



**VOL 41 #4 April 2023**



**Longtime MGVR racer, Pencil Jim Weissenborn leads a pack of MGA's into the Chicane at Watkins Glen in the summer of 1961**

# From The Editor :

Sumer is upon us – well almost. Our cover shows a pack of MGA's slithering through the legendary “chicane” at the original 2.3 mile Watkins Glen road course.

The calendar is full with races on both coasts and from north to south. I know many of you, like me, are getting older and our cars sit patiently waiting for us to dust them off, change the oil, put in a new set of plugs and go racing. I have noticed a pretty severe drop in the number of MG's racing in the past few years. When I returned to vintage racing the small bore group one class was chock full of great cars. Where have they gone?

Those cars are still out there, but they are lost to the thousands of vintage race spectators that would love to see them. If you are not going to race it, find someone who will. Send me a couple photos, tell me about your car and we may be able to get an enthusiast to buy it, return it to the track and enjoy what you built.

Not much this month except for Mr. MG, Bob Vitrikis who lets us have two of his writings. I say it often, but I need more of you to write something about your racing history. A fun story or a sad story – a tow car breaking down, the leader gets a flat and you're on the podium. I know each of you has something we'd like to know.

Our big 100<sup>th</sup> celebration is taking shape. We have 30 MG's entered and a nice sampling of cars for the concours. We will have MG race cars featured in Lime Rock Park's feature tent. If you have a concours MG or an MG of historical significance, please let me know and I will steer you to the right people to get your car featured.

For racers? Enter now and you won't be charged until June 1. Enter before June 1 and save \$100. We need to show the Festival MG's are going to dominate the field.

<https://lrphistorics.motorsportreg.com/events/historic-festival-41-race-car-entry-lime-rock-park-687269>

## **MG: The War Years**

By Bob Vitrikas

The following article is reprinted, with permission from the MG Car Club web site.  
Here's the link to the article:

<https://www.mgcc.co.uk/articles/mg-in-the-second-world-war/>

The article is an excerpt from a book, "MG Wartime Activities." The book was originally written by MG General Manager George Propert who headed the company during some of the war years. One could hardly ask for a better source! The new updated and expanded edition has been edited by Colin Grant, and is printed on glossy artwork paper. Indicative of the mutual respect between MG management and the workforce, copies of this book were originally given out to some members of the MG workforce as a "thank you" for their unstinting work during World War II. They were the embodiment of "keep calm and carry on." And carry on they did overcoming problem after problem as they transitioned from car production to building and assembling tracked vehicles, tanks and bombers. Copies of the book can be purchased from the MG Car Club web site book store. I can't wait to get my copy! Here's the link to order your copy!

<https://shop.mgcc.co.uk/product/mg-wartime-activities/>

Meanwhile, please enjoy reading the article below, courtesy of the MG Car Club.

### ***The Second World War Two and MG – How the car manufacturer helped win the war.***

6th November 2015

MG may be about cars to most, but how they helped during the war did not go unrecognised – with some people regarding the work in Abingdon being the pinnacle of the company's successful history.

The following excerpt comes from 'MG War Time Activities' by George Propert, former General Manager at MG. The original 59 page document was re-edited by club secretary Colin Grant so this incredible information could be shared with enthusiasts worldwide. The full version is available to purchase through the club's online shop. (please see link above)



At the outbreak of war, it was obvious that motorcar manufacture would have to cease, and the Government would need the factory capacity for essential war work.

Having this clearly in mind, we commenced to clear the factory. This was rather a sad job because it had been planned and built to suit our particular productive needs and it seemed that in pulling out the major plant, we were destroying any possibilities of making M.G. cars, and goodness only knew when we should be able to start up again, but "needs must when the devil (Hitler) drives" and we set about the job.

It was soon clearly obvious that if we were going to handle major war work, the first thing would be perfectly clear factory floor space. So our expensive paint plant and all other motorcar producing equipment was removed and put into cold storage.

This all sounds relatively easy, but even the breakdown of the plant brought its problems because to store the complete factory plant meant that we had to get a premises practically half as big as our own factory and this did not seem

