of paint could cause issues with cracking and severe chipping later in life.

Another issue was cracking the windscreens. Forcing the screen assembly into place to get good door and roof fitting and sealing sometimes caused the screen to crack. This resulted in more delays while replacements were sourced. Remember, we did not have a stock pile of parts – Peter was often robbed to pay Paul.

I didn't stay with the MGB's. Once we had all the assembly issues for this and the Midget resolved, I was moved onto other projects. The Midget was a piece of cake compared to the MGB.

In my next role in Quality Control, I had the opportunity to drive both MGB's and Midgets home overnight to do a Quality Audit check. We disconnected the speedo cable so the car didn't show excess mileage when sent to a dealer. These were better cars than most as we spent some time ironing out any issues I found.

When were the first cars built?

The very first cars were built mainly by the planning engineers and a small group of technicians. This is how the build manual is written up. It also meant the line could be "productionised", i.e. everything in the right place for ease of build. I would suspect that we did a pilot build in May or June and then were put back a couple of months with all the problems.

The first saleable vehicle would more likely be available August or September. Stock would then be built up for an official launch. Unlike today, all cars would not be held back for the launch. If a hot sale was on the cards for a colour which was not held in dealer stock, one of the newer cars would be shipped. The press release was more of an excuse to patronise the dealers and the motoring press with a drive day, beer and bickies.

As for production dates, don't get too hung up on the figures I've provided in the past. I've dug up my correspondence with Andres Ditlev Clausager and David Knowles. Both did a lot more research. I believe that David's final figures are extremely accurate and probably cannot be disputed. Anders disputed the figures and rightfully so. As I've pointed out, these are not production or sales records. They are Service warranty records. They were compiled from warranty registrations sent back to the Service Department by the dealer or owner. If you look at these records in this manner, you can appreciate why the numbers and dates vary so much. These are more accurately described as "Date of Delivery". I've attached my message to David Knowles where we were trying to resolve the actual numbers of MGB's produced in Australia. Barry Lake in his book "MG Downunder" used actual sales records. These are not factory records, but actual sales figures from the FCAI (Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries) who put out annual records from the mid-fifties. Barry unfortunately died on the 20th July this year. I knew Barry. I did some photography work for Auosportsman and Racing Car News when he was starting out as a journalist in the late sixties. He was a frequent visitor to the factory when we were at Zetland and had some involvement in our rally cars. A really nice person, who could ask the right questions to put interesting articles together.

I hope all this helps. I would love the website to be a “work in progress” with a definitive history of MGB in Australia.

***Tom replies to John...***

It's a wonderful insight to read your discussion of the productionising the MGB for Zetland. I was interested to see some cars in your list, but I'm somewhat confused. I thought the YGHN4 cars were the Mk I O/D cars, but you have listed some YGHN3 cars with O/D along with appropriate 18 GBRUH engine numbers (and we know for certain that there are indeed Mk I O/D cars designated YGHN3 out there) and YGHN4 as Mk II.

I was under the impression that the YGHN5 cars were the first Mk II cars, but your list suggests that YGHN4 were the first Mk II. Can you clarify this for me? Could it be that the 257 YGHN4 cars referred to were actually Mk I O/D cars, and a few other Mk I O/D cars slipped through earlier as YGHN3? Or is it possible that Enfield MK I O/D cars were designated YGHN3 and the Zetland ones YGHN4? Otherwise, what was the difference between YGHN4 and YGHN5? Or is it all too long ago to be certain today? YGHN6 appear to be the Mk II without overdrive.

***Another email comes in from John, in response to Tom's and Stuart's comments...***

Comments on your message as follows;

Hi guys. Regarding "Birth of a B"

The first photo (pic 1) is a pull handle Mk I as Stuart says. It appears to be a generic photo probably from an earlier road test of an MGB. Looks a bit like the main straight at Warwick Farm. We wouldn't have had much in the way of a new car to show them at that stage, especially a registered one.

***“The second photo (pic 2) seems to show a white Mk I (eared knock offs) behind the pallets of Midget panels at Zetland. Can't comment about the other three MGBs glimpsed in the background. “***

This is Zetland. It is the north-west corner of CAB3. The Midget panels are stored ready for the set-up of the Midget jigs, which did not happen until we were finished with MGB. Like the previous photos, the next photo (pic 3) would be at Zetland too.

