



The Mquette Newsletter

for North American Enthusiasts

February 1997

Dear Enthusiasts,

First of all, welcome to the new members. Since March '96 nine new members registered twelve cars with only one preregistered car being transferred by sale to a new owner.

This is the first newsletter since Indy '96. Although I met at least 20 ZMG members during the weekend, only four Mquettes showed up for the event. Seems that most of us have the 'spare' MGA, MGB, or T-Type in the garage. Wayne & Dee Johnson left the ZB at home and brought their beautiful YA Saloon that looked great with the ZB's on the field. Keith Holdsworth left the TF & MGC-GT at home and drove his trusty ZB from Ontario, Canada. Jack & Helen Heist from Illinois drove their ZB, although they have several other award winning MG's ranging from an M-Type to a MGB MK I at home. Special recognition has to go to Mike Jacobsen for driving his Varitone from San Francisco! Mike was accompanied by ZMG member Jack Kurkowski. Mike said that the only adjustment made during the trip was to change the carb mixture while in the mountains!

The Z Mquette Group parts contest was a box that contained 16 of the most obscure Mquette parts that I could find. Mike Jacobsen won the contest with six correct answers. (Mike would like me to say that he won because he completely checked out his car before the trip!) Sounds good, but he would have had to part it out to find all of the items! Okay, I'll admit that the parts were a little too obscure, most of the answers were very creative...

Ed Sass "#3 - not sure, but needs rustoleum", "#11 - this part lies on my floor, please tell me where it goes"

Jack & Helen Heist "#10 - rubber backing for something", "#8 - banjo bolt, 1 each 1956 Sept. MFG."

John Park "#4 - insulated holder for another part"

Dave Houser "#5 - bracket that holds something", "#12 - some type of bracket", "#15 - Another damn bracket".

It was a good thing that I had an answer sheet or I would now have a box of 16 unidentified parts to put back on my shelf!!! Hope all had fun participating in this contest.

Indy '96 was a great event that saw over 1300 MG's in one place at one time. Sharon and I enjoyed a drive with several other MG's taking mostly back roads. I understand that this event will take place again at Indy in the year 2000. So no excuses next time - you have 3 1/2 years to get your Magnette ready.

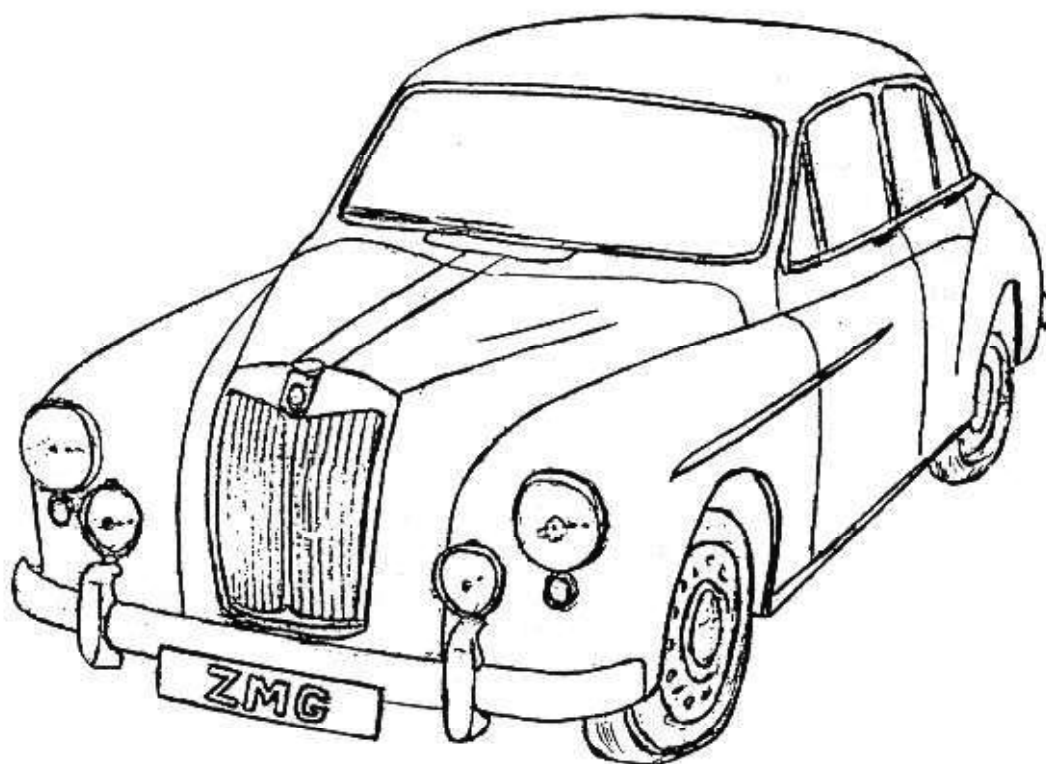
This issue has three articles written by ZMG members. As always, I welcome anything sent in, so if you have an MG experience to relate, photos or tech items, please send them to me. Also in this issue are two book reviews, Brooklands Road Tests and MG Odyssey. The Brooklands book is currently available thru Ron Emblings of Brit Books. The MG Odyssey is about 5 years old and may require a little work in locating a copy. Check with Ron at Brit Books first.

