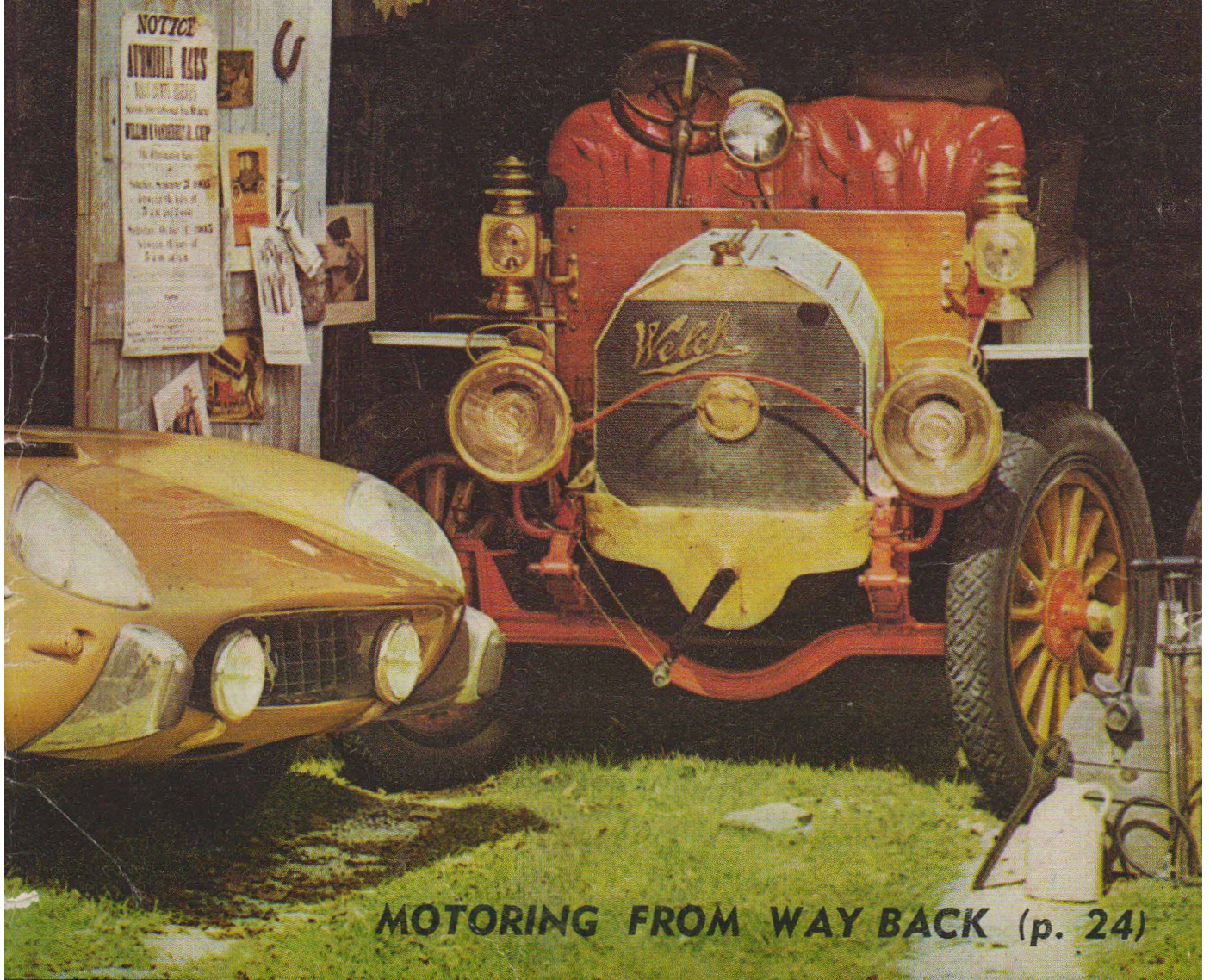


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CHRYSLER  
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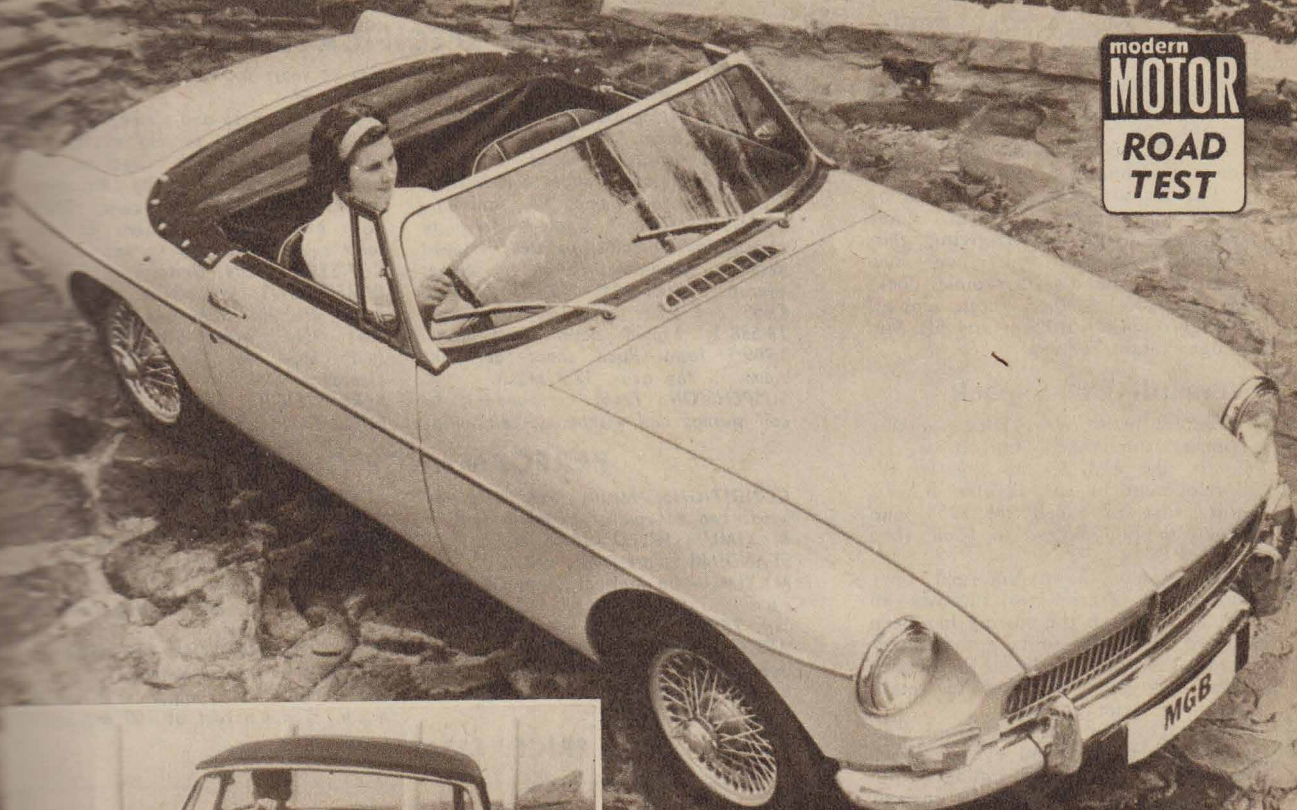
**MOTORING FROM WAY BACK (p. 24)**

**AUGUST  
1963 2/6**

**ROAD TESTS: • MG B • NEW VALIANT  
SPORT: FIRST WORLD TITLE RACES**



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TEST