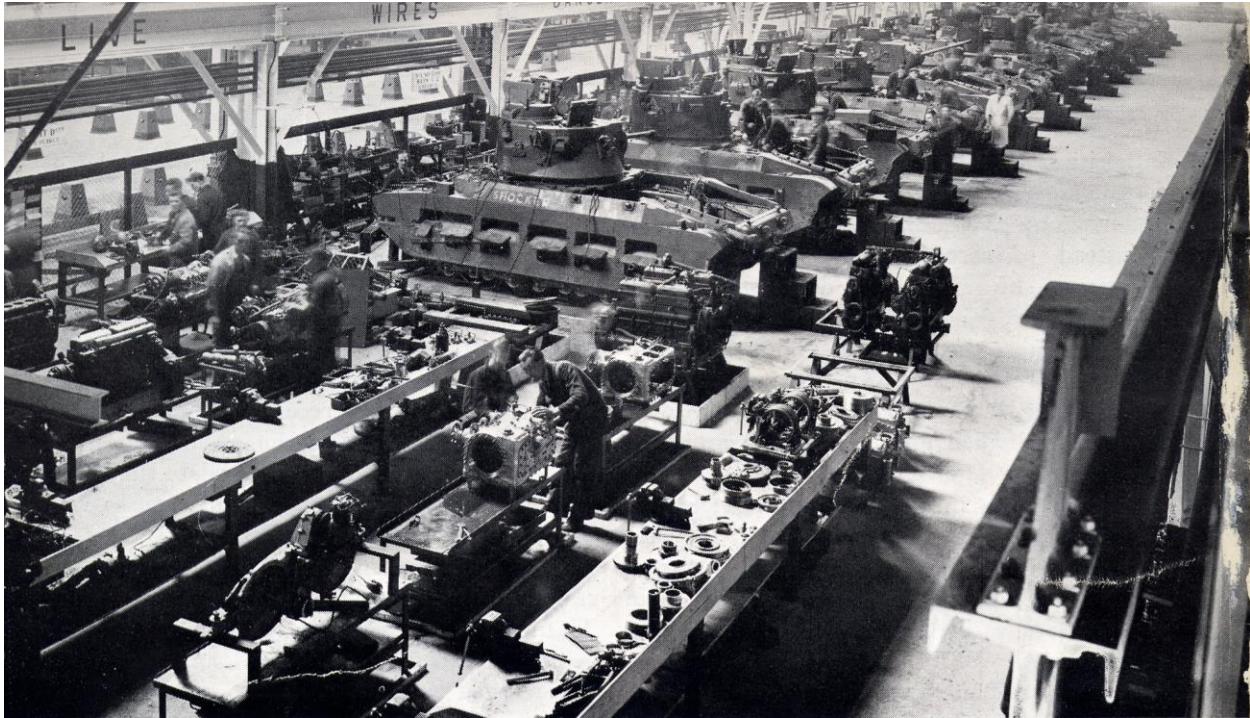
practicable, particularly in view of the fact that in clearing the factory we should also have to clear many hundreds of tons of extremely valuable motor car parts, which included the service stores material and all the left over production material, the least easy of which to store were the many hundreds of chassis frames.

Fortunately we were able to acquire a very dilapidated dis-used local factory, which at some considerable expense, we were able to put into suitable condition as a Stores. So at the end of 1939 we found ourselves with a completely empty factory and no work to do, because our idea that as soon as the works was empty, the Ministry would be rushing a job along to us was quite erroneous.

This was very understandable because the Ministry had to get themselves sorted out and it is quite conceivable that they had quite a vague idea at that time what they would need. In any case, to get any sizeable job under way, a good many months are required. However, we had crossed the first bridge and stood ready. Prior to this we had been taking all sorts of enquiries into the possibilities of acquiring a contract for this or that work, but now it became a job of major importance. Because we could not stand still with an empty factory at such an urgent time of need, our Managing Director and the General Manager made it their personal job to scour the country for suitable contracts.

A good deal of this time was spent almost literally sitting on the door step of the Ministries concerned. Looked at from this distant date, it is almost amusing to think of the kind of job we were prepared to have a go at. The only thing that mattered to us then was that it should be a job of work directly needed by the fighting men. The writer well remembers on one occasion very, very seriously investigating the possibility of bridge making.

It was in actual fact, although we did not know it at the time, the birth of the Bailey Bridge\*, and although we did not undertake this work, it illustrates how keenly anxious we were to get our teeth into an important job. Aircraft rotating turrets and guns too, came into the picture, but despite all the energetic efforts, it was some time before we got started.



