

HINTS FROM AUSTIN'S MORRIS GARAGE[©]

Hi, Everybody, and I hope you all had a good holiday season. I've been trying to think of what might be a good topic for the column this month, and have come up with this: MG Parts.

The manufacturer made a parts book for every MG car produced, except for maybe some of the specials and exotic record-attempt cars. Some of these manuals are scarce-to-rare, indeed.

Having been in the BMC parts business for over 30 years on both ends, I have run into some strange things. For instance, if you were to get hold of a brand new TC, TD, or TF parts manual, you would certainly be happy at the larger drawings available in them. Valuable information on when various parts were upgraded or systems changed is there for the reading. However, the parts numbering system has more than likely been upgraded to those familiar AAA numbers for almost all of the individual pieces.

Back in the late 1950s, someone at BMC decided to revise all the T-series (and whatever other cars the parts on them fit) part numbers. So, they invented a new part number series to fit in with the letter-number sequences they had begun to use for MGAs and other cars in that era.

Gone were most of the MGxxx numbers. As a part became obsolete, the number did not change, but merely went to the old part number graveyard. Larger dealers may have had bins full of those oldies, and one had to shop other dealers if the number had died.

During the earlier years of the changeover, I managed to continue ordering the old part numbers with some success. Surely, though, when the stocks at suppliers ran out, there were no more to be had. Soon, many desirable and critical parts became extremely hard to get.

Our friend Alan Moss had decided that he could not live without some of them. So, in

order to keep his older-MG repair business running and so he would not have to shop the world for a job that was promised for next Tuesday, he started his own parts business. He began to send samples to local machine shops and manufacturers and suddenly, the obsolete parts became readily available by mail. Moss Motors has been a godsend over the years to owners of our lovable machines because of Al's foresight and willingness to invest a pile of money in a chancy undertaking.

Anyway, back to the subject of books. If you have a very early Moss parts book for MG T cars, most of the listings have the changed numbers of that period. It's easy to insert those new numbers into your factory parts book so you can identify at least some of the numbers if you run across them in swap meets and so on.

I have a complete set of TC, TD, and TF (and Lucas) books that have been updated to the latest (as of about 1983) factory numbers. If you run across some numbered parts that you think you would like to get, just get in touch with me, and I'll try to let you know if the numbers are a T application.

That's all for this month. Regards, Jerry

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All MG car clubs who focus on pre-1956 MG cars and all Vintage MG owners are encouraged to join our club and enjoy the many benefits of membership. Please write for an application or visit our Web site at vintagemg.com to view, print, and fill one out.

Regards, Jerry Austin