

Derbyshire Dales Group Major Projects

Ryan Walker: Owner

Previous Projects

1972 Land Rover 109" Station Wagon. A complete restoration was started in 2011 and was completed in 2012, but it has since been resprayed and it has just been put back on the road.

1973 - Land Rover 88" Station Wagon. A complete restoration was started in 2015 and was completed in 2017.

1964 - Land Rover 109" Military. A complete restoration was started in 2016 and was completed in 2018.

1993 - Range Rover Vogue TDI. A rolling restoration was started in 2016 and was completed in 2017.

1992 Range Rover Vogue SE 3.9 EFI. It was bought as a non-runner but is now running (sort of). Awaiting structural and mechanical work.

1990 - Land Rover Discovery TDI. Rolling restoration planned but currently not started.

2004 - Rover 75 Connoisseur 1.8T. Preservation was started in 2015 At the moment preservation and conservation consists of keeping it going and keeping on top of maintenance etc.

2001 - Rover 75. Recommissioning and preservation started in 2019 (Was used for European trip – see footnote)

Current Project

1970 MG B GT 1.8L

I bought my MGB GT in December 2017. At the time I found the MG tucked away in the back yard of a local garage. I was looking to purchase an MG and really wanted a classic. The MG showed potential because it had the Webasto folding sun roof as a factory fitted option that would give you the best of both worlds in hot and cold weather. Unfortunately it didn't have overdrive but this wasn't a major problem at the time.

Apparently the owner had bought it in the early 1990's and had spent a lot of time and money on the car, including extensive structural work carried out in 1993. He had bought it to get it back on the road but simply hadn't got around to it. So I found myself in possession of a car that hadn't been touched since 2012 and was a non-running and un-drivable car which had to be towed back to our yard.

The first task was to drain the oils, change the filter and replenish. With a check of the electrical system it became apparent that the MGB would have originally been fitted with 2 x 6 volt batteries wired in series to give 12 volts - however this car had been fitted with 2 x 12 volt batteries wired in series giving 24 volts! Once fitted with a new 12 volt battery and a sorting-out of a burnt-out relay everything was working correctly.

Following a dose of WD40 down the bores and a check for oil pressure and spark I went for the first start. The engine eventually fired into life and was a bit smoky but this eventually cleared and all was running well. That was within my first day of owning the car.

The next requirement was to sort the clutch system; the pedal had seized solid, the problem being the phosphor-bronze bush which was replaced. It is also a common problem with MGB's that have stood for a long time that the clutch plates seize up and cause damage to the carbon release bearing. Once the pedal was fixed it was possible to move the car. The gearbox and clutch were ok, however I had to come back to this at a later date and completely overhaul the hydraulic system as the mechanism was not releasing

correctly. After much hassle the clutch system was eventually bled up to work correctly.

The next task was the bodywork, which was completed over the next 5-6 months with help from my father and friends. The front inner wings were patched up from panels which I fabricated. A lot of this car was clearly in ok condition and had been replaced before, including floor pans, sills and castle rails. However on further investigation the driver's side sill was rather tired and was to benefit from replacement. Knowing that specialists charge up to £1000 for this type of work, with the aid of 'You Tube' I managed to determine the anatomy of the car's structure and how to put it back together, once again fabricating my own panels and buying the external panels new from Rimmers where necessary.

The next set of tasks was to fit a new outer wing on the rear quarter to finish the back end of the car off. Then having bought two second-hand front wings, a new rear lower valence and the new outer wing, I sprayed the replacement/new panels using cellulose paint after primer, this being all that required doing.

Once the car was put back on the road, I found that one of the wheel cylinders in a brake drum was leaking causing a lack of braking efficiency on that wheel. I phoned around one Sunday morning and found that PCS at Clay Cross stock them!

Now that I was using and driving the car I fitted an electronic ignition kit for the Lucas 25D distributor to give a long and more reliable service life.

