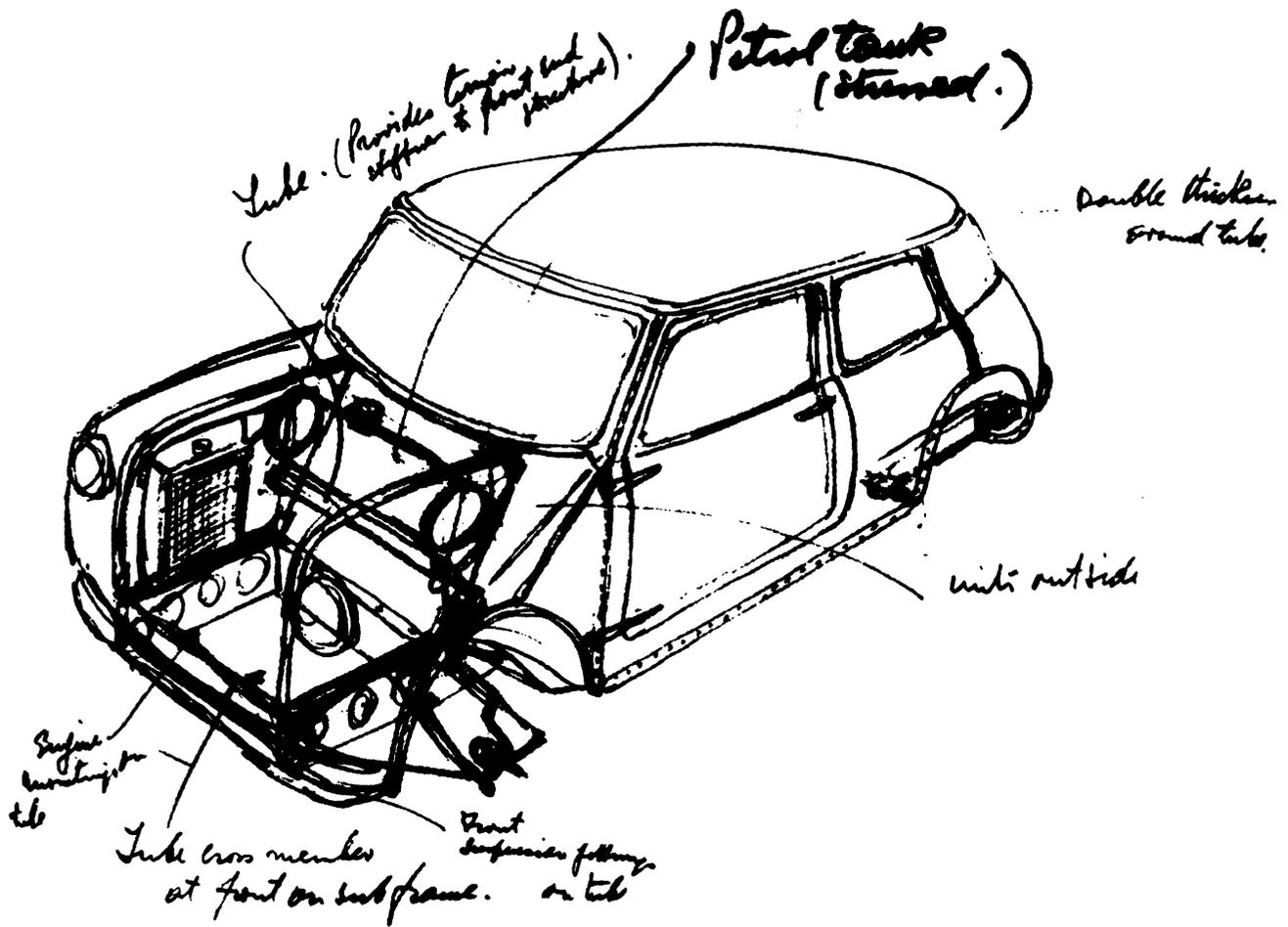




1959 - 2000

press information





A CELEBRATION OF CLASSIC MINI 1959-2000

The most famous small car ever – the classic Mini – finishes production at Longbridge on Wednesday 4th October 2000.

Known and recognised for so many achievements, the Mini has become a motoring icon, acknowledged for its pioneering concept, economy of use, sports handling, the star of many films and the winner of countless rallies and races. Few cars have done so much to influence the approach of motor car design than the revolutionary transverse engine mounted, front-wheel-drive, 10ft Mini.

This collection of interesting facts and information has been compiled with historic pictures reproduced with the kind permission of the British Motor Industry Heritage Trust.

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Mini Production

1959	20,000 Minis produced
1965	First million Minis built
1969	Second million
1971	Highest output year with 318,000 Minis made
1972	Third million
1976	Fourth million
1986	Five million
2000	Final production ends in October totalling 5,387,862

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1. The Mini – an automotive career second to none

Remember the Mini?:

- Built in response to the 1956 Suez fuel crisis
 - Designed by Sir Alec Issigonis, famous for his table-cloth and fag-packet illustrations
 - It was only 10 feet long. Compact, yet space efficient in design.
 - 'A' Series engine, launched in 1950, is still used, now with sophisticated electronic controls
 - Transverse mounted engine solved a packaging issue and now commonplace in auto design
 - 4-speed manual or auto gearbox was fitted below the engine
 - Handling reminiscent of a sports car, so inspirational that John Cooper produced a performance version, that became the legendary Mini Cooper.
 - Externally welded exterior seam joints being just one of many unique features
 - Engine cooling radiator fitted within the left-hand wing until 1996 for space utilisation
 - Wicker baskets, door pockets, open dash were many items that optimised space
 - Centrally mounted speedometer, sliding windows, door pulls and a floor starter
 - Produced in two forms; the Longbridge built Austin Se7en and Cowley Morris Mini-Minor
-
- Launched on 26 August 1959
 - Priced originally at £496.95 (19s), it was much cheaper than the competition
 - The British motor cycle industry was a victim of the Minis success
 - From the Sixties on, Mini became a celebrity 'must have', and famous owners have included Peter Sellers, Sir Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr, David Bowie, etc. Even the Queen has been for spin around Windsor Great Park in a Mini, chauffeured by its designer.
 - Became a classless product of desire following Lord Snowdon and various other VIP owners
 - Grand Prix constructor John Cooper produced a performance version with great success
 - Won the Monte Carlo rally in 1964, against all odds with Paddy Hopkirk and Henry Liddon
 - Mini has appeared in countless films, but most famously 'The Italian Job' gold bullion raid on Turin. In 1969 the Mini's star status was assured when a trio of red, white and blue Mini Coopers appeared alongside Michael Caine in the cult British crime caper. The outrageous driving scenes in the film were recently re-created for a TV commercial, using the same the same stunt driver, Remy Julienne.
-
- Produced in great numbers – highest production year being 1971 with 318,000 Minis
 - The Mini has been continuously built at Longbridge since 1959
 - Numerous body style variants made; saloon, pick-up, estate, Cabriolet, Moke, Clubman.
 - Was the by-word for automotive economy
 - Starred in numerous movies, ads, pop videos, indeed in all forms of media
 - Special and limited editions became a mid-life regular feature for themes of new Minis
 - Was credited for introducing women to motoring in their masses
 - A public household family member – Minis were often personalised and named
 - The Mini is followed enthusiastically by nearly 400 UK and 250 world-wide Clubs
 - A national symbol for Britishness
 - Voted Autocar magazine's 'Car of the Century' and 'European Car of the Century' in 1999 by 130 of the world's top motoring journalists.
 - The Mini has spanned six decades, yet was always in tune with fashion and trends
 - 5,387,862 Minis have been built since launch in 1959



2. Small Wonder

A Mini history

The modern motorcar was born on 26 August 1959.

On that day, BMC (British Motor Corporation) launched the Mini. It was not officially known as the Mini at the time. BMC had been formed in 1952 by the merger of Austin and Morris, so the Mini was launched in two versions - the Austin Se7en (sic) and the Morris Mini-Minor. The Austin was "The Incredible Austin Se7en" and the Morris was "Wizardry On Wheels", according to the advertisements of 1959.

The story of the Mini went back to 1956. In the wake of the Suez crisis, petrol rationing had been introduced, and this gave a short-lived fillip to the so-called "bubble" cars, the microcars that were mainly imported from Germany. BMC's chairman, Sir Leonard Lord (Lord Lambury; 1896 - 1967) wanted a new small car to go into production as soon as possible, to drive the bubble cars off the road. It had to be a proper car, with four seats. It had to use an existing BMC engine. And it should be smaller than the then current small cars made by BMC, the Austin A35 and the Morris Minor. Otherwise, Lord gave his designer a free hand.

Enter Sir Alec

The man to whom Lord issued his directive was Alec (Later Sir Alec) Issigonis (1906 - 1988), or to give him his full name, Alexander Arnold Constantine Issigonis. Issigonis had been born in Smyrna, now in Turkey but then a Greek city. His father was a naturalised Briton of Greek descent and his mother came from a Germany.

The young Issigonis came to England in 1922 with his by then widowed mother, after the war between Greece and Turkey where Greece lost her territory in Asia Minor. Alec and his mother set up home in London, and the young man enrolled as a student in the Battersea Polytechnic. Issigonis' father had been a marine engineer, and from childhood Alec was determined to follow in his footsteps. However, his objective was automotive rather than marine engineering. His first job after leaving the polytechnic was with a small London-based firm, which was developing a form of automatic transmission.

In 1933, Issigonis joined the Rootes Group at Coventry where he worked on independent suspension systems for the Humber and Hillman cars, but in 1936 he left to accept a position with Morris Motors at Cowley.

At Morris, Issigonis was expected to take charge of rear axle design but he managed to get himself switched to suspension instead. He developed an independent front suspension which was experimentally tried out on a Morris Ten in 1939, but which did not go into production until 1947, on the MG Y-type. During the war, he worked on several different projects for the war department, but also began to design a new small Morris car, at first known as the 6 hp, later given the code-name "Mosquito".

The Mosquito project began in 1942. This car was very radical in design compared to the average British small car of the pre-war period. It had a chassis-less unitary construction body, styled on the lines of the 1941 Packard Clipper, the most modern American car at the time. The front suspension was independent with torsion bars. It had rack-and-pinion steering, and the 14" wheels were rather smaller than the contemporary norm. The engine was mounted ahead of the front axle line.



Originally it had been envisaged that the car should have a horizontally-opposed four cylinder engine, but in a late change of plan, the existing Morris Eight engine was substituted. Another last-minute change was that Issigonis decided to widen the body by four inches, to improve interior room as well as the proportions of the car. The finished design was launched at the 1948 Motor Show as the Morris Minor and won immediate acclaim from the press and public. The Minor continued in production until 1971 as the most popular British car until then - more than 1.6 million were made.

However, Issigonis left Morris in 1952. He went to Alvis at Coventry where he designed a saloon car with a V8 engine. This car incorporated many interesting features, including fully independent suspension by hydraulic interconnected rubber suspension units, developed by Issigonis' friend Alex Moulton. Issigonis had already gained experience with rubber as a suspension element, used in a racing car, the Lightweight Special, which he had built in his spare time before the war together with another friend, George Dowson.

But when, in 1955, Alvis decided not to put Issigonis' design into production, he left the company and on the invitation of Leonard Lord, joined BMC in the Austin factory at Longbridge near Birmingham. It was Lord's wish that Issigonis should devote himself to advanced concept design. He gathered a small group around him, including Chris Kingham who had been working on the Alvis project with him.

Their first project was a rear wheel drive 1.1/2 litre family saloon, with Moulton's "Hydrolastic" independent suspension and functional two-box body styling. This first vehicle was purely an experimental design, and when Lord asked Issigonis to design a small car instead, it was quickly shelved.

