



VOL 40 #1
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Stories from MG's
Racing past

From The Editor :

Our name says “Racers” and this issue is a historical glance back at what the name MG meant to auto racing. Inside will be pieces on Cecil Kimber, John Thornley and the beginnings of our racing heritage with the M and J cars. These articles are compliments of authors and magazines who published them.

It is a brand new year and we start on our second 40 years of existence. We’ve announced two MGVR focus races, one at Mosport in Canada and the other at Put-In-Bay, OH.

Rumblings are coming from the west coast where our surfer, macchiato drinking, avocado with everything, blonde racers are wondering if the boys from the east and fly over land could compete with the quick fellas from the left coast.

You, the membership, are letting me hang by my thumbs for sending in so little content. Best you start sending me things to publish; stuff you are selling, things you want to buy or even a letter to the editor wondering how many spokes are in a Borrani wire wheel. If you don’t, then I’ll start telling stories of my MG racing history.

To prove I’m not kidding, inside is a story picked up by a few MG publications in 2013 about my return to racing with the MG known as Honey Bee. Now – why don’t you tell me a story on how you started !



Registration for Put-in-Bay 2022 is Officially Open

Put-in-Bay, OH 1/14/22 – Registration is officially OPEN for the 2022 Put-in-Bay Vintage Sports Car Races set to take place on Ohio's South Bass Island September 20-23 with racing at the Put-in-Bay Airport on Wednesday and Thursday, September 21 & 22. Featured Marques for the event, as announced in late November, are MGs and Triumphs including "specials" running MG or Triumph engines.

The Put-in-Bay Sports Car Races take place on Ohio's South Bass Island where small-bore sports cars raced through the streets of the village of Put-in-Bay from 1952 to 1959 and one last time in 1963. Beginning in 2009 with a modest "reunion" followed by real racing in 2012, today's Put-in-Bay Vintage Sports Car Races take place on a challenging 1.2-mile hay bale-lined course at the island's airport. Unique in vintage racing in many ways, the Put-in-Bay event offers entry options for racing-, exhibition- and non-racing enthusiasts plus an entrants car show, tours of the original street course, social events and the unexplainable and often hysterical "rocker cover races".

The event will be an official MG Vintage Racers "Focus Event" meaning that group will pull out all the stops to entice MG drivers from far and wide to make a special effort to come and enjoy the "Holy grail of old school vintage sports car racing." 2022 will mark 70 years since the first Put-in-Bay Road Race back in the fall of 1952 when most all of the entries were MG TCs and TDs. Then by the late 50s Triumph TR2s and TR3s vied for preferred British entry status, dominating E production. So it just made sense to add the TRs into the mix for 2022 and to provide an excuse for an always-popular MG vs. Triumph race.

To enter, go to www.pibroadrace.com and either click on the link to MotorsportReg.com for online registration or print out the "hard copy" entry form for the mail-in version. In addition to the registration material, the web site also contains information about everything a potential entrant might need.

Also on the site can be found the latest "downloadable" flyer about the event which entrants and other PIB enthusiasts are encouraged to print out and post/distribute to help spread the word about "the Holy Grail of Old School Vintage Racing."

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It is with great pleasure that we at MGVR and VARAC are announcing the 2022 Focus Event at VARAC's Vintage Grand Prix at Canadian Tire Motorsport Park (CTMP) Mosport Grand Prix circuit June 16-19 , 2022

Mark your calendar & make plans to join us!



For those of you who don't know, Canadian Tire Motorsport Park is just north of Bowmanville ON. Formerly known as Mosport, it is a great world class track and was home to all the classic series from "the day" such as F1, Can-Am, F5000, USAC Indy cars & stock cars and was run by all the racing greats of that period. It is truly a racing hallowed ground, come and soak it in!

