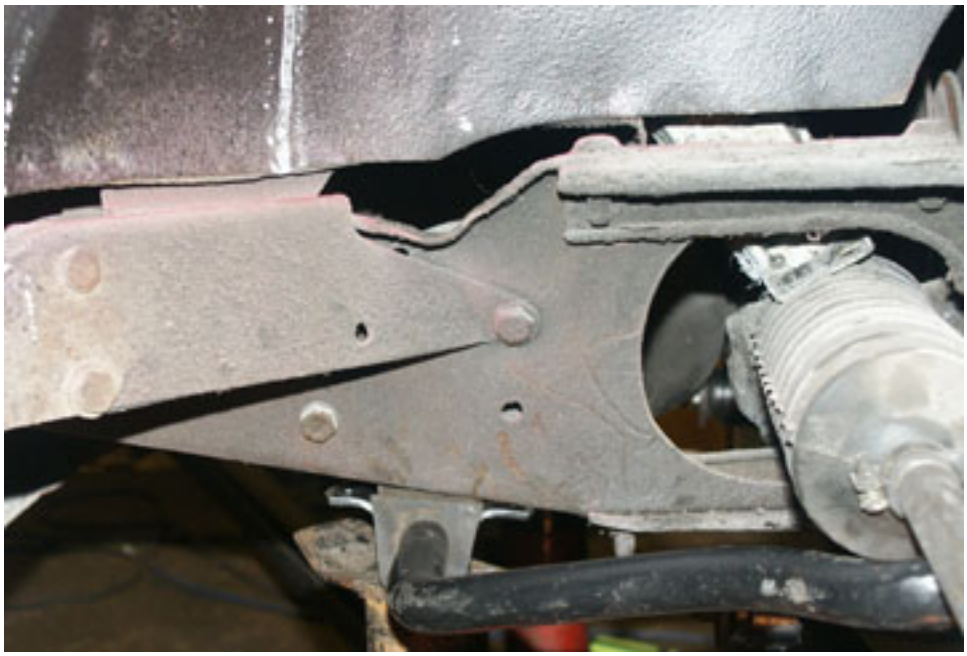
Fitting an MGB sway bar to an MGA

The Moss Motors catalogue (and probably other vendors as well) sells MGB sway bars for use on the MGA and rather optimistically states “Some fabrication will be required to mount the sway bar brackets to the MGA frame.” I’d never bothered researching this, as I use specially made sway bars on my MGA race car, using rod ends and solid mounts. When I went to fit a stock MGB bar to my 62 MGA coupe, I discovered that there were considerably more problems than the Moss reference had suggested.

As most MGA people will know, the MGA had a rather strange and inconvenient method of mounting the factory bar – you removed the front apron of the car, and then the front frame extension, drilled and bolted the brackets above the frame and mounted the bar, and then replaced all of the bits, including extension and apron. The stock location is shown in the ‘V’ shaped depression on top of the extension in the picture below.



Not the easiest way to mount a sway bar, and some early MGAs did not have the frame extensions with the mounting point in any case! If you buy one of the MGB kits, you couldn’t mount it that way as the rubber mounts and brackets are the wrong shape, so presumably Moss intends you to mount the bar under the front extension where any sane person would put it. Only one problem. The links provided in the mounting kit, while correct for MGB, are the wrong length for a bar mounted under the front frame extension of an MGA.

