

The Plough Inn at Clifton Hampden was a popular spot for publicity photos in the 1960s. Today it's a popular pub and restaurant majoring on Chinese food.

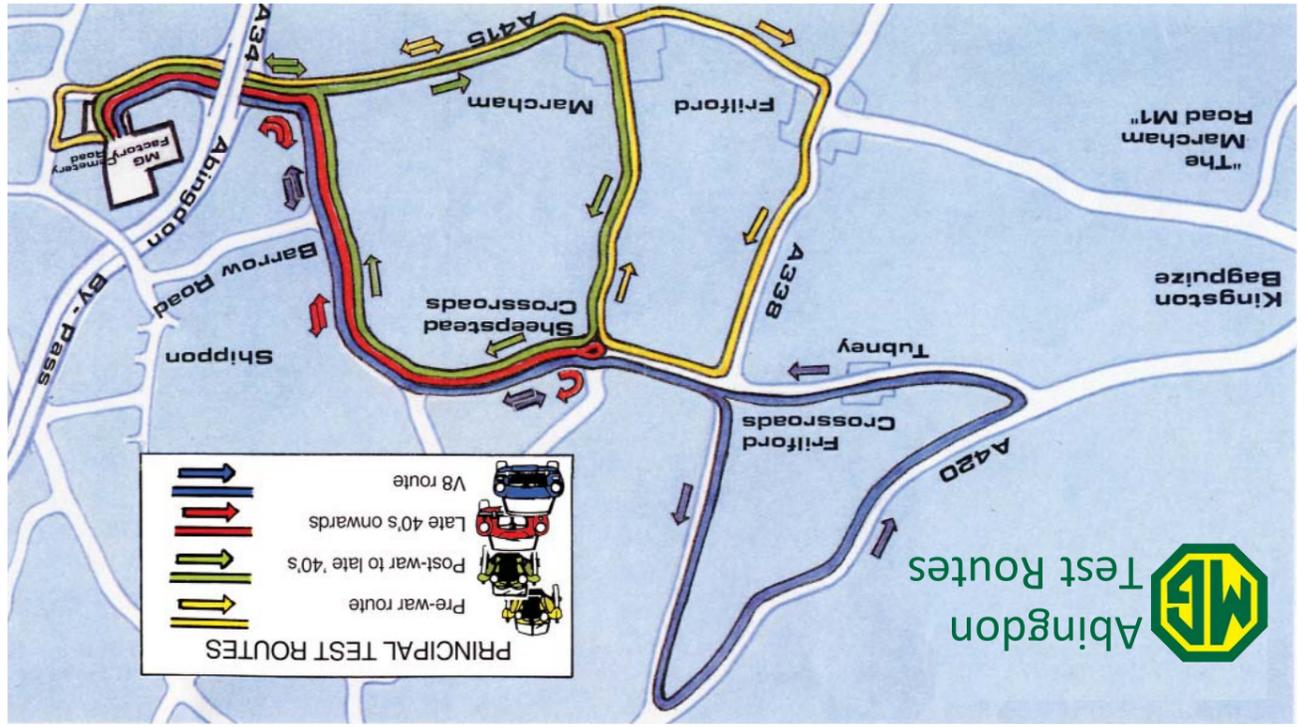


The Boundary House, formerly the founder of MG Cecil Kimber's home. Now it's a fashionable pub that serves food and good beer.



Over the fifty years they were based in Abingdon. Accommodation, Restaurants and landmarks linked with MG and the factory, and pick up a 32 page tourist brochure. This includes History, The MG Experience

## The MG Experience



Before Mgs could pass their final factory inspection they were sent out over a standard test route (shown above). Any faults logged in the road test report had to be cleared by the rectification staff. A return rectification work 'rode shotgun' on these occasions. This return to test being tested by supervisory staff. Often the fitter who carried out the activity required a variety of routes to verify the rectification of specific faults. Barrow Road, which leads to Shippon Village, with its bumpy edges was used to check suspension rattles. High speed vibrations such as wheels out of balance were checked on a good smooth section of a side road leading off the A415 which was nicknamed by some of the testers as 'The Marcham Road M1'. A third rectification route was sometimes needed. This took the late 40's outwards route with a further loop from the Sheepstead crossroads into Kingsdon Bagpize and back to the factory via Friford Village, Friford and Sheepstead crossroads, and the usual route back to the factory. This last route was also used as the standard test route for Abingdon produced Rileys. A rolling road was installed at the factory in 1975. From then on with one exception the MGB GT V8, standard road tests only took place as an overflow activity.