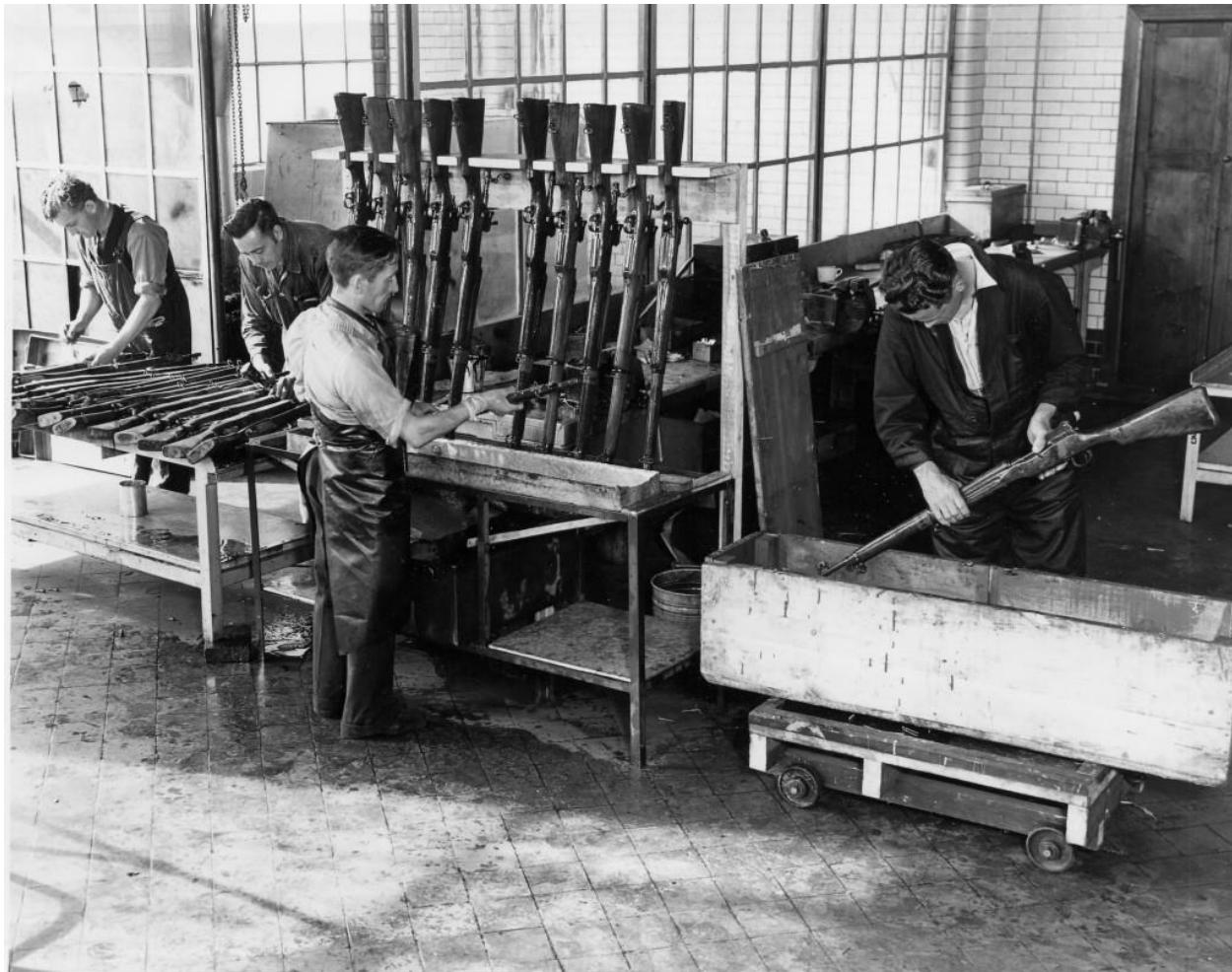
The real start was made with the overhauling of light Armoured Track Vehicles and in due course throughout the years we blossomed out from this minor start to major Tank manufacture and we have had, as the following records show, an enormous variety of Tank jobs. Having seriously started on Tank work, quite unexpectedly an aeroplane contract came our way, the Parent Company having in mind, we assume, that as we were builders of really high-class motor cars, we could successfully handle aircraft.

Little did they know at that time that our knowledge of aircraft work was just nil. It is quite true that if we saw something in the sky we could safely say it was an aeroplane, but as for knowledge of the detailed intricacies of production, this was a closed book to us.

The days that followed when we got hold of some of the drawings were simply terrific. Had it not been for the fact that a number of the senior staff were such grand people who were prepared to have a go at any job, however difficult, and once started never give in, I doubt very much if we should have been brave enough to tackle this, our first aircraft production job.

As it turned out I feel we can be forgiven for boasting about it. We succeeded where several other much bigger manufacturers failed and in the end we had to clean up all their failures and were entrusted with the building of every unit for this particular marque that ever went into the air.

Coincident with this hectic struggle to get aircraft work planned and production really under way were constantly picking up newer and later type Tank models and at the same time altering and adjusting the facilities of the works to meet all the new demands. It was no easy matter, and at times the obstacles appeared to be almost insurmountable, but every senior in the works had the will to win and all the difficulties, mountainous as they sometimes appeared, were ultimately surmounted.



Apart from these major activities, an enormous amount of work was being put into the development of a Press Shop which was called upon to handle many hundreds of different types of Tank Stowage for the Ministry of Supply, work of a somewhat heavy nature, and in amongst it, various details of light equipment for the Admiralty and special light alloy work for aircraft.

No praise is too high for the ingenuity, which was displayed in this particular section in the creation of special tools, processes and various devices, which ultimately enabled us to meet demands from the Ministries, demands that could not be catered for by the larger manufacturers.

It has oft-times struck the writer how very true is the old adage that 'Necessity is the Mother of Invention', because jobs of work were put into this section which at first appeared to be entirely outside its scope, and it is really amazing when

people have the real will to do the job, how by some means or another they dig out of the unknown a latent ability which never had an opportunity previously to exercise itself.

It was surprising to see how one successful activity after another threw into prominence the need for further effort and with machined details in terribly short supply handicapping the production effort, the necessity for major increased machine capacity became very apparent.

To meet this demand, almost without a thought as to whether it could be successfully accomplished or not, we created a machine shop at our local stores factory and it was really amazing how the seniors concerned, again with that sheer doggedness to succeed, built up a successfully operating plant which solved the detail hold up problems that had previously handicapped the main production effort.

