

As far as cautionary tales go, there is none better than this one that I came across this week (October, 2020)(thanks Richard for sharing the information.

So, you go to buy a used MGB and you want to check the provenance of the vehicle.

1. You see that the number stamped on the bulkhead is clearly '698'. At this stage, you can't be sure of what the prefix is but at least you know it should have '698' at the end. (see photo1)



Photo1 698 clearly shown on bulkhead

2. You check this against the ID plate attached by the factory (the plate in question is definitely the original). You notice that it states 'YGHN3 698'. Ok, so at this stage you're thinking it's a Mk1 vehicle, assembled in September, 1963 and when you check it against my registry, you get some extra information. But upon looking at the ID plate closer, you notice the engine number is 18GD/RWE/H 1871. This is not possible as the 18GD series didn't come out until the series 4 in mid-1968! (see photo2)

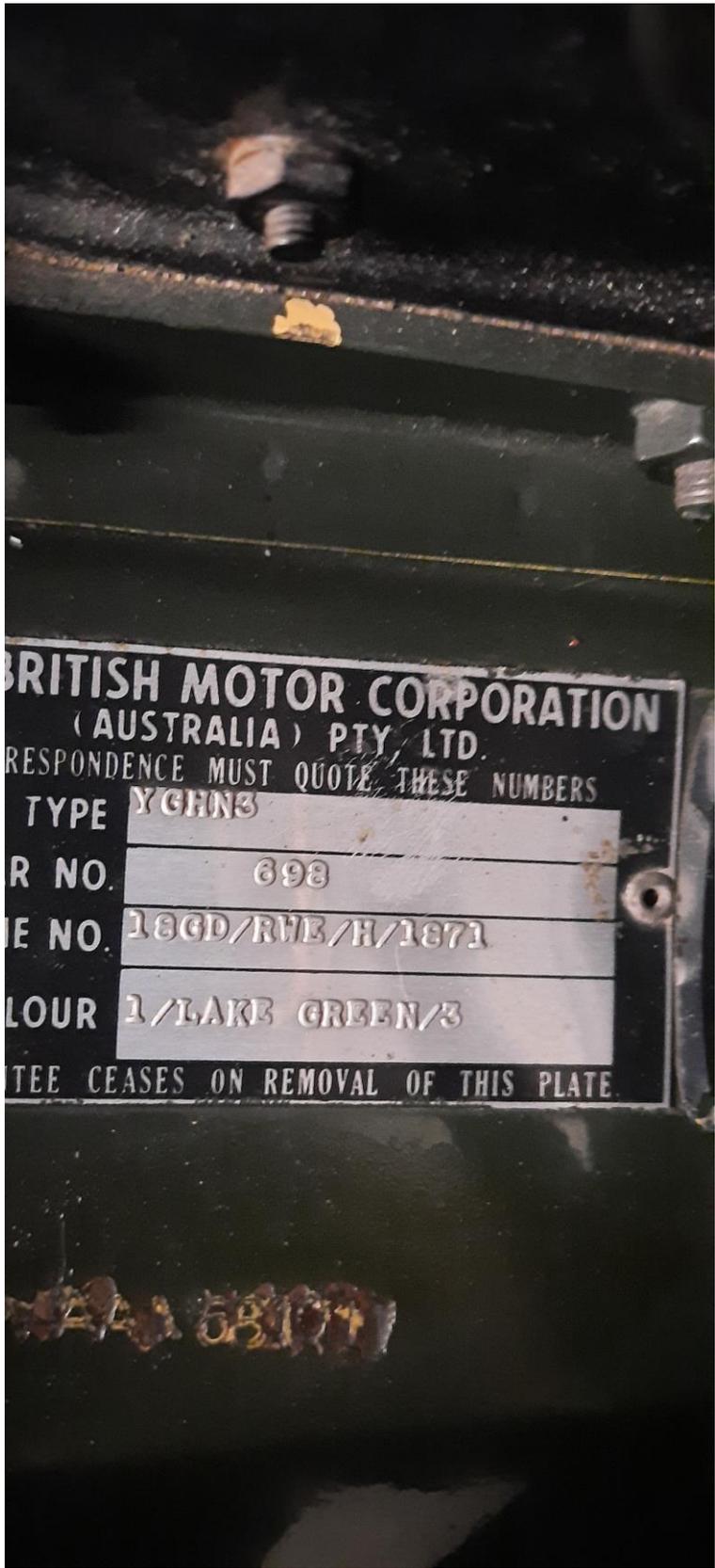


Photo2 ID plate clearly stating YGHN3 and the 18GD engine

So, where do I go now? The Driver's Handbook and Passport to Service that you receive when buying from a dealer, clearly (?) states the details of purchase. So what type of car am I buying?

