

The end of the line

11

1957-1966



The decision to end car production gave Stuart Proctor the chance to pursue other ideas. On joining the company, he had expressed the opinion that there was a large and profitable market for 'bolt-on goodies', improvements for mass-produced cars, but all his efforts had been directed to the new car development and, apart from keeping his interest in the accessory market, nothing had been finalized. Now he turned his attention to this area of design and the H.R.G. crossflow head for the 1,500cc B-series BMC engine was produced. This engine was then in use in the MGA, Riley 1.5, MG Midget and Wolseley 1500 cars as well as the more prosaic Austins and Morrisies. The head was cast in alloy, with twin SUs on the offside and a four-branch exhaust manifold on the nearside. The unit was offered as a package, complete with competition pistons, special rocker cover and cold air box. MGA valves were used and alternative 1½in or 1¾in carburettors could be fitted.

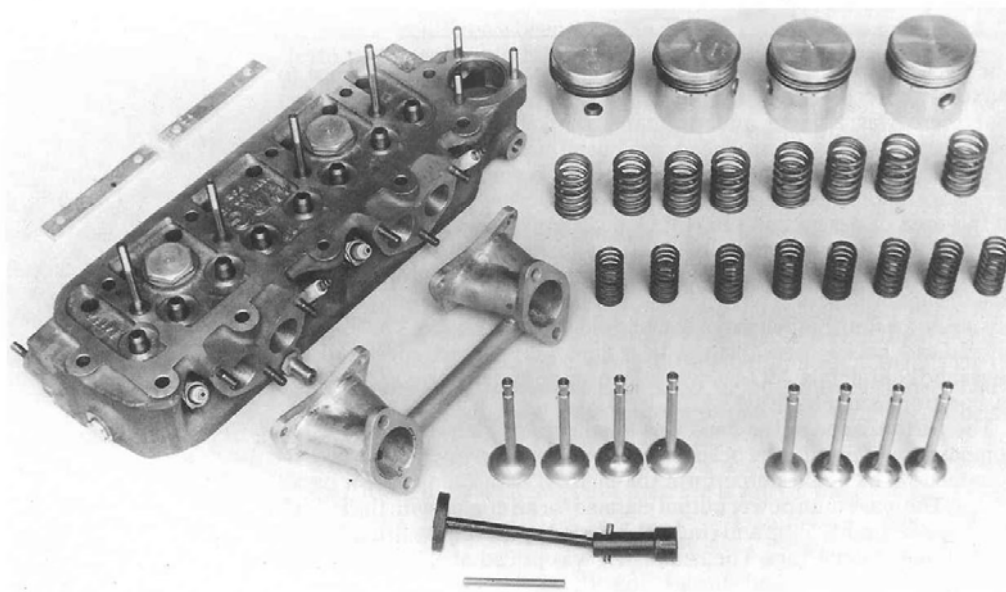
The performance of the head was excellent and the works issued the comparative figures in the accompanying table, showing that an H.R.G.-equipped MGA could outperform the factory Twin-Cam version on all points. The maximum power output claimed for an engine with the H.R.G. head was around 125bhp and could be boosted to 150bhp by fitting Weber twin-choke carburettors. The head itself was priced at £58 10s 0d and, assembled with valves and springs, £68 10s 0d.

	MGA coupe	MGA with H.R.G. head	MGA Twin-Cam
Acceleration:			
20-40mph in top gear	13.6sec	8.9sec	10.7sec
60-80mph in top gear	17.6sec	11.9sec	13.9sec
10-30mph in third gear	8.1sec	6.7sec	8.3sec
20-40mph in third gear	7.9sec	6.0sec	6.5sec
Maximile speed:			
Timed $\frac{1}{4}$ mile after 1 mile accelerating from rest	92.0mph	102.3mph	101.3mph
Fuel consumption:			
At steady 50mph	43.2mpg	44.5mpg	33.5mpg
At steady 90mph	24.8mpg	25.0mpg	22.0mpg

