

# ***The ROVER 75 and MG ZT COMPANION***

*A buyers and owners guide.*

*By Colin Gray*



*Rover 75 CDTi Club SE*

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.**

Primarily, this is a collection of information that I discovered when looking for a Rover 75 to buy, coupled with my experiences of ownership in the first year. I have to acknowledge that the vast majority of information in this book was gleaned from the internet, which had been submitted by individuals and clubs, via their forums. As most of the forum users are nameless, only being identified by their user name, it is difficult to acknowledge them individually, but I am indebted to them nonetheless.

I would especially like to thank Julian from JMA –Cars in North Wales, [www.julian@jma-cars.co.uk](mailto:julian@jma-cars.co.uk), for all his advice which was freely given, the work he has done on my Rover 75, the modifications he has developed for all R40 models and the information he has supplied to the 75ZT Community [www.75ztcommunity.co.uk](http://www.75ztcommunity.co.uk) (his user name is Jules). Julian was an RAF electronics engineer and as a result, has no fear of the ‘electronics’ on 75’s and ZT’s. After leaving the RAF, he specialised in his passion for Rovers, initially the 800, but especially the R40. He has sold hundreds of Rover 75s and MG ZTs, repaired even more and has developed several modifications to overcome the few ‘trouble spots’ in these fine cars, most of which will be explained in this book. He is always willing to advise and often has desirable cars for sale, all having received the ‘Jules’ treatment before sale. He works alone, so he may be away on holiday etc; but in general he is usually at home and if not, will soon get back to you; TEL:- 01492 535020 or E-mail [julian@jmacars.co.uk](mailto:julian@jmacars.co.uk)

I must also acknowledge Trotting Mare Garage, near Wrexham, TEL:- 01978 710435 or <http://www.trottingmaregarage.co.uk>, who sold me my Rover 75 CDTi Club SE Saloon. Daniel and his team run what I would call, an old style country garage, where knowledgeable service is given at a very reasonable price. They made my purchase and part exchange a pleasure.



**My 2004 Rover 75 CDTi Club SE, purchased for £3,500 in November 2010.**

Finally, I must acknowledge the people that designed and made the R40 and all those journalists that produced reviews and road tests from 1998 to this day.

## **INTRODUCTION.**

I have written this 'companion', a guide to the Rover 75 and MG ZT from 1999 to 2005, because there is a lot of information to be found on the internet and in motoring magazines, but it is in many varied locations and takes a long time to trawl through; so hopefully this book will bring most of the information together in a single reference volume, or at least point the reader in the right direction to find out more.

My first drive was in my father's 1934 Rover 10 when I was about eleven years old and by which time I was already a keen car enthusiast. I took my test in my father's 1939 Rover 14 and used his later 1954 P4 Rover 90 before owning my own cars, among which was a 1957 Rover P4 105 S, purchased for £150 and a 1963 Rover P5 3 Litre Coupe that cost £595 in 1969. In 1973 I was given a company car and therefore didn't need a car of my own, but in the late 1980's, through to 2009, I owned several 'classic' Rovers, including Rover P4 100, Rover P5B Coupe, several Rover P6's, including 2000 TC, 3500 S, 3500 VIP and a 3500 S Crayford Estate.

After the year 2000 and because of the high penalty of fuel costs during retirement, I decided to buy new environmentally friendly small cars. Some were quite good and were well respected by media commentators, but I was never really fond of them in the same way as my old Rovers. In addition, I found that the 'after sales' service from the dealers was less than satisfactory, even when dealing with major problems whilst still under warranty. As a result, I started to look around for a second-hand car that had good parts backup, owner's club support and independent specialist mechanics. Minor 1000's, MGF's and 'classic' Rovers were all dismissed on the grounds of practicality and/or economy.

Modern Rovers, that is Rovers from 1990 to 2005, didn't appeal. They were, in the main, excellent cars, often based on Honda designs, however, they didn't have that old Rover feel, but then I started looking again at the Rover R40 75. When they were new I dismissed the 75 as too expensive, too complicated and burdened by the ownership and liquidation problems of MG Rover. However, following a search on the internet, I found that in fact this was actually a good proposition. From the launch, through to current ownership testaments, I was convinced this was the car I wanted.

Again searching the internet, I found several cars within 100 miles, but was very disappointed by my first viewing and my enthusiasm quickly waned. After a while I looked again and bought the first one on my short list from a small country garage (Trotting Mare Garage), and where I still return for the MOT and annual service. Since then I have found a lot more information, both from amateurs and specialists, on internet forums and magazine articles. I don't regret my purchase and as it happens, I now have an excellent low mileage 2004 Rover 75 Club CDTi SE manual diesel saloon. But how much easier it would have been if I had had all the information I now possess in one handy reference book.

Any prices or details quoted were correct in 2011/12 and any recommendations are purely personal and are based on my own experience; it doesn't infer that there are no alternatives, or that I have personal links with the companies/individuals mentioned, it just means I have been very pleased with the service I have received so far. If distance is a problem, a quick search on any of the 'club' websites will reveal a more convenient local 'help point' for you, complete with other personal recommendations of a job well done.

I will often use the term 'Rover 75', which in most cases will also apply to the MG ZT, and similarly I will use the term R40 (MG- Rover code for the initial Rover 75 saloon), which in most cases will apply to the R41 (MG-Rover code for the Rover 75 Tourer). The actual codes for the MG ZT and MG ZT Tourer are X10 and X11, with other 'X' variants following later on. Therefore Rover 75 or R40, as used in this book, will usually also apply to the Tourers and the MG ZT variants.

Hopefully, this book will help others, both owners and potential owners, to appreciate one of the best modern cars, whether it is the Rover 75 or the 'sportier' MG ZT, and it's British!



**Rover 75 as shown in 1998 and the Tourer version launched in 2001.**



**Rover 75 Tourer rear end.**



**MG ZT version introduced in 2001.**



**Rover 75 Mk 2, introduced in 2004.**

## **CHAPTER ONE.**

### **ROVER HISTORY BEFORE R40 ROVER 75.**

Most 'classic' Rover enthusiasts know the history behind the Rover name, but for the benefit of the younger generation and those that have only experienced Rovers made by Leyland, Austin Rover, MG Rover, BMW and Phoenix, it is worthwhile explaining how Rover came to be, what the name stood for and how it influenced the R40 range of cars known as Rover 75 and MG ZT.

Rover is one of the oldest names in the motor industry, morphing out of the earlier Starley Cycle Company, which had developed into cycles, after initially producing sewing machines. As Starley, they produced the Starley Safety Cycle, which forms the basis of the modern bicycle, that is, rear wheel driven by chain, pedals and crank. One of their model names was Rover, as in roving around on a bicycle. Subsequently, the company became known as Rover and in the early 1900's diversified into motor cycles and cars.

After a while they concentrated on cars, which were then made in Coventry. Like most similar companies of the time, they struggled to find their niche within the motor industry, with many ups and downs. However, by the late nineteen twenties they were at a cross roads; having produced a few fine models, but now suffering losses and a lacklustre model range, they needed to change course.

As luck would have it, two people joined Rover from Hillman in 1929 and 1930; their names were Spencer Wilks, who became MD and his brother Maurice Wilks, who took charge of engineering. In the middle of those depression years in Britain, they decided that quality was the key to sales, because even when money is short, there are always wealthy customers that appreciate quality products. Over the next three years they steadily improved the quality of engineering and by 1933 they had a new range of cars for the 1934 season. Basically 10, 12 and 14 horsepower saloons, with a new chassis and mechanicals, but using the then current Hillman body shell to keep development costs down. The car was made to look different from the Hillman and various 'special' bodies were also available, as was common in those days.



**Mid 1930s Rover, RSR National Rally 2011**

Up until the 1939 to 1945 war, Rover steadily improved their cars, ending up with 10, 12, 14, 16 and 20 horsepower OHV models, plus, by then, a profitable company and a well respected quality image; their slogan being 'The makers of one of Britain's fine cars'. Then the Second World War intervened, car production was stopped and Rover was involved in 'war work'. They also took over a Government 'shadow factory' in Solihull and helped develop the Whittle jet engine.



**Late 1930's Rover (RSR National Rally 2011).**

Following the war and now based in Solihull, Rover, like many others, continued with their pre-war models, but as steel was rationed and the Government wanted more exports, they cleverly decided to produce a 'Jeep' type vehicle, which became known as the Land-Rover by the 1948 launch. As it used a lot of aluminium, which wasn't rationed, they had a larger steel quota that could then be used to make cars. In 1948 they also launched their first new post-war P3 model, called Rover 75, the 75 representing 75 BHP, instead of the pre-war use of the RAC horsepower ratings of 10hp, 12hp, etc. The 75 looked like the pre-war cars, but now had independent front suspension, instead of a solid beam axle and a new IOE (inlet over exhaust) engine with a sloping head. The IOE was unusual in that it had overhead inlet valves, side exhaust valves, sloping head and a central spark plug. This cross flow arrangement gave good performance, economy and torque and was unique to Rover, although Rolls Royce/Bentley used a similar, but flat-head arrangement on their MK 6, R-Type, S1, Wraith and Cloud models of the late forties and early fifties. Some early twentieth century manufacturers had also experimented with the IOE concept.



**1948 Rover 75 P3 Model (RSR National Rally 2011).**

1949 saw the launch of the all new Rover P4 series, initially only as a Rover 75, utilising P3 mechanicals coupled to a new look, all enveloping three box body style and incorporating aluminium doors, bonnet and boot. Several variants were made over the next fifteen years, 60, 75, 80, 90, 95, 100, 105 and 110. All cars were elegant and solid, with walnut and leather interiors, and were very competitively priced. This model represented the culmination of Rover's desire to produce one of the best cars in the world, often known as 'the poor man's Rolls Royce'. Second-hand they represented good value, coupled to excellent reliability.



**My 1956 Rover 90 P4 model (similar to the 75 P4).**

1958 saw the introduction of a larger P5 model, with a unit construction body-shell which eliminated the separate chassis. 1963 saw the introduction of the P6 Rover range, which was a £10 million investment producing a completely new car, with OHC engine, all-round independent suspension, four wheel disc brakes; it was given many car of the year and safest car awards. In the meantime Land-Rover was going from strength

to strength and Rover had acquired Alvis, which produced low volume, high quality sporting cars and was very big in military vehicles, as was Land-Rover.



**My 1972 Rover P5B 3 Litre Coupe.**



**My 1971 Rover P6B 3500s.**

Rover were a very go-ahead firm during the 1950's and sixties and were never short of ideas. They produced a Jet Rover, registered and later known as JET 1, which was based on one of the first P4 Rover 75's. This car obtained the ultimate speed record for wheel driven, as opposed to thrust driven, cars in 1952, at 152 MPH on the Jabbeke Highway in Belgium. In 1963 Rover entered the jet 'Rover-BRM' in the Le Mans 24 hour race. There was no gas-turbine category, but it averaged 108 MPH and effectively finished eighth. P5's and P6's were also successful rally cars during the 1960's.

Upheaval, take-overs and strikes dominated the British car industry during the 1960's and Rover was absorbed into British Leyland after they had effectively purchased the Rover supply chain. This liaison was not good for Rover and the only major new 'Rover' designed products to follow were Range Rover and Rover SD1. During the 1980's the group became known as Austin-Rover, with Austin badges going onto the mass market cars and the Rover badge going onto the upmarket versions. This was badge engineering, where the Rover name was misused and abused. Ownership changed hands and promises were never kept. Some cars were quite good, often based on Honda designs, but the Rover name became tarnished. BMW took over and again promised so much under the Rover name, but they became angry with the British government and eventually bowed out to Phoenix, always a bad choice of name, I think! BMW made Mini a make, as opposed to a model and took it with them. MG Rover, as it was now known, soldiered on until 2005, when it all went bust, but at least their legacy was the R40 Rover 75, which is what this book is all about.

