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WELCOME TO SAFETY FAST! INDIA. WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF MG.

Hello and welcome to the third issue of **Safety Fast!** India.

We at MG are elated at the success of the first two editions of Safety Fast! a magazine that has been around for 60 years, and has been sought after by MG family and motor enthusiasts the world over. It has excited and captured every little nudge, poke, push and leap MG has taken towards innovating the world of auto-tech.

We brought this magazine to India as it is an iconic part of MG as a brand. With the first two editions we've seen the eagerness and love for facets of MG's history which you may or not have even been aware of.

While we take a trip down memory lane and read about the iconic brand with nostalgic reminiscence, you can be rest assured that our commitment towards disruption and differentiation remain intact.

After the great reviews and launch of the Hector Plus and a new Dual Tone variant of Hector, we're excited for the upcoming launch of the Gloster, India's First Autonomous Level - I Premium SUV. With features that have never been seen before in the segment, we're absolutely sure this one will capture everyone's heart.

Least to say, we are looking forward to another First from MG India.

With this I sign off with my warmest regards.

Until next time,



MORRIS GARAGES



6

MG ZR- FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS IN 2001.

Read the fascinating story of the MG icon.



12

A STORY OF A BOY WHO GREW UP AROUND MGs.

The enthralling journey of an enthusiast who restores MGs.



16

EARLY DAYS OF MG RACING, THE TECHNOLOGY AND THE SUCCESS.

A story in innovation dating back to 1937.



23

THE EARLY DAYS OF THE MG MIDGET.

Take trip down nostalgia with MG stories from the 1960s and early '70s.



32

OUR CARS RUN ON LOVE.

Our club runs on togetherness.

31

MG INDIA CONTINUES TO PARTNER IIMPACT IN SOME OF THEIR WOMEN FIRST INITIATIVES.

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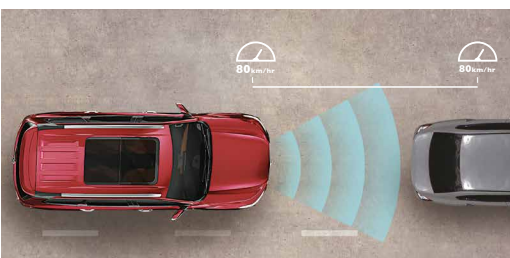


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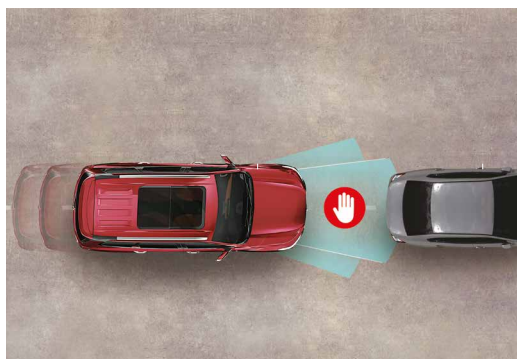


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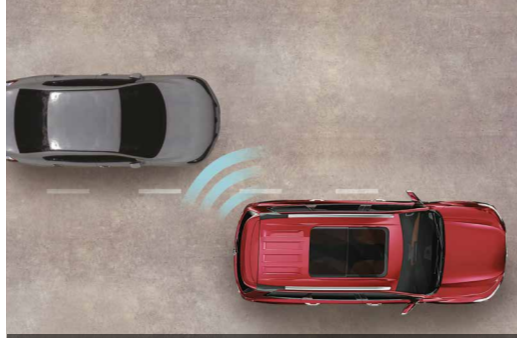
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FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS...

THE STORY OF THE **MG ZR**

by **Andy Knott**



When the Phoenix bid for Rover was accepted by BMW in 2000 John Towers had a saving grace in MG and soon the company was renamed as MG Rover. The appealing 'bubble' shape of the then Rover 25 made the MG transformation easy, with a more aggressive stance due to the lower ride height, bigger alloy wheels and the chrome front mesh which really gave this little MG road presence. It was well received by the younger generation, so much so that it was Britain's most popular sporting hatchback throughout its production life.

The ZR was launched in a choice of six colours ranging from the suitable classic contemporary Le Mans Green, Anthracite and Platinum Silver to the brighter shades including Solar Red, Trophy Yellow, and Trophy Blue. Instead of following suit with most manufacturers and naming their models L, GL, CD, etc, MG decided to name their Z range of cars on the amount of horse power the engine produced, with a choice of four engines in the ZR range. You had the ZR105 with a 1.4k series, ZR 120 with a 1.8k series, the 101PS and later on 115PS Turbo Diesel and the range-topping 1.8 VVC engined ZR 160. With a low insurance group of eight and a car that could accelerate from 0-60 quicker than a VW Golf GTi 2.0, it was an instant hit, especially as it came as standard with a sports suspension and lowered ride height, 16 alloy wheels and a modern interior featuring a Kenwood Stereo. If you wanted a bit more luxury from the 1.4-engined car that would easily return over 40mpg you

could always go for the 105+.

Cosmetically, the car only had a couple of minor tell-tale signs over the base model, these being fog lights in the front valence instead of blanks and the black ZR logo found on the boot of the base car being replaced by a more upmarket chrome-effect one. The interior of the car is where MG Rover spent the extra money, with the front wind-up windows being replaced by electrical items, electrically adjustable heated door mirrors, electrical slide and tilt sunroof and a leather-covered sports steering wheel and gearknob. The last three plus options were available as extras on the base model.

The next model in the range, the 1.8 K-series ZR 120, was also available as a base or plus model with the same exterior styling as a ZR 105. It's quite difficult to tell them apart, but look closely and you will see that the rear drums found on the 105 have been replaced by solid discs and the front discs are ventilated. With the extra horsepower, the car comes with ABS as

The MG CC has more torque than the MG ZS 180 fitted with the 2.5 24 valve V6 engine and can get from 30-50 in fourth gear quicker than a ZR 160; all this and it still returns over 50mpg.

standard and will see 60 in 8.6 seconds. The 120 is the only car in the ZR range you could order with the automatic stepspeed gearbox, which is an adaptation from the MGF stepspeed box.