***“The substructures in the “Dorman” jigs are likely to be Mk II cars. I don't think they did the Mk I platforms at Zetland for the Mk I cars.”***

It is Definitely Zetland. This is the shitty Dorman jig we had so much trouble with and the next main assembly jig also. I am led to believe that this Dorman jig is the one now used at Heritage in the UK. If you look in the centre background with the corrugated steel fence (that is my cell where I did all my good work).

***“The “hot run” photo (pic 4) looks to be a Mk II box with a FWD engine behind.”***

Yes, Zetland hot run area. This was not done for Enfield built cars.

***“The next two photos interest me, as I don't know if they're taken at Zetland or Enfield, but I suspect it's Zetland. ( I'd asked John Lindsay in the past but he never responded).”***

Sorry about that.

***“However the car in the second last photo (pic6) with the inspector and two assembly line workers appears to be a Mk I O/D (YGHN4) car. It's DEFINITELY a Mk I, and the gear lever has what looks to be a Mk I knob on a straight gear lever (=Mk I O/D)! So Mk I cars it seems were indeed***

***assembled at Zetland as we'd all assumed if the photo is indeed Zetland as seems likely. The question is how many and from when to when)?"***

Definitely Zetland again. The first (pic 5) is partially completed cars on the elevated track. The second (pic 6) is on the final finish line (I recognise the people). However, the photo may be staged. We had a mule (an Enfield car we disassembled and rebuilt) which was red – this appears to be a red car, and because the doors actually look like they fit, would almost certainly say it is the mule. We did not build MK I cars which reinforces the fact that this is the mule. NB: the mule was a MK I. When it had served its purpose, it was sold off in the company. It was brought to me when sold and I fitted a MK II badge and reversing lights to it. It's probably still out there somewhere with a totally confused owner.

***"The Roto Dip photo (pic 7) MUST be Zetland and I'd assume a Mk II body."***

Lay down misere with this one. The guy on the left is spraying on the under-sealer before it goes into the paint booth for the first coat of primer.

Given the lead time for magazines and the fact that they come out the month before they are dated, I would suspect that the article and photos were taken in August when we were deep in 'it' with paint and door problems. The people from SCW would have been carefully escorted around very quickly so that everything looked honky dory and taken for lunch.

All the people in the photos are those involved in the initial pilot build and problem solving. I think that Will Hagen could have been working for us then. He has a mind like an elephant and may be able to shed some light on this. I often bump into Will at BMC/Leyland functions. You may be able to find him through the ABC. Someone told me he now has a motoring memorabilia shop somewhere up north, but don't quote me on that.

***And yet another email from John...***

I'm sorry, but I'm no expert of chassis numbering. My job at Zetland was to build the best possible bodies for production to make cars from. I had no involvement in chassis prefixes or numbering. All the records I have been supplying are those given to me by Ron Switzer, or salvaged from the archives at Moorebank. If you can work towards recording the chassis numbers of all existing Australian MGB's in Australia, you will get a much clearer picture.

At least all the cars from 1969 should have a compliance plate with the actual date of manufacture on it. Has anyone recorded these?

***Stuart re-enters the discussion...***

Obviously John knows what was built and what was not but the engine and gearbox on the Hot Run test IS a Mk1 overdrive (I've removed a few in my time ! ) and the white car on the line is a Mk1 as it has an overdrive relay on the firewall which was not fitted to the Mk2 overdrive cars.

Were some Mk1 OD cars built at Zetland as these pictures seem to show?

***Tom again...***

I've just zoomed in on the assembly line photo, and Stuart is ABSOLUTELY correct: you can make out the Lucas relay for the O/D on the white car's firewall. John Lindsay says there was a mule car but this suggests that there were two "mules" at least assembled at Zetland, or, perhaps more likely, there were, after all, Mk I's assembled at Zetland! Stuart is also correct that it's a Mk I O/D box in the hot run department. I'll attach a photo of mine. John Lindsay may perhaps be right that it's

another "mule", but I sure can't answer that with any authority. It's certainly great to get all these guys with so much first-hand knowledge on board!

### ***John replies...***

Hi Tom,

Please read everything I write very carefully and don't assume things. Sometimes I may not make myself clear and prattle on. There was only one mule. Firstly let me explain what I mean by a mule. This was a complete Enfield built car that was stripped down to the last nut and bolt to write up production procedure and work out where everything went. Various parts and assemblies were then used to make up the jigs, receiving fixtures and production line locations. Given that the setup for production is not a simple or fast procedure, work would have started in mid to late 1967, so the red "mule" would come from that era and would have been a MK I overdrive car. All the parts from that car would have been stored for reassembly and the major components like the body shell, suspension units and the engine/transmission used to set up the jigs and fixtures. Considering that the engine and gearbox was a fully operational unit it would have been used to make up the receiving fixture and commission the hot run test bed – the reason I suggest it is the "mule" engine on the hot run test bed. It could also be an assembly from Enfield.

