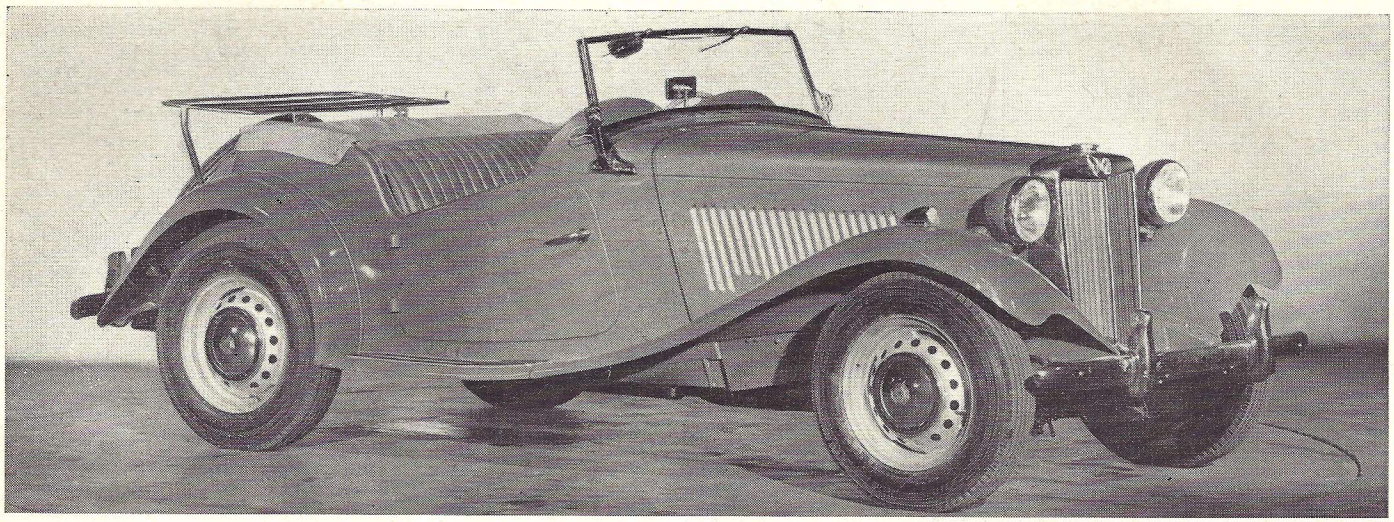
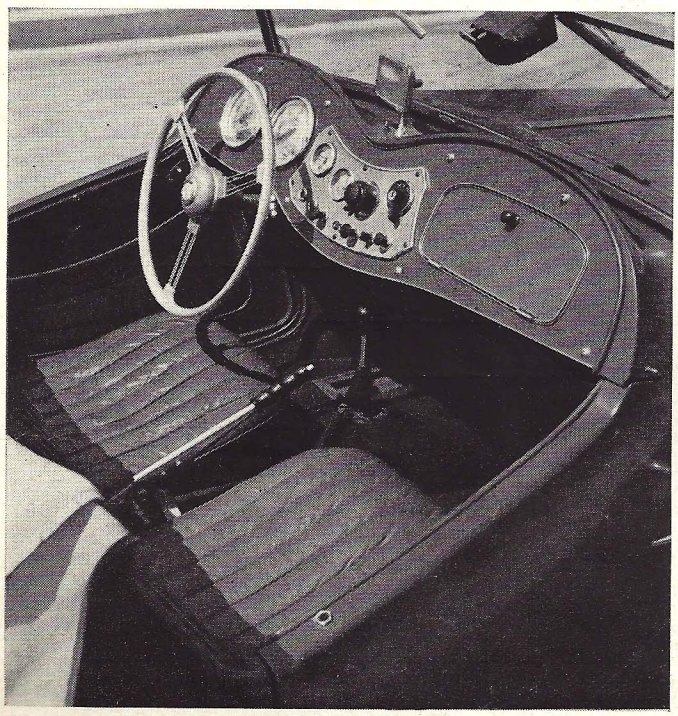


MG-TD

1950—Since the introduction of the series-TD, there has been a lot of argument over the merits of the car, compared with its predecessor, the TC, relative to performance, appearance and design. Strong individual opinions are forming favoring the TC or TD (there are some good points on both sides) and in the end the TD will surely be classified as better than, or inferior to, the TC.

As we were rather used to driving the MG-TC, our earliest impression of the TD was not altogether favorable; however, after approximately 100 miles of driving, the very real advantages of the TD model began to be felt. The TD's somewhat higher seating position, and the fact that the right front fender could not be seen, was at first a bit disturbing. But, on the other hand, there was a notable improvement in the quality of steering, due to the change to a rack-and-pinion steering mechanism.



This, in combination with the independent front suspension, should be more than enough to compensate for the effect of the TD's greater weight on cornering power. Moreover, the TD offers a much handier turning circle than the TC.

While testing the car's handling, the TD was literally thrown around a twisting mountain road. Corners were taken in slides—good slides, bad slides and even some wild, hairy slides—and the car was so stable that we never had a really bad moment. Even though the tail does tend to swing out on fast turns, it was easy to make the necessary corrections and avoid trouble.

In straight-line performance the TD proved, surprisingly enough, to be slightly quicker than the lighter TC. It reached 50 mph in 13.0 sec and the standing start ¼-mile was covered in 20.8 sec. Two-way runs, for top speed, were made and the TD turned 79.2 mph on its upwind run and 82.8 going down-wind, for an average of 81.0 mph. Stability was good at these speeds, but there was a great amount of engine noise and a pronounced cowl-shake, so driving this fast in anything but a race would be uncomfortable. At a more reasonable cruising speed (61 mph coincides with the theoretical limit of 2500 fpm of piston speed) everything is smooth and one feels complete confidence in the car.

Our criticisms of the TD are few; we would like to move the dimmer switch from under the dash-mounted horn button to a more accessible spot. The instrumentation could also stand some revision, as the lighting of the dials is definitely over-bright for night driving. And, too, although the dials are very large, the lettering does not contrast with the rest of the dial face and is quite difficult to read at a glance.

As with all Nuffield products, the finish of the entire car was excellent. The lack of water temperature and fuel gauges is regrettable, but that lack is more than compensated for by the other fine attributes of the MG-TD.

For the perennially dissatisfied (who always want more performance) there is a Mark II version of the TD. This model has higher compression, larger carburetors and valves, heavier valve springs, an additional electric fuel pump, an additional set of adjustable shock dampers and a lower (4.875) rear axle ratio. These, and other detail modifications, give a worthwhile improvement in performance and the Mk II should be most popular with the racing-set.

The Mk II specifications were ultimately adopted, with minor changes, for the 1954 change to the TF-series MG. And, the performance of the TD-Mk II was virtually identical with that of the later TF-1250, which had revised bodywork but was otherwise almost unaltered.