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The range-topping ZR 160 is quite a different animal altogether.

On the outside it's fitted with 17 straight alloys showing off its large front and rear discs, deep body-coloured sideskirts, twin tailpipes with a metal exhaust heat shield, and just to make sure you know it's the 160 a nice little rectangular 160 badge sits below the ZR logo on the boot lid. The interior is also quite different. The Matrix fabric designed seats found in the rest of the ZR range were replaced by Monaco fabric seats with leather bolsters and colour-keyed inserts. Interestingly, if you wanted air-conditioning in your 2001-2004 pre-facelifted ZR, it was only standard on the 160 but was optional at considerable cost for the rest of the range.

The 1.8 VVC engine had been used in the





Early press photos of a Trophy Yellow MG ZR 160.

Rover 200 BRM and later on in the 25 GTi but in its 145bhp guise not the full 160. This extra 15PS takes the ZR from 0-60 in 7.4 and tops out at 131mph, and still manages to return over 35 miles to the gallon. In its day as now, car running costs were an important factor in purchasing a car. MG Rover realised this and from the very start of the ZR production included a Turbo diesel, in many ways the most enigmatic of the range, using their well-proven 2.0 litre L Series engine which had been in production since 1995. Originally starting at a slightly underpowered 101PS in the ZR but in late 2002 being tuned to a near 115PS. OK, the ZR 115 TD isn't the last word in diesel technology, boasting only a solitary pair of

valves per cylinder and no trendy common rail, particulate filtering, exhaust gas recirculating niceties and isn't regarded as a 'true MG' by some purists. But consider this: it has more torque than the MG ZSI 80 fitted with the 2.5 24 valve V6 engine and can get from 30-50 in fourth gear quicker than a ZR 160; all this and it still returns over 50mpg.

To look at, the diesel ZR it looks like the base and + models – the only giveaway that it's a diesel being the down-turned tailpipe. The way to tell the two diesel models apart is that the rear brakes differ on the two variations with drums being fitted to the 101PS models and discs to the 115PS version.

In 2004 Peter Stevens was charged with giving the Z range a makeover. The ZR



Rover 200 BMR used the range topping VVC K series engine.

makeover exuded even more attitude than before, with the rear number plate being relocated to the bumper and the front end having the now-distinctive, slatted, colour-coded grille which resembled the MG Supercar, the SV. The facelifted model also received a revised interior with the ZR+ models having a part-leather grey Axis interior. A new 'technical grey' dash layout was incorporated which included four satin chrome rotary air-vents. Also, air conditioning was now fitted as standard on the + models in the range.

The only colour which stayed available throughout the whole of the ZR production was Trophy Yellow. The other standard colours available during the last year of production were X-Power Grey (Metallic), Ignition Blue (Pearlescent), Rio Red, Royal Blue (Pearlescent), Goodwood Green (Pearlescent), Starlight Silver (Metallic) and Black Pearl (Pearlescent). As well as the standard colours, there was

also MG's Monogram programme which allowed you to create a truly individual car by specifying a non-standard exterior colour, customised interior and state-of-the-art entertainment system. With the earliest of the MG ZRs now being 19 years old, it's getting harder and harder to find a good one. Thankfully, with the help of our ZRZSZT Register beating the drum with their 'Save our ZEDs' campaign, more and more of them are falling into the hands of enthusiasts willing to invest in this great little car.



MG ZR Trophy SE models, sporting the Trophy rear lights.



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THE STORY OF A LITTLE BOY'S MG NOSTALGIA.

MIGHTY MODDED MAESTRO *by Stefan Bronkhorst*

First some background to MGs in my life. I am 31 years old and grew up in a village called Hurwenen in central Holland. My life was surrounded by MGs, as my Father was an MG enthusiast owning a variety of MGs over the years. As a young lad I had a succession of mopeds, go-karts and bicycles where I honed my mechanical skills, helped with tuition from my Father, who is an

excellent mechanic. When I was eight years old the MGF was introduced in Holland and I said to my parents "I am going to own one of those when I'm 18!" I was told to start saving, and just before my 18th birthday I bought one and I still have it to this day. My daily driver is an MG ZS 180 which I've owned for nine years.

My MG Maestro was delivered to the first owner on January 2 1984, by a dealership named "Sille". The Maestro was a company car for many years and in 1994 it was traded in to a garage called Donker, located in De Meern. Necessary mechanical work was carried out in their workshop and it was then put on display in their showroom.

Some 19 years later the garage in De Meern decided to close down and were selling off their inventory. I went along to have a look and fell in love with the Maestro which was included in their sale. A deal was done and on June 27 2013 I became the proud owner and trailered my Maestro to its new home. There were things to do, as it needed a new battery; some fresh fuel and a thorough clean of the fuel system. With that, it started and it was off to the MOT station. Unfortunately it failed as the wheel bearings needed replacing. But after fitting new bearings it passed second time around.

I then started driving it regularly and really enjoyed the experience. Apart from the odd minor repair here and there all went well until I smashed the sump on a speed bump!! This kick-started the first stage of my restoration. Using my Dad's workshop I rebuilt the engine and painted the engine bay, sourcing a lot of my parts from the UK. I had already planned to convert it to turbocharged, and luckily I found an original O-series turbocharged engine. Alongside the engine rebuild, I had to make a lot of parts myself which I couldn't source from



specialists, like turbo pipes, brackets for intercooler, oil cooler and exhaust manifold. The second change was to the suspension which I converted to air assisted suspension.

