

The Ogle G.T. Mini

BASED at Birds Hill, Letchworth, the firm of David Ogle Ltd. is making a determined effort to achieve a renaissance of British coachbuilding. Last year they introduced the Riley-based Ogle 1.5 which was priced out of the market, mainly because B.M.C. would not co-operate in supplying chassis parts. However, despite this, the car still sells reasonably well. The latest offering from Ogle is a G.T. version of the Mini-Minor which uses the basic chassis platform of the Mini, suitably strengthened to accept the very pretty glass-fibre coachwork manufactured by the Letchworth firm.

Unlike the Italian Motor Industry, which actively supports the specialist coachbuilders, taking it as a compliment that people want to clothe their chassis in attractive coachwork, the British Industry appears to be completely disinterested. Consequently the only marketing method open to the Ogle organisation is to fit their coachwork to an existing Mini, which means cutting the body from the chassis platform. A customer supplies his standard Mini to Ogle's and in return, for £550, gets a pretty little G.T. car. Crashed, burned or rolled cars are not particularly welcome as the chassis could possibly be twisted.

For Ogle's to purchase the necessary new parts from a B.M.C.

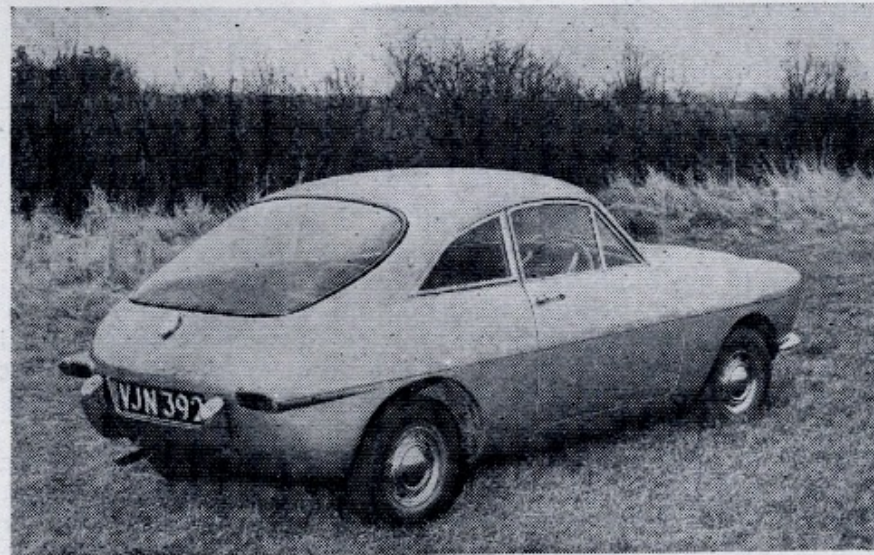


distributor (supposing they would supply them) and build up a car from scratch for a customer would cost in excess of £1,000, which once again prices the Ogle out of the market, so they have been forced to supply the body as a conversion.

The Ogle body should not be confused with the average shell, for we were able to examine and drive the prototype car, which reaches an extraordinarily high standard of design and finish. The glass-fibre bodywork is remarkably smooth and the doors and other components are both strong and excellent fits. The handling of the prototype is very similar to that of the Mini but the lowered driving position is much more pleasant. Standard fittings include twin bucket seats, a wood-rimmed dished steering wheel, 10½-gallon fuel tank, undersealing, full sound deadening, Marchal lamps, twin-tone horns, winding windows and hinged quarter-lights, remote gear shift, built-in radio aerial, and full instrumentation. Six single colours are available. Overall length is 11 ft. 2 in., height 3 ft. 11 in., and width 4 ft. 10 in.

Racing versions are being prepared which will be lighter than the normal Mini. John Whitmore has already taken delivery of a normal Ogle G.T. which he has taken to the United States, and other motoring notables are reported to be interested.

The manufacture of the Ogle G.T. Mini is indeed a brave venture which is backed by sound engineering and first-class workmanship. It deserves to succeed and we think it will.—M. L. T.



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