You are confusing what I would refer to as "hybrids" with the "mule" i.e. Those cars from the end of the Enfield build where due to various issues like shortages, faulty and/or damaged material, these WIP (work in progress) vehicles would be completed after the production line at Enfield was shut down. They may have been finished at either Enfield or Zetland.

Also, if there was any excess material from Enfield, and I would include engines and gearboxes in this, there would be a plan to use them, adopted to save a few dollars. The material would not be sent to Parts, as this would be an expense on manufacturing. When you consider that any replacement material would need to come from the UK, by the time an order was placed, the item (either big or small) picked, packed and shipped, this would be a minimum of 8 weeks, and could as much as 16 weeks. Also as the rectification work would not be carried out on line, if it didn't fit it would be made to fit. This may sound a bit obscure, but the production people had only one objective, that was to finish cars as quickly as possible as another batch of cars were coming off the line while this work was being carried out. I worked in Quality Control and we referred to this as "get 'em out regardless". There was always a constant battle between Production and Quality Control.

Also understand that I am very confident we did not build any MK I bodies at Zetland. The bodies built at Enfield were made up of fewer components. The Waterloo bodies were made up of more loose panels, hence greater local content. The Enfield components would not have fitted into the assembly jigs. As previously indicated, some earlier Enfield incomplete cars may have been completed at Zetland. Although there may also have been a situation where a mix of MK I and MK II running gear was fitted to the first MK II bodies we produced. The clue to this is in the press release on page 2 where MK II features were "phased in".

You may now ask, "how is it that a car on the assembly line has a Lucas relay fitted?" Easy—all planning was done on the stripped down MK I "mule" and as such a relay would have been included in the local build sheets. When the body was finally married up the power train, this would have been OK if MK I running gear was fitted, but if the relay was found to be superfluous there could be as many as 6 cars on the line with it fitted before a change was noted. The relay would be removed or under the "get 'em out regardless" policy, just left fitted and not connected. If you look in the photos I supplied for your article in Safety Fast, the very same white bodies can be seen in the background with the recesses for the reversing lights.

Remember, although I was there, I could be proven wrong, and this is easy to do in regard to MK I bodied cars.

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All Enfield bodies were painted with the front guards removed. Therefore on a correctly restored Enfield car, the large washers and bolts holding the guards should be plated and not painted.

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All Zetland bodies were fully assembled prior to paint and the washers and bolts were painted.

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Additionally, Zetland built bodies were the only cars that were roto-dipped. Therefore, if a MK I car can be found with a rotodipped body, I would gladly eat humble pie.

As an enthusiast, and you are a very passionate one, don't look at everything with rose coloured glasses. When the cars were built, they were not built with the same enthusiasm as people like yourself. It was a job of getting out as many as possible in the shortest time to make them cost efficient, which is why I say there is no definitive factory build and concours judges should look at cars with this in mind. The paint run on the front guard and dent on the rear panel could be "original".

I've probably written more in the last week about my MG experiences at the factory than anything previously. It's been a bit of a struggle, but as I write, I seem to remember more. I hope some of this is very helpful in building up the MG Australia story.

While scratching around, I opened up a box and was almost knocked over by the smell of ammonia. It has a huge swag of factory negatives that I didn't give to British Motoring Heritage. Mainly people, but also the full set (I think) of MG assembly photos –see my message to Stuart, 7 August, where I had two of these. I will now scan these (will take some time) and they may make a nice reference for research purposes.

### **Tom's turn...**

...

Hi John.

Sorry to have to scratch a reply on my phone, but I'm stuck at work late yet again ( Currently working the 11th day in a row without a break. Yesterday and the day before were both 14 hour days.

Today's shaping up to be the same!)

Thanks so much for your careful reply. Rest assured that I do read what you write with care, and despite my Hungarian heritage-based volatility, I do try not to jump to conclusions. I did presume that there was just one "mule" car. Your explanation for the relay being on the firewall of the white car on the Zetland line is certainly plausible. The car in the next photo in the "Birth of a B" with the two workers and the supervisor at Zetland is certainly a Mk I car, with a Mk I O/D gear lever and may well be the "mule" you refer to.