The Mini Takes Shape

Issigonis turned his mind to the problem of designing the smallest possible car that would still accommodate four adults and luggage. His idea was for a box measuring approximately 10 feet by 4 feet by 4 feet of which 80% should be given over to passengers and luggage, leaving only 2 feet in length to accommodate the power train. Issigonis realised that to fit everything into the space available, he would need to use very small, 10" wheels, and all independent suspension. But the real masterstroke was his idea of employing a transverse engine, driving the front wheels via a gearbox and a final drive built into the sump of the engine.

Issigonis had already explored front wheel drive while still with Morris in 1951. He was a great admirer of the Citroen and familiar with the German DKW - then the two most important of the few front wheel drive cars on the market.

The pre-war DKW had a transverse engine, but only of two cylinders. In 1951, Issigonis converted a Morris Minor to front wheel drive, turning the engine and gearbox through 90 degrees. The open drive shafts to the front wheels incorporated constant velocity joints. The car ran very well for many years and Jack Daniels - Issigonis' right hand man - used it regularly when driving between Cowley and Longbridge. The front wheel drive system was particularly useful in wintry conditions. This front wheel drive Minor had what we now call an end-on gearbox, a layout also proposed (on paper) by Dante Giacosa, Fiat's chief engineer, in the 1940s. But on the small car Issigonis was now designing at Longbridge in 1957, there would not be sufficient room for an end-on gearbox.

The solution was to put the gearbox beneath the engine. A specially-designed clutch went outboard on one side of the engine. The differential gear for the final drive was also built into the sump, at the back of the power unit. There were equal length drive shafts to the front wheels, incorporating inner universal joints and Rzeppa constant velocity joints at their outer ends. The engine itself was a version (originally 948 cc, later reduced to 848 cc) of BMC's well-proven and highly successful A-series, first introduced in the Austin A30 in 1951.



At first it was installed in the new car with the carburettor and manifold at the front, and the ignition and electrical equipment at the back. When it was found that the large primary gears between the clutch output and geartrain introduced too much inertia for the synchromesh to handle, the engine was turned around so that an intermediate or idler gear could be used, thus reducing the size of the gearwheels. Until recently, it was always accepted that the swap was to give the carburettor a warmer location to avoid icing, but it seems this was Sir Alec being a little coy about the real reason.

The small car project was originally known as XC 9003 but this was changed to ADO 15. The car was designed in an incredibly short time, literally in six months between March and October 1957. By that time, two running prototypes were available. Development progressed rapidly and by July 1958, Issigonis invited Leonard Lord to take a test drive round the factory. After five minutes, Lord was satisfied. He told Issigonis that he wanted the car in production within twelve months. And so it happened: the first proper production cars left the assembly lines at Longbridge and Cowley at the beginning of May 1959, in readiness for the international launch at the end of August.

Apart from the revolutionary engine and transmission layout, ADO 15 was in many respects highly unusual and advanced.

All independent suspension had been commonplace on many Continental cars, even before the war, but the first British mass-production car with all-independent suspension (the Triumph Herald) had only been launched in April 1959 and that used a comparatively old-fashioned system with a transverse leaf spring and swing axles at the rear.

ADO 15 had Moulton-developed rubber cones as the suspension medium, with fully trailing arms at the back and 10 inch wheels to save space (14"/15" were still the industry norm) and needed specially developed Dunlop tyres - still cross-plyes in 1959 - and also presented a headache for Lockheed which supplied the hydraulic brakes. ADO 15 had rack-and-pinion steering which, despite having been used on the Morris Minor for ten years, was still considered unusual. While the body was of unitary construction, there were sub-frames front and rear on which the power unit and suspension were mounted.

The styling was functional, a characteristic feature were the external welding seams incorporated for ease of manufacture. The car was an early example of the boot-less two-box design, pioneered by Austin with the A40 Farina model in 1958. Above all, the car was only 10 feet long, and yet had sufficient space for four adults, and although boot space was by necessity limited, the boot lid folded down as a platform for extra luggage, and there were plenty of cubby-holes inside the car for additional storage. One famous feature were the door bins which it had been possible to incorporate because Issigonis insisted on having sliding windows - as no space had to be used for window winding mechanism in the doors, internal width could be maximised.

The Mini's Debut

The two cars that were launched on 26 August 1959, the Austin and the Morris, were all-but identical, except for badges and radiator grilles. BMC was then in what has become known as its badge-engineering period - to satisfy the different dealer networks and different circles of customer, all-but identical cars would be marketed under different name plates. However, in 1959 Austins were still made at Longbridge, and Morris at Cowley near Oxford, in their respective traditional factories! (A few years later even this distinction would disappear.) This also meant that the bodyshells were primarily sourced in two places, Longbridge West Works for the Austins, and Pressed Steel at Cowley for the Morris, with some contributions from Pressed Steel plant at Castle Bromwich. All of the power units, however, were made at Longbridge. Another little difference between Austin and Morris consisted of the colour range - the Austin Seven was offered in Farina Grey, Speedwell Blue and Tartan Red, while the Morris Mini-Minor was available in Old English White, Clipper Blue and Cherry Red.



Both cars were available in standard and de-luxe versions. The standard models had cloth upholstery, and the floor was covered by a rubber mat; on the de-luxe version, there was two-tone leather cloth upholstery, and carpet for the floor. De-luxe models also had more chrome-plated trim, opening rear quarter lights, ash trays for the back seat passengers and other additions. The original prices, including Purchase Tax (the 1959 equivalent of Car Tax and VAT), were £537 for the De-luxe models, and £497 for the standard models.

These original Minis were full of little idiosyncrasies - some practical, some not so practical. The gear lever was long and willowy, coming straight out of the final drive housing.

There was still a separate starter button, and this was on the floor (it made sense as the battery is in the boot). There was no dashboard in the ordinary sense, but a full-width parcel shelf, with just a speedometer incorporating a fuel gauge in a central nacelle. In addition to the afore-mentioned door bins, there were stowage bins to each side of the rear seat, and some space under the rear seat. BMC announced a range of extras for the Minis, which even at one stage included wickerwork baskets to fit under the rear seats and in the rear stowage bins; these never caught on! Because the boot lid was supposed to act as a luggage platform when folded down, the rear number plate mounted on the boot lid was hinged at the top so it stayed vertical when the boot lid was opened.

Many of the early production cars were made with left-hand drive for export, as the new cars were launched throughout Europe on the same day as in Britain. Because the old Austin Seven and Morris Minor names were not so well known abroad, many export cars were badged as Austin 850 or Morris 850.

The cars were introduced in the North American market where BMC was primarily known for the MG and Austin-Healey sports cars, but despite the American big three car manufacturers launching their "compact cars" in 1959 (these were compact only by American standards, being about the size of BMC's biggest saloon model, the Austin Westminster) the American market was not yet ready for true small cars such as the Mini.

First Impressions

In fact, it took time for the Mini to catch on. The first year's production (the eight months from May to December 1959) amounted to less than 20,000 cars.

In 1960, more than 100,000 Minis were made. In 1962, annual production for the first time reached more than 200,000 cars, and stayed consistently above this figure until 1977.

By the time the Mini was launched, Leonard Lord's original idea of ousting the bubble cars from the market had been largely overtaken by events - they had virtually disappeared by 1960 - and instead the Mini set out to carve its own niche in the marketplace.

At first, the Mini was treated with some derision, even suspicion, because of its small size and its unconventional features. The British public was slow to accept the merits of front wheel drive. It was believed that front wheel drive cars could not cope with hills, and were unsuitable in wintry conditions - some were even convinced that front wheel drive was dangerous. However, the praise lavished on the new cars by the press helped, and so did the fact that the Mini was adopted by the fashionable "Chelsea set" - the equivalent of a later generation's Sloane Ranger or Yuppies. Famous people bought Minis - long-standing devotees included Peter Sellers and Peter Ustinov, and members of the Royal family took to mini-motoring, most famously Princess Margaret and Lord Snowdon who became personal friends of Issigonis.



Sporting Success

The other aspect that helped the success of the Mini along was the introduction in 1961 of the first Mini-Cooper. Fitted with a twin-carburettor 997 cc (later 998 cc) tuned engine inspired by Formula One Champion Constructor John Cooper, front disc brakes, a remote-control gear change and extra instruments, and immediately recognisable by distinctive two-tone colour schemes (the roof was either white or black, depending on the body colour) this became the car to be seen in, in Kings Road or Carnaby Street, and also began to make a career for the Mini in the world of motor sport. Various modified Minis had already taken part in saloon car racing, and the model had made its somewhat inauspicious rallying debut in the 1959 RAC rally.

The best early competition result for the 848 cc standard Mini was a sixth place in the 1960 RAC Rally. The Mini-Cooper and the even more potent Mini-Cooper 'S', launched in 1963 with a 1071 cc engine, put Minis firmly on the map as the saloon car to be reckoned with in competition on the 1960s. The Coopers formed the back-bone of the works team run by BMC's Competitions Department, led first by Marcus Chambers, later Stuart Turner and finally Peter Browning. The first big success for a Mini came with Pat Moss's win in the 1962 Tulip Rally, in a 997 cc Mini-Cooper. At the time, the Monte Carlo Rally was the one event, which dominated public perception of rallying. This therefore became the important event for BMC to win. In 1964, a 1071 cc Mini-Cooper 'S', driven by Paddy Hopkirk and Henry Liddon, did just that.

This was no fluke either, because the Mini-Cooper 'S', in the later 1275 cc form, won the Monte Carlo again in 1965 and 1967. The drivers on these two occasions were Timo Makinen and Paul Easter (1965), and Rauno Aaltonen and Henry Liddon (1967). Makinen and Aaltonen were BMC's famous "Flying Finns" who because of their Scandinavian background were particularly familiar with driving on snow or ice-bound roads, and who both revelled in the advantage that the front wheel drive Minis gave them in such conditions, often encountered on the Monte Carlo rally held in January. In fact, there might have been four Monte Carlo wins for the BMC team - in 1966, Timo Makinen and Paul Easter had won the rally again, but following an inspection they (and other members of BMC's works team) were disqualified on the dubious technicality of having used non-standard halogen bulbs in the headlamps.

While the three Monte Carlo wins were the high points of the Mini-Cooper's competitions career, there were many other notable victories, such as in the 1965 RAC rally and several wins of the Tulip rally (1964 and 1966, apart from 1962). Although by 1967 the Minis were beginning to be out-classed by more powerful and specialised competitors, in addition to the Monte Carlo rally, the BMC works cars also won the Alpine rally, the Acropolis rally, and three other major European events. The last full season contested by the BMC works team was 1968, but by then the original BMC Competitions Department at Abingdon was virtually closed down, and the heyday of the Mini-Cooper was over.

Variation on the Theme

The Coopers were the most famous but by no means the only derivatives of the Minis introduced in the 1960's. In 1960, a van version had been introduced, soon followed by an estate car (the Austin Se7en Countryman and Morris Mini Traveller). A pick-up followed in 1961, and also introduced in that year, following BMC's badge-engineering philosophy, were two up-market versions of the Mini - the Riley Elf and Wolseley Hornet. Miniature versions of the classic radiator grilles of these two marques adorned the front ends of the new models, while the rear end had been modified by the addition of a built-out boot. Even if some of the compactness of the Mini had been lost, the extra luggage space came in useful! The Riley and Wolseley originally had the 848 cc engine but were found to be under powered; in 1963 they were given the first 998 cc engines to be found in any Mini, an engine size standardised in the Cooper Models in 1964 and later introduced also on normal Mini models.



