

