



THE OCTAGON

Official Journal of the MG Car Club of Queensland Inc.
Affiliated with Confederation of Australian Motor Sport

Patron: Dick Johnson

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E&OE

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

On another topic

Well, here we are at the end of another year, and what a BIG year. The year passed very quickly, with lots of very well attended activities and competition.

The highlight of the year for me has been the large-scale re-emergence of the very vigorous 'club spirit'. It has always been there, of course, but seems to now manifest itself in many obvious ways.

The most obvious of these is the number of club members. Never before in the history of the club have we had as many members as we have this year. The total number of members is around 380.

The reason for static or declining club membership in recent years was always thought to be as a result of the competition from other, newer 'entertainments'. The membership increase has proved that this logic does not have to be accepted.

It is my theory that the increase in membership is solely due to the drive and enthusiasm of the members. For example, other motor sport enthusiasts see our club members enjoying our diverse activities and decide to join in.

As everyone knows, this has been the last year of professional competition driving for our Club Patron, Dick Johnson.

Congratulations Dick on a brilliant career and good wishes for the future.

Hopefully, we will now see more of Dick at club events and functions.

I have not yet received very much feedback on the previous suggestions for determining the 'MG of the Century', nor for the forming of a 2004 National Meeting Committee. Input please.

On the Clubroom front, attendees of the Christmas Function will notice the results of a very hardworking group of club members led by Ron Clydesdale and Dino Mattea. Thank you people for a job well done.

Finally, to everybody -

Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year

John Davies
John Davies



Courtesy - House of MG



Club Members !!!

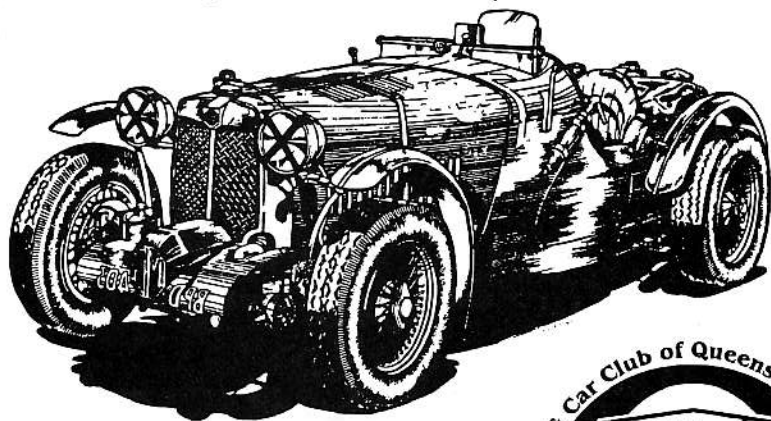
"Noggin & Natter"

NAT MEET NEWCASTLE MEETING

Don't forget to attend the Noggin & Natter Night on Friday 14th January at 7.30 pm at the Donkin St. Clubrooms, West End.

Bring some nibbles and enjoy an informal, fun evening.

Friday 11th February will be a special Noggin & Natter with guest speaker Owen McNeill Talking on construction and driving a fibre glass bodied MG Special in the 1950's.



Contact
David Miles -
3892 2699



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

There is an old adage in advertising. It is to the effect that 20% of advertising pays but no one can tell you which 20%.

We have over the past few years had some good promotional support, both in "The Octagon", at the "Hill" and in our race meeting programmes. These supporters provide services, which have been aligned to the needs of members of the club, and to maintain this support, we must endeavour to utilise those services where possible. It is also worthwhile to advise when making contact, that you are a member of the club and this can help to maintain this mutual support.

We have lost supporters in the past because they "feel" they are not getting value out of the advertising. We can assure them that we are the useful "20%" which pays.

As this edition will come out just prior to Christmas, I wish to thank all our supporters and members who have assisted with the Octagon, the compliments of the coming festive season.

Safety Fast

Bruce Mutch - Editor

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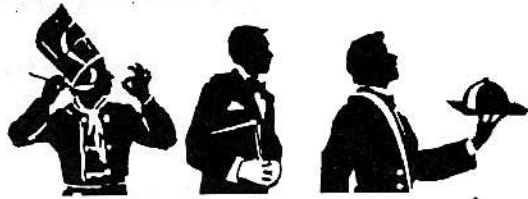
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R&VP. Ron Clydesdale 3263 6575 or G409 728 647
by 20th January 2000

Christmas Message

Is it just me, or are the Christmas preparations later this year? It seems like the Christmas sales, and decorations are only beginning now, instead of September and October of previous years. But then, I may have been too busy to notice.

"Safety Fast" (the MG motto), well I'm not too sure; things seem to be happening so quickly around me. It's like coming out of 'Lover's Leap' in third gear, going like the hammers and forgetting to brake for the 'nuts'.

Then maybe it's not Christmas but the New Year, which is causing concern. Y2K, millennium bugs, or is it the man behind the millennium.

It's comfortable thinking about the baby Jesus at Christmas. But when it comes to this double millennium, many have doubts, even fears about the future. Earthquakes, floods and the major disasters of recent times don't appear to have helped either. WE can turn off the TV and not read the papers, but it doesn't really help.

So what do we do?

"Safety Fast", that MG motto, to me it says we put our trust in a car in which we believe. Believe me, when I watch what some of you

do in those MG's, it seems anything is possible. As the saying goes, "NO FEAR".

For me it's "NO FEAR" of the millennium because my trust in the man behind the millennium, Jesus, the Christmas babe, Son of God, a man I believe in, in Him anything is possible.

So what is Christmas preparations are later than usual. They still take place, Christmas is coming and so is the millennium.

Enjoy the blessings of Christmas, families, fun and gifts. Then take the gift of Christmas, Jesus, into the New Year, the millennium, "NO FEAR".

May I wish you all, everything you hope for this Christmas and New Year.

