

# Our Cars

## MGC GT

I suppose these accounts of the C borrowed from John Tybjerg could really take the form of a "Dear John" letter since he is overseas and hears about his car through these pages. Having briefly made the car's acquaintance last month, I've clocked up a further 700 miles or so and sorted out one or two problems. Firstly the oil cooler was leaking at one union; when our IPC garage tried to solve this, they found a badly stripped thread which the use of builder's anti-leak tape was unable to cure. I took the cooler to Raymond Radiators hoping it was repairable; it wasn't — it is an aluminium cooler and could only have been restored by welding on aluminium, filing round and retapping. So we've fitted a new £25 oil cooler, John, and tightened it correctly with two spanners. I've also used most of a Spectra aerosol of engine cleaner, getting rid of oil drawn through the radiators and projected at the engine.

Our garage was trying to solve another problem at the time which was failure of the fuel pump located down in the dirt behind the axle; they cleaned out all the dirt and water, adjusted the points and taped the junction of cap to body. It worked properly for a bit but I've had to hit the pump three times now to jerk it into activity.

Next problem was a loss of brakes, fortunately at the bottom of the drive and two-handed application of the handbrake stopped the car just in time. I had earlier had to top up the fluid, but couldn't find out where it had gone. This time the reservoir was still half full and reversing up the drive in a cloud of white smoke told me where the fluid had been going — into the servo, and thence into the inlet manifold. I took the servo unit to Richard Williams, who reconditions similar ones for Astons, but the cylinder on this one was too badly scored to be recoverable. So now I've fitted a new servo unit at £60. Fitting it wasn't that simple as the olive joint into the servo had been overtightened, spreading the bolt bottom so that it wouldn't go down clean new threads. I had to remove that pipe length and file down the bottom part until it was the right size again; filing *in situ* was impossible. I also removed the master cylinder to check that that wasn't as scored as the servo, but that was in excellent condition so I reassembled it. I also took the opportunity to replace a rear wheel cylinder that John had left me to replace, one with a sheared bleed nipple. The old cylinder was gummed solid into the backplate and wasn't sliding as it should, nor was the handbrake adjuster free to rotate. That was cured with the new cylinder. On the other side the story was almost the same, apart

from a complete nipple; both sliding ability and adjuster had to be freed, but the handbrake lever which operates the adjuster is too wobbly on its pivot to get a decent push at the ratchet adjuster, so I had to do that by hand and will replace it when I get the new rear brake linings that are necessary.

The engine has responded quite well to adjustment of plug and distributor gaps and carburettor tuning with a Crypton balancer; adjusting the choke linkage ensures quicker starting too, and topping up the carb piston dampers has improved throttle response.

While the plugs were out I decided to check the back axle ratio and it is the standard 3.307 for that year — just over 33 turns of the engine for 10 revolutions of the rear wheel in a straight line. So that means that the rev. counter is hopelessly inaccurate; the indicated 80mph which is really 72mph should be 2700rpm and not the 33-3600rpm indicated according to temperature.

Rehanging the doors on hinges and



*The Skilleter wife, plus cat and Morris Minor.*

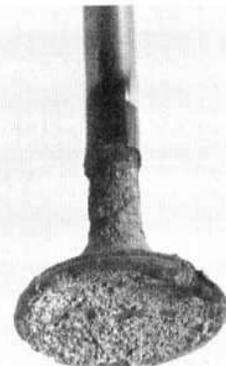
striker plate, lubricating all the door linkages, window winding mechanism and felts, and adjusting the bolt in the end of the door push-button, has made the doors close cleanly and the windows run smoothly to seal relatively well, and there is now little wind noise.

That was two full days work, including continuing to T-Cut the very oxidised red paintwork, which John had already begun to do. I also indulged a personal steering wheel fad; I don't like overly small wheels, but nor do I like large ones silhouetted against the road ahead. I still had the Formula steering wheel that I used on an MGB GT many years back; the one in smaller diameter is now just right, without making the steering noticeably heavier.

It might be thought that I would resent having to do all this work on someone else's car, but the truth is that I like the car, more so now that it is going properly. The GT is a very practical sports car and is quite nice looking; with its stiffer rear springs the C GT handles better and I suspect that this one is even better balanced by virtue of sagged rear springs that put the car on to the rear bump stop somewhat earlier in the roll proceedings; because, even with equal tyre pressures, it doesn't plough outwards at the front end. The C engine has some virtues too; it is very quiet and is remarkably smooth and torquey at the bottom end for relaxed top gear motoring. Even with adjustments it still doesn't get up and go but I find the performance far more acceptable now than I did ten years ago when I thought that any new sports car should be faster than its nominal predecessor. I still do, but it doesn't worry me as much in retrospect, and I find its easy 70-75mph gait very restful; the front wheels need balancing before I try anything faster. ●

M.H.L.B.  
20

*Right, J. W.'s Rover 100 exhaust valve. This was extracted from the engine which explained why one of the cylinders was somewhat down on compression! Read the full story next month.*



*Below, after some early troubles, the Editor is enjoying "his" MGC GT.*