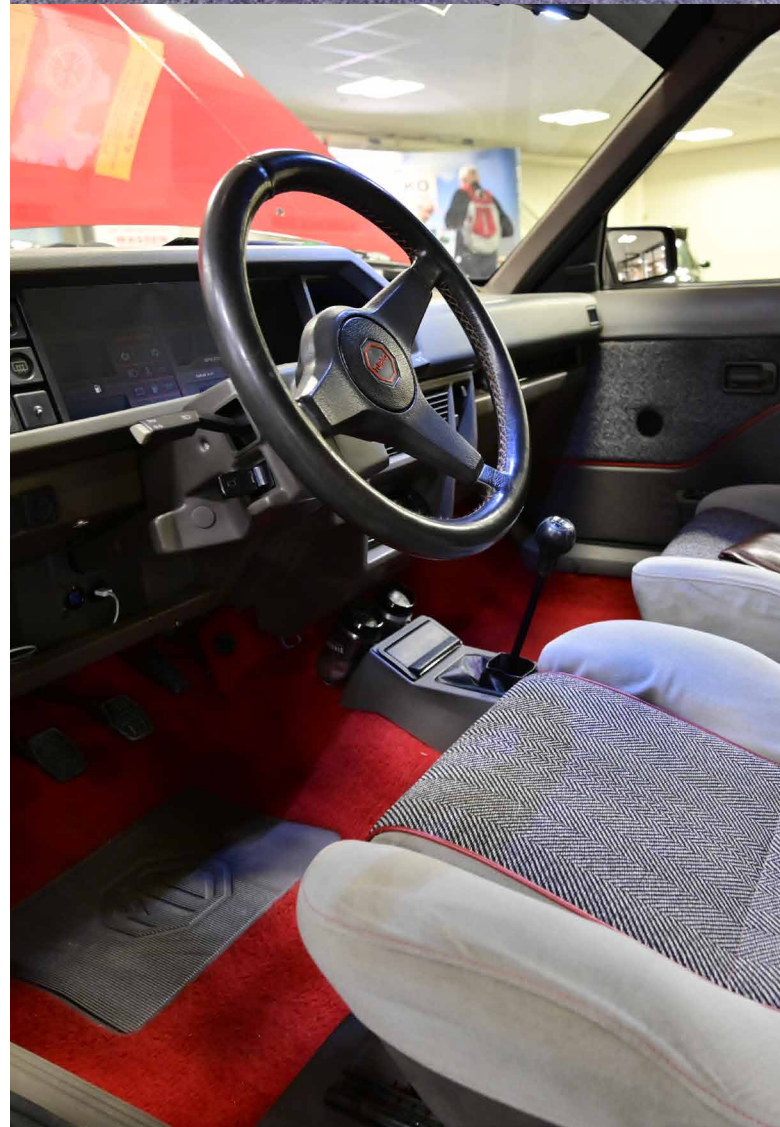
The big moment came, starting up the engine. But with the turbo and original Lucas injection system fitted it didn't run reliably, so what next? I fitted a new ECU, with a larger fuel pump, bigger injectors and some other parts to make it all work. After some adjusting and tuning I was driving again, but still upgrading on the way, with callipers from a Mercedes Sprinter and discs off an MG ZS 180.



Everything was fine until someone crashed into the rear bumper in September 2016; that was the beginning of a full restoration. I did the bodywork myself, stripping off the old paint to bare metal, making some minor rust repairs, and modifying the body to be able to fit larger wheels. Other changes I made were upgrading the headlight, and number plate lights, changing the badging, modifying the rear bumper, and removing the seams on the roof. My biggest learning curve came from doing the respray. I spent hours sanding, painting, rubbing down, and finally applying the final coats of paint and lacquer, but the results were well worth it.

I rebuilt the car in just over a month with a view to getting it ready for the MG Spares Day at Houten, in Holland, which was on January 5th 2020. The Maestro was ready by the fourth! My main aim was to have it ready to compete for the best restoration of the show. The Maestro was up against strong opposition with two outstanding MGBs, a TA, a YA and a Triple-M L-type with a special body. The Triple M couldn't make the show on the day, which reduced my opposition, and you can imagine my amazement when I was awarded the Most Remarkable Restoration of the show having 366 out of 400 points awarded by the judges.

The car is now used mainly for shows and exhibitions, although I do use it when the sun shines. It is my pride and joy and I intend to keep it well into the future.





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ROOTS GUIDED OUR ROUTES.

IN THIS CASE OUR LEGACY IN
MOTORSPORTS STARTED IT ALL.

(MG TRIALS TEAMS IN THAT YEAR,
WRITTEN BY NORMAN MCKEE AND
REPUBLISHED FROM THE JANUARY 1973
ISSUE OF SAFETY FAST!)



NWLMC Laurance Cup Trial 1937.

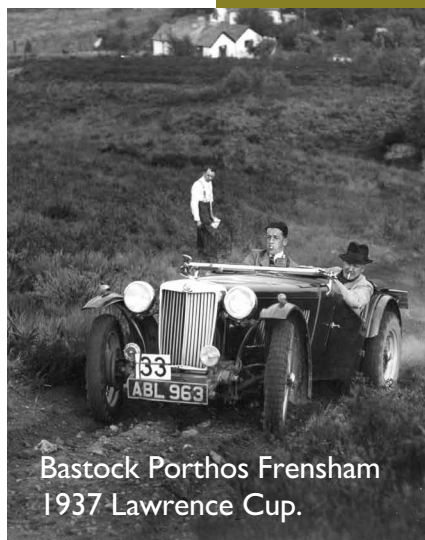
MG had at last realised their drastic mistake of O.H. cam engines and cable brake vehicles came out with a fantastic motor in 1936! That motor, of course, was the TA using the MPJG engine, the forerunner to the XPAG which was to gain such success.

