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MG 'Z' models disappearing fast... Don't let yours be one of them!

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Kim Henson reports...

It is widely known that MG ZR, ZS and ZT models are disappearing from our roads fast; however, recent figures show just how rapid the decline has been - and continues - with over 78% of the cars ever built already gone.

I was fortunate enough to be invited to the original press launch of the 'Z' models in south Wales in the summer of 2001. The launch was based at Cardiff and involved extensive driving of all three new models - ZR, ZS and ZT - on a mixture of motorways, fast roads and



winding valley routes, plus many fast laps at the Pembrey circuit in Carmarthenshire.

It was notable that at this launch, with motoring writers in attendance from across a wide spectrum of magazines and newspapers, and from around the world, there was almost universal praise for the job that MG Rover had done in producing these sporting versions of equivalent Rover models. It was felt that the new cars looked good and were dynamically competent - especially the V6 version of the ZS saloon (ZS 180), which surprised many with its excellent handling and strong performance.

Speaking for myself, I too found all three versions (especially the ZS 180) to be great fun to drive, yet practical too. Indeed I felt then that the new models were already classics in their own time... and I came very close to buying a new ZS 180 in 2004.

So I find it particularly sad to hear that the numbers have declined so much. However there is evidence to suggest that the surviving cars are becoming increasingly highly regarded as modern classics. I would add that their dynamic performance has to be experienced to be fully appreciated...

SAVE THE SURVVORS!

The MG Car Club and Zed Register are hoping to reverse this downward trend of the cars disappearing with the launch of 'Save Our Zeds'; a campaign to highlight the decline of Zed MGs and help equip owners with the right tools to keep enjoying and running their cars, rather than consigning them to the scrapheap.

Data taken from HowManyLeft.co.uk (in September 2018) shows the severity of the decline:

ZR: 51,116 left in 2006; 7,964 surviving in Q3 2018; cars lost 43,152 (84 per cent)

ZS: 20,055 left in 2006; 5,478 surviving in Q3 2018; cars lost 14,577 (72 per cent)

ZT & ZT-T Z Range: 19,020 left in 2006; 6,176 in Q3 2018; cars lost 12,844 (67 per cent)

Total 'Z' range: 90,191 left in 2006; 19,618 surviving in Q3 2018; cars lost 70,573 (78 per cent)



cent).

At the end of production in 2006, the total number of cars on the road was 90,191 and today that sits at 19,618; a 78% decline. A staggering 43,152 (84%) of MG ZRs built are no longer on the road.

The MG Car Club has the Zed Register who exist to help owners to keep their cars on the road, support with technical advice and queries and be friendly faces out and about at various events during the year.

John Thompson, Chairman of the Zed Register, commented "Today's culture of financial incentives to scrap older cars when purchasing cars on PCP or lease deals versus the cost of repairing an older car appears to rule out repairs as a viable option.

There are many quality MG specialists & parts businesses across the UK; and the MG Car Club offer member discounts with some of these suppliers, so repair really is a good choice.

The Zed range of cars is an affordable way into MG ownership, and the growing Modern Classic scene, with good condition cars available from as little as £350. This makes a Zed car a great option for a young driver as a first car, as well as something fun.

The MG Car Club has also recent formed a Young Members Branch, who organise events and an online community to support the Younger end of our membership with everything they need."

Adam Sloman, General Manager of The MG Car Club, added "This decline in Zed cars is something we as a Club have heard many stories about at classic car events up and down the country.

We are concerned that an important part of the MG brand's heritage is going to be lost; and future generations are going to miss out on these much loved cars."



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The MG Car Club... was formed in 1930 at the famous MG works in Abingdon. Today, the club is based at Kimber House in the shadow of the former factory and caters for all MGs, from the earliest vintage machinery through to the newest cars.

The Zed Register... was formed in July 2002 following the launch of the ZR ZS ZT range in June 2001. Currently, the Register has 1,500 members.