

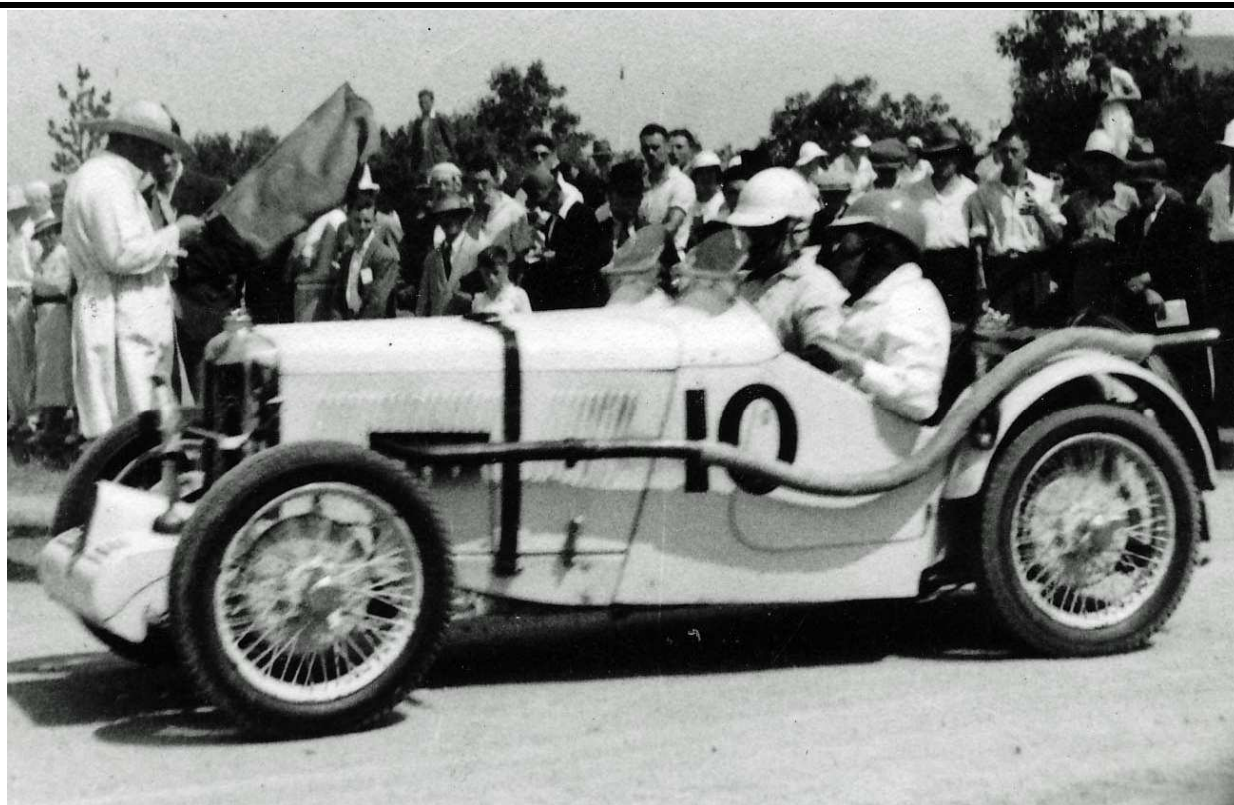


# THE PRE-WAR MG REGISTER OF AUSTRALIA

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*George Martin driving J3763 at Phillip Island in 1936. See our feature story - the Australian J4  
Photo from Tim Jackson and Ross Kelly*

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***Plus all our usual columns.....***

## Your National Executive

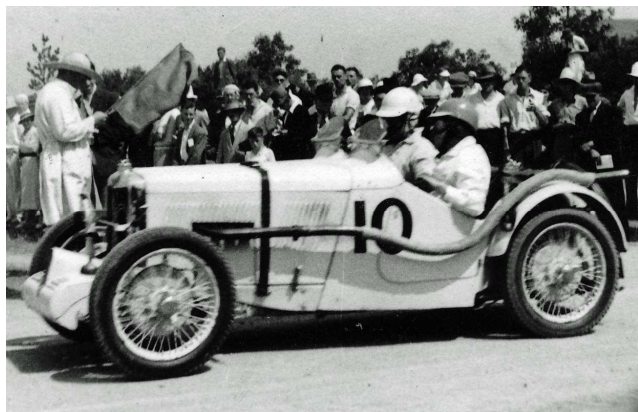
<b>PATRONS</b>	Ray Fowler Walter Magilton	(02) 9546 3650 (03) 9844 3616
<b>REGISTRAR</b>	Tony Sloan 22 Mullens Rd, Warrandyte, 3113	(03) 9844 0919
<b>EDITOR</b>	Malcolm Robertson PO Box 3031 Weston ACT 2611	(02) 6288 9343 or 0408 627 685
<b>LOGISTICS</b>	Email: Tony Sloan	<a href="mailto:musgrovemedi@netspeed.com.au">musgrovemedi@netspeed.com.au</a>
<b>WEBSITE</b>	<a href="http://prewar.mgcc.info/">http://prewar.mgcc.info/</a>	
<b>WEBMASTER</b>	Graeme Davies	<a href="mailto:graemedavies@espmach.com.au">graemedavies@espmach.com.au</a>

## Contact Your State Correspondent

The Newsletter thrives on news. You enjoy reading about what the others are doing, the miseries that befall them and the fun they have, so why not ring or email your local correspondent with your news:

ACT and surrounding region	Brian Oxley	02 6281 2351 or 0412 188 409
NSW	Position vacant – contact Malcolm now with your ideas!	
Queensland	Ross Kelly	<a href="mailto:grkelly@bigpond.net.au">grkelly@bigpond.net.au</a>
Victoria	Graeme Jackson	03 9876 1452
South Australia	Bob Bazzica	08 8356 3166
Western Australia	Allan Herring	08 9341 3210, mob 0408 918 863
New Zealand (South Island)	Ted Loversidge	+64 03 337 1828
New Zealand (North Island)		

### COVER PICTURE...



### Cover Photo

George Martin driving his freshly-imported J3, J3763, at Phillip Island in 1936. Originally described in the press as a J4, the car went on to an illustrious history with Martin and subsequently Derry George. Read more about this historic MG in our story by current owner, Ross Kelly, beginning on page 5.

## STOP PRESS

**The 2015 Bathurst Rally booklet is now available. Another fabulous production from Rob and Tim. Yours will have been posted if you ordered one. If you would like one, but forgot to order one, contact Jennie Jackson**  
**([g.jackson01@optusnet.com.au](mailto:g.jackson01@optusnet.com.au))**  
**There may be some spares!**

### Editorial Contributions to:

The Editor  
 Pre-War MG Newsletter of Australia  
 PO Box 3031  
 WESTON ACT 2611

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## Editor's Soapbox

Hello Everyone



I am always impressed with the content of our Newsletters. Whether it is from the corners of your minds, or the corners of your garages, or from the depths of your libraries and studies, there is always a wealth of fascinating material for our readers to digest, to be inspired by or just simply to wonder at.

Our feature story for this edition is from Ross Kelly who really must be regarded as more than simply a restorer. Those of us who saw his car, the Australian J4 as it used to be known, at Bathurst were stunned at the beauty of the restoration. But more than that, he has gone to enormous lengths to bring the old Derry George/George Martin J3 back to its original configuration on its original chassis. This is MG philanthropy at its best and our movement owes him a huge debt of gratitude for not only bringing a piece of Australian MG history back to life, but also untangling one of those messy situations where one car becomes two when critical components are separated, in this case the chassis and its identifying knuckle.

Graeme Jackson has become fascinated with fibreglass. Last issue it was the Bolwell, this issue the Milano. The common connection and the link to pre-war MGs of course being J2 chassis, the basis of both cars. Patron the elder, Ray Fowler, will naturally tell us that the J2 chassis was just the thing for building a Special on, and clearly the Bolwell brothers and Sam Johnson (the Milano man) clearly agree, but I suspect that availability and price might have been a driving factor as TCs were still being used and raced when these "specials" were under development in the 1950s.

Finally, a lovely "interview" with Ron Clarke whose family has owned their VA tourer for ages. We saw the car at Bathurst, freshly restored after many years being cared for but not used, and to have the history recorded in this way is both historically satisfying as well as fascinating reading and we congratulate Tony Slattery for taking the time to do the recording. I urge more of you to try the same technique next time you are chatting to someone with that sort of history and knowledge and your mobile phone is right there.

Malcolm

## Patron's Comment – Walter

*Walter has been delving into the history of MG Car Clubs and appeals for YOUR help...*

Apologies for not contributing to the last edition of our Pre War Newsletter (and a very good one it was too as it always is) but I was recovering from a time in hospital with Cellulitis. Take my advice – never, if you have cracked feet, wander around in the dirt beside your dog kennel at 2am or at least wear some footwear if you have to. I finished up with a swollen leg the colour of my NA. I seem to be spending more on body maintenance than on my old cars these days, so things must be getting serious.

It was our good fortune (Matthew and I) to recently be given half a dozen copies of The Sportscar (price sixpence) dating from March 1938 till September 1939. I believe they originally belonged to Rod Hiley. As many of you will know, this magazine was the official organ of the MG Car Club (GB) as well as the MG Car Company Ltd. and published anything and everything that was of benefit and interest to owners and potential owners of M.G.s. The great John Thornley was the original secretary and helped get the club, with its many branches, away to a very successful beginning. Nowhere in the copies I have is there any mention or indication of the gloom of coming of a disastrous world war, not even in the September 1939 edition. Life seemed to be going on ahead as normal – dinners, events, reports new models (TA, VA, SA, WA) and lots and lots of cars for sale plus pages of commercial advertising - £20 superchargers anyone?