Because the car had sat for so long, the discs, which were good regarding their thickness, were badly corroded and continued rusting at the slightest amount of water. Hence the shoes, discs and pads were all changed. I also had to fit a new caliper because the old one had seized up. Given the choice of going brand new or refurbished, I went new because it worked out cheaper, giving no problems as of yet. Of interest, I noticed that the caliper design and pad design are very similar if not the same as those used on the rear of Range Rover Classics. The hydraulic systems on an MGB are Lockheed systems, as are those on Range Rover Classics, so parts like the clutch master cylinder are in fact exactly the same and Land Rover/Range Rover prices work out better than MG prices from Rimmers.

Along the way I fitted a new fuel tank because the old one leaked from around the sender unit area, this being sourced from Rimmers.

I am currently swapping the gearbox on the MG to incorporate a Laycock de Normanville LH type overdrive. This differs from a Triumph unit in the sense that the solenoid is located within the casting and it is submerged within the sump of the overdrive. Apparently this is a much more refined unit compared to the type that Triumph used at the time. In order to do this the engine and gearbox came out as one unit, this being easier than removing both parts as separate units. Once removed, they were steam cleaned to remove years of oil and grime. The gearboxes were acquired from two different sources, one being from MG specialist breakers in Wrexham, North Wales, the other from a scrap car I managed to pick up for £10 which also served as a donor car for axle, suspension parts, a few body parts and trim pieces etc. See the pictures of YWF 729T to show how far in I went with this car. Currently I have partially stripped the engine bay and this has gone off to be blasted. On its return I will be ensuring that there are no repairs required and then will spray it up to make the engine bay look somewhat tidier than before.

The car was originally white but in the 1990's when it was resprayed to the current maroon colour. When I removed the engine/ gearbox I steam-cleaned the engine bay to remove the oil and grime and consequently the maroon paint lifted to reveal the original white, bringing me to respray this while I had the opportunity.

I recently attended the Stoneleigh spares day for Triumph and MG parts, where I acquired new parts such as clutch plates, some interior trim panels and some good second hand parts such as replacements for the rusted chrome bumper sections.

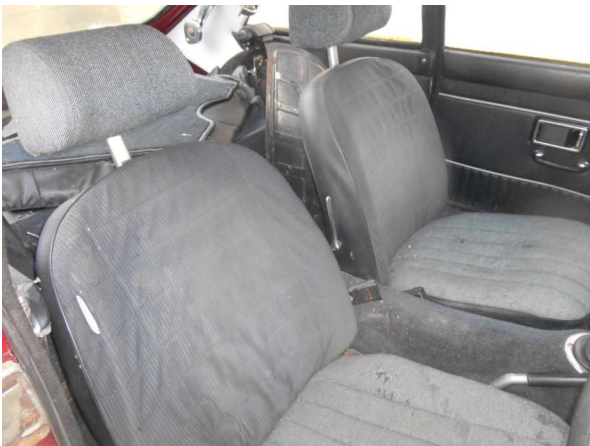
My plans are not to make this car immaculate but I do want it to look smart-ish, wanting it to be usable and to not have to worry about it getting dirty or scratched etc.

Currently the car has been back on the road and the overdrive gearbox is running well. The next task will be to rebuild the S.U. HS4's carburetors as they are showing quite a lot of wear and the engine is not running quite as efficiently as it should. The later cars had the HIF carburetor fitted.

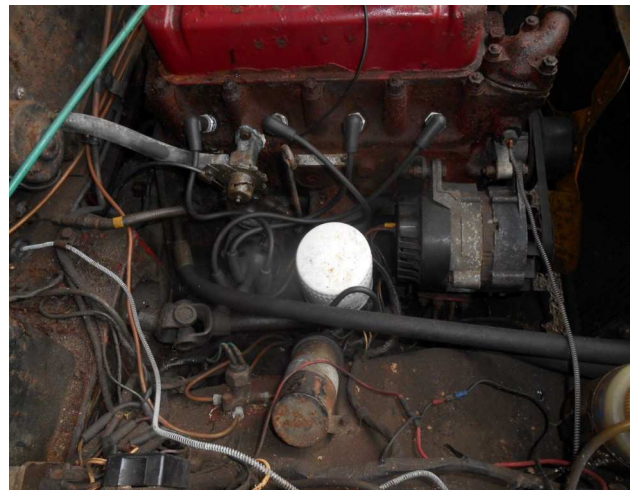
Being 6'4" I find this car rather difficult to get in and out of so something else maybe on the horizon!