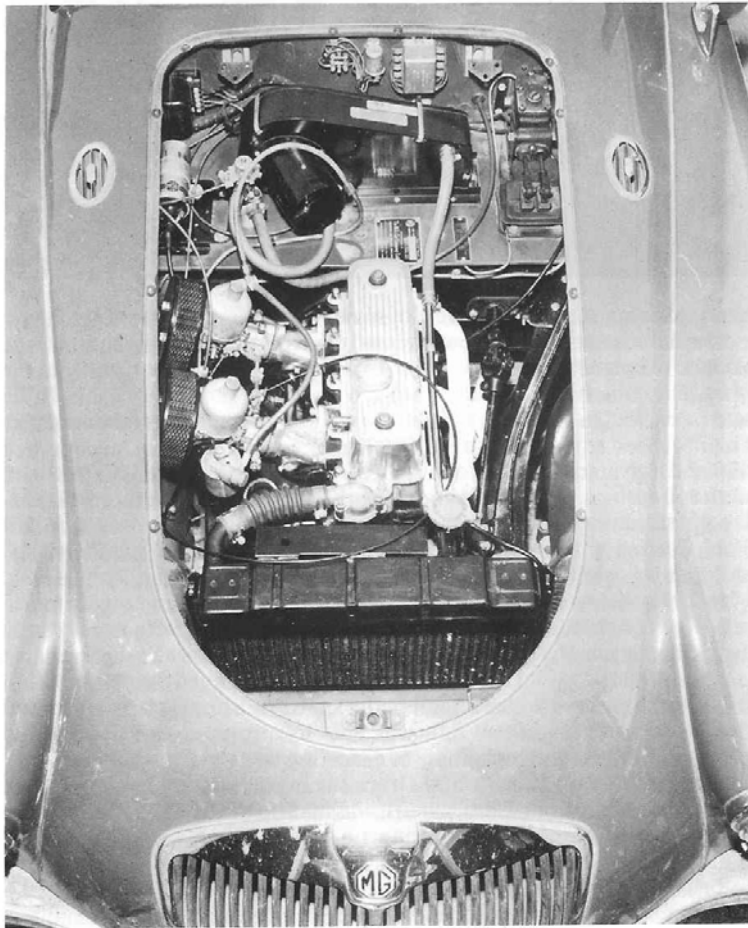
Proctor's designs also included plug holders and plug spanners, similar to those fitted to the H.R.G. cars, air intakes for carburettors and a range of aluminium rocker covers suitable for BMC engines, both A-series and B-series, as well as Fords and Standard-Triumphs. They were very good looking, available with either black or polished finish, and retailed at between £4 and £6.

Another production item was the exhaust extractor, also marketed by Alexander Engineering. This device consisted of an attachment to the end of the exhaust pipe, aimed at improving gas flow. It was claimed that it increased efficiency and improved fuel consumption because it incorporated a reverse-wave trap, that it was light in weight with no moving parts and, for good measure, gave a smoother exhaust note — all for 50 shillings!

Components of the H.R.G. crossflow cylinder head conversion for the 1,500cc B-series BMC engine.



A result of producing these accessories was an approach from V. W. Derrington, who had taken over the patterns and tools of the Alta OHV head for the Series MM Morris Minor from Geoffrey Taylor when he retired, and suggested that H.R.G. should also produce that conversion. Although the market was almost exhausted, a few batches were produced and sold. The B-series head was, however, extremely successful, both performance-wise and financially. On one occasion a professional financial adviser recommended to the H.R.G. board that if 400 heads per week were produced, all the worries of the company would be over! This was too much for Proctor, who thought of himself as a designer, not a commercial businessman: even he could not imagine where that number of sales would come from! Nevertheless, this specialized design market continued to interest the company and Proctor turned his attention to the new Ford 105E engine, developing two options. The first was a 'quickie' conversion to improve performance by means of an improved manifold and twin carburettors. The second was the design of an overhead-cam



Overhead view of the engine compartment of an MGA equipped with the H.R.G. crossflow cylinder head.