## Test Routes

## Visiting Kimber House

Kimber House Abingdon is the office of the MG Car Club and is right next to the gate to the former MG Car Company factory. We have an exhibition of various MG and MGCC memorabilia, a library of MG and BMC Comps Dept books, an archive of more than 10,000 photos plus production records for most MGs produced up to 1950. We have a range of items including club badges, clothing, books, DVDs and more, available for sale in our shop area.



We are open from 09:00 to 17:30 Monday to Thursday and 09:00 to 16:00 Friday and at weekends and evenings by appointment. There may be some days where we are all involved in events out of the office - in particular, the week before our MGLive! event is very busy! So, please do phone ahead if you are planning a visit.

Parking is available in our recently extended car park or in the quiet cul-de-sac immediately outside.



MG is alive and well in Abingdon through the MG Car Club, come and see for yourself!

Capture the true MG Spirit....



## The MG Car Club

The Club was founded in 1930, with John Thornley as its General Secretary, who was later to become Director and General Manager of the MG Car Company. The Club was run, over a long period of time, from within the Abingdon Factory, but from 1969, following the formation of the British Leyland Motor Corporation, it had to fend for itself in the outside world. Since then the Club has gone from strength to strength and now boasts twelve event organising centres which cover the UK, and a further 80 associated centres which circle the globe. Fourteen registers offer technical aid and support for all models produced from 1923 up to and including the current products. In 1990 the Club headquarters returned to Abingdon in its present location. Even if you don't currently own an MG, you can still join the Club and enjoy the camaraderie and its award winning monthly magazine, *Safety Fast!* If you live overseas there is a membership link available direct to the parent UK Club. Do visit our offices at Kimber House, which is situated adjacent to the old MG Car Company's Administration Block in Cemetery Road. The route is signposted from the direction of the A34. You will be welcome at any time during normal working hours, however it is always advisable, if possible, to let us know you are coming. For further information on the MG Car Club and the services it offers please call us on 01235 555552 or visit us online at [www.mgcc.com](http://www.mgcc.com).

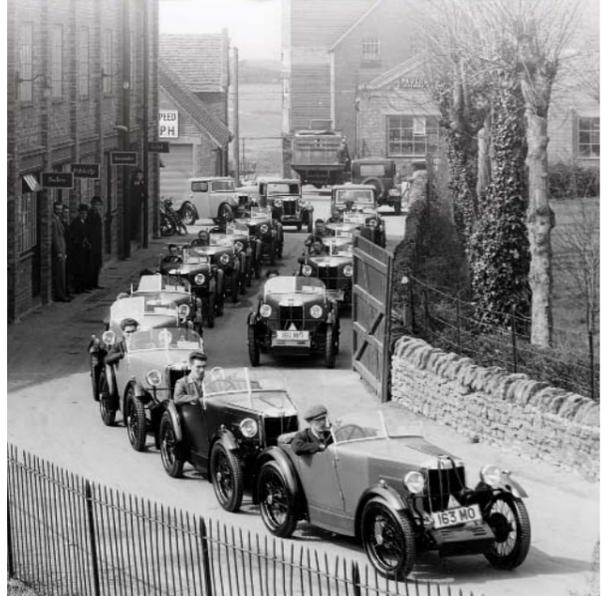


The MG Car Club  
Kimber House  
12 Cemetery Road  
Abingdon  
Oxfordshire  
OX14 1AS

To help you locate the MG Car Club, type in **OX14 1AS** to either your SatNav system or an internet address search engine before you travel.



# AN MG GUIDE TO ABINGDON AND OXFORD



Area Maps ● Where to go  
What to see ● Short History

## MG The Early Oxford Years



MG 18/80 rolling chassis' leaving the Edmund Road MG factory, Oxford on a journey to Coventry to have their bodies fitted.

William Morris started repairing and building bicycles at Oxford in the early 1890's. He subsequently produced motor cycles for a limited period but entered the motor car field around 1910. This start took two directions; one, the manufacture of vehicles, namely Morris Motors, the other, a retail and service operation called the Morris Garage. 1913 saw the name change to The Morris Garages, reflecting the acquisition of further Oxford premises. In 1921 Cecil Kimber joined The Morris Garages as their sales manager. He was to become general manager just one year later. Kimber set about fitting coach-built tourer bodies to the Morris Cowley chassis, the resultant cars being known as the Morris Garages Chummies.

