



Looking at UK sales figures, it would be tempting to conclude that the Mk1 S was a commercial disaster. BMC's 1961 55bhp 997cc Mini Cooper had been a hit. It sold more in the UK in its first 16 months (8,382) than the eventual UK total of all three Mk1 Cooper S models (8,344). The S fell even further behind in Mk2 guise, as the Cooper outsold it 4:1 in the UK. Perhaps BMC didn't realise how many buyers they could have found for the S initially? Its original task was simply to sell enough to achieve homologation for Works cars to enter world class motorsport events.

We know that BMC wanted to make sure that their new S didn't cause highway carnage at

the hands of the unsuspecting district nurse. A pre-launch briefing note to BMC dealers goes some way to explaining: "...this is an additional model for special purposes only... It is intended, in other words, that the car should only be made available to experienced competition drivers and not offered to the general motoring public." How things had changed in the four years since Mini had been launched as a car for everyone.

We don't know precisely when Mr George Johnstone placed an order for his new Cooper S, or how he convinced a dealer that he was not merely part of "the general motoring public." Maybe he showed them his racy Moto-Lita steering wheel? The car featured here was first »

Simon Drew



- ▶ **Occupation:** Proprietor of The Mini Works
- ▶ **Dream job: Got it:** running The Mini Works (www.themineworks.co.uk)
- ▶ **First car?** 1968 Mini MK2, cost £20
- ▶ **Most embarrassing Mini moment:** Dropping a valve on HMX, my Works replica, in Avignon during Minis to Marseille 2006
- ▶ **Worst Mini moment:** Accidentally filling a car up with diesel
- ▶ **Fave TV:** *Salvage Hunter*
- ▶ **Fave film:** *Zoolander*
- ▶ **Lottery win dream:** Pay off mortgage, buy a huge garage and help my friends out

FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES

Around May 1963, George Johnstone bought a new Moto-Lita wood-rim steering wheel. All he needed next was a car to which he could bolt it

Words: Monty Watkins. Photos: Jim Jupp

registered to him, in Glasgow, on 5 February 1964. There's a good chance that it was ordered in 1963, as it is widely held that there was a long waiting list for the elusive S, and he had been told that he was the second person to order a new Cooper S in Scotland. We don't know why he wanted a Cooper S but his son, William, had a very clear idea and laid siege to the ignition key.

At £695, the 1071 S was appreciably more expensive than the £679 Cooper. Well, £16 was a lot of money when the UK average house price was £2,850. Despite it costing 25 per cent of the price of a family home, there were many more potential S buyers out there than there were Ss. Current, and fourth, owner of that same Cooper S, Simon Drew, has done much delving into this

car's extremely distinguished combat history. It looks like William had it all his own way.

"In the late 1960s, AGD was extremely well known in Scottish motorsport circles. It participated in many hillclimbs and rallies, including the Rest and Be Thankful hillclimb in [September] 1965." From the minute he sequestered the car, Mr [William] Johnstone was modifying it in just the same way as most other Cooper Ss were modified, for serious amateur motorsport. His job, as a marine engineer, meant that he had a very thorough approach and had been scanning the mail order ads in the motorsport magazines in order to get the best prices for all the top hardware he would be needing. Simon now has a large and

fascinating file which contains all the ads and brochures for the goods that William ordered.

George Johnstone must have been a very indulgent father as young William progressively turned his showroom S into a specialist hillclimb and rally tool. AGD 737B still features the modifications done by William and, as such, it's an extremely important snapshot of what amateur competitors were doing to their road cars at the time. At the heart of the conversion was a full-width rallying dash, which was custom made for the car. It was equipped with the switches and components necessary for the driver and co-driver. Add to that the latest Restall Masterfit reclining bucket seats, lap/diagonal seat belts, a clever Smiths rear screen demister »

"George Johnstone must have been a very indulgent father as young William progressively turned his showroom S into a specialist hillclimb and rally tool"



A very lucky find. Not many 1071 Ss are this good. Single fuel tank was the norm on the S until 1966.



High capacity ashtray might indicate that William's co-driver was a little nervous about rallying.



William Johnstone designed his own full-width rally dash. That metal flask to the left is the Pyrene BCF fire extinguisher.



Note more acute rake angle of these Masterfit seats, a good 'anti-submarining' feature and also better thigh support for longer-legged drivers.



Early 11AC(43A) alternator copes with the extra lighting burden.