Not only do we have a great 4 days on an iconic track but this event kicks off the North American MG meet, MG 2022, in Peterborough, ON which is just down the road. This event is Sunday PM through Thurs, commencing after racing on Sunday, Race cars are very welcome. See link for more details. <https://mgtoronto.com/mg2022/>



The VARAC Vintage Grand Prix boasts lots of track time, exciting racing during the day and social events every night. Yup.. registration is open ! <https://www.motorsportreg.com/events/2022-varac-vintage-grand-prix-canadian-tire-motorsport-park-canada-472650>

For MG racers, register in your Vintage Historic group as well as two special races. Note group racing is by lap time " bracket". This enables close racing as well as eliminating high speed differentials in your group. If you are unsure of your group/ bracket, drop me a line and I can help. The two special races are our "all MG" race and the Nations Cup - Brits vs the world- so sign up to "Defend the Realm"

Register now - No financial penalty- VARAC won't charge you till a few weeks ahead of the event. We're limiting run group size so some may fill up. Any questions- drop my a line

Dave Good
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AND NOW A BIT OF HISTORY WE ALL SHOULD KNOW

John Thornley, OBE, was one of the founders of the MG Car Club and served as its first Secretary. Later, he went on to become Director and General Manager of the MG Car Company. John Thornley was inducted into the British Sports Car Hall of Fame in ceremonies on June 2, 2017.



John Thornley's first MG was an M-Type he bought in 1930, and soon after he met with two other enthusiasts and formed the MG Car Club. John went to Abingdon and managed to get Cecil Kimber to authorize the MG logo for the club's badge. He was at this time an accountant in London, but he then persuaded Kimber to give him an office at the MG Factory to run the fledgling MGCC and he moved to Abingdon. However, another part of the job at MG was as assistant to the service manager, John Temple, who was shortly afterward appointed competitions manager, and John thus inherited the Service Manager's position.

Serving in the army during the war, Thornley attained the rank of Lt. Colonel and returned to Abingdon in 1945, where he became Sales and Service Manager for MG. He was involved deeply in all aspects of the competition and record-

breaking efforts of the Octagon. In 1952 he was appointed General Manager. MG was now headed by a no-nonsense enthusiast who battled against the corporate hierarchy of BMC and later BL. He handpicked his staff and jollied them along with his sense of humor into vast achievements which no other small auto factory could ever have dreamed of.



*John Thornley with MG Designer Syd Enever
and Racing Driver Stirling Moss*

Thornley envisaged the MGB and saw into production the MGB GT, the “poor man’s E-Type” as he put it, and many other MG successes achieved against the odds. He remained convinced to the end that the Triumph “suits” who gained control of BLMC were responsible for the ultimate demise of the MG in 1980. During his tenure as head of the company, the MG Factory became the world’s largest producer of sports cars. Even when in retirement, Thornley still retained a

great interest in MG and he was outraged at the decision to close the MG factory and personally wrote to MG dealers around the world to request their support to protest the closure.

Sadly, Thornley passed away in 1994 but he left behind an enduring legacy. His work with the MG Car Company and work with the MG Car Club and later simple ambassadorship and good nature have influenced generations.

*John Thornley’s book **Maintaining The Breed: The Saga of MG Racing Cars** is out of print, but you can still easily obtained used copies on Amazon and eBay. The book focuses primarily on the competition history of MG but also relates how those competition developments fed back into the production cars. There is also a biography of Thornley, written by his son Peter Thornley, titled simply [Mr. MG](#).*

Cecil Kimber – The Man Behind MG

To say that Cecil Kimber is famous for his role in the formation and growth of the MG Car Company would be a bit of an understatement. To title him as just an “automotive engineer” would be even more so. Cecil Kimber was the creator and driving force behind what would become one of the best-loved car brands of all time. Cecil Kimber will be inducted into the British Sports Car Hall of Fame this June.



Cecil Kimber was born in South London on April 12, 1888. At a young age, he became interested in vehicles and motorsport. His attention was originally drawn to motorcycles, but after an accident that badly damaged his right leg, Kimber made the switch from two wheels to four wheels.

A career in the motor industry soon beckoned and after a few other stops along the way, including a brief stint with AC Cars, Kimber went to work for William Morris to take on the role of Sales Manager. While working for Morris, Kimber developed a range of special cars based on Morris bodies, and in 1924 the MG marque, for Morris Garages, was born. From the start, the MG specialty was sports cars. Cars with flair. The new company, still under William Morris's personal ownership, moved from Oxford to Abingdon in 1929 and Kimber became managing director in July 1930.