There was a great deal of speculation as to what cars the two trials teams would use in 1937; in fact both teams drove identical cars, different only in colour scheme and that the Musketeers used bonnet straps. Crackers, colours varied slightly from previous years, wings, apron, spare wheel carrier and chassis were brown, the rest being cream including the bonnet and scuttle. The name was written on the bonnet with different lettering.

Musketeers had black chassis and flame red bodies. The '37 team registration numbers were Crackers ABL 960, '962 and '964 being driven respectively by Toulmin, Crawford and Jones; Musketeers were ABL 961, '963 and '965 driven by MacDermid, Bastock and Langley.

These TAs were modified, but not quite so much as previous years; maybe the

pushrod engine did not need to be tuned to produce success! Chassis mods were much larger and stronger shock absorbers and dual braking was fitted; the tandem master cylinder from the 2.6-litre being used, ideal in the event of fracture of a brake pipe on a section. Large wheels were fitted to the rear during a trial while the main road work was on 4.50 X 19; the trials wheels were 600 x 16 for the rear, two spare wheels being carried. There have been various reports stating that the cars had locked differentials. All I can say is, mine is original and is normal TA. Bodies had cycle wings steel front and aluminium



Bastock Porthos Frensham
1937 Lawrence Cup.

rear, bonnet, bonnet side pieces and doors also being made in aluminium. The gearbox had lower 1st, 2nd and 3rd gears, 1st being 19.5 : 1. The engine had the oil filter fitted slightly higher to avoid damage from stones, etc. Compression ratio raised to 7.5 : 1, tin sumps being fitted after Crawford holed his sump

on Simms during the '37 Exeter, repairing the cast aluminium with chewing gum to finish the event. Twin petrol pumps were another mod. The interior had bucket seats to give good elbow room, the dash

“

The Exeter that year saw the Crackers in TAs for the first time, while the Musketeers ran their 1408cc blown Magnettes; both teams, however, gained first class awards.

”

had a water temperature gauge in front of the driver, oil temperature in front of the passenger, two map-reading lights instead of the 30mph warning light.

In 1937 the drivers were not too happy on trying the cars out, and they took time to tune and get used to. The Exeter that year saw the Crackers in TAs for the first time, while the Musketeers ran their 1408cc blown Magnettes; both teams, however, gained first class awards. The Muskets waited until the Margate and District Club's Wye Cup Trial for their first outing in the new cars. They did extremely well for Bastook to win the Wye Cup, Langley the Committee Cup and MacDermid a

First class; they also won the team award. This event was in February, the same month as Mac won the Full Moon Cup in the Bristol MC Full Moon Trial.

The list of successes for these cars is very long. Some of the more outstanding events are: Colmore Cup, team award Musketeers. Lands End Mac: a Bronze failing Station Hill and Crackington, Crawford and Jones Bronze, failing Blue Hills 1 and Crackington, Bastock and Langley Silver failing Crackington; indeed Crackington caused a fantastic amount of failures and only Toulmin of the teams managed to clean, giving a tremendous exhibition of driving skill from the start line.

He later failed Blue Hills to gain a Silver. In the Edinburgh all drivers had Premier Awards, the team going to Musketeers while the Crackers were third. The Brighton-Beer had a disastrous acceleration test followed by a brake test.

In the latter, a 30hp Ford fitted with twin rear wheels clocked eight seconds, easily the fastest, while Langley was only 2/5ths second slower. Only one car qualified in the acceleration test, and that was Mac's. All Muskets did extremely well to win the team, Langley the Brighton and Hove Trophy and Mac the Bishop Trophy. Crawford and Jones first class awards, while Toulmin does not appear in the results. The Bristol Speed Trials saw Mac second in class, while in the Scottish Rally Langley was winner of the open car class up to 1300cc. Looking at the results of the Fedden Trial, Mac's car was best supercharged car; first time to show up as blown; all the others appear in the results but the trial was extremely tough, catching even experts like C.A.N. May unawares.

One event of outstanding interest to TA owners was the team of Musketeers being entered for the Donington 12 hours Relay, the cars being driven by Crackers and Musketeers drivers.

Orders, it seems, were for the drivers to keep revs down for the first three hours to 4,800 rev/min; after that anything went. Two cars had trouble with oiling of plugs,



“

The engine had done well over 90,000 miles since 1962. These miles were of competitive motoring and also as everyday transport – not bad for what has been called a rather ordinary-looking engine.

”

while Langley and Jones drove '965 with only one plug needing changing. It came on to rain very heavily and Crawford gave a terrific display of driving in the wet and the team went on to win the team award.

These team cars went on to be used for the Exeter of Jan '38, their new modified TAs not being ready. The new TAs were very different and interesting, the Crackers having VA engines while the Musketeers were blown TA engines which were reported to be faster than the VA – this, however, is another story. Just for the record, the Crackers won the M.C.C. Trial Team Championship for 1937.

Having stated some of the successes of the cars in '37, I must now defend them. First, though, I must say how I came by my own.

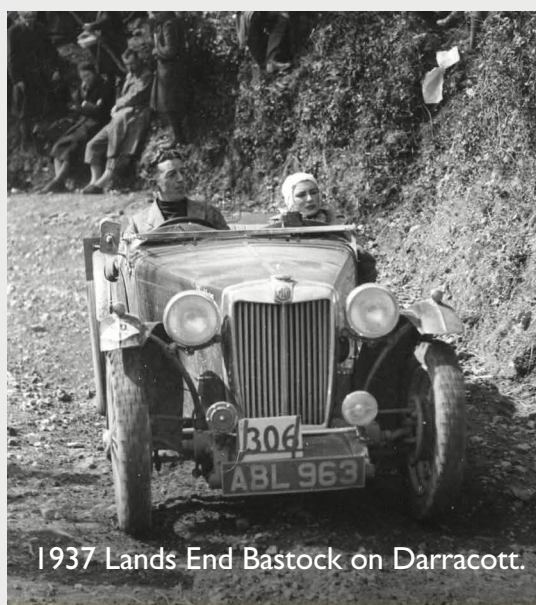
After trialling Ford Pops for three years, I decided in 1962 to change to a more competitive class, the sports car class. It was therefore with interest I saw a TA belonging to a cartoonist friend of my brother, Ralph Steadman. Ralph had blown the engine up on the way down to the



Edinburgh Trial Park Rash 1937.