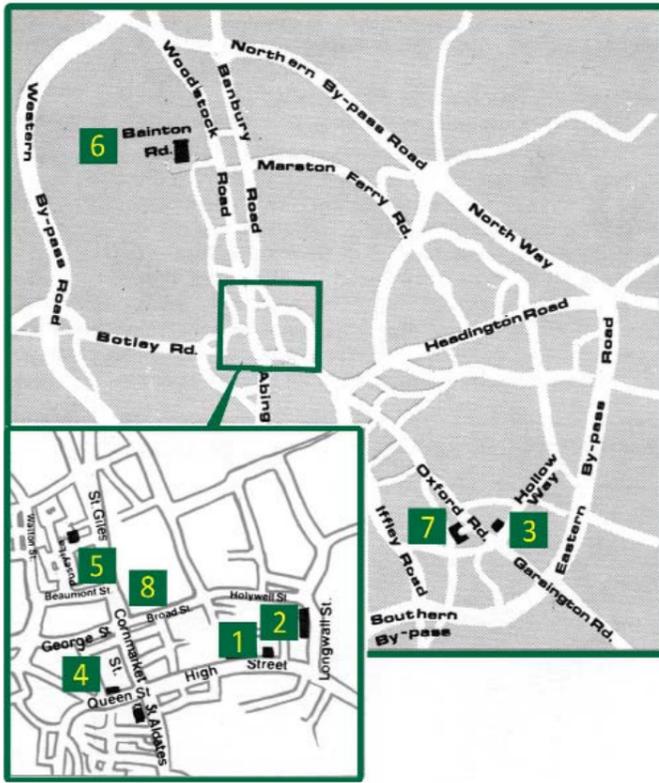


The father of MG, Cecil Kimber.

The first pure MG designs appeared in 1928. These were the luxury 18/80 and the diminutive sports M Type, the first of the long line of MG Midgets for which the marquee is famous. The Midget proved to be such a success that a larger factory site had to be found the following year to satisfy the current and future demands of this newly tapped small sports car market.



William Morris seated in a car outside Morris Garages, Queen Street, Oxford.



### Oxford Sites of MG Interest

- 1** 48 High Street, Morris' first cycle shop and showroom in the city. Look for the inscription on the door.
- 2** Longwall Street, the Original Morris Garage rebuilt in its present form in 1910
- 3** The original Morris Cowley works, on the northern junction of Oxford Road and extending down Hollow Way. These buildings formerly housed the Oxford Military College which dated from 1841. William Morris started car production here in 1912. The School House was adapted for administration use. The east wing of the college, overlooking Hollow Way, was turned into the factory block. All car parts entered on the ground floor; engines, transmissions and chassis were assembled on the first floor; body and final assembly took place on the second floor, while wheel painting was carried out in the attic. Lord Nuffield, as he became, occupied the same first floor office in this building, overlooking what had over the years become his vast motor works, until his death in 1963.



The original Morris Garage located in Longwall Street, Oxford.

- 4** The Morris Garages showrooms at 36/37 Queen Street in the city centre, opened in 1913. The upper floor of this building is currently used as a restaurant. The original repair garage was situated in the area now enclosed by the adjacent Clarendon Centre.
- 5** Site of the Alfred Lane mews garage; production work on the Morris Garages specials moved here from Longwall Street c.1923. Alfred Lane is now known as Pusey Lane.
- 6** Site of Bainton Road factory. MG production moved here from Alfred lane c.1925. This was the Morris Radiator Works and MG occupied a couple of their bays for a short while. This site is now a housing estate.
- 7** Site of The Edmund Road factory. This was purpose built for MG production which began here in 1927. This area is also now occupied by houses.
- 8** Oxford Tourist Information Centre is located in Broad Street.



Morris Garages located in St Aldates, Oxford taken in the 1960s. The building is now used as the Oxford Crown court.

## MG The Abingdon Years



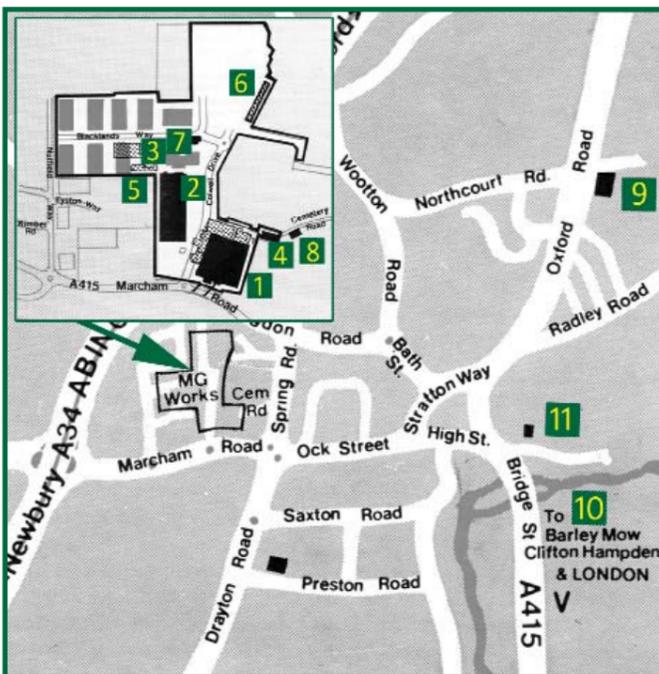
M Type Midgets and 18/80s leaving the Abingdon Works 1930. (photograph taken from a window in the MG Car Clubs headquarters.)