A YGHN45! This is truly remarkable as they only went up to YHN10. (see photo3)

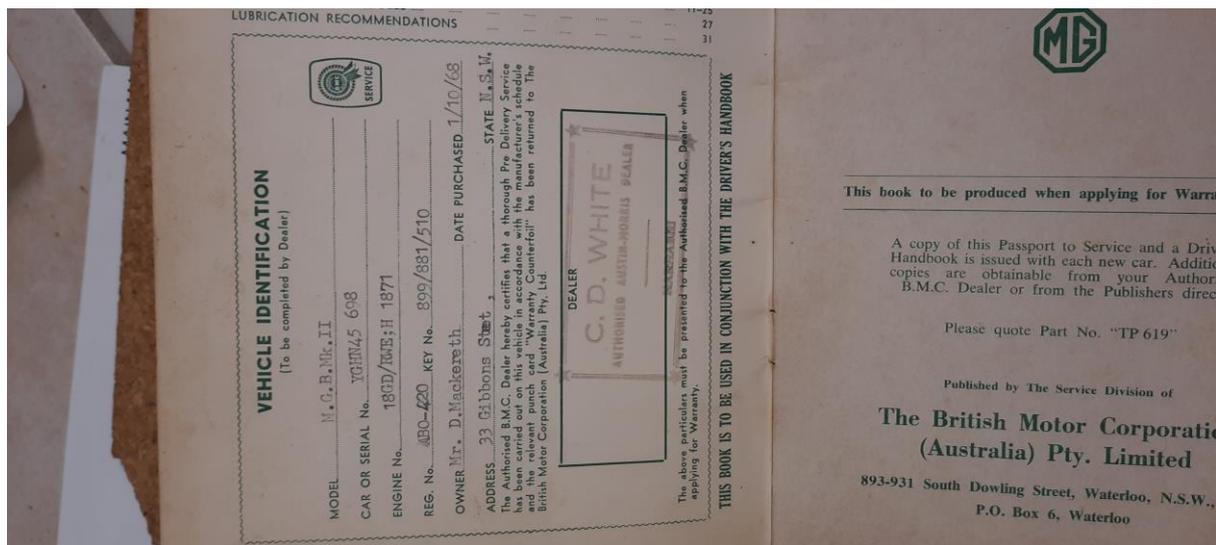


Photo3 Driver's Handbook showing the car as a series 45!

Back to the person who you are buying the second hand MGB from. He has kindly and sincerely prepared a history of the vehicle (as far as he understands it) and obviously had come up against the identification issue. He was either told (or surmised) that there was an error at the factory and that the vehicle is in fact a series 5 (YGHN5) (see photo4)

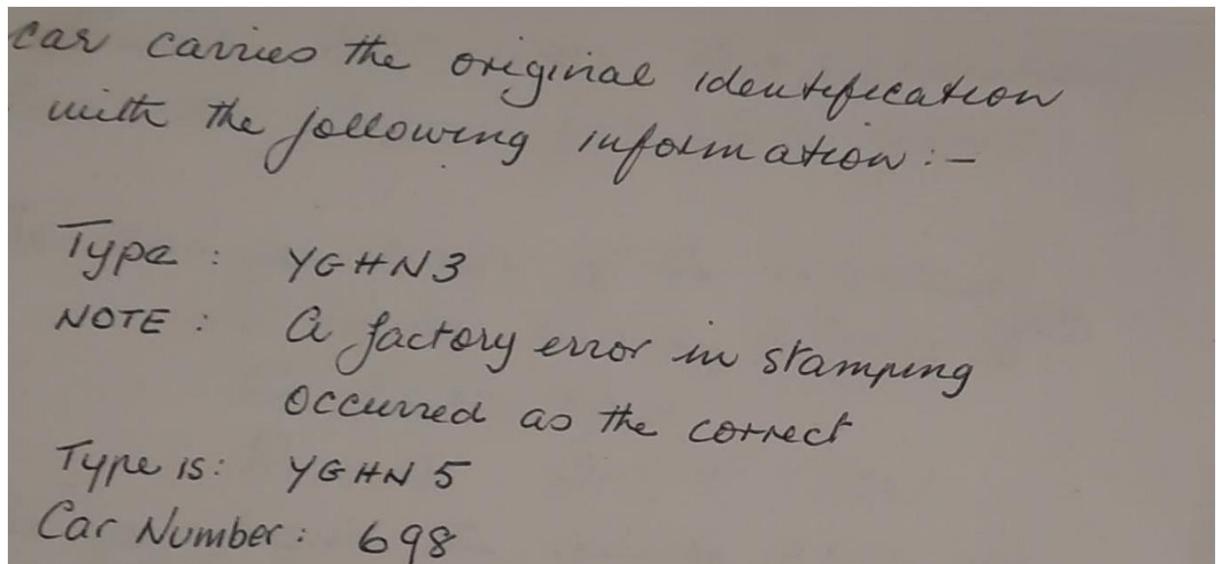


Photo4 History of vehicle from previous owner

This also presents a problem as there was never a YGHN5 698 vehicle (YGHN5 series started at car number '758').

Checking the recorded engine number against my spreadsheet (unfortunately we couldn't check the real engine number as the engine had been replaced with a short motor), we see that it fits in nicely with the YGHN4 vehicles around '698' (dates, engine numbers, even the colour).

Finally, we can confidently say (with as much certainty as possible) that this vehicle is YGHN4 698, assembled around Sep/Oct, 1968. Phew!

The advice here is 'Caveat Emptor' – let the buyer beware!

Roger Sharpe, October 2020