*New, chassisless MG B offers more engine, more comfort, but retains all the old zest, reports Bill Daly*

# GEE-WHIZ!

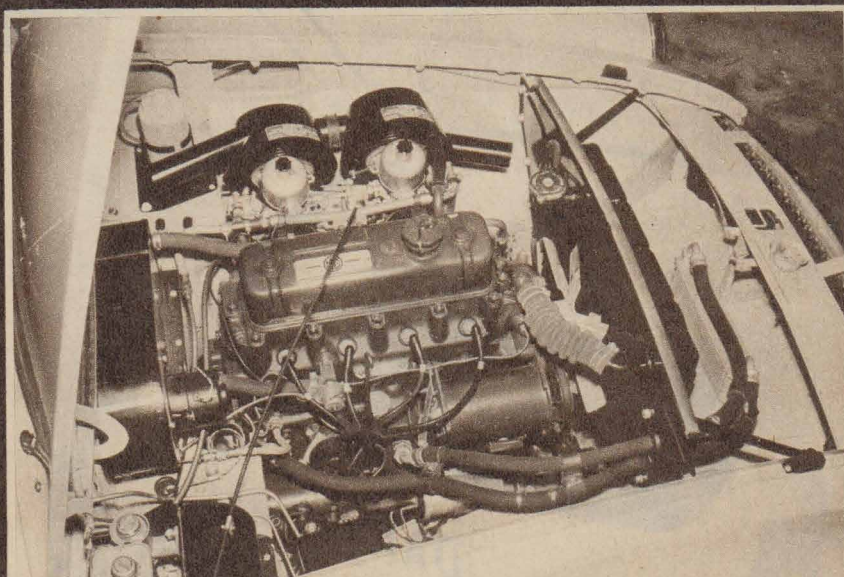
**W**HEN the late Jack Myers looked like being beaten by race handicappers, he would say "there's no substitute for inches," and forthwith bore the cylinders of his car out a fraction lighter.