Your Club
Chaplain,

Ken Trudgian



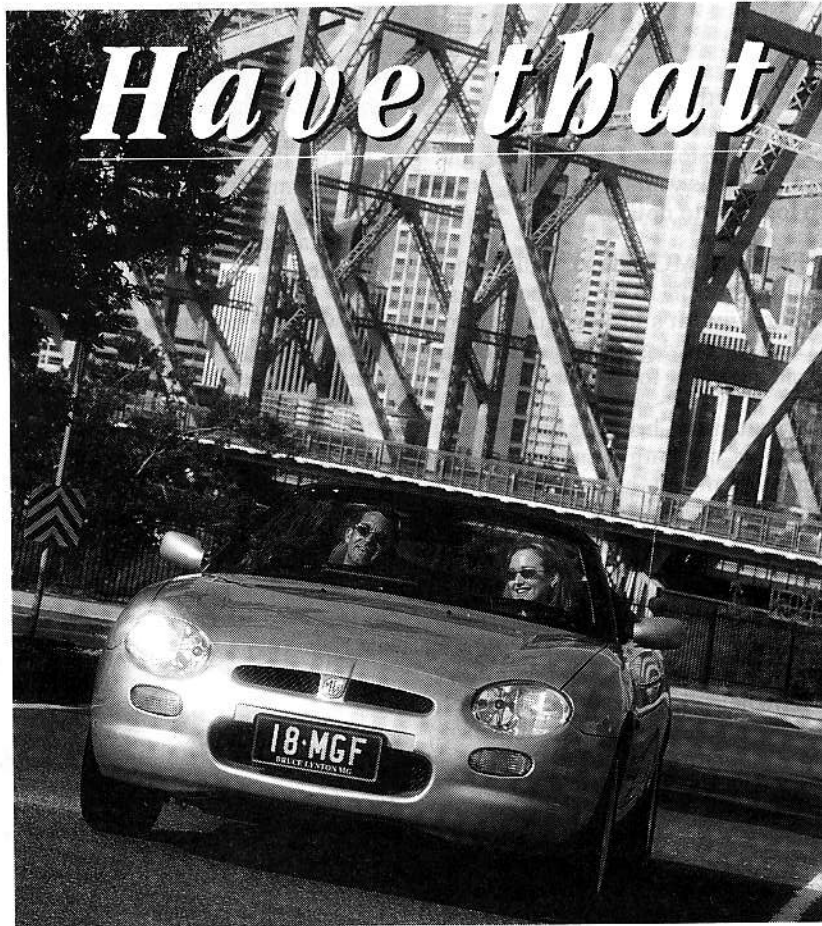
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MG Car Club of Queensland

Race Meeting - Lakeside International Raceway Sunday 28th November 1999

The last race meeting of the millennium at Lakeside under clouded skies was a successful meeting. There were a few unfortunate accidents due to over exuberant "peddling".

There was some excellent racing in the formula fords, formula vees, HQ & Gemini's. The Club cars and sports sedans really showed their potential.

Fred Douglas had his time cut out, keeping ahead of the Datsun 2000 with Don Lake snapping at their heels.

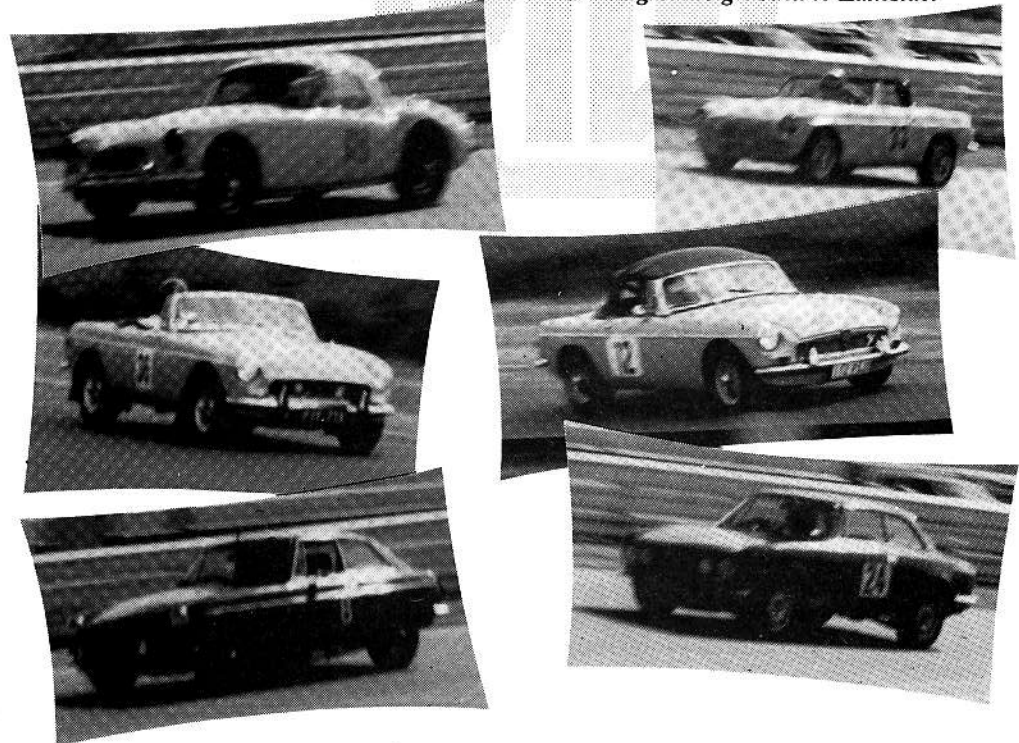
The regularities created a great deal of interest with new commers "resplendent to be seen" in their new driving suits with

"Rossi" Mattea and Ron Clydesdale tasting the first of many runs. Great adulation was apparent when John Walker, driving Graham White's MGBGT won the first regularity with Phil Ross in the Mustang second and Graham Buick in the GT Cortina third.

In the second regularity, Colin Warrington in the big Chevy Camaro switched on the cruise control and won the event with Mike Collins in the GT Cortina second and "Bucky" again third in his GT Cortina.