William Johnstone's rally shopping list

(Not a comprehensive list)

Steering column rake adjuster	12s.6d.
Inertia-reel seatbelts	£13/0/0 pair
Wing mirrors	£3/10/0 pair
Crypton tachometer	£10/0/0
Pyrene fire extinguisher	£3/9/6
Maserati air horn set	£6/19/6
Smiths S1501/1 rear screen demister fan	£4/15/0
Restall reclining bucket seats	£16/0/0 each
Paddy Hopkirk alloy throttle pedal	16s.6d.
Paddy Hopkirk steel sump guard	£8/15/0
Flip-top fuel filler cap	£2/15/0
Britax Nutek 'blue-spot' lamps	£4/7/0 each
Antiference Autek roof radio aerial	£1/15/0
1970 Nerus 1275cc conversion	£337/13/11



fan and numerous additional lights inside and out. His nervous co-driver had all the mod-cons and was even treated to a special high-capacity ashtray in the door pocket. The car retained its integrity as a road car as no harnesses were fitted and the S road wheels were retained. No mention is made of changes to brakes and standard dry rubber suspension.

Under the bonnet, you can see that he has paid careful attention to wet weather reliability. The coil has been moved up near the bulkhead and the heater fresh air intake tube has been shortened just clear of the bulkhead. He has the optional Lucas 11AC alternator, positive earth, to cope with the many extra electrical loads rather better than the usual C40 dynamo. And there's an imposing Harry Moss Maserati air horn set to make sure that curious rally fans get off the stage. Hoots, you might say. At some point, George must have made his own motoring arrangements and the S became William's property officially in 1967.

Simon continues the story. "Mr [William] Johnstone was a marine engineer and spent most of his career working between the UK and China. As such, it appears from the documentation that the car wasn't used much post-1970, after he had taken it to a Nerus



agent for a 1275 race-prepared, performance upgraded engine." With many motorsport classifications putting cars of between 1000cc and 1300cc together, the 1071cc S was going to have a hard time beating the 76bhp 1275 S that was introduced in April 1964. We do not know when the original engine was eventually removed but it had been comprehensively written off. There is a receipt from a Nerus Performance Conversions agent, dated 17 March 1970, which tells us that Mr Johnstone invested heavily to get his S competitive again.

By that time, BMC and the Cooper were dead, the Leyland 1275GT was the must-have street Mini and the Cooper S was in its sunset Mk3 guise. So there were 1275 S engines out there

for grabs. He went to Andrew Barton Ltd, of Newburn, Newcastle upon Tyne, for a complete rebuild to a high specification. And, craftily, the original 1071 S engine number was transplanted to the 1310cc replacement. Can't have scrutineers asking too many awkward questions can we? At a time when a new BL Mk3 Cooper S would have cost him £942, he spent £337/13/11 on a Nerus engine and straight-cut box for a five-year-old Mini. It's nice to think that he had formed an attachment to AGD and liked the way he had built it to his precise requirements.

AGD remained untaxed after August 1970 but stayed in the Johnstone family until 2008, was sold and stored. Simon Drew bought it in 2011. It has been preserved in very sound »



Its condition means that it would be a more straightforward resto than most Cooper Ss out there but Simon is keeping it just as William Johnstone left it.



The standard 1071 S clocks rehoused.



Power take-off to the left of the 'ICE' is for a windscreen-mounted movable spotlight.



You don't see too many of these... a Smith's rear shelf-mounted screen demister fan operated by a dashboard switch.



Full-width front valance was fitted to Minis up to the summer of 1964. Wing mirrors, not door mirrors, were the UK norm throughout 1960s and well into the 1970s.

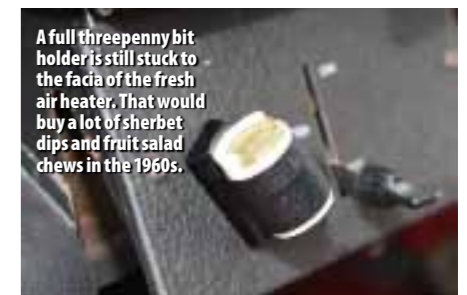


Upswept Works exhaust tailpipe is said to facilitate reversing off steep trailers or to avoid clogging with snow or mud having spun off a stage. Oblong Lucas retro-fit reverse lights were probably more common than the round type.

"With many motorsport classifications putting cars of between 1000cc and 1300cc together, the 1071cc S was going to have a hard time beating the 76bhp 1275 S"



We don't know if George Johnstone ever drove the car in competition but he let his Moto-Lita steering wheel go to son William along with the rest of the 1071 S.



A full threepenny bit holder is still stuck to the fascia of the fresh air heater. That would buy a lot of sherbet dips and fruit salad chews in the 1960s.



Halda Speed Pilot, used by co-drivers, to measure the moment when the next Player's No6 should be lit.