Read on and enjoy.

## **CHAPTER TWO.**

### **ROVER 75 & MG ZT DESIGN.**

Under the then ownership of BMW, Rover was expected to produce a new range of cars, starting with the Rover 75, codenamed R40. It was to replace the existing Rover 600 and Rover 800 and was required to capture the prestige of the early post-war Rovers, ie. P4, P5 and P6. The model 'name' of 75 was used because it best portrayed the image of those earlier Rovers; that is the P4 Rover 75 of 1949 to 1964. However, to the Rover enthusiast this is a little confusing, because the original 75 was actually the short lived 1948 P3 model, which looked like the pre-war Rovers. Also the original 75 designation, reflected the BHP (brake horse power), of those early cars, far lower than the R40 models would produce, but with the re-naming of the other existing smaller Rovers as 25 and 45, the model listing was to have some merit.

Basically, the brief from BMW was to design a car that reflected the best British values as seen in earlier Rovers, without compromise and for it to be the best front wheel drive car in the world. BMW gave the design team full financial backing, a virtually free hand, didn't interfere and didn't insist on using BMW components. There were rumours from outside sceptics that it was based on the BMW 5 Series platform because of similarities in overall dimensions and the inclusion of a central prop-shaft tunnel, but this was not true. Obviously some cross fertilisation and shared ideas would take place within the organisation and between design teams, but it did not dictate what the British design team would do. They did use the BMW rear wheel drive Z style rear axle system because of time constraints, but in a much modified form for the front wheel drive 75. The other major BMW component was their, then new, common rail diesel engine for the CDT range, plus the odd component that BMW had already sourced, mostly in the electronics.

From the beginning in 1993, through the BMW approval stage in late 1994, Richard Woolly was in overall charge of the design concept, Wyn Thomas was in charge of the interior design and David Walde was Chief Engineer. They got it right first time, producing only one design, one clay model and one fibreglass model for initial approval and little was subsequently changed. The design took place at Canley, but soon transferred to the new Design and Engineering facility at Gaydon, which had the latest and very advanced design systems; in many ways superior to the BMW facilities.



**Early Cowley Built Rover 75 (note satin black sills).**

The design development was carried out using advanced computer 'virtual' engineering techniques, far in advance of most other manufacturers at that time. This enabled the whole vehicle to be developed in a 'virtual' form and sometimes in 3-D. These virtual images could be used to determine build tolerances, production techniques

and future servicing needs. As a result, components such as the one piece exhaust fitted the first-build prototypes without modification. The 'virtual' system was also used for designing the production line facilities and the combining of these simulation systems enabled the designers and engineers to manipulate the design and improve various aspects, such as refinement, safety, ease of production etc. All this technology was carried over into production, where computerised robotic systems ensured an accurate build quality and techniques such as 'hydro forming' were used. Hydro forming was a new way of forming items such as the tubular front sub frame, enabling a single length of tube to be automatically manipulated into the fully formed and strong structure we now see, using hydraulic pressure and without human intervention.

All of this advanced technology resulted in a very strong and torsionally stiff bodyshell, in fact it was two and half times stiffer than the outgoing Rover 600, stiffer than the equivalent BMW and much stiffer than the previously acclaimed BMC 1800 of 1964. Add to this an almost completely galvanised bodyshell, wax injected cavities, plastic wheel arch liners etc; and you have a potentially safe and durable car.



### **Crash Testing an early Rover 75.**

Further designs were released in due course, namely the Tourer (estate car, code named R41) and the sportier MG ZT in 2001, a long wheelbase Limousine in 2002, the Mustang V8 powered version in 2003 and a final up-dated styling version of the whole range (now known as the Mk 2), in 2004, with production ending in 2005. These were turbulent times for Rover, all to do with a factory move from Cowley to Longbridge, ownership changes, political issues etc; it is therefore both remarkable and fortunate that the designs reached maturity at all. There is a website ([www.aronline.co.uk](http://www.aronline.co.uk)), which has a section called 'Concept and Prototype Rover 75'. Here you will find pictures of the clay models and the various interior designs.



**Rover 75 Saloon and Tourer.**



**MG ZT.**



## **Rover 75 Limousine.**

The full story for this chapter and the ones that follow would fill several books, but it is hoped that this book will give the reader, whether familiar with the 75 or not, a 'taster' of what R40 is all about. For those that want to know more detail on certain subjects, later chapters will point the reader towards the internet and various publications that can elaborate further. Of particular interest is the 'Ultimate Buyers Guide for Rover 75 and MG ZT', which is constantly being updated; it can be found at the 75ZT Community website, [www.75ztcommunity.co.uk](http://www.75ztcommunity.co.uk) and covers every known variation and problem. But for now I hope this précis of what is available will put the R40 story in perspective.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **ROVER 75 & MG ZT MODEL RANGE**

This is the most difficult area to deal with and I don't expect that any single source covers every model detail. I hope to relate the basic model details as published, but as there were so many options, customer choices and factory changes, such as the 'Monogram' customisation programme, 'Personal Line Interior Colours' and 'Project Drive', which rationalised or deleted items, some of which customers could still request be fitted at extra cost, it means that many cars don't reflect the advertised features listed at the time. Additionally, enthusiastic owners have often fitted items from other models, retrospectively and which they feel enhances their car.



**Typical 'Standard' Interior; this is my Rover 75 Club SE spec.**



#### **Club SE Rear Compartment.**

**Note folding armrests (front and rear), which contain storage space.**

Initially the model range consisted of a saloon body style, with manual or automatic transmission, a K series 1.8 engine, KV6 2.0 litre or 2.5 litre engines, and the 2 litre (BMW M47R) diesel engine for the CDT. Model names were Classic (basic), Club and the highly specified top of the range Connoisseur. These were supplemented by SE, which added some additional features, often from the next model up. In 2001, Tourer (estate cars) and MG ZT versions were added. The MG versions were basically the same as the Rover 75, but they had a more sporty and aggressive look, firmer suspension, less bright work and often featured subtle differences in braking and gearing, etc.

Later the 2.0 litre V6 was dropped, the CDT was electronically given more power and became the CDTi, the 1.8 was given a Turbo; a Limousine long wheelbase was introduced in 2002 and from 2003 just under 900 of the 260 BHP Mustang V8 rear wheel drive cars were produced. There was a major facelift for the final year in 2004, which some feel lost the 'classic' looks of the original design. The Club model name was replaced by Contemporary, so we ended up with Classic, Contemporary and Connoisseur, with SE supplementing the two higher spec cars.

Prices ranged from just under £17,000 to over £30,000.

## **CHAPTER 4.**

### **R40 SPECIFICATION.**

This is an equally complex area due to all the changes, but it will give some extra detail to the previous 'Model Range' chapter.

All cars were front wheel drive (except the V8), had a five speed all synchromesh (including reverse) manual gearbox by Getrag, or the five speed automatic gearbox by Jatco. All had power steering, adjustable steering wheel, four wheel servoed ABS disc brakes, manual air-conditioning or climate control, galvanised body shell, supplied all round independent suspension (the MG ZT's were firmer), full remote central deadlocking, quality audio, and a large boot for the saloon or an exceptionally large load-space on the Tourer.

To varying degrees, above the base model, other items became standard, such as leather upholstery, electric windows, heated door mirrors, self folding door mirrors, chromed door mirrors, electric front seats, folding rear seats, sat-nav, on-board computer and a wide range of alloy wheels, and lots more. The wide range of alloy wheels, which are a distinctive feature of most 75's and ZT's and ranging from 15" to 17", can be viewed under "Want to check the spec of your Rover 75?", on the 75 and ZT Owners Club forum.

### **MODEL AVAILABILITY:-**

**Produced :- 1999-2005.**

**Body Styles :- 4 door saloon and 5 door estate (Tourer).**

<b>Engines :- 1796cc K Series – 115 BHP.</b>	<b>(Also fitted to the MG ZT 120)</b>	<b>*</b>
<b>1796cc Turbo K Series - 150 BHP.</b>	<b>(Also fitted to the MG ZT 160 1.8T)</b>	<b>*</b>
<b>1991cc KV6 -150 BHP.</b>	<b>(Also fitted to the MG ZT 160 V6)</b>	<b>*</b>
<b>2497cc KV6 - 177 BHP.</b>	<b>(Also fitted to the MG ZT 190 V6)</b>	<b>*</b>
<b>1951cc M47R CDT – 116 BHP.</b>	<b>(Also fitted to the MG ZT CDT)</b>	<b>*</b>
<b>1951cc M47R CDTi – 131 BHP.</b>	<b>(Also fitted to the MG ZT CDTi)</b>	<b>*</b>
<b>4601cc Ford V8 – 256 BHP.</b>	<b>(Also fitted to the MG ZT 260 V8)</b>	<b>*</b>

**Launched June 1999, cars produced at Cowley.**

**SE packs available October 1999.**

**Production moved to Longbridge by October 2000.**

**MG ZT launched January 2001. \*\*\*\*\***

**Tourer estate versions launched March 2001.**

**MGZT V8 launched November 2003.**

**Face Lift (Mk 2) versions launched January 2004.**

**Mk2 V8 saloons and estates launched May 2004.**

**Production ends April 2005.**

### **SERVICING:-**

**Every 15,000 miles. (NB. not recommended today; oil and filter should be every 6000 miles or annually).**

### **RECALLS:-**

March 2000 = engine cutting out on cars built 01-02-1998 to 08-10-1999.  
 July 2002 = Front spring problems on cars built 01-12-1998 to 27-10-1999.  
 May 2004 = Front spring problems on cars built 27-10-1999 to 20-02-2002.

**ENGINE SPECIFICATION (and performance) with manual transmission:-**

<b><u>SIZE</u></b>	<b><u>FUEL</u></b>	<b><u>POWER</u></b>	<b><u>TORQUE</u></b>	<b><u>0 to 60 mph.</u></b>	<b><u>MAX SPEED</u></b>	<b><u>MPG</u></b>	<b><u>YEARS</u></b>
1.8	Petrol	118 BHP	129 lb-ft	10.9 secs	121 mph	37	1999-2005
1.8T	Petrol	148 BHP	159 lb-ft	9.1 secs	130 mph	35	2002-2005
2.0 V6	Petrol	148 BHP	136 lb-ft	9.6 secs	130 mph	30	1999-2002
2.5 V6	Petrol	175 BHP	180 lb-ft	8.2 secs	137 mph	29	1999-2005
4.6 V8	Petrol	256 BHP	302 lb-ft	7.0 secs	151 mph	13.4	2003-2005
2.0 CDT	Diesel	114 BHP	190 lb-ft	11 secs	120 mph	48.8	1999-2005
2.0 CDTi Diesel		129 BHP	221 lb-ft	10.3 secs	120 mph	48.8	1999-2005

**NB.** The MPG figures quoted are the 'Combined' figure and relate to manual gearbox cars. Automatic cars will be less economical eg; Auto 1.8 = 30.1 MPG, 1.8T = 31.7 MPG, V6 = 26.6 MPG and the Diesel Auto's. = 40.9 MPG. The Co2 figures are quite good; a manual diesel is currently £165 PA to tax, but automatics will be more.