We ultimately found ourselves at the end of 1941 handling a surprisingly large variety of jobs with every square foot of the factory packed to its limit, and at times, taking a bird's eye view as it were of the whole set up, the change was incredible. It seemed that in a short space of time we had changed from a works filled with daylight and colour, clean to an unusual degree, well planned, with colourful motor cars moving about in active production, to a works that by virtue of the fact that security measures had made it necessary to have a complete black out with artificial light, looking very different from its previous bright clean self, with hardly room to walk about.

It seemed rather sad at times when one remembered previous conditions in the works, but one felt fortified with the thought that however different one would wish the place to be, we were undoubtedly pulling our full weight in the war effort, and this seemed, if anything, to strengthen our resolution to keep on doing more and more if possible or burst in the attempt. I think one of the major facts that kept it all so very much alive was that one day there must be an end.

Although in the major effort, we might only be a small cog, the efficiency of our set up must be helping to bring nearer the day when there would be a successful issue to the war and we could get back to our peace time occupation, and now as I write after the best part of six years of intensive effort when we are facing up to even greater problems in the rehabilitation period, with major war contracts ceasing, bringing us face to face with difficulties which again seem almost insurmountable, one has a feeling that having been successful in handling all the problems encountered in the war period, we shall, because the same spirit prevails, be fully successful in solving our immediate problems and getting launched on our post-war work.

# For Sale

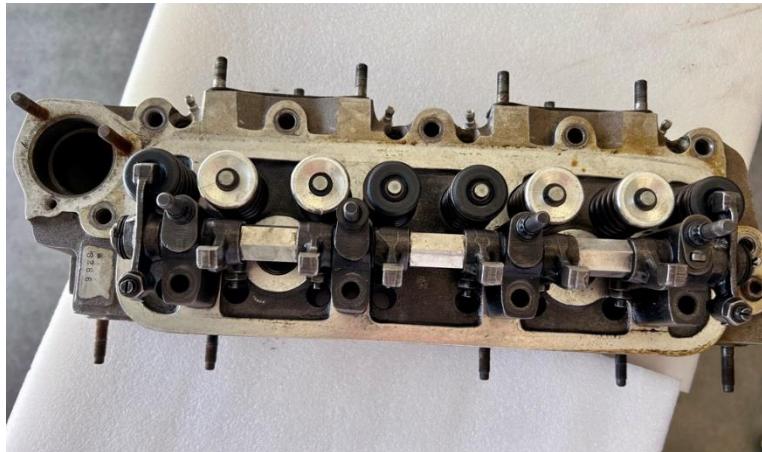
I KNOW YOU HAVE STUFF YOU LOOK  
AT AND WONDER WHY YOU ATILL HAVE IT.  
SEND IT HERE AND WE'LL GET IT A NEW OWNER.



## SLIGHTLY USED ALUMINUM CROSS FLOW HEAD – COMPLETE

Not many hours on this head. It is complete with valves, springs, rockers, pedestal. If you wanted, it is ready for installation. I would recommend taking it apart, do a thorough cleaning and make it ready to give you an instant 20-30% power increase. Head number S286.