A great day's racing which was enjoyed by a relatively small crowd under good conditions.

It was great to get back to Lakeside.



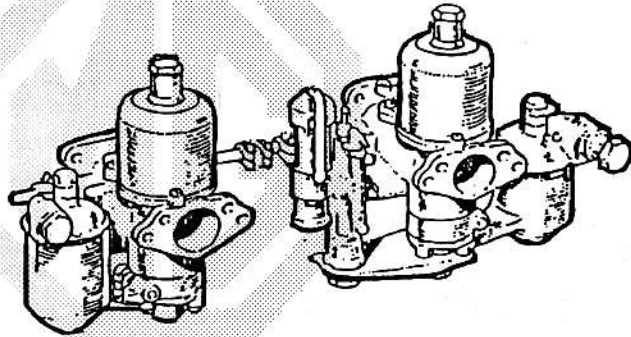


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Profile: IVAN TIGHE

Ivan Tighe was born in Melbourne in 1931. After racing motorcycles in Australia and then overseas, he returned to Australia in the late 1950's and built the Tighe Vincent. This was a lightweight space frame race car powered by the famous 1000cc Vincent HRD engine.

He drove this Hillclimb car very successfully at various venues all over Australia, winning his first Australian Hillclimb Championship in it at Silverdale, NSW, in 1964.

Circuit racing followed Ivan switching to an 1100cc Lynx Formula Junior, moving on to an Elfin 600 powered by a Ford Twin Cam by the end of the sixties.

Towards the end of the Formula 5000 era, Ivan purchased his most powerful car yet, the ex-Peter Gethin Chevron B38 that had been owned briefly by Bruce Allison. This car was to take him to his second Australian Hillclimb Championship in 1985, this time at Mt Leura in Victoria.

Another change of mount saw him in the Kaditcha, a car more in the mould of the Elfin 600, but of much more advanced design. It provided him with his third Hillclimb title at Mt Cotton in 1991.

Becoming a triple-Australian Championship winner allowed Ivan to join an illustrious - but exclusive - group of

drivers. Only Lex Davison, Bruce Walton and Peter Holinger had achieved this before him, Walton having five titles to his credit.

Of all the Australian Champions, Ivan is the only one to have spread his titles over four decades - no other has won in more than two!

You might win some bets on that

Ivan is honoured to be the Patron of the 2nd Noosa Hillclimb and is also running in his Kaditcha, the same car that took the 1991 title for him.

STOP PRESS.... Ivan won this event!



Photo:
Norris at Mt Cotton earlier this year.

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Alternative fuel set to bury lead

The final nail in the coffin of leaded petrol is being hammered home by the introduction of alternative fuels for older cars.

Shell already has started selling lead replacement petrol (LRP) at two service stations in a trial in Western Australia and plans to introduce it in Perth early next year.

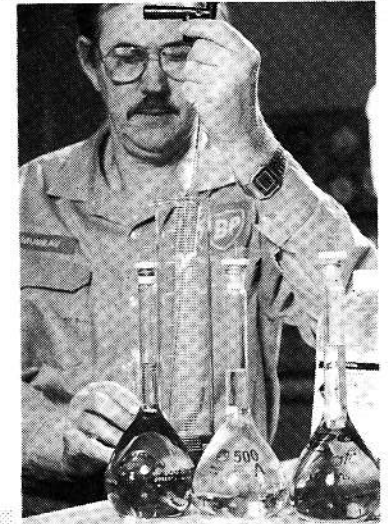
Later this year, BP's Kwinana refinery in Western Australia will unveil its LRP to customers at a number of that state's service stations.

The company's Brisbane-based Bulwer Island refinery also will be capable of producing LRP when a \$500 million upgrade, part of the Queensland Clean Fuels Project, is finished in late 2000.

Of most relevance to the consumer, BP says LRP will cost the same as leaded 'Super' and will not require vehicles to undergo engine modifications.

BP oil business development manager Tim Wall said essentially BP would remove 'Super' from the marketplace.

He said LRP would be available through a similar bowser distribution system and the street price would be the same as leaded petrol.



LRP has a Research Octane Number (RON) of 96, the same as leaded petrol.

Mr Wall said there also had been speculation that other distributors may offer LRP products within the next few years.

BP has been developing LRP since 1994 and the company has indicated a desire to reduce sulphur content in its fuels, improve vehicle emissions and move towards lead-free petrol.

"There doesn't seem to be too many reasons not to do it (LRP)," Mr Wall said.

He said an education campaign would precede sale of the fuel in Queensland.

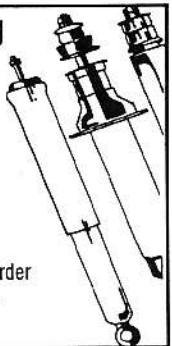
Bulwer Island's new plant should produce cleaner diesel and petrol products with limits of 50 parts per million sulphur content.

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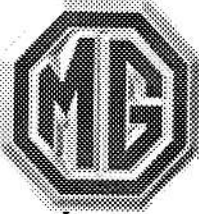
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Alternative fuel set to bury lead (cont)

As well as LRP production, the clean fuels project aims to increase petrol octane, reduce the benzene content and lower the vapor pressure of petrol (lower emissions).

BP's technical experts said there would be no change in engine operation, fuel consumption or performance with LRP.

They claim the petrol has been developed using non-toxic additives to allow older engines to run properly, without restrictions on their operating life.

Leaded petrol prevents valve seat recession in engines, as layers of lead oxides coat the valve and seat faces and prevent metal to metal contact. Those lead oxide deposits are continually worn away but also replaced by the combustion process.

According to BP, the new substitutes in its LRP will replicate the coating on those metal surfaces, but without using lead.

The additives in the fuel will burn and form oxide coating that is deposited onto the exhaust valve seats. Those additives include phosphorous, sodium and potassium compounds and are used in concentrations

of less than 20 ppm. Lead contains 1000-2000 ppm.

