

**Motor****MOTOR ROAD TEST No. 37/67 ● MGC**

## Softly, softly

*Stable high-speed cruising; smooth, quiet engine sluggish at low revs; good roadholding; clumsy steering; good brakes and economy; seats comfortable but lack support; dated finish and controls.*



**A**FTER a lapse of over 30 years, MG have re-entered the First Division of the sports car league table with their new C model in which a six-cylinder 2,912 c.c. engine is installed instead of the four-cylinder 1,798 c.c. unit of the MGB which, of course, continues as a separate model in Mk. II form. To Europeans this new power-plant is still likely to be rated as big, despite the current influx of large American-made or American-inspired V-8s. Described in detail in our October 21 issue, the new engine is a modified, lightened and seven-bearing version of the old Healey six; it develops 145 (net) b.h.p. at 5,250 r.p.m. compared with the 95 b.h.p. at 5,400 r.p.m. of the MGB unit, and produces 170 lb. ft. of torque at 3,500 r.p.m. instead of 110 lb. ft. at 3,000 r.p.m.

With 53% more power yet only 18% more weight the MGC can be expected to go much quicker than the B, and it does: top speed, for example, was 118.2 m.p.h. for our road-test hard-top

two-seater, compared with the 106.5 m.p.h. attained by the similar version of the MGB which we tested in 1964. But enthusiasts familiar with the fierce, masculine behaviour of the Austin-Healey 3000 Mk. III may find the performance of the new car a little disappointing. This is partly because of poor torque below 3,000 r.p.m. which can lead to sluggish overtaking, and partly because of the very refinement of the new unit and its subdued exhaust note, which is often drowned by aesthetically less satisfactory fan and gear-box whines. These two characteristics make the MGC much more of a high-speed touring vehicle than a sports car. Certainly the new model amply satisfies one of the prime requirements of grand touring—the ability to cruise with complete effortlessness at high speeds. The steering feels lower geared and less precise than that of the MGB, and in conjunction with an overlarge wheel and lack of lateral support from the seats, rather discourages the kind of hard cornering a sports-car fan is likely to indulge in occasionally, although the overall handling characteristics are little changed. Also GT in character are some improvements to interior safety and comfort: rubber winders for the windows, neatly recessed door locks and some welcome additional fore-and-aft adjustment for the driver's seat. However, the method of rake adjustment is as primitive and inadequate as ever, the heater has inferior controls and remains an extra, the glove

**PRICE: £895 plus £206 16s 6d tax equals £1,101 16s 6d. Overdrive £61 9s 2d with tax, hardtop £73 15s with tax, heater £15 1s 2d with tax, wire wheels £30 14s 7d, total as tested**

## MGC *continued*

compartment is crude, sun visors are not provided as standard on this open model, and no fresh air vents (or extractor louvres on the GT version) are fitted. Despite these faults, general comfort is quite good and there are few cars that can outpace the MGC at anything near its £1,163 price tag, as our performance chart shows.

### Performance and economy

Requiring full choke for the first start of the day, the new engine is one of those for which any initial choke setting seems either too much or too little, and a mile or so must be covered before power is developed cleanly. On our test car the engine idled with a whine, but made its true nature apparent at anything above 1,000 r.p.m.

From this speed it pulls without hesitation, pinking or vibration, making for pleasant driving in towns—and the quiet hum of the exhaust is the predominant noise. But at the higher engine speeds used on the open road, especially between 3,500 and 4,000 r.p.m., the quietness of the new unit becomes a trifle masked by a fan noise which although it is never unduly loud, is particularly evident at speed in the lower gears. The lack of torque below about 3,000 r.p.m. makes itself evident when overtaking, too. With the throttle floored at, say, 1,500 r.p.m., the car takes some time to build up speed until the engine reaches 3,000 r.p.m. when it begins to pull firmly and continues to do so with silky smoothness right up to the 5,600 r.p.m. limit, at which it sounds quite unstrained.

Because of this lack of low-speed torque, high revs and wheelspin had to be used during our standing start acceleration tests to prevent the engine speed from dropping too low. Nevertheless, the creditable 0—60 m.p.h. time of 10.0 seconds was achieved, comparing well with the 12.6 seconds of the MGB.