**\$1,400 located southern California. Can ship.**



TOP VIEW  
SHOWING ROCKERS & PEDESTAL

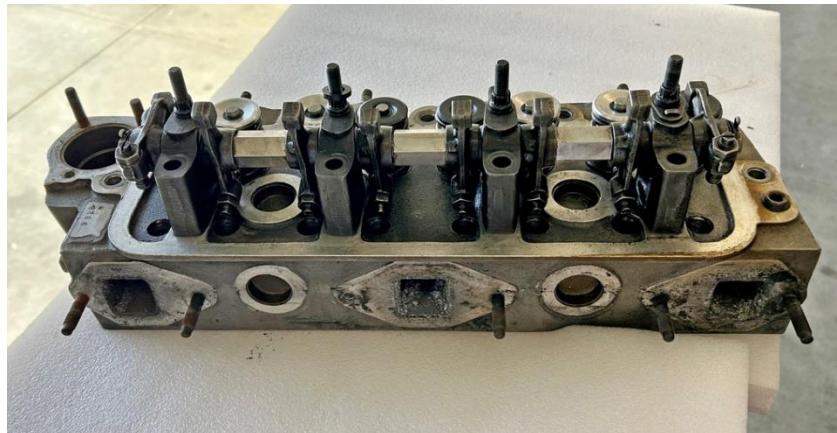
BOTTOM COMBUSTION  
CHAMBER & VALVES



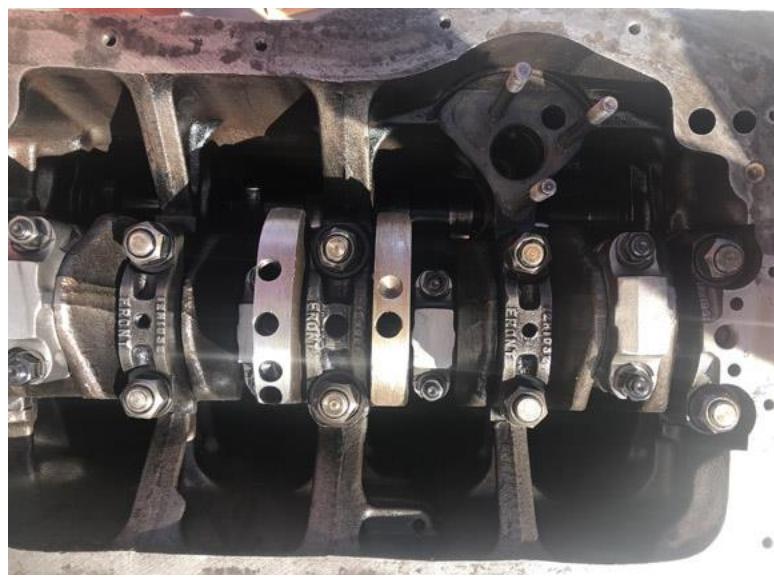
CROSSFLOW HEAD  
INTAKE SIDE



CROSSFLOW HEAD  
EXHAUST SIDE



**5 MAIN BEARING MGB SHORT BLOCK AVAILABLE 8GK-WE-H 1375**



Late Hi compression engine, slightly prepared, balanced, not sure of cam. No oil pump, distributor, flywheel, front pulley, waterpump. Turns freely. \$500 located So California  
OFFERS CONSIDERED ON HEAD OR BLOCK    **Dave Nicholas** [davnik6@gmail.com](mailto:davnik6@gmail.com)



# GoF WEST 2023

## Registration Form

### Carlsbad, California

### Oct 16-20, 2023

Regist. #

staff use



~~\$60 USD before March 31, 2023~~

**\$75 USD Apr 1-Aug 31, 2023**

**\$100 USD as of Sept 1, 2023**

**In-Spirit \$30 USD**

In-Spirit registrants will receive a patch, pin, dash plaque and event guide

Cancellations will revert to "In-Spirit." If received by May 31, 2022 the remainder less fees incurred will be refunded. If received after May 31, 2023, no refunds will be given.

Names — as you want them on your name tag and the event guide

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Co-driver \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Children, under 12, (or dependents) who will be attending with you: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Country \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #1 \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #2 \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Note: Registration confirmation will be sent by email

Primary Club Affiliation (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

Other Club Affiliations (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

Have attended \_\_\_\_\_ GoF Wests or this is my First GoF West

MG to display\*: Year \_\_\_\_\_ Model \_\_\_\_\_ Color \_\_\_\_\_

want my MG listed but will not display

\* Please notify us ASAP if you later plan to display a different MG so we can plan out the car display and have adequate class awards

If your MG has major mods from stock, please check here and list on the back. (such as non MG engine or exterior resembling a different model)

Will you be bringing a trailer? Yes  No

Will you participate in the rally? Yes  No

Will you stay at the Holiday Inn? Yes  No

Participate in the funkhana? Yes  No

Method of Payment: PayPal   
send to  
GoFWestInc@gmail.com

Zelle   
send to  
GoFWestInc@gmail.com

Check   
Make checks  
payable to GoF West

#### Hotel Information:

**Holiday Inn Carlsbad**

**2725 Palomar Airport Road  
Carlsbad, CA 92009**

**Phone - 760-438-2725**

"GoF West 2023" rate of King-\$159\* or Two-Queens-\$189\*

To get group rate, reserve by Sept 15, 2023.

\* Plus tax and fees (currently a total of 12.195%)

#### Mail registration to:

**GOF WEST 2023  
1454 CHASE TER  
El Cajon, CA 92020-8368**

or email to:

**GoFWestInc@gmail.com**

More information will be posted on the [www.GoFWest.org](http://www.GoFWest.org) website as available (can use QR code above)

or contact David & Joyce Edgar (Co-Chairs) at [GoFWestInc@gmail.com](mailto:GoFWestInc@gmail.com) or 619-593-8255

# MG: Getting Down to Business

By Bob Vitrikas



MG was flying high when this iconic 'MG Girl' drawing made the cover of the April 1932 Autocar magazine.

series. The publicity upset William Morris, MG's overseer and revenue provider, who already had a dislike for motorsport. At the same time, Morris had hired Leonard Lord as his Production Director with orders to streamline his car manufacturing business. During Lord's first visit to Abingdon, Cecil Kimber proudly showed him MG's competition shop. Lord's reaction was not what Kimber was expecting. Lord forcefully stated, "Well that bloody lot can go for a start." From that point forward everything changed; no more factory racing specials like the mighty K3. Although the fact is that MG sold their racing models to private racers and charged them to maintain their high strung steeds at the MG factory so it wasn't a money losing proposition and gained much positive publicity for MG. Nevertheless, MG would now have to use Morris production model components, just like in the early days of the 1920s. No more high maintenance overhead cam MG specific engines, chassis and brakes. The reign of Midgets, Magnas and Magnette MGs was suddenly ended. William Morris, who had personally owned MG, sold the company in 1935 to his holding company, Morris Motors Limited. The honeymoon was over.