RACQ policy coordinator Sam Weller said the argument for LRP was simple.

"Provided it does the job effectively and does not cost motorists any more at the bowser, the RACQ would see positives in those sorts of leaded replacement fuels being introduced."

He said the technology would be well tested by the time Queenslanders were able to buy the replacement fuel, as many European countries had been using similar petrol products for some time now.

Mr Weller said in the short term, motorists would be able to buy unleaded (ULP), premium unleaded and lead replacement petrols.

However, he said there were moves within the local automotive and petroleum industries to follow the overseas trend for premium or 95 RON ULP to become the common fuel used in the next generation of cars.

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OLDTIMER GARAGE

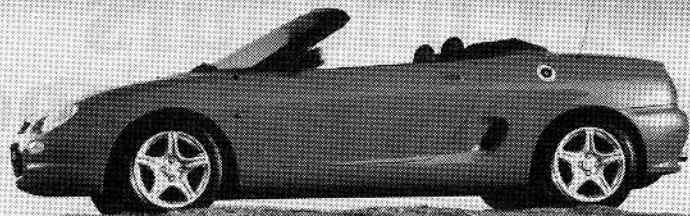
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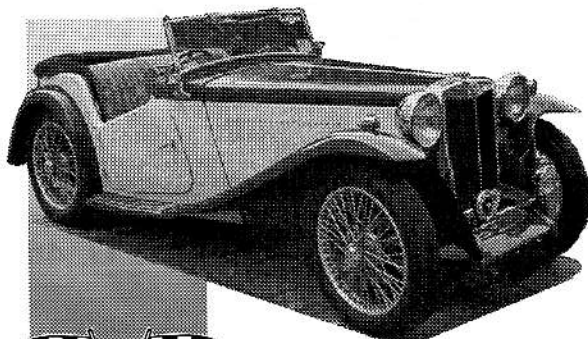


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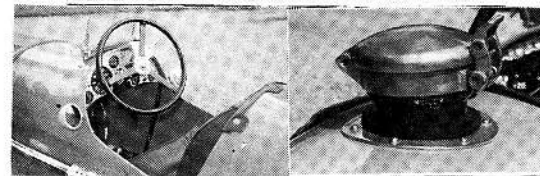
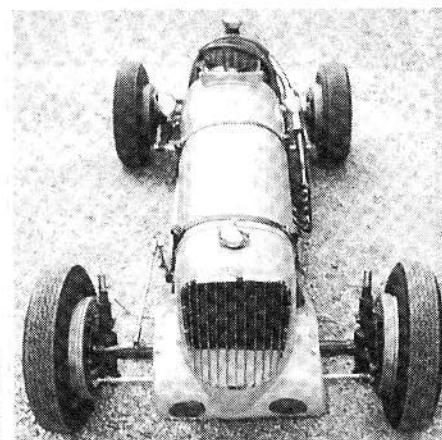
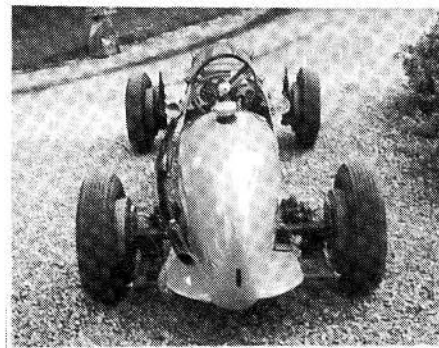


K3 Racer

The 'K' series MG's were introduced in 1932 at the London Motor Show. They were to compliment the already successful Magna range of cars and were designated 'K' type in logical sequence following on from the very popular 'J' types. The K1 and K2 models utilised the now familiar and well established conventional MG chassis layout. These new models were to form the basis for an important new racing model, and it was with this solely in mind that Cecil Kimber took the decision to produce the K1 and K2, as he was unable to justify the production of a racing model on its own at the time. Kimber was keen to get an entry into Class G (1100cc) racing, and as this class fell midway between the 847cc Midgets and 1271cc Magnas, it was decided to produce a special racing model on its own at the time. Kimber was keen to get an entry into Class G (1100cc) racing, and as this class fell midway between the 847cc Midgets and 1271cc Magnas, it was decided to produce a special racing model the 'K3'. Although this was announced at the 1932 Motor Show, at the same time as the 'K1' and 'K2', it was not until January 1933 that a prototype emerged from the factory that would give Kimber chance to compete in Class G.

The MG model range was particularly confusing at this time with the 'K' series having three different chassis, four different engines, three different gearboxes and five body variations. With such small quantities of each one being produced, no two cars seemed alike! To add to this confusion early on in 1933, the Magna range was updated with the introduction of the 'L' type in which was placed an engine derived from the KB Magnette power unit. This became known as the K3 type with coil ignition and twin carburettors, despite this ever increasing and confusing range of cars, Abingdon did achieve very good sales during this period, and this no doubt helped Kimber to justify the introduction of probably the most famous Magnette of all time, the racing K3.

During the winter of 1932/33, two K3 prototypes were produced in the Racing Department at the Abingdon factory. Both utilised supercharged 1100cc engines on specially made chassis upon which were mounted modified 'C' type racing bodies. One of the cars was entered in the Monte Carlo Rally and it proved to be the fastest car on the Mont Des Mules Hillelimb section and it broke the class record easily.





