PHIL IRVING ADVOCATES - L-S-D FOR THE MASSES

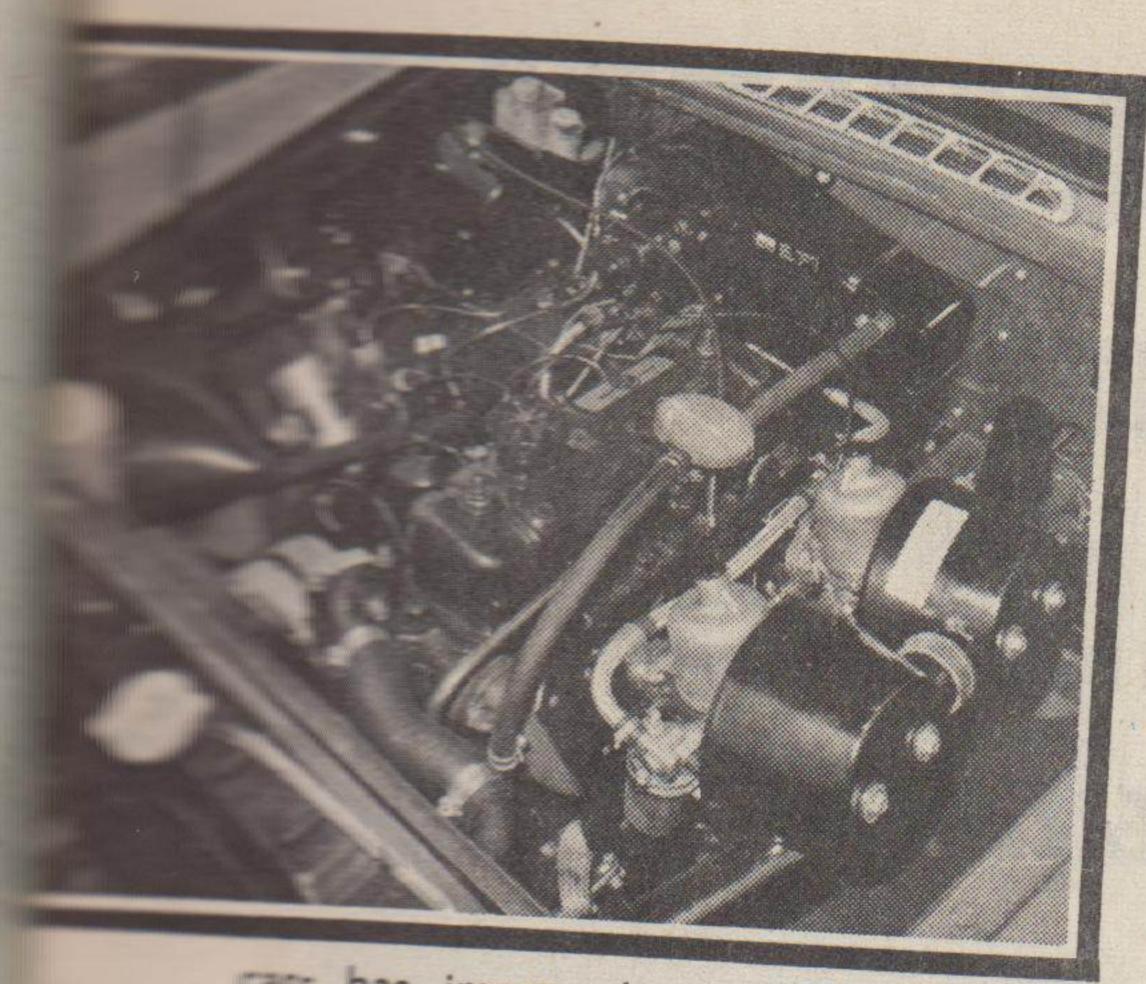
TATOROR INTERNATIONAL INTERNAT

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FEBRUARY 30 GENIS



Birds and B's
Detroit Sixty Niners (bleah!)
Reports Florian/Mazda 1200. tests (plus 3 others)



has improved out of sight in the Tew years.

