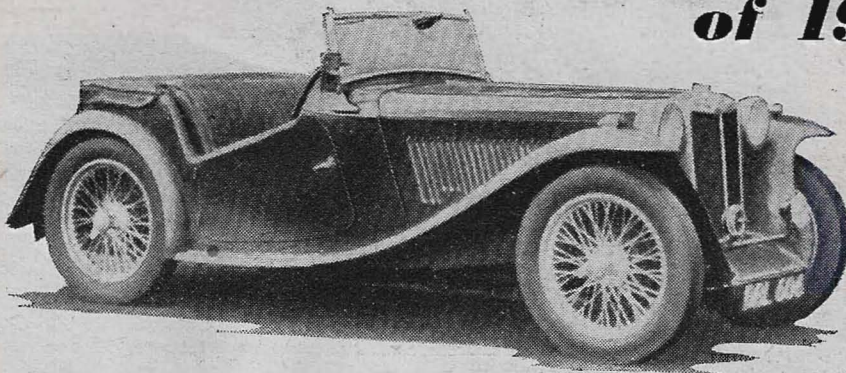


The Autocar ROAD IMPRESSIONS of 1946 Cars



TYPE TC
M.G. MIDGET
TWO-SEATER

TO anyone who has closely followed the development of the M.G. Midget from the earliest model away back in 1930 and who, furthermore, has been almost completely cut off from sports cars during the war, it is a most interesting and refreshing experience to renew acquaintance with the latest Type TC Midget. One of the first impressions received in driving it is that, as viewed today, the famous Midget has grown in stature; for one thing, today there are fewer sports cars available than in the past, secondly, the current model, with an engine of 1,250 c.c., is a far more substantial car than the earlier versions, which started with an engine of 847 c.c. and ranged in the course of time through intermediate capacities up to the present figure.

The great point about this car is, naturally, that it is intended for the section of motorists known as enthusiasts, but the appeal is far from being limited to those of ages in the twenties. The sports car characteristics which it embodies are appreciated by anyone who revels in driving for its own sake and who values accuracy of control and road stability developed to a fine art, allied with a performance that permits the car to be driven about as fast as anyone could wish under average conditions on main road or by-road, not to mention rough stuff of trials character.

It is a feature automatically derived from the whole design and layout of a car such as this that a driver strange to the M.G. feels at home in it at once and confident within a very few miles in driving it fast. Much is contained within the bare citation of that fact. It means that in the first place the driving position is right; that driving vision, with full view of both wings, is as it should be; that the controls are correctly placed; that the car can be cornered without conscious steering effort; that its suspension holds it firmly to the road, and that the brakes behave as they should.

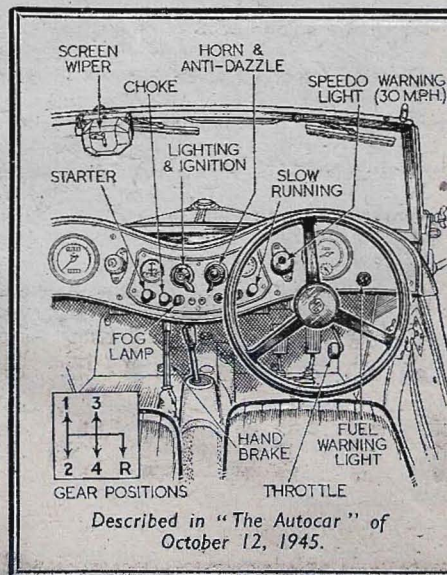
As is well known, the type of motorist whose natural choice of car is the family saloon would be critical of some of the features that belong to such a car. In other words, with the Midget there is noise from the engine, though not such as to be tiresome or wearying, and the suspension that gives fine road-holding is hard, especially at the lower speeds. To omit reference to this aspect would be not to give a complete picture of the car, but they are not disadvantages to deter the enthusiast.