K3 Racer (cont)

The other car went with a team of drivers led by Reg Jackson to Italy to tackle the gruelling Mille Miglia. This 1000 mile road race on public roads had always been dominated by such home teams as Maserati. The prototype was put through its paces around sections of the Mille Miglia course on a reconnaissance mission prior to the event. The idea behind this was to thoroughly test the car and show up any weaknesses that were not immediately apparent. This proved a worthwhile exercise and as a result, the pre-selector gearbox was revised because the gearing was too low and it also consumed too much oil. Road wheels and hubs were also re-designed as were the brake drums which failed under the arduous two months testing programme. meantime, back in Abingdon, three team cars were prepared and were shipped to Genoa in early March 1933, in readiness to tackle Mille Miglia. The three cars were to be driven by Earle Howe and

Hugh Hamilton, George Eyston and Count Lurani with a third car manned by Henry Birkin and Bernard Rubin. Birkin's K3 had to retire with a broken valve, but the remaining two K3's proceeded to break all existing class records, finishing first and second in their class and they also came away with the coveted team prize. The Mille Miglia was renowned for being the toughest racing event in the world and the MG victory at this event set the stage for countless other successes at race venues all over the world. In its class, the K3 remained at the top for the best part of two years, and became one of the most successful racing cars of all time.

The production K3's were based on the standard K2 chassis and this was an open-channel frame stiffened with tubular cross-members and cruciform centre bracing. The axle was under-slung beneath the rear axle. Remote chassis lubrication was provided by grouped oil nipples mounted on a plate on

K3 Racer (cont)

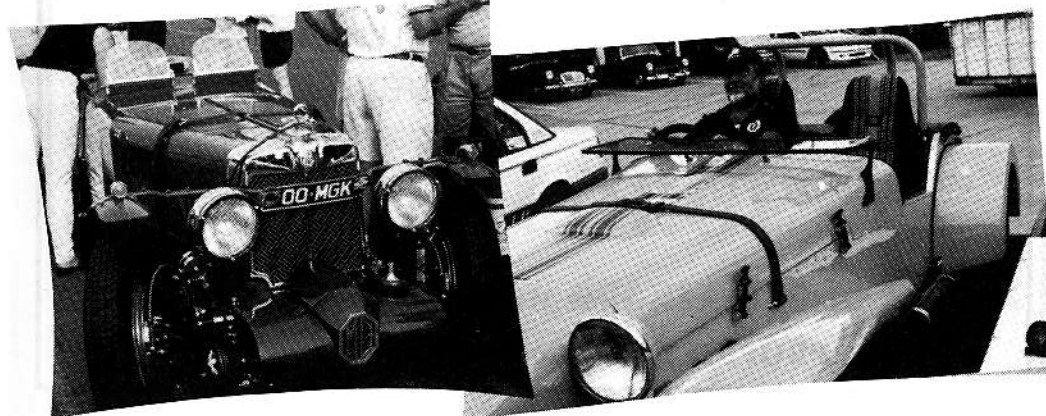
the offside bulk head. Suspension was by semi-elliptic leaf springs front and rear which were taped and then cord bound. The main spring leaves moved in sliding trunnions at the trailing end. Two Hartford Duplex friction dampers were mounted longitudinally at the front and four were utilised at the rear mounted transversely. Wheels were of the Rudge Whitworth wired spoked racing type 19" in diameter. Brakes were 13" drum type, cable operated via a central cross-shaft connected to a fly-off type handbrake lever. The brakes were adjustable from the cockpit via a small hand wheel mounted on the back of the gearbox below the pre-selector lever. The steering was effected by means of a cam type box and transverse drag link to an axle mounted slave arm that controlled the wheels through a divided track rod.

The 1933 specification cars originally carried a 23 1/2 gallon slab type fuel tank, with a three gallon reserve and twin quick release racing filter caps. Twin electric fuel pumps, one main and one reserve fed into a single SU carburettor mounted above the power plus vein type supercharger. In 1934, the cars were modified and a larger 27 1/2 gallon fueled tank was fitted that was formed into a pointed tail, a hand pump was incorporated in the fuel system to maintain the fuel supply by air pressure which dispensed with a need for a battery.

The original specification electrical system included a magneto, a dynamo charging twin

6 volt batteries, headlamps, torpedo sidelamps, tail lamps, twin horns, and a windscreen wiper. All of these circuits were separately switched and fused. In 1934, the cars were further modified and carried special external contacts to couple up to auxiliary starter batteries. Dashboard instrumentation was comprehensive with quality Jaeger equipment to include Tachometer, Oil Pressure Gauge, Oil and Water Thermometers, Fuel Gauge, Ammeter, Super-charger Boost Gauge, and Supercharger Oil Pressure Gauge.

In the standard production K3 cars, the six cylinder overhead camshaft engine had a bore and stroke of 57mm x 71mm with a displacement of 1086cc. The four main bearing crankshaft carried steel connecting rods with aluminium pistons. Engine lubrication was effected by a wet sump system utilising a gear driven pump and large triangular shaped finned sump which greatly assisted with oil cooling. A reserve oil feed tank was mounted on the scuttle. The standard cylinder head was of the cross flow type with a single overhead camshaft drive by a vertical shaft directly from the crankshaft. This shaft also formed the armature for the vertically mounted dynamo. Special valves and triple springs were used on both inlet and exhaust and bearings all had special metalling applied. The power plus vein type supercharger was mounted ahead of the radiator and was driven via a splined coupling



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K3 Racer (cont)

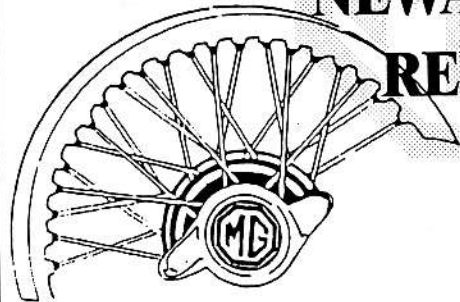
shaft with universal joints directly from the crankshaft nose. A Wilson pre-selector gearbox with centrally mounted selector lever transferred the power to the road wheels via a three-quarter floating rear axle with straight cut bevel final drive.

The standard exhaust system was a Brooklands competition type with a fixed branch primary manifold feeding to an externally mounted silencer which then lead to a huge fishtail tail pipe. A thermo-syphon cooling system was employed with an engine driven water pump.

