

SafetyFast!

THE MARQUE OF FRIENDSHIP

September 2017 Volume 61 Number 09 £3.95



THE  CAR
CLUB LTD
ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
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PROJECT MGA

PART ONE

After turning heads at the 2016 Classic Motor Show, Mike Brewer's Project MGA is ready to go, but first TV's *Wheeler Dealer* lifts the lid on why he wanted to tackle an MGA in the first place...

His TV shows have seen him tackle everything from a Mini Cooper to a Dodge Charger but Mike's always had a special affection for MG and in particular, the MGA.

"Of all the cars MG have ever built, the MGA is for me, the best. Now don't get me wrong – I can see the appeal in a Triple M, I know the MGB tends to be people's go-to MG and I've enjoyed

a ZR 160 or two in my time, but for me, the MGA is the one," says Mike. "With the MGA it's got such a great story with it – from the legendary EX cars that entered into Le Mans, the twin-cam, even Elvis owned one – there's something really special about the A."

"Those gorgeous lines that Syd Enever sketched all those years ago just seem to get better and better every year – from the moment we sold the MGA on *Wheeler Dealers* I've wanted to do another one."

The MGA

Year: 1959

Engine: 1588cc B-Series
(non original)

Colour: Currently yellow – suspected Old English White originally



Mikes MGA in Kimber House



Work starts at MGLive!

Mike joined the MGCC in 2015, after hosting at MGLive!. "I had a great time at MGLive! and people loved seeing the MGA we'd done on TV at the show, so this time I wanted to do it for myself and share the project with other members of the Club and in the kind of depth that an hour on the telly just won't allow."

While the idea of doing an MG project was something Mike was interested in, he didn't go out looking for something to restore. "I found the car in California – it was rough but solid thanks to the climate – and at some point, had been resprayed in yellow. I was so pleased to have another A and was quite happy to keep it just the way it was and so shipped it back to England. It was whilst reading *Safety Fast!* I saw some of the MGAs in there and started to think about getting members of the Club to give me their opinion on it – restore it, or leave it as it is."

The A featured on the Club's stand at the Classic Motor Show in November, with Mike asking show-goers to vote whether to restore the car, or keep it 'as found'. "I knew there'd be people out there that wanted it kept as it was," says Mike. "I met plenty of them at the show, but once they saw that the car wasn't original, that changed a lot of people's minds."

After the show, Mike brought the car to Kimber House, putting it on display in the John Thornley Suite. "Bringing it back to Abingdon was pretty special," he says. "Even more so when you think that the Club's HQ is so close to the old factory site – it really was like bringing her home!"

Once the votes were totted up, over 60% of people had gone with

restoring the car and so Mike began to look for the right partners to work with on the project. "The A is a bit special because unlike say the MGB or Midget, not everything is available off the shelf and there has to be a budget for the project. I spoke with the guys at Kimber House and some other friends who've restored their MGs and the name that people kept coming back with was Moss Europe, so they seemed to be the people to speak to and were interested in getting involved with the project so it tied up nicely."

With a parts supplier sorted, Mike turned his attention to someone to help him rebuild the car. "With my commitments to filming, there's no way I can do this one in my lock-up at home and we didn't want to do one on the show as we'd already done an A," recalls Mike.

An entry on the 2016 Peking to Paris rally had brought Mike in touch with Witney-based company Rally



Mike in awe of the vast stock Moss hold





Mike gets his spares order from Fillipe



Trying the A for size

Preparation Services and although work commitments meant he hadn't been able to enter the rally, he'd struck up a friendship with the guys – in particular MD Simon Ayris and workshop foreman Ben Harris. "Ben's a big MG man – he's been around MGs for years, he's built more than a dozen different MGs, and plenty of them have been MGAs."

Mike got in touch and as he expected, Ben and the rest of the guys at RPS were up for the challenge and Ben came to assess the car, which was now on display at the Club's Kimber House headquarters.

Ben was happy that Mike had bought a decent basis and it would be ideal to kick things off by starting the project officially at MGLive! 2017.

"We got the car to MGLive! and the guys just went for it," says Mike. "As more and more of the car came apart, we started to realise just how solid it was. That's obviously the biggest benefit to a Californian car!"

Once MGLive! was over with, the



Mike and his MGA at the NEC



Ben from RPS and Mike with the A



Mike gives Moss the thumbs up



At RPS in Witney

Starting next month you'll be able to follow the start of the project, beginning with the body removal.


As the project moves on you'll not only be able to follow the project in *Safety Fast!* but also online, via the Club's YouTube channel, the Club's social media feeds and websites, online with both Moss Europe and Rally Preparation Services but also at upcoming MGCC shows and events.

A travelled back to the RPS workshop, leaving Mike to get to London, and Moss' HQ to secure everything on Ben's shopping list.

"We had a great day at Moss – I didn't realise how massive the operation is – they've got everything there from a gear knob to a full bodyshell, it's incredible."

At long last Mike has everything in place for the MGA project and in the coming issues of *Safety Fast!* you'll be able to follow the car's restoration step-by-step. "I'm keen to make sure the cars in keeping with what MG intended for it back

in 1959, but I also want to see what can be done to take in some of the improvements that have been made to the B-Series engine over the past 60 years," he adds.

"We're going to go through every step of the resto – bodywork, engine, running gear, interior, everything. It's a great opportunity to see what goes into a restoration," says Mike. "Not only that, the mechanicals, the oily bits we all love – so much of that will apply to other MGs – the B, the Magnettes, they all used the B-series, so there's loads that I hope will be of interest to the members." 



Mike with Filipe at the spares Counter