As might be expected from a capacity increase of over a litre, the fuel consumption has gone up, but the difference is small. The

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## Performance

Performance tests carried out by Motor's staff at the Motor Industry Research Association proving ground, Lindley.

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### Conditions

Weather: Warm and dry.  
(Temperature 54°—61°F. Barometer 29.4 in. Hg.)

Surface: Dry concrete and tarmacadam.

Fuel: Super premium 101 octane (RM) 5 star rating.

### Maximum speeds

	m.p.h.
Mean opposite runs	118.2
Best one-way $\frac{1}{2}$ -mile	123.8
Direct top gear	113.9
3rd gear	94.8
2nd gear	60.3
1st gear	41.5

at 5,600 r.p.m.

"Maximile" speed: (Timed quarter mile after 1 mile accelerating from rest)

Mean	113.9
Best	115.2

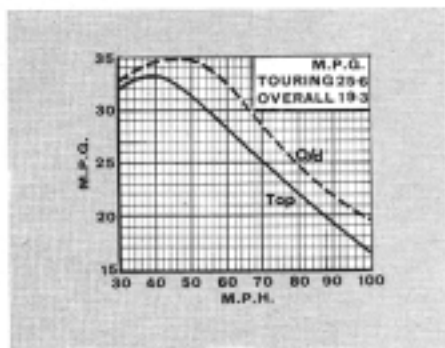
### Acceleration times

m.p.h.	sec.
0-30	3.6
0-40	5.1
0-50	7.6
0-60	10.0
0-70	13.7
0-80	17.7
0-90	22.6
0-100	30.1
Standing quarter mile	17.6

m.p.h.	Q/d		Top	
	sec.	sec.	sec.	sec.
10-30	—	—	7.8	7.0
20-40	16.0	10.3	7.0	7.2
30-50	12.7	9.4	7.0	7.4
40-60	15.4	10.8	7.2	7.7
50-70	17.3	11.7	7.4	—
60-80	20.1	11.9	7.7	—
70-90	—	12.5	—	—
80-100	—	14.6	—	—

### Hill climbing

At steady speed		lb./ton
Q/d top	1 in 10.8	(Tapley 206)
Top	1 in 8.9	(Tapley 281)
3rd	1 in 6.9	(Tapley 322)
2nd	1 in 4.1	(Tapley 528)



### Fuel consumption

Touring (consumption midway between 30 m.p.h. and maximum less 5% allowance for acceleration)	25.6 m.p.g.
Overall	19.3 m.p.g. (= 14.6 litres/100 km.)
Total test mileage	1,446 miles
Tank capacity (maker's figure)	12 gal.

### Steering

Turning circle between kerbs:	ft.
Left	34½
Right	33½
Turns of steering wheel from lock to lock	3½
Steering wheel deflection for 50ft. diameter circle	1.1 turns

### Clutch

Free pedal movement	= 1 in.
Additional movement to disengage clutch completely	= 3 in.
Maximum pedal load	= 20 lb.

### Brakes

Pedal pressure, deceleration and equivalent stopping distance from 30 m.p.h.	lb.	ft.
25	0.35	86
50	0.74	40½
75	1.0	30
Handbrake	0.37	81

### Fade test

20 stops at  $\frac{1}{2}$ g deceleration at 1 min. intervals from a speed midway between 30 m.p.h. and maximum speed (= 74.1 m.p.h.)

Pedal force at beginning	30 lb.
Pedal force at 10th stop	35
Pedal force at 20th stop	37

### Weight

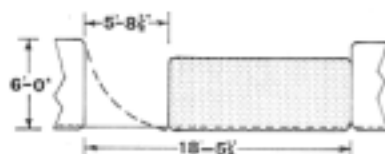
Kerb weight (unladen with fuel for approximately 50 miles)	22.2 cwt.
Front/rear distribution	56/44
Weight laden as tested	26.0 cwt.

### Speedometer

Indicated	10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90
True	10 20 29 39 48 58 68 79 89
Indicated	100
True	99
Distance recorder	accurate

### Parkability

Gap needed to clear a 6ft. wide obstruction parked in front:



### MAXIMUM SPEED

75 80 85 90 95 100 105 110 115 120 125 130 135 m.p.h.