West Country from London and being like my brother a poor artist, could not afford to have it repaired. He asked £80 for the car, but after a while a price was agreed and the vehicle obtained for less than half the price asked. The block was beyond repair and another was found and everything else fitted. After using it for a few events, an H.R.G. owner told me what the car was and its history, which was confirmed by Wilson McComb. I was the proud owner of ABL 962, Crawford's Cream Cracker. On the Exeter '65 I was offered two TAs for £16. These were at Truro. The following weekend I bought them, one a Tickford the other, which was in a very sorry state, was A Langley's Musketeer 'Aramis' ABL 965. These two cars would have been sold for scrap the following week. ABL 962 and 965 appear to be the only cars remaining of the '37 teams at present, but one always hopes others will turn up. Two, though, are known to have been broken. ABL 962 has been used with success for a wide variety of events. In Autocross always having fun in practice until the surface dried, then rather slow, but have won the class against E-type Jags, TR3As, MGAs and Twin Cams, that was in a sea of mud where the Cracker found grip and the others could hardly move. Hill climbs used to be enjoyed, but I was tired of 'being put in the specials class (the organisers did not agree to cycle wings) however the class was won against

blown Ford Specials. The organisers at Wiscombe had more sense and there we were in the sports class. In Rallies the suspension was rather hard for a navigator but he was very good and a great deal of time was saved by using trials sections to cut down mileage. It was good fun. At the moment Autotests are popular in our Centre so it has to 'be used for that as well, and on the odd occasion has beaten the moderns. In 1965 the Musketeer engine was fitted for the Silverstone high-speed trial, in practice a big end ran. In order to drive home, the sump was dropped and the offending rod and piston removed, a piece of tin cut and wrapped around the journal, held in place by two jubilee clips. The car was then driven home on three cylinders, out of balance but getting me the 300 miles home. The old engine was then replaced. The Cracker has been used for at least 12 trials a season since 1963, these including the Exeter and Land's End; always just missing a first on the Exeter and never better than a third on the Land's End, having however cleaned every section in each event at various times. At this year's Exeter the oil filter was damaged and all oil lost. It was repaired and driven on but the engine



1937 Lands End Bastock on Darracott.

needed overhaul afterwards. That engine had done well over 90,000 miles since 1962. These miles were of competitive motoring and also as everyday transport – not bad for what has been called a rather ordinary-looking engine.

The Cracker is now once more in original colours but has telescopic shock absorbers, as the originals get damaged too quickly on rough Cornish trials. The radiator slats were replaced by stretched wire to give better cooling, as many trials' down here are in very wooded areas and overheating is a problem, e.g. oil temperature with the tin sump around

95°C, while an aluminium sump temperature never over 45°C. Another point is no door handles on the exterior, as the trees soon knock them off.

A point of interest may be a letter published in the late 1960s from Mr Rees of Leeds, who bought Mac's 1937 Cracker. It was raced by him at Donington at 109 mph; Brooklands 101 mph and 99 mph two up, this was in blown form and presumably maximum speeds achieved.

If you can bring us up to date on the activities of the ABL registered Musketeers or Cream Crackers since the article was first published please do get in touch.



Norman McKee at the wheel.

The car that made everyone fall in love with MG.

THE EARLY DAYS OF THE MG MIDGET.

This article is based on a transcription of notes made in longhand by me after talking to the various people mentioned herein during the 1960s and early '70s. I changed the English a little, and ignored the swear words, often used for emphasis. Many of the stories were repeated several times and I have no doubt that they are historically accurate; remember, it was still barely 30 years after the events described, and the old MG employees were proud of their achievements, which spoke for themselves, and when I heard the stories, it was still like “yesterday” for them.

by **MIKE ALLISON**



Cousins, Jackson and Tayler in their M Types at Brooklands.

There can be little doubt that just as small ships had launched a great empire, so the smallest of cars launched the MG marque and brought sports cars to those with relatively small incomes. In the period following the Great War, there was a plethora of small companies which brought motoring into the realms of the middle class, and many of these built worthy transports, but it was Morris Motors who really brought personal transport to those of modest means. Morris made this possible simply by cutting prices to a level that others could not achieve, but while doing so made sure that his cars were amongst the most reliable of their time. The nascent MG Car Co started building specially bodied versions of the reliable Morris Oxford, and then sought to increase their market by producing four-seat sports cars with larger engines. In 1928 Morris Motors started work on their small car to rival the successful Austin Seven, versions of which were being raced at Brooklands. The new Morris was based on an unborn Wolseley car, which company William Morris had personally bought out of receivership in 1927. It was a logical step for the MG Company to exploit this small car, and the results were quite extraordinary.

During my time at MG (1964-1973) I had the privilege of working with many of the people who had been around when the Midget was in its early days, some of them from the start of the MG car production.

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In order to create brand loyalty, a two-door saloon was created and dubbed the “Sportsman’s Coupé”, to appeal to the young family, but appealed more to the ladies, it seems, since the wind was kept out and did not upset the hairstyle, and one was dry inside should it rain!

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Cecil Cousins (Works Manager until 1969) had been apprenticed in the Morris Garages workshop and became a fully-fledged mechanic in around 1919 and rose to be shop foreman at Longwall Street by the time Cecil Kimber came, so his claim to be one of the “originals” was well justified. Frank Lowndes had recently retired, but called in every week, so I met him. Frank Stevens was similar, and his son, Dick, was a line foreman in my day, whom I knew well. Harry Herring was also just about to retire, but his son, Jack, carried as the official coach-builder and model maker until the end in 1980. These men were all at Longwall Street and followed the Factory through all changes until age caught up!