In 1962, the original Austin Seven was renamed simply Austin Mini - by then the cars were universally known simply as "Mini" so BMC was merely making it official. The Morris version stuck with the Mini-Minor label until the end of 1969, however. The original Mini-Cooper of 1961 was followed by the previously-mentioned Mini Cooper 'S' in 1963, at first with a 1071 cc engine, but in 1964 the 'S' model was introduced with a choice of two other engines. Of these, the 970 cc model was a homologation special, built only in small numbers to get the car into the under 1-litre class in saloon car racing. More important was the 1275 cc version which was soon standardised in all Mini-Cooper 'S' models. This was the first A-series engine of this capacity. It is now the only engine being made for current Rover models - Sprite, Mayfair, Cooper and Cabriolet.

An unusual Mini derivative was introduced in 1964. This was the light utility vehicle, the Mini-Moke, with very simple fully-open body work, which BMC officially described as a "buckboard". Originally developed with an eye to military applications, the Moke was extensively tested by the British and American armies, but was rejected because of lack of ground clearance and two-wheel drive only. Unfortunately, in the UK civilian market it did not fare too well either. It was deemed to be a car rather than a commercial vehicle and in consequence attracted Purchase Tax, which killed its chances in the home market.

However, many were sold for export, and it was popular as a beach car in American and West Indian resorts. After production in Britain was stopped in 1968, the Moke continued to be made in Australia, transferring to Portugal in 1980.

Right from the start in 1959, the Mini had been sold internationally. In those days BMC had an extensive overseas network with assembly operations in many European and Commonwealth countries. Many Minis were exported in the form of CKD (Completely Knocked Down) kits, and in a number of countries whole production lines were set up with foreign-made Minis incorporating mostly locally-sourced parts, depending on local customs regulations. This happened above all in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

In Europe, the Italian Innocenti Company of Milan (well-known as makers of the Lambretta motor scooter) already made a range of BMC cars under license, and added the Mini - including the estate car and the Mini Cooper - to their range. They were subsequently taken over by British Leyland but in the 1970s were sold to the De Tomaso organisation. BMC and later British Leyland were also active in other European markets, and Minis were eventually also made by the Spanish Authi company, as well as in British Leyland's assembly plant at Seneffe in Belgium.

Further Developments

On the engineering front, in 1964 the Minis were given the Moulton-designed interconnected Hydrolastic suspension, already seen on the Morris 1100 of 1962 and the Austin 1800 of 1964 - the two bigger cars that Issigonis designed for BMC, as extension of his basic Mini design philosophy. However, in 1969-71 Hydrolastic was gradually phased out again as the Minis returned to the original rubber cone suspension. In 1965, BMC offered the Mini (and the 1100 models) with an automatic gearbox, a special four-speed box developed by Automotive Products. Fitting an automatic gearbox into the sump of the Mini engine, where it has to share the engine oil supply in the same way as the manual gearbox, caused certain difficulties, successfully resolved by AP's development engineers. The automatic option offered on the Mini today is essentially unchanged from 1965, albeit greatly improved in detail.



In October 1967, the Mini models were given a mild facelift, with changed radiator grilles and badges, plus a 2"-wider rear window and larger, square rear lamp units, on the Austin and Morris versions. The 998cc engine was now offered as an alternative to the original 848 cc unit, and on manual cars, the gearbox was given synchromesh also on first gear. The cars were now known as the Mark II models, except for the Riley and Wolseley versions which had been Mark III models since they were given wind-up windows and fresh-air face level ventilation in 1966. The last Riley and Wolseley models were made in August 1969, as the Mini was celebrating its tenth birthday and the range was being prepared for its most major overhaul to date.

When the 1970 range of Minis was launched at the 1969 Motor Show, the first thing to be noticed was that the Austin and Morris badges had disappeared from the new models. From now on, the cars were called simply Mini. The basic 850 and 1000 saloons, together with the van and pick-up models, were changed least radically, and the Mini-Cooper was still offered, but now only in 1275 cc 'S' form. But in addition there was a range of three new models, all with a radically-altered front end - longer and with a squared-up grille which incorporated the headlamps. The front bumper had been raised and was fitted with "underriders", while the side lamps and flasher lamps were now repositioned below the bumper. In standard saloon form, the new model was called the Mini Clubman and was fitted with a 998cc engine (from 1975, replaced by a 1098cc engine on manual gearbox cars). Parallel to this was the Mini Clubman estate, now the only estate car in the range.

Finally, there was the 1275GT, fitted with a single-carburettor engine similar to that used in the Austin 1300, and initially with Cooper 'S' type front disc brakes.

Although the Mini-Cooper 'S' Mark III was discontinued in 1971, the new range saw the Mini reach a new height of popularity - 1971 was the best year ever, with more than 318,000 Minis being produced world-wide. The 3rd millionth Mini was made in 1972 - previous milestones reached had been 1 million in 1965 and 2 million in 1969. 4 million would be reached in 1976, and the 5th millionth Mini was made in February 1986. Since 1969, all British-made Minis had been assembled at Longbridge, with the Cowley factory initially being given over to models such as the Austin Maxi and the Morris Marina.

The 'Supermini' Arrives

The popularity of the Mini continued unabated throughout the 1970s and the model easily maintained its position as the best-selling British small car. However, competition in the market sector was gradually increasing, with many European car manufacturers bringing out the so-called "Supermini" small cars, mostly a bit bigger than the original Mini and with hatchback bodies, but almost without exception copying the Mini's transverse engine and front wheel drive. For example, Ford launched the Fiesta in 1976.

It was by then fairly well known that British Leyland was developing a new small car, at first thought to be a replacement for the Mini, but when it was made slightly bigger to compete more effectively against the European opposition, the decision was made to keep the well-established Mini in production alongside the new car.

This would give British Leyland, at this time BL, two models to offer in the competitive market for small cars. The new car was launched in October 1980 as the Austin Mini-Metro (later renamed simply Metro). It shared many features with the Mini, most importantly the transverse engine with the gearbox in the sump and front wheel drive. However, it was a slightly bigger and roomier car with a hatchback body.



Prior to the launch of the Metro, the Mini range had been reduced, as the Clubman saloon and 1275 GT models were discontinued in August 1980. The estate continued with the Clubman front end but was renamed Mini 1000 HL Estate. In 1982, the van, pick-up and estate models were all discontinued, leaving just the original 1969-style saloon in production, fitted with the 998 cc engine as the 848 cc size had been discontinued in 1979.

Two models were then offered as regular production models - the Mini City and the more luxuriously-equipped Mini Mayfair, both available with the one-litre engine with either manual or automatic gearbox.

In recent years, Mini production has stabilised at some 20,000 cars per year but the model still plays a useful role in the Rover Group's range. Many devoted Mini customers would not dream of changing to another model. In addition to the two regular Minis, Austin Rover and subsequently the Rover Group offered a range of Special Edition models to enhance and personalise the Minis great appeal.

Variations on this theme have included the Mini 1100 Special (celebrating 20 years with a party at Donington) and the Mini 25 (another celebration with a party at Donington Park in 1984). Special editions followed the mainstream top-of-the-range Mayfair with a classy theme related to London - Mini Ritz, Mini Chelsea, Mini Piccadilly and the Mini Park Lane. In 1987, the Mini Advantage was launched with a tennis theme - in time for Wimbledon. A pair of young 'jet set' Minis followed in January aptly named 'Red Hot' and 'Jet Black', and in the summer of 1988, the Mini "Designer" was introduced, created by Mary Quant - more famous for 'inventing' the Mini skirt.

In 1989, special editions were at their most popular. The flavour of the 1960's was recreated with the two-tone colour schemes and white roofs of the Flame & Racing, and sky blue and rose pink coloured roofs with white bodywork on the Sky and Rose. In the autumn of 1989, Mini was in celebration mood again, with the Mini Thirty (and another party attracting 120,000 enthusiasts to Silverstone). A higher specified version of the popular Minis Racing and Flame was joined by the Checkmate with black bodywork and white roof, followed by the Mini Studio 2 - the result of a Rover young people's design project.

Nostalgia was at its peak in July 1990, with the most memorable special edition of all - the re-launch of the Mini Cooper with the introductory model limited to a production run of only 1000. This was the first time the 1275cc engine had been used in Mini since 1980.

February 1991 saw the introduction of more special editions - the Mini Neon, a bright and jazzy Mini with Nordic Blue paintwork. This was followed by the Mini Cabriolet - a special Mini, limited to just 75 examples, modified by Lamm Autohaus, a German Rover dealer, and fitted with the Cooper's 1.3 engine. All 75 were sold out within days of announcement. A further-improved Mini Cabriolet was developed for production at Longbridge, with deliveries commencing from June 1993. In the ensuing years, further special edition action has included the Mini 35 in 1994 - celebrating yet another milestone; the Cooper Monte Carlo, Sidewalk and Equinox in 1995 and a very limited edition of only 200 cars to commemorate 35 years of the Mini Cooper in 1996.

Demand from afar

The Mini was sought-after in many export markets, the most important being France, Italy and most significantly Japan, with sales in 1995 almost twice those of Great Britain. The Japanese love of nostalgia is particularly strong for the '60's with the Mini provided the world's only 'still in production' link with that evocative era. Total sales world-wide in 1995 amounted to 20,044.



Following re-launch of the Mini Cooper as a special edition in July 1990, the continuing mainstream Cooper model contributed to a stabilising of Mini sales in the teeth of the recession through 1990/1. Sales accounted for 40% of all Minis world-wide and the re-introduction of Cooper into Japan, Germany and Switzerland, rekindled nostalgic links with this legend.

Exhaust emissions legislation at last seemed to threaten the end of the Minis long and interesting life. If survival was going to be possible, appropriate action had to be taken. The Mini Cooper was fitted with an exhaust catalyst as standard when launched - standard fuel injection and a fully compliant closed loop catalyst, introduced in October 1991, led to the car being badged 1.3i. In 1996, even more significant legislation led to multi point fuel injection, sophisticated electronic engine management and 'the impossible', a driver's air bag. With this action came a rationalisation of the range to just two models - Mini and Mini Cooper and the deletion of the Sprite and the Cabriolet. The addition of a wide-ranging option and accessory package allowed full personalisation of the car to the customer's taste.

Mini dominated the news in the early part of 1997, with the progressive reveal of a number of prototype concepts for its impending replacement. The ACV30 was an anniversary concept vehicle celebrating 30 years since the hat-trick on Monte wins and the Spiritual Minis were inspired by 'Issigonis lateral thinking'. On the eve of the Frankfurt motor show, the media were given a glimpse of the future New Mini – now due for launch in 2001 through BMW.

Themed Minis were introduced during the course of 1998, with Paul Smith, David Bowie and Kate Moss each creating their car. Paul Smith's design consisted of 86 vertical stripes in a spectrum of colours. David Bowie's design was a chromed Mini reflecting the impression of yourself in it! Kate has an obsession with spiders so her Mini was covered in cobwebs.

2000 finale variants were introduced mid-year as the inevitable end finally drew nearer – the Mini Se7en bore homage to the original, the Cooper and the Cooper Sport drew testimony to the inspiration of its name sake – John Cooper - and the talented drivers that enjoyed it.

Demand for the final Minis reaches levels not seen for many years with owners keen to attain one of the motoring industry's key icons.

Never in the field of automotive transport, was so much achieved by something so ... Mini.



3. Mini technology

When the Mini made its first appearance on August 26 1959 there was no intensive market research supporting it and no guaranteed slot in the market where it was bound to succeed. It was a courageous management that backed the car and presented it to a disbelieving world.

The family motorist was unconvinced by a car so unconventional, the sporting driver sceptical and the hardened motorist faintly amused. At the low, indeed bargain price of £496.95 the Mini featured a host of innovative features and received excellent press reviews.