The featured car this month is very much a one-off K3 Racer and it originally started life from the Abingdon Works as a two seater car in 1933. It was then converted in 1934 to an offset single seater race car by Ron Horton. The car then changed hands in 1935 and over the following four years was progressively and extensively modified by the well known driver

of the era Reg Parnell. Following a bad accident in practice for an event, the front end of the car was extensively damaged and when rebuilt, was fitted with Lancia independent front suspension and larger 14" drum brakes. The car was raced with considerable success at Brooklands and Donington race circuits prior to the war. Throughout the 1950's the car was to see one or two appearances at different race circuits before being finally laid up in 1964. In 1985 Peter Gregory the six cylinder MG specialist of Goring-on-Thames acquired the car and then totally restored it to the superb condition we see the car in today. The Parnell bodied K3 Racer is a beautiful example of pre-war engineering excellence and it is pleasing to know that the car survives today for all MG enthusiasts to admire.

Source: *Enjoying MG* - October 1988



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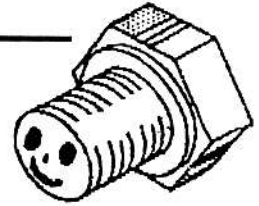
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SUMP PLUG



Our Triathlete, Sam and Joan A were comparing their cycling skills to the Lakeside Circuit. Appears that Sam does it but Joan's not quite up to the feat at present.

Graham White is on cloud nine with the success of the JW peddled green GT at Lakeside and at the Hill. Appears that GW wants to sell the GT and a hot Celica (MG?)

The orange 'B' is up on blocks getting a few more bits tacked on. Ray might have to have a trailer on behind to carry all the goodies.

The Noosa Hillclimb was enjoyed by many except for a few growls from our President about stumps and gutters "dinging" the "Beama".

Scowls all round when our VP was stopped going to scrutineering with hairy legs showing. Had to get out to find the driving suit in the back of the 3500.

Ron and Dino, with the help of many of the faithful have done a splendid job in converting the "cubby house" to a very inviting club room. Heard on the grapevine, it will be good enough to have a Presentation Dinner in future.

One of the accidents at the Lakeside meeting when Paul Attard successfully peddled his attractive MINI into the ARMCO, then was knocked out. The ambulance took him to Redcliffe Hospital where Paul quickly fully recovered. He would like to thank his mates for putting all the bits together on the truck and delivering them safely home.

The latest bulletin is that Paul is AOK but not quite so the MINI.

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Cross Country Racing in 1902

THE ELITE - Alan Brinton

Formerly motoring correspondent of the NEWS CHRONICLE (after a career in political journalism), Alan Brinton is now deeply involved in motor sport as editor of MOTOR RACING, and freelance writer and broadcaster. Here he picks out from history some of the greats of the past, and assesses the stars of today.

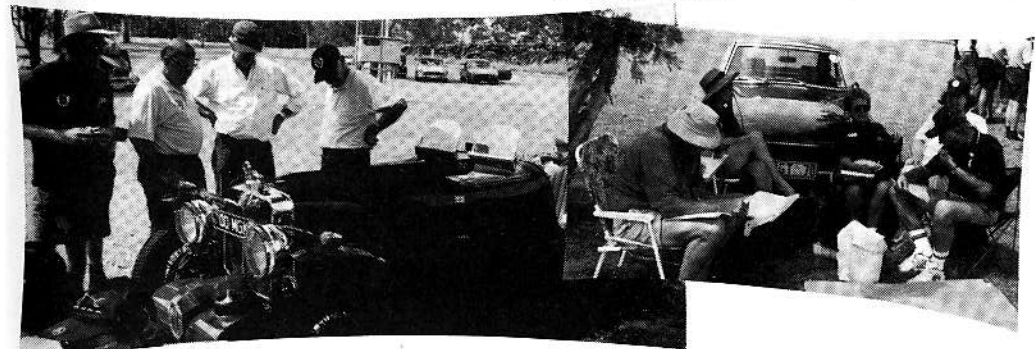
Driver and riding mechanic were constantly beside their car at the roadside, heaving away to replace fragile tyres, which were consumed at a high rate, or carrying out repairs which were all too often major rebuilds.

Stories of heroism and dogged determination are legion. Just one example will give the flavor of the difficulties facing racing drivers of those days. During the Paris-Vienna race of 1902, over a 615 miles route, Charles Jarrott, one of the greatest British drivers of all time, found that part of the chassis of his 70 horse-power Panhard had come apart on the second day, when they still had nearly 400 miles to go. Jarrott and his mechanic managed to buy some bolts, purloined legs from one of the tables at their hotel, and succeeded in fabricating a 'splint' to keep the fractured frame together. They had puncture after puncture and then, even worse, water started to gush from a broken cooling system. Jarrott's mechanic stemmed the flow by lying along the bonnet and holding a towel wrapped rounds the leaking pipe, while part of his body was being burnt by the


hot exhaust. The brakes had given up the struggle, the steering was almost impossible, and the engine was nearly bursting through overheating as the Panhard plugged on through the last weary miles between Salzburg and Vienna. Almost within sight of Vienna, a large part of the gearbox dropped on to the road. Repairs were impossible, but Jarrott discovered that most of the gears were still intact, though the clutch withdrawal mechanism was jammed. With help from spectators, he got the car restarted in bottom gear, and the Panhard limped towards the finish. The silencer fell off, but still Jarrott pressed on at snail's pace ... and just made it before the tortured machinery expired. Jarrott's average running speed was 29.6 m.p.h., and though he finished only 23rd in the general classification, his determination marked him out for future success.

Charles Jarrott was certainly one of the greats, and so was another Englishman, Selwyn G. Edge, who confounded all the experts by winning the Paris-Innsbruck race for the Gordon Bennett Cup in 1902 at the wheel of a Napier, he averaged nearly 66 m.p.h. for 24 hours round the new Brooklands circuit, a tremendous feat of endurance which underlines that the drivers of those days were really tough.

Source: *The Ford Book of Competition Motoring* - by Jim Clarke and Alan Brinton.