Please notice the ads for ZMG window stickers and polo shirts. I have several stickers left and they really look good on the car. Also, now is the time to place an order for ZMG polo shirts before Jim gets busy in the spring.

Hope to see you at an event this year!

Safety Fast in 1997

JEFF



New Members

	Joe Calvert 10366 Elderberry Drive Jacksonville, Fl. 32257 (904) 268-3054 (no Z's yet)	#138	Steve Howard 756 Regent Road Cincinnati, Ohio 45245 (513) 528-1941 58 ZB
#139	Mike Hickman 16 Dexter Road Southgate, Kentucky 41071 (606) 781-1847 58 ZB	#140	Aaron Spaulding 1504 S. Acacia Street Compton, Calif. 90220 (310) 639-2582 57 ZB
#141	Jake Bowser 1161 Dorothy Anna Drive Banning, Calif. 92220 (909) 849-2678 57 Varitone ZA & ZB parts cars	#142	G. Wayne Hardy 818 S. Meadows Diboll, Texas 75941 (409) 829-5427 59 Varitone
#143	Jack Begley 1862 Dunn Road Merced, Calif. 95340 (209) 722-2209 57 & 58 ZB	#144	Roland Young 20310 Michael Court Cupertino, Calif. 95014 (408) 252-1834 '58 Varitone
#145	Benjamin Pope 2303 Burroughs Street Richmond, Virginia 23235 (804) 320-5806 2 - '59 ZB's	#146	Dan Booch 930 N.E. Raven Court Bend, Oregon 97701 (541) 317-1757 '58 Varitone

