

Member Featured Car of the Month

John Florkey's '73' MGB

By John Florkey

We've had a couple of non-restoration stories in the newsletter this year. This is going to be one of those. My interest in MG's may have started before my oldest memories. My parents had a 1967 MG Midget and the family lore holds that as an infant I rode in the "back" in a pumpkin seat. My father and his best friend spent their time getting the Midget to run just in time for his 1965 Mustang to stop cooperating. Then they'd turn their attention to the Mustang and get it going only for the Midget to stop running. Rinse and repeat. Growing up I enjoyed hearing these stories told and retold. The seed had been planted. I wanted to add my own chapter to the family lore.

In the summer of 2018, my wife, Meredith, discovered an MGB for sale and suggested I take a look at it. After a battery swap, it fired right up and I took it out for a drive. I found it particularly hard to steer and the color was a little unusual, but it was a blast to drive, the price was right, and the best part - it ran without me having to do anything to it. It even came with the write up from the car's most recent visit to MG Automotive. For what it's worth the previous owner showed up to sign over the title in a brand new Mazda Miata.



The Octagon News April 2026

The first thing that needed to be addressed was the difficult steering. The local tire shop was able to address the issue and while not the source of the steering issue, I was made aware that the wheels were not in great shape. I would later discover the ride was a bit jittery at speeds over 50. I hadn't gotten up to those speeds during the test drive, not that it would have dissuaded me from the purchase. I swapped the original rostyle wheels for some mini-mags. I love the look of the mini-mags and they did a lot to smooth out the ride. The brake master cylinder and the front calipers got replaced pretty early. More recently I replaced the rear brake cylinders when I noticed some dampness around one of them. As I was attempting to loosen the captive nut, I got it to turn but the flexible pipe turned with it. So, I got to replace all of the rear brake plumbing. I've fussed with the carburetors and I've reset the valve clearance, but I've sworn off messing with the engine further for now. If it isn't broken don't fix it.

I've dealt with a few minor electrical problems. The fun one was the turn signal switch. All of the headlight current flows through that switch. If I had the headlights on and signaled a turn, my headlights went out! You could find the spot where they came back on by manipulating the signal stalk, but that was not a workable solution. I eventually discovered that the high beams did not suffer the same problem. I drove around for a while with my high beams on until one of them went out. Now I felt compelled to actually address the problem, but I could not get the steering column cover removed; there was one screw that would not budge. I worked at getting that cover off for months; spray a little penetrant, try to get it to budge. Not sure what changed other than time passing, but I eventually got the cover and the switch removed. Feeling somewhat more confident about working on electrical things, I thought I would attempt to repair the switch instead of buying a replacement and promptly broke the 50 year old plastic, so back to Moss for a replacement. While I was at it, I added a relay to the headlights and swapped them to LED's. They're much brighter and with a fraction of the current flowing through that switch, I hope to never have to think about it again.

I mentioned the unusual color earlier. I thought I was buying a red MGB. I'm pretty sure the car was blue at some point, at least there is blue in the engine bay. The thing is, it really depends on the light. Sometimes it has a pink-purple hue to it. Sometimes it is a really nice looking red. Sometimes I'd swear I can kind of see the blue. My wife, Meredith, joked that I should set up a sandwich board in front of the car at British Car Day that asked, "What would you call this color?" If nothing else it would start a couple of conversations.

This car has been pretty accurately described as a "driver". It's not winning any car shows, probably never will. That's OK though. I didn't buy it to win car shows. I bought it to drive it! I mostly drive it around town on errands and on short day trips. It usually gets attention from young and old alike. Future improvements will likely be aimed at making that more comfortable and reliable. I've been thinking about replacing the suspension bushings. A dead pedal (A dead pedal is just a foot rest to the left of the clutch. https://mossmotors.com/190-745-dead-pedal-kit?queryID=fa921e6f5645b71f9c445bb6bdac2944&objectID=279488&indexName=live_default_products) might be nice and an overdrive transmission is starting to sound more and more

The Octagon News April 2026

appealing. I'm looking forward to attending MG International this year in Sandusky. That will be the longest trip I've ever taken in this car. Hopefully the first of many.

My youngest child has definitely inherited the car gene. He's not necessarily an MG guy, but he recognized the opportunity to do something cool for prom his senior year. His date's mother is from England and was surprised to see my son pull up in an MGB to pick up her daughter. They did look really good in it. Family lore added.