The new MG factory at Edmund Road in Oxford soon proved to be too small for his rapidly increasing production. As there was no further room for expansion on this site Kimber was forced to seek an alternative facility. This he found in the shape of a disused factory belonging to the Pavlova Leather Company in Abingdon. Production began here in 1929 and continued, with the exception of the war years, through till 1980 when the factory was closed by the parent company, British Leyland. Beginning in 1930 a succession of small four and six cylinder OHC engine cars were designed and built. Cecil Kimber actively pursued a policy of supporting racing and record breaking with considerable success. This was seriously curtailed in 1935 when the Morris Motors took the company over. A revised model policy saw the introduction of the T-series Midgets and the S, V & W range of larger touring cars. With the advent of war in 1939 the MG factory found itself engaged on armament work producing aircraft sub-assemblies, tanks and component parts. During this period Kimber was to be replaced at the time by H.A. Ryder with John Thornley eventually taking the helm in the post-war period.

The T-Type, upgraded in 1945 began to find new markets overseas particularly in the United States. This model was replaced in 1955 by the streamlined MGA with the majority of its 100,000 plus production going for export. The new MG Midget was introduced in 1961 and the MGB a year later. These two models would continue in various forms until the factory closure. Riley and Austin-Healey models were also built at Abingdon during the post-war period.

The BMC Competitions and Special Tuning departments were also based at the MG Factory and achieved many successes in international rallying over the years, particularly with the Minis and big Healeys.

The end came in 1980 when the British Leyland management decreed that this small (but efficient) assembly plant was no longer viable. Interested buyers, the MG clubs, the public and the motoring press were sadly unable to save the axe. So ended 51 years of MG association with the market town of Abingdon-on-Thames. However interest in MG, the affordable British sportscar, and its associated heritage continues unabated. Be assured that the MG Car Club will play a leading role in supporting this enthusiasm in the years to come.



### Abingdon Sites of MG Interest

- 1** 'A' Block. A new police station and housing now occupies the site of the main assembly building where all Abingdon built MGs were manufactured between 1929 and 1980. This building also housed the Service Department, the Press Shop/Machine Shop and the Show Preparation Shop.
- 2** 'B' Block. This block remains but has had new cladding added on the outside. Units 1 to 6 originally housed the Tyre Fitting Bay, Competitions Department, Despatch, Final Inspection, Paint Repair, Rectification and Design/Development.
- 3** 'C' Block. This was a later addition to the MG Factory and housed among other things the Special Tuning Department. This building remains but has had new cladding added to match the new units of the Abingdon Business Park.
- 4** Administration Block or 'Top Office'. This building has been extensively modified as the result of being converted to flats. The leaded bay window to Cecil Kimber's office has been retained at the western end of the building and remains the only recognisable feature from the days when the three story block housed, at various times, the principal functions of wages, sales accounts and production control.



A 1960's MG Works publicity shot of an MGA taken in a scenic location by the River Thames with Abingdon Town Centre in the background.

- 5** Site of the Air Pollution Control Centre - the first such facility in the world for testing emissions of production cars destined for overseas markets. Built in 1966/7 nothing now remains of it.
- 6** Site of Barrier Impact Testing Facility - built to prove conformance to US safety regulations. A road now occupies this area.
- 7** Commemorative Plaque.
- 8** 'Kimber House' - MG Car Club Headquarters.
- 9** The 'Boundary House' - home of the Kimber family between 1933 and 1938 and subsequently converted into a Morlands public house (now Greene King).



The 'Barley Mow' public house was used in a lot of publicity shots by the MG Works. Here showing off the MG VA in 1937.

- 10** The 'Barley Mow' public house at Clifton Hampden. This famous inn was one of the locations used by MG for publicity photographs. Leave Abingdon via the river bridge on the A415 and after approx. 4 miles turn right by the Plough Inn featured overleaf, into Clifton Hampden village (at traffic lights). The 'Barley Mow' is to be found immediately after crossing the river bridge.
- 11** The Abingdon Tourist Information Office is located in the Abbey House in Abbey Close.