New Address

#129	Ed Sass 1709 Dove Lood Road Apt. #2414 Grapevine, Texas 76051 (817) 329-5212
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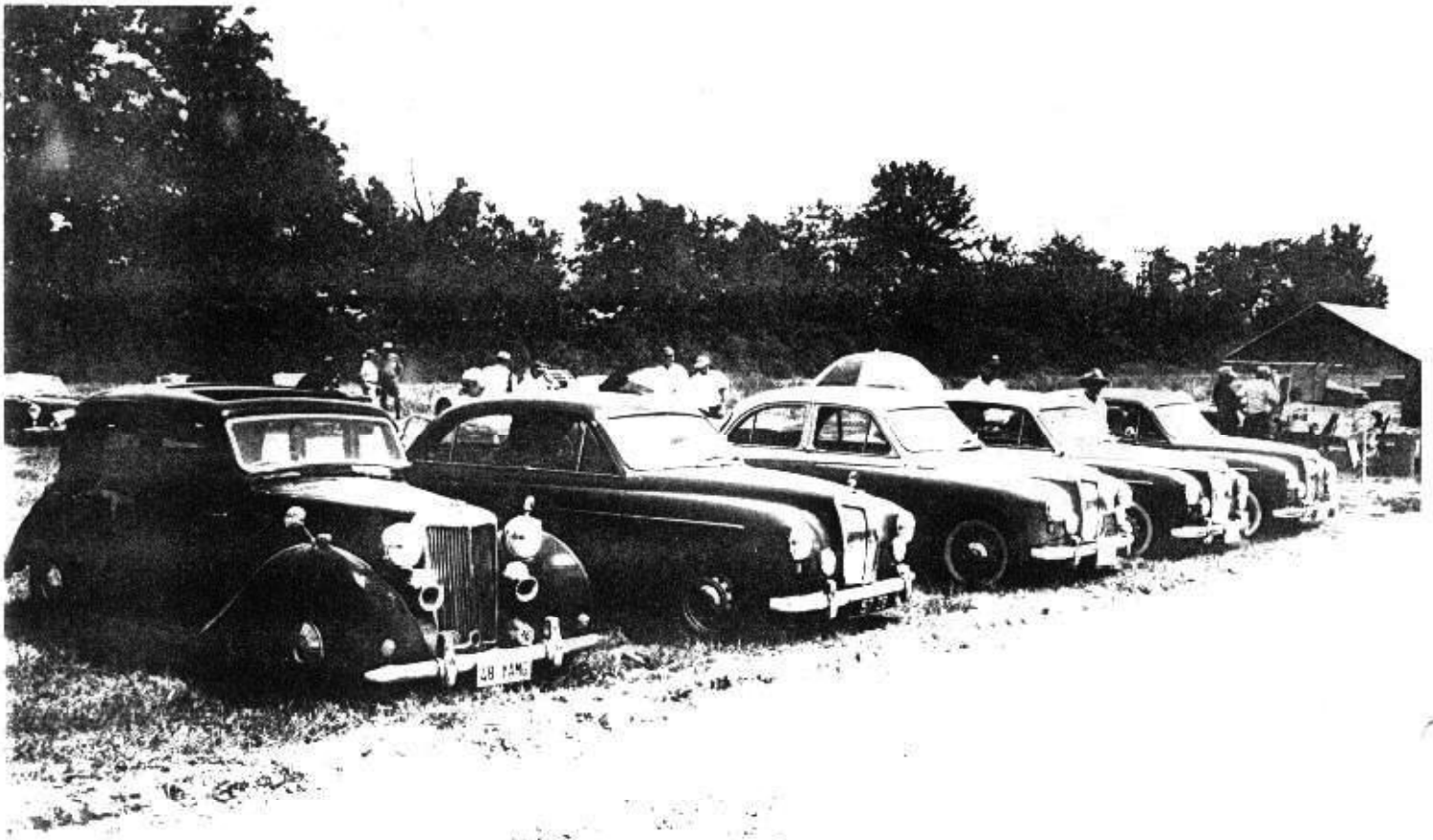
Looking For The Following Members:

#53	Ed Wassel Faribault, Minn.	#41	Tim Wolfe Huntington Beach, Calif.
#49	Mike Penney Shrewsbury, Mass.	#96	Terry Williams Sudbury, Ontario Canada

Mike Jacobsen (left) receiving
ZMG Parts Contest Award (and Long
Distance Drive) from Jeff Powell.
Photo: Jack Heist



The ZMG field at Indy '96. Wayne & Dee Johnson's YA, Keith Holdsworth's
ZB, Mike Jacobsen's Varitone, Sharon & Jeff Powell's ZB, and Jack &
Helen Heist's ZB.
Photo: Sharon Powell



1956 MG ZA Magnette

Car # KAC 43/14362

A brief history

(i.e. over simplified)

Our Magnette was purchased in 1988, after parting with \$300.00. It had sat for the last seven years where I first saw it in Pomona. Although not planned that way, an extensive restoration was begun, which consumed all the spare time Janet and I could find for the next two years.