Reginald Jackson was recruited by Cousins in mid-1928 as development engineer and was joined by Hubert Charles when he moved from Cowley to Abingdon as Chief Draftsman, in charge of all development,

although Charles had worked “unofficially” for Kimber since around 1926, from the Cowley Drawing Office. Gordon Phillips had started at Edmund Road in 1927, and assisted Jackson. Fred Kindell joined the group at Abingdon, when the new factory started work, to work with Jackson, while Frank Tayler was also an assistant through a large part of the story. Sydney Enever worked at Cowley initially as a tea-boy, which entailed working with the mechanics and learning his trade, and transferred officially to Abingdon during 1931, although he had worked spells with Jackson when the workload demanded more than four hands!

Jackson was initially responsible for making special parts, and making sketches of these, for the new MG “Six” (later called the 18/80) which was taking shape in 1928, and then getting his sketches translated to “proper” drawings at the Morris Motors Drawing Office, probably by Charles.



M Types being worked on at the factory.

“

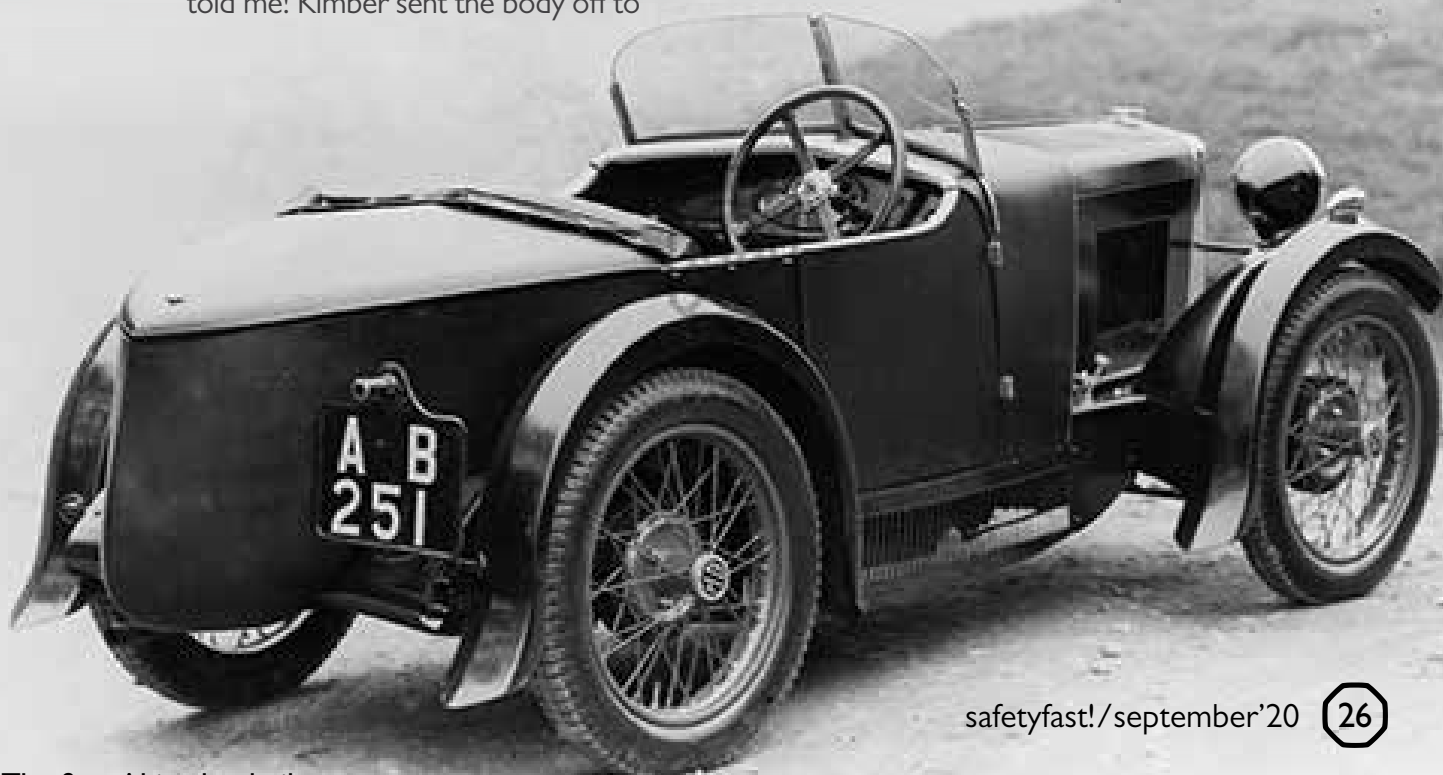
It took until early 1931 to achieve the magic 100, but Austin were beaten to the target, and even Kimber had finally been convinced that the small engine cars were the way to go... the rest, as they say, is history.

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It was during one of these visits that he saw a Morris Minor prototype, and quickly saw the potential for a small MG based on this, and talked over his thoughts with Cousins, who passed the ideas to Kimber, whose message was “Concentrate on the Six”. However, Jacko had already spoken to Charles, and he relayed similar thoughts to Kimber, who then agreed to Jackson having a chassis to investigate the idea. The job was officially known as “EX101”, but it took but a few days for Jackson, Cousins and Phillips to lower the steering column, and fit a wooden boat-tailed body, “inspired by the Type 35 Bugatti, but bearing little resemblance to it” Cousins told me! Kimber sent the body off to

Carbodies Ltd, and within a week the first two bodies arrived at Edmund Road to be fitted to chassis. Kimber liked it, and got a second chassis over, for the car to be present at the London Motor Show in September.