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**MG**

National Meeting Newcastle 2000

Revised Nat Meet Schedule

Friday April 21st 2000
 • Registration and Scrutineering 11am - 5pm
 Hall of Industry Newcastle Showground - Broadmeadow
 • Noggin & Natter 6.30pm - Hall of Industry, Newcastle Showground (Smorgasbord Style Dinner)

Saturday April 22nd 2000
 • Concours d'Elegance 9am - Stockton Foreshore
 • Theme Night "Back to the 70's funky" West Leagues Club Hobart Road, Lambton

Sunday April 23rd 2000
 • Motorkhana Energy Australia Depot - Abbot St. Wallsend
 • Free Night

Monday April 24th 2000
 • Hillclimb King Edward Park Newcastle
 • MG 2000 Observation Rally, Newcastle & District

Tuesday April 25th 2000
 • Farewell Breakfast 7am - 10am - Queens Wharf, Newcastle
 • Delegates Meeting 10am - Queens Wharf
 • Lunch provided for delegates

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MG's on the Web

Since being inspired by my first National Meeting at Gosford, I've been exploring several of the MG-related Web Sites on the Internet. A time consuming but enjoyable experience. It's amazing what a third place in the Concourse does to spur one on to find those elusive parts - to keep just ahead of Joan's ZA! (Just kidding Joan.)

As with other topics on the Internet, there are official Web Sites of MG organisations and several which are private. Each Web site visited so far, contains interesting information and, in some cases, links to other sites. This is the time-consuming process - one can spend all night following up the links in search of more information and contacts in the MG world. This is more comfortable though, than spending a winter's night crawling around one's MG, looking for oil leaks.

MG Owners (MGOC)

The major MG related site is sponsored by the MGOC. The MGOC Home page is worth spending some time at, as it has links to regalia, accessories and spares. Unfortunately as the MGCCQ is not affiliated with the MGOC, I couldn't arrange to purchase anything! Anyway, the Web address of the MGOC Home page is: <http://www.mgcars.org.uk/mgoc/>

I was particularly interested in the MGOC's listing of spare parts and workshops - 9 pages of addresses, with most

companies giving details of their specialisation. I've now written to three that mentioned Midgettes to see what I could pick up when in the UK in June-July.

Club registers

Part of the MGOC's Web site is an interesting set of links to each of MG's marques.

There's an entertaining story about changing rear axles on MG Y saloons and on Midgets winning concourse events. (Just kidding Owen and Ron). There are some interesting facts about Midgettes though! These links are worth following up, although it's some time since some have been updated.

An economical way to search for parts

I this has been enough to whet your appetite to go searching the World Wide Web for more details or parts for your restoration project, you could do this from the comfort of your home - a lot less expensive than going on a wild goose chase to the UK as the writer did in June-July this year. I'm convinced that there aren't easy sources for ZB Midgette parts! But that's another story.

More next issue!

My latest Internet find has been an Australian source for 'original' MG tool kits in an authentic roll. I'll check it out and tell you more later.

Paul (still looking for ZB Midgette parts!)
 Lupton

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SA - MG

The MG SA was launched at the 1935 Motor Show and this elegant saloon was the first all model to be introduced since the merger with Morris Motors in July 1935. It was launched alongside another new model, the PB Midget and a revised version of the N type magnette, but everyone's attention was turned to the SA. This brand new car was a shock to the MG fraternity as it was a car of such huge proportions compared to the previous Abingdon offerings and was to be the largest MG to date. Many enthusiasts refused to recognise the SA as a genuine MG, choosing to forget the fact that some of the earlier Magnettes were not exactly small cars. To understand the reasoning behind the launch of this luxury sports saloon, we need to look back to early 1935 and the revolution that swept through Abingdon. Leonard Lord was appointed the new managing director of the MG Car Company when Nuffield sold the concern to Morris Motors in July 1935.

Virtually overnight, all racing activities and developments were ceased and although Cecil Kimber remained at Abingdon, there was little he could do without the consent of Lord. Initially Lord said that he did not want to produce any more MG sports cars as they interfered with his plans to streamline the organisation. However, Cecil Kimber still retained a lot of influence and he managed to gain enough support to eventually change Lord's mind. The end result of this

disagreement between Kimber and Lord was the production of the MG two litre SA Saloon, first announced in October 1935.

Lord felt that all that was necessary to sell a Wolseley at an inflated price was to put an MG radiator on it. This thought was rapidly dispelled by Kimber and his supporters and Kimber was allowed to design a new body for the Wolseley chassis. This he did with great success, producing a very attractive well proportioned body and at a mere 375 pounds for the saloon version, it was attractively priced as well. It was exceptional value for money particularly when compared to its predecessor the KN Magnette at 399 pounds. Other coachwork which included a four seat tourer and the handsome Tickford Coupe followed later. The pleasing appearance of the coachbuilt body was subsequently adopted by some of England's leading coachbuilders, one of note was Mulliner Park Ward. In terms of luxury, internal appointments and overall appeal, the SA stood favourable comparison with many other similar cars of the era. Sadly the car suffered from the inefficiencies that Leonard Lord was trying to get rid of, with the SA going through numerous changes of components. In order to take advantage of the standard items utilised by Wolseley.