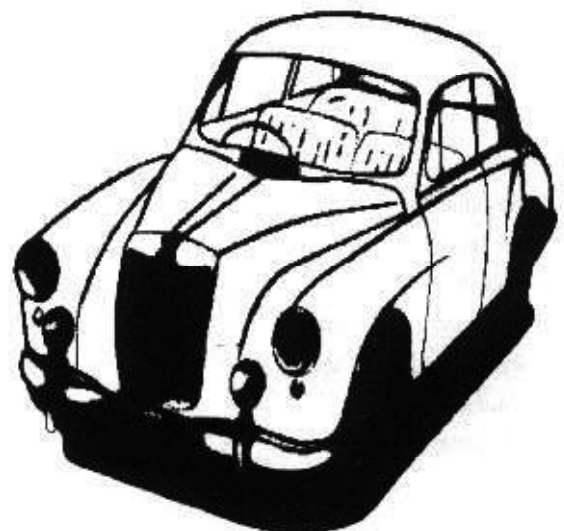
After gutting the interior, removing the engine and transmission, disassembling the steering and suspension components (not necessarily in that order) the body was stripped to bare metal. The insides of the doors, trunk and roof were coated with sound-deadener. The underside of the car and the wheel wells were treated with under-coating and painted. Minor body repair was done to remove the dings and dents life had dealt before etching, priming and painting with catalyzed acrylic enamel.

While the engine and transmission were out, I decided it would be nice to have an engine with real oil seals front and back. Janet wanted a full syncro-mesh transmission and why not overdrive? So we went about tracking down, rebuilding and installing a late model 1800cc five main B series engine and overdrive transmission.

All the while, we had been working on the suspension, steering and brakes. All the suspension and steering components, along with the differential were powder-coated and rebuilt using custom made polyurethane bushings throughout. The wheels were powder-coated to match the body and shod with new radial tires.

The front brakes were up-graded to disc using MGA rotors and spindles. MGB calipers with soft pads are hung on custom made caliper brackets. Stainless steel brake lines were used and the rear end was geared up slightly.

The wiring harness was replaced and the electrical system up graded and protected by additional fuses, a removable rear safety light, a later generator, electronic ignition and a master power switch.



The wood for the windows and dash was probably the toughest part, and one of which I am most proud. (Give me a piece of metal and I can make something, give me a piece of wood and I'll make something crooked). The wood was all stripped, or replaced, lightly sanded, re-veneered, oiled, steel-wooled, clear coated, and buffed. While the dash was being done the instruments and clock were restored and the speedo re-calibrated to the new transmission.

The seats were completely rebuilt and upholstered to the original pattern, of gray nylon velour, to be both comfortable and practical. Gray was also used for the head liner and new door panels. Medium gray carpet was installed in the passenger compartment as well as in the trunk.

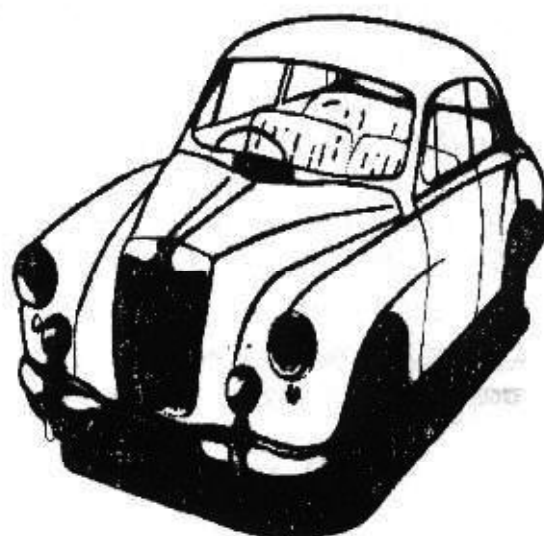
All the ancillary devices were restored as was all the chrome. Of all the parts to acquire and install, the rubber door and window mouldings were the toughest.

Although the car was not restored to be a show car, (but rather as a fun, reliable car to use and enjoy) it has proven to be an award winner. Many a fellow Magnette owner has complemented our car as being the nicest they have ever seen. Since we have gotten our car on the road, it has motivated several people to buy and or fix up their Magnettes. Our Magnette has given us hours of fun!