**SALES BROCHURES:-**

Factory Sales Brochures and price lists are sometimes available from Motoring Book specialists, on E-Bay and occasionally they are viewable on some internet forums, for example on [www.rover75.eu](http://www.rover75.eu). Sometimes only a picture of the cover and/or date and part number is shown, but others can be printed off complete, as is the case with the 2004 Mk2 version. These forums are being updated all the time, with new items being added, almost daily; so keep checking.

**DIMENSIONS.**

**SALOON :-**      4747mm = 186.9" O/A Length.  
                      1970mm = 77.6" O/A Width.  
                      1424mm = 56.1" Max Height.

**TOURER :-**      4792mm = 188.7" O/A Length. (all other dimensions as Saloon).

**LONG**

**WHEELBASE:-** 4947mm = 194.8" O/A Length. (all other dimensions as Saloon).  
                      The extra length is all in the rear seating area.

**COLOUR CODES.**

The colour code for the exterior paint finish will be found on the plate attached to the nearside/left side 'B' post/centre door pillar. The codes shown can be used to obtain colour matched paint, although some suppliers only need the UK registration number.



**Identification Plate on Left Hand Centre Door Pillar.**

<u>Colour</u>	<u>Code</u>	<u>Colour</u>	<u>Code</u>
Moonstone Green	= HES.	Cimmaron Green	= HQJ.
British Racing Green	= HNA or HFF. *	Arden Green	= HEW.
Le Mans Green	= HFN.	Goodwood Green	= HQN.
Wedgwood Blue	= JEL or JBH.	Seafrost Blue	= JYA.
Ski Blue	= JHI.	Steel Blue	= JFB.
Odyssey Blue	= JGA.	Atlantic Blue	= JEY.
Midnight Blue	= JQW.	Royal Blue	= JFM.
Tahiti Blue	= JRJ.	Ignition Blue	= JGY.
Copperleaf Red	= CDX.	Damson Red	= CEB.
Dorchester Red	= CDW.	Firefrost Red	= CEV.
Rio Red	= CQC.	Solar Red	= CMU.
Black Pearl	= PBT.	Raven Black	= PMF.
Pewter Grey	= LAL.	Anthracite	= LQW.
Tempest/X Part Grey	= LEF.	Tundra Grey	= HQR.
Arran White	= NNX.	Dover White	= NDJ.
Primrose Yellow	= FAH.	Trophy Yellow	= FAR.
White Gold	= GMN.	Platinum Gold	= MCN.

<b>Starlight Silver</b>	<b>= MBB.</b>	<b>Zircon Silver</b>	<b>= MUM.</b>
<b>Spectre</b>	<b>= IAA.</b>	<b>Typhoon</b>	<b>= IAB.</b>
<b>Poseidon</b>	<b>= IAW.</b>	<b>Twilight</b>	<b>= IAV.</b>
<b>Chagall</b>	<b>= IAT.</b>	<b>Celestial</b>	<b>= IAI.</b>
<b>Nocturne</b>	<b>= IAP.</b>	<b>Moody Blue</b>	<b>= IBD.</b>
<b>Caledonian</b>	<b>= IBG.</b>	<b>Horizon</b>	<b>= IBF.</b>
<b>Mirage</b>	<b>= IAS or IAU.</b>	<b>Atmosphere</b>	<b>= IBC.</b>
<b>Moonshine</b>	<b>= IBB.</b>	<b>Glacier</b>	<b>= IAD.</b>
<b>Chatsworth</b>	<b>= IAE.</b>	<b>Bacchus</b>	<b>= IAQ.</b>
<b>Dark Fantasy</b>	<b>= IBA.</b>	<b>Garnet</b>	<b>= IAK.</b>
<b>Aurora</b>	<b>= IAX.</b>	<b>Orange Grove</b>	<b>= IAR.</b>
<b>Sunspot</b>	<b>= IAC.</b>	<b>Saffron</b>	<b>= IAJ.</b>
<b>Jubilee</b>	<b>= IAL.</b>	<b>Bittersweet</b>	<b>= IAZ.</b>
<b>Shot Silk</b>	<b>= IAY.</b>	<b>Lagoon</b>	<b>= IAN.</b>
<b>Biomorphic</b>	<b>= IAF.</b>	<b>Gulf Stream</b>	<b>= IAM.</b>
<b>Black Olive</b>	<b>= IAH.</b>		

**\* NB. You must confirm the name and paint code with all paint orders to ensure the correct colour match. For example, British Racing Green has two codes, ie; two different ‘shades’ and there are actually several colours called British Racing Green as used by other car makers and they will all differ in ‘shade’.**

Paint matching can be a mine-field. The vehicle may have been re-sprayed or the paint could have faded. If in doubt, visit a retail paint supplier and get them to colour match it with their colour charts. However, R40 paint is very durable and if the car looks ‘original’, then the paint codes should be OK. As customers could specify almost any colour, including two-tone combinations, there are lots of variations, but in practice most cars will be in just a few popular colours.

## **CHAPTER 5.**

### **ROVER 75 & MG ZT PRESS REVIEWS.**

Surprisingly, given the poor 'press' given to British cars and the turmoil at launch time in 1998/9, the new Rover 75 met with much international and national press approval, for a change. This was at the time that TV programmes had deserted their objectivity and specialised in wheel spinning lunacy, turning themselves into a comical entertainment programme, rather than a serious motoring programme. However, Top Gear was very impressed at the 1998 Motor Show preview and put it above the Jaguar S Type, which was launched at the same time and was based on the American Ford Lincoln floor pan. The 75 and its variants continue to receive press plaudits to this day and the following list of awards goes to prove it :-

#### **ROVER 75 AWARDS.**

<b>WHAT CAR?</b>	<b>'Car of the Year' 1999.</b>
<b>WHAT CAR?</b>	<b>'Compact Executive Car of the Year' 1999.</b>
<b>WHAT CAR?</b>	<b>'Diesel Car of the Year' 1999.</b>
<b>AUTO EXPRESS</b>	<b>'World Car' 1999.</b>
<b>THE JOURNAL / AA</b>	<b>'Business Car of the Year' 1999.</b>
<b>ITALIAN</b>	<b>'World's Most Beautiful High Class Saloon' 1999.</b>
<b>BILD am SONNTAG</b>	<b>'Golden Steering Wheel Award' 1999.</b>
<b>THE SOCIETY of PLASTIC ENGINEERS</b>	<b>'Innovative use of Plastic' 1999.</b>
<b>BRITISH MOTOR SHOW</b>	<b>'Best riding and handling FWD saloon in World 1999.</b>
<b>JAPANESE</b>	<b>'Import Car of the Year' 1999.</b>
<b>MIDDLE EAST WHEELS &amp; GEARS</b>	<b>'Car of the year' 1999/2000.</b>
<b>JAPANESE</b>	<b>'Import Car of the Year' 2000.</b>
<b>NEW ZEALAND'S National Business Review</b>	<b>'Car of the Year' 2000.</b>
<b>PORTUGUESE EXECUTIVE CLASS</b>	<b>'Car of the Year' 2000.</b>
<b>WHAT CAR?</b>	<b>'Compact Executive Car of the Year' 2000.</b>
<b>EUROPEAN CAR of the Year (the only executive car short-listed)</b>	<b>2000.</b>
<b>USED CAR BUYER</b>	<b>'Used Car of the Year' 2000.</b>
<b>USED CAR BUYER</b>	<b>'Used Car of the Year' 2001.</b>

<b>DIESEL CAR MAGAZINE</b>	<b>‘Compact Executive Car’ 2001.</b>
<b>JD POWER SATISFACTION SURVEY (only European car in top 5)</b>	<b>2001.</b>
<b>AUTO EXPRESS USED CAR HONOURS</b>	<b>‘Best Diesel Car’ 2002.</b>
<b>USED CAR BUYER</b>	<b>‘Best Used Medium Car’ 2002.</b>
<b>ITM</b>	<b>‘Car of the Year’ 2002.</b>
<b>AUSTRALIAN INST. of TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>‘Car of the Year’ 2002.</b>
<b>USED CAR BUYER</b>	<b>‘Used Car of the Year’ 2004.</b>
<b>USED CAR BUYER</b>	<b>‘Best Used Family Car of the Year’ 2004.</b>
<b>BRITISH FORCES GERMANY</b>	<b>‘Most Popular Tax-Free Car Purchase’ 2004.</b>
<b>AUTO EXPRESS DRIVE POWER</b>	<b>‘Best Ride Quality’ 2006.</b>
<b>AUTO TRADER USED CAR AWARDS</b>	<b>‘Best Family Car’ 2007.</b>

From launch to this day, the R40 cars were held in high esteem by the many ‘Road Test’ teams that tested most of the variants available at the time. Often the tests were a group test with other similar versions of competitor’s cars and in general the R40 came out well. There were the usual minor criticisms, including the often un-liked (but liked by Rover drivers), soft cossetting ride; this was answered by the introduction of the MG ZT with its firmer suspension, not that the standard Rover 75 has poor road holding, far from it. The other minor gripes were poor rear legroom (debatable and solved by the LWB Limousine), and difficulty in reversing, but this applies to nearly all modern cars with headrests, seatbelts and high waistlines and is solved by the optional reversing sensors or the fitment of low cost after-market sensor kits.

For more contemporary Road Test data, you can look at the following tests which are listed on the internet under Rover 75 Press Reviews at [www.rover75.eu](http://www.rover75.eu) and can be printed off :-

#### **ROVER 75 GENERAL REVIEWS.**

<b>AUTOCAR ‘Test Secrets of motor show star’</b>	<b>Oct. 1998.</b>
<b>AUTOCAR ‘1200 Man Years’ - with pictures taken during testing</b>	<b>Dec. 1998.</b>
<b>TOP GEAR ‘Hello Auntie’</b>	<b>Dec. 1998.</b>
<b>WHAT CAR ‘Best Rover for Decades?’</b>	<b>Dec. 1998.</b>
<b>THE AA ‘Rover 75 First Drive’</b>	<b>Feb. 1999.</b>
<b>AUTO EXPRESS ‘Dawn of a New Era?’</b>	<b>Feb. 1999.</b>

<b>CAR MECHANICS ‘Cars to Keep for Ever 75/MG-ZT’</b>	<b>May 2007.</b>
<b>AUTO SWIAT (Polish) ‘Rover 75 Review’</b>	<b>Feb 2008.</b>
<b>WHICH? ‘Rover 75 in-depth Report’</b>	<b>Dec. 2008.</b>
<b>MOTOR (Polish) ‘Rover 75’</b>	<b>May 2009.</b>

**ROVER 75 1.8 REVIEWS.**

<b>CAR MAGAZINE ‘Wild Rover – 1.8 Classic Review’</b>	<b>Aug. 1999.</b>
<b>WHAT CAR ‘75 Not Out – 1.8 Club Review’</b>	<b>Sep. 2000.</b>
<b>WHAT CAR ‘Compact Brisk, - 3 car test inc. 1.8T Club SE’</b>	<b>Apr 2003.</b>
<b>MOTORING MAGAZINE (Singapore) 1.8T Review’</b>	<b>Oct 2003.</b>
<b>AUTO EXPRESS (2 car test) ‘Facing a Real Grilling – revised 1.8T’</b>	<b>APR 2004.</b>
<b>WHAT CAR ‘Built for Comfort – Not Speed’ face lifted 1.8</b>	<b>Jul. 2004.</b>