So the joys of driving a fast, goodrandling vehicle are no longer the exright of the sports car owner.

Prices, too, are way out of proportion actual value, so the case for the sports becomes a difficult one to argue.

Difficult, that is, if the person you are arguing with has never driven one.

The MGB has the claim to fame of being the cheapest "real" sports car available and as such is the biggest sellwehicle of its type in this country.

To own an MGB is, as an advertising campaign a year or so back pointed out, sheer self-indulgence", and anybody able to afford to indulge himself in such fashion must obviously have some spare money to throw around—thus the young blood with the "B" usually goes over pretty well with the birds.

And this is why so many young Australian men strive for MG ownership and all the side benefits it brings.

But owning an MGB usually goes a

little further than this.

The "Safety Fast" syndrome is everpresent, but it brings itself home forcibly every now and then when emergency braking, or sudden avoiding manoeuvres are required.

Those big 10% inch dics up front are capable of hauling the 1920 lb. bodywork of the MGB to a stop from any speed without fade, wander or any other drama, and are able to do this many times in succession before the familiar smells begin to issue forth from the lining material.

The car corners flat, with a touch of understeer and precise placement is possible with the sensitive rack and pinion steering The huge steering wheel looks and feels slightly reminiscent of the "Old days" of motor racing and is not really as pleasant to use as the smaller wheels in vogue today.

Driving position leaves little grounds for complaint. In the interests of "personalized" motoring, the backrest is adjustable only by means of a spanner once the owner has found the position that suits him best, the seat stays there.

Fore and aft adjustment is of sufficient range to suit most drivers from 5'6" to 6'6" tall-and this covers a large cross section of the community.

The dipswitch, we feel, is rather poorly

located. Mounted on the floor to the left of the clutch pedal, it is so positioned that the driver's left foot must be permanently propped against it. Easy to operate at night, but tending to become uncomfortable during long stretches at the wheel. The accelerator pedal is positioned well enough, but on our test car was inclined to be a little too sensitive, making it hard, with the MG's typically harsh ride, to maintain a constant pressure over rough roads.

We didn't like the gearlever as much as the shorter unit used on earlier models. Too high for the left hand to fall naturally from the wheel, it also made for longer travel between gears and was not significantly lighter in operation. So why has this been done, BMC?

And we're not knocking for the sake of it, but the instruments, particularly the tacho, were too hard to read at night, even with the rheostat illumination control turned up to full brightness.

The instrument panel was a mixture of safety and non-safety controls.

Toggle switches were used for the heater fan, two speed windscreen wipers and the overdrive control, while safer, impact-absorbing knobs were used on the pull-out headlight and choke controls.

A roll of padding extended across the top of the dash and the two main instruments (speedometer and tachometer) were contained in a hooded binnacle directly in front of the driver.

Other gauges-oil pressure, water temperature and fuel supply — were located on either side of these.

The doors were fully safey-oriented, with flush door handles, safety window winders and generous safety padding.

The floor on either side of the carpeted central console was covered in easy-toclean rubber and the seats were upholstered with cloth-backed expanded foam vinyl.

All-in-all, a very comfortable and liveable, but very practical interior, conducive to relaxed long-distance driving.

Even more conducive to fatigue-free driving was the electric overdrive which comes as standard with the Mark II.

Operating on third and top gears, the overdrive gives six forward ratios and enables the car to cruise at very high speeds in top gear at moderate engine

In overdrive top at 100 mph, the engine is spinning at just over 4500 rpm -or 1000 rpm less than in direct top at the same speed.

From third gear onwards, three different ratios are still available—which allows selection of exactly the right gear for practically any conditions.

The gap between second and third gears is larger than we would have liked —the answer to this, we feel, would be to raise second slightly which would even things out and give more balanced progression through the gears.