There was no second engine, so Harry Herring made a wooden replica engine for the Motor Show stand, and the bonnet was kept firmly shut, while the other car was accorded the chassis number EX101/1, was registered (WL 6523) and was used a demonstrator at the Show. Over 200 orders at £185 were taken for this car, while the Six only had a few firm orders at around £500 taken. This immediately set a



The first Abingdon built car, with revised, and more efficient, cable operated brakes. The number plate was a false one, for advertising purposes!

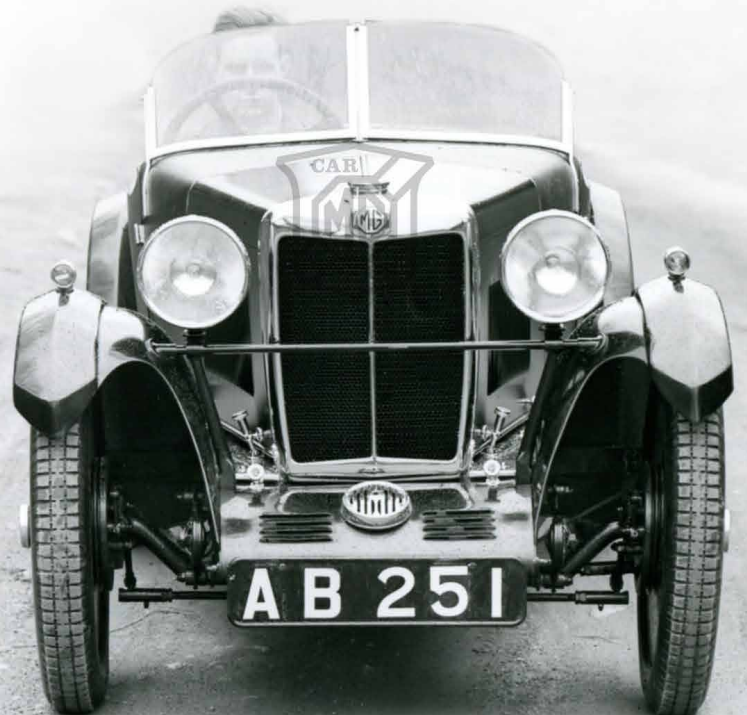
major problem, as Cowley had also had considerable interest in the Minor, and so far, only a dozen cars had been built.

Production of the engine was started, at Wolseley, who also supplied most of the running gear, and it was the following spring before the orders could be followed up. Even though the 14hp MG models were winding down, it was immediately apparent that Edmund Road was too small to accommodate the building of around 500 cars in eight months, and so a new works was sought.

Production of the model started in April 1929, with minor modifications, at chassis number 2M/ 251, the upswept scuttle of the prototype cars was done away with, to get the price lower, and the prime cost of each body fully trimmed was £5.10.0 (£5.50 in today's money) or roughly twice each worker's weekly wage in the factory. Production was crammed into the small Edmund Road facility, and 500 were built by the end of November, although finished cars were moved to various places around Oxford before shipping. Orders were still coming in at a high rate and this again raised the problem of factory space, and the now-redundant trench-coat and saddle factory of the Pavlova Leather Company Ltd at Abingdon became available and the freehold was bought by Sir William Morris, for around £50,000, with an agreement to leave the artesian well available to Pavlova

indefinitely. A further equal sum was put aside to move all equipment and refurbish the place.

The first Midget cars to be built at Abingdon started in February 1930 at Chassis 2/M 751. Chassis numbering at the time was like that, the first number or letter indicating the body style, the letter the series (M for Midget) and the next digits the serial number, starting with 251. This, at Abingdon, was stamped on the frame in groups of ten, but the withdrawal of these was haphazard, and not necessarily sequential. The 18/80 model was just a four-figured number starting at 6521. The 14/40 Mark IV had started at 2251 (the phone number of the Edmund Road factory); prior to that the 14 HP cars had just had the Morris chassis number and carried a Morris Motors guarantee. When the Mark II 18/80 was introduced, this became the "A-type" MG, with numbers starting at A 0251. The Abingdon phone number was 0251, by agreement with the



Abingdon exchange, these, of course, being the days before STD, when all long-distance calls were operator connected.

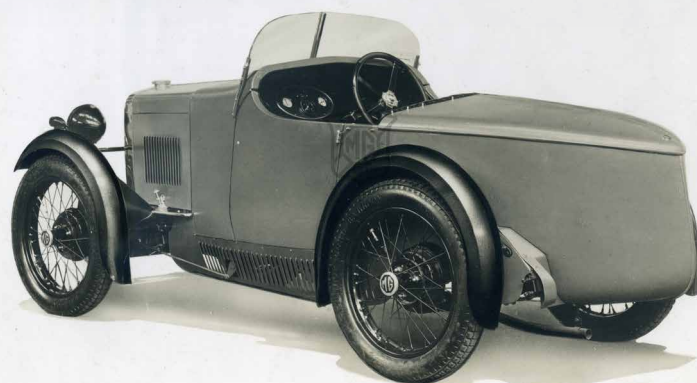
The Midget chassis frames were made at Abingdon after 1930, once the move was completed, with forged parts made by Wolseley, and by the James Motor Cycle Co., which had good foundry facilities. The axles and chassis side members were supplied by Wolseley, as were the engines and gearboxes. Steering boxes came from Adamant Engineering of Luton, electrical components by the Rotax Company of London. Most other parts were either made at Abingdon or sourced locally.

During 1929 a team of three Midgets had been taken to Brooklands by Cousins, Jackson and Frank Talyer to be driven by the Earl of March, Harold D. Parker and Leslie G. Callingham to run in the one-hour High Speed Trial at the JCC Member's Day meeting in April. It is thought that each had bought a car, and while they hoped to achieve 60 miles in the hour, they were not far adrift of their target, which surprised all! These cars have not been identified, but were registered WL 7171, WL 7180 and WL 7182, in a photograph reprinted in John Thornley's book "Maintaining the Breed".