**ROVER 75 CDT & CDTi REVIEWS.**

<b>AUTO EXPRESS ‘Diesel Car of the Year Award’</b>	<b>1999.</b>
<b>AUTO EXPRESS ‘Rover’s Return 75 vs P6 2000’</b>	<b>1999.</b>
<b>AUTO EXPRESS ‘Class War – CDT Club vs VW Passat TDI’</b>	<b>Apr. 1999.</b>
<b>TOP GEAR ‘Awe Dervs – 75 CDT Club vs Alfa 156 &amp; Saab TID’</b>	<b>Sep. 1999.</b>
<b>NATIONAL ROADS &amp; MOTORISTS ASSOC. ‘CDTi Review’</b>	<b>Nov. 2004.</b>

**ROVER 75 2.5 Litre V6 REVIEWS.**

<b>AUTOCAR ‘Rover 75 Faces the Future’ - 75, Alfa 156 &amp; BMW 323i.</b>	<b>Feb. 1999.</b>
<b>AUTOCAR ‘Rover 75 V6 Connoisseur Road Test’</b>	<b>Feb. 1999.</b>
<b>CAR MAGAZINE ‘Rover 75 Meets Its Rivals’ 75, Alfa, Audi &amp; BMW.</b>	<b>Mar. 1999.</b>
<b>THE AA ‘2.5 V6 Auto. Review’</b>	<b>Jun. 1999.</b>
<b>WHAT CAR ‘The C of Change – 75, BMW 323, Lexus IS200 &amp; Merc. C’.</b>	<b>Jul. 2000.</b>
<b>NATIONAL ROADS &amp; MOTORISTS ASSOC. ‘2.5 C6 Con. Auto’.</b>	<b>May 2001.</b>
<b>WHAT CAR ‘Dark Horse Sense’ – V6 Classic SE vs Accord &amp; Passat</b>	<b>Feb. 2003.</b>

**ROVER 75 TOURER REVIEWS.**

**AUTO EXPRESS ‘Watch This Space – Rover 75 Tourer First Drive’      May 2001.**

**THE AA ‘75 Tourer CDT Club SE Auto Review’ Nov. 2001.**

**AUTO EXPRESS ‘Green Kings –75 Tourer 1.8T Club SE Auto vs Audi   Aug. 2002.**

**WHAT CAR ‘Rover’s Roomy Service - 2.5 Tourer Connoisseur SE’.      Jun. 2003.**

**WHAT CAR ‘Relaxing the Rules – Tourer 1.8T club SE 3 Car Review’.    Jul. 2003.**

**ROVER 75 V8 REVIEWS.**

**AUTO EXPRESS ‘Rover 75 -A Legend Reborn? – First Drive’                  Sep. 2004.**

**AUTOCAR ‘V8 Road Test’. Dec. 2004.**

**ROVER 75 VDP & LIMOUSINE REVIEWS.**

**AUTO EXPRESS ‘Coy of the Rovers – Rover 75 LWB – First Drive’      Jun. 2002.**

**AUTOCAR ‘The Phantom Menaced – 75 VDP vs RR Phantom’.              Mar. 2004.**

**AUTO EXPRESS ‘Rover 75 Limousine First Drive’.                              Oct. 2004.**

**TEST DRIVE MAGAZINE ‘Stretching a Point – 75 Limousine Premier’      2004.**

Of the ‘press reviews’ above, special mention must be made of the 1200 man years article which gives an in-depth look at the development of R40. There are also sections devoted to ‘You Tube’ type videos including, the TV’s Top Gear 1998 Motor Show launch, the official Rover launch in London, Rover adverts and even a ‘crash test’ film. The photo gallery section also includes ‘factory’ derived special duty models, such as Police cars, Ambulances and even Hearses.

## **CHAPTER 6.**

### **ROVER 75 & MG ZT LAUNCH**

The launch of the R40 Rover 75 at the 1998 NEC Motor Show was a great success as far as the car itself goes. It was described as the best Rover ever and it outflanked its close rival, the Jaguar S Type, launched at the same time. Even Jeremy Clarkson liked it and his then co-presenter of Top Gear, Quentin Wilson, was full of praise for the 75. He was looking at the styling of both the 75 and the S Type, talking to the respective designers and coming to the conclusion that the 75 looked right, whereas the Jaguar looked uneasy at the three quarter rear view. The conclusion was that Rover had done a ground up design, where everything blended, but the Jaguar was a styling compromise, because it had to fit the American Ford Lincoln underpinnings. There is a You Tube video of the Top Gear Rover 75 Motor Show preview and the 1999 official launch in London at [www.rover75.eu](http://www.rover75.eu) , and a very interesting Coventry and Warwickshire News article, which includes the 20th October 1998 Rover Group Press Release. The MG ZT and Tourer would be launched in 2001, the Limousine in 2002 and the V8 cars in 2003.

Rover had planned to launch the 75 in 1999, but BMW wanted to hurry it up a bit and get it ready for the 1998 Motor Show. In the event, although it was previewed in 1998, the official launch wasn't until 1999 and it was a grand affair in London on the Embankment, with 75 Rover 75 saloons, using their horns to accompany the London Symphony Orchestra. However cars would not be sold until June 1999.

BMW's Rover boss Pischetsrieder was due to meet the press at 4pm in the NEC, but this was delayed until 4.30pm and when it did happen it looked like a suicide mission. BMW were fighting a strong 'pound' at the time and were seeking financial support from the Labour government, which was not forthcoming, presumably because of their earlier ventures in supporting Leyland and a previous takeover by British Aerospace. The rant about the viability of Rover without this financial support, stunned those present and the media were convinced that Rover was finished; not a good way to release a new product. The morale of the workers and dealers plummeted just at a crucial time. Uncertain times were to follow for Rover, which was a shame, especially for the highly acclaimed Rover 75. The rest is history. A full article, including the 'Troubled Launch' can be seen at [www.aronline.co.uk](http://www.aronline.co.uk) .

## **CHAPTER 7.**

### **ROVER 75 & MG ZT CLUBS.**

There are many support services for the R40 buyer and/or owner and none better than the specialist car clubs and their members, many of who can help with technical and parts assistance.

If you are on the internet already you can ignore this paragraph. Just before I list the clubs, I would like to mention accessing the internet. The Rover 75 particularly, tends to attract traditional Rover owners from the older generation and the internet is not always familiar to them, but most of the help they need, will be on the internet. I am one of those people. Obviously, if you have friends or family that can give you the internet help and access, all well and good. If not you can often get help and access at local drop-in centres run by your local Council. If you can use a computer, but don't have broadband at home, you can use computers at most public libraries. If you have a Wi-Fi laptop, you can get free access at many places and at most public libraries; in fact this is what I do. Not having a great need of the internet, I just visit my local library, look up what I want, save it (Save As) to a memory stick and look at it later at home. Interesting items can then be selected and stored on the computer, or even printed out and kept in easily accessible binders.

The most useful club is the internet only based '75ZT Community' at [www.75ztcommunity.co.uk](http://www.75ztcommunity.co.uk) which caters for all R40's, both Rover and MG. It is free to access and free to use forum, which will answer almost any query you have. It is wise to refer to the forum before you make any Rover R40 related purchase or before you start any job. There are many 'experts' that can supply parts and service at much lower prices than larger garages and many members offer simpler ways of doing certain jobs than the 'manuals' suggest. More information can be found on their website.

The Rover Sports Register caters for all Rovers; from the earliest cycles, right up to the R40 and it has been going since the mid 1950's. There is a bi-monthly club magazine, a National Rally once a year, local monthly club meetings and regular submissions from the R40 part of the membership. They too exhibit at the NEC and have other local rallies, often jointly with like minded Rover clubs. More information can be found at the website [www.thersr.co.uk](http://www.thersr.co.uk) or new membership enquiries from, Cliff Evans, 8 Hilary Close, Great Boughton, Chester CH3 5QP.

For MG ZT owners, there is also the MG Owners Club, [www.mgownersclub.co.uk](http://www.mgownersclub.co.uk), who cater for all MGs and who produce a monthly magazine, have rallies, meetings etc; just like the RSR above. They have been established since the 1970's and can be contacted at Octagon House, 1 Over Road, Swavesey, Cambridge CB24 4QZ or TEL:- 01954 231125. If you have a Rover 75 and not an MG ZT, you can still enjoy their information sources, because the two cars are so similar. Uniquely for a club, they can also maintain your car in their own workshop and supply parts from their own shop.

There will be other clubs, especially overseas, that can cater for both Rover 75 and MG ZT; a quick search on-line should reveal others, but for now the above will cover most of your needs.

## **CHAPTER 8.**

### **ROVER 75 and MG ZT SERVICE & PARTS.**

Although sad, the demise of MG Rover has probably been good for the survival of Rover 75's and MG ZTs, because a support network quickly built up to support what was, in 2005, a relatively new and large group of cars, ranging from new to a six year old vehicle park.

If, for the moment, we look at older Rovers that are now 'classics', like the Wilks Rovers from 1934 to the early 1970's, we find that although they were very desirable and well respected vehicles, they were not looked at in the same way as they are now, that is, as a 'classic' car and a historical part of the motoring scene. They were bought new by moderately wealthy people, like doctors, bank managers etc. Then they became second-hand cars and eventually 'bangers'; bought for their durability by the final link in the chain, usually people of limited means, and when they became too expensive to maintain and spares were becoming difficult, they were scrapped. The 'classic' Rovers that survive today are, in the main, restored vehicles that escaped the breakers yard. Consequently, their support group has grown up around those restorations, often resulting in the expensive re-manufacture of parts, often without the original patterns, drawings, presses etc. R40 is therefore at an advantage, with vehicles ranging from seven to thirteen years old, they are entering that 'banger' stage and many have already succumbed to the crusher, especially during the Government 'Scrappage Scheme'. However, that support network, mentioned above, is still in good health, so many of our cars are being kept on the road by enthusiastic owners, which makes good sense. After all the R40 range never rusts, if it remains undamaged, and as most are only worth between £1000 and £5000, it would take at least £20,000 to buy a new equivalent vehicle and you would lose more than the R40 is worth in the first year's depreciation. It was recently reported that a new small car could expect a life span of only seven years, due to the high costs of complicated technology related repairs, against the vehicle value at that time, so the R40 range is doing rather well.

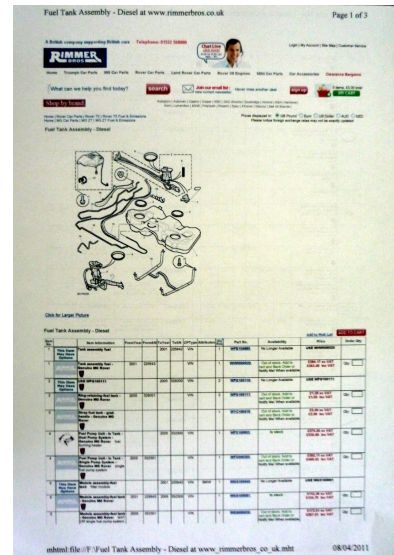
When MG Rover folded in April 2005, their spares distribution was being handled by Caterpillar under the name of X-Part, so there was actually no loss of continuity in parts supply. Caterpillar also used some of the old MGR dealer network to service and repair R40's and all the other MGR types. They also took on all of the sourcing and manufacture of parts that had been sourced directly by BMW/MGR. The internet will give you a list of X-Part dealers and, if you are lucky, you may find one close to home. However, apart from the extra carriage costs, this is not a problem and a lot of X-Part dealers can supply by mail order.