In 1935 William Morris formally sold MG to Morris Motors company. This meant Kimber was no longer in sole control of the company and had to take instructions from head office. This led to disagreements about management and direction

but also personal matters. With this Kimber became increasingly disillusioned with his role at MG, and the dissatisfaction was mutual. In 1941 Cecil Kimber, the creator of the MG brand was out of the company. His tenure was a mere 17 years.

Five years later, on February 4, 1946, Cecil Kimber died in a train accident at the age of 56. Cecil Kimber's daughter, Jean Cook, remembers the cruel irony of that train wreck:

"The only reason he was on that train was because he couldn't get the petrol coupons to drive to Peterborough in his own MG. His death was nobody's fault, but MG had been his be-all and end-all. It was almost a merciful release – he never quite got over being fired".

Though the man was dead, and arguably many of MG's most famous cars came after his departure, his legacy has never been forgotten. There are plaques honoring where he lived, societies and awards named after him, and of course books and countless articles devoted to him. He remains, to this day, a revered figure in the annals of MG history.

Footnote: MG's future is as convoluted as its past; the sad cars it produced at the turn of the millennium were a pale shadow of the lively sports cars it built in its glory days. These days, MG is a subsidiary of SAIC, and while MGs are still rolling down assembly lines, those lines are in China.

Kimber probably couldn't have seen that one coming. But there's always the promise of something better just around the corner ...



OK MG racers. Here is a request from a new MGA race car owner Who can help?

My name is **Dan Lamprecht**, and I am the current owner of a 1959 MGA Twin Cam, Car No. YD3-784.

My Twin Cam was obviously used as a race car in the early '60's, and still has the original roll bar, a VW gas tank (for racing), a racing windscreen, and other period racing mods. The car is Old English White (Factory paint with one respray in the late '60's(?)). It has a racing stripe down the center of the car. Engine is a Twin Cam engine, (engine no. plate behind the head casting is missing). Original Smiths Heater was removed, and someone had replaced the heater with a standard push rod heater. Thermostat was removed, by-pass plugged, and a sleeve installed in the thermostat housing. Front inner wings have been cut for better access to the distributor. Front splash plates removed. Rear front splash plates removed. Aluminum floor boards to replace the wood floorboards. I have no knowledge or evidence of the number(s) it was raced with. Speedo shows about 25k miles now.

The car was purchased by the previous owner in 1972 from Lakewood Motors in Lakewood, Ohio (Cleveland). I purchased the car from the previous owner (Keith Sikora) in September 2020. Sikora drove the car on the street occasionally for only a few years during his ownership tenure.

I am trying to learn the racing history of the car, as I know very little about the car's history before 1972. I understand it was owned by one of the Lakewood Motors sales management (?) before it was sold to Sikora in 1972. It is rumored that the car was originally from Canada, however I have no sales documentation or other paperwork to confirm this.





The fascia had various dash plaques for racing and hill climbs for Mid-Ohio, Dunkirk New York, etc., however I don't know if these were collected by one of the owners after the period the car was raced, or during it's racing period. Can you offer any information I can use to trace the history go my MGA?

At Lakewood Motors with a 1965 Ohio License Plate.