A subject that I am very interested in is who imported our cars in the 1930s and when did each State start an MG Club. The magazines do throw some light on SA, Vic and NSW, but it is all too sketchy. I quote some small passages.

March 1938 - "MG Cars are very popular in Sydney. The NSW Light Car /club having eight series T Midget owners among its members. Speed Trials are held in Canberra, in which MG owners have been prominent and it is expected that there will be several MG entrants in the Australian GP to be held in Bathurst at Easter." The March edition also makes brief mention of Bernd Rosemeyer crashing to his death in his auto Union at 250 MPH in Germany.

April 1938 - this edition gives quite a full report on the SAGP (not the AGP) at the new Lobethal circuit before a crowd of 40,000. Colin Dunn in the Bira K3 winning one handicap event and Les Murphy (PB) thrilling the crowd with his power-sliding the corners.

September 1938 - "Australian Branch - Good progress is being made by the club's Overseas Branch in



Southern Australia, the Hon. Sec of which is Mr. Robert Manser (2nd owner of my NA). The Chairman is Les Murphy, the well-known racing driver and the Hon treasurer is R Langley. The branch has a first rate committee, consisting of A Bini, his brother B Bini, EJ Taylor, N McKay, S Flowers, and PF Hacherle. An experts Trial, on British lines, has just been organized and the Branch held a Sunday Rally on July 17, which was mid-winter in Melbourne. There was a good attendance of members in the Rob Roy Hill Climb, at which Derry George (J2 Midget) won his class in 38 secs. An M.G. class winner was Miss Lyle driving a PB Midget. "Outright and new record was P Whitehead (ERA) with a climb in 31.43 secs."

August 1939 - "From South Australia - LN Bakewell, of the South Australian Branch, in the course of an interesting letter mentions that S Osborne, driving a T Midget, won the 1,500cc class in the Victor Harbour Hill Climb in June. His time was 1 min. 11 secs. The record for the hill is 1 min. 7 secs. By a 30/98 Vauxhall. Mr. Bakewell mentions that the AGP will be run next year at Albany WA. MG cars have been successful for several years in the Australian Grand Prix races."

September 1939 - a small report of an Arthur Porter, a friend of the Hon. Sec. of the SA Branch, Neville Bakewell, calling in at the headquarters of The Sportscar in London – Neville Bakewell drives a well-known Mquette.

And so much for the war clouds, but the magazines do make very interesting reading. Gosh! I wish I had a full collection.

Dear Readers of the Newsletters of the Pre War MG Register of Australia, I am appealing for your help. Do you know anything of the MGs in your state during the 1920s and 1930s or in the early years after WWII? Do you know the history of your club and its relationship with "our" cars? Who were the important drivers and do you know what happened to the cars? Do you know of any MG owner who went away to war and did not return? The more history we can save while it is available, the easier it will be (and more interesting) in the future.

Needed (and for copying) are photos, newspaper articles, family and personal memories, anything that casts light on our obsessions. We know that here in Melbourne that an MG Car Club did exist and who was on the committee and some of the events they ran or supported. However it seems that it didn't reform after war. We have no direct connection but I do know of an enthusiast (not an MG driver) who has a small late 30s serviette ring inscribed with Les Murphy's name plus the MG Car Club badge we know so well. I wish it was in the museum section of our Melbourne clubrooms but he is asking a far too high a price.

Here in Melbourne we know that the main importers from about 1932 onwards were Lanes Motors. We have a full listing of the exactly 100 cars they imported before the war. These include a number of CKD models to be bodied here such as the editor's famous SA. This information does not include various cars that came here as private imports or second-hand cars (K3s etc.) imported by specialist car dealers. I would love our Newsletter to record similar information for the other States. Does anyone have any information on P and R Williams in Sydney, for example?

Email me at [stonycreekstudio@icloud.com](mailto:stonycreekstudio@icloud.com) or send your story in to our editor, Malcolm.

## From the Registrar

*Tony Sloan is having trouble keeping up with the changes...*



Over the last few months the Register is proving rather difficult to keep up with as there has been a spate of cars changing hands. Most changes have occurred within Australia however at present there are a few Australian cars being offered in the UK (or should I say England?) – more news on these next issue.

On the local scene, Elliot Burns in NSW has purchased PA1345 previously with Des Hardy in Queensland. This car also came with a spare chassis (PA1499) which was previously unknown to the Register. Walter Magilton has sold J3 3756 to George and Marguerite Morgan and, not happy with the space thus produced in his garage, has bought the ex-Brian Sheaffe TA0988 from Ian Mawson who had just completed a lightning fast re-assembly and repaint job on it (as well as taking it to Bathurst).

Ryan Thompson of Geelong bought M2737 and F1317 at the Barry Bahnisch auction in Adelaide and these cars have joined PA1026 which had previously changed hands (this one sneaked past me to the keeper). In very recent times Ed Taylor has sold NA0303 to Ryan.

As if this all isn't enough there are two cars for sale (or may have sold) being TA1553 owned by Allan Lim Joon and PA1101 which belonged to Alan McKinnon back in the 1980s.

Melbourne weather at this time of the year is not conducive to spending time in the garage, open motoring or even anywhere away from the fire so progress on PA0481 has been slow – maybe something might have happened by the time I report in the next Newsletter.



## Cover Story - The Australian J4 - the chequered history of J3763

*Philanthropist and MG owner, Ross Kelly, chronicles his challenge to restore back to original the J3 first owned in Australia by George Martin and Derry George...*

I have always had an interest in British sports cars, in particular the early overhead cam engine MGs. They are small cars in terms of size and engine capacity that beat the best of British and European marques on the race circuit. They live up to the "Win on Sunday, Sell on Monday" sales slogan.

My first MG was a TF 1250 purchased with a loan of four hundred dollars from my girlfriend at the time. I now was in dire straits, limited income, an MG (Money Grabber) and a debt that looked very large on my meagre twenty seven dollars a week before tax. I decided that the best way out was to propose to the girl and therefore hopefully cancel the debt and live with the consequences – one of the best investments my first wife ever made!

In late 2003 I was perusing "The Book of Dreams" as my current wife Georgia likes to describe Unique Cars magazine. There was the car of my dreams, a red MG J3 for sale in Geelong. I purchased the car and bought it back home thus starting the lessons in not doing due diligence when buying old cars.



**Ross's TF in 1965**  
*Photo from Ross Kelly*



**J3763 as purchased**  
*Photo from Ross Kelly*

My subsequent enquires revealed the car had had a very chequered past, both on and off the track. It had a successful racing history in Australia in the nineteen thirties and forties before suffering the fate of many of these cars – a blown engine replaced with a Ford engine substitute, a cracked chassis and the final resting place in a chook yard.

The J3 3763 chassis and an F Type chassis (F1254) were acquired by Bill Atherton from an old garage in Sandringham in 1968. In 1973 the J3 chassis was given to Gary Grant who intended to restore the car. At this point after assessing the state of the chassis Gary decided to remove the identification knuckle from the chassis and rebuild the car using the chassis and some parts from a J2 (chassis J4281). The ID knuckle was removed from this chassis and the numbered knuckle J3 3763 riveted in its place. Gary Grant's brother then sold the chassis frame to Peter Callaghan in Perth who at some stage realized that he was in possession of a J3 chassis but without the ID knuckle. Meanwhile the J2/J3 was restored by Gary Grant and on sold to Bill Andrews.



**J3 chassis in Perth**  
*Photo from Peter Callaghan*



**Outback repairs**  
*Photo from Ross Kelly*

There was subsequent discussion between the interested parties about where the real identity of the J3 lay, with the ID knuckle or with the chassis frame. This was resolved when Peter Callaghan sold the chassis frame and the J-type bits he had collected to Paul Latham of HVR in Victoria.

The major components of the original chassis frame were then passed onto Bill Andrews whilst the collection of J-type bits was sold to Graeme Jackson.

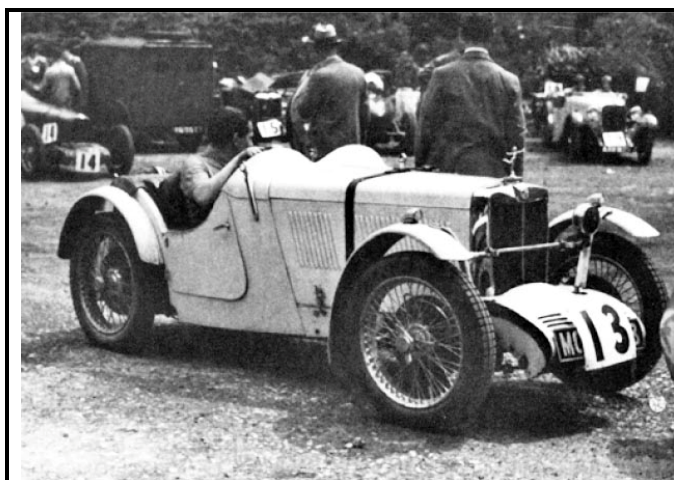
At this point muggins enters the story with the purchase of the "J3" from Bill Andrews together with a spare chassis frame and some parts. Sometime later I pieced together the history of my purchase with the help of the Triple M Register in the UK and members of the Victorian Pre-war Register.