Making sports cars based on production models was nothing new to Kimber. The Midget had taught him that sports cars based on production models are simpler and cheaper to build, using fewer parts and selling at a premium price. Style sells. Jaguar chief, William Lyons is famously quoted as saying, "It doesn't cost any more to make something pretty." And so MG realigned their products to use Morris running gear with sporty bodies made to an MG specified design. The first product of this rationalization scheme was an unlikely MG, the SA saloon. Its sleek, elegant four door enclosed body was designed by Kimber. With a wheel base an incredible three feet longer than the two seater MG sports models before it, the SA

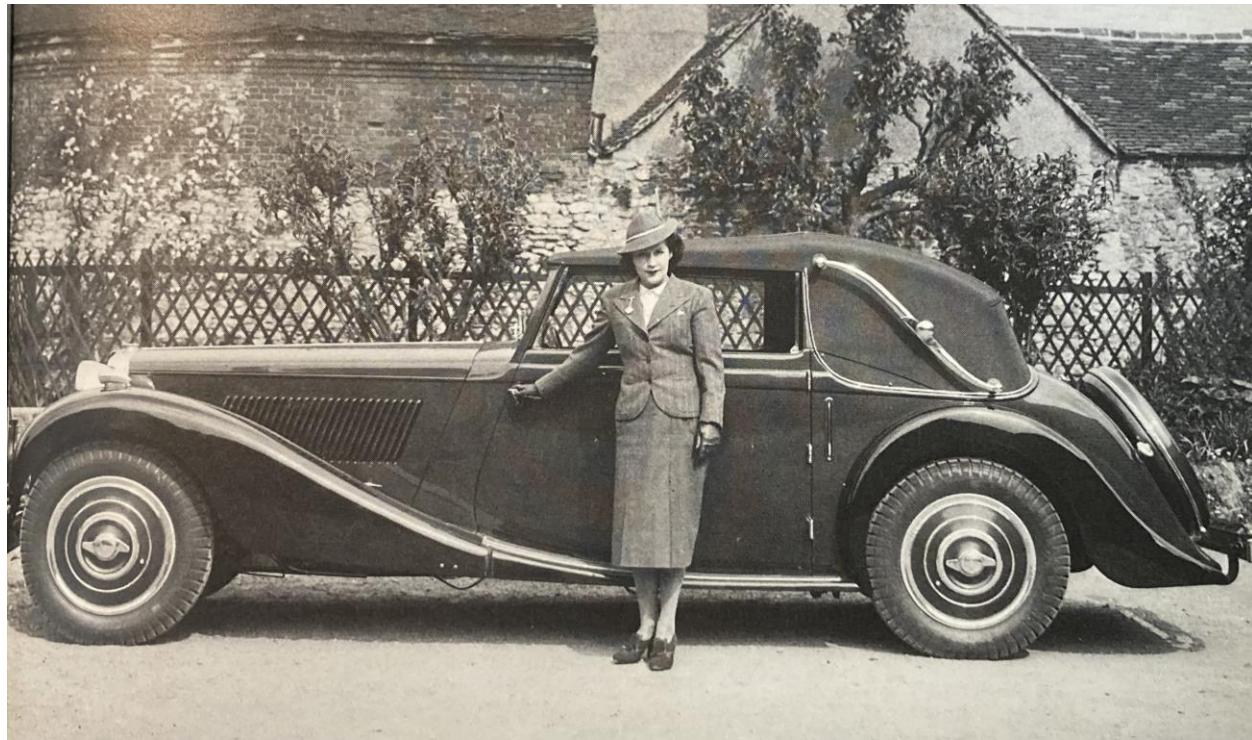
Last month we immersed ourselves in the Glory Days of the MG marque, racking up competition successes around the world accompanied by scores of Land Speed Records. The publicity value of these achievements was priceless, making MG the only British sports car to sell in large numbers during the 1930s. These accomplishments were fueled by MG's design innovation which was in turn driven by the boundless enthusiasm that infused the MG workforce. This spirit of innovation, and faith that the risks of competition improve the breed, ran counter to the conservative culture that characterized the larger British car companies in the 1930s.

It all came to a head in late 1934 when MG racer Kaye Don crashed while doing some pre-race testing for the Isle of Man race. His riding mechanic, Frankie Tayler, was killed and as a result Kaye Don was jailed for 10 weeks. In the dedication to his book, 'Maintaining the Breed,' John Thornley honored two men, Frankie Tayler and Cecil Kimber, with these words, "To Frankie Tayler who went out the way he would have wished (had he ever thought about it) and to Cecil Kimber who most certainly did not." More about Cecil Kimber's untimely passing in the next installment of this

was a radical departure for MG. Under the long louvered bonnet lived a 2288 cc Wolseley Super Six straight six cylinder engine with pushrod actuated overhead valves and backed up with a four speed synchromesh gearbox. Brakes were the distrusted (at least by Kimber) hydraulic Lockheed four wheel drum brakes. Priced at 375 pounds, the SA looked to be good value compared its predecessor the much smaller in every way 1271 cc KN Magnette priced 24 pounds more.