The wheels were new - there had never been ten inch wheels on a 70 plus mph car before and the tyres were specially developed by Dunlop. Rubber cone suspension had never been fitted to a mass production car before. Little was known about gearboxes running in the sump of an engine, while the transverse engine/gearbox position made new demands on steering and suspension design. Yet never before had there been so much usable space in a car with such tight overall dimensions.

Whereas the late Sir Alec Issigonis had imagined the Mini to be a people's car, the man in the street was suspicious of so much innovation and sales were disappointingly slow. Success came only when the Mini was adopted by the London trendies. Its reputation enhanced, the car took on a classless image appealing to all sectors of the market. The Mini never looked back.

VIPs and show-biz personalities revelled in driving this chic newcomer which solved their London parking problems (there were few NCP or multi storey car parks in those days). Such was the car's universal attraction that even the Queen went for a brief drive around Windsor Park partnered by Issigonis.

The competition fraternity could not afford to ignore the car for long as its stability and cornering far outweighed the Mini's initial power disadvantage compared with the conventional sports car. Tuning shops flourished throughout the country as men like Ralph Broad, Daniel Richmond and John Cooper strove to extract the last ounce of power from the engine.

Lockheed miniaturised the disc brakes for these 'hotted up' Minis to cope with the ever-increasing power and tyre designers spent many sleepless nights trying to develop tyres capable of handling the incredible speed at which the small Mini wheels revolved.

Saloon car racing became one of the spectacles of a track meeting rather than a supporting race to single seaters. The rise of the Mini was current with the increased popularity of stage rallying and although the six-inch clearance of the car left many enthusiasts doubtful as to its durability the pundits were soon proved wrong.

By 1960 Minis were popular sights in rallies and in fact Pat Ozanne gave the car its RAC debut just three months after it was launched. In 1962 Pat Moss gave the car its first major international victory when she won the Tulip Rally in Holland. By the end of the sixties the Mini had won the Monte Carlo three times, the RAC Rally, the Thousand Lakes, The Alpine and numerous other major events. In fact, from 1965-7 twenty-two prestigious European rallies had experienced Mini victories.

In 1974, the Mini was facelifted with the introduction on the squared front-end Clubman, headed up by the 1275GT, which replaced the popular Cooper, itself discontinued in 1980, with the traditional shaped Mini continuing to date.

The largest changes to Mini came in 1996, when drive-by legislation necessitated a series of enhancements. The radiator was moved from its left-hand wing mounted position to the conventional front position. With multi-point replacing single-point fuel injection, driver airbag and a Sports pack the changes gave the new Mini extra life.



4. Major differences Mini 1959 - 2000

When it comes to claims about the biggest production runs, it should be remembered that some rivals effectively became quite different cars over the years. Today's Mini is obviously a direct descendent of the 1959 design, (with a far closer relationship than say, that between a 1948 Volkswagen Beetle and the final 1977 German-made cars). Nevertheless, there are many detail differences. This list summarises the key changes over 41 years.

1959

848cc, 34bhp

Top speed of 72mph

0-60mph in 27.1 seconds

Fuel economy of 40mpg

Sliding windows in front doors

External front door hinges

Floor starter button

Central speedo/fuel gauge

Single indicator stalk on column

Recirculatory heater optional

Long, toe-board sited gear lever

No provision for radio

No automatic gearbox option

Non-servo drum brakes all round

Single-line hydraulics

Single speed wipers, manual

Plunger-type screen washer

Solid-mounted front subframe

Twin-spoke steering wheel

Floor mounted static seat belts

Single wing mounted mirror

External bonnet release

Single carburettor

2000

1275cc, 63Ps (62bhp)

Top speed of 90mph

0-60mph in 12.2 seconds

Fuel economy of 43mpg

Winding windows + dash vents

Concealed hinges

Key start/steering lock

Driver's instrument binnacle

Twin multi-purpose stalks

Fresh air heater standard

Short remote shift lever

Radio/cassette now standard

4-speed automatic option

Front disc/rear drum

servo brakes, dual line

Two-speed wipers,

electric screen washer

6-point rubber-mounted subframe

Airbag equipped three-spoke steering wheel

Inertia reel, pre-tensioned seat belts

Twin door mirrors

Internal release with alarm sensors and engine immobiliser

Multi-point fuel injections with MEMS 2J ECU

Other advantages enjoyed by today's Minis include: Side repeater flashers; Heated rear window; twin door mirrors; low-profile radial ply tyres; larger rear lamps incorporating reversing lamps; rear fog lamp; internal bonnet release; comfortable front seats with reclining squabs and head restraints; Airbag equipped steering wheel; seat-belt pre-tensioners; 1.3 litre fuel-injected engines, etc.



5. Mini Years in History

It's paradoxical that the Mini, designed for minimum size, should thereby become an enduring giant of automotive history. But what about the march of world history during the momentous 41 years of the Mini's life? Here we match some of the Mini's milestones against other notable contemporary events.

1959: While production of the first few Minis was gradually being brought on stream in preparation for the August launch, Dr Fidel Castro was settling into power in Cuba after ousting the dictator Fulgencio Batista. His friends in the USSR launched three Luna spacecraft to steal a march on the USA. In November, Britain entered the motorway age as the London-Rugby M1 was opened.

1960: Perhaps realising that the Mini was going to seriously reduce petrol consumption, the Petroleum Exporting Countries got together to form OPEC. The estate car versions of the Mini, complete with genuine wood 'framing' were launched in autumn.

1961: Yuri Gagarin made the first manned space flight, the Berlin Wall was started and President Kennedy announced the Apollo project to put Americans on the moon. Lady Diana Spencer was born. Another important birth put motoring enthusiasts over the moon - the Mini Cooper was launched in October.

1963: In January, President de Gaulle blocked Britain's entry into the EEC.

By way of retaliation, the Mini Cooper S (1071cc) was launched in March. This was Britain's secret weapon to win European rallies and invade continental car markets!

1964: Paddy Hopkirk and Henry Liddon took their Mini Cooper S to victory in the Monte Carlo Rally, all three returning to a hero's welcome on the TV 'Sunday Night at the London Palladium' show. In June, Nelson Mandela was sentenced to life imprisonment.

1965: The year began on a sombre note with the funeral of Sir Winston Churchill. But another great Briton, the Mini went from strength to strength, reaching its first million, and becoming available with a novel 4-speed automatic gearbox option.

Rhodesia 'invented' the acronym UDI and the 70mph speed limit was introduced in Britain, thus allowing 848 cc Minis to go at top speed.

1966: After a spectacular 1-2-3 finish in the Monte Carlo Rally by the Abingdon Mini Cooper team, French officials spent eight hours trying to disqualify them eventually doing it on a trivial lighting technicality. It was some compensation that the England Football team won the World Cup later in the year.

Mrs Indira Gandhi became Prime Minister of India, Leonid Brezhnev became General Secretary of the USSR and the Barclaycard was launched.

1967: The liner Queen Elizabeth II was launched, but the Torrey Canyon oil tanker broke up off Lands End. The Concorde prototype was revealed at Toulouse. Dr Christian Barnard performed the first human heart transplant in Cape Town, doubtless inspired by the transplant of the 998 cc engine from the Riley Elf and Wolseley Hornet into the new Mini 1000, part of the New MkII Mini range.

1969: Neil Armstrong made the first human footprints on the moon. Concorde made its maiden flight, as did the Boeing 747 Jumbo Jet. Britain discovered Oil in its sector of the North Sea. The Mini gained its Clubman and 1275 GT siblings, plus winding windows.



1973: A particularly turbulent year, which was to boost the appeal of economical cars like the Mini. The Yom Kippur war in the Middle East led to a quadrupling in oil prices. Amongst several technical improvements to all Minis were alternators and a new rod-operated remote gearshift.

1976: Harold Wilson suddenly resigned as Britain's Prime Minister in March, but in May the Mini re-affirmed its intention to remain firmly in office with a host of improvements across the range, including twin column stalk controls, heated rear windows and hazard warning lights.

1979: The Ayatollah Khomeini displaced the Shah of Iran, Egypt and Israel signed a peace treaty in Washington and Margaret Thatcher became Britain's first woman Prime Minister. For really momentous news, however, we had to wait until August, when the Mini celebrated its 20th birthday with a party at Donington and Silver or Rose 1100 Special Edition models.

1980: A fourth decade for Mini. Wearing well and wearing more than Erika Roe did at Twickenham.

1982: Britain reacted with unexpected fierceness to the Argentine occupation of the Falklands in April, driving them out by June. The Pope made the first-ever-papal visit to Britain, and the first-ever Mini Mayfair was launched.

1984: Amongst a lot of bad news (UK Miner's Strike, assassination of Mrs Gandhi, IRA bombing of Grand Hotel Brighton) came a few bright spots such as the birth of Harry, second son of the Princess of Wales, and the 25th Birthday of the Mini. There was much Silver Jubilation, and all Minis got 12-inch wheels and front disc brakes as at present.

1987: Sees a range of Limited Editions such Park Lane, Advantage, Red Hot and Jet Black. Mini now costs £3,873, not as expensive as the Duchess of Windsor's jewels, which sell for £31 million.

1988: Russia withdrew from Afghanistan after 10 fruitless years, and South Korea successfully hosted the Olympic Games. By now, Mini Special Editions had become very popular, with the Red Hot, Jet black and Mary Quant-inspired Designer models appearing in the first half of the year.

1989: Mini's Thirtieth, outliving the Berlin Wall which comes down in this year. Not everything was good news this year - Jason Donovan had the biggest selling album of 1989.

1990: Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, and the Western Allies began a massive military build-up in the Gulf. Issues nearer to home led to Mrs Thatcher's resignation after an extraordinary 11 years as Prime Minister. Perhaps even more extraordinary was the return of the Mini Cooper after 19 years in limbo.

1994: South Africa held its first all-races elections, bringing Nelson Mandela to the Presidency. Paddy Hopkirk celebrated the 30th anniversary of his first Monte Carlo Mini victory by driving a current Mini Cooper to a much-applauded finish in the 1994 event, and Mini celebrated a remarkable 35th year.

1995: Autocar readers vote Mini 'Car of the Century'. Princess Diana's Panorama special is the most watched TV show in this year. Alcopops hit the streets while Hugh Grant wishes he'd stayed off them.

1996: The wing-mounted radiator was finally positioned behind the grille for all but Japanese spec Minis as part of the '97 drive-by noise legislation. Sports pack and a plethora of options and accessories recognised a growing desire for owners to personalise their Mini.



1997: What goes around comes around: Oasis are the new Beatles. Labour is the 'New Labour' government yet Mini is still the original Mini although packed with a host of modern technologies such as an airbag, twin-point fuel injection and a catalytic converter.

1998: Kate Moss, David Bowie and Paul Smith turn their hands to designing Minis as sales go on and on. Titanic is a smash and Celine Dion's 'Heart' Goes On (and on, and on.....)

1999: Mini reaches 40 and the Mini 40 LE costs over £10,000. With over 5 million sold, Mini has become a classless symbol of style and chic. The Italian Job film is re-launched as the world (and of course Mini) awaits the millennium.

2000: Millennium celebrations dominated the entry of a new century, but in a fast changing world at least one dependable product remained constant- the Mini. Final production loomed however, with the announcement that three variants would see Mini production finish. The Mini Se7en bore homage to the original; the Cooper and the Cooper Sport drew testimony to the inspiration of its namesake and the talented drivers that enjoyed it.