**Letten (TD), Dino Mattea (L2) and Ross Kelly (J3) touring in Italy in 2010**  
*Photo from Ross Kelly*

I thoroughly enjoyed my J2/J3 driving the car at MG National Meetings, Speed on Tweed and two long distance jaunts. In the company of the Matteas' 1933 L type and the Lettens' MG TD we toured Europe in 2010 starting with the MG European Event of the Year in Italy and finishing with the MG Triple M Summer gathering in the UK. In 2011 we joined Trevor Watkin's Outback Tour, travelling from Brisbane to Lightning Ridge and north to Longreach before returning home. I wish I could say that this was trouble free motoring, but this was an MG! We met and were helped by many MG enthusiasts and friends when troubles struck, usually with the supercharger drive.

Always in the back of my mind were the issues surrounding the chassis and ID knuckle. I had resolved to tackle the task of rebuilding the J3 3763 back to how it looked when owned by George Martin and Derry George in the 1930s. Fortunately I had obtained some early photos of the car showing its distinctive features that set it apart from other J3s. In 1933 and 1934 whilst in England the car was upgraded with the following modifications: outside exhaust, larger brakes, cutaway driver's door, ENV crash gearbox and larger Marshall supercharger. Period photographs of the car at Brooklands and Shelsley Walsh detailed these changes as its then owner K.H. Perry was developing the car for racing.



**K H Perry at Shelsley Walsh**  
*Photo from Ross Kelly*

Among the many other interesting cars entered is a super-charged M.G. that was specially prepared by the M.G. factory for competition events in England; it had many successes before it was sent to Australia. G. Martin, the driver of the special super-charged M.G. J4, has been given 7 min. 58 sec.

**The Australian J4 - the myth begins - extract from The Recorder in 1935**  
*Photo from Ross Kelly*

Tim Jackson was researching J3 history including reviewing photos of J3s competing at Brooklands and other race events and trials in England. Tim noticed the similarity between a J3 racing in the UK during 1933 and 1934 to a J3, which raced post 1934 in Australia. When examining the photos it became obvious that the cars were identical and that the car raced by Perry was in fact the car subsequently raced in Australia by George Martin and Derry



George – J3 3763. (Ref: Tim Jackson article “Which J3 did Perry drive?”). These modifications lead to the J3 being referred to as a J4 in entry and results published in Australian newspapers in the 1930s and 40s.

I decided to leave the rebuild until my retirement but started collecting the various parts that I knew I would need. One item I knew that would be difficult would be the ENV cross tube manual gearbox that was fitted to C Types and J4s. My search for this did elicit from one UK MG collector/dealer a photo of eight or so of the required gearboxes lined up in his driveway but none were for sale. The late Bob Hudson (C type) offered me one at a very reasonable price so that item was ticked off the list.

The Marshall 100 supercharger was sourced from Barry Walker who has helped me out over the years with many hard to source parts for my pre-war MGs. The first work to be done was to have the original chassis repaired, straightened and then have the cross tubes riveted to the chassis. Pre-assembly revealed that the outside plates were missing and these are needed to hold the cross tubes in place. I mentioned this to Tim Jackson, another J3 owner and J3 historian.

“No problem Ross, when Dad purchased the J-type bits from Paul Latham included in the collection of parts were the outside chassis plates”

A phone call to Graeme Jackson confirmed that he did indeed have the plates and he kindly delivered them to Historic and Vintage Restorations. HVR in Melbourne carried out the chassis repair work including reuniting the ID knuckle J3 3763 with the original chassis. Subsequently they also did the work to fit the doors to the body tub.



**J3 body at HVR in Melbourne**  
*Photo from Ross Kelly*

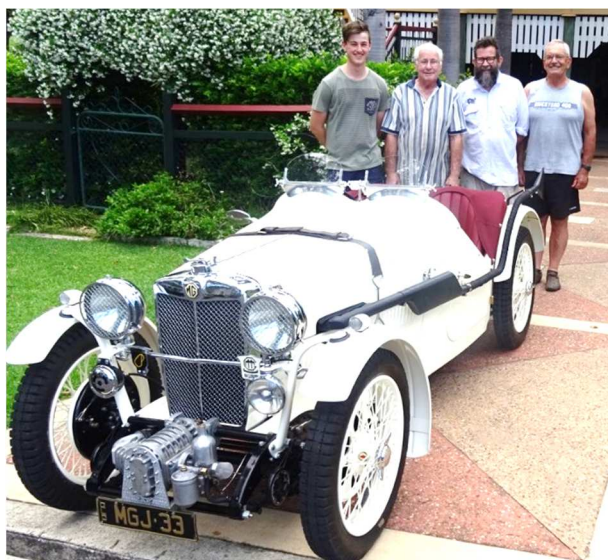


**Restoration team at Ross's garage in Brisbane**  
*Photo from Ross Kelly*

With retirement looming I started to brush up on my barista and baking skills, as I knew that this was my important contribution to the skill set required for the rebuild of the J3.

My technical ability is limited to taking photos, dismantling cars and misplacing parts. I can manage brass brackets and a reasonable engine turned J type dash after imbibing medicinal quantities of whiskey. Fortunately I was able to convince Norm Goodall and Jeff Newey to assist who, when bribed with good coffee and my excellent biscuits, provided the technical skill and attention to detail required for the rebuild. Most Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays would find Norm and me working away in the garage with an aim to finish the car by November 2015 for the Australian MG Pre-war weekend at Bathurst. Jeff came up periodically to help with the attention to detail needed to complete the car. The car was finished several days prior to our leaving for the Bathurst event; road testing around the local streets went well, so the car was ready for its first outing.

The effort was well rewarded by the car being selected for the Peter Harper People's Choice trophy at Bathurst.



**Alexander Gastaldon, Norm Goodall, Ross Kelly and Jeff Newey**

*Postscript:*

*The original J2 chassis J4281 has been passed onto Graeme Jackson who has since obtained the identification knuckle from Gary Grant. The F type chassis F1254 has been restored and is now owned by Tim Shellshear.*

## The Milano MGs - Australian Beauties of 1959

*Graeme Jackson muses on the use of glass fibre reinforced plastic to beautify old MGs...*

During the period of post-World War 2 austerity, an acute shortage of new motor cars meant that many old vehicles were kept in service on Australian roads regardless of condition. Money was not a plentiful commodity, but vintage cars and worn out 1930s cars could be bought quite cheaply. Car ownership brought to a post war car-mad generation a freedom and status which clearly defined the identity of the driver. So what were the options for the would-be Stirling Moss (or Pat Moss) who did not have a hundred pounds for a well-worn, ten year old, MG TC? One choice was to pick up for a few quid, an old pre-war Austin Seven, Singer, Morris 8, or preferably an MG, and fit it with a fibre glass body to make it look like a Ferrari.

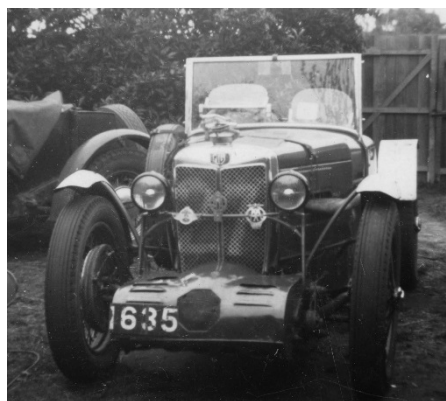
Glass fibre reinforced plastic composite dates back to 1936 but the technology was not sufficiently developed for use to make car panels until 1946 when William Stout produced the first car to have a fibreglass body. A solitary Stout Scarab Experimental, a futuristic rear engine monocoque, using a Firestone air suspension system, was built in Detroit Michigan.

Fibre glass is inherently light weight, strong and weather resistant, but the polyester resins are subject to contraction during curing, causing distortion. However, quite complex shapes can be achieved and the material is ideal for a motor car manufacturer who wishes to save high tooling costs. The 1953 Chevrolet Corvette pioneered mass production of a fibre glass bodied car. Early examples of the Corvette did not display a particularly high quality of finish but this improved as the resin technology developed. Other manufacturers have successfully utilised GRP bodies, for example Lotus, Daimler with the Dart SP250, Studebaker's Avanti and the Gogfather Bill Buckle's 1958 Australian designed and built Goggomobile Dart, the thinking man's E type Jaguar.



In 1959 Sydney based JWF Fibreglass Industries announced the Milano body, a Ferrari Monza look-alike. There were three standard wheelbases, 80 inch for LWB Austin Sevens, 88 inch and 90 inch. The mould could be varied to adapt to the 86 inch wheel base MG J2. 200 Milano bodies had found owners by 1962. Ian (Sam) Johnson, the "J" in JWF, also built one, possibly two, examples of the hard top GT Milano moulded on to a tubular space frame. He used an MGJ2 chassis for the prototype, and the remains of an MG TC in which he had managed an unscheduled stop against a rock wall. After lowering the chassis, the J2 front end was retained with the substitution of TC brakes and

steering, shortened tail shaft, engine clutch and gearbox and rear end. The TC wheels on 15 inch rims were chrome plated. Johnson clearly had his eye on the iconic 1954 Mercedes 300 SL Gullwing, the fastest production car of its day, examples of which now-a-days, change hands for \$1M to \$5M. For the GT Milano the gull wing doors opened on Morris Minor boot hinges permitting simple access after some practice, though the driver needed to avoid squashing her beehive hair-do as the door closed. A Triumph Herald rear window served as a windscreen. A Perspex oval rear window, and a dash populated with TC instruments completed the picture. The 12cwt car achieved 17.7 seconds for the standing quarter mile, and a top speed of 86 mph. Johnson's GT Milano has not survived and the fate of the J2 chassis and its chassis number are not known.