Following this, and about the time Charles officially joined the MG Company, Kimber allowed Jackson to use one of the press demonstrator cars to see what he could do about improving engine outputs. Jackson

told me it was a blue car, which had been beaten up on several trials, and he believed "Buckingham had used it a lot". This would identify the car as 2/M 256, registered WL 6557. Checking the valve timing he found there was no overlap of valve opening at TDC, so he got an unground forging from Wolesley and hand shaped it to get a little, and then had it hardened at the Wolseley Works. The result was amazing, the engine being livelier straight away. He then obtained better results by adjusting the timing for each cylinder to be the same. From his motorcycle experience, Jacko realised that it would be better if a larger inlet valve was used, and he introduced one a sixteenth of an inch larger, polished the ports, matched manifolds with ports, and so forth. He then took the "bottom half" apart and polished rods and crankshaft and lightened the flywheel by a few pounds. All this polishing work earned the car the soubriquet "Shinio", even though the outside of the car was somewhat battle-scarred and even tatty! Jackson and Charles drove the car as a "shop car" until well into 1932, when it was broken up having served its use.

The camshaft was redesigned by Charles to give similar results, and was available in



This almost certainly the first M-type, with up-swept scuttle. It is possible to see the mixture of instruments, black speedometer, and white oil-pressure and ammeter gauges.



early 1930, manufactured at Wolseley, and fitted to all Midget engines after the 12/12 race. The larger inlet valves were only introduced for the 12/12 cars, though.

In order to create brand loyalty, a two-door saloon was created and dubbed the “Sportsman’s Coupé”, to appeal to the young family, but appealed more to the ladies, it seems, since the wind was kept out and did not upset the hairstyle, and one was dry inside should it rain!

To be a real sports car, the model needed to take part in sporting events. Trials and rallies were soon required to make classes for small, cheap cars, but exposure in racing events was more difficult, and simply “not allowed” by William Morris, unless such racing was done by owners of cars at their own expense.

Cecil Randall, a successful market gardener in Essex, had bought an open model, and while he had raced various cars as a hobby, he teamed with a neighbour, Bill Edmondson, who was just starting to dabble, and they decided to approach MG about entering a team of cars for the prestigious Double-12 Race to be held at

Brooklands in May 1930. This was around the September of 1929, and just as plans were being laid for moving the production to a new factory in Abingdon. Three cars were laid down, fitted with the new camshafts and carefully put together, with exhausts complying with the Brooklands track regulation, and with slightly modified bodies. In the event two similar cars were ordered, one by Norman Black, the London car dealer, and by Miss Victoria Worsley who was making a name for herself as a competent racing driver in a Salmson car but was using her brother’s Midget on the road.

The Randall team took the Team Prize, and the other two cars ran reliably, all five averaging around the 60mph mark for the 24-hour run, which brought a lot of press attention, so much that a Double-Twelve Replica Midget was produced and 20 of these were sold. Sir Francis Samuelson wanted a car to use in the Le Mans 24 Hours race, and A. Murton Neale ordered a similar car. These were similar to the 12/12 cars, but the bodies had to be altered to comply with the Le Mans regulations. All these cars were fitted with a larger (1.25" choke) downdraft

carburettor mounted on a special manifold, the Le Mans cars using the standard underfloor exhaust system but having a special three-branch manifold welded up by Fred Kindell.

When Charles started to work exclusively for MG, he decided a better chassis was needed as much as more power, and started work under the code EX120 on this improved chassis. However, he had already simplified the braking system on the Midget, dispensing with the somewhat complicated rod and cable system, and providing, as he had for the 14/40 cars earlier, four cables operated from a centrally mounted cross-shaft. The new chassis however went far further, providing a low frame which swept over the front axle, but under the rear axle. Fairly stiff springs were used damped by Andre-Hartford shock absorbers. This chassis was deployed at the behest of George Eyston, who had a home in nearby Milton, and had been successful as an amateur racing driver in a variety of cars in collaboration with his brother, Basil. George wanted to have an attempt at being the first to drive a "Baby car", i.e. one with an engine capacity of less than 750cc, at 100 mph. The Austin Company were spending large amounts of money with similar intent, so far unsuccessfully.

Eyston was being financed by Jimmy Palmes, of Surrey coachbuilder Jarvis, and by Ernest Eldridge, the former land speed

record holder. Eyston had put money into the Jarvis company previously, who became MG dealers for Surrey and Palmes was able to get a couple of unmachined cylinder blocks from Wolseley Motors, presumably using Charles as an intermediary, and keeping the project "under the blanket", thought Jackson.

It took until early 1931 to achieve the magic 100, but Austin were beaten to the target, and even Kimber had finally been convinced that the small engine cars were the way to go... the rest, as they say, is history.

The complete history of the growth of the MG marque into a sports car of world stature is covered in detail in the book "Works MG" by Mike Allison and Peter Browning, recently reprinted by Osprey and available from Kimber House.



This is an early Sportsman's Coupe, photo taken by George Tuck, outside the Barley Mow Inn, near Clifton Hampden on the Thames side. These were popular little cars for those progressing from the open version, and for the ladies.

MG INDIA CONTINUES TO PARTNER IIMPACT IN SOME OF THEIR WOMEN FIRST INITIATIVES.

Our commitment remains intact towards the community. Because at MG, that's what allows us to do what we do.

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We are simultaneously driving the tech enablement of IIMPACT HQ's Training & Professional Development Department. We aim to empower an additional 1800+ IIMPACT LCs across 11 states through a cascading approach. The primary focus of the initiative is on the quality content



dissemination for students and the teachers, further supplementing the program with the professional development of the teachers, thereby addressing the educational needs and concerns of the rural girl child.

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