"I'm just borrowing the car, dad." Mr William Johnstone and AGD queuing for the next special stage. Note: famous Cooper registered V997 next in the queue. There's a car which also has an interesting history.

condition, especially the bodyshell, and still has the distinctive full front valance typical of Minis built before September 1964. As owner of The Mini Works in Edinburgh, Simon is one of few specialists in the UK able to return the car to its showroom state, or at least recreate it as a show car in its current sporting trim. He even has the original 1071cc S engine. "I plan on keeping the car exactly as it is and, as such, AGD will not be undergoing any modifications or restoration." He believes that AGD's modifications are an important historical document. If you were one of the few lucky enough to get one of the 2,426 sold in the UK, this is very likely the kind of work that you would have done. There are very few surviving motorsport warriors and it's a wonderful and nostalgic thing to behold. 📺

Simon would like to thank: Patricia and Ben for help and support; Archie, the previous owner, who approached me about buying the car in March [2011]; my girlfriend Tracy, for putting up with me and all the late nights at the garage.



1071 engine was destroyed comprehensively so William went to great expense to get this Stage 3 Nerus 1310cc S conversion. The 1071 is far superior to the 1275 but not sufficiently powerful for the typical 1000-1300cc classes.

Technical Specification

Modified 1964 Austin Cooper S

▶▶ **Engine:** 1310cc A-series S Nerus stage 3 race engine built by Andrew Barton Ltd at Newburn . Nerus race cylinder head, 11-stud, flowed, ported . Downtown lightened S roller rockers . Hepolite Powermax +0.040-inch pistons . AEG649 camshaft . 38G402 crankshaft . competition flywheel . AEG410 oil pump, three extra breathers . oil catch tank . twin SU H4 carbs . SU AUF201 fuel pump . Nerus ram pipes . AEG179 inlet manifold . Downtown 3-branch exhaust manifold . Works Special Tuning mild-steel exhaust, upswept centre-exit tailpipe . Lucas 23D4 40819 (Mk1/Mk2 S type) distributor . Lucas TAC transistor-assisted contacts ignition . Lucas SA12 sports coil . Champion N64Y spark plugs . 2ST starter solenoid . Lucas T1AC alternator, positive earth . Lucas 4TR control unit . Lucas 6RA isolating relay . original 13-gill Coventry radiator . two-blade fan . lightened water pump pulley . cast iron water pump . 9-row oil cooler . capillary oil pressure pipe on T-piece . oil pressure warning switch . electric water temperature sender . truncated heater air intake tube

▶▶ **Gearbox:** S-type remote shift, three-synchro manual four-speed gearbox . AJJ3371 straight-cut/close-ratio gear set . 3.765:1 final drive . diaphragm clutch

▶▶ **Suspension:** dry type . adjustable Armstrong dampers

▶▶ **Brakes:** single-circuit vacuum servo-assisted S type . S type Lockheed master cylinder . Lockheed type 5½ brake servo . Lockheed 7½-inch front discs . twin-pot calipers . rear S 7-inch spacer drums . steel brake pipes

▶▶ **Wheels/Tyres:** Cooper S (optional) steel 4.5x10 ventilated steel wheels . Dunlop SP Sport 145HR10 radial tyres . same size spare tyre

▶▶ **Interior:** Restall Masterfit reclining bucket seats . original red/gold brocade rear seat . Britax inertia reel three-point seat belts . original Tartan Red carpet . trim panels in grey/gold brocade . cream crackle headlining . custom-built rally dashboard, from left to right: Butlers 1589P flexi map light, Smiths stopwatch, RAF type aircraft 8-day movement clock type Mk4B 6A, Halda Speed Pilot, demister toggle switch, demister warning light, Smiths water temp gauge, Smiths 1071 S type 120mph speedometer/fuel gauge, Smiths oil pressure gauge, panel light toggle switch, Crypton MkIII BPL 10k rpm electronic tachometer, Smiths oil temp gauge, ammeter, reverse light switch, reverse light warning light, Notek spotlight switches . under-dash equipment: switched power take-off, Motorola transistor radio, single

speaker, extended switch panel toggles, Pyrene BCF type fire extinguisher . fresh air type heater, magnetic coin holder on heater fascia (complete with 1964 threepenny bits), New Era steering column lowering bracket . Moto-Lita flat-dish 15-inch wood-rim steering wheel . additional column stalk . Paddy Hopkirk alloy throttle pedal extension . Smiths rear screen demister fan . custom high capacity passenger ash tray in passenger door pocket . oddments holder in driver's door pocket . rubber-bound gear lever . Don Barrow Potti . magnetic inspection lamp . early type rear view mirror . stick-on wide angle rear view mirror . early type sun visors . Cosmic front seat angle adjusters . Maserati air horns . Halda speedo cable drive gearbox . single fuel tank

▶▶ **Exterior:** pre-September 1964 Cooper S bodyshell, full-width front valance, four-flute sill outers . Old English White (WT3), black roof (BK1) . front lights: single Notek 130 Passlite, single Notek 130 Foglite, Notek Variomatic adjusters, single (central) Cibie Oscar lamp . stainless steel front lamp bar . front badge bar . front number plate sticker on bonnet . S-spec bumpers, overrides, corner bars . twin bullet wing mirrors . roof radio aerial . twin Lucas 661 reverse lights on boot lid