The most popular X-Part mail order supplier is Rimmer Brothers of Lincoln [www.rimmerbros.co.uk](http://www.rimmerbros.co.uk) (or TEL:- 01522 568000). They have a long history of supplying the Triumph, Rover and Land Rover classic car enthusiast and have a good reputation for quick delivery and stock levels. They supply a 'Quickfinder' abridged Parts and Accessories Guide for all MGR cars, FOC. In addition, they have an on-line catalogue for the R40 Rover 75 and MG ZT, which is broken down into sections (Engine, Brakes, Suspension etc.); in effect a priced Parts List, including exploded views of components with part numbers, supercessions and Vin number change points. In the more competitive areas they also offer additional 'after market' alternative factored parts at a lower price than original equipment prices. Actually, their on-line catalogue is so good that I usually print the pages off that I am looking at, and keep them in a binder for future reference.

Although the prices become dated, the exploded views and part numbers relating to your particular model are very useful for future reference, often when you're out in the garage.



### Quickfinder Parts List



### An Online Parts Page

There are many local motor factors that can offer pattern spares for the more common applications, such as discs and pads. These may take the form of a single local operation, or be part of a national chain. Unipart has several outlets and prior to X-Part, they were the official Leyland/Austin-Rover parts distributor.

From the above, you will appreciate that R40 is still very well catered for on the parts front, probably better than if MGR still existed and still relied on selling lots of new cars for their survival. There are a few shortages from time to time, especially interior trim and the odd panel, but on the whole, supply is good. There are also many independent suppliers that can be found on the internet, such as Julian at JMA-Cars (who will be mentioned later in the 'Potential Problems chapter'), who supplies a small range of essential and/or upgraded parts at very reasonable prices. Others can offer things such as keys, at less than half the price of BMW sourced items; just look on the internet under [www.75ztcommunity.co.uk](http://www.75ztcommunity.co.uk) and pick the appropriate section on the forum.

Apart from E-Bay, there are several 'car breakers', some specialising in Rovers, that have a mail order service. One that I have used is Rover Breakers in Cheshire [www.roverbreakerslimited.com](http://www.roverbreakerslimited.com) or TEL:- 01606 835355. They supplied two alloy wheels, well packed, in good condition and within a couple of days. I also ordered two jacking point plugs, which were missing on my car, delivered next day and about a third of the new price.

There are numerous companies that can offer things such as number plates, new plastic bumpers, pattern exhausts, fully chromed grilles etc. So, at least for the foreseeable future, parts should not be a problem for all the standard R40 and R41 models; V8's may have some problems in the long term, but on the whole the situation is better than for most cars. Some paints are still available from the likes of Rimmer Brothers, as shown below left, with a pair of 150ml aerosols (colour and lacquer) costing around £12 + VAT and touch-up pencils at £7.50. However, 'Autopaint (St Helens)', Tel:- 01744 818102, which I found recommended on the MG-Rover.org forum, can supply large 400ml aerosols, matched to your paint code, for £6.99 + VAT each, including free next day delivery. They can supply paints such as the 'Silver Sparkle' alloy wheel paint,

which is currently not available from Rimmers, compatible lacquers, small touch-up bottles at £4.95 + VAT each, plus all your other requirements, including bulk paint for spray guns, compounds, 'wet and dry' paper etc. You may find a local paint supplier with similar offers, but Autopaint's mail order service is excellent and hassle free.



**X Part Paints on left, Factor Paints on right.**

If you intend to DIY, or just want to understand more, The Haynes Workshop Manual is still available at less than £20 and Rimmer Brothers can also supply hard copies of the computerised 636 page MG Rover Factory Workshop Manual for £45.



ramps that can be driven onto whilst folded down and then pumped or jacked up, to raise the vehicle, but they are quite expensive.

Finally, the internet is a continually changing source of information, but currently at [www.75ztcommunity.co.uk](http://www.75ztcommunity.co.uk), you can find and download MG Rover service information, in the form of 'M47R Diesel engine', 'Body Electrics', 'Technical Brochure' and the 'T4 Testbook Manual'; this is the MGR computer system used for diagnosis, tuning etc. The X-Part dealers, some smaller garages and some club members have the 'T4' diagnostic computer, which, apart from the obvious, can be used to upgrade a CDT to CDTi spec, programme keys and turn On/Off certain features on your car which were electronically optional when new. The [www.75ztcommunity.co.uk](http://www.75ztcommunity.co.uk) has a feature in the forum showing how the OBD (on board diagnostics) dash button, used to reset the mileage trip, can be used as a diagnostic tool.



**Trip Button, also known as the OBD button.**

## **CHAPTER 9.**

### **ROVER 75 POTENTIAL PROBLEMS.**

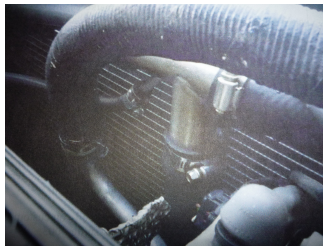
Listed below (in no special order), are some of the potential problems, but I would urge you **not** to become disheartened after reading it. Remember, all cars have problems, even BMW, VW, Toyota etc; they just don't get the media coverage that Leyland through to MGR had. They certainly don't boast about it, but I can assure you that R40 was actually pretty good; after all it was the only European car in the top five of the 2001 J D Power Satisfaction Survey! Some R40's have covered over 250,000miles and some are used as taxis. Poor servicing and/or driving are the main causes of problems and as many owners can confirm, they often don't personally experience any of them. There are simple modifications that can ensure the more common faults will not re-occur.

#### **K SERIES HEAD GASKET FAILURE.**

This really only applies to the 1.8 and 1.8T four cylinder cars and is well known in the motor trade. KV6's are not as prone, but it is still wise to make sure the cooling system is in good condition (some of the hoses can split at their 'Y' junctions), and that the electric fan is working. The answer is to be very careful when buying such a car and equally careful with maintenance if you end up owning one.

Firstly, the coolant capacity is fairly small, so any fluid loss must be stopped. There is a modification for the 'head gasket' problem and it is fully detailed on the [www.75ztcommunity.co.uk](http://www.75ztcommunity.co.uk) , but basically consists of a modified Multi Layer Head Gasket, a Cylinder Head Shim and an Oil Feed Ladder Rail in a kit, Land-Rover part number ZUA000080. This kit is used for the Land Rover Freelander (which still used the 'K' series engine after R40), and was developed to overcome this fault. Do not just fit a new head gasket and if the engine has overheated, the head needs to be checked and/or surface ground. The long stretch bolts should always be replaced and not used again. It is also suggested to vacuum fill the coolant and pressure test for leaks on completion.

If you are not confident to do this job yourself, then there are specialists for Land-Rover or MGF cars that should be familiar with the problem and be able to help, but what ever you do, don't be fobbed off with just putting a new head gasket on; it will just go again. There are also weaknesses in the form of plastic 'head locating' dowels and plastic water hose connections, the latter can split and leak, so they need changing, sooner rather than later. A member of The 75 and ZT club sells a modified stainless-steel connection pipe for the water hoses, as shown below.



It has also been suggested that a 'low coolant level' indicator kit that is available from Brown and Gammons, in Baldock, TEL:- 01462 490049, for the MGF, which also uses the K series engine, could possibly be used on the Rover/MG 1.8 R40's; check before you buy, but this should give you an early warning. In the meantime, check the coolant level at least weekly.

Having said all this, the 1.8 and 1.8T are excellent cars (just look at their performance figures) and they can be bought for very little money. The trouble is that they have a bad reputation and many are being scrapped by un-knowledgeable owners, but a few pounds spent will produce an excellent and reliable car and some owners have run them without any problems at all.

### **PLENUM CHAMBER DRAINS.**

The most publicised and potentially damaging problem, affecting all models, is the flooding and water logging of the plenum-chamber; this is the cavity in the double skinned bulkhead at the back of the engine bay, which supplies air to the interior. It is caused when the drain tubes at the bottom of the chamber become blocked and the water leaving the bonnet and windscreen has nowhere to go. Eventually, water destroys the pollen filter, leaks into the foot well and, worst of all, floods the main ECU; costing several hundreds of pounds to repair. If the car is new to you and you have no proof of rectification work being done, then clear the drain tubes out and clear all the debris and leaves out of the cavity. The operation is well documented in places such as the Haynes Workshop Manual, although there may be a different number of drain tubes to that mentioned. Finally and to avoid future problems, there is a modification available from Julian at JMA-Cars, TEL:- 01492 535020 or [julian@jma-cars.co.uk](mailto:julian@jma-cars.co.uk) costing around £10. Rover blanked off one end of the chamber, but left the driver's side open, to avoid the wiper linkage and this is where the debris gets in. Julian has designed a superb plastic moulding that just clips into place and stops leaves getting past, but at the same time allows water to get through. You should only need to check for debris when you change the pollen filter at 30,000 mile intervals or every two years.



**JMA Plenum chamber plastic blanking plate.**

### **COOLING FAN.**

The second most common problem is the electric fan, which is used to cool the air-con condenser radiator, as well as the engine radiator, so it will often be on when the engine is relatively cool and actually works very hard. The fan is controlled by the ECU and BCU and can be in use, even at high road speeds. The diesels will probably not overheat when the fan is not working, but all petrol versions will and all R40's can destroy the air-con with a non-working fan. The easiest way to check is to turn the ignition on for diesels, and actually start the car on petrol versions; then press the demist

button on the centre console heater panel. This is the button to the left of the heated rear window button, showing a wiper arced version of the rectangular rear one, on the button.



**Demist Button, left lower in picture.**

The fan should start and can be heard and seen through the front grille. If it is not working, it could be the fuse (check first), the motor itself or the resistor. Replacements can cost around £400 plus fitting, but Julian can supply new motors at £189 + fitting (and modified resistors) or better still a complete 'Kenlowe' conversion kit for £139 + fitting. He can also supply and fit the Kenlowe for £299, which is a five hour job and includes a two year warranty.

Kenlowe are a well known British make and Julian modifies it so that it fits in the original housing and he wires it in so that the car electronics control it as they did before. Whilst the front is off, he does the following (plus the cost of additional parts):-

- \*Wiring looms repaired and re-routed to stop rubbing.
- \*Replace turbo intercooler 'O' rings and check intercooler for damage.
- \*Protect air-con and PAS pipes from rubbing.
- \*Flush out washer bottle (slime builds up and blocks the pump filter).
- \*Modify bonnet cable divider block by building-up the diameter of the inlet cable with layers of tape, to stop it disconnecting).