-Steve Carroll-

This is a rough list of expenses incurred in the restoration of our 1956 MG ZA Magnette. We put this together because we were always being asked how much was spent on this or that part of the job. When looking at this list you must keep in mind that Janet and I did all the work ourselves except for the cylinder boring, crankshaft grinding, chrome and the upholstery. I hope you find this of interest.

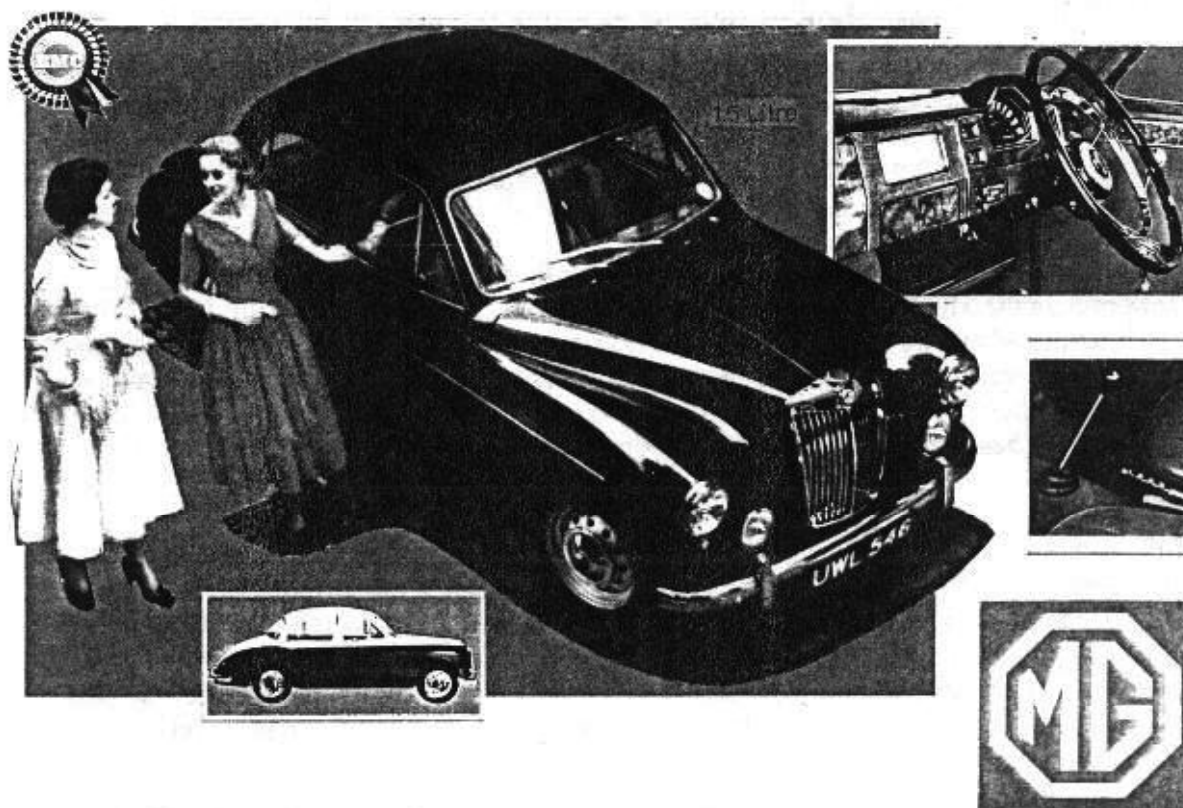
1956 MG ZA Magnette	300
Wheels, brakes and tires	864
Body and Paint	769
Chrome	1,215
Electrical	565
Rubber & glass	820
Upholstery	1,173
Suspension	327
Woodwork	113
Engine	1,314
Transmission	690
Instruments and radio	323
Radiator, heater and oil cooler	370
Hardware	164
Miscellaneous	356
Total	7,430



Driving the ZB is similar to driving an MGA, only slower. I'm told that the Z-series Magnettes and their corporate cousins were the first unibody cars that BMC made. Evidently BMC was anxious to get the bodies strong enough, because even after 35+ years there are no creaks or groans. Of course, thanks to this hefty construction, it weighs much more than an MGA, leaving the 1500 completely overwhelmed. A ZB does not accelerate; it gathers speed.