### ACCELERATION

26 24 22 2 seconds

MGC	£1,163 (a/d)
MGB	£1,010 (a/d)
Sunbeam Alpine GT	£1,010 (a/d)
Triumph GT6	£1,057 (a/d)
Healey 3000 Mk. 111	£1,187 (a/d)







From the rear the MGC is indistinguishable from the MGB, except for a small "MGC" emblem on the boot above the octagon, and wider tyres on 5J rims that not all MGBs have.

## MGC *continued*

overall consumption was 19.3 m.p.g., compared to the 21.3 m.p.g. of the ordinary MGB and the 20.9 m.p.g. of the GT version. This was achieved on a mixed diet of British five-star petrol and French "Super Essence", and there was no pinking or running-on with the latter fuel. On several occasions, however, the plugs fouled up after a period of traffic running and needed a few bursts of high revs to clear them.

### Transmission

The new gearbox has synchromesh on bottom gear and a lever which is spring loaded towards first and second, probably

because there is hardly any free movement across the gate in neutral between the 1-2 and 3-4 slots. It is slightly heavier and generally less pleasant to use than the MGB's, partly because it is easy to notch first instead of third from second, and inadvertently override the spring protecting reverse on the left when coming down to second. Perversely, reverse itself was often difficult to select. The synchromesh, however, is effective and not too obstructive.

Both the throttle and clutch are smooth and progressive but have a long travel, giving a rather "soft" feel to the car.

With overdrive (as on our test car), goes a lower final drive ratio (3.307:1 instead of 3.07:1) and different indirect ratios to give approximately the same speeds in first, second and direct third as on the non-overdrive car. Direct top, being determined solely by the final drive ratio, remains a lower ratio (22.1 m.p.h. per 1,000 r.p.m.) than top without overdrive (23.8 m.p.h. per 1,000 r.p.m.). These ratios are generally satisfactory, except for a rather large gap between second and third—as on the MGB—which is accentuated by the torque characteristics. In overdrive top, the engine speed is only 3,700 r.p.m. when cruising

## Safety Check List

### Steering assembly

Steering box position	Forward
Steering column collapsible	No, but jointed
Steering wheel boss padded	No
Steering wheel dished	No

### Instrument panel

Projecting switches	Yes
Sharp cowls	Yes
Padding	At top of fascia

### Windscreen and visibility

Screen type	Laminated
Pillars padded	No
Standard driving mirrors	Interior
Interior mirror framed	Yes
Interior mirror collapsible	Yes
Sun visors	None

### Seats and harness

Attachment to floor	Via slides
Do they tip forward?	Yes
Head rest attachment points	None
Back of front seats	Padded
Safety Harness	Diagonal and lap
Harness anchors at back	Not applicable

### Doors

Projecting handles	Door handles recessed: window winders soft
Anti-burst latch	Yes
Child-proof locks	No



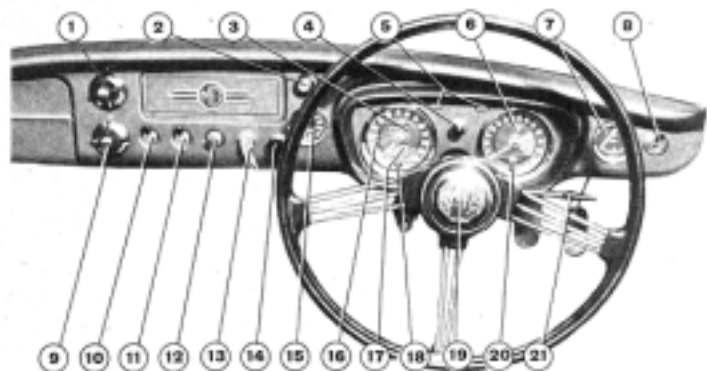
With room for 3.3 cu. ft. of our test boxes plus some soft luggage, as well as more space behind the seats, the stowage capacity of the MGC is quite good for a sports car.

at the 100 m.p.h. which the car was able to maintain comfortably on French autoroutes. Below 3,000 r.p.m. the overdrive engages reasonably smoothly; even at higher speeds, it comes in with less of a jerk than usual so it is not really essential to dip the clutch to cushion engagement.