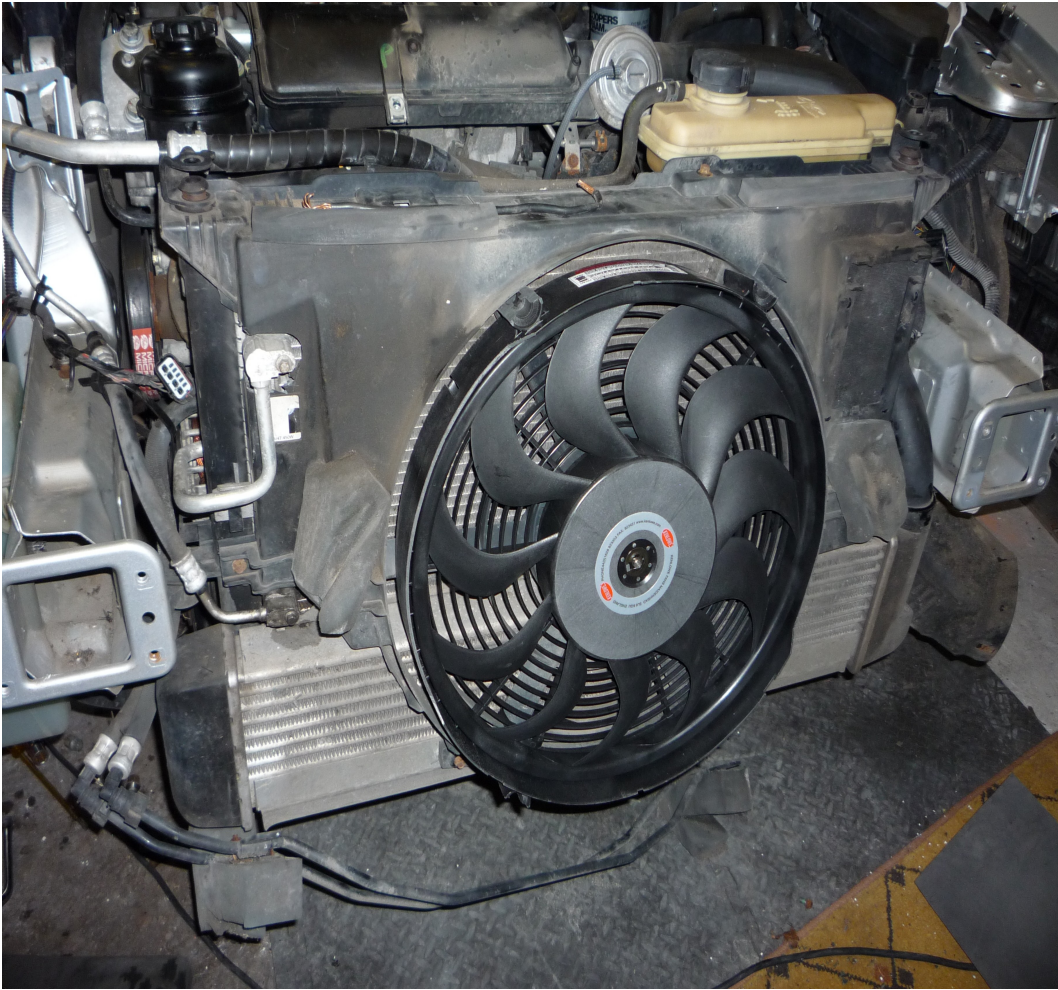


### **Single inlet Bonnet Cable modification.**

- \*Modify intake on diesels (optional).
- \*Fit twin horns, if required and not already fitted.
- \*Check all bulbs (easier with the front off).
- \*Check that PAS cooler is not fouling.
- \*Check outside temperature sensor for security.
- \*Check alternator cabling and belt (I actually got him to change the PAS and auxiliary belt while the front was off).
- \*You can also use the occasion to have other jobs done, like replacing radiators etc; which will be easier and cheaper to do at the same time.

The advantages of the Kenlowe are that it is quieter, uses less energy (the 80 amp fusible link can be replaced by a 30 amp item), two year warranty, no resistor to fail (it is a two speed , two field wound motor), it retains the original ECU intelligence and weighs one kilogram less. Julian can also deal with any air-con requirements at the same time including servicing. Whilst mentioning the air-con, which is pretty trouble free, it is important to use it, at least for a short while, every week or so. If left unused for long periods, it can cause problems through lack of internal lubrication. Often, the main advantage of the air-con or climate control in Winter, is to quickly demist a steamed up interior by utilising its dehumidifying abilities.

A non-working fan on the diesel will probably not cause any engine damage, but it could destroy an overheated air-con system and it would certainly be disastrous on a petrol engined car, especially the 1.8 K Series.



**JMA Kenlowe fan being installed.**

## **ROAD SPRINGS.**

There were re-calls over broken road springs, a common problem on many modern cars and caused by poor quality steel, road salt corrosion and the poor finish at the coil ends where they seat in their housings. In extreme cases it has been known for a broken front spring's sharp end to rip open the tyre. To avoid this damage, Rover introduced tyre protector plates and these are still available from Rimmer Brothers at £9 a pair. The plates are not handed and are fixed with two (supplied) self tapping bolts, which use existing holes in the spring plate. They fit underneath and form an extra lip to the spring housing cup.



**Front Spring/Tyre Protector Plate fitted.**

## **THERMOSTAT FAILURE, Diesel.**

This is not a disastrous failure, but it does mean that the engine and therefore the heater, will not get up to full working temperature very quickly. All appears well after five miles or so, because the gauge is showing normal at the nine o'clock position, but this is not, as you may think, set to a specific temperature; in fact the midway point can be anything between 73 deg C and 113 deg C. The actual full operational running temperature is 88 deg C, with slight variances for 'load'. The problem with too low a temperature is reduced MPG and increased engine wear; by the way, a diesel should use no engine oil between services.



**Temperature Gauge at 9 o'clock position.**

The in-dash OBD button mentioned in the 'Service and Parts' Chapter, (details on how to use it are on, [www.75ztcommunity.co.uk](http://www.75ztcommunity.co.uk)), can be set to show the actual engine temperature, in degrees C, on the display. Once set (it will re-set itself when you switch off), the car can be driven and in most cases it will show about 70 odd degrees C. The thermostat, part number PEL100570, comes built into its' housing and costs about £40, or £179 fitted from Julian at JMA-Cars on 01492 535020 or [julian@jma-cars.co.uk](mailto:julian@jma-cars.co.uk)

## **PCV FILTER, Diesel.**

This is not so much a fault, more an omission in the servicing schedule. The PCV filter is used on the BMW M47R engine and is actually a crankcase breather filter. The problem is that it was never mentioned in the Rover servicing schedule, presumably missed in the translation from BMW to Rover. The filter comes with the associated seals and costs about £15. It is available from BMW agents (P/No. B11127793164), Rimmer Brothers (P/No. LLJ500010) or from Julian at JMA-Cars. It should be changed every 30,000 miles, otherwise it clogs up and causes the crankcase pressure to build up, which will force oil out of the dip-stick tube or even force oil into the clutch, causing it to slip. Some garages say that they wash the filter in petrol, but this is not good practice and as it takes a while to dismantle the unit, you may just as well replace it. The PCV filter is situated towards the back of the engine and the 75zt Community website has a fully illustrated DIY procedure for replacing it, or people like Julian can fit it while you are having other work done. Remember, unless you have proof that it has been done on the car you are buying, always assume it hasn't and change it ASAP, because it is not in the workshop manuals and most garages are not aware of it.

### **DUAL MASS FLYWHEELS (manual gearboxes).**

The DMF is found on all modern high torque engined cars and it has a poor 'press', because when it fails it is very costly for the DMF and clutch replacement. Borg and Beck, and Valeo do offer solid flywheel conversions, but up to now not for the R40. In any case, they are probably best avoided, because of their non absorbing structure, which can result in vibration or worse still, broken crankshafts. They were invented for very good reason and in the case of R40, are generally trouble free. JMA-Cars has never had to replace one on any of the hundreds of cars he sees, but obviously some do fail, probably because of abuse. The symptoms are rattling from the clutch area, but if all is well and the relatively heavy clutch pedal bites at the midway point, then you will probably be OK. Remember; do not abuse the clutch, such as spinning the wheels etc.

### **FUEL PUMP FAILURE.**

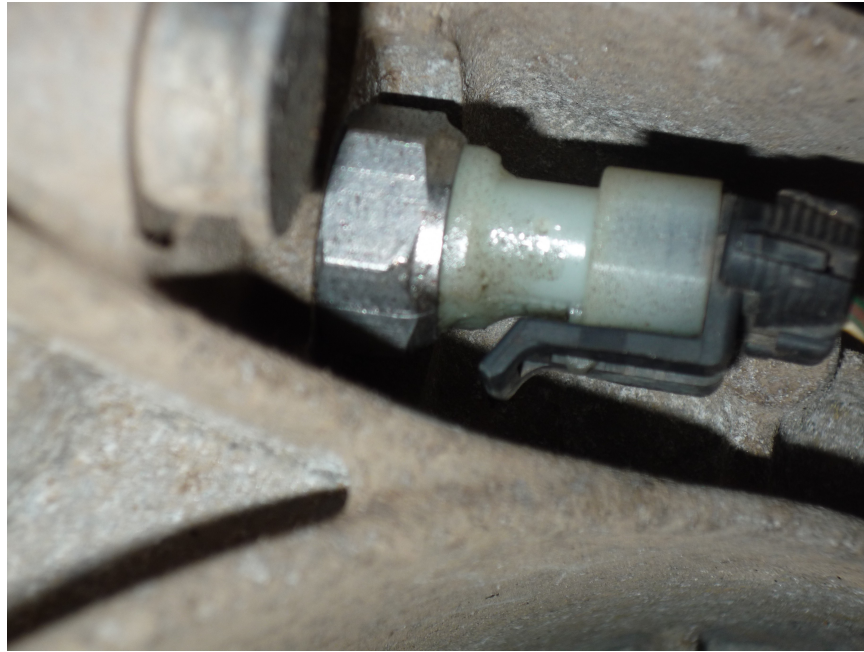
On all R40's there is a 'saddle' type fuel tank that straddles the centre tunnel, so that there are basically two connected tanks, one under each of the two rear seats. The half under the offside/right hand rear seat contains an 'in tank' electric pump and most have a second under bonnet electric pump as well. Nobody is really sure, but it is thought that when the tank is below half-full, the rear pump has to work too hard and fails, which then puts more load on the front pump. As a precaution, I usually fill-up at the half-full mark. New pumps are readily available and at the moment JMA-Cars can offer both at about 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the dealer price; I have actually bought one of each as spares.

### **SUSPENSION PROBLEMS.**

There are reports of suspension problems, but these will usually show up in tyre wear or at the MOT. All the bushes etc are available and can often be had at lower prices from motor factors and 'specialists'. JMA -Cars, for example is offering rear bushes for the lower front wishbone arm for less than half price. Also, as in this case, the MG versions can often be used as they are 'tougher' and more durable. The other problem relates to the front top strut bush/bearing, but these are relatively easy and cheap to do. The problem manifests itself in a 'creaking' noise, if you try to turn the steering wheel from side to side, while the car is stationary.

### **REVERSE LIGHT SWITCH, manual gearbox.**

These can fail and are often not noticed, unless you have 'reversing sensors'. Workshop manuals, including the MGR version, state that you have to remove the engine under tray and the NSF wheel arch liner; however, this is not necessary. 75ZT Community website tells you how to do it in 15 minutes. Check the fuse first and if it's OK, then basically you remove the NSF road wheel, you will then see the switch through the drive shaft opening in the wheel arch liner. Simply un-plug the electrical connection and with a 19mm ring spanner, undo the switch. Once removed (check the old switch first, because it sometimes has dirty connections) and then simply replace in reverse order. New switches are available from Rimmers for about £13 including VAT and postage.



**Reverse Light Switch and Connector, as seen under NSF wheelarch.**

### **BLOCKED WASHERS.**

The windscreen washers can easily get choked up, so if cleaning the jets doesn't help, it will be caused by a blocked pump pick up, inside the washer bottle. The bottle is behind the OSF bumper/wheel arch liner, however, if you release some of the fixings around the front of the liner, you should be able to pull it out sufficiently to see and remove the pump, which just pushes into a rubber ferrule at the bottom of the bottle. What happens is that bacterial growth blocks the very fine mesh type opening in the rubber ferrule. Once the pump is out, the rubber ferrule can be pulled out, the bottle flushed out (possibly with some bleach and hot water, but be careful and wash out with lots of clean cold water afterwards). The ferrule should be similarly cleaned and when it is all replaced, your washers should work again. Obviously check that they work before re-assembling.