All this, including a fresh air, fan boosted heater, reversing lights, laminated windscreen, radial ply tyres and wire wheels with safety knock-on caps, comes at \$3325 including tax.

The price of self-indulgence . . .



CAR FROM: BMC, Moore Road, Airport West, Victoria.

PRICE AS TESTED: \$3325. OPTIONS FITTED: Nil.

ENGINE:

Type four cylinder ohv Bore & Stroke 80.26 mm x 88.9 mm Capacity 1798 cc Compression ratio 8.8:1 Power (gross), 95 bhp @ 5400 rpm Torque, 710 ft./lbs. @ 3000 rpm

TRANSMISSION: Four speed, synchro.

CHASSIS:

Wheelbase 91 Length 153 inches Track F 49 inches Track R 491 inches Width 59 inches inches Clearance (minimum) inches Test weight 1920 Fuel capacity 12 lbs. gallons

SUSPENSION:

Front: Coil springs, telescopic shock absorbers, anti roll bar. Rear: Semi-elliptic leaf springs, tele-

scopic shock absorbers.

BRAKES:

Front: 104 inch discs. Rear: 10 inch drums.

STEERING:

Type: Rack and pinion. Turns lock to lock: 2.9. Turning circle: 32 feet.

WHEELS/TYRES:

14 inch wire wheels with 165 x 14 Olympic GT Radial ply tyres.

PERFORMANCE:

Zero to 30 mph 3.6 seconds 40 mph 5.8 seconds 50 mph 8.4 seconds 60 mph 12.0 seconds 70 mph 16.5 seconds 80 mph 21.5 seconds Standing quarter mile: 18.3 seconds Fuel consumption on test: 25.2 mpg on S fuel. Fuel consumption (expected): 25-28

mpg. Cruising range: 330 miles.

SPEEDOMETER ERROR:

Indicated:

30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 Actual: 29 38 47 56 65 75 NA NA