Bruce Leer purchased the MG C type, C 0291, from Cyril Nichols in 1954 and ran it until 1958. This is the Monthery Midget which ran at Le Mans in 1933 where it finished in 6th place overall, and was the first 750cc car to finish the 24 hour race. It came to Australia in 1935 and continued a very active competition life in SA and NSW but was controversially sold back to UK by Gavin Sandford-Morgan in about 2001. Bruce Leer ran the C type on 27/4/1958 at the ASCC Mount Druitt Record Attempts, and on 22/6/1958 at Foley's Hill Climb. In 1959 Bruce Leer turned his attention to building the open bodied Milano MG which is still being raced and enjoyed today, after 57 years of active life. The car was constructed using the well-proportioned, visually attractive, JWF Milano body on an MG J2 chassis. He retained the MG's front and rear axles, but substituted a Morris Minor differential centre and 10 inch Jowett Bradford hydraulic brakes with radius rods. A 1500cc TC engine running twin 1.5 inch SUs powered the device, driving a TC clutch and gearbox.

The Milano MG made its first competition appearance early in 1960 at Gnoo Blass circuit at Orange. By 1961 the MG held the under 1500cc lap record at Warwick Farm, and had bettered a top speed of 107 mph recorded on Con Rod Straight at Bathurst, with 120mph at Orange.



The current owner, Mike Gosbell, has been a frequent competitor at Historic Winton and other circuits in the beautifully presented Bruce Leer Milano MG, showing the adoring crowds how a modified J type can perform. The car is currently for sale and could be road registered as it has been previously. Our registrar Tony Sloan is keen to buy it, to lift the body to inspect the front dumb irons to discover the J type chassis number, and solve yet another of life's mysteries.

My thanks to Mike Gosbell for his help in preparing this discourse.

*Footnote: - Our dear departed mate and P type owner, Graeme Pain, made a mould and produced a number of fibre glass bodies which sort of, somehow, look a bit like a K3 MG and are crafted to drop on to a TA/TB/TC chassis. Aubrey Pavard drives a red one, Graeme Davies has a white one, and our editor has a green one, but to be patriotic we really need a blue one. John Lackey now has the mould, so who knows how far the plastic will spread?*



## INTERVIEW - Ron Clarke talks about his family's VA Tourer

*We all admired the VA Tourer brought to Bathurst last year by Darren and Andrea Setch, friends of Ron Clarke, the current custodian of VA0922. Tony Slattery tracked Ron down to find out the history of the car...*



The Pre-War MG SWV Models are some of the rarer models to be found in Australia today. While they were certainly marketed as "Sporting Saloons", sales of the contemporary MG sports cars in Australia far exceeded the saloons. Of the three models – SA, VA and WA, the rarest of them all is the WA with only 3 exported to Australia, but the VA is not far behind in the rarity stakes with only 10, while 23 SAs were sold here as new cars. They were all available in Saloon, Tourer and Tickford from Abingdon via their local dealer network as complete cars, but more often in Pre-War years, many MGs found their buyers in Australia as a "chassis only". This was a result of a Government Duty being applied to cars imported with "coachwork". This was to protect the local coachbuilding industry and jobs, and led to the construction of some remarkable bodywork by local craftsmen.

This car – a VA Tourer, owned by the Clarke family, was one of those that arrived here as a "chassis only", and was fitted with a locally built body. Now the description "chassis only" is a little misleading as the following were usually included in the crate of chassis only cars: The rolling chassis and all running gear; petrol tank; spare wheel, number plates; instrument panel; switches & all electrical equipment; unpainted wings; running boards; front fairing; bonnet; propshaft tunnel; rear footwells; and bumpers.

This car therefore looks very much like an Abingdon Tourer, but a detailed inspection will reveal many changes from the UK specification. However, the most remarkable thing about this car is it has remained in the same family for around 65 years, being passed from generation to generation. Recently I was fortunate to meet with Ron Clarke (the current custodian) and viewing the car after its recent restoration by *Sleeping Beauties*, while we had a bit of a chat about the car and its family links.



TS: Ron please tell me about your beautiful VA Tourer, and the family story?

RC: Well that's the important part. I am not a mad MG enthusiast as I will admit, although I have a very big soft spot for them, this car was my step-father's car.

TS: What was his name?

RC: His name was George Mabbitt.

TS: Did he buy it new?

RC: No, he didn't buy it new, as I understand from my memory as a kid, the first I can recall this car was when I was only 7 or 8 years old, this was when my mother and my step-father were not a unit, (if I can put it that way), this was pre-that. I was living in Sydney at the time, or we were, and I believe the lady before him, (and I have no idea who she was or anything about her), but from memory she owned a fleet of different cars and she had a chauffeur, that's about all I can tell you about the history but it goes back that far. It was my step-father's road car, he just used it as his everyday car. We used to go for Sunday drives in it from Sydney to Narellan, have a hamburger and then back to Sydney, with me in the seat in the back.

TS: What year would that have been?

RC: Well I was under driving age, I'd have been 12 or 13, 14 maybe, probably 14, so about 1956.

TS: So the car was nearly 20 years old then?

RC: Oh yeah, and ever since then, (now I asked Wolf at *Sleeping Beauties* when he did the screen to try and maintain the rego sticker on it, but he couldn't as it was all crazed), as I recall it would have been early 60s

that it would have been de-registered. Now my step-father died in 1969, my mother inherited it and she wanted to sell it but I told her she can't sell it. This was a good thing but in another way a bad thing, because now my son's holding me to that, as he wouldn't let me sell it, so he is going to inherit it, and so it will go on and stay in the family.

TS: Well that's great. So it came from Gloucester in New South Wales?

RC: No it came from Sydney, Sydney itself.

TS: But it spent time in Gloucester, everyone refers to it as the Gloucester car?

RC: Yes, that's correct. The MG people didn't know the car existed from what I understand, and when I first brought it to the surface, they were surprised there was another one, as they thought they knew them all. This one was hiding in the woodwork with my step-father, he liked old cars. His brother had an old Lagonda, a big long nose Lagonda as well. Then he bought a little Skoda, and the VA got de-registered, and I ended up carting it from Sydney. When my wife and I got married we went to the South Coast of New South Wales for a number of years, so I took it down there. I had it at a Service Station I had in Sydney prior to that, where I used to bring it out of the workshop each day and put it out the front and put it back inside.

TS: So where in Sydney was that?

RC: In Concord, Burwood Road Concord. There was a Shell Service Station, it's not there now. I had the lease on that for a number of years in the late 1960s, and then we moved from there to the South Coast. We were there for a number of years and it was parked in a shed gathering dust, then we moved (we got pushed out by the drought) to Gloucester and I carted it to there and that's when it started to become "known". I haven't promoted it because it's a fairly unique car (and I know there are a couple around) but this one's different with the spare wheel on the side, not on the tail.

TS: I was only reading this morning that the SA Tourers had the wheel in the guard and not on the back, while my VA Tourer is an English built car, and an English built body and it has the spare wheel on the back. But do you know for sure that your body was built in Australia?

RC: It was built in Australia by a guy in Annandale in Sydney, there is a plaque on the dashboard with his name on it. The car has always been kept in good condition, not as good as it is now of course, because it was stripped literally right back to the chassis and everything was rebuilt.

TS: It is absolutely beautiful, stunning!

RC: The colour is original as well as is the canvas coloured hood.

TS: It was a real treat to see this car in Bathurst last November.

RC: Now don't ask me to tell how much I have spent on it, but I can tell you it's six figures, however if you weren't a ratbag you wouldn't do it.

TS: But it's a family heirloom. The cars go on forever.

RC: It's better than new now.

TS: Well thank you Ron for talking about your car – wonderful.

## ***Snippets of Life***

*Peter Kerr was at the National Meeting in Perth. An encounter with the NE brought back some memories...*

The attached pic of NA 0520 allows me to tell a story.

I lived in Eltham Victoria after getting married and Lance Dixon lived nearby with his large shed of cars. He bought NA 0520 for \$4000 and I helped on originality work with him. The blue printed Holden engine was removed and sold to an enthusiast. The TC gearbox came to me and I cut off the hand controls on the extension and fitted it to my MGTC. It is still in my TC doing good service to this day. An OHC 6 cylinder Magnette engine was mated to a proper gearbox. Lance preferred the Alfas and the Bugatti, but Yvonne enjoyed driving the MG. I mentioned at the time, that I would like to buy the NE if it came up for sale.

I moved to Queensland and, true to his word, Lance phoned me and said I should fly down and drive the MG home to Queensland. Back in those days there was no internet banking and before I could arrange payment and transport of the car to Queensland, Peter Briggs bought the collection for a car museum he was establishing in Perth.

John Hunting has done the very professional restoration, and I enjoyed morning tea with Peter and Robyn at the MG Nationals in Perth. It was quite a reunion and I enjoyed the meeting very much.