### **FURTHER...**

***This is what happens when you get a collection of buffs together, exchanging their thoughts and research. On the weekend, Tom Aczel, John Lindsay (armed with a lot of original documents) and Stuart Ratcliff got together and exchanged ideas about the mgb production data.***

***A lot of the discussion was focussed around when the Mk 2 started production. John introduced John Burns to the group, who knew the complete history (first hand) of his Mk 2 (see registry – YGHN4/572). John says he'll look up the original papers, but he's confident that it was purchased early in the second half of 1968 (we've since received a copy of the rego papers that suggest 24 Oct, 1968). It's definitely a Mk2 with the wide tunnel, 4 synchro with o/d. Given that we now know that there were a number of (Australian) overdrive Mk I cars produced ex-factory designated "YGHN3", it is beginning to look like the YGHN4 cars were the first Mk II models, not the YGHN5. The registry, will tell the tale eventually.***

***Meanwhile, in front of a computer, entering over 2 000 new details in the registry, Garry Kemm gets an email regarding the weekend meeting. Garry sends the following:***

Hi Gents,

Most interesting, Tom. Another example of dogged sleuthing and collective brainstorming, leading to some more historical information being unearthed. I agree that the YGHN4 cars were the first MkII models, and the spreadsheet that I am gradually filling in, adds further evidence in support. Attached is my updated interim version of the "Australian MGB –Chassis Prefixes and Numbers" from David Knowles book.

One astonishing fact that is emerging is that there were as many as 1200 MkII cars produced prior to the January 1969 announcement of the MkII model release. Thanks John L. for the story on how you sorted out the badge situation...these little recollections I find fascinating.

John Burn's memory is excellent, there is a Victorian MGB with numbers very close, YGHN4/570, engine 18GD/RWE/H/1645 that was registered on 15th August 1968. (August being not too far into second half of the year!). No idea if this car has survived, but John B's car is living proof that YGHN4 cars are MkII's.

Regards,  
Garry

***At this stage, I receive a list of salient points about all years of Australian production from Mark Paget...***

1. "...the rear panel for reverse lights arrived in Australia before reverse-light-wiring. Thus, many cars had the light units but not the matching rear loom to connect them."
2. "It should be noted that there were several white Bs that had painted interiors. The seat facings at least were UK red with white piping, entirely overpainted in black. The refinish was quite good and only by the late 1980s/ early 1990s had this worn through, though I doubt that many owners/repairers had even noticed. I did at the time and coincidentally bumped into the son of a long term owner who had the same feature. Such cars would have either gone to God by now or had all of their interior trim replaced at least once."
3. "...when BMC (Aust) introduced an alternator to the Australian B, it was a Lucas (Aust)ralia alternator with external regulator and matching Australian made loom. All other markets continued with dynamo (even North America). Somewhere along the way, Australian B changes from a DR3A wiper motor to a Lucas permanent magnet type. One of the few major electrical components to remain Lucas (and not Lucas Australia)."
4. "Probably to meet changing vehicle standards, BMC (Aust) introduced a heater box to the Australian B to provide screen demist only. There was no heater provision or heater fittings, thus only one control knob on the dash and the box in the engine bay. This could have been an option but just as likely it was a cost effective way to match new vehicle standards. Certainly by 1969, the entire car range would have had some level of screen demist, if only a mechanical flap just for the driver's side of the screen."
5. "1966 is a major change point for most if not all BMC (Aust) cars. Till 1966, one of the three seat belt anchorages for each front seat position, would have had either 2 x 5/16" holes, or in the case of the mgb, 2 x 5/16" studs (on the rear wheel arch). During 1966 this changes to a 7/16" captive nut. The 3 x 7/16" captive nut arrangement is still a standard seatbelt arrangement today. So, generic replacement belts can be purchased with some ease.

Anyone with the earlier arrangement who wants new lap-sash belts would need to order bespoke items, usually from the UK.”