Can anyone recognize someone in the photo



CONTACT

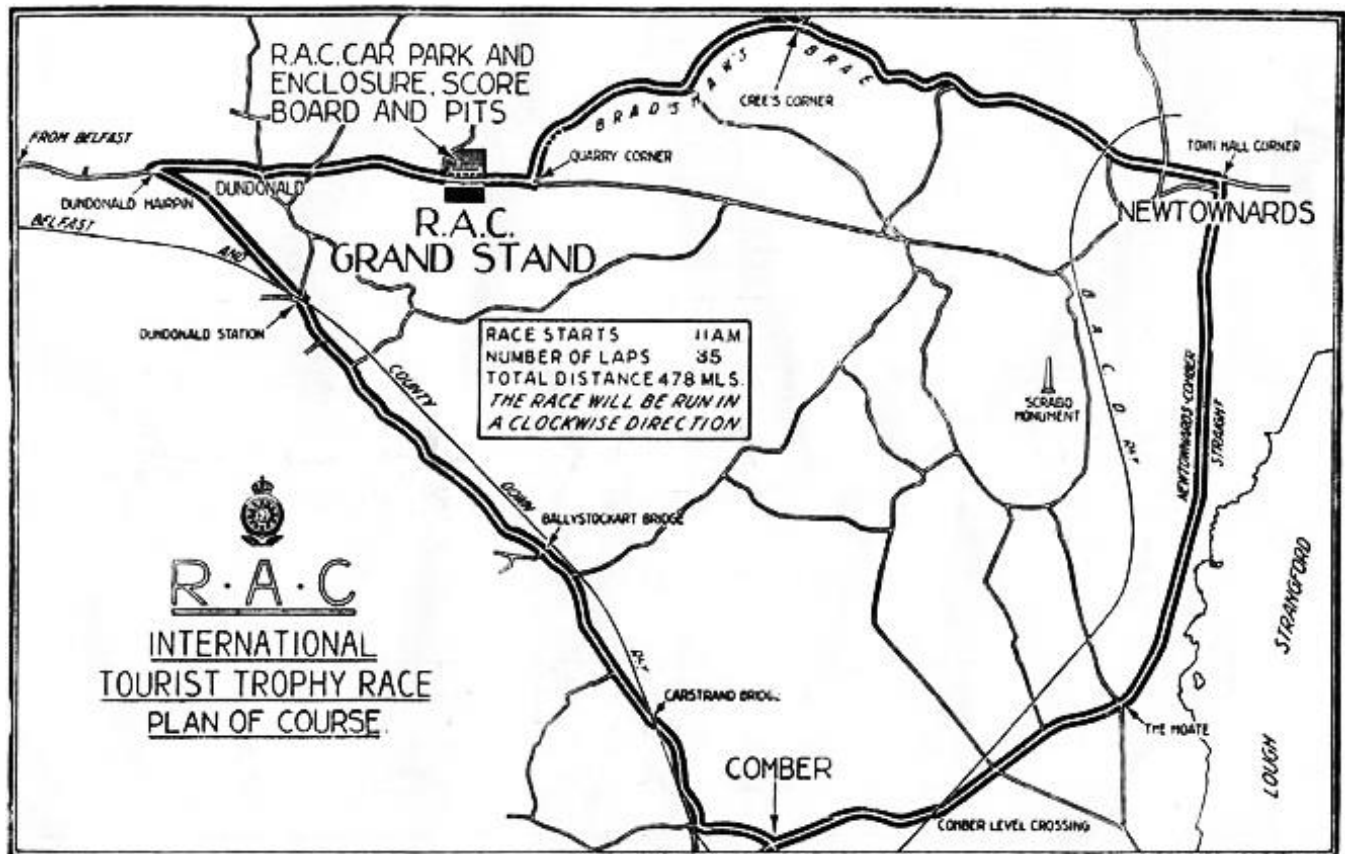
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AS MG Racers, have fun reading about one of our marques most famous victories