## Handling and brakes

With 210 lb. more engine weight and an increase in front roll stiffness, pundits have been predicting tremendous understeer for the new MGC. But in fact the weight distribution is very little changed compared to the MGB, although the car is  $3\frac{1}{2}$  cwt. heavier overall. Other factors which work against an increase in understeer include an increase in power and the fact that the front tyres are run at 4 p.s.i. above the rears. Under most circumstances, therefore, the car remains a mild understeerer and although the tail can be made to break away quite readily it does so in a rather clumsy, wallowy way. The biggest difference is in the steering. To prevent it from becoming intolerably heavy, the gearing has been lowered (there are now more turns from lock to lock for a bigger turning circle) and the castor angle appreciably reduced. Even so, the steering is still almost in the heavyweight class; on sharp corners you have to haul it round from the shoulders and even on gentle ones it is a bit spongy and unporting.

These two characteristics, plus an over-large steering wheel and the tendency to cling on to it because of poor lateral support by the driver's seat, make it physically difficult to apply rapid corrections—your hands are liable to get tangled up with your knees—and tiring to throw the car about in the way that ought to



1, heater temperature control. 2, lights switch. 3, trip mileometer. 4, panel light rheostat. 5, indicator tell-tales. 6, rev-counter. 7, fuel gauge. 8, overdrive switch. 9, heater distribution control. 10, heater fan switch. 11, wiper switch. 12, washer button. 13, ignition/starter lock. 14, choke. 15, oil pressure and water temperature gauge. 16, speedometer. 17, mileometer. 18, headlamp main beam warning light. 19, horn button. 20, ignition warning light. 21, indicator stalk.

Continued on the next page

## Specification

### Engine

Cylinders	6 in line
Bore and stroke	83.34 mm. x 88.9 mm.
Cubic capacity	2,912 c.c.
Valves	pushrod o.h.v.
Compression ratio	9.0:1
Carburettors	Twin SU HS6
Fuel pump	Mechanical
Oil filter	Full flow
Max. power (net)	145 b.h.p. at 5,250 r.p.m.
Max. torque (net)	170 lb.ft. at 3,500 r.p.m.

### Transmission

Clutch	Boig and Beck s.d.p. 9 in. diaphragm
Top gear (s/m)	1.0:1 (overdrive, 0.82:1)
3rd gear (s/m)	1.307:1 (overdrive, 1.07:1)
2nd gear (s/m)	2.058:1
1st gear (s/m)	2.98:1
Reverse	3.035:1
Overdrive	Laycock
Final drive	3.307
M.p.h. at 1,000 r.p.m. in—	
0/d top gear	27.0
1st gear	22.1
2nd gear	20.7
3rd gear	17.0
2nd gear	10.8
1st gear	7.4

### Chassis

Construction	Unitary
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### Brakes

Type	Girling discs/drums with servo.
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Dimensions	11½ in. dia. discs; 9 in. dia. drums
Friction areas:	
Front	20.8 sq. in. of lining operating on 226.2 sq. in. swept area of disc/drum
Rear	63.6 sq. in. of lining operating on 127.2 sq. in. swept area of drum

### Suspension and steering

Front	Unequal length parallel wishbones with torsion bars and an anti-roll bar
Rear	Live axle on leaf springs
Shock absorbers:	
Front	Armstrong telescopic
Rear	Armstrong lever
Steering gear	Cam gears rack and pinion
Tyres	165-15 Dunlop SP41
Rim size	5J

