

Oxford LANDING

When **Tim Parrott** rescued his MG TA from a Scottish barn, it was only the beginning!

I dragged what was a rather shabby old thing from a barn beside the sea in Fife in 2014 and trailered it back to my home in Gloucestershire. It was to be a retirement project as I've liked MGs since my time in the Royal Navy. I came back from sea in 1970 and ended up at the Royal Naval Engineering College in Plymouth, where I bought myself an MGA 1600 MkII. As an engineering student, you're encouraged to fix things, so I did a lot of the work myself, such as rebuilding the door pillars.

I had always loved the older cars though, having fallen for an MG TC as a kid. The construction of them really appealed to me. I liked how easy everything is to remove, lift and work on yourself. Scroll forward and I was after an example I could fix up, so I bought this car in November 2014 for £12,000 and started the restoration a few months later. Did I budget for it? No! I bought the one I could afford and then had to work out what on earth to do with it. So many of the people who've helped me with advice bought their cars for £500 decades ago, and there's me... on a very different kind of 21st century restoration journey!

Starting slowly

At the time of purchase, I was still working full time as a software consultant, so fettling commenced initially in the evenings and the odd weekend. My intention was to do a rolling restoration, but it was only when I got to the last nut and bolt on the chassis, I realised that plan was very much out the window! I simply had to put right what hadn't done properly in the previous decades of ownership, and it would be a big task. The car had received a failed rebuild in the Sixties, was patched up again in the Seventies and had not run since 1997.

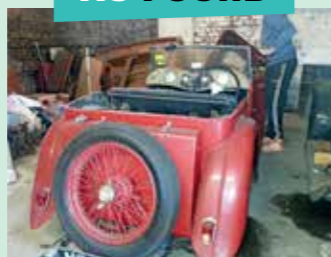
On taking the car apart, the frame fell to bits, so I rebuilt that first off. It was clear once I had begun work, there were going to be elements of the restoration I'd need help with due to some untimely health mishaps. Having stripped the wheels and axles, I had to have my right hip replaced so during that time, I had parts blasted and undercoated by Mikris in Stonehouse.

ME AND MY RESTO

Once up and about again, I rebuilt the carburettors at the kitchen table while I was recovering. I also painted the chassis while I was on crutches! All the work that I did was in my very small garage with a wheelie bin and a Black and Decker workmate as the work benches. I can only get to one side of the garage at a time, so ended up having to move the car about a lot! All the flat, wooden bits were made by myself using marine ply from the local builders' merchant and bit of cardboard to make templates. I was back and forth in the garage using two bits of string with knots to ensure the body was square! I dismantled the engine and, on inspection, I took it to Maynard Engines near Nailsworth piece by piece. They viewed the bits with dismay! The engine had been rebuilt previously, but with a lot of issues, so I replaced many parts and had others seen to. For instance, the camshaft went to Coventry Boring and Metallurg where it was ground down and they white metalled the centre bearing. After that, I collected more parts, rebuilt the gearbox and reassembled and rewired the car over the course of the next two years. I then disassembled it for painting by PRH, just down the road from me in Ebley.

The first drive was around the estate near my home and each time I took it out, I drove it a little further. I've since driven it to Bicester and Birmingham a few times. Having been a part of its revival, I'm quite confident it'll go anywhere now! ■

AS FOUND



Tim went to Scotland with his daughter to pick up the TA. It was complete, although not in the finest state as it had been 'restored' and patched up badly in the past. The car was then trailered home to his home in Stroud, Glos.



Nameplate

The MG T-type was a series of two-seater cars produced in Abingdon between 1936 and 1955. Tim's TA model – chassis 2446 – had a steel body on an ash frame. It could supposedly do around 80mph and, when new, cost £222. Initially known as the T-type, the 'TA' name only came about when the 'TB' replaced it in 1939.



Engine & tools

Tim took the engine apart in his garage and found many worn parts. It had been rebuilt poorly in the decades before, so he rebuilt some parts on his kitchen table while recovering from a hip operation. The need to carry essential tools in a vintage car meant that while there was a tool kit in the back, Tim made provision for another one, which lives under the back seat. He's been picking up tips for years from *Practical Classics* magazine and his daughter buys him a subscription annually for Christmas!



Practical Classics Restorer of the Year

Tim is entered into the Restorer of the Year competition. You can vote for your favourite in a future issue of *Practical Classics* magazine.

TIME TAKEN
(YRS)
4

EST. COST
(£)
35k

BEST HELP
'Parts for MGs of this era aren't cheap and some jobs are tricky, so it's important to join the clubs and get friendly with specialists.'