Under present conditions it has not been possible to record the range of performance data,

but interesting as such details can prove for comparison there are other broader factors of a car's performance which can weigh even more in passing judgment. Especially to the experienced motorist it will mean much to state that during a test totalling approximately 470 miles the Midget covered at night 90 miles of main road, measured by the speedometer, in two minutes less than two hours, non-stop. It is interesting that in the first hour 45 miles were covered. The route in question is a good one for safe, fast driving, and the weather was dry and clear. At other times during the test it proved possible to achieve that yardstick of soberly verified average-speed performance, namely a solid 40 miles in the hour, without the driver putting forward exceptional effort or taking more out of the engine than seemed reasonable. A highest speedometer reading of 80 was seen on one occasion, 75 once or twice and 70 several times. Approximately 1,000 r.p.m. on top gear equals 15 m.p.h. As an extreme reading the speedometer needle can be pushed round close to the 60 mark on third and towards 40 on second gear, and 50 and 30 can be recorded as comfortable readings on those gears.

The engine, even when pressed by the driver, does not become rough or harsh, but has about it a feeling of mechanical hardness, not easily defined, which somehow is satisfying in a sports engine. It is not meant to trickle along on top gear, though it is sufficiently flexible to below 20 m.p.h. on top. There was no more than a trace of pinking even on the present petrol.

The remote control gear change, with its short, firm lever, is extremely satisfactory. Second, third and top have good synchromesh, but in the main the double-declutching process is naturally employed for fast downward changes with a car such as this. The changes go through beautifully smoothly, and quickly enough on



DATA FOR THE DRIVER

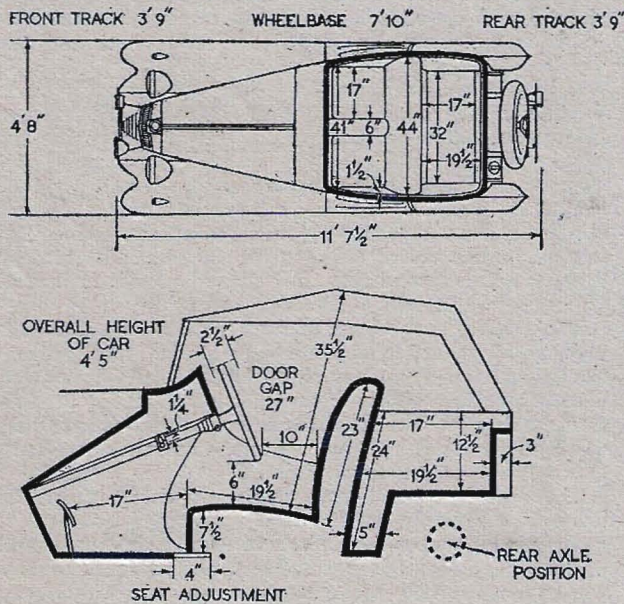
TYPE TC M.G. MIDGET
PRICE, with open two-seater body, £412 10s plus purchase tax, £115 6s 8d, total £527 16s 8d.
RATING: 10.97 h.p., four cylinders, o.h.v., 66.5 x 90 mm., 1,250 c.c. Tax, £13 15s (cars first registered after January 1, 1947, tax £13).
WEIGHT, without passengers: 15 cwt 3 qr. LB. PER C.C.: 1.41.
OVERALL GEAR RATIOS: 5.125, 6.93, 10.00 and 17.32 to 1.
TYRE SIZE: 4.50 x 19in on knock-off wide-base wire wheels.
LIGHTING SET: 12-volt. Automatic voltage control.
TANK CAPACITY: 13½ gallons; approximate fuel consumption, 29-35 m.p.g.
TURNING CIRCLE: 37ft. (L. and R.).
MINIMUM GROUND CLEARANCE: 6in.
MAIN DIMENSIONS: Wheelbase, 7ft 10in. Track (front and rear), 3ft 9in. Overall length, 11ft 7½in; width, 4ft 8in; height, 4ft 5in.

The Autocar ROAD IMPRESSIONS

Continued

the upward movements for good acceleration results. Smooth starting from rest is obtained without special care in engaging the clutch.