The production of the car was inevitably delayed through too many people being



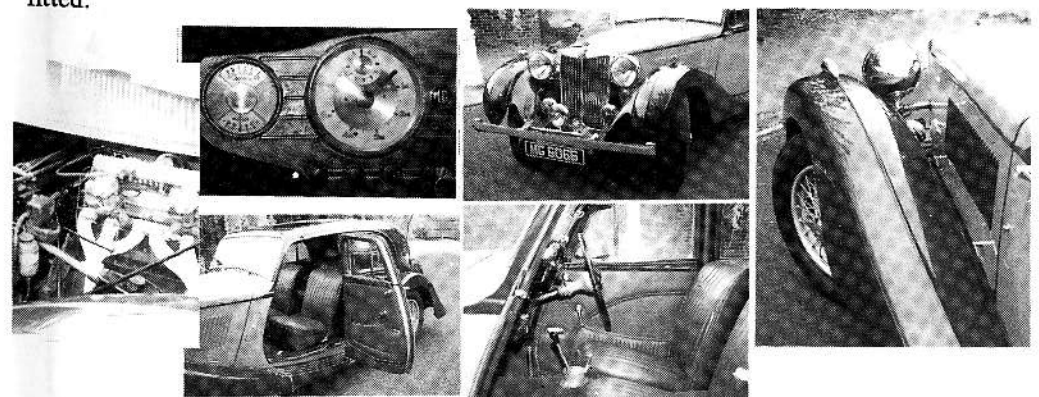
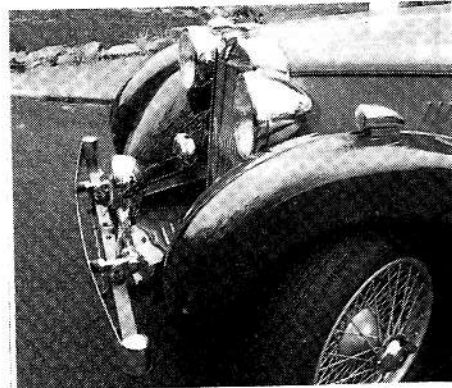
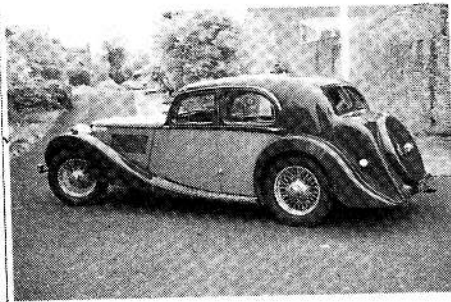
SA - MG (Cont)

involved in the decisions surrounding the use of components, production procedures and the general inflexibility of the Nuffield group as a whole.

The SA model was aimed at the larger luxury car market. Based on the Wolseley Super Six, this graceful sports saloon was intended to be a prestige model that would enhance the Company image and move away from the stark and somewhat basic sports cars that had made MG famous. Certainly insurance companies welcomed this departure as there was considerable disapproval previously over the sporting image and hefty premiums were often imposed. This fact was no doubt considered by the Nuffield organisation as they invested heavily in this new luxury sports saloon. The MG purists were however most displeased with the SA as the familiar MG chassis were dispensed with, being substituted with a heavy conventional box-section Wolseley based variety. Gone also was the overhead camshaft engine, which was replaced with a Wolseley Super Six 2 litre pushrod operated unit. The familiar cable operated brakes were replaced with Lockhead hydraulic type, a system that Kimber did not favour at all, maintaining the old style cable brakes were far more dependable. The prototype had pressed steel bolt-on type wheels instead of the knock-on wires and as a final insult, a synchromesh gearbox with a long unwieldy gearlever was fitted.

The SA had its biggest setback just ten days before the launch of the model was due, when a new sporting saloon was announced by SS Cars of Coventry. MG had never considered this company to be any threat to them in the past, as they were not producing cars to compete in the same market sector. SS also did not have any competition successes worthy of note, however, this new car, the first to bear the Jaguar name, was a far more serious rival. William Lyons, the owner of SS cars was a brilliant designer from the same mould as Kimber. He also made all the major decisions, which meant that the Jaguar SS went straight into production, unlike the floundering Nutfield group which took until early 1936 to decide on the specification and supply the parts for the SA. With the initial publicity long since forgotten, it was over six months since the introduction of the model before the MG Two Litre went into full production. This delay was due also to Abingdon trying to uprate the specification to improve its standing against the Jaguar. The car initially had a 2062 cc engine and this was increased to 2288 cc's to match the jaguars 2663 cc unit. Normally this sort of alteration to the specification would have taken a matter of days when Abingdon were dealing direct with suppliers and were doing their own design work.

It took months for the Morris engines





SA - MG (Cont)

division to change the specification as they saw it as a relatively unimportant job. As a direct result, many disillusioned customers, over 500 in all, who had been waiting for their cars, changed their orders to the Jaguar SS which was ready for immediate delivery.

Other changes implemented were the replacement of the original bolt-on wheels with centre-lock wire wheels but even once production had started in earnest, there were continued changes in specification, which made a mockery of the so-called Nuffield efficiency. These changes could only be attributed to faulty initial design of the components. Eventually even the complete chassis frame was modified. By the time of the 1936 Motor Show, circumstances dictated a price rise with the saloon now costing 389 pounds and the Charlesworth open tourer at 385 pounds. The Tickford Coupe was introduced at 415 pounds. Early in 1937, the engine capacity was changed yet again to 2322 cc, probably to comply with Nuffield standardisation of models and there was little if any improvement in performance as a result.

The performance could be described as adequate rather than exhilarating, with the car weighing in at almost a ton and a half and with only 75.3 bhp available, acceleration could only compare to its 18/80 forerunners.

The SA did however have a genuine top speed of nearly 85 mph and could sustain a cruising speed all day long of 70 mph plus.

The SA Saloon featured this month, forms part of the fine collection of MG cars owned by John Shute of Worthing. One of John's cars, a TA Tickford was shown in last month's feature and you will recall that although he has a strong affinity for the MG based Tickford cars, he does have other MG's that I am sure he is quite attached to. Amongst those is the beautiful SA saloon which has been the subject of extensive refurbishment in John's workshops at International Automotive Design, although a full chassis-up restoration was not necessary, the car has been completely retrimmed, painted and undergone a full mechanical overhaul to include an engine rebuild. John's company, I A D has superb facilities that ideally suit the restoration and maintenance of his MG collection, however this is secondary to the main thrust of the company which is the provision of a design and consultancy service to the world's motor industry. A section of the enthusiastic workforce turn their skills from prototype building to working on the MG's either in their spare time or between design projects and a very fine job they do too!

Source: Enjoying MG - August 1988



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