***Deadline for November Issue:  
Friday 21 October 2016***





**VA0922 at Bathurst in November 2015 - Darren and Andrea Setch on board.**  
Photo from Jeremy Braithwaite



**Peter Briggs' NE (NA0520)**  
Photo from Peter Kerr



## Pictorial Feature



*The Milano-bodied J2, originally owned by Bruce Leer, now owned by Mike Gosbell*  
Photo from Mike Gosbell



*Walter Magilton's J3 and Ed Taylor's class-winning NA under the examining eyes of judges Malcolm Robertson and Paul Acfield at the MG Car Club of Victoria's concours d'elegance in April*  
Photo from Bob Somerville





**Walter Magilton and John Noble with Ed Taylor and his J3 3762 - Victorian Pre-War run, June**  
Photo from Richard Millington



**D0311 in the Cotswolds, UK. Be sure to read our coverage of the energetic "D Group" in our next Newsletter**  
Photo from Ted Hack



## Pictorial Feature



**Winton 2016 - Chris Lamrock's fast J2 and Ian Mawson's equally-fast P-type under starter's orders at Winton.**  
Photo from Tony Basham



**Doug Keith warms up the NA (NA0278) at Winton, while Tim Shellshear adjusts his helmet beside F1254.**  
Photo from Tony Basham



## Wondrous Winton - May 28 and 29 2016

*Graeme Jackson was at Winton again this year...*

Clear blue skies and a gentle breeze, a huge appreciative crowd of attracted, often attractive, car nuts, preening sulphur crested cockies in the gum trees, the brm-brm of those sports and racing infernal combustion engines (but not before 8 am so the neighbours can sleep in) smells of rubber and smoke, and whiffs of proper coffee and of the Potato Man's spicy garnishes, what more could the pre-war MG fraternity do but to join the fun and amuse the crowd by displaying Abingdon's finest?

The scrutineers had previously decided that the matching red taping on the MG's headlamps was not permissible, because as they explained, if the car were to spin, other drivers may mistake the headlamps for tail lights. The task of a scrutineer is not an easy one. This year we went green, satisfied the scrutineers, and protected the environment too.



Tony Basham flew down from Cairns for the meeting, and was rewarded with a free push of Ed Taylor's J3 to start the engine so that Ed could have a crack at circulating the Winton track regularly. However, a quicker Chris Lamrock had his gorgeous green J2 rocket crackling away with 15 psi registering on the boost gauge at 4,000 rpm, and achieved about equal times to an experienced and regular Ian Mawson aboard the MG PA with the large rebuilt blower protruding proudly from the bonnet. Pleased with his Winton showing, Chris has decided to further reduce weight of the J2 by ripping the doors off and grafting on door less panels to copy Kimber's J4 model. Graeme Jackson buzzed around in the red J2, comfortably under two minutes like everybody else. Doug Keith's pit crew, Jacy, had polished the aluminium body of the pointed tail NA special to a mirror finish, utterly confusing her Kelpies who saw twice as many sheep in the home paddock. Tim Shellshear's NA powered F type MG had journeyed from Sydney with Pre-War MG Register Patron-the-Elder, Ray Fowler, whose tuning expertise had enabled Tim's MG to knock 10 seconds off previous year's times. By contrast, Warwick Anderson's L type special proved a little temperamental. Jim Thompson scored a second place in his most desirable Bugatti Brescia but will probably abandon the car as soon as his stunning MG M type is back from the upholsterers. He was able to give Tony Basham advice about the split roller bearing arrangement fitted to the front of the two main bearing crankshaft M type motor. A knowledgeable Ray Skewes and attending M owners Allan Tyrrell, Peter Fleming and Ian Mawson also related their experiences in a caring sharing way, and agree that two main bearings are quite sufficient.

To entertain the crowd and to contest the Group K fair dinkum racing, Robert Phillips helped fiddle the John Lackey MG TA Tomlinson Replica, to keep ahead of Stuart Steinfort driving the ex Les Murphy AGP winning MG PA and within sight of Neil Murdoch MG TB Special. Mike Gosbell's MG Milano, running in Lb Sports, presented superbly, and ran impeccably with the huge advantage of being built on the race bred MG J2 chassis. The soles of Tim Jackson's boots were of interest to Tristan, as Tim lay on his back under the car in the pits looking for a J type chassis number, but to no avail. The mystery remains. Patrick Ryan energetically raced his enormous Georgian 1922 D type Vauxhall instead of an MG.



Bill Atherton delegated the organisation of the pub food and drinks part of the weekend operations to Manager of Sustenance, Debby. He drove his Elfin Streamliner at Winton for the first time since 1971. Bill, who claims to be getting older, has threatened to expedite the creation of his P/Q Special by injecting hard, but honestly earned dollars, provided Debby gives him back the credit card. Our ageless Harry Hickling drove his 1964 Renmax BN1 Group M racer and is certainly worth a mention because he has an MGSA at home and he had a good honest go at identifying the fine drophead Tickford MGSA sitting proudly

amongst scores of interesting cars in the display area. In all probability, the owner is Todd Barker and the car was recently imported from New Zealand.

The spectators who travelled to Winton were treated to two days of very exciting racing featuring a tremendous variety of motorbikes and historic cars including lots of modern MGs and sports cars, tin tops, open wheelers and specials of all confections. Amongst the crowd John Hurst reports that his F type motor is well on the way to good health following the mishap at Bathurst, John Nobel, Ray Skewes, Mick Donnelly and Kevin Leishman are determined to bring an eligible car to the Pre-War MG National Rally at Yamba, and T people John Oliver, John Cochran and Bruce Ellis may borrow an MG and come too. Graeme Steinfort knows everybody and fulfilled the role of roving diplomat, and part time P polisher. Then finally Peter Jackson left his MGBGT V8 at home but searched the pits for a suitable early square rigged MG to acquire for his dotage. You cannot supercharge a bath chair.

## Your Letters

*Rob Dunsterville writes from Green Point near Forster...*



Thank you for another corker of an issue (the March 2016 Newsletter). I think Najar's TB arrived sooner than 1944. It's the earliest on the Australian register and was built in May 1939. Is likely to have been shipped soon after and arriving before the end of 1939 or early 1940. Douglas Williams, son of Percy, told me P&R Williams held stock during the war that had arrived after WWII was declared in Sept 39, but they did not to sell any and they were stored in a wool store. This might be because there were no buyers, or perhaps it was Government action that prevented them selling. However, Douglas's father registered one and gave it to him as a 21st birthday present in about 1942. He had no details of its chassis number.

Douglas told me that this store suffered a fire in about 1950. It was still being used for TDs being made ready for sale from their imported condition. The sales manager happened to be driving past at night, spotted the fire and his quick action saved several cars. One was badly damaged but Douglas patched it up with wooden materials and drove it in the 1950 REDEX trial.

*Rob Everett writes from Sydney...*

I have just replaced the petrol tank on my L type with a new tank from Barry Walker. The reason for this was that the tank that came with the car bits I purchased many years ago finally started to seep a little around the bottom seams and where the tank sits on the chassis rails. A few years ago I applied that red liner material used in aircraft tanks which worked well for some time but the writing was on the wall.

As a result I have an old tank, which with some skilful repair by someone with the appropriate skill, may be useful to a person who is desperately looking for a tank. It would need to be collected in Sydney and free to anyone who can use it. Ring me on 0427 270 317.

*Alfred Lane writes from Oxford in the UK...*

I agree with the sentiment of Malcolm Robertson's piece in the most recent Newsletter (Pointed Tails, March 2016), in that it would be good if the worldwide M.G. community could agree on when the centenary of the marque should be celebrated. Sadly, it is unlikely that a consensus on the true date of the first M.G. sports car will be reached among the various 'interested parties'. There are those whose thoughts on the matter are firmly fixed thanks to inaccurate information which somehow seems to have passed into folklore. I refer to those who believe that 1924 was the year of the first M.G. sports cars. Their view stems mainly from the fact that the M.G. Car Company celebrated the 50th anniversary in 1974. Even at that time, there was plenty of historical evidence to prove that M.G. sports cars had already been sold a year earlier, in 1923. However, that did not fit with the marketing men's plans for a big sales push in 1974.

As a consequence, the M.G. Car Club in Abingdon, made great play in 2014 by celebrating 'M.G. 90' at Silverstone M.G. Live. As the venerated M.G. historian, Robin Barraclough said at the time "Typical of the M.G. Car Club – they call it 'M.G. 90' because it's 90% accurate!"

These days, the club's main activities are firmly focussed upon post war M.G. models. This is understandable, because the club's main income stream is provided by owners of MGBs and MGFs. The management team at the M.G. Car Club displays little expertise in their understanding of the earliest days of M.G. sports car manufacture, so why should they care when it actually began?

In defining the year in which M.G. sports car manufacture began, there is only one thing that can be considered, and that is the facts:

1. The first sports cars to be advertised and sold as M.G. Super Sports was in 1923, when the Raworth bodied 2-seaters emerged. As reported in Malcom Robertson's recent article, one of these M.G.s was purchased by Oliver Arkell in August 1923.
2. In 1928 M.G. issued a Salesman's Handbook to their staff and the first line from the Introduction page begins with these words – "When the M.G. Sports Cars were first introduced in 1923 ....". So, as far as M.G. was concerned, the whole thing began in 1923.
3. Cecil Cousins, who worked for Kimber at The Morris Garages and went on to be the development chief at M.G. is quoted as saying that "the Raworth bodied Super Sports were the first Morris Garages products that may be considered M.G.s ...".

Surely, nothing more needs to be said – 1923 was the year in which the first M.G. cars were made, advertised and sold.



As far as I'm aware, none of the original six Raworth-bodied M.G. Super Sports survive – but I am fortunate to possess a relic from one of the cars. I met an old chap many years ago, who, during a conversation about the very earliest M.G.s, told me that he had owned one of the Raworth bodied M.G. Super Sports in the 1930s. In fact, he still had the Raworth threshold plate from the door aperture! He said that he'd taken it off because it used to catch on the door to his annoyance. He asked me if I'd like it. Needless to say, I still have it to this day – it's the nearest I'll ever get to owning one of the first half a dozen M.G.s. I enclose a picture, showing that it still bears the scars from the door scuffing it!