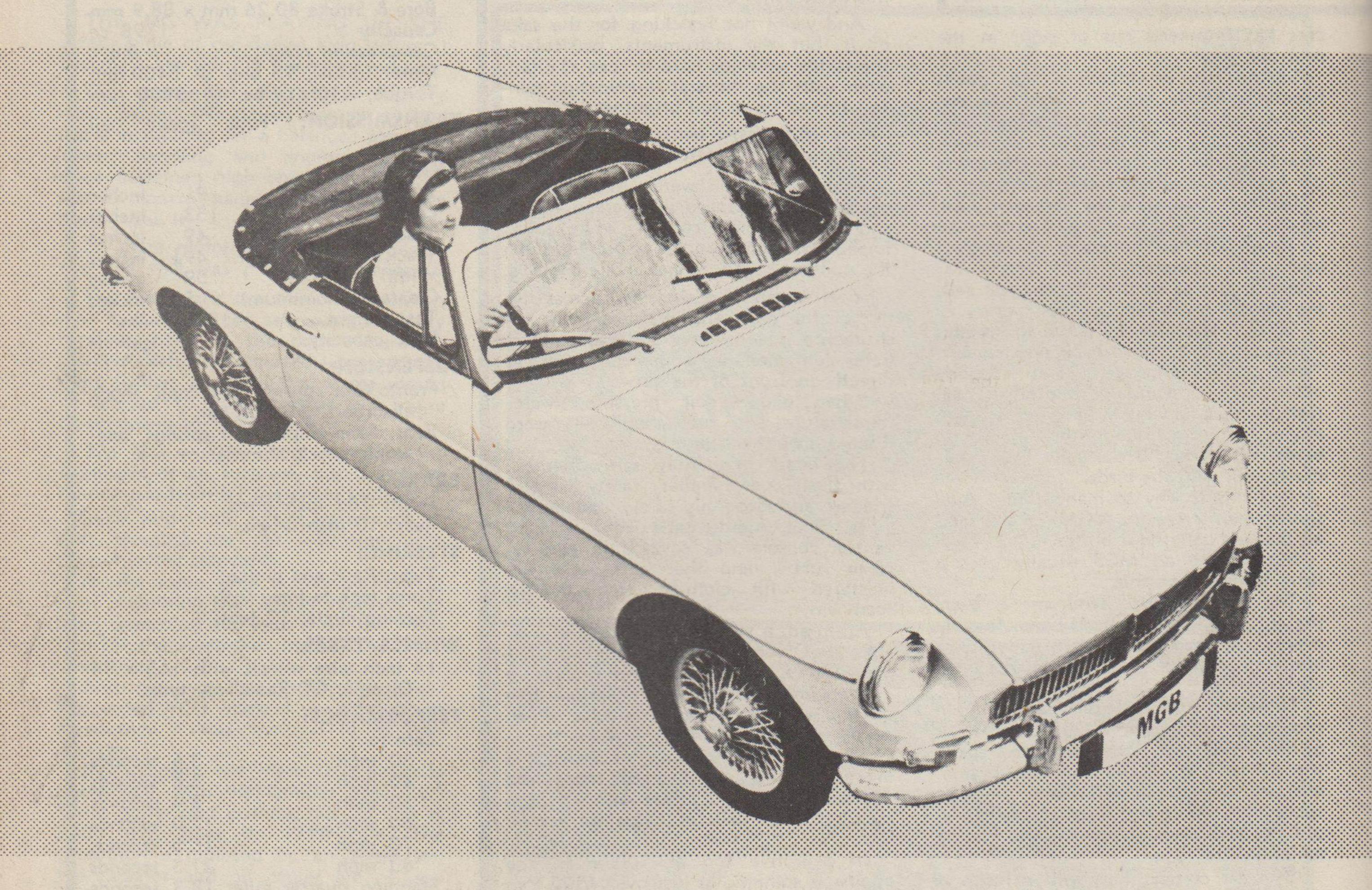
MAXIMUM SPEED IN GEARS:

rirst	Second				
Second					mph
Second					mph
Third old	**** ****		***	78	mph
Third o/d Fourth		****	••••	95	mph
Fourth old				102	mph
Fourth o/d	**** ****	,		103	mph

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CALL or PHONE
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THE MG WAS PLAYING UP THE safety angle of car design long before it became a key word in the motor industry.

The coining of the phrase "Safety Fast" helped MG on its way to an enviable reputation for a balanced blend of power, handling and engineering that made sustained high speed motoring as safe as modern manufacturing techniques could make it.

So when motoring entered the Nader era, the MG was pretty well prepared.

The Nader and the MG philosophy on how to make a car safe went virtually hand in hand to the point where an accident actually occurred—here Nader went further and said that a car should be designed to protect, rather than injure its occupants in an accident.

The MG was designed to reduce the likelihood of an accident, but it fell behind in provision for passenger protection.

So, in mid-1968, moves were made to start bringing the car into line with current safety standards.

At the same time it was decided to offer something that MG enthusiasts had been screaming for ever since the MGB first hit the Australian market in 1963. Overdrive.