The SA was announced in October 1935 and the press rallied round it. 'Motor Sport' described it as "A handsome well-found car which should be ideal for fast cruising in silence and comfort." 'The Motor' charitably described it thus, "The design is not that of a super-sporting saloon. The engine is not turned to a fine edge of performance which will call for constant attention...just the type of design to appeal to the modern sports car enthusiast who has come to realize that speed with silence has a fascination all its own." Not a bad start for such a complete change of design. Unfortunately 10 days earlier Bill Lyons at Jaguar has just introduced his trend setting SS 90 model which was a worthy competitor for only 10 pounds more. Worse, the massive, lumbering Morris organization took six months to get MG SA production up to full production. By that time customers, tired of waiting for their SA, switched allegiance and in the 1930s. Just 4' 10" she successfully competed in hill climbs, grand prixs, rallys and record attempts around the world.

Women drivers frequently played a key role in MG competition successes. Kay Petre, shown here with an MG SA Tickford Drophead Coupe, was one of the top driver drove this MG SA in the 1938 R.A.C Rally where it also won its class in the coachwork competition



She bought a Jaguar instead. Bother! Weighing a stout 3,000 pounds with just 75 hp to propel it, acceleration was no better than the five year older MG 18/80 Mark I saloon. Top speed was a useful 80 mph. Indeed the handling of the MG SA was generally regarded as superior to the Jaguar SS 90. Laurence Pomeroy, Technical Editor of 'The Motor' owned a

Tickford Coupe SA for two years and described it, "...certainly the best car I have owned out of a considerable number, built both in England and on the Continent... For sheer pleasure in driving I have come across nothing which pleases me more."

Speaking of Jaguar, it is interesting to note that in 1937 MG advertised the SA with the slogan, "for space...for grace...for pace..." (See ad above). Ten years before Jaguar used the same terms in their advertisements. At about the same time as the SA production line was getting in full swing in mid 1936, a new MG Midget appeared, the TA, first of a long line of T series MGs that would define the marque. The TA offered more room than the previous Midgets with more passenger and luggage space and a larger fuel tank. The suspension was softer, brakes were hydraulic and it weighed about 100 pounds more. The weight gain was more than offset by the new 1292 cc engine producing 52.4 hp compared to its predecessor PB's 939 cc engine producing 43.3 hp. The TA's greater displacement gave it more pulling power and flexibility and the additional roominess eventually won over MG enthusiasts. The TA was available in three body styles, roadster, Airline Coupe and Tickford Drophead Coupe.



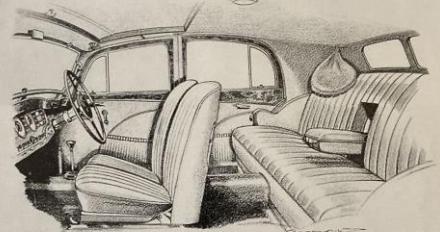
This MG SA was the lone British entrant in the grueling 1937 Mille Miglia. Driven by Tommy Wisdom and his wife "Billie Wisdom, it was doing well until it reached Florence, skidded out of control and crashed.

THE TIMES  
SUN. APR. 14. 1937



*M.G. Midget Series T. Two-Seater £212  
M.G. 1½-Litre Four-Door Saloon £315. Four-Seater Open £380. Folding Head Fourseater £315  
M.G. Two-Litre Four-Door Saloon £385. Tourer £395. Folding Head Fourseater £395  
Prices ex works: Delays, Triplex. Buy a car made in the United Kingdom*

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*SAFETY FIRST!*

*for space  
for grace  
for pace . . . . .*

*The M.G. Two-Litre Four-Door Saloon.*

THE MG CAR COMPANY LIMITED • ASHINGDON ON THAMES • BERKSHIRE  
SPECIALISTS IN AUTOMOBILES LTD. COTSWOLD MOTOR COMPANY LTD.

This 1937 MG ad featured the SA Saloon with elaborate wood trim. Note the sunroof and hanging rear seat pillow head rest

Alongside the TA and a slightly improved TB, the much larger MG line of the 2.3 liter SA, Alongside the TZ and a slightly i1.5 liter VA and 2.6 liter WA continued on until late 1939 when the outbreak of World War II put a stop to all automobile production.

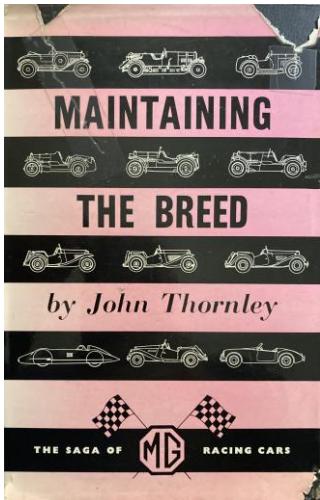


George Tuck, MG Publicity Manager and friend Beryl Goodwright, pose with a beautiful TA Tickford Drophead Coupe in George's backyard.