Incidentally, as regards the pronunciation of the name 'Raworth', we in England have been inclined to pronounce the 'Raw' part of the name as in raw meat. However, families here who have this surname pronounce the first half of the name like Ray – as in Raymond, so the overall effect is to say 'Rayworth'. We have a BBC TV newsreader named Sophie Raworth and she pronounces it 'Rayworth'. So who knows which pronunciation was used by the Oxford coach-building firm?

The firm Charles Raworth & Sons originated not in Oxford, but as carriage builders in Bridgewater, Somerset in about 1813. In 1904, the company contracted to build bodies for a new motorised carriage to be built in Bridgewater, introduced to the market in 1905 and named the Bridgewater. Bridgewater cars could be supplied either with a French Ballot engine, or with an English White & Poppe engine. The first Morris cars in 1913 also had White & Poppe engines and guess what? The bodies for these Morris cars were made by Raworths. By 1911, Charles Raworth is recorded as residing in Oxford, a move perhaps calculated to improve his fortune, while the old family business continued in Bridgewater. Charles Raworth & Sons, Oxford continued to manufacture Morris and M.G. bodies for many years, and eventually became part of the Morris Empire in 1944 when it was acquired as a subsidiary company - by The Morris Garages Ltd.

Finally – going back to the Centenary, it will certainly be celebrated by the more enlightened M.G. clubs in 2023, which will make the stick-in-the-mud faction look rather silly when they hold their special events a year afterwards.

*Our overseas reporter, Peter Kerr, has been keeping tabs on MG Live!...*

The world's largest MG event returned to the home of British Motorsport on June 4-5 2016. The theme was 'Heritage', and Ant Anstead of the "Love of Cars" TV show presented all the action in the Live Arena over both days. The Triple-M stand at Silverstone used the Heritage theme to focus on its glory days of MG. The banner highlighted 4 themes with the L type Magna. Section 1 pictured an L type having its brakes adjusted; Section 2 showed an L2 on the Alpine trial where they won the team prize. Section 3 pictured A Ashton-Rigby and his L2 at Brooklands. Section 4 showed an L barn find in Canada. The arrow points to L2023 owned by George Eagle who provided the picture on the day. The Triple-M display received a commendation for the stand.

John and Helen Gillett in K3030 and George and Marguerite Morgan in C0284 were amongst the hundreds of overseas visitors from 15 countries showing the power of the MG family worldwide.

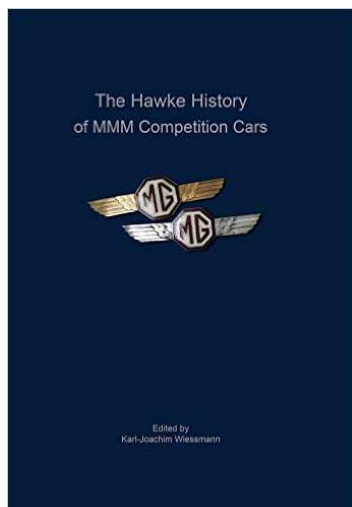


**Triple-M Stand at MG Live 2016 featured this handsome L2 Magna**  
*Photo from Peter Kerr*

Peter also reports that May 2016 was the scene for very exciting racing at Brands Hatch. Triple-M race 1 was for the Mary Harris Trophy. The Trophy was decided on a sealed handicap. The system allows any decent driver to win and theoretically all should cross the line together. The winner was Jane Metcalf in her NB supercharged Magnette. Congratulations Jane!

## BOOK REVIEW - The Hawke History of Triple-M Competition Cars

Graeme Jackson has been reading again...



The origins of this most important compilation of MG lore, date back to 2008 when the late Mike Hawke was discussing the publication of an extension of his K3 Dossier to include known histories of all the Triple-M competition models. Legal doubts had prevented the publication of the information in England. It is understood by your reviewer that a few people associated with a couple of the cars on the list did not want the known history, authenticity and/or ownership of certain MGs included. To overcome this hurdle of British law, the book has been edited by Karl-Joachim Wiessmann and published in Germany in August 2015.

Wiessmann is eminently suited to the task. He has had a life-long interest in MG competition cars, has strong connections with the English Triple-M Register, and is currently listed as the owner of three R types, a K3 and an NE (the Barraclough/Lockington car)

Competition MGs invariably get modified for performance, blown up, crashed and components used on other MGs and specials. So without any attempt to answer the question of how much of the MG Works DNA still remains in surviving cars, the book simply traces the thread of history of the listed MGs as compiled by meticulous research.

Listed are the tabulated records of M12/12, C, J3, J4, QA, RA, K3, NE, EX (Experimental) and *The Musketeers* as produced by the M.G. Car Company Ltd. between 1929 and 1936. Car identification details, dates, events, drivers, results comments and entry numbers are included, together with comments about the subsequent fate of the MG.

Now let me quote Wiessmann: "When reading the bare facts and figures one may remember the dry charm of a phone book. You, the skilled reader, know it is the framework bearing exciting stories and the fates of fascinating drivers, mechanics and enthusiasts, which make up the living history of the MGs."

This is the essence of the book. Although it brings together an impeccably compiled tabulated list of MG facts to form an invaluable reference document, the reader will often recall the stories behind the data. It is also a powerful reminder of the incredible successes in competition over the last 80 years of the cars from the small factory at Abingdon and of the passionate following of the competition MGs today.

So who should buy the book? It is an essential reference document for the library of anybody with more than a superficial interest in MG history, and full of interest for many happy hours of browsing. The price of the 244 page soft cover publication is listed at £20 from the Triple-M shop. Be assured, it is worth every pfennig.

The Hawke History of MMM Competition Cars.  
Karl-Joachim Wiessmann  
ISBN 978-3-930514-57-1

Available from: <http://www.triple-mshop.org/>

### BOOKS FOR SALE - ALL WITH MUCH MG CONTENT

"Flat Out" by George Eyston. 1976 reprint of his 1930s book, red leather bound, signed by Eyston as copy number 181 of 250 limited print run. Almost mint cond. \$50

"Magic M.P.H." by Goldie Gardner. First edition 1951. Missing a small part of the dust jacket otherwise in excel. cond. for its age. \$75

"Tourist Trophy" The history of Britain's greatest motor races by Richard Hough. First edition 1957. Dust jacket slight frayed at edges otherwise in excel cond. \$75

Rob Dunsterville [robertanddenny@gmail.com](mailto:robertanddenny@gmail.com) or 0412 314 427.

## Reports from Correspondents

Ross Kelly reports from Queensland...



Yamba 2017 has certainly galvanised Queensland pre-war MG owners into action to complete their projects in time for the next get together. Our ace undercover reporter has been out and about gathering the latest on restorations, acquisitions and disposals across Queensland.

After coming to the last couple of pre-war gatherings David Godwin, the much-travelled MGA owner, has purchased the ex-Allan Lim Joon TA1553 from Victoria. Now that David has a decent MG in the garage, it will be interesting to see what pre-war delight will join the TA in the future.

The new garage at the Slattery residence will see some late nights if Tony is to obey instructions and have his and Debbie's hidden delights ready in time. The TA Tickford is number one priority closely followed by the VA Tourer and then M Type. The parts have been collected. It will only require some midnight oil to get the job done. Maybe Peter Garrett is now available to lend a hand.

Jacqui and Ray Mutton have started on the restoration of TA1536. Ray has stripped down and sandblasted the chassis, fixed the dodgy welds and the odd crack in the chassis. Ray and Jacqui suspect the car has been raced, it was certainly not kept for Sunday drives. They would love to trace that part of the history of the car if anyone can help. The target is to have the TA completed for October 2017.

TA0394 owned by Frank Hiscock has almost been completed and Norm Goodall is working furiously on the engine to Peter Kerr's N type now that he has all the parts to complete the job. Ellen Wilson is giving the SA "The Duchess" a new coat of paint so she will look her best for coming events. Bob Fast is selling NA0541 after long-term ownership. The car was at last year's pre-war weekend and it would be nice to see it remain in Australia.

After waiting three months I have finally received the new oil pump gears for the NB Special, they are now fitted and oil pressure returned to back to normal. All ready for the Leyburn Sprints in August.

Planning for Yamba 2017 is well underway, so start planning your journey to the event



**Jacqui and Ray toast the start of a long journey.**

*Photo from Jacqui Mutton*



**TA1536 emerges from its long hibernation into the Queensland sunshine.**

*Photo from Jacqui Mutton*

Brian Oxley reports from Canberra...



I am just back from UK where we did by chance come across a great car display in a little village called Bainbridge in North Yorkshire which was part of something called the Beamish Run. No prewar MGs, but lots of TCs and a couple of TDs. There were many other interesting cars including Bentleys, Rileys, a couple of Allards, an early Bugatti, Bullnose Morris, a Singer roadster etc. We did also see quite a few "modern" Morgans on the road. We came across an MG showroom in London displaying all the new models, not very exciting. I asked how the sales were going and his response was they had an iconic brand name! We also called in to see Ted Hack, well-known for his energetic D-Group for the D-types.

