



No. 1497 : M.G. MIDGET  
 SERIES TD  
 TWO-SEATER

Though the body is wider, nowadays giving ample elbow room for two passengers, the familiar lines of the Midget are preserved. Bumpers with substantial over-riders cater for the relatively large overseas market that the car enjoys.

## *The Autocar* ROAD TESTS

**F**EW cars, if indeed any, can claim to have fostered enthusiasm for sports cars to the extent that the M.G. Midget has done. In April, 1929, the first of these cars, a Series M Midget, left the M.G. works and started a line of small sports cars which, under various type letters, but always with the suffix Midget, has continued unbroken to the present day. Many different models have made up this succession; some, notably the Monthléry J4, Q and R types, were out and out racing cars, but their less stark and highly tuned counterparts, too, have been competing in races, rallies and trials ever since.

It is likely that a car with a lineage of this sort should possess qualities in handling and performance that are out of the ordinary; the relatively large market for the current model, the Series TD Midget, in America is evidence of this fact, and the car can claim to have played a fair part in the present rapid growth of enthusiasm for sports cars amongst the American public. That this model has continued virtually unchanged since it was introduced early in 1950, and has lost none of its popularity, is further evidence, if such were needed. It is interesting to try to analyse the points which, collectively, make the TD such fun to drive.

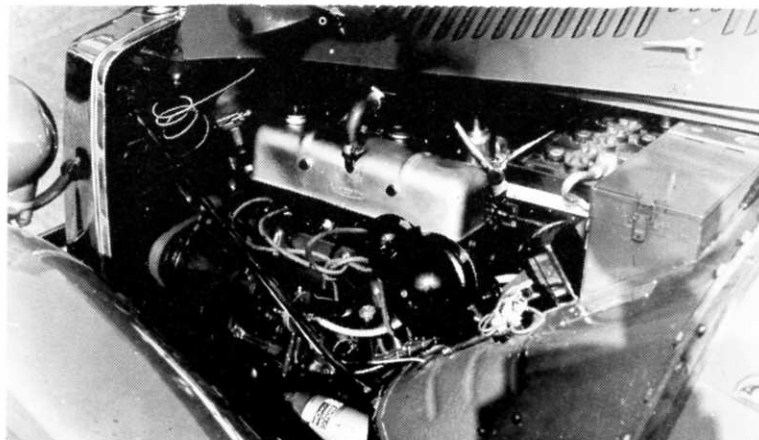
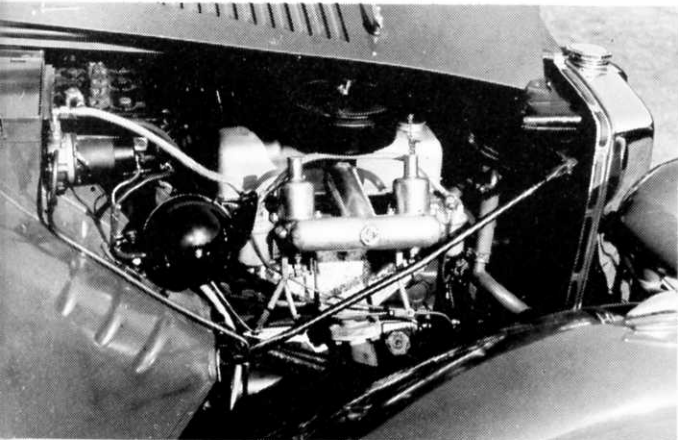
The feel of the car on the road inspires confidence and there is the impression that even an indifferent driver could make a good showing behind the wheel; however long the journey, the actual driving of the car is beguiling all the way. In traffic its small size and good visibility make it very manoeuvrable and the flexibility of the 1½-litre engine is such that one can trickle along at 10 m.p.h. on top gear, using the lively acceleration on third and second gears to pass through comparatively narrow openings in the traffic. For the daily shopping it could not be more convenient; its small size and good steering lock make parking an easy matter.

The high-g geared rack-and-pinion steering is light, accurate and sensitive, and small movements of the wheel produce a quick response. On the open road it is necessary only to hold the wheel very lightly, and long, fast bends are taken more by leaning the body into the corner than by steering round it. A slight tendency to oversteer at the recommended tyre pressures, particularly with a full tank, was cured by increasing the rear pressures to 20 lb. One of the few major departures from the design of the earlier cars lies in the front suspension, which is independent, using coil springs and wishbones; leaf springs are used at the rear, though not of the short, stiff variety on the Midget's forebears. In operation, the suspension is sufficiently stiff to reduce roll on corners to a minimum and it gives a comfortable ride over rough surfaces, though there is a certain amount of vertical motion over roads with undulating bumps.