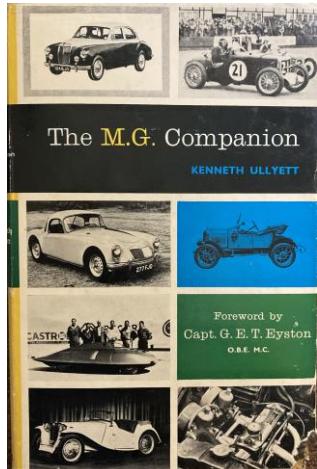
Below is a TB Roadster with blackout lights and fender flashes as England enters WWII in Sep 1939 marking the end of car production "for the duration." Per my friend Norm Ewing, the driver is Mildred Kitto who always wore stripped dresses.



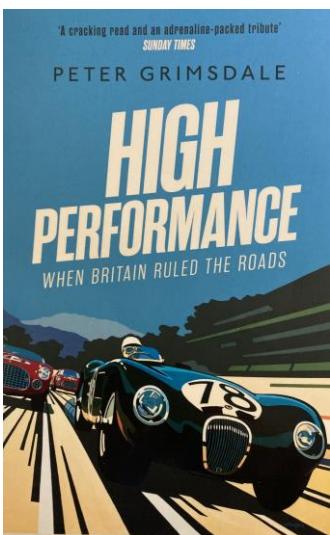
In addition to the three books I recommended in my first article in this series, may I suggest the following excellent books from which I have borrowed liberally:



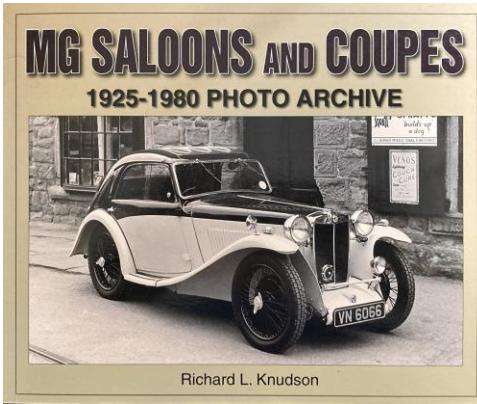
"Maintaining the Breed" by 'Mr. MG,' John Thornley. One of the first books on the MG, first printed in 1950. John Thornley tells the story of the MG from its earliest days right through to the MGA in the 1956 updated edition. Present at the first MG Car Club meeting in October 1930, and hired by Cecil Kimber shortly thereafter, Thornley quickly rose through the ranks to become MG's General Manager after WWII. If one man could be credited with saving the marque after the war, it is John Thornley. His first hand account of the development of the various MG models, especially the competition and record breaker cars, makes fascinating reading. The book is richly illustrated with photographs, engineering drawings and has several useful appendixes. This worn and tattered copy is my most cherished book, generously given to me by John from his personal library.



"The M.G. Companion" by Kenneth Ullyett is another early book on the MG, published in 1960. One of the first MG books I purchased, it too is dog eared from use. Speaking of dogs, it appears that one of ours chewed the lower right corner off the cover. Oh dear! Full of colorful anecdotes, Ullyett provides the reader insight into the men (sorry ladies, no mention of women that I could find) who were MG. About half of the book covers the development of the MGA, which had just come on the market when this book was printed.



"High Performance, When Britain Ruled the Roads" by Peter Grimsdale, is my most recent car book acquisition. Published in 2019, Grimsdale weaves the story of the British motor industry during its golden age after WWII in a way that highlights how the various personalities and their innovative cars reinforced and competed with each other during the tumultuous 'do or die' post war years. Grimsdale paints a brilliant, clear, and colorful picture of the cars and personalities of that glorious time. I couldn't put it down and I'll bet you won't be able to either! A must read for the British car enthusiast.



"MG Saloons and Coupes" by noted MG author Richard L. Knudson presents the reader with an interesting and easy read from the origins of the MG right through to the MGB. Beautifully illustrated with hundreds of period black and white photographs. Emphasis is, as the title promises, on MG saloons and coupes. These often overlooked models are a key part of MG history and the reader will find much material to hold their interest!

Please allow me to close with a quote from the front of John Thornley's seminal work, 'Maintaining the Breed.' I believe it is telling and fitting that John chose an American founding father to provide guidance for his writing. Much of John's career success was tied to America and indeed his son, Peter Thornley, lives in the U.S..

"That is best wrote which is best adapted for obtaining the end of the writer..."  
 "The words used should be the most expressive that the language affords, provided that they are most generally understood - smooth, clear, and short, for the contrary qualities are displeasing."

Benjamin Franklin  
1706-1790

*Amen.*



The terrific MGVR 100 celebration poster is available now. We need your help to offset our expenses for this great event happening this Labor Day, Sept 1-4.

Posters are heavy paper 13 x 19 and will include the artist's statement explaining the images and his vision

\$20 including postage.

Send donations – any amount will help to

Eric Russell, treasurer  
5560 Fieldview Rd  
Mebane, NC 27302-7031



**Start  
Your  
Engines!**



**Join us for the  
Rallye for a Cure  
Saturday, June 17th!**



Register your  
team today at  
[RallyeForACure.org](http://RallyeForACure.org)



**Parting Shots**



1959 MGCC  
Races at  
Watkins  
Glen. That  
was the  
way to  
tow your  
race car  
back in the  
day.