As reported elsewhere, Malcolm took himself off for a boys-own week away in April, driving the Airy Coupe to Melbourne and back, primarily to attend the AOMC concours and display at Flemington. While in Melbourne the old SA was the subject of a sympathetic road test by Ernest Littera of the RACV and subsequently published in *Wheelspin*, the Victorian MG Car Club journal. *Wheelspin* has now published a wide range of road tests by Ernest, including several Pre-War MG ones, and it would be nice if these got some wider publicity in our Newsletter. Malcolm reports that the SA ran well for the entire 1000 mile trip to and from Melbourne, including a diversion to Geelong and back



through the Mt Macedon area for an overnight stop with Harry and Cathy Hickling.



**Not everyone gets to drive the Airy Coupe.**  
Photo from Malcolm Robertson



**Relaxed but concentrating - Ernest Littera drives the SA**  
Photo from Malcolm Robertson

*Bob Bazzica reports from South Australia...*



So how wide is our Pre-war MG world! I mentioned in my last article that I had a Pre-war PA owners manual with details of the car it was from. Well I received a phone Call from a Victorian who was the owner of that car, hence the car and owners manual have been re-united. My desire to own a P type dates back to 1973 when I went over to UK to buy one, but what was offered by the "bone yard" and others were only scrap iron, with no complete cars available, so I wound up buying my DB5 Aston instead.

As a footnote to Ray Fowler's article, I was in Switzerland with Phillip Duchet at his home recently. We were looking at his K3 that he had resurrected from behind the Iron Curtain and we were preparing it for a drive in the mountains and Phillip says "No my friend Bazz, you are not driving it!" But I digress. When another car showed up driven by another Swiss gentleman, I wandered up to have a look at it and was informed that it was a famous Australian racing J type. Of course, being an ignorant South Australian, I had no knowledge of the car's existence, when I told the owner this he looked a bit surprised and told me that he had all the papers and Cams log books for the vehicle and it had been raced for many years. You cannot know it all. I guess Australians are now off his Christmas list!

Seeing Tony's article about missing TAs, I have located three TAs in chassis form here in Adelaide. I do not know if they are listed on the register but they are as follows TA1238, TA1923, and TA2378. TA1288 used to belong to Tony Olmeyer who was the greatest MG mechanic in South Australia. His car was imported in a chassis form and Tony made it into a special following the original lines of a TA body. He raced it in local events until he clipped a curb at the Lobethal circuit and rolled it over. He took it home, straightened it up and never raced again. It now resides in the care of his grandson. The owner of a recently arrived P type has joined the MGCC of SA, but I have yet to see it at any events.

*Graeme Jackson reports from Victoria...*



**Conkers de Elephants, Flemington, Sunday 10 April** - There has never been a more exciting time to be an Australian with an MG. The vast, uncrowded Flemington Racecourse carpark, amidst the well-kept gardens and carefully clipped lawns, is the perfect spot to display our shining mechanical treasures on a fine, mild autumn day. And, as a bonus, the AOMC European car day attracted scores of car clubs whose members paraded their much adored machines of all confections, purely for our entertainment. Conkers Director, David Hutchings and his host of MG helpers, put on a proud show for the MGCC and made a fair fist of the judging, though did I see a big lump of mud under the guard of Allan Fabry's otherwise quite clean, winning MGC, or was it a shadow? Effulgence or effluent that is the question.

Ed Taylor's splendid MGNA had spent the previous Friday abandoned in the street outside Warrandyte Hotel where each of the local passing dogs had helped to wash the silver spoked wheels in preparation for Sunday. Ed did the rest and was awarded first in the pre-war class and a creditable third outright. Walter Magilton's shining J3 had an additional oil drip, and was consequently beaten into third place pre-war by Tim Jackson's L tourer which secured second. The pre-war judges Malcolm Robertson and Paul Acfield have to learn that Walter's car dribbles cleaner oil than the Jackson car. Allan Reid's passenger in his attractive cream and brown MGNA, lives in gay Paree on either the Left Bank or the Right Bank of the River Seine depending on whether you are facing upstream or downstream. He understands no English, but listened politely to hours of pre-war chatter, missing absolutely nothing of substance. The more substantial Ian Mawson had polished his two tone TA to a saleable standard. It comes with a 12/12 warranty, in that it is guaranteed to have been garaged next to Maw's Double-Twelve M Type Midget. Jennie and Graeme Jackson brought the TB, nothing unusual there.





**Malcolm Robertson, Harry Hickling and Rhys Timms pose with their SAs at the Melbourne Concours**

The three MGSA s provided great interest for the adoring crowd. 2016 is the 80th anniversary of the MG TA and SA, and by the way, the centenary of the invention of the vacuum windscreen wiper motor, a diabolical device which we endured for the next 50 years before confining it to the dustbin of history. 2016 is also the 1.8 millionth anniversary of Homo-erectus, a lovely bloke but with limited mechanical knowledge. But you don't need a stone implement to maintain an MGSA. Malcolm Robertson drove trouble free from Canberra and back in the black SA coupe, a car coachbuilt in Melbourne by Martin and King in 1937 for leading Melbourne dentist, Doctor Airy. He did not order a saloon body because he would have been unable to fill the cavity. Power extraction was a specialty during his ownership. He engaged Barney Dentry, the proprietor of a local motor garage and owner/driver of a Brooklands Riley in the 1932 AGP, to fit a supercharger to the 2.3 litre six cylinder motor. With the blower fitted the Airy Coupe achieved the magic 100 mph.

Both the stylish Keller bodied SA of Cathy and Harry Hickling, and the purposeful well-used SA saloon belonging to Rhys Timms, had been driven by their owners from Peking to Paris in 2010 and again in 2013. The maps of the route of the epic drive are still attached to the boot lid of the Timms car and somebody thought that it must have been a bit tedious for the navigator to inspect the rear of the vehicle each time new directions were needed. Now, Richard Millington is an Alfa Male so he came in his gorgeous Giulietta and parked with the Alfa Romeo mob. He has just been to Cuba on holiday, a destination highly recommended. This explains the Cubist influences in the body styling of his TA boy racer. Finally, Dorothy and Paul Acfield attended this most successful car clubs event in their venerable YA saloon, their red J2 had a hole in the pong box and was muffled not. We all went home improperly exhausted.



**Pre-War class winner - Ed Taylor's NA.**  
Photo from Malcolm Robertson



**Pre-War corner - Melbourne Concours - April 2016**  
Photo from Malcolm Robertson

**Pre-War MG Register Social Run June 12** - All MGs run well in chilly weather, once they have overcome the initial challenge of a lethargic battery and have submitted to squirts of priming petrol into those silly sucking SUs. Surprisingly, it was motor-engineer-to-the-rich-and-infamous, Ray Skewes, who arrived at the Burvale hotel start of the June Social Run in his modern, having failed to coax any one of his line of MGs to start. Ian Mawson had his forced induction powered PA growling along, leading the gaggle of early MGs into the verdant Dandenong ranges. A well rugged Ed Taylor, MGJ3, in convoy with Neil Cook, whose new engine in the PB is running very well indeed, ahead of Phil Cassie with a smiling Alli navigating the green TA, a genial Richard Millington in the TA boy racer, Graeme Jackson TB, and Paul Acfield, Y saloon. His J type pong pox is still work-in-progress. Two TCs joined the fun, John Cochran with a mate, Dennis Jones, and also Quentin Sykes. Roger Townley has owned his series one MGB for over 40 years and a fresh refurbishment has brought it to conkers standard. It is as red as Patron-the-Younger Walter Magilton's Morgan (with a cockpit heater) which





joined the fray. Our John Noble has suffered a recent short slash of the surgeon's knife. It only hurts when he laughs but he cannot drive. So he arranged for his dedicated nurse, Alicia, to drive him in their Audi or is it an Audi W12? Despite his urgings she refused to wear her nurse's uniform because John needs to keep calm and rested. He was saying that his 6 litre 444bhp car would do 144 mph but cannot keep up with Ian Mawson on the long winding scenic roads beyond Woori Yallock. Interestingly, he said that its firing order is 1-12-5-8-3-10-6-7-2-11-4-9, something that we all knew of course.

It was pure joy, the spirited dash in the taut, responsive MG, along deserted roads through rolling green hills. Many of the trees on the small rural holdings still sported contrasting late autumn russet colours, all framed by the distant blue hills of the Yarra Valley with ribbons of mist threading the valleys. And there ahead, and also in the oscillating rear vision mirror, an old MG sports car being driven as Kimber intended. Even the cows who knew about MGs bullnose origin gave us a wink. We arrived at the Healesville bakery for a belated breakfast. They hand you an electronic device on which is displayed your order number, and Ian Mawson became quite stimulated when the thing started to vibrate. He took it to the young lady at the counter to ask what to do. Without a word, she took the vibrator from him and handed him a poached egg on toast; such is life.

**Pre-War Register Meeting April 28 - Theatre in the round. Act 1.** The English speaking world is celebrating 400 years since the death of William Shakespeare. So which car should the pre-war MG mob appropriately select for display? TB or not TB that is the question? Quoth Ray Skewes, "A Maws a Maws, my kingdom for a Maws". You see, some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them. So, even though the better part of valour is discretion, and brevity is the soul of wit, Ian Mawson agreed to bring along his newly refurbished, shiny, 1937 MGTA, TA0983, and tell us about it. Remember though, all that glitters is not gold, often have you heard it told.