1933 Tourist Trophy – Sensation at Syracuse

By Richard Hough

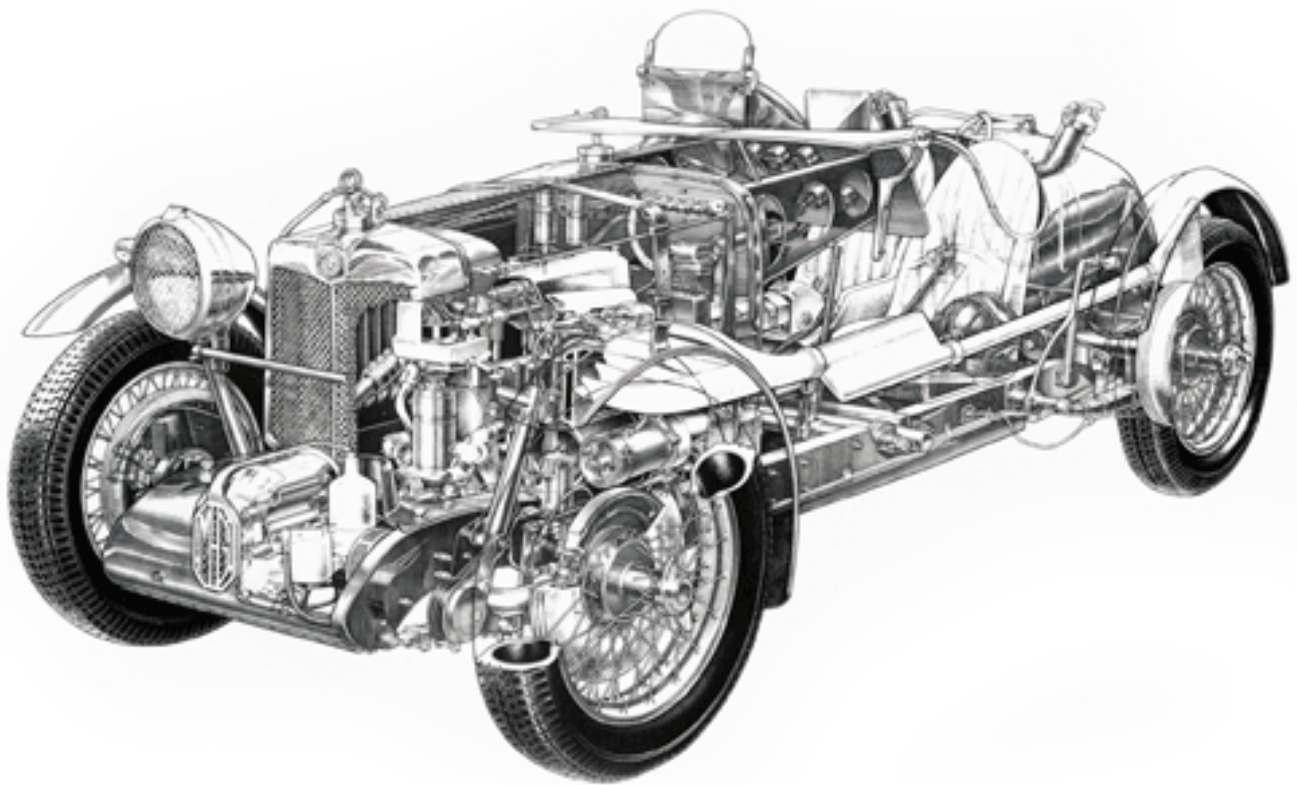
“It seems perfectly apparent,” wrote Sammy Davis after the 1932 race, “that the prospects for next year are not particularly good.” They did, indeed, look bleak a week or two before the race, with no more to support the MGs than half a dozen or so Rileys, a pair of Invictas, and three straight-eight Alfas, manned this time by Rose-Richards and Brian Lewis, who had shifted their allegiance from Talbots, and by Earl Howe. Apart from this there was only a promised pair of tuned and supercharged Irish Morris Minors, but with a lap speed of little above 60 mph they were not likely to provide much excitement.



When it suddenly became known that Whitney Straight had persuaded Tazio Nuvolari to handle his new K-type supercharged MG Magnette; the event took on an entirely different complexion. Nuvolari dominated the scene from the moment he arrived for the first morning's practice until he came in with a dry tank on Saturday evening, the trophy safely his, and with both the race speed and class

lap records in his pocket. He broke the class lap record by some seven miles an hour.

The four factory-entered, class F 1 1/2 -liter Rileys was the most dangerous opposition to the four MG Magnettes. The Rileys were based on the rather unimpressive machine Maclure had driven in 1932, but had many modifications, including the use of new light alloys in both engine and chassis; they had six cylinders w three main crankshaft bearings. With the marquee's great racing experience, and their superlative road holding, they should have been formidable. But they were not, and never found their last 1,000 revs throughout the race for that old, old reason, lack of preparation. The smaller Rileys turned out to be a different proposition altogether and were a constant menace to the MGs. There were three of them, two entered by Victor Gillow. The third, tuned to perfection, specially lightened and much faster than the factory 1 1/2 s, was entered by Freddie Dixon.





Rose-Richards' Alfa promised to be very fast. It was the car Chiron had driven at Le Mans and which had nearly killed his co-driver Cortese in a spectacular somersault.

The new J4 MG Midget, with the fashionable slab gasoline tank, had a special doorless racing body in light alloy. Among the other modifications involved was an increase in the brakedrum diameter from eight to twelve inches. The 1087-cc. K3 Magnettes, which had appeared in the Spring in the same month as the J4 Midgets, had the preselector planetary self-changing gearbox, operated by a fore-and-aft quadrant on an extension of the gearbox top. Even by

modern standards they were phenomenally fast and could have comfortably left a 1961 MG-A. In their Mille Miglia debut they had frequently exceeded 110 mph in full touring trim.