The only accurate way to measure and design proper links is to assemble one corner without the spring, and move it with a jack through the full range of normal suspension travel to see what hits what. Here is a **full length link** at **full compression** of the suspension:

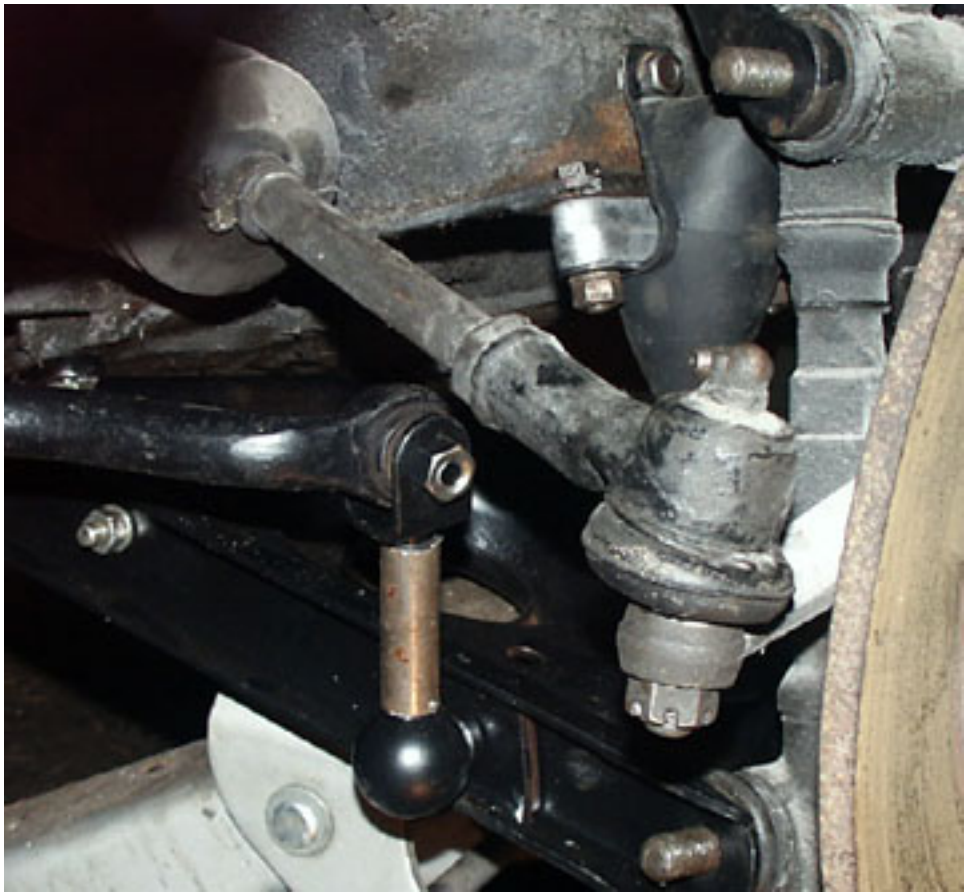
The sway bar is sitting on the tie rod.

Here is the same link shown at **full droop** of the suspension:

No interference at that extreme.

Clearly the angle of the sway bar is not optimal and the bar interferes with the tie rod at full depression of the suspension.

The better answer is to use a much shorter link and to have the sway bar end under, instead of on top of the tie rod. I cut the link to remove a section and mocked it up to test fit with a section of tubing.. Here is this **shorter link** at **full depression**:



Lots of clearance there. At **full compression** it looks like this:

The sway bar eye is much closer to the tie rod, but still clears it by at least a quarter of an inch and the arm of the sway bar is much closer to level and thus pulls the link at much less of an angle as the suspension travels through it's normal range..

The short links are set up for testing by cutting a section out of the stock link and using a piece of tubing to hold things together while checking clearances, before welding. Once length and angle of the clevis has been accurately set up, the joining tube can be MIG welded to the ends, paying suitable attention to the Metalastic end to prevent undue heat build up. Here are the results once welded. The original link is 8.5 inches from the top to bottom, and the shortened link is 4.5 inches.

The bar is a ¾” factory special tuning part C-AHH-7924, the largest bar offered from the factory (although many current race cars use 7/8” or better). I have found that it offers a decent result without needing to change the rear roll stiffness. If you go any stiffer on the front, you may have to add some roll stiffness at the other end of the car.

The car is an MGA with Twin Cam Dunlop discs, in case any sharp eyed readers spotted the peg drive holes in the hubs and wondered what was going on.

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