**Act 2 Enter the villain** - At the Bathurst rally, Sydneysider and MG stalwart Jeff Newey showed Ian Mawson a shipping manifest which showed that TA 0983 had arrived in NSW on 3rd April 1937 and sold to a Max Harris. The car came to Melbourne in 1964 and passed to Brian Sheaffe over 30 years ago. Brian restored the chassis and running gear, the motor was rebuilt with a new counterbalanced crankshaft by Crankshaft Rebuilders in 1996. The body tub and the majority of the panel work had been reworked but sadly Brian died before the car had been finished. 3003 MGTAs rolled off the assembly line at Abingdon from 1936 until the spring of 1939 when the XPAG powered TB came into production, just in time for the war. Initially, the TA featured a 15 gallon fuel tank, wire wheels with outside lacing, and P type styled rear wings. Towards the end of 1937, after 1,519 cars had been built, at chassis TA 1769, Abingdon decided to modernise the TA by fitting a smaller 13.5 gallon petrol tank with the wider, perhaps more visually attractive TC pattern ribbed rear mudguards, together with centre laced wire wheels.



**Ian Mawson discusses the TA restoration.**  
Photo from Bob Somerville



**A tearful Robin Page hands Vera the VA over to new owners, Julie Craig and Royce Read**  
Photo from Robin Page

The body tub of Ian Mawson's early MGTA had been reconstructed to accept the later smaller fuel tank and wider guards. Fitting the original items, which came with the car, would entail major rear end surgery, a real pain in the butt, so the small tank and ribbed guards were successfully utilised. Maws had to rework the running gear, but the motor started and ran without fault. The TA is now resplendent in a striking two toned paint work of black and cream, true to a 1930s period presentation. Ian enjoys driving the TA which has an exceptionally good ride, although a driver's mistimed gear change can occasionally result in interesting noises. Phil Cassie, whose VA powered TA sat outside the club rooms, gave Ian some advice about the required cog swapping technique to use to advantage the cork faced TA clutch which runs happily in sticky engine oil, as is its habit.

The TA restoration still lacks a hood and side curtains, but brave Ian did not mind the chilly evening breezes so long as we were sincere in our thanks to him for his entertaining presentation. As the Bard wrote: "Blow, blow thou winter wind! Thou art not so unkind as man's ingratitude."

**The sound of a pie warmer, exit left stage, curtain.**

John Hurst has sent in a couple of photos from a recent VSCC run and reports that his F-type is just a ghost of its former self while it waits for its engine to be rebuilt. Bob Simpson reports that his local club has just had a run to the Valley Heights Locomotive Depot Heritage Museum where they were met by Ian Heather in his M-Type, as he was one of the volunteer guides. Bob reports that he managed to get the SA saloon (SA1306) there, so now it's been part of the way to Bathurst.



**Neil Murdoch's TB special**  
Photo from John Hurst



**Bob and Tricia Simpson's SA and the Heather M-type**  
Photo from Bob Simpson

## Market Place

- For Sale:** New MG TC chassis rails (left and right hand). I have acquired the press and dies to make MG TC chassis rails. Dies can be made for other MG chassis rails if required. Also available are Q type replica fibre glass bodies & frames and "Monaro" style grab handles, filler caps, windscreens, wind wings, and front & rear cycle guard stays. John Lackey 0400 388 859 [jscl.2996@gmail.com](mailto:jscl.2996@gmail.com)
- For Sale:** MG Stub Axles - I hope to have available by July 2016 more sets of MG TC stub axles – these are made of superior steel on a CNC machine (stronger than the original item) – are your original axles cracked? Can you afford to have a stub axle break? If you require a pair of stub axles please let me know – the more I get made the better the price to you. John Lackey 0400 388 859 [jscl.2996@gmail.com](mailto:jscl.2996@gmail.com)
- For Sale:** Genuine 1929 M-type, Oxford midget, chassis 582. Complete but laid up. Campaigned by my late father in regularity trails at Amaroo Park and Oran Park over a 30 year period. Extensively rallied with the VSCCA including 3 International V & V Rallies. Car rebodied in the slab tank style in Sydney in the 1950s. Could be easily converted to pointed tail. Good free runner in its day. Ring for photos. Best acceptable offer. Ian Heather, email [mgheather@hotmail.com](mailto:mgheather@hotmail.com), or 0404014098.
- Wanted:** For P type: 4 shoes for 12" brake drums, lining condition not important as will be riveting new lining material. For M type: Serviceable radiator, OR tanks to suit especially a bottom tank. Tony Basham 0438532877.
- Wanted:** Paul Acfield requires the following to complete his MMM Yearbook Collection: Years 1970; 1971; 1976; 1977 and 1980. Also am after a copy of "How They Ran" by Mike Hawke. Contact: 03 9726 4319 or [pcacfield@optusnet.com.au](mailto:pcacfield@optusnet.com.au)

**Deadline for November Issue:  
Friday 21 October 2016**



## Pointed Tails - Mike Sherrell has the Last Word...

*Mike Sherrell reminisces on L0617, a good friend, a mad scientist and a crazy plan...*

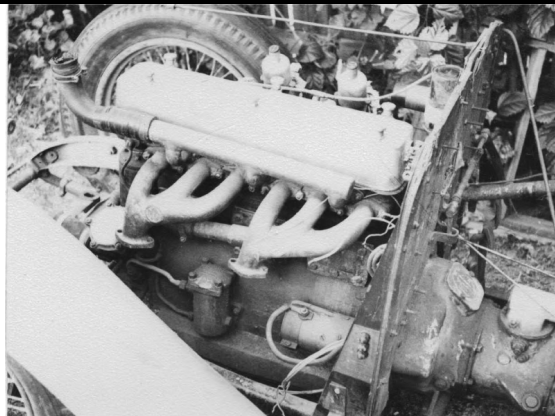


Seeing John Lawson's L Magna (L0617) in the March newsletter sent me back to 1966 or thereabouts. Rumours of sightings of a K3 in the south west of WA had persisted over the years, enough for a group of TC owners to make the trek down south for a look around. A tip off and a bit of luck unearthed the culprit in Burekup. It turned out to be an L Magna, more or less in bits. Not long after, it reappeared for sale in Bunbury, where it had been roughly assembled to resemble a car. This event was to be the beginning of a long association with Bob Irvine, the L and me. Bob and I were already embroiled in all things TC, but here was a new avenue of discovery. In the meantime, he had acquired a pranged TF, (front left corner),

which we loaded on to a trailer and headed for Bunbury. It was an even swap, each thinking he had the better of the other. Not long after, Bob was sent off to Weapons Research at Woomera in South Australia, being the Mad Scientist he was. He drove his TC east and left the L with me in Mosman Park, where it languished for some years and while I restored my TC for the second time. That was in 1968.

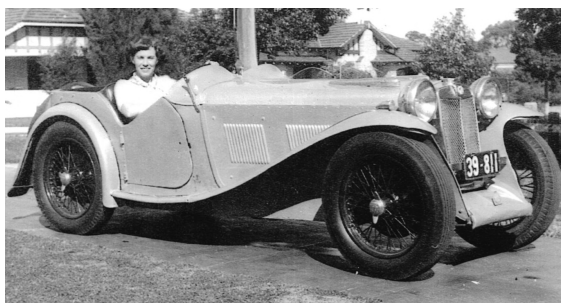


**L0617 as found in 1966**  
Photo from Mike Sherrell



**L0617 engine - as found**  
Photo from Mike Sherrell

Moving house to South Perth in 1970 meant the L needed to move also, to Adelaide, and some years would pass before anything further happened. Towards the end of 1976, Bob rang me with a crazy plan to assemble what we had of the L and drive it to the MG National Meeting in Katoomba, Easter 1977. Several weeks before the event, I flew to Adelaide to assist and following much burning of midnight oil, during which many obstacles were overcome, we had cobbled together, literally out of rotting cardboard boxes, what resembled an L Magna, jumped in it and headed for the Blue Mountains. Unfortunately we only made it to the end of the street. The rear wheels locked solid and we slid to a halt. It was a tipping point. Both frazzled by one eleventh hour after another, we teetered between tossing it in there and then, and having a cuppa and thinking it over. Several cuppas later it was out with the diff. to find a fencing staple had found its way into the works. Don Shinnars came up with another diff. and after a long day we decided on an early night and another attempt at first light. We had blown the Friday night Natter & Noggin but we could still make Saturday's Concours, probably not in the most suitable car for such an event but what the hell. Well believe it or not, the mighty Magna ran like a dream from that morning on and we arrived scruffy and tired in time to park an equally scruffy L Type in the Pre-War line up. The performance of this wonderful old machine had completely won we hard line TC owners over. I should also mention that this L Type's extended



visits back to WA in the late '70s and '80s were the inspiration for some well-known local identities becoming entrenched in the Pre-War scene here. Later, Bob went on to have it restored by Finch & Hocking to Factory L2 specs, twice bringing it back to WA and using it extensively in SA. Then he went and got himself killed in a mid-air gliding collision after he had already won the Gliding Nationals that morning. It was universally understood that the L would automatically come to me following Bob's untimely death, but it was not to be, eventually finding its way to John Lawson, who has looked after it, well it seems, ever since.

Pat Kerr of Shack Motors, Fremantle, imported L0617 in 1938, the previous owner apparently being Bill Ward of Surrey (Charles William Ward of Rosebank, Buckingham Way, Wallington, Surrey and related to Park-Ward, coach builders), the car described as "a specially modified L Magna Drop-head Coupe". Pat himself said it was a Continental Coupe and Bob's investigations revealed many tell-tale signs of it being just that, with perhaps a drop-head conversion having been carried out. We were told that the original body was left in England, but I heard a much more colourful story, of the body being (un)ceremoniously tossed overboard crossing the Equator, and it is this one I prefer to believe. Shack Motors, being body builders themselves, produced an L2-ish body for the car.