Nuvolari saw this car for the first time soon after breakfast on the first practice morning. The working principles of the Wilson gearbox were explained to him by a blend of sign language and odd Italian words. There was no interpreter, and Nuvolari knew no English. In a very few minutes he climbed in beside Alec Hounslow, who was to be his mechanic, and set off.

Some wild things have been written about Nuvolari's practice driving at Ards, including a report that he executed three 360 degree turns in Newtownards Square on his first lap. Tazio was much too wise a driver to become involved in such extravagances. Determination and concentration, each to the ultimate degree, made him the greatest champion of all, and he displayed these qualities in familiarizing himself with this new and impressive car and intriguing gearbox, and in refamiliarizing himself with the course. The main impression he gave was one of extreme enjoyment. It is true he took a little time to get the hang of the box, but he was soon preselecting the appropriate gear for the next corner as he straightened out from the last. And it is true he went through eight sets of tires rather quickly (he used two sets in the race), but then what is practice for if not for experimentation? By half-past eleven the same day, Nuvolari knew as much as anyone about the handling of the blown K3 Magnette.

On the day of the race Ards was astir early. Trolleys clattered out to Dundonald hairpin in packed convoys. Ten thousand cars and half a million people scattered themselves around the course. At eleven o'clock "Ebbby" (Mr. Ebbblewhite) dropped the flag for Dixon's, Baird's and Gillow's Rileys-a formidable trio and the blown Midgets screamed away just thirteen seconds later. The blown Magnettes

and 1.5 Rileys followed in a pack, Nuvolari rather slowly. Earl Howe led the Alfas that left in one rush. Gillow was ahead at Ballystockart when the Invictas left the grandstands to silence and an empty road. Everyone came around safely except Fontes, who split his MG's connecting rods through the crankcase. Earl Howe, who finished fifth overall, had decided that tires were going to be the principal factor for the big cars and deliberately allowed Brian Lewis and Rose-Richards to set the pace, which they did together with great gusto.

There were never more than a couple of seconds between them and at the end of the first hour they were keeping such close company that no one could tell them apart. Nobody else had left the field and everyone was having a good time. But, as always in the T.T., the first hour showed clearly who was going to be important-Hamilton, lapping furiously at 75 mph and leading on handicap by 53 seconds; Nuvolari, over a minute ahead of Eddie Hall and five minutes ahead of the big Rileys; Dixon and Gillow in close company in the 1100-cc. Rileys; and Brian Lewis and Rose-Richards in the Alfas.

Brian Lewis did a couple of laps at 83 mph, "and then I broke my transmission on that diabolical bump out of Newtownards." Soon after, the first cars came in for their routine stops. How important the pit stops were in these T.T.'s with their Einstein like handicapping and quantities of identical machines! A misplaced blow with the hub hammer could lose a place; a trace of agitation could lose the race. And so it happened in 1933.

Dixon, who had been trailing his exhaust quite a lot, had been obliged to hitch it up from time to time. He lost more minutes at the pit with wire and pliers and was eventually disqualified. But the carefree manner in which he lifted his black Riley onto the axle stands created a sensation. Both Howe and Rose Richards were fast and efficient, but not spectacular.



At twenty minutes of two Nuvolari came in. Everyone watched with great interest, for it was known that he and Hounslow had had no pit practice. Everything went remarkably smoothly, the driver refueling and filling up the oil, and whipping around all four wheels to give them a final blow after Hounslow. A quick bite, a quick drink, and they were away in 3 min. 9 sec. It was a characteristically smooth performance, efficient and unflustered. Nuvolari did the next lap at 78.5 mph and then settled down to some remarkably fast and consistent driving, varying his lap time for the next three hours by no more than 19 seconds.