Speeds up to 65 m.p.h. are reached easily and a cruising speed of 60-65 m.p.h. can be maintained whenever conditions allow. Above these figures, however, the increase is slower and to reach 75 m.p.h. on the slightly flatter speedometer requires a fair length of road. With the wind-screen flat and only the driver in the car a true speed of 78 m.p.h. was reached on two occasions on level ground. Without unduly stressing the engine or the driver it is possible to put upwards of 45 miles into the hour in normal road conditions. Main road hills are taken easily on top gear and it is very seldom indeed that it is necessary to drop below third gear for gradient alone. For normal use the top gear ratio of 5.125 to 1 is about right, but for extensive main road driving, particularly on the long straight roads of Europe, one feels that a slightly higher gear would be useful.

The gear box, with synchromesh on second, third and top,

Accessibility at its old-time best. Regular maintenance of the auxiliaries and components of the 1½-litre engine is encouraged by neat layout. Dipstick, oil filler, oil-bath air cleaner, distributor, sparking plugs, fuel pump, battery and tool boxes are all accessible.



## ROAD TEST . . . . continued

and its short, remote control, central lever, are a joy to use—to such an extent that one tends to use third gear more than one needs. For normal purposes the synchromesh is adequate but, in the conditions of recording the performance tests where full use of the performance was made, it was quite easy to override it. In this connection, too, it was found that, in taking the acceleration figures, when full-throttle gear changes were made there was a tendency for the clutch to spin. In a car of this type which is bound to be used in competitions by many owners, stronger clutch springs would be an advantage; this would be particularly necessary in a car which had been subjected to the stage-by-stage tuning which can be carried out under the guidance of the M.G. company and which was fully detailed, with its results, in *The Autocar* of July 18 and 25, 1952.

The Lockheed hydraulic brakes, with two-leading shoes at the front and leading and trailing shoes at the rear, are amply adequate to the car's performance. Heavy pedal pressures are not required and, as a test, the brakes will stop the car in a straight line from 50 m.p.h. with the driver's hands off the wheel. There was no sign of fade in the arduous conditions of the test, and after extensive use both while taking the performance figures and during many miles of normal motoring, they did not deteriorate nor did the pedal travel increase to any great extent.

### Noise Levels

Mechanically, the engine is agreeably quiet and the exhaust note is subdued and pleasant; even on the intermediate gears between high buildings there is no back echo. Inevitably there is a certain amount of wind noise in an open car at high speeds, but this is not worrying and conversation can be maintained without the need to shout; gear noise is confined to a pleasant whine on the intermediates. The engine starts easily from cold and the mixture control is required only for the initial start. It is sensitive to fuel and, on a low-grade diet, it pinks readily. At speeds not exceeding 50 m.p.h., maintained over a long run, the fuel consumption worked out at a little under 30 m.p.g.

The driving position is good and the seats are adjustable—together, not separately, because of the one-piece back rest—to an extent to suit drivers of widely different heights; the steering column, too, is adjustable for individual reach. Space is rather cramped round the pedals and there is barely enough room for the left foot when it is not on the clutch pedal. Both front wings are visible from the driving seat,

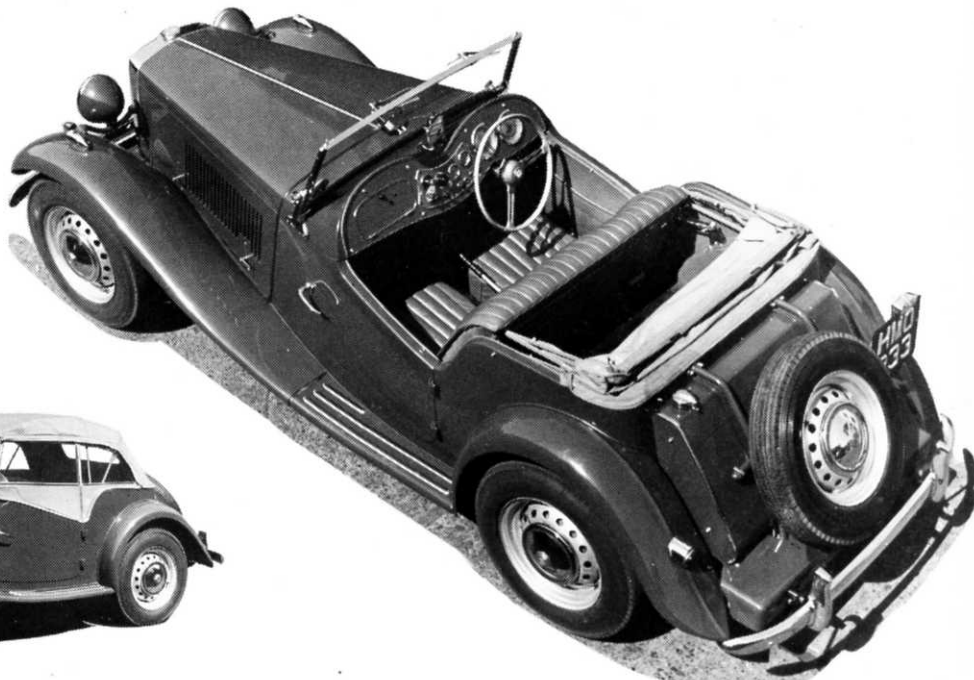
All the attributes of an enthusiast's car: a good driving position with the pleasant, long bonnet stretching away in front of the driver, accessible spare wheel, external slab tank with quick-action filler cap, and adequate luggage space. In closed form the car is proof against the worst weather, and is warm and comfortable.