6. Significant dates of change

Mini (Morris Mini Minor & Austin Se7en) launched	26 August 1959
Mini Van	January 1960
Mini Estate (Countryman/Traveller)	September 1960
Mini pick-up	January 1961
Mini Cooper (997cc Austin & Morris)	October 1961
Riley Elf / Wolseley Hornet	October 1961
Mini Cooper S (1071cc)	March 1963
Mini Cooper (998cc Austin & Morris)	January 1964
Mini Cooper S (970cc & 1275)	March 1964
Mini Moke	August 1964
Hydrolastic suspension	September 1964
Automatic transmission option	May 1965
Mini 850 & 1000 MkII	October 1967
Door handles replaced cable internal release	June 1968
Heated rear window option	April 1969
Mini (ADO 20) Clubman/1275GT	October 1969
Dry cone suspension re-installed on 850 & 1000	October 1969
Wind-up windows	October 1969
Inertia reel seat belt fitted as standard	February 1974
Denovo 'run-flat' tyres	August 1977
Mini 1000 City	September 1980
Mini Mayfair	September 1982
Mini 12" wheels/disc brakes standardised	June 1984
Brake servo-standard fit	October 1988
Mini Cooper (re-intro SE)	July 1990
Mini Cooper 1.3i with fuel injection	Oct 1991
Mini Sprite (all Minis are 1300cc)	May 1992
Mini Cabriolet (factory built)	July 1993
Mini & Mini Cooper (Airbag/extensive changes)	October 1996
Mini Se7en, Cooper and Cooper Sport final variants	April 2000



7. Every individual Mini (all 137) derivatives – 1959 - 2000

MODEL V	VARIATION	FROM	TO
Austin Se7en/Mini	Saloon standard (cloth trim)	1959	1962
Morris Mini Minor	Saloon standard (cloth trim)	1959	1962
Austin Se7en/Mini	Saloon de-luxe	1959	1962
Morris Mini Minor	Saloon de-luxe	1959	1962
Austin Se7en/Mini	Countryman (wood trim)	1960	1967
Morris Mini	Traveller (wood trim)	1960	1967
Austin Se7en/Mini	Van	1960	1969
Morris Mini	Van	1960	1969
Austin Se7en/Mini	Pick up	1961	1969
Morris Mini	Pick up	1961	1969
Austin Super Seven/Mini	Super saloon	1961	1962
Morris Mini Minor	Super saloon	1961	1962
Austin Se7en/Mini Cooper	997cc saloon	1961	1964
Morris Mini Cooper	997cc saloon	1961	1964
Riley Elf	Mark 1 848cc saloon	1961	1963
Wolseley Hornet	Mark 1 848cc saloon	1961	1963
Austin Mini	Saloon standard (Vynide trim)	1962	1967
Morris Mini Minor	Saloon standard (Vynide trim)	1962	1967
Austin Mini	Super de-luxe saloon	1962	1967
Morris Mini Minor	Super de-luxe saloon	1962	1967
Austin Mini Countryman	(all metalbody)	1962	1967
Morris Mini Traveller	(all metal body)	1962	1967
Austin Mini Cooper 'S'	1071cc saloon	1963	1964
Morris Mini Cooper 'S'	1071cc saloon	1963	1964
Riley Elf	Mark II 998cc saloon	1963	1966
Wolseley Hornet	Mark II 998cc saloon	1963	1966
Austin Mini	Moke	1964	1968
Morris Mini	Moke	1964	1968
Austin Mini Cooper	998cc saloon	1964	1967
Morris Mini Cooper	998cc saloon	1964	1967
Austin Mini Cooper 'S'	970cc saloon	1964	1965
Morris Mini Cooper 'S'	970cc saloon	1964	1965
Austin Mini Cooper 'S'	1275cc saloon	1964	1967
Morris Mini Cooper 'S'	1275cc saloon	1964	1967
Riley Elf	Mark III 998cc saloon	1966	1969
Wolseley Hornet	Mark III 998cc saloon	1966	1969
Austin Mini	Mark II 850 saloon standard	1967	1969
Morris Mini Minor	Mark II 850 saloon standard	1967	1969
Austin Mini	Mark II 850 saloon super de-luxe	1967	1969
Morris Mini Minor	Mark II 850 saloon super de-luxe	1967	1969
Austin Mini	Mark II 1000 saloon super deluxe	1967	1969
Morris Mini Minor	Mark II 1000 saloon super deluxe	1967	1969
Austin Mini	Mark II 1000 Countryman (wood)	1967	1969
Morris Mini	Mark II 1000 Traveller (wood)	1967	1969
Austin Mini	Mark II 1000 Countryman (metal)	1967	1969
Morris Mini	Mark II 1000 Traveller (metal)	1967	1969
Austin Mini Cooper	Mark II 998cc saloon	1967	1969
Morris Mini Cooper	Mark II 998cc saloon	1967	1969
Austin Mini Cooper 'S'	Mark II 1275cc saloon	1967	1970
Morris Mini Cooper 'S'	Mark II 1275cc saloon	1967	1970
Austin Mini	Van 1000	1967	1969
Morris Mini	Van 1000	1967	1969



Austin Mini	Pickup 1000	1967	1969
Morris Mini	Pickup 1000	1967	1969
Mini 850	Saloon	1969	1974
Mini 1000	Saloon	1969	1974
Mini Clubman	1000 saloon	1969	1974
Mini Clubman	1000 estate car	1969	1974
Mini 1275GT	Saloon	1969	1974
Mini Cooper 'S' Mark III	1275cc saloon	1970	1971
Mini	850 Van	1969	1974
Mini 1000	Van	1969	1974
Mini 850	Pickup	1969	1974
Mini 1000	Pickup	1969	1974
Mini 850	Saloon	1974	1979
Mini 1000	Saloon	1974	1979
Mini Clubman	1000 saloon	1974	1980
Mini Clubman	1000 estate car	1974	1980
Mini 1275GT	Saloon	1974	1980
Mini 850	Van	1974	1983
Mini 1000	Van	1974	1983
Mini 850	Pickup	1974	1980
Mini 1000	Pickup	1974	1983
Mini Clubman	1100 saloon	1975	1980
Mini Clubman	1100 estate car	1975	1980
Mini 1000 Special	Limited edition	1976	1976
Mini 1100 Special	Limited edition 20th anniversary	1979	1979
Mini 850 City	Saloon	1979	1980
Mini 850 Super De Luxe	Saloon	1979	1980
Mini 1000	Super Saloon	1979	1980
Mini 1000 City	Saloon	1980	1982
Mini 1000 HL	Saloon	1980	1982
Mini 1000 HL	Estate car	1980	1982
Mini 1000 City E	Saloon	1982	1988
Mini 1000 HLE	Saloon	1982	1982
Mini 1000 Mayfair	Saloon	1982	1992
Mini Sprite	Limited Edition	1983	1983
Mini 25	Limited Edition 25th anniversary	1984	1984
Mini Ritz	Limited Edition	1985	1985
Mini Chelsea	Limited Edition	1986	1986
Mini Piccadilly	Limited Edition	1986	1986
Mini Park Lane	Limited Edition	1987	1987
Mini Advantage	Limited Edition	1987	1987
Mini 1000 City	Saloon	1988	1982
Mini Red Hot	Limited Edition	1988	1988
Mini Jet Black	Limited Edition	1988	1988
Mini Designer	Limited Edition	1988	1988
Mini Sky	Limited Edition	1988	1988
Mini Rose	Limited Edition	1988	1988
Mini Racing	Limited Edition	1988	1988
Mini Flame	Limited Edition	1988	1988
Mini Thirty	Limited Edition 30th anniversary	1989	1989
ERA Mini 1275 Turbo	Special build	1989	1990
Mini Checkmate	Limited Edition	1990	1990
Mini Racing Green	Limited Edition	1990	1990
Mini Flame Red	Limited Edition	1990	1990



Mini Studio 2	Limited Edition	1990	1990
Mini Cooper SE (RSP)	Limited Edition	1990	1990
Mini Cooper	Carburettor engine	1990	1991
Mini Neon	Limited Edition	1991	1991
Mini Cabriolet Lamm	Limited Edition	1991	1991
Mini Cooper 1.3i	Fuel injection engine	1991	1996
Mini British Open Classic	Limited Edition	1992	1992
Mini Italian Job	Limited Edition	1992	1992
Mini Cooper 1.3 Si	Limited Edition (John Cooper)	1992	1996
Mini Sprite	1275cc saloon	1992	1996
Mini Mayfair	1275cc saloon	1992	1996
Mini Cabriolet	1275cc	1993	1996
Mini Rio	Limited Edition	1993	1993
Mini Tahiti	Limited Edition	1993	1993
Mini 35	Limited Edition 35th anniversary	1994	1994
Mini Cooper Monte Carlo	Limited Edition	1994	1994
Mini Cooper Grand Prix	Limited Edition (John Cooper)	1994	1996
Mini Sidewalk	Limited Edition	1995	1995
Mini Cooper 'S'	Limited Edition	1995	1995
Mini Equinox	Limited Edition	1996	1996
Mini Cooper 35	Limited Edition	1996	1996
Mini 1.3i	Front mounted radiator	1996	2000
Mini Cooper	Front mounted radiator	1996	2000
Mini Cooper with Sports pack	Front mounted radiator	1996	2000
Mini Paul Smith	Limited Edition	1998	1998
Mini Cooper Sports	Limited Edition	1998	1998
Mini Forty	Limited Edition 40th Anniversary	1999	1999
Mini Cooper LE	Limited Edition (John Cooper)	1999	1999
Mini Se7en	Classic finale	2000	2000
Mini Cooper	Classic finale	2000	2000
Mini Cooper Sport	Classic finale	2000	2000

Recent individual Minis			
Hot Rod	Unique performance one-off	1998	1998
Mini Limo	Luxury specification inc 1 st Mini disc	1998	1998
Paul Smith	Unique one-off with multiple stripes	1998	1998
David Bowie Mini	Chromed plated for reflection	2000	2000
Kate Moss Mini	Unique one-off with spider's webs	2000	2000
Natasha Caine Mini	Black with gold bullion (Italian Job)	2000	2000
Time Machine Mini	Covered with cog images	2000	2000



8. UK Limited/Special Editions

The concept of the special/limited edition was optimised best with a sequence of themed specials that successfully continued throughout the second half of the Mini's career.

MINI	Launched	No. Made	Price
Mini 1000 Special LE	Jan '76	3000	£1,406
Mini 1100 Special LE (20th)	Aug '79	5000	£3,300
Mini Sprite	Oct '83	2500	£3,334
Mini '25' (Silver Jubilee)	June '84	5000	£3,865
Mini Ritz	June '85	3725	£3,798
Mini-The Chelsea	Jan '86	1500	£3,898
Mini Piccadilly	June '86	2500	£3,928
Mini Park Lane	Jan '87	1500	£4,193
Mini Advantage	25 May '87	2500	£4,286
Mini Red Hot/Jet Black	12 Jan '88	2000	£4,382
Mini Designer	15 Jun '88	2000	£4,654
Mini Rose/Sky	25 Jan '89	1000	£4,695
Mini Racing/Flame	25 Jan '89	2000	£4,795
Mini Thirty	14 Jun '89	3000	£5,599
Mini Racing/Flame/Checkmate	2 Feb '90	2500	£5,455
Mini Studio 2	12 Jun '90	2000	£5,375
Mini Cooper (re-intro model)	10 Jul '90	1000	£6,995
Mini Neon	21 Feb '91	1500	£5,570
Mini Cabriolet (Lamm)	23 Jun '91	75	£12,250
Mini British Open Classic	2 June '92	1000	£7,195
Mini Italian Job	20 Oct '92	1750	£5,995
Mini Rio	16 June '93	750	£5,495
Mini Tahiti	6 Oct '93	500	£5,795
Mini 35	22 June '94	1000	£5,695
Mini Cooper Monte Carlo LE	20 July '94	200	£7,995
Mini Sidewalk	9 June '95	1000	£5,895
Mini Equinox	24 April '96	750	£6,195
Mini Cooper 35 LE	14 May '96	200	£8,195
Paul Smith Mini LE	25 March 1998	300	£10,225
Mini Cooper LE	21 April 1998	100	£10,525
Mini 40 LE	4 March 1999	250	£10,995