Hamilton had a handicap lead of only a few seconds before Nuvolari came in, and at once he speeded up still further, leaving the rest of his class ten minutes behind and breaking the class lap record again and again. At two o'clock he came charging in and at once began throwing away the race. Never calm or untemperamental, he shouted instructions at his mechanic, who responded the wrong way and became more ham-fisted as Hamilton became angrier. Fuel was thrown everywhere. The filler cap was left undone. It took a minute to raise the front axle. Then the starter failed, and the hood was raised again while the mechanic did his best to use a wrench as a switch, succeeding only in setting fire to his gasoline-soaked gloves and overalls with a spark from the terminals. The



poor man was in such a state that he could not buckle the hood strap and-well, all in all it was nearly seven minutes before the furious Hammy was away.

Nuvolari took the lead again by a few seconds. The race was now between the wild, dark Irishman with the flashing, screwed-up eyes, who was tragically to be killed in the Swiss Grand Prix ten months later, and the great Italian, who was to pass away quietly in his bed twenty years later. Nuvolari was touching his brakes only momentarily at Comber and Dundonald, varying his distance, so it is said, from hubcap to stone wall at Comber by between three and nine inches lap after lap. Once he grazed a telegraph pole but even that moment gave Hounslow little cause for anxiety. Taking someone around Ards in an 1100-cc. car at 81 mph without creating any concern was perhaps his greatest achievement in a spectacular performance that resulted in his rounding off his Mille Miglia and Le Mans wins with the Tourist Trophy.

After 400 miles there were still only seconds between Hamilton and Nuvolari. These are their respective times in minutes and seconds for the last six laps:

| | | | | | | |
|----------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Nuvolari | 10.8 | 10.6 | 10.9 | 10.4 | 10.4 | 10.12 |
| Hamilton | 11.1 | 10.59 | 10.47 | 10.37 | 10.43 | 11.7 |

On the next-to-last lap Hamilton's fuel gauge was registering zero; he knew he would never get around again. To everyone's bewilderment he tore in in a flurry of dust, threw in a can of gasoline in 20 seconds, and tore away again. It was remarkably fast work, but not fast enough. Nuvolari came by then, and Magnette led Midget. A few miles back Nuvolari's engine had cut out; he had raised his hands in despair but replaced them promptly on the wheel as Hounslow switched over the fuel line to the reserve tank. This gave him enough, just enough, to keep ahead and complete the last lap, though the man with the checkered flag had Number 25 behind Number 17 in his right hand as he stepped forward.

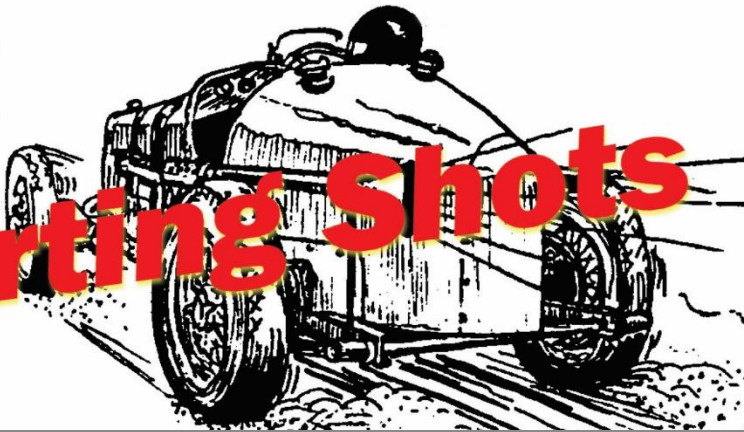


1933 Tourist Trophy Results

| | | | |
|-----|------------------|------------|-------------------|
| 1st | Tazio Nuvolari | MG | 78.65 mph average |
| 2nd | H. C. Hamilton | MG | |
| 3rd | T. Rose-Richards | Alfa Romeo | |



Parting Shots



MGB60

CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF MGB

CSRG | SONOMA RACEWAY | SEPT 30 - OCT 2

2022



THE GAUNTLET HAS BEEN TOSSED. THE WEST COAST MEMBERS DON'T THINK THE REST OF THE COUNTRY CAN COMPETE WITH THEM. WILL WE PICK IT UP AND DEFEAT THEM? SHALL WE MEET ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE?

OR LET'S JUST GO AND HAVE A GREAT TIME, ENJOY OUR MATES AND DRINK THEIR WINE AND EAT THEIR FOOD? **IT'S ALL ORGANIC YOU KNOW**