Still undisguised, the radiator has changed little since the days of the first series M Midgets; the flat, octagonal filler cap is functional, not just ornamental.

though the left wing view is in line with the driving mirror. The 5in speedometer and revolution counter dials are directly in front of the driver, though it is felt that they could both be moved over to the right, as the higher readings on the speedometer are hidden by the rim of the steering wheel. On a panel in the centre of the fascia are grouped the remaining instruments: a combined radiator thermometer and oil pressure gauge, ammeter, horn button, lighting and starter switches, mixture control, rheostatically controlled fascia lighting switch, ignition warning light and a green light which warns the driver when the level of fuel in the tank drops below 2½ gallons; a fuel gauge is not fitted. There is an additional switch for a spot lamp if one should be fitted, though such a lamp is not standard. There is a deep cupboard in front of the passenger, though its lid is not lockable; upholstery and interior trim are in leather and the seats are comfortable, well padded, and give ample support to the extent that, after a long drive, no signs of stiffness are felt. The windscreen wiper motor is placed at the top of the fold-flat windscreen, in front of the passenger, and the twin blades clear a wide area of the screen. At high speeds, with the blades in the parked position, and occasionally when they are in operation, the blade on the driving side disappeared above the screen; a stop to prevent this would be valuable.

The weather equipment, once in position, is excellent and free from draughts and rattles, and the side screens are rigid and fit well; soon after raising the hood the interior becomes almost as warm and comfortable as that of a convertible. At high speeds the canvas of the hood vibrates and produces a fair amount of noise, but the side screens remain well



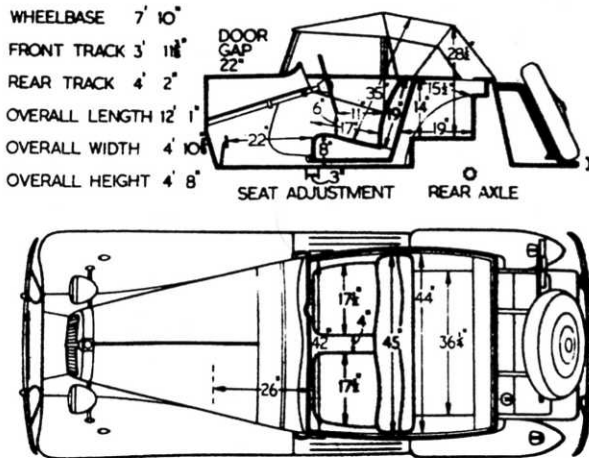
fitting and they do not flap. The hood and side screens take a fair time to un-stow and erect; against this, however, must be balanced the pleasant thought that, in fine weather, one has the joy of driving along in the sunshine and, given warning of the weather's more obscure moods, one has first-class protection available against them. Adequate luggage space for two large suitcases is provided behind the seats and it is fully protected by the hood.

The double-dip head lights give a good beam which is adequate for any speeds within the car's range; a conveniently placed dip switch lies to the left of the clutch pedal. In general, the finish of the car is first-class and in keeping with the better traditions of British craftsmanship and quality-built British cars. A minor criticism in this connection is that the washers under the chromium-plated screws on the apron in front of the radiator are inadequately plated, if indeed at all, and rust very quickly.

From the point of view of the owner who carries out his own maintenance, the accessibility of the engine and its auxiliaries could not be better. The gear box has a dipstick which is reached through an inspection cover in the floor above the gear box; the rear axle, too, is easily checked for level and replenished by removing the floor of the luggage compartment.

The Midget is a survival of what, in the opinion of many people, is the right sort of small sports car. It caters for those who look upon motoring not as a means to an end, but as an end in itself. Many thousands of these little cars are succeeding admirably in providing their owners with something that will, at one moment, journey forth and do the shopping and, at the next, take part in serious competitive events or tackle a 400-mile journey with zest; and this at a price which, in modern times, amounts to a very modest outlay.