### **ENGINE UNDERTRAY.**

This is not really a problem, but for most R40's, a plastic under-tray was fitted under the engine to keep out muck, reduce noise and improve aerodynamics. They are kept in place by three captive fixings each side and by four loose fixings under the front plastic bumper. These are sometimes damaged on the road by driving through flood water, driving over speed humps, etc; and are then often held in place by cable-ties. Worse still is that lazy mechanics remove them permanently to make their job easier. They can be purchased from Rimmer Brothers for about £150, but the four loose fixings are no longer available and would need to be sourced second-hand.



### **Plastic Undertray.**

### **AIR-CON CONDENSOR/RADIATOR.**

The radiator at the very front of the car, just behind the fan, is the one used to cool or condense the heat generated when the air-con is working. The problem is that it is right at the front; that is in front of the engine cooling radiator etc. and it has aluminium fins. Being at the front it takes the full blast of road salt and spray and is liable to lose many of the fins, especially at the bottom, because of corrosion. Consequently, it doesn't do its job properly and loses about 35% efficiency. This means the air-con doesn't get very cold, the system itself will get very hot and you may hear a 'whooping' noise from behind the dash. Julian at [www.julian@jma-cars.co.uk](mailto:www.julian@jma-cars.co.uk) can supply a new radiator for about £50. Fitting and overhauling the air-con system at the same time, will be extra and a good time to have this done is when he is fitting a Kenlowe fan for you, because the front of the car is already off.

### **WATER LEAKS.**

If the car has a sun-roof, check for water leaks and if the car is a Tourer, check that the opening window in the rear tailgate has a good rubber seal and that there is no water in the rear load floor. Saloons and Tourers can have water ingress in the boot or rear load area, which is caused by dodgy rear light seals, poor sealing around the air extraction vents behind the trim, or leaks around the clips for the rear wing moulding. Cures are easily found on the website forums. Wet front carpets may be from a leaking sun-roof, or more likely, from blocked plenum drain tubes.

### **OTHER PROBLEMS.**

There are other problems that can appear, but most are avoided if the car is not abused and is serviced properly. The handbrake operates on separate brake drums behind the rear brake discs and the lever can come up a long way if it is not adjusted properly. Never adjust it by the adjusting nut at the base of the handbrake lever, at least, not until

you have adjusted at the drum. Obviously, as the handbrake is not used on the run, the shoes should never really wear out, but any adjustment is easily done through a small hole in the rear hub, as per the Haynes manual and can even be done by removing one road wheel bolt and turning the wheel to expose the adjusting hole. If adjusted properly, then any remaining slack can be taken up by the handbrake lever adjusting nut. In extreme cases, the compensator (a small balancing system behind the handbrake lever, to equalise the lengths of the two cables), can bend and distort. 75ZT Community website has a fully illustrated modification to correct this, in their 'forum'.

The 'SRS' light symbol can appear in the display behind steering wheel, which should not be on once the engine is running, however this is usually caused by dodgy electrical connections for the front seat belts and is found under the seats, often caused by large seat adjustment movements. It is easily cured by using a modified connector or mending the existing connector.

If the front seat belts are jammed or stiff and will not re-coil very quickly, then the problem is usually found behind the top interior door pillar trim panel, where you will find the automatic height adjuster has become dislodged from its locating socket, which fits over the top seat belt fixing bolt head. This problem can also be caused by the seat belt height adjusting cables, under the front seats, becoming dislodged from their pulleys; simply re-fit them.

The outside door mirrors are sturdy, but vulnerable. If they do get damaged, new ones can be very expensive. Depending on what is damaged, they are usually easily repairable by removing the backing cover or in extreme cases, the whole mirror. 75ZT Community has a fully illustrated repair article, where a mirror had been kicked off the car by a 'yob' and the owner had fabricated a DIY repair.

In some cases, an apparent fault may be no such thing. For example, if the interior lights don't come on when opening a door, it may simply be that they have been permanently switched off and, as described in the Driver's Handbook, they can be reinstated to their courtesy function by pressing the large centre on/off button for five seconds. Similarly, the reverse will deactivate them.

Like all modern cars and especially diesels, the battery has to work very hard due to the vast amount of electronics, some of which are activated even when the car is parked. If the car is not used regularly, it may fail to start and give the impression the starter or similar is at fault. It is probably caused by low battery voltage, not necessarily a 'flat' battery. Thirteen volts is usual, but anything below twelve volts can give problems. So ensure firstly that you have the correct battery fitted (very large and especially true of the diesel) and that it is in good condition. If there is any doubt, replace it with a quality new battery of the correct specification; it will pay dividends in the long run. By the way, the battery sits in a plastic box and should have a plastic cover; if it hasn't, new ones are still available from Rimmer Brothers for about £10.



### **Battery Box with Fitted Cover.**

The picture above shows the cover fitted. It also shows a black and red electrical socket fitted to the front of the battery box. This modification was done, using parts from 'Maplins' and costing about £5, to simplify battery charging, voltage testing and alternator testing. Before, it was necessary to remove the cover, but this is a little awkward and can result in the cover breaking. When removing the cover, I have found it best to release the two side 'clips' first, then the front and then raise the lid to the vertical position, which will allow the cover to be unhooked and lifted out of the rear locating slots.

Check that any car you are buying still has the four under sill plastic jacking point covers, as these are sometimes missing. New, they are about £15 each.

## **CHAPTER 10.**

### **ROVER 75/MG ZT AS A 'CLASSIC' EVERYDAY USED CAR.**

The R40 range of cars are ideal for the person looking for a modern 'classic' car, that is, a car that has the right looks, is comfortable, robust, has good club and parts support, can handle sustained everyday use and above all, is very affordable. It is the easiest way to get a car that is a little out of the ordinary, is well respected and is cheap to buy. The media labelled it as a future 'classic' from day one.

There are things to be aware of. This is a big car and covers the same overall 'footprint' as the earlier Rover P5 and P5B from 1958 to 1973, so check your garage space for both length and width, noting that Tourers and Limousines are a few inches longer than the saloons. They are also heavy cars, so make sure it is safe when venturing underneath. The seating is quite low and this may not be suitable for the less able, particularly if the vehicle is parked on a slope.

Insurance costs are quite low, at around Group 10. Road Tax is based on emissions, so you need to check your chosen vehicle, but one of the best is the CDT and CDTi diesels, currently £165 PA. Equally, fuel consumption is good for each model within its class, with the manual diesels returning 48.8 MPG in the combined cycle and, unlike today's MPG claims, this is genuine and readily obtainable. Performance is more than adequate for the non Top Gear pantomime driver. The CDTi diesel does 120 MPH, 48.8 MPG and 0 to 60 MPH in less than 10 seconds. This compares with the very potent Rover 3500S V8 manual of the early 1970's, which I once owned, except that the fuel consumption for that car was only in the low 20's MPG. Staying with the CDT and CDTi for a moment; they don't have the troublesome DPF (diesel particulate filter) that today's diesels have and which can create expensive problems after a while.

The diesels have a timing chain, which gives very little trouble with regular oil changes, but all the petrol models have belt driven camshafts that need the belt (or belts), changing at certain mileage point or year/time points, whichever comes first. The V6's have three cam belts, one at the front of the engine and two at the back, that need changing at 90,000 miles or six years and it is quite a big job. Because of that, it is also recommended to change the plastic idler pulley, water pump and tensioner wheel, which is an expensive job at an ordinary garage, often quoted as over £1000! JMA-Cars current price for the complete job, including water pump is £495.

All R40's are easy to drive with no temperamental characteristics and are extremely comfortable. The diesels are the most economical and the V6's are the most refined and super smooth. All the interiors are luxurious.

## **CHAPTER 11.**

### **ROVER 75 BUYERS GUIDE.**

Most of the information to prepare you for making a choice between the different models is contained in the previous chapters. Firstly, decide whether you want a saloon or estate (the Tourer); saloons are a little cheaper and estates are in more demand. Then decide whether you want automatic or manual; the manuals have slightly better performance, better MPG figures and sometimes cheaper road tax. Now consider whether you want the traditional Rover looks and cossetting ride, or the more aggressive or sporty looks of the MG ZT, which has a firmer ride, a slightly lower stance and less external 'bright work'. The 2004 (MK 2) cars have a more modern front and rear appearance, but with the same body shell centre section; to some extent losing the earlier car's classic looks, so you need to choose whether you prefer the 1999 to 2003 (and early 2004) cars or the later and last of the line MK 2 cars of 2004 to April 2005. Many of these later cars may have a later registration date, following the liquidation of MGR and a few 'new' ones were still available until quite recently.

Prices will range from a few hundred pounds to about £5,000 for the better and/or lower mileage cars. Price is governed by many factors, other than those mentioned above, but mileage, service history, individual specification, condition and desirability are a few others. As there is probably less than 15,000 MG ZTs left and MGs are always sought after, their future should be assured. However, many people prefer the Rover 75 version, with probably around 75,000 still around, so their future is equally rosy.

What you probably won't get is a car with the absolute specification you require and your ultimate purchase will depend on what is available at the time. Whatever you do, take your time; don't miss a gem or a bargain, but be prepared to be choosy. Be flexible with what features you are prepared to accept, like colour. Also, don't be lured by features you may not actually need, like some of the electronic gizmos, potentially leaky sunroofs or oversized road wheels. Seventeen inch wheels (and above in accessory form), will give you a much harder ride, although road holding may be improved. Personally, I think sixteen inch wheels are as large as most people need to go and these (and the fifteen inch), still give excellent road holding when fitted with the correct tyres.

If you go on the internet (or get somebody to do it for you), you can search by your own 'most wanted specification' parameters, for example, model, price, year and crucially, the distance from your home, say up to 50 miles and they include sites like the 'Autotrader'. If you buy from a private seller, you must remember you have virtually no consumer rights, but you will probably pay less. If you buy from a 'Trader', be aware that not all 'Traders' have garage premises and they may be working from home. If it is a garage, try to check their reputation, but as a 'Retailer' of used cars, they are covered by various trading standards and despite what they may offer as a warranty, they have to deal with any problems that are presumed to have been present at the time of sale and for six months after purchase in England and Wales. Many dealers are quite good; it is often a safer option and they can handle part exchanges. A good source of purchase is through the clubs and dealers that only deal with 75s and ZTs.

You will probably not find an R40 in the flashy high street dealer showrooms these days. Although such dealers do take them in for part exchange, they will usually 'trade' them out to a smaller second hand car dealer or pass them through a car auction.

You can buy from such auctions, but unless you are confident or willing to take a risk, they are best avoided.

All the usual checks should be made (plus those relating to potential problems in the previous chapter), as you would with any second hand car purchase, so if you are not confident, get a friend or club member to go with you. In fact, it is probably a good idea to take someone else with you anyway, because even if you are confident, a second pair of eyes may see something like torn upholstery that your partner notices, while you're engrossed with the technical aspects of the car. Many club members will not mind answering questions and many of the specialist dealers are often willing to offer advice. They may be able to put you in touch with a car they know is for sale and sometimes even take a note of your requirements and keep a look out for what you want. Take a check list of potential problems, as listed in the earlier chapters of this book and any more you find in the internet forums. You may be prepared to accept a non-working fan, but you will at least know how much it is to replace, which you can then use as a price bargaining tool.