The ZB also doesn't generate any of the usual MGA questions or comments like "How fast does it go?", "How do you get in?" and so forth. Instead, people talk about how it reminds them of their grandparents' old car. (One friend said it reminded her of her parents' Studebaker!) I guess that's because most folks are more familiar with sedans than sportscars, and the ZB at least looks familiar. It's only upon closer inspection that it begins to remind them of another era. The entire dash and the trim on the doors is of real wood, not a millimeter of veneer over some plastic. The seats are upholstered in honest-to-God leather, the kind with that wonderful aroma that you smell when you first get in the car. The motor has ignition points, multiple carburetors, and other relics of automotive history that admittedly don't work as well as their modern computer-controlled counterparts, but that can instead be fixed by mere mortals like you and I.

While there are many similarities between the ZB and the MGA, the ZB is a car from another time when compared to modern sedans. It's not as fast, or as frugal, or as amenable to everyday use as almost any modern car. Still, it has some things that few of the modern ones have: character, charisma, and class. That's what makes me smile every time I drive it, and that's why I'll have it for a very long time.



British Motor Heritage postcard submitted by Wayne & Dee Johnson

Dear Jeff,

Over the past three months I've completed another project you may be interested in - a 1/24 scale ZB Varitone in stone. The process is simple, and I am enclosing the 1/24 scale mechanical drawings if any one would like to make their own. Magnette models are seldom seen in stores.

The original drawings were done to 1/8 scale for a fiberglass/styrofoam Magnette. Again, the process is simple but can be time-consuming without some sculpting experience and tools. To make a 1/8 scale model, enlarge the drawings 200%. (Overall length at 1/8 scale is 21 1/8").

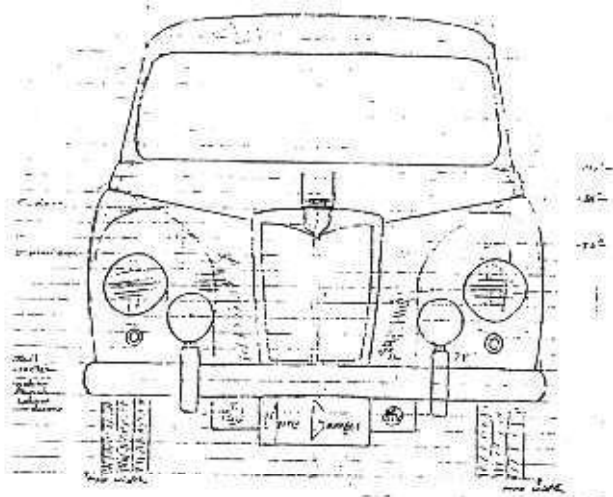
I recommend cutting the exterior edge of the top view first, then the maximum height profile. Glue a photocopy of the drawing or use carbon paper if you have to. Once the outer shapes are correct, repeat with various subsections, always checking proportion and symmetry. Don't forget to verify the shape against the full-scale one in the garage either.

The result isn't a "model car" like the put-together kits in stores, but a true "sculpture". I am happy to advise/help anyone inclined to make their own Magnette, by mail or phone, or even possibly may take a mold off of mine.