Footnote:

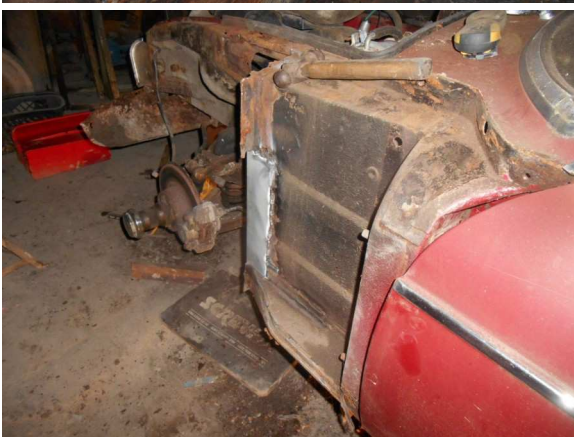
Last December Ryan obtained a non-running 2001 Rover 75 and brought this back to life over the winter months at an all-in cost of £800. Then in mid-February, along with a couple of friends in another car, he undertook a 2400 mile trip through Europe taking in France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Switzerland and Italy before returning home through France, taking time to visit the Auto & Technic Museum in Sinsheim, nr Heidelberg, en-route. Apparently, the sum total of problems experienced was a faulty battery connection and a loose throttle cable. Not a bad achievement by anybody's standards!



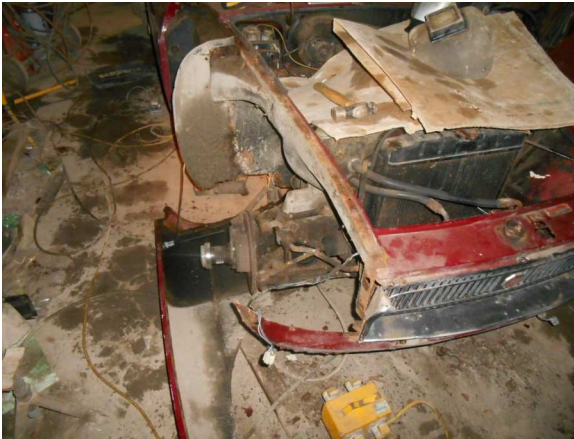
The condition of Ryan's MGB GT on arrival



Prior to the start of the restoration work



Restoration work in progress



On With The Welding



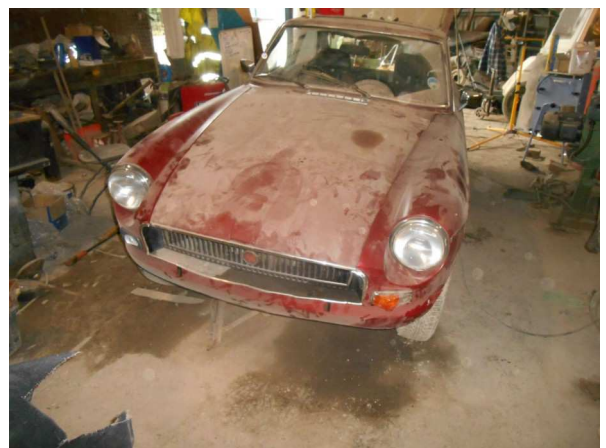
The Donor MGB GT



Stripping Down The Donor Car



The Strip Down Continues



Back To The Rebuild



The Finished Car!