



Pick a date. **Any date...**

MGB GT Jubilee
Introduced: 1975
Cost when new: £2669
Equivalent today: £38,140
Average earnings in 1975: £2291
Equivalent today: £14,991
Gallon of petrol in 1975: £0.73
Equivalent today: £10.43

In 1974, British Leyland planned to make a limited edition car to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the MG marque. The idea was to make 750 cars, and sell 400 in the USA with 350 to remain in the UK. Unfortunately, things did not go as planned.

Words and pictures: Richard Mullins

Celebrating MG's golden anniversary was a fine idea, but British Leyland did not do their homework and there was a great controversy from MG historians when this car was announced. The most widely held view today is that the birth of MG occurred in 1924, though there is an irrefutable body of proof that places it a year

earlier in 1923. Yet British Leyland's marketers apparently based their Golden Anniversary date on Old Number One, which may well have been the first MG purpose-built for competition, but despite the misleading name was most certainly not the first MG.

Cecil Kimber himself may be partly to blame for some of the BL confusion, as he inscribed the

fly leaf of a book he gave to Wilfred Mathews, the first passenger to ride in Old Number One on the London to Land's End Trial in 1925, with the words: '*To Wilf, the first passenger in my first MG.*' Then again, perhaps British Leyland simply needed a gimmick to boost MG sales in 1975 more than they had in 1973...

The date was not the only cock-up on the

Jubilee planning front because in 1974, changing US regulations required all MGBs sold over there to have impact-absorbing bumpers. This added 200lbs to the weight of the GT, which put it in a different class for emission compliance and one that was beyond the B-series' capabilities. While the MG design department did their best to bring the weight down, ultimately the GT was withdrawn from the USA market and all Golden Jubilee GTs made were RHD cars for the UK market.

In all, a total of 751 Golden Jubilee GTs were produced, with one being damaged in a television promotion. That damaged car became a factory mule and was later fitted with an O-series motor. The factory also made other unique Golden Jubilee Cars of note. For example, the British School of Motoring requested a Golden Jubilee GT with a V8 motor, and this was built in addition to the four cylinder Golden Jubilee cars. There was also one Golden Jubilee made for the USA market. This was a LHD Roadster made in 1975, but given away in 1976 as part of a promotion. This was also the millionth MG to be made at the Abingdon factory, and unlike the UK cars it was painted Brooklands Green and featured an Autumn Leaf interior. If this car still exists, it must be one of the rarest MGBs ever made.

The main run of Jubilee GTs were all painted a new (darker) British Racing Green with gold 50th anniversary logo side flashes and were fitted with black and gold MGB GT V8 wheels with 175 section tyres. The mechanical spec was standard, but with overdrive. Other tweaks included tinted glass, head restraints, black mirrors and a BRG colour-coded waist rail trim instead of chrome. The MG design department even had a contest to come up with a unique



dash badge celebrating the 50th anniversary of MG. For some reason, the badges were not installed when the Jubilees were made, but were supplied by the dealer when a car was sold.

The Jubilee GT pictured on the facing page is on an period publicity photo from MG, but all the pictures on this page are of my own car, which is one of only three believed to have subsequently moved to North America. Originally not sold until 12th March 1976, before that it was a demonstrator/executive car at Bromley Motors. It has the original factory badge #74, most likely because the car stayed long enough at the dealer for them to fit it prior to sale. I also own another limited BGT, the MGB/GT Special created in the USA in 1967 to celebrate the first anniversary of the BGT over




Richard's car is a talking point in the US, as most fans there have never seen one.

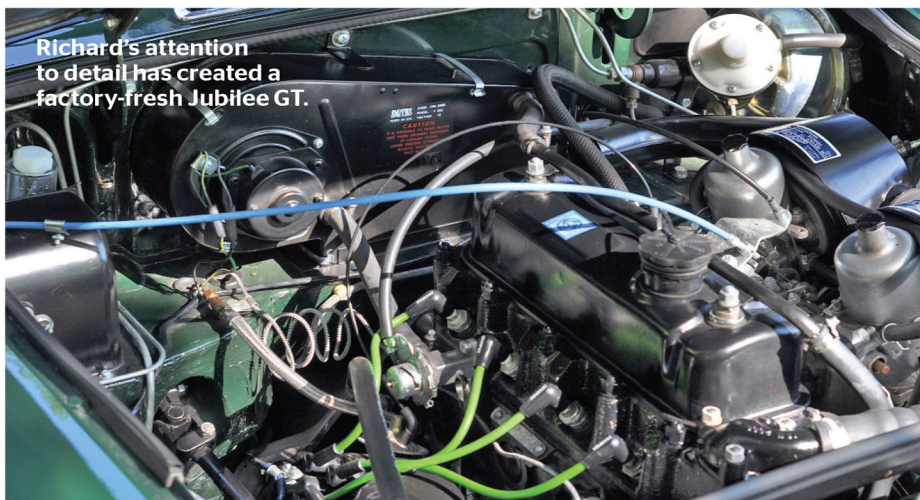
here (and coincidentally to shift a backlog of unsold cars!). 1000 of those were planned, but only around 500 are believed to have been created from kits supplied to dealers for fitment.

I first saw the Jubilee GT in 2008, having purchased a book called *Original MGB* to use as a tool in sorting out my 1967 MGB/GT Special. My first thought was: 'What a lovely car, even the rubber bumpers look good on this car!'

In November of 2009, I saw my Jubilee for sale on a UK website. It was a one family owned car, which had the original factory badge and only 54,000 well-documented miles from new. I thought it would be fun to own both the UK Golden Jubilee and the USA MGB/GT Special. After help from my UK friend Ken Smith and Colin Goodey of the Jubilee and LE Register, the car sailed from London in January 2010.

I didn't drive the Jubilee much for the first year, which I spent sourcing parts from both the USA and the UK and carefully researching just how the engine and engine bay should look. My goal was to ensure that my car was as close to factory standard as possible. I even found NOS HT leads with black Champion caps from a shop in Canterbury which were used by Abingdon at the time, though MG did use multiple suppliers for small parts so there were slight production variations.

My car, JMY 829N was in very original condition when I bought it, so most of what we had to do was to bring it back to as-new condition. In 2013 the car was entered in the concours competition at MG2013 in Corvallis, Oregon where it won an Honorable Mention (third place). This year it will be on display at the LeMay-America's Car Museum in Tacoma, Washington from July to October as part of their British Invasion exhibit. 



Richard's attention to detail has created a factory-fresh Jubilee GT.