Sincerely,

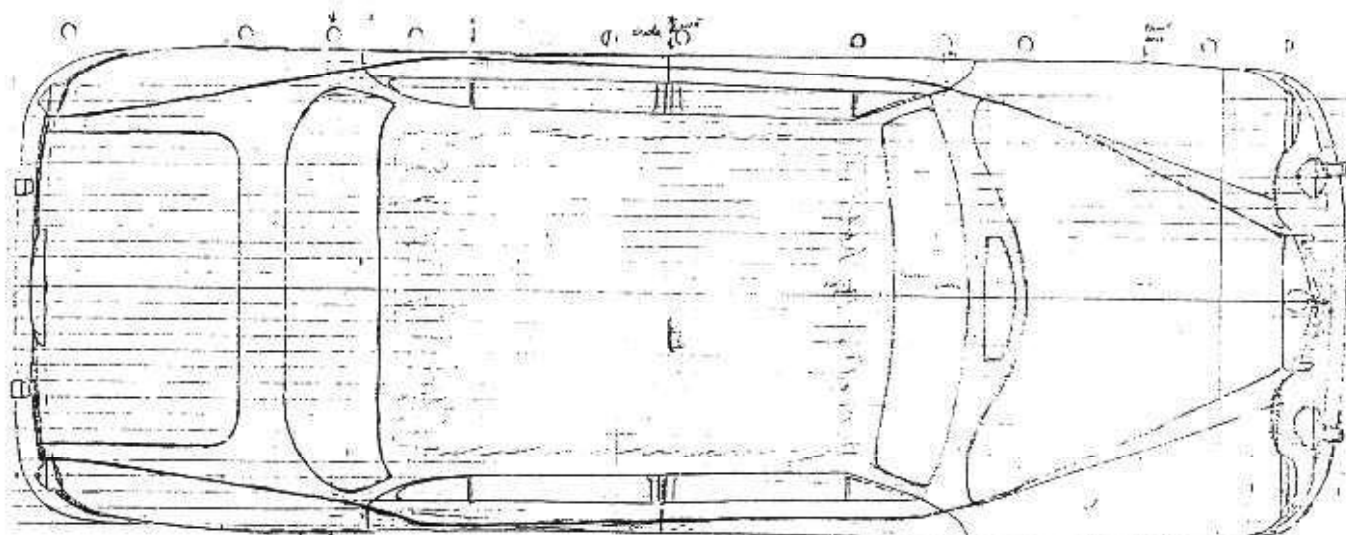
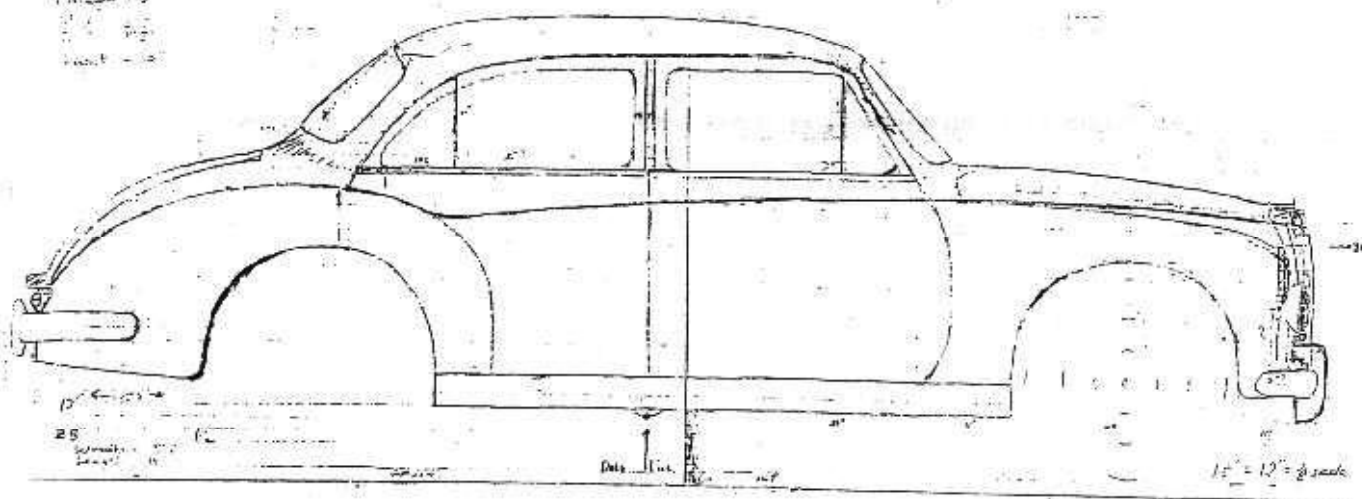
David Lively
2596 Rio Bravo Circle
Sacramento, Calif. 95826
(916) 366-9185