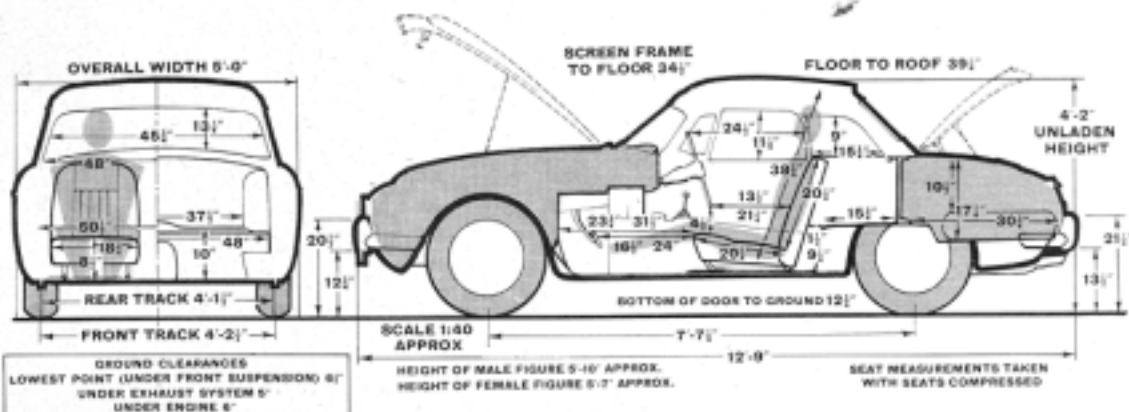
### Cowcatcher and equipment

Starting handle	No
Jack	Pillar screw
Jacking points	One each side in door sill
Battery	2 x 6 volt negative earth, 72 amp. hours capacity
Number of electrical fuses	2
Indicators	Self-cancelling flashers
Screen wipers	Two-speed
Screen washers	Manual button
Sun visors	None
Locks:	
With ignition key	Doors
With other keys	Boot and glove locker
Interior heater	Fresh air (optional)
Extras available	Automatic gearbox, wire

wheels, heater, tonneau cover, exterior luggage grid, rear compartment cushion	Leather and leathercloth
	Rubber mats
	GT

### Maintenance

Sump	12½ pints S.A.E. 10W-30
Gearbox	14½ pints S.A.E. 10W-30
Rear axle	1½ pints S.A.E. hypoid 90
Steering gear	Sealed rack
Cooling system	18½ pints (2 drain taps)
Chassis lubrication	Every 3,000 miles to 4 points
Minimum service interval	3,000 miles
Ignition timing	8° b.t.d.c.
Contact breaker gap	0.014-0.016 in.
Spark plug gap	0.024-0.026 in.
Spark plug type	Champion N9Y
Tappet clearances (cold)	Inlet 0.015 in.; Exhaust 0.015 in.
Valve timing:	
Inlet opens	16° b.t.d.c.
Inlet closes	56° a.b.d.c.
Exhaust opens	51° b.b.d.c.
Exhaust closes	21° a.t.d.c.
Front wheel toe-in	Parallel
Comber angle	0° + ½° - 1½°
Castor angle	5° + ½° - 1½°
King pin inclination	9° - ½° + 1½°
Tyre pressures:	
Front	28 p.s.i.
Rear	22 p.s.i.



## MGC *continued*

be possible. Nevertheless, it retains its ability to corner hard—with a fair amount of roll and a good deal of tyre squeal—and adhesion in the wet was excellent.

When used for a hard stop from high speed, the servo-assisted brakes claw the car down in a very satisfactory way, but for town use they feel just a little over-sensitive and not quite so progressive. A small increase in pedal pressure was observed during our fade test, and there was a good deal of smoke at one stage suggesting that a shortening of the time between stops or an increase in the deceleration used might lead to quite rapid fade. They were little affected by the watersplash, however, and the handbrake gave a good 0.37g stop.

### Comfort and controls

On normal British roads the ride of the new car is firm, well-damped and a little better than that of the MGB—certainly it is quite good for a sports car of this kind. On the cobbled streets of French towns a good deal of vibration is transmitted to the interior which sometimes builds up to a singing resonance.

Some people found the seats comfortable on long journeys, but others complained of poor spinal support causing backache. Everyone agreed about the lack of lateral support, especially at the shoulders. Much more fore-and-aft adjustment is available than in the MGB (in fact leg room is tremendous) but the limited amount of rake adjustment is still effected by two bolts at the base of the backrest; these are joined by a slotted link (which also needs a spanner for adjustment) to prevent the backrest from tilting forward in a crash. Because it is so big the steering wheel tends to foul your knees or thighs, especially of the left leg when the foot is drawn back to accommodate the long travel of the clutch. Other major controls, such as the gearlever and pedals, are well-located. Some drivers found them awkwardly placed for easy "heel and



Window winders are made of yielding material, and neatly recessed door locks are a new feature. The plastic tongue at the front of the recess locks the door.

toe" control. Of the minor controls (nearly all of which protrude lethally) only the indicator stalk and horn button are within fingertip reach, the overdrive switch, lights switch, and wiper and washer controls being on the fascia but not too far away from the driver's hands. The floor dipswitch requires an even longer backward movement of the left leg than does the clutch, though it is easier to work than the B's.