Most of the time this formula worked successfully for Jack—just as it has for the just-released MG B.

Capable of 105 m.p.h. and offering every comfort for two people and their luggage, the latest version of this famous make has a bigger (1798c.c.) engine which, coupled with the car's new chassisless construction, makes it a delight to drive in town or country.

At 18½cwt., the B may be a little heavy for competition work—but it should certainly do better than the

**NEW 1798c.c. engine develops 94 h.p., kicked test car to 105 m.p.h.**





abortive twin-cam job of not so long ago. And it can accelerate this weight from rest to 90 m.p.h. in just over 32 seconds—or pull away smoothly from 15 m.p.h. in top gear.

The B's weightiness is justified by the provision of wide (36½ in.) doors for easy entry, comfort-giving glass wind-up windows (just over two turns of the handle), a roomier cockpit with lots of elbow room, and all the leg-room adjustment any 6ft. 4in. midget might require.

### Versatile Power-pack

Externally the new 1798c.c. engine appears unchanged—but it is, no doubt, the end of the line in the development of the 1½-litre B.M.C. unit, first produced in 1954 and progressively enlarged to 1588, then 1622c.c.

Bores have been enlarged once more, but there's no increase in stroke, although the casting has been altered internally to take the bigger bores; the inner wall of the tappet chest has been modified to retain adequate water passages.

Contact area between front and rear pairs of siamesed cylinders has been increased, and gudgeon-pin bosses now sport four holes instead of two, to give further internal cooling by oil spray. Crankshaft has been stiffened and main-bearing diameter increased by ¼ in. Minor head modifications round off the mechanical picture.

Under load, this enlarged, high-compression (8.8:1) version of the B series engine with twin SU carburettors has a much wider range of useful speeds than the B.M.C. touring vehicles, already renowned for smooth pulling power at low revs.

**DASH** (top right) is fully instrumented, gearshift a beauty. **WELL** behind seats (right) takes luggage or one small child. **BOOT** (below) loses much space to the spare wheel.

## MAIN SPECIFICATIONS

**ENGINE:** 4-cylinder, o.h.v.; bore 80.26mm., stroke 88.9mm., capacity 1798c.c.; compression ratio 8.8:1; maximum b.h.p. 94 at 5500 r.p.m.; maximum torque 107lb./ft. at 3500; twin SU semi-downdraught carburettors, SU electric fuel pump; 12v. ignition.  
**TRANSMISSION:** Single dry-plate clutch, hydraulically operated; 4-speed gearbox, synchromeshed on top three; overall ratios—1st, 14.214; 2nd, 8.655; 3rd, 5.369; top, 3.901:1; reverse, 18.588:1; hypoid bevel final drive, 3.909:1 ratio. Road speed at 1000 r.p.m. in top gear, 17.9 m.p.h.  
**SUSPENSION:** Front independent, by coil springs and wishbones; semi-ellip-

tics at rear; hydraulic shock-absorbers all round.

**STEERING:** Rack-and-pinion; 3 turn lock-to-lock, 32ft. turning circle.

**WHEELS:** Centre-lock, knock-on wheels with tubed 5.60 by 14in. tyres.

**BRAKES:** Lockheed hydraulic; 10in. discs at front, 10in. drums at rear; total swept area, 350 sq. in.

**CONSTRUCTION:** Unitary.

**DIMENSIONS:** Wheelbase, 7ft. 7½ in.; track, 4ft. 2in. front and rear; length, 12ft. 9½ in.; width 5ft. 2in.; height (with hood up) 4ft. 1½ in.; ground clearance 5in.

**KERB WEIGHT:** 18½ cwt.

**FUEL TANK:** 10 gallons.

## PERFORMANCE ON TEST

**CONDITIONS:** Mostly wet; cold, no wind; two occupants, premium fuel.

**MAXIMUM SPEED:** 105.6 m.p.h.

**STANDING quarter-mile:** 18.4s.

**MAXIMUM** in indirect gears (to 6000 r.p.m.): 1st, 29.5 m.p.h.; 2nd, 48.0; 3rd, 78.0.

**ACCELERATION** from rest through gears: 0-30, 3.8s.; 0-40, 5.8s.; 0-50, 8.2s.; 0-60, 12.0s.; 0-70, 16.2s.; 0-80, 22.5s.; 0-90, 32.8s.