9. Mini's major success on the Monte Carlo rally

Reg. No.	Driver and co-driver	Car No.	Position attained
1960			
618AOG	Peter Riley/Rupert Jones	110	23rd o/all
619AOG	Tommy Wisdom/Jack Hay	299	55th o/all
TMO561	Don Morley/Eric Morley	263	33rd o/all
TMO560	Alec Pitts/Tony Ambrose	284	73rd o/all
1962			
737ABL	Pat Moss/Ann Wisdom	304	26th o/all, 1st Ladies, 7th in class
363DOC	Rupert Jones/Phillip Morgan	97	77 o/all
1963			
977ARX	Rauno Aaltonen/Tony Ambrose	288	3rd o/all, 1st in class
407ARX	Paddy Hopkirk/Jack Scott	66	6th o/all, 2nd in class
737ABL	Pauline Mayham/Val Domleo	58	28th o/all, 4th in class
477BBL	Logan Morrison/Brian Culcheth	155	44th o/all, 1st in class
1964			
33 EJB	Paddy Hopkirk/Henry Liddon	37	1st o/all, 1st in class
570FMO	Timo Makinen/Patrick Vanson	182	4th o/all, 2nd in class
569FMO	Rauno Aaltonen/Tony Ambrose	105	7th o/all, 3rd in class
447BBL	Raymond Baxter/Ernie McMillen	39	43rd o/all, 2nd in class
1965			
AJB44B	Timo Makinen/Paul Easter	52	1st o/all, 1st in class
CRX91B	Paddy Hopkirk/Henry Liddon	56	26th o/all, 1st in class
CRX90B	Don Morley/Eric Morley	72	27th o/all, 2nd in class
1966			
GRX555D	Timo Makinen/Paul Easter	2	(1st o/all) disqualified
GRX55D	Rauno Aaltonen/Tony Ambrose	242	(2nd o/all) disqualified
GRX5D	Paddy Hopkirk/Henry Liddon	230	(3rd o/all) disqualified
1967			
LBL6D	Rauno Aaltonen/Henry Liddon	177	1st o/all
LBL666D	Paddy Hopkirk/Ron Crellin	205	6th o/all, 5th in class
LBL606D	Tony Fall/Raymond Joss	32	10th o/all
HJB656D	Simo Lampinen/Mike Wood	178	15th o/all
LBL66D	Timo Makinen/Paul Easter	144	41st o/all
1968			
ORX7F	Rauno Aaltonen/Henry Liddon	18	3rd o/all, 1st Category
ORX707F	Tony Fall/Mike Wood	185	4th o/all, 2nd Category
ORX777F	Paddy Hopkirk/Ron Crellin	87	5th o/all, 3rd Category
ORX77F	Timo Makinen/Paul Easter	7	55th o/all
1994			
K33EJB	Philippe/Francine Camandona	40	47th o/all, 3rd in Class
L33EJB	Paddy Hopkirk/Ron Crellin	37	52nd o/all, 4th in Class
1996			
D555GRX	Tony Dron/Alistair Douglas	113	69th o/all, 2nd GpA in Class
L408AUE	Keith Bird/Rob Dyson	111	87th o/all
1997			
572ETX95	Frederic Vie/Lionel Curat	223	54th o/all, 3rd GpN in Class
P246WFH	Dave Paveley/Andrew Bull	222	62nd o/all, 4th GpN in Class



10. The Italian Job Film

Ask anyone what they remember about the film 'The Italian Job' and without fail they will recount Mini's leaping from roof tops, driving through tunnels and along pavements, and trundling down endless flights of steps.

In spite of a mixed reception from the critics, the film was immensely popular with the viewing public, offering just the right balance of drama, comedy and action. But the thing that had the greatest impact of all, and made The Italian Job so memorable was the quality of the stunt driving which gave the Mini a characteristic cheekiness that has lasted to this day.

The groundwork for The Italian Job began in the spring of 1968 with much emphasis for the script being placed on the patriotism with British criminal brains pitched against the might of the Italian Mafia.

Although the car chase sequences made the Mini an obvious British candidate for the part, this very nearly did not happen. Fiat were keen to sponsor the film and it was only after some very persuasive bargaining that B.M.C. agreed to a limited sponsorship package in the form of six new Austin Mini Cooper S's, two of each in red, white and blue (all monotone). In all fourteen Minis were used, not forgetting four E type Jaguars, an Aston Martin DB4, one Lamborghini Miura, six Alfa Romeo Giulias, plus a host of other mixed vehicles. The Minis used were all Mk 1s.

On delivery to Blenheim Motors, in Queens Grove, St. John's Wood, London, work quickly got under way preparing the Minis for the gruelling stunt work that lay ahead. Interiors were stripped and special seats were installed, as well as reinforcing roll cages for extra safety. The stunt driving was the responsibility of Remy Julienne and his team (L'Equipe Remy Julienne). He personally supervised all of the vehicle modifications.

As for the exterior of the Minis, the brief was to make them look sporty but not like boy racers, Minilite wheels were supplied in large quantities with the same company also making the sump guards that were to prove their worth time and time again. The addition of spotlight clusters completed the desired appearance. One thing that was not modified was the engines, which were all standard 1275cc units.

Filming commenced in August 1968 with the prison scenes being shot in Ireland very early on. This was to be Noel Coward's last film and his diary records how much he enjoyed the witty script. Meanwhile on the motor vehicle front the location teams were also hard at work.

Whilst one location unit was busy pushing gutted Mini saloons out of a coach in the Italian Alps at Aosta, another was shooting stunt driving footage at Crystal Palace.

Ramp crash scenes were filmed for each of the three cars but only those showing a red Mini saloon and a blue Cooper S were retained after editing. For these shots Remy Julienne had the windscreens replaced with Perspex ones and the interior cleared completely. The reason for this was that he did not want to risk being hurt by anything flying around inside the cockpit once impact had taken place.

With regards to the filming in Italy there are some interesting stories behind what are now familiar scenes. Right at the beginning of the film we see Rossano Brazzi sent to oblivion in his Lamborghini Miura. The car itself was only a few weeks old and cost £11,000 - a fortune in 1968. Rather than wreck such an expensive prop, a lookalike was fabricated to make the scene appear authentic. However David Salamone, a specialist in film location work who's previous film exploits were 'Robbery', 'Grand Prix' and 'Le Mans', recalls that it was often cheaper to buy a rough second-hand car and give it a new coat of paint, rather than build a replica in the workshop.



Shooting the demise of the three beautiful sports cars was well rehearsed but did not go quite according to plan. As the Aston Martin was pushed over the side of the mountain pass, the special effects charges inside it exploded prematurely, causing the camera crew to dive for cover. With only one car and no film of its final journey, a crisis developed. Getting a replacement from England would take several days and cost vast sums in lost filming time. Improvisation was called for and twenty-four hours later the scene was completed with a heavily disguised Lancia playing the part of the unfortunate Aston Martin.

Turin was the setting for most of the Mini stunt work. Driving through the interior hallways and quadrangles was made difficult by the lack of space. A number of the planned stunts were dropped as being unworkable. One of the early scenes shows the Minis negotiating some steps with a very tight left turn on the landing below. Those of you with eagle eyes will witness the driver's door of the red Mini fly open just as it goes off camera. That was certainly not in the script!

The roof jumping sequence, which was only given seconds of screen time, took two weeks to rehearse. A local airfield was used to perfect the correct angles of the ramps that would enable three Minis to leap more than thirty feet with very little braking distance on the other side. When the big day came everyone involved gave it 110 per cent with the result that all of the cars missed the landing ramp and two had to be retired with distorted roofs!

Many films have scenes added or changed in the middle of shooting and *The Italian Job* was no exception. Several days were spent filming an ice rink sequence showing the Cooper S's doing formation handbrake turns. The effect was extremely picturesque but the piece ended up on the cutting room floor as being too contrived and not in the true spirit of what was supposed to be a getaway.

Perhaps the strangest location used was the roof of the Aeronautical Museum. Although vast, driving on its steep and highly curved surfaces was extremely hazardous, giving only a limited horizon that often concealed a seventy-foot drop. Traffic jam sequences in Turin were provided courtesy of some three to four hundred extras, most of whom it seems owned Fiat 500s!

The sewer scenes were filmed in Coventry where a new sewer was being laid that was about a mile in length and just sufficiently wide enough to accommodate the Minis plus at a squeeze the police Alfa Romeo. An attempt was made at driving one of the Minis through a complete arc inside the tunnel. Sadly the diameter was not quite broad enough and the car ended wheels up. Another problem encountered was the lighting. Ordinary car headlamps and spotlamps were just not bright enough, merely appearing as a dim blur. To overcome this the spotlight clusters were replaced by an array of sun film lights. David Salamone drove the camera vehicle, which was a Mini Moke.

Everyone likes a bit of a cliff-hanger for an ending, but this one takes it quite literally leaving the audience forever wondering. The truth is that it was not intended to be this way. Troy Kennedy Martin's original story ended with our heroes reaching Switzerland and Charlie Croker depositing the gold in a bank and getting the girl as well. The twist comes when a bank official informs him that the bank manager wished to extend his personal thanks for making such a shrewd choice of bank. Nothing wrong in that you might think except that the bank manager turns out to be the Mafia boss!

The reason for the change in ending is that halfway through filming Paramount sensed that they were on to a winner and so decided to make a sequel. Unfortunately agreeing a timetable when all the key actors would be available proved impossible and so the idea was shelved indefinitely.



11. Interesting facts about the Mini

1. The Mini is a motoring legend and has been in production during the 50's, 60's, 70's, 80's, 90's and into the 21st century ... effectively six decades!
2. Sir Alec Issigonis, the designer of the Mini, was also responsible for much of the design work on Britain's first million selling car the Morris Minor.
3. The Mini was at one stage going to be called the Austin Newmarket.
4. In March 1957, less than 30 months before the Mini was unveiled to the public, Leonard Lord authorised Issigonis to start on preliminary designs.
5. The Longbridge Mini was launched with the name Austin Se7en and the Cowley produced version was called the Morris Mini Minor.
6. The purchase price of the '59 Mini was £496.95 including tax when it was launched to the public on 26th August 1959.
7. The universal joints used in the Mini were produced from a design used for submarine conning-tower control gear. Today most of the world's front-wheel-drive cars employ this type of constant velocity joint.
8. The first 'mass produced' Mini, 621 AOK, now part of the British Motor Industry Heritage Trust's collection at the Heritage Motor Centre, Gaydon, Warwickshire, was hand assembled by Longbridge foreman Albert Green in just seven hours.
9. By 1960, 400 Minis were being produced each day at Longbridge while the night shift which assembled 180 Minis consisted of just 57 men.
10. After just three years of production, on 12th December 1962, the 500,000th Mini rolled off the production line.
11. The first million Minis were produced by 1965, the second million in 1969, the third million in 1972.
12. The Mini was the first British car to win the European Rally Championship.
13. The late James Hunt's first ever racing car was a Mini in 1966.
14. Niki Lauda's first racing success was behind the wheel of a Mini Cooper in a hillclimb and he recently became the owner of two Austrian Mini Cooper.
15. The Mini is still one of the shortest production cars at fractionally over 10ft long and inspired the "SHORT VEHICLE" sticker.
16. The Mini has won the Monte Carlo Rally three times (1964, 1965 & 1967) and more recently the 1990 & 1991 Pirelli Classic Marathon. In 1994, the Mini returned to the Monte with Paddy Hopkirk at the wheel - again as car No.37 and this time as L33EJB.
17. The original Mini Cooper concept was inspired by then World Champion F1 racing constructor, John Cooper.
18. The best year for sales was 1971 at 318,475 cars.
19. The Mini has been made in different forms in Portugal, Australia, New Zealand, Italy, Belgium, South Africa, Chile and Venezuela.
20. The record for a Mini cram was 26 (!). This event happened on the Noel Edmonds Late Late Breakfast Show in May 1986.
21. The popular Mini Cooper was re-launched on 7 July 1990 and subsequently fitted with fuel injection on 29 October 1991.
22. The legendary Mini was voted "The greatest car of all time" by Autocar & Motor magazine, in March 1991.
23. The Mini was the first ever car to lend its name to a skirt length. Sixties fashion designer Mary Quant pioneered a short skirt, known later as the 'Mini skirt'. Jean Shrimpton & Twiggy, the super models of the day, came into prominence modelling the daring design.
24. Joanne Westlake was the first person to be born in a Mini.
25. Ringo Starr had his Radford Mini converted into a hatchback - so he could transport his drum kit around.
26. BMC had a hatchback mini-car ready for production long before the Fiesta or Metro arrived. Designed by Issigonis and code-named 9X, it was shelved as a Mini replacement in 1968.
27. At the peak of its production, the Mini used 2.4 million wheel nuts a year. There are just over 3000 screws, nuts and bolts in a Mini.
28. It is believed that more British people have either learned to drive in or had a Mini as their first car, than any other car.
29. The Mini is one of only a few cars to have been listed in the dictionary as a generic description - **Mini** (mi-ni) 1964. **a.** Shortened f. minicar. **b.** Shortened f. miniskirt 1966. **Mini-**, comb. **f.** MINIATURE **a.**, denoting things that are very small of their kind.
30. In 1959, the Longbridge assembly line was 220 yards long. There were 57 workstations on the assembly line. Each task took 2 minutes 24 seconds, making a little over 2 hours for each car. With production of the final 41-year-old classic Mini at Longbridge, it is perhaps conveniently ironic that the date should be 4/10/00
31. The final production total of Mini's produced is 5,387,862 cars.