With the thin-pillared optional plastic hardtop, all-round visibility is good, and it is possible to see the back of the boot when parking, although the mirror is rather small. The headlights gave an exceptionally powerful and well-aimed blaze of light both when dipped and when on main beam.

During wet weather the car is liable to steam up, and although the rather noisy fan cleared the windscreen fairly quickly we would have welcomed separate fresh air vents to increase the flow through the car; it is not possible to leave the windows open for very long when it is raining without getting wet. None of our test staff like the old-fashioned rotary heater controls which are troublesome to set by feel in the dark. Using them in conjunction with the flaps in the transmission tunnel it is difficult to maintain a constant and comfortable temperature, especially if the car's speed is constantly changing.

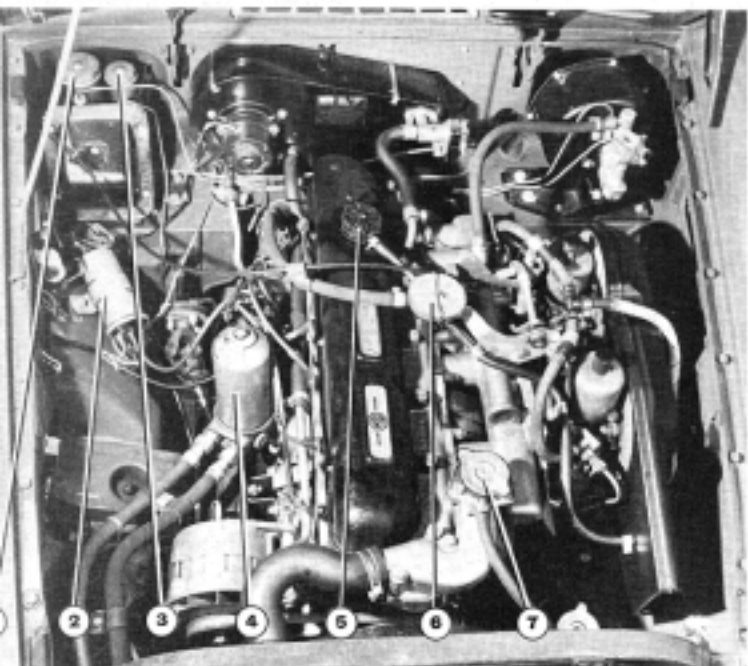
In the indirect gears the gearbox emitted a powerful whine which combined with the noise produced by the engine fan to drown out the exhaust note. Wind noise was moderate up to 80 m.p.h. in our hardtop with all the windows properly shut and would have been lower with better sealing. Road noise on some surfaces, however, was considerable, perhaps because of the difficulty of insulating the inboard ends of the front torsion bars.

### Fittings and furniture

The traditional set of MG instruments includes a large, clear speedometer and a matching rev-counter which was up to 600 r.p.m. fast on our test car, as well as a combined oil pressure and water temperature gauge, and a fuel gauge. There is an ashtray on the transmission hump, a lockable glove compartment and a rigid pocket by the front passenger's legs for oddments. A carpeted platform behind the seats—which can be fitted with an optional cushion—provides space for two small children or quite a lot of small luggage. The boot would accept 3.3 cu.ft. of our test boxes around and above the spare wheel. The hardtop is clamped on in six places, four of which need either a spanner or a screwdriver to release.

### Servicing and accessibility

The rather heavy bonnet is released by a pull knob awkwardly located on the passenger's side. The big six-cylinder engine fits neatly into the MG compartment and all the most important service points such as the oil filler cap, radiator filler cap, dipstick, carburettors brake and clutch reservoirs, coil, distributor and oil filter are easy to get at. Servicing is needed every 3,000 miles and the requirements are similar to those of the MGB. The pillar type jack was easy to use.



1, brake reservoir. 2, coil. 3, clutch reservoir. 4, oil filter. 5, oil filler cap. 6, crankcase breather valve. 7, coolant filler cap.

### Insurance

ADA group rating	7
Lloyd's	7