**ACCELERATION** in top (with third in brackets): 20-40, 7.5s. (5.0); 30-50, 7.4s. (5.2); 40-60, 8.0s. (6.8); 50-70, 9.6s. (7.8); 60-80, 15.8s.; 70-90, 17.0s.

**BRAKING:** 29ft. 8in. to stop from 30 m.p.h. in neutral.

**FUEL CONSUMPTION:** 23.8 m.p.g. on test; 27.4 on normal running.

**SPEEDOMETER:** 2 m.p.h. fast at 30 m.p.h.; 5 m.p.h. fast at 100 m.p.h.

**PRICE: £1365 including tax**

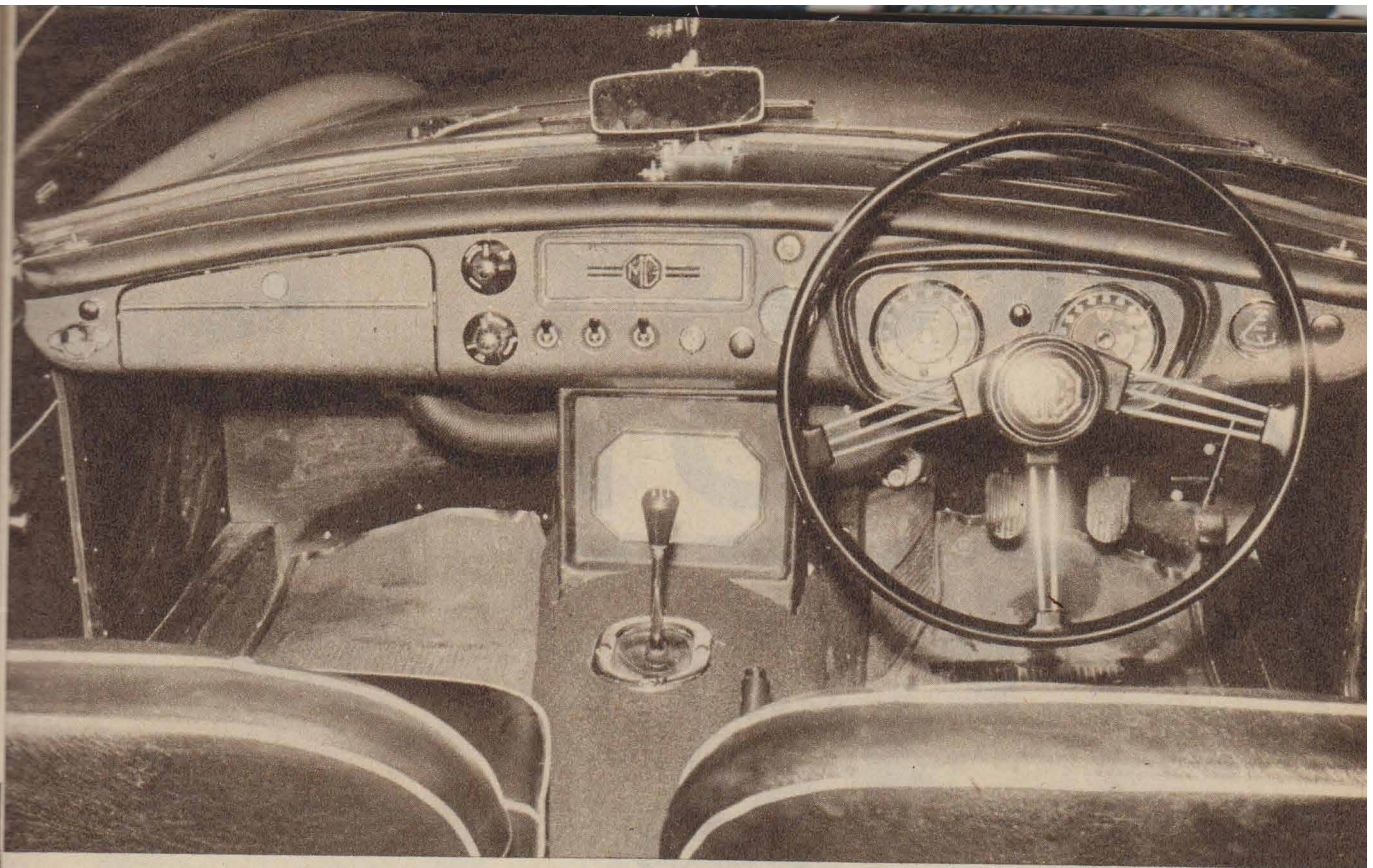


It enables the car to respond to your every mood: pottering along quietly and easily in top at low speeds; tractable as any town-bred saloon in city traffic, yet quickly overtaking most traffic when up-changes are made at around 3500 revs; or really stepping it out if you push the rev-counter needle up into the 5500-6000 region.