## M.G. MIDGET SERIES TD TWO-SEATER



Measurements in these 1/2 in to 1 ft scale body diagrams are taken with the driving seat in the central position of fore and aft adjustment and with the seat cushions uncompressed.

## DATA

**PRICE** (basic), with open two-seater body, £530.

British purchase tax, £221 19s 2d.

Total (in Great Britain), £751 19s 2d.

**ENGINE**: Capacity: 1,250 c.c. (76.28 cu in).

Number of cylinders: 4.

Bore and stroke: 66.5 x 90 mm (2.62 x 3.54 in).

Valve gear: Overhead; push rods.

Compression ratio: 7.25 to 1.

B.H.P.: 54.4 at 5,200 r.p.m. (B.H.P. per ton

laden 50.8).

Torque: 63.5 lb ft at 2,600 r.p.m.

M.P.H. per 1,000 r.p.m. on top gear, 14.5.

**WEIGHT** (with 5 gals. fuel): 17 1/2 cwt

(1,995 lb).

Weight distribution (per cent) 50.2 F; 49.8 R.

Laden as tested: 21 1/2 cwt (2,395 lb).

Lb per c.c. (laden): 1.9.

**BRAKES**: Type: F, Two-leading shoe.

R, Leading and trailing.

Method of operation: F, Hydraulic. R,

Hydraulic.

Drum dimensions: F, 9 in diameter, 1.5 in

wide. R, 9 in diameter, 1.5 in wide.

Lining area: F, 52.5 sq in. R, 52.5 sq in

(98.1 sq in per ton laden).

**TYRES**: 5.50—15 in.

Pressures (lb per sq in): F, 18. R, 18 (normal).

**TANK CAPACITY**: 12 1/2 Imperial gallons.

Oil sump, 10 1/2 pints.

Cooling system, 12 pints.

**TURNING CIRCLE**: 31ft 3in (L and R).

Steering wheel turns (lock to lock): 2 1/2.

**DIMENSIONS**: Wheelbase, 7ft 10in.

Track: 3ft 11 1/2 in (F); 4ft 2 in (R).

Length (overall): 12ft 1in.

Height: 4ft 8in.

Width: 4ft 10 1/2 in.

Ground clearance: 6in.

Frontal area: 16.6 sq ft (approx), with hood

erected. 13.0 sq ft (approx), with hood and

windscreen down.

**ELECTRICAL SYSTEM**: 12-volt; 51-

ampere-hour battery.

Head lights: Double dip, 42-36 watt.

**SUSPENSION**: Front, Independent; coil

springs and wishbones.

Rear, Half-elliptic springs.

## PERFORMANCE

**ACCELERATION**: from constant speeds.

Speed, Gear Ratios and time in sec.

M.P.H.	5.125	7.098	10.609	17.938
	to 1	to 1	to 1	to 1
10-30	11.7	8.6	6.1	—
20-40	12.4	8.9	—	—
30-50	12.6	9.8	—	—
40-60	15.1	—	—	—
50-70	22.6	—	—	—

From rest through gears to:

M.P.H.	sec
30	6.3
50	15.6
60	23.9
70	39.6

Standing quarter mile, 23.4 sec.

**SPEED ON GEARS**:

Gear	M.P.H.		K.P.H.	
	(mean)	(normal and max.)	(normal and max.)	(normal and max.)
Top	(best) 75	73.5	120.7	118.3
3rd	—	48-59	77-95	48-61
2nd	—	30-38	48-61	26-32
1st	—	16-20	26-32	—

**TRACTIVE RESISTANCE**: 26 lb per ton at 10 M.P.H.

**TRACTIVE EFFORT**:

Pull (lb per ton) Equivalent

	Pull (lb per ton)	Equivalent Gradient
Top	179	1 in 12.5
Third	257	1 in 8.5
Second	390	1 in 5.6

**BRAKES**:

Efficiency	Pedal Pressure (lb)
96 per cent	130
78 per cent	95
35 per cent	53

**FUEL CONSUMPTION**:

25 m.p.g. overall for 320 miles (11.3 litres per

100 km).

Approximate normal range 23-29 m.p.g.

(12.3-9.7 litres per 100 km).

Fuel, First grade.

**WEATHER**: Dry surface, light wind.

Air temperature 55 degrees F.

Acceleration figures are the means of several

runs in opposite directions.

Tractive effort and resistance obtained by

Tapley meter.

Model described in *The Autocar* of January 20,

1950.

**SPEEDOMETER CORRECTION**: M.P.H.

Car speedometer	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80
True speed	10.5	19.8	29	38	48	57.5	67	77.5