32. Stardom has come to the Mini many times; following its amazing David vs Goliath success in the 1964 Monte Carlo rally, the Mini was immediately flown home to appear on the top Sunday night TV programme at the London Palladium. Five years later the abilities of the small car upstaged Michael Caine, in the popular Turin gold bullion car chase film -'The Italian Job'.
33. The Mini has used more SU carburettors than any other car in the 90-year history of SU, taking over 5.5 million from the SU factory in Erdington.
34. The Mini has been in production for well over a third of the entire history of the UK motor industry, which had its centenary in 1996.
35. What clinched the success for the Mini was the irresistible charisma of the car - its cheeky charm.
36. One of the more improbable claims that have been made for the Mini was that it caused the collapse of the British motor-cycle industry.
37. Up to the Mini's launch, the motor-cycle and sidecar combination had been a familiar method of transport for the less well-to-do.
38. Issigonis could not see why it was impossible to build a 'proper' car that would be economical, with a wheel at each corner and seats for four adults.
39. Issigonis had plenty of practical engineering experience but no real academic training. His principal skill was a fertile imagination and a fluid hand that sketched idea after idea with a clarity that has been compared to that of Leonardo da Vinci.
40. Never before had there been a transverse engine driving the front wheels with a gearbox in the sump.
41. Never before had there been ten inch wheels that gave anything like an acceptable ride. Dunlop were persuaded to make them, with the harsh ride being resolved by involving Alex Moulton (of bicycle fame) into designing a rubber suspension.
42. The Mini's manoeuvrability made it possible to park the 10ft car in an 11ft 6in space. The smart set felt fine in their Jaguars, but foolish when they could not park anywhere near the Kings Road.
43. The Mini's supremacy at darting through traffic and diving into the kerbside gave rise to the impudent rear-screen sticker: 'You've just been Mini'd'.
44. Lord Snowdon and Princess Margaret adored their Mini. The Queen was televised driving one in Windsor Park.
45. Sir Alec was obsessed with the idea of getting the maximum usable space out of the minimum (hence the origin of the Mini name) overall dimensions.
46. The automotive world learned so much from the Mini story. It learned that a car does not need a huge engine to be a sports car, and that a sports car does not need to be large to have tremendous traction and stability.
47. The front-drive hot-shoe specials of today all owe their existence to the conversion process started by the Mini - the belief that rapid and dramatic transport was no longer the prerogative of the rich.
48. The Mini Seven Club is the longest running racing club series.
49. The size of the Mini's road wheels was fixed when Issigonis said to Dunlop chief engineer, Tom French: 'Give me wheels this size'. French measured the space between his outstretched hands. It was 10".
50. When the Mini first went racing, its tiny wheels made the tyres hotter than on any Formula One car - well above boiling point.
51. Souped-up Minis were known as 'Ministrones'. Driving schools using the little car were, of course, 'Miniscules'.
52. At Battersea Technical College, the young Alec Issigonis failed his maths exam - three times.
53. BMC works drivers initially thought of a Mini drive as a punishment. But after Rauno Aaltonen won the 1963 Alpine Rally in a 1071cc Cooper, everyone wanted to abandon their Austin Healeys.
54. Issigonis and Downton built a specially tuned Mini for their friend Enzo Ferrari. He sent it back because it was right hand drive (but did subsequently own LHD Minis for his amusement).
55. During the golden years of 1965/66/67 there were 22 victories for the Mini in the major international rallies. Rauno Altonen was the biggest single winner for the BMC team. He took eight victories.
56. The Automotive Products automatic gearbox for the Mini was the only one in the world for a car under 1300cc with four forward speeds, and is still a popular option on the Sprite and Mayfair models.
57. The Mark II Mini involved the introduction of a switch panel brought three inches nearer to the driver. The problem was that once strapped inside the now compulsory seat belts only an ape could reach the switches (later fitment of inertia-reel belts resolved the issue).
58. The Twini Mini with an engine at both ends created a 2.5 litre car with 175bhp and wheelspin on all four wheels.
59. Graham Hill once owned a Mini - the Speedwell Mini. His Speedwell Tuning Company tweaked the 1275cc engine up to an alleged 105bhp.
60. Peter Sellers Radford Mini that starred in the film 'A Shot in the Dark' featured a wicker pattern down both sides created by carefully hand painting 2000 lines.
61. There are 469 Mini clubs in the UK and 263 more around the world.



12. A selection of Famous Mini Owners

The Beatles (John Lennon, Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr & George Harrison)
Peter Sellers
Britt Ekland
Lord Snowdon
Princess Alexander
Jeffrey Archer
Charles Aznavour
Enzo Ferrari (had three)
Brigitte Bardot
Twiggy (Purple automatic)
Dame Margot Fonteyn
Prince Michael of Kent
Steve McQueen
David Niven
King Hussein of Jordan
Graham Hill
Jochen Rindt
John Surtees
Denny Hulme
Jackie Stewart (F3 Cooper World Champion - with 'A' Series engine)
Bruce McLaren (raced the first NZ Mini Cooper)
Ron Dennis (bought John Cooper's own red Mini Cooper with black roof!)
Jack Brabham
Niki Lauda
James Hunt
Ken Tyrrell
Paul Newman
Dudley Moore
Norman Wisdom
Juliette Greco
Jean-Paul Belmondo
Spencer Davis (Group - popular music band song 'Keep on Running')
Alan Freeman
'Diddy' David Hamilton (DJ)
Spike Milligan
Nick Mason
Joanna Lumley
Rick Parfitt - Status Quo
Mary Quant (who went on to design the Mini skirt)
Clint Eastwood (had a Mini Countryman)
Judy Geeson (1275GT)
Patricia Hayes
Zandra Rhodes
Ray Boulting (had green & black vertical stripes)
Patrick Lichfield (started his photographic career in 1962, with a Mini Cooper)
Tommy Steele (owns a green 23 year old Mini Clubman called Jock)
Anthea Turner

And many, many more. Indeed, most have a Mini story. So many people were introduced to the Mini as part of their first motoring acquaintance, which is what explains most people's affections to the Mini!



13. Sir Alec Issigonis CBE FRS

Alexander Arnold Constantine Issigonis was born on 18 November 1906 in Smyrna (now Izmir) in Turkey. He was the only child of a marine engine designer of Greek descent but British nationality, and a German mother.

Sir Alec was therefore also British, a fact of which he was always very proud. From a very early age he demonstrated a consuming interest in all things mechanical, especially engines, but he was not to see his first motorcar until he was 16 years of age. In 1922 when the Turks re-took Smyrna from the Greeks he and his parents were evacuated by the Royal Navy to Malta, where his father died. His mother, now almost penniless, having lost everything in the evacuation, brought her son to the UK. Sir Alec never went to school (he always had private tutors) and although was 'down' for an English public school, this was now out of the question for financial reasons and he enrolled in a three-year engineering course at Battersea Polytechnic. When he left the polytechnic his mother decided that he must do the grand tour of Europe before seeking a job and becoming the family breadwinner.

This tour was accomplished in a Singer 10, which was effectively Sir Alec's introduction to the automobile. He first job in 1928 was as senior and only draughtsman with a small London firm developing an automatic clutch. The Humber Company showed an interest in this development and in 1934 he joined the Humber staff in Coventry. Two years later he joined Morris Motors at Cowley Oxford, to be responsible for the development of independent suspension systems under Robert Boyle, the Chief Engineer.

During the war years of 1939-45 when the factory was wholly committed to aircraft repair, Sir Alec was employed on a variety of prototype military equipment, much of which never went into production, but at the same time he was turning his thoughts to the design of a completely new car, and with the end of hostilities he was given the go ahead. He was now Chief Engineer of Morris Motors and what he had in mind was a small four-door saloon which would have sophisticated handling but which would be cheap to buy and run. This was contrary to the then European and British trend towards large American type cars and the result was the Morris Minor, which appeared at the 1948 Motor show.

The Minor was so successful it became the first British car whose sales passed the one million mark and it continued in production for 23 years. After the merger in 1952 of Austin and Nuffield, Sir Alec left the newly-formed British Motor Corporation and joined Alvis, where he designed a large rear wheel drive car with an entirely new suspension system, which for financial reasons was never produced. Returning to BMC in 1956 he was working on a new development on front wheel drive cars when the Suez crisis erupted causing petrol rationing. Demand for small economical cars soared and was only met at this time by small two cylinder imported vehicles. Early in 1957 Sir Leonard Lord ordered Sir Alec to do something about it.

Working with a small team never more than eight in number, he had a prototype running within a year. Lord having ridden in it demanded production within 12 months. Sir Alec is said to have replied "Sir Leonard, this will cost many millions of pounds", to which Lord is said to have retorted, "Don't you worry about that. I'll sign the cheques, you get on with getting the thing to work". The result was the launch in 1959 of the Mini. The car with which the name Issigonis will always be associated. Now 41 years and more than five million Minis later, the car is still one of the most popular ever built. It was followed by other cars from the same brilliant man; the 1100, the 1800 and the Maxi. He was appointed Technical Director of BMC in 1961 and Director of Research and Development, British Leyland Austin Morris limited in 1969. When he retired in 1971, he was retained by the Company as Advanced Design Consultant to work on future products.

Sir Alec has received much recognition of his genius and his contribution to automobile engineering. In 1964 he was made CBE and in 1966 was awarded the Leverhulme Gold Medal of the Royal Society, of which he was made a Fellow in 1967. He received his knighthood in 1969 and was also the recipient of honorary degrees from a number of universities.



14. John Cooper CBE

John Cooper, whose cars won the Formula 1 World Championship for Constructors in 1959 and 1960, was a close associate of Issigonis, who he'd raced at events like the Brighton Speed Trials. John knew that the Mini was under development and always knew that there was potential for a faster variant.

