

1952 MGTD INFORMATION

Car S/N 20102

Engine S/N 20455 (original to car)

The car came off the MG production line in Abbingdon-on-Thems, England on September 22, 1952 and was destined for the US where it was purchased by the original owner in 1953. The English do not assign a model year to their cars and the car was titled as a new 1953 model by the State of NY. I purchased the car from original owner as a basket case in January 1993. Conducted a complete amateur frame off restoration (except for front shocks) was done which was finally completed in June of 1996. The car odometer read approximately 21,000 miles at completion of restoration. Contained in the following information are significant items to be aware of for future owners of the car:

BRAKE SYSTEM

All brake system rubber and steel hoses and lines were replaced. The front wheel cylinders and the master cylinder were rebuilt. The back wheel cylinders were replaced. The brake system is serviced with DOT5 (silicone) brake fluid which must be used to top off the system as needed. Never mix DOT5 with DOT3 or 4 as they are not compatible and will lead to brake failure.

The brake light pressure switch is located under the car screwed into the brake line cross T just aft of the master cylinder. These switches fail and are a continuous problem due to burn out from high current. The present one was purchased on line from RON FRANCIS (GOOGLE) and is reported to be more robust. I added a third brake/tail light above the fuel tank (made from the bottom of a magnetic CB antenna base and a Triumph motor cycle tail light) for safety. Concerned with the additional current draw on the more robust switch, a relay was added to reduce the electrical load on the pressure switch. The addition of the relay also provides for a split in the tail lights separating the third light from the original lights giving additional redundancy.

The brake system was completely rebuilt in 2015 (61200 miles approx). All wheel cylinders and the master cylinder were replaced. The drums were turned, new shoes installed, front wheel bearings and all rubber hoses replaced. The brake lines were flushed and new DOT5 fluid was installed.

TURN SIGNALS

The car was not originally configured with turn signals. I replaced the original electrical harness with a new one which included wiring for turn signals. This also required replacing the original tail light and front wing light bulb sockets with ones for dual element bulbs. The silver turn signal control box, which also supplies electrical power for the brake lights, is mounted in the engine compartment on the firewall under the steering column. This component can also be troublesome due to internal electronic relay problems. The turn signal switch, mounted under the dash, is vacuum operated and the duration of the turn signal can be changed by removing the switch from it's mount and adjusting the small screw on the back.

The problematic turn signal control box was finally replaced with an original mechanical relay type which seems to have eliminated the troublesome electronic relay problems.

HEADLIGHTS

The headlights are halogen. They draw more current than the standard but perform much better. With the addition of the third brake light and the halogen headlights, little additional electrical capability is available as the generator is only 19 amps capacity. In addition, when working on the electrical system the car is positive ground from the factory which must be kept in mind at all times when trying to add anything on the car.

DIFFERENTIAL

The rear end gear ratio was changed from the original 5.12/1 to a 4.3/1 in order to reduce engine RPM while cruising at modern highway speeds (60 to 65). This was accomplished by changing the gears to an early MGB set. The advantage is reducing the original 4200 RPM at 60 miles per hour to 3700 RPM reducing wear on the engine. The speedometer was rebuilt to correct for the gear change and is within about two miles per hour. I use standard 90 wt hypoid gear lube in the differential.

FUEL TANK FILLER CAP

The fuel tank filler cap is a problem. Even though the tank has internal baffles the fuel sloshes up against the filler cap causing fuel to splash out and down the face of the tank. This has been alleviated somewhat by installing a bathroom sink drain tail piece into the mouth of the tank thus providing a barrier to fuel sloshing out. The tail piece has two holes in the pipe to provide ventilation so as not to collapse the tank as fuel is used. This plus not filling the tank all the way to the top stops most of the spillage. Do not try to use a different gasket as sealing the filler cap completely will also result in collapse of the tank with fuel use.