There should be no rust on the bodywork, walk away if there is. Some early cars made at Cowley and identified by satin-black sills below the doors, can show rust marks on door and boot edges, but anything else points to previous poor repairs. The external bright work is stainless, except the chrome door handles on the Rover 75, which can pit with age. When checking the interior, make sure the four black plastic trims at the bottom of each door opening are intact, as they have a habit of being kicked off.

When checking the engine oil, don't just remove the dipstick and check the level. The dipstick is sealed by two rubber 'O' rings, so there is a tendency to get a false reading at the first extraction. The correct procedure is to remove and wipe the dipstick clean, then, re-insert it fully and now the dipstick will give you a correct reading. Whilst you are doing this, you can also check on the cleanliness of the oil, but be aware that diesels dirty their oil very quickly following an oil change and this is quite normal. If the oil feels gritty, the car is best avoided.

Service History is a good thing to have, but don't think that a fully stamped service book (this is actually the back section of the 'Owner's Handbook' and is printed upside down and is read from the back), is to be relied upon. Think of it as a good indicator; however if it is supported by itemised service invoices and old MOT's, there is a good chance that the car has been properly looked after. Incidentally, you can get the full MOT history from the internet, (Directgov – MOT history request); you will need the registration number and the test number of the current MOT certificate. Having said all this, things still may not have been done (the PCV filter for example, because it was never in the servicing schedule). If in doubt, assume a full service is required, including brake fluid change, coolant change, gearbox oil change, etc; and factor the costs into the price being asked. In such cases it's probably better to have it checked over ASAP by a specialist like Jules at JMA-Cars. Obviously, buying direct from such a specialist will ensure that everything is done before 'sale'.

There are specific in-depth 'Ultimate Buyer's Guides' in club forums on the internet, such as [www.75ztcommunity.co.uk](http://www.75ztcommunity.co.uk), which will help when looking at cars for sale, because there is a lot to look at and lots of items to check, I always find it helpful, especially if you are not familiar with the R40 range, to take a long look at the handbook and familiarise yourself with all the controls etc; so that you can accurately assess their

correct operation. Some vendors/garages will actually leave you for a length of time with the car and handbook and some even let you take the handbook home overnight.

Make sure all the tools etc. are with the car, jack, brace, locking wheel nut adaptor, spare wheel; this could be full sized, possibly steel, a 'space saver' or even no spare at all, just a 'get you home' puncture kit. Check for water leaks in the spare wheel well, while you are there. Also make sure you get two 'plip' type keys (new coded keys will cost up to £200) and that the battery cover is fitted, that the engine undertray is in tact and fitted correctly, that the four plastic jacking point protectors are in-place on the underside of the sill panels, and that there are no splits to the underside of the front plastic bumper, which is liable to damage from high kerbs. This list is not all there is to look at, but it should be considered a starting point.

Because of a diminishing stock and the fact that owners are beginning to hang on to their 'beloved' cars, now is probably the best time to buy. It is even possible that prices may start rising for the best cars as they become recognised as a 'classic', after all, not many new cars give the 'pride of ownership' that a nice R40 does.

Finally, bear in mind that you are buying a seven to thirteen year old car (at least), and you can expect a few stone chips etc; so be realistic with your expectations.

## **CHAPTER 12.**

### **ROVER 75 and MG ZT MODIFICATIONS.**

This chapter is fairly short, because all R40's are well specified and not much can improve their abilities. Some very keen enthusiasts carry out modifications, such as fitting a leather interior from a scrapped Connoisseur or a later plastic front end from a Chinese built car. Others up-grade the audio equipment, but on the whole modifications are usually left to those that improve longevity and trouble free motoring.

Most of the more worthy modifications or upgrades, are contained in the 'potential problems' chapter, like the head gasket mod on the 'K' Series, the Kenlowe electric cooling fan mod and the plenum chamber mod, etc. Incidentally, a 75ZT Community member, user name 'Arctic', can supply a modified plenum chamber plastic cover, with an inspection hole (or you can modify your own), so that the drain tubes can be prodded and unblocked, without removing the panel itself.

A modification that is worthwhile is to add a reversing sensor kit to a car that hasn't got them already. 'Maplin's', the electrical/computer parts stores, found in many towns, or via mail-order, can supply a complete kit with four sensors for less than £50 and often have them on offer for £20 to £25, which is much cheaper than a single sensor for an OE fitted system. The kit is complete and you even get the cutter for the four holes in the rear plastic bumper. The spacing of the sensors is shown in the instructions and a quick look at a picture of a Rover 75 from the masses of press pictures on the internet, will give you an idea of the best position in relation to other features on the car. Don't forget to check that the reversing lights work, before you start; refer to the 'problems' chapter under 'reverse light switch'.



**'Maplin' Reversing Sensors fitted to rear bumper.**



**Reversing Sensor Display, indicating an obstacle 0.4 of metre to the nearside rear.**

The wheel bolts, five on each alloy wheel, can look tatty, but the appearance can be improved with plastic chrome covers for about £15 a set of twenty and which includes a removal tool. If the car has a locking wheel nut fitted to each wheel, then that plastic cap will need modifying to fit level with the other four. Also, remember to remove them before you or a garage put a wrench on and break them!



**Chrome Plastic Wheel Bolt Covers.**

Some cars have a horrible space saver spare wheel and in some cases, no spare wheel at all. Second-hand wheels can be purchased from E bay or a car breaker (Roverbreakers, [www.roverbreakers.com](http://www.roverbreakers.com), TEL:- 01606 738873), which will enable you to carry a full sized spare. In addition, if you buy two spare wheels, you can fit them with 'winter/snow' tyres and use them on the front wheels from November to the end of March. Winter tyres

grip and stop better in the cold weather, especially in the wet and snow, but will quickly wear out in the higher temperatures from spring to autumn. Ideally you should fit them on all four wheels, but as all, except the V8's, are front wheel drive, having all the power and steering forces and most of the braking forces put through the front wheels, makes it sensible to at least fit them to the front wheels.

Obviously, proper MG Rover rubber mats and mud flaps are worth fitting and are still available from X Part, via Rimmer Brothers etc. Actually, when you are ordering spares, it is sometimes wise to get a few spare plastic fixings, which can easily be broken, such as those used for retaining the grille, bumpers, scuttle panel, door-trims etc; especially if you are contemplating a job in the near future, such as reversing sensors, as mentioned above.



**Rear Mudflaps.**



**Fitted Front Rubber Mats.**

## **CHAPTER 13.**

### **THE FUTURE!**

Now is a good time to buy a Rover 75 or MG ZT, because they are probably at their lowest price, which is about ten per cent of their original cost. There are still a lot of good cars to choose from, spares are secure for the foreseeable future, they are durable, relatively cost effective to run, look good and are as good as the best cars being sold today. Many owners are already saying that their Rover 75 or MG ZT will see them out and they intend to keep it for the rest of their driving days.

The problem for the future is finding low mileage cars; it certainly would not be cost effective to restore a wreck, as you would for a 'classic' 1950's Rover or MG. Current owners are tending to hang on to their 'pride and joy' and, in some cases, spending more on the car than it is worth. Also, some models are already very scarce; there is a shortage of low mileage diesel Tourers for sale, as an example. Being such a good car; well respected when new and during the 'second-hand' years that followed, it is becoming a victim of its own success, but an investment for the owner, which means the right car is going to be more and more difficult to find. Many Rover and MG club officials use R40's as everyday cars, even if their passion may be a much older 'classic' Rover or MG.

Figures are hard to find, but 238324 R40's and R41's were thought to have been produced, which includes just over 27,000 MG ZT's. In 2009, 97,677 Rover 75's and 19,267 MG ZT's were on the DVLA computer (excluding the Isle of Man or Northern Ireland). It is not clear how many, of the many sold, are still left in overseas countries. The Chinese Roewe 750 and MG7 are probably not going to be sold in the UK for sometime and often the spares aren't interchangeable. It has been suggested that the Chinese version of the 1.8 K Series engine is compatible, but although the dimensions are similar, it was actually an engineered copy and therefore parts may not be of any use for UK built cars. Julian at JMA-Cars is of the opinion that diesels, especially Tourers, will survive in large numbers, but petrol versions less so, especially, what was, the very popular 1.8 K Series.

With the help of a Haynes workshop manual, or a copy of the official MG Rover workshop manual (part number RP10120E, 636 pages, but expensive at £45 from Rimmers), the 'Owners Handbook', the support of the various club's and the growing number of specialists; lifetime ownership is quite possible, legislation permitting.

Running an older car, like the R40, which is quite low on emissions, especially in diesel form and has a longer life than the now quoted seven year life of a new small high tech car, is probably better for the environment; or looking at it another way, what a waste it is to throw away a perfectly capable vehicle, only to use more resources to build a new one. Perhaps car manufacturers might not agree with the last statement.

These cars were initially bought, in the main, as work horses by companies and the like, so high mileage cars are common; not a problem if maintained correctly, but don't buy neglected examples. Equally, be cautious of very low mileage cars; they will be good mechanically and bodily, but the 'systems' and rubber fittings etc. could suffer through lack of use; 30,000 to 80,000 miles, with history, is nice.

One car you won't find is the Rover 75 Coupe project, which never went into production.



**Rover 75 Coupe concept.**



**Coupe Interior.**

On the other hand, you may see these Chinese versions in the future,



**MG7.**



**Roewe 750.**

or, even the MG6, which has many R40 features.



**MG6.**

In April 2012, the MG6 'British Touring Car Championship' contender, as driven by Jason Plato, came in 4<sup>th</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> in the first three rounds at Brands Hatch. The car was built in three months and this was its first time on a race track!

## **USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS.**

### **CLUBS**

**75ZT Community:-** [www.75ztcommunity.co.uk](http://www.75ztcommunity.co.uk)

**Club Seventyfive:-** [www.r75.info](http://www.r75.info)

**The Rover Sports Register:-** [www.thersr.co.uk](http://www.thersr.co.uk) or Cliff Evans, 8 Hilary Close,  
Great Boughton, Chester CH3 5QP.

**The MG Owners Club:-** [www.mgownersclub.co.uk](http://www.mgownersclub.co.uk) or Octagon House, 1 Over  
Road, Swavesey, Cambridge CB24 4QZ

### **PARTS**

**Rimmer Brothers:-** [www.rimmerbros.co.uk](http://www.rimmerbros.co.uk) or Tel:- 01522 568000.

**Rover Breakers:-** [www.roverbreakers.com](http://www.roverbreakers.com) or Tel:- 01606 835355.

**Auto Paint (St Helens):-** [www.auto-paint.co.uk](http://www.auto-paint.co.uk) or Tel:- 01744 818102.

**JMA-Cars:-** [julian@jma-cars.co.uk](mailto:julian@jma-cars.co.uk) or Tel:- 01492 535020.

**X-Part Dealers:-** [www.xpart.com](http://www.xpart.com) for a complete list.

### **SERVICE**

**JMA-CARS:-** [www.julian@jma-cars.co.uk](mailto:julian@jma-cars.co.uk) Tel:- 01492 535020;

### **FORUMS**

**75ZT Community:-** [www.75ztcommunity.co.uk](http://www.75ztcommunity.co.uk)

**The Rover Sports Register:-** [www.thersr.co.uk](http://www.thersr.co.uk)

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

**AR On Line:-** [www.aronline.co.uk](http://www.aronline.co.uk)

The above list is known to be useful to the author, however, it is not exhaustive and many more will be found by browsing the internet or joining a club.

**MY LIST OF ADDITIONAL CONTACTS.**