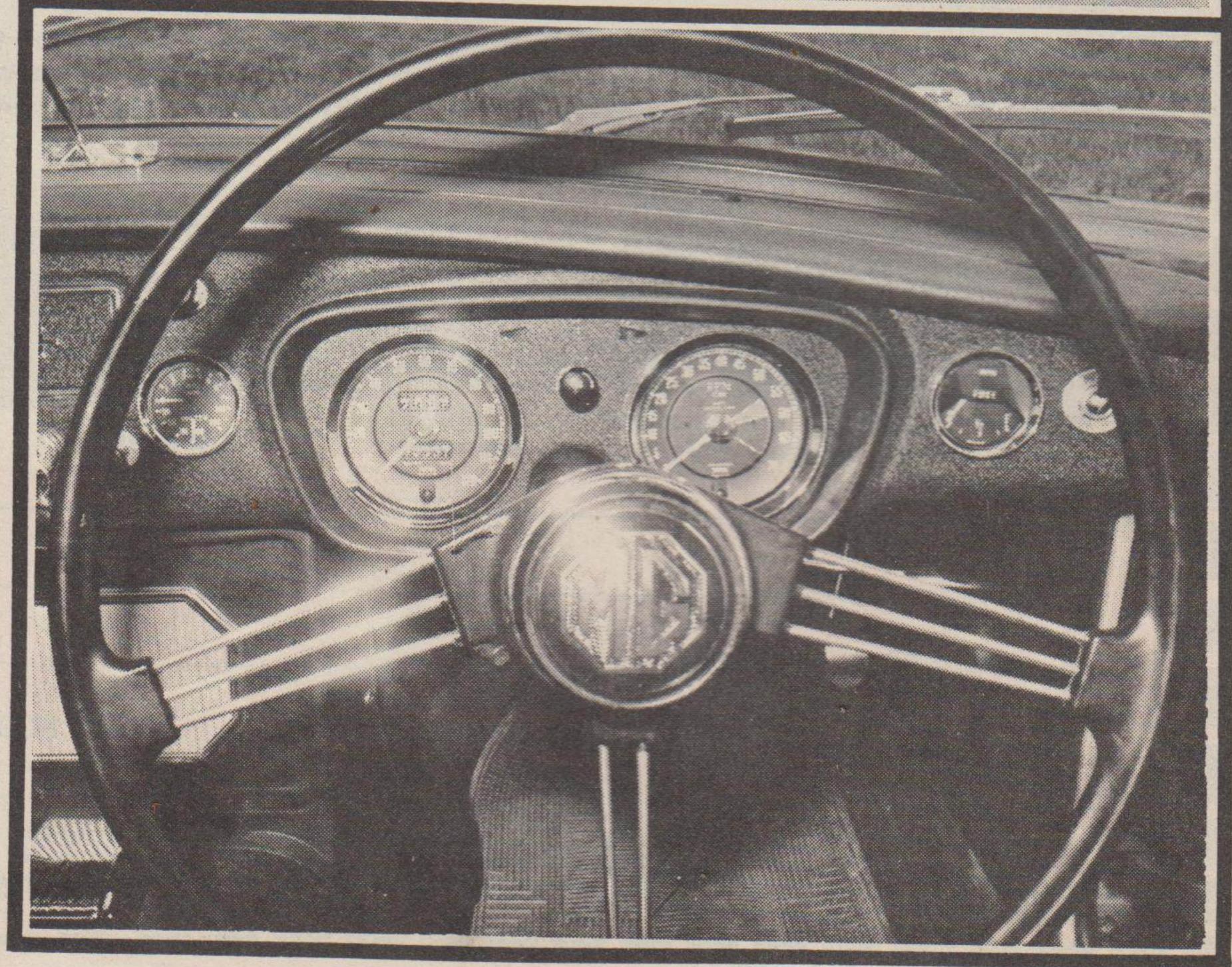
And the car that evolved was redesignated MGB Mark II — although in appearance it was identical to its predecessor.

Mechanically, the Mark II is basically unchanged, with the familiar BMC "B" Series power unit pushing out 95 bhp at 5400 rpm from its 1798 cc's. The generator is replaced by an alternator, the radiator and oil cooler are of new design, and the starter motor is now a fully enclosed type, but apart from these changes the engine is pretty much the same as when it was first introduced in 1963.

Still, this engine has come a long way when you consider it originally started life as powerplant for the long-deceased Austin A40.

In 1963, the MGB was quite a rapid motor car, but by today's standards it cannot claim to being particularly fast. The appearance of sophisticated engine designs and continual increases in engine capacities used to propel a given body weight have put many "ordinary" cars onto at least equal footing with the MGB, and the handling and braking of these





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