6. “Australian Bs should have been YGHJ **NOT** YGHN. ‘N’ is a two door tourer with sliding window doors (Sprite 1, 2, all MGAs, early big Healeys ...). ‘J’ is two door tourer with wind-up window doors.”
7. re 1963: “Not that I remember when it was first introduced, but from early in the piece, there was a factory folding roof option, whereas standard equipment was the lift-off stow in the boot roof (canopy and header rail as one, bows unplug and become two parts). The early design of the folding roof was a notably different design and construction to what would later become the standard feature. Standard features on the B at this time included height-adjustable steering column, speedometer with trip meter, hydraulic front disc brakes... Wire spoke steering wheel at inception with centre horn push, seat backs didn’t lock in position. Jaeger gauges are electric but don’t utilize a voltage stabilizer. BMC (Aust) apparently never used the pressed steel or ‘disc’ road wheels. Only wire with an eventual chrome option.”
8. “In 1969, the last cars roll off the assembly line with BMC (Aust) body plates and the old coding system. The next model is released, with the new coding system. The new system deletes the second character or marque identifier. No body plate is fitted for the remainder of the year. This void continues till the arrival of the big square compliance plate which continues through till circa May 1971, when replaced by the small rectangular compliance plate.”
9. “The entire MkII concept is somewhat of a misnomer. Australia was the only country to create and badge a MkII. This in itself manifested into countless problems from owners imagining that it was a revelation in B production. The entire B production run had a series of continuous changes, none of which were specific to, or limited by what badge was on the car. There are five Australian models all with same MkII badge, let alone the continuous evolutionary changes that they incurred (Lucas (Aust) distributor, revised tail lights, Lucas (Aust) starter, fresh air ventilation, revised trim, revised colour schemes...)”
10. “From memory (which is fading), all Bs have an electronic tachometer. I can’t say that I’ve ever seen one with a cable or 1800 using a cable drive off the cam, though blocks do have the cast provision. The means of sensing coil switching did change as the years passed. I think you will find that before this point, Jaeger gauges were replaced by Smiths and, in 1965, Smiths gauges were equipped with a voltage stabiliser, creating new fuel and temperature gauges.”
11. “...Typically, BMC (Aust) changed to Lucas (Aust) dynamos, later changed production line polarity (dynamos later being stamped negative earth), then introduced Lucas (Aust) alternators and regulators to most of the car fleet.”
12. re 1968: “In your opening for this section you do seem to have unintentionally confused UK production line changes with Australian, and that Australia actually introduced a badge (MkII

model). If you delete this imposed confusion and simply revert to the straightforward premise that BMC (Aust) bought components from the UK production line. Allowing for transport delays etc., there will always be a knock-on effect to what is rolling off the local assembly line. Further, BMC (Aust) didn't just buy CKD kits. As per the entire premise of CKD, the buyer orders 'a so-called kit', without any given parts they intend to supply themselves. BMC (Aust) then produced, badged, titled, coloured and trimmed models they wanted. If major structural or mechanical component x, y or z changed on the UK production line, then, some months later, this change will appear on Australian models."

13. "For Australian production, the only emission control is the introduction of PCV, late '69 or '70. This is replaced by CCV. Local production ceases in 1972, long before ADR27, 27A etc. For North American specification cars, everything changes after 1967. Structurally LHD only, first design of evaporative loss, air pump, pending catalyst, first generation of low speed impact bumpers, mandatory belts and anchor positions... Reading the appropriate parts list will reveal this."
14. "The press release referred to needs to be clarified, as it is a press release that more changes have been made to the Australian B (MkII) and not the release of the model. Whether there was an earlier I don't know, though BMC (Aust) PR Dept were usually on top of such things."
15. "Though my research isn't conclusive, I'd suggest that hand-stamped plates continued for longer at PMC, if not for their entire production. Once shifting to Vic Park, the B appears to fall in line with the mixed character (pressed and stamped) period. This is probably a point that your spreadsheet needs to try and address."
16. in response to question of what different fuel pumps and when were they used (AUF300 & HP): "The change point should be in the first Australian parts list, as fittings change at the same time, however the differences in SU replacement pumps for the past fifty years is another story."
17. Further: "As I'd suspected, it is in the parts book: YGHN3 1793 last car and 1794 as first car with the banjo bolt type pump. The second pump then starts its own series of evolutionary changes, most of which can be retrofitted to new genuine SU replacement pump, with little effort beyond attention to detail."
18. "YHN8 simply doesn't exist. In 1969, with the new coding system, G is dropped. However YHN8 should but doesn't. YHN8 should be Facelift Mk II (manual). However, by this point in time, BLMC (Aust) seems to be only pushing 'top of the line' Bs (o/d or auto). About the only thing not fitted as standard equipment was a wireless. How far in advance BLMC (Aust) decided to end production is unknown. Whether this was a swan-song or that someone just realised what was needed as standard to be competitive in the market place. Save for Moke, there wasn't much else left at the entry level end of the convertible sports market at this stage. Honda and Datsun were already out and Stag was to come."

19. "I've never been able to substantiate where the 'L' term comes from. The car more correctly continued to be known as MkII, as very few B owners differentiate their car as anything else than what the badge below the boot states. This is regardless of the large number of continuous changes that occurred since BMC (Aust) attached the badge."