Issigonis had developed the Mini specifically as a "people's car" and Cooper had to go over Sir Alec's head, to George Harriman, to get agreement for a trial production run of 1000 versions of his sporty version of the Mini. The first Mini Cooper appeared in October 1961 and featured a twin-carb, 55bhp/997cc version of the humble Mini engine. It was an instant track success and paved the way for a succession of even more powerful models, like the 1963 Cooper S, which offered 70bhp from its 1071cc engine.

The hat trick of Monte Carlo victories and countless circuit racing championships during the 60's and 70's were testimony to the little car's amazing abilities and sales rocketed as a result. More than 145,000 original Coopers and Cooper Ss were made, until a decision by Lord Stokes was made to replace the Cooper models with the 1275GT in 1970.

The popularity of the Mini Cooper returned to the roads in July 1990, when Rover Group re-introduced the Cooper to great effect. The re-kindled passion for the Cooper enhanced sales and has remained a popular variant of the range ever since.

One notable benefit of the re-introduced Coopers, was the return of Paddy Hopkirk in the Monte Carlo rally in 1994, 30 years after the 'David and Goliath' victory. This initiative permitted the Mini to be represented in motorsport competition, in its fuel-injected form, competing again successfully in international events

After many versions, LE and SE variants, it seems fitting that the last Mini to be produced would be a Red Mini Cooper Sport. It is symbolic because of the many sales, race and rally successes achieved by this amazing small car, named after a man who came to represent British performance and success - Cooper.

15. The venerable 'A' Series engine

The 'A' Series has been used in the Mini exclusively throughout its 41 year life, but it was introduced by BMC (British Motor Corporation) in 1950 with the Austin A30 and then subsequently used in the Morris Minor (another Issigonis design) and the "frogeye" Austin-Healey Sprite.

The engine was designed with heart-shaped combustion chambers, from Harry Weslake patents, which provided swirl to direct the incoming charge at the spark plug. It featured big valves, a heavy flywheel and although the stroke was relatively long in the British tradition inherited from the old Treasury Horse Power rating, it was a short engine that would fit easily under the bonnet. When introduced into the Mini, it was fitted transversely and mounted onto of its own gearbox with which it shared its lubricating oil. The stroke was shortened, 62.9mm x 68.26 making 848cc and producing 34bhp at 5500rpm with an SU carburettor.

The left side was now 'the front', exposing the distributor through the radiator grille and the transverse installation gave great benefits in space utilisation, transmission refinement, handling and roadholding. These in turn brought demands for more speed, answered in 1961 with the Mini Cooper, which retained almost the same bore and increased the stroke with its 62.43 x 81.28 997cc unit, now producing 55bhp at 6,000rpm helped by the fitment of two SU carburettors.

Many variants of the A Series have been evolved from the original, including the A Plus that powered the Metro and the fuel injection that meets today's stringent demands of today's legislation. The A Series has also powered the MG Midget, MG 1100-1300, Riley Elf & Kestrel, Wolseley Hornet & 1100-1300, Marina, MG & Austin Metro, Maestro & Montego.



16. Final Mini specification

The Mini was substantially updated on the 1st October 1996, the most radical package of improvements were incorporated into the Mini to perpetuate its life until now.

These featured significantly improved specification levels and extensive engineering changes providing greater technical refinement. The changes included a comprehensive new safety package, which included a driver's airbag, stringent new emissions legislation and pass-by noise regulations.

The multi-point fuel injection uses two injectors carefully tuned to the A-series siamesed inlet port design. They are controlled by the sophisticated MEMS 2J electronic engine management system used on Rover's KV6 and MGF VVC, giving an improved torque curve which enabled the introduction of a higher final-drive ratio for more relaxed cruising at motorway speeds.

Another significant technical change was the repositioning of the radiator to the front of the engine bay ensuring compliance with the pass-by noise legislation and enabling major gains in refinement at all engine and road speeds.

A driver's airbag was fitted as standard and seat belt pre-tensioners and side door intrusion beams. Easing access to the rear seats were new 'break-back' front seat squabs, which could be released to fold forward, in addition to offering the normal reclining adjustment. Based on the front seat design of the Rover 200, the squabs taper towards the top, enhancing the perception of interior spaciousness - enthusiasts will also find them reminiscent of the original 1960's Mini Cooper optional reclining seat design, with modern levels of comfort. A further detail improvement that will be welcomed by owners is a new two-speed heater fan, allowing more precise control of heating and ventilation.

Mini was designed in an era when legislation was scarcely more than compliance with Construction and Use Regulations; its 'A' Series engine had been designed even earlier. It is a tribute to all engineers involved then and now that the Mini has been able to meet the very demanding emissions standards in addition to the new pass-by noise requirements. Significant engineering changes have been made to achieve these environmental standards, making the latest cars the most technically sophisticated production Minis ever.

Another contributory state-of-the-art feature is the fitment of a direct (distributorless) electronic ignition system. This uses quad dry-coil twin-spark technology, triggering each spark twice - once on the compression stroke and once on the exhaust stroke - so that the high tension voltage does not have to be switched between cylinders. The cylinder block was modified to delete the distributor housing, redesign the oil galleries and also to re-locate the oil filter (deleting the external pipework). This allowed the radiator to be moved from its traditional side mounting to a more conventional position in front of the engine as part of the pass-by noise reduction programme.

Performance and Economy

Despite being the 'cleanest' 'A' Series engine, the final spec Mini engine matches the power and torque figures of the previous Cooper unit, doing so at lower engine speeds. For lower internal noise levels, a 2.76:1 final drive ratio raises the overall gearing by 16% compared to the previous Mini Cooper and this, coupled with an inevitable weight increase of around 3.5%, means a slight reduction in 'on paper' performance.

With fourth gear now equivalent to fifth gear on many other cars and a third gear high enough to virtually achieve the 90mph maximum speed, the driving characteristics are very different. The 'overdrive' fourth gear cuts engine speed at 70mph from 3,888 rpm to 3,333 rpm for more comfortable cruising, while third gear now provides the upper range acceleration and overtaking capability.



Performance comparison with previous Mini range

	Mini/Mini Cooper 1996-2000	Mini Cooper 1995	Original Mini 1959
Cubic capacity	1275cc	1275cc	848cc
Max Power @ rpm	63Ps @ 5500	63Ps @ 5700	34Bhp @ 5500
Max Torque @ rpm	95Nm @ 3000	95Nm @ 3900	45LB FT @ 3000
0-60mph	12.2secs	11.5secs	27.1secs
Max speed	90mph	92mph	72mph
Mph/1000 rpm in 4th	21.0	18.0	14.8

Although fuel consumption fuels are formulated under ever-stringent testing conditions the fuels produced at the time provide a general idea of the gains made possible by technological improvements.

Overall fuel consumption	43.0mpg	43.0mpg	40mpg
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TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

	Mini Seven & Mini Cooper	Sports Pack equipped
Cubic capacity (cc)	1275	1275
Max power (Ps/kW EEC) @ rpm	63/46 5500	63/46 5500
Max torque (Nm EEC) @ rpm	95 3000	95 3000
Max rpm	6500	6500

Performance:

0 -60 mph	12.2	12.8
30 - 50 mph (4th)	12.5	13.7
50 - 70 mph (4th)	16.2	19.3
Maximum speed	90.0	84.0
Standing 1/4 mile	18.9	19.2
Standing 400m	18.8	19.1
Standing km	35.4	36.1

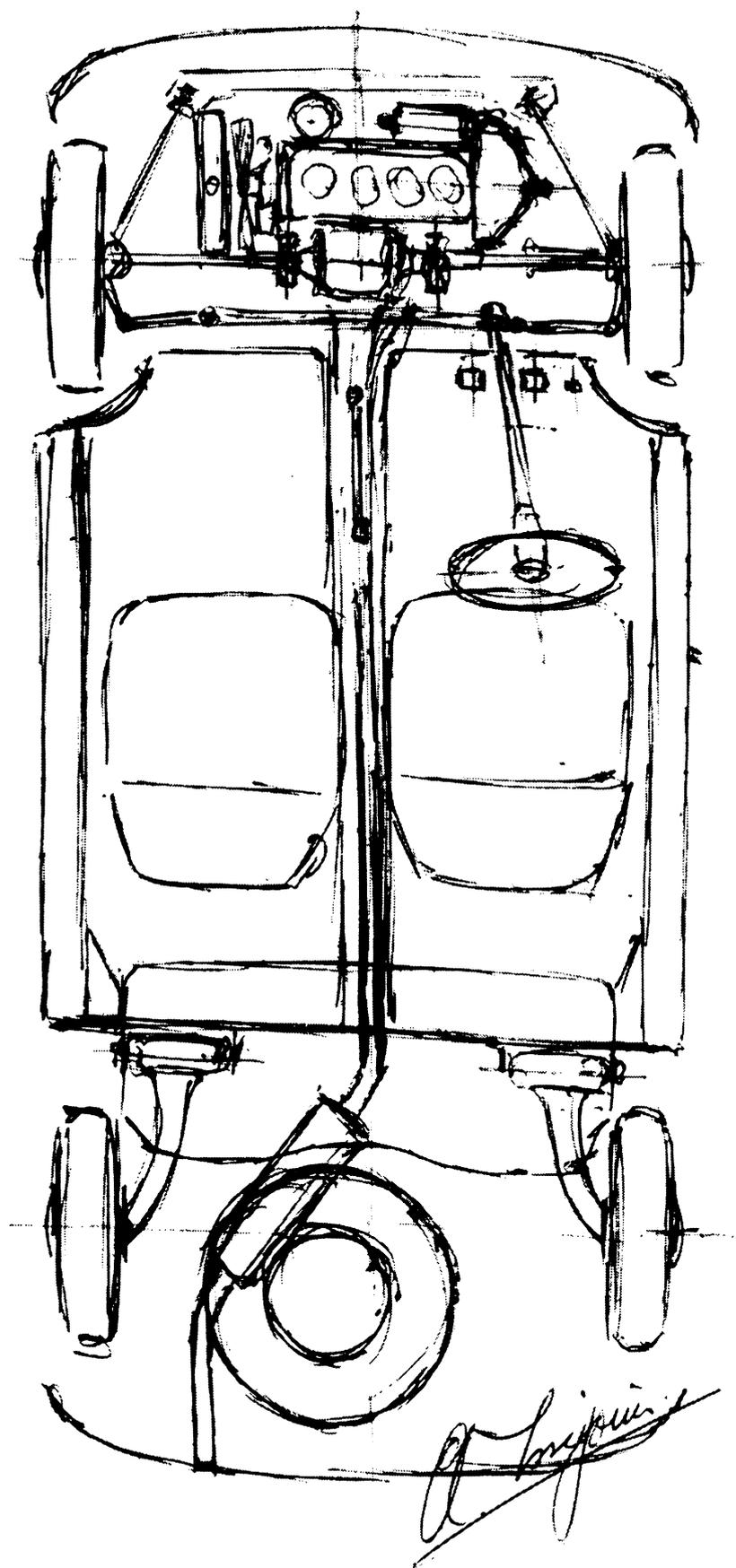
Economy - 93/116/EC:

Urban (cold) mpg (l/100km)	33.4 (8.5)	33.4 (8.5)
Extra Urban	51.8 (5.5)	51.8 (5.5)
Combined	43.0 (6.6)	43.0 (6.6)

Gearing (mph(kph)/1000 rpm):

4th	21.0 (33.7)	20.8 (33.5)
3rd	14.7 (23.7)	14.6 (23.5)
2nd	9.6 (15.4)	9.5 (15.3)
1st	5.7 (9.2)	5.7 (9.2)

Unladen weight (kg)	715-720	730
Aero drag Cd/Cda	0.49/0.80	0.54/0.90
Tyre size	145/70 R12	175/50 R13



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