Acceleration from standstill is only fractionally quicker than that of the superseded MG A Mark II — but then the bigger, beefier new motor doesn't have to work so hard to achieve this result.

It is obviously detuned, as the 11 percent increase in capacity gives only about 5 percent more power,





helping to explain the smoother, quieter performance of the larger engine. At around 3000 r.p.m., torque increase is 17 percent.

At touring speeds the engine has a deeper, throatier rumble than any previous B.M.C. unit I can remember. At over 4000 revs, this note changes to a harder pitch.

Top-gear acceleration from slow speeds is one of the few "un-MG-like" features, being more in the "Dynaflash Fireball 8" class. Top-gear hill-climbing power can also be likened to the "D.F.8."

Our 1-in-4 test hill was tackled at 15 m.p.h. in second from the base. Accelerating all the way up, we crested the top at 45 m.p.h. — still accelerating. I was too amazed to think about changing up to third.

Fuel economy is in direct relation to the amount of lead contained in your right boot. Genteel motoring rewarded us with 27.4 m.p.g. — but high-speed tests naturally put a severe strain on fuel economy, reducing the overall figure to 23.8.

Since the MG B is a sports car, the 10-gallon fuel tank is a happy compromise, giving a reasonable range of about 250 miles (even with a fair proportion of high-spirited pedalling) without adding too much weight.

### True MG Handling

With such big changes in construction and styling, I had expected to find some differences in behavior. Not so — ride and handling appear to be almost unchanged.

This is both a vice and a virtue. After 50 miles or so you realise the suspension is definitely "firm" —

yet it is this very firmness which gives the MG its sensitivity, allowing the driver to "feel" just what the car is doing in relation to the road surface.

Steering characteristic is still very definitely toward oversteer. But not at full chat on a good highway, where fast curves can be taken in a smooth arc — under these conditions steering is almost neutral.

It's on the tighter corners, where the lower cogs are hurriedly grabbed, that the old MG oversteer becomes evident. Altering tyre pressures made little difference.

On wet road surfaces, the steeper corners were, to put it mildly, excitingly "hairy" if taken with any gusto. However, steering correction alone (without applying extra power) was usually enough to straighten things out. Body roll was almost nonexistent.

Steering ratio is a fraction slower than on the MG A; all the better for it, and reassuringly responsive in front-wheel turning action — but I wish the steering wheel wasn't so stiff to turn in the column. It robs the system of much sensitivity.

### Cockpit, Controls

This must be the first MG sports whose cockpit gives a feeling of spacious comfort, wooing you with attractively upholstered, comfortable seats, full-width carpeting, wind-up windows, a neatly cowed, fully-instrumented dash panel — even a lockable glovebox.

An improvement was noted in the gearbox synchro, the changes being noticeably smoother and easier. The shift lever is nicely positioned and just the right length to afford good

leverage, so you don't finish up with a sore palm after a day's motoring.

Thanks to the new chassisless construction, the pedal controls are no longer crammed together; but the accelerator is small, and set so far from the brake pedal that heel-and-toeing is almost impossible. An organ pedal would solve this problem.

It was also surprising to find a normal ratchet-type handbrake lever (positioned between driver's seat and transmission tunnel) instead of the traditional "fly-off" type. However, it proved eminently satisfactory, holding the car on one of the steeper pinches of the Silverdale hillclimb course.

The disc/drum footbrake layout worked like a charm. Despite the absence of a power booster, it called for moderate pedal pressure and stopped us in less than 30ft. from 30 m.p.h. in neutral. Braking was progressive, free from squeal and fade-free.

Disappointingly, the boot is only slightly roomier than the MG A's. If the spare wheel could be carried elsewhere, boot space would be vastly improved — but I can think of no more practical spot for it than right where it is: in a lockable boot.

The MG B cannot hope to please every sports-car enthusiast, but I'm willing to bet it will please the vast majority. It IS a genuine sports car, despite its "roadster" appearance, and it DOES have a true everyday usefulness — unlike many so-called sports cars you see transported to race meetings on trailers.

To this everyday usefulness you can add bags of performance, with refinement, comfort and economy thrown in for good measure. Fair value at £1365, I calls it. ●●●