***So folks, it appears the jigsaw is starting to come together. Time (and your input) will tell***

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#### **YGHN4**

***The following are five emails received in response to the long held point of contention as to the designation of the YGHN4:***

##### ***Email #1***

"MG MGB Model Types: YGHN4 is definitely first Mk II cars, not Mk I with overdrive."

##### ***Email #2***

"...Back briefly to your web site, as I said, I'm confident now of the differences between YGHN4 and YGHN5 cars and it's pretty much as I said in my email on Friday. It also explains why at a glance the (ex-BMC) guy who rebuilt my MGB carburetors recently said at a glance that they were off a later car. (They were indeed. I'm honestly not sure how he did it, but when the original carbs on my MGB had worn out and began sucking air through the throttle shaft housings, as with where SUs are prone to do, my father swapped my original worn carbs for a brand new pair, with a carton of beer to "settle the difference"! They in turn had now worn. The changeover on my car had taken place around 1975. The giveaway was that the newer carbs on my car had (blocked off) ventilation tubes, as had been adopted in the MGB in 1969, allowing elimination of the PCV valve that had been a feature of the earlier post-18G engines."

##### ***Email #3***

"... For example, the YGHN4 cars were definitely the first Mk II cars, not Mk I O/D. We've now seen too many examples to think otherwise, such as John Burns' car, which has a known from new history. Garry Kemm strongly agrees on this point based on his records. I now personally believe that the change from YGHN4 to YGHN5 indicates the change from the PCV valve for crankcase ventilation to crankcase ventilation via the carburetors (These later carburetors are visibly different). So, 18GD to 18GG series engines, introduced in the UK in October '68. This correlates nicely with the circa January 1969 official Mk II introduction in Australia and the probable beginning of the run of the YGHN5 series cars. This also roughly corresponds to moving the parking light/blinker units in closer to the grille, reclining seats (I'll have a look at John Burns' car tomorrow, but from memory his seats are like my earlier ones) and temp gauge no longer reading degrees, rather C, N and H. Such subtle differences may explain the failure to return to 501 for numbering for YGHN5, but would appear to have been deemed revised enough to consider the cars to warrant a new series code.

The overdrive badge probably indeed was not fitted to the Mk I cars. This is likely since the locations for the Mk II and overdrive (and automatic) badges were all laid out at the same time (John Lindsay was involved with this, and made the jigs for locating the mounting lug body/boot lid holes). However, these badges were ordered in March 68, and the Mk I cars ran right through to August 68. So probably Mk II only, but Mk I from factory could be possible, as they would certainly have started to receive these badges before August. Yet, as we also know, John Burns' early YGHN4 Mk II O/D has never had an overdrive badge!, so my money's on overdrive badges on Mk II cars only, and those

Mk I cars with o/d badges had them fitted by owners wanting to look up to date or dealers caught with old (YGHN3 O/D) stock.”

**Email #4**

“...However, Clausager's "Original MGB" page 144 states: " (December 67) Introduction of MGB Mark II model, car number prefix becomes GHN4/GHD4." (GHD4 would presumably be the GT). There's absolutely no reason why the UK GHN4 model didn't become the YGHN4 in Australia. Yes there was a stuff up with the last MGA series (1600 Mk II) receiving incorrectly in Australia the YGHN 3 model designation, which then had to be repeated for the MGB Mk I in Australia, but after that we ran in parallel with the UK model types again, apart from the delayed introduction of each update. The overdrive was an option on the Mk I in the UK from January 1963. They never labelled those cars GHN4 in the UK; I just don't see why we would have chosen to do that. Mk I MGB cars were (Y)GHN3 with or without overdrive both in the UK and here. GHN4 was the first Mk II roadster in the UK and YGHN4 was the first Mk II roadster in Australia. It simply had to be. It doesn't seem to make sense any other way, and the early MkII cars we've seen would support this premise.”

**Email #5**

“As I'd said in my phone email, I just can't see why we'd go off on our own, and designate cars with the overdrive option with a different model number, but perhaps as Peter Davis recalls, they'd intended do that in Australia. It would appear though from the cars that we are seeing, that our model designations did correspond to the English ones from (the MGB) YGHN3 onwards.”

**And on it goes!**

*I don't know about you, but I found this whole series of inputs from some very knowledgeable people fascinating; perceptive eyes looking at old photos, years of experience evident in their comments. I hope this inspires others to put in their two bob's worth.*