For these days the steering is quite high geared—about $1\frac{3}{4}$ turns of the wheel give the full lock-to-lock movement. At no time is the steering conspicuously heavy, and it is admirable, in conjunction with the suspension characteristics, in allowing the car to be placed just where the driver wants to aim it. Corners of fast or slow type can be taken in a smooth, clean sweep on a selected path for the wheels and, as compared with some more modern and more comfortable suspension systems, the driver knows where he is with the car. That is, if he overdoes things when cornering he encounters tyre scream, and at a further stage a tail slide to act as a warning, and can pull out of the difficulty he has created for himself. The Lockheed hydraulic brakes reduce speed just as one would wish, and do not by any fierceness of action suggest that they are doing as much work as in fact they are frequently achieving in rapidly slowing a car of this description.



Measurements are taken with the driving seat at the central position of fore and aft adjustment. The diagrams are to scale.

Driving position is of the kind again appreciated by the keen driver, with a back rest which can be adjusted close to the vertical, and the spring-spoked wheel in a position where one has full power over it. Adjustments in connection with driving position are well arranged; both the column rake and the wheel itself can be adjusted, and the seat cushion is easily moved fore and aft. It is most satisfactory, too, to sample again the fly-off type of hand brake lever, held to its ratchet only when the knob is depressed, and released by a slight pull.

It takes a little while to become used to horn and anti-dazzle controls on the instrument board instead of at the centre of the wheel. The horn is sufficiently powerful. A definitely inconvenient feature is that there is nowhere for the driver comfortably to place the left foot for long periods except to rest it lightly on the clutch pedal. It would seem that, with advantage, the clutch and brake pedals could be moved a little to the right, thus also rendering heel-and-toe braking change-downs easier for those who sometimes use this method. The passenger has ample leg room. Another criticism is that apart from ordinary door

pockets and the main luggage space behind the front seats, where a useful quantity of baggage can be put under cover, there is no shelf or cubbyhole for the oddments that one always carries.

A good general view is given by the externally mounted mirror, but with hood and side screens raised the mirror view of vehicles close astern is limited. The hood is easily put up and down and the protection afforded, in conjunction with the easily erected side screens, is more than adequate.

Points about the engine compartment are the general neatness, and an accessible oil filler and dipstick; the battery and tools are in convenient lidded metal containers. The engine started readily from cold, taking a little while to gain working temperature without use of the mixture control.

Forestalling STARTING TROUBLES

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always neglected, particularly the one inside the casing body of an electric fuel pump.

Next the carburettor needs a certain amount of attention, particularly the starter and slow-running jet. The jets themselves need inspection, and the slow runner air supply may need adjustment, but the main point is to see that the carburettor itself is clean internally and free from water and any form of dirt.

So much for initial preparations for the winter. The next thing is to foresee what external circumstances may accentuate trouble. The garage itself should be heated, if that is at all possible, just sufficiently to avoid condensation whereby moisture is deposited on the outside of the sparking plugs, on the inside of the ignition distributor, and in various other places hoding ill for the electrical circuits. An engine has been known to prove extremely difficult to start simply because so much moisture had accumulated on the porcelain of the plugs that the current was short-circuited. It is rare nowadays to find that connections to the coil are faulty, but it may pay, none the less, to make sure that these connections, especially the high tension connections, are really good and also clean, and the same applies to the high tension wires in the sockets on the distributor head.

Over-rich Mixture

Then comes the vexed question of choking, that is, shutting off the air supply to the carburettor in order to obtain a very rich mixture. The main point to remember in this connection is that in nine cases out of ten an engine which is difficult to start is made worse because the choke has been kept in operation too long, and the cylinders have become full of an extremely rich mixture which cannot possibly fire. If, therefore, the choke has been kept in operation longer than usual it pays to try the engine with the throttle wide open and the choke released.

The symptoms of too much fuel will be initial irregular firing and a good deal of black smoke from the exhaust. The right method is to make a note of the correct setting and the correct amount of choke which suits the engine in normal circumstances.

Finally, so many cars are without a water temperature thermometer on the instrument board that it is necessary to remember that the engine must be really warm before it will pull, and that, when the engine is stopped, the radiator should be covered with a muff or a rug, to maintain temperature, even if there is thermostatic control.

When the worst comes to the worst the starting handle may have to be used to save the battery, so now is the time to make sure that the starting handle can be fitted without fouling additional accessories such as badges or auxiliary lamps, and that you really know how to use a starting handle, which is not so simple as it looks.