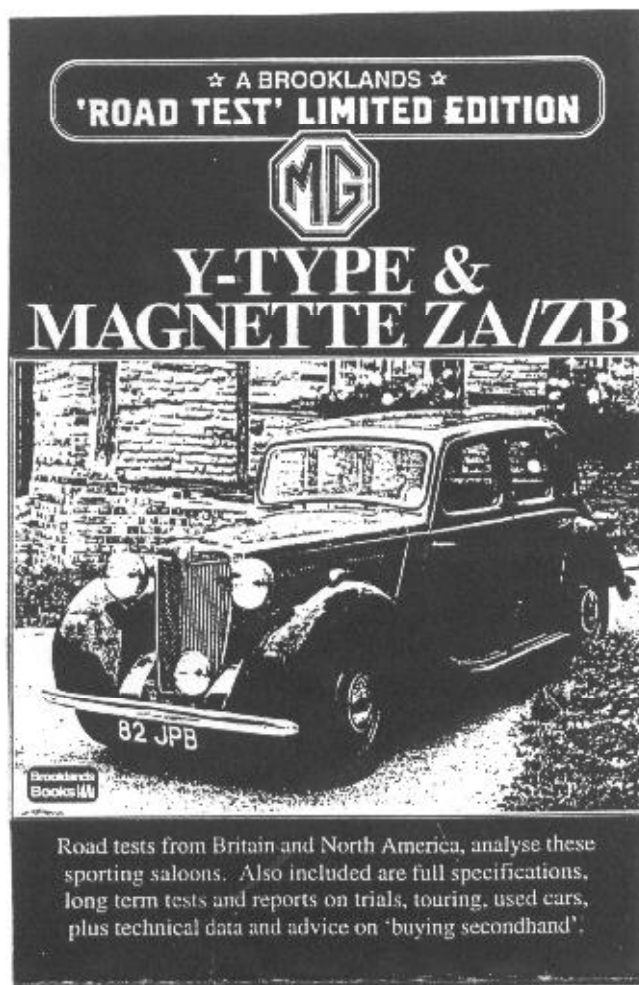
MAGNETTE VARITONE 1/24 SCALE



ACTUAL DIMENSIONS

OVERALL LENGTH	169"
LENGTH (BONNETT)	48"
LENGTH (CAB)	96"
WIDTH (MAX.)	63"
HEIGHT (MAX.)	58"
HEIGHT (COWL)	40"
TYRES (DIAM.)	24"
WHEELS	15"
HUBCAPS	9"





BOOK REVIEW

MG Y Type & Magnette ZA/ZB

Brooklands Books

Softbound 8" x 10 1/2" \$19.95

Black & White Photos 92 pages

Covers road tests, auto shows, reviews, road trip stories, buying a used Magnette. Great photos of interior and engine details. You will not regret buying this book.



MG Odyssey by Ken McKimmie

Softbound 6" x 8" approx. \$24.00

Black/White & Color Photos

152 pages

A great story of how this club project ZA goes for a trip across the Outback. Not a technical book, but it will certainly give you inspiration to use your Magnette.

BritBooks

PO Box 321, Otego, NY 13825

Call us at

1-800 732-3646 or Fax 607 988-7956

CARS FOR SALE

ZB Varitone

Frank Webb
1920 Woodvalley Drive
Columbia, South Carolina 29212
(803) 781-5172

'57 ZA

Dave Houser
4 The Circle
Warwick, New York 10990
(914) 986-2855

'59 ZB

Ron Damman
4719 Borina Drive
San Jose, California 95129
(408) 255-1863

PARTS FOR SALE

Transmission, jack,
front suspension

Phil Collins
3319 S.W. Bukeries
Topeka, Kansas 66614

Original style windshield seals
and rear window seals (small
rear window only, not Varitone)

Windshield \$75.00

Rear window \$65.00

Includes shipping

Jeff Powell
910 Hirsch
Melrose Park, Illinois 60160
(708) 344-2268