ENGINE REAR OIL SEAL

The engine rear oil seal leaks when the car is at rest. The seal technology is mid 1930's and doesn't work very well. When the engine is running it uses a slinger and reverse scroll to keep most of the oil away from the rear seal while running. When the engine is shut down residual oil flows back against the rear seal (basically a rope design) and leaks through and runs down to the bottom of the bell housing where it drips out the drain hole onto the ground or the garage floor. This happens to be the same for most British sports cars and is affectionately called marking it's territory. We looked at any new fixes at the time the engine was rebuilt but found that none were successful. The best solution is to purchase a drain pan or old rug for under the car and smile.

Later a mod was added by installing an oil catch container, mounted at the aft end of the bellhouse which provides a method to capture and later drain the oil leaked from both the aft transmission seal and the front transmission seal. This effort reduced the oil on the floor but a method to contain the oil still dripping on the floor is needed.

WATER PUMP

The water pump was replaced at the time of engine rebuild. The pump has a grease fitting on it that is for originality only (the original required greasing). The new pump has sealed bearings and requires no grease.

ENGINE REBUILD

The engine had been removed from the car and rebuilt in the past by an Inskip recommended engine shop in NY City. The engine was never reinstalled and sat for 27 years before I purchased the car. The engine was seized, requiring complete tear down and second rebuild. The cylinders were overboard to .060, pistons and rings replaced, Camshaft and bearings replaced, Lifters replaced, freeze plugs replaced and all gaskets and seals replaced. The crankshaft and bearings were found to be ok. The head was checked and the valves and seats were reground. The oil pump was checked and found ok except for a stretched pressure relief spring which was replaced. The flywheel was resurfaced and a new clutch and throw-out bearing installed. The carburetors, distributor, generator and starter were rebuilt.

TRANSMISSION

The transmission was torn down and inspected. The only significant wear was on the lay shaft which was replaced. The drive gears and bronze synchro gears were found in good order. All seals and bearings were replaced. I use Red Line MT 90 transmission fluid. It has proven to improve shifting and is bronze friendly to protect the bronze synchronizers which are hard to come by. The oil may be somewhat hard to find off

line. Google it or order from Amazon.com.

ENGINE COOLANT

The coolant is a 50/50 mix of water and Auto-Zone antifreeze. The anti freeze best suited for the older type components in this car is the yellow colored liquid (Ethylene Glycol). As the mixture of water with anti freeze is not quite as efficient cooling as plain water, a bottle of Red Line Water Wetter is added to improve heat transfer from block to coolant and coolant to radiator. The addition of Water Wetter reduces the water temperature at least ten degrees. On a hot 95 degree day the temperature runs between 75 and 80 degrees once the engine is totally warmed up and being driven hard. Water temperature sitting in traffic on a very hot day should be monitored however.

TIRES

The tire size used today is the 165R-15 radial tire. The car was originally delivered with bias ply tires which can still be purchased but the radial tires provides for significant handling, braking and ride improvement. The major problem with the 165R-15 tire is availability. The best solution is Michelin which can only be purchased from Coker Tires (on line) at a very high premium. Michelin has discontinued normal sales of that size due to low demand and Coker has obtained the rights from them for sales in this country. The 165R-15 tire is used primarily on the old Volkswagen and the array of 1950/1960 British sports cars. Off brand tires are available but the quality is inferior and they are hard to balance which is critical to ride comfort. There are some Korean (KUMHO) and Dutch (VREDESTEIN) tires that some have had success with. The wheel rims are not safety type which some feel are not safe for hard cornering due to tire bead slipping off the rim but I have not experienced any problems. The answer to this possible problem is tubes. Good luck.

Replaced tires with Michelin tires and tubes around 61,200 miles.

FRONT END WHEEL ALIGNMENT

The only adjustment for front wheel alignment is toe-in which the maintenance manual indicates should be zero. Even though the front end bushings have all been replaced it is recommended that tire wear be monitored from time to time and slight toe-in adjustments be made to control uneven tire wear.

FRONT END

The entire front end was rebuilt during the initial overhaul of the car. It was done once again in 2015 at around 61K miles as the rubber bushings were showing signs of deterioration. At that time a 5/8 inch diameter sway bar from an early MGB was installed to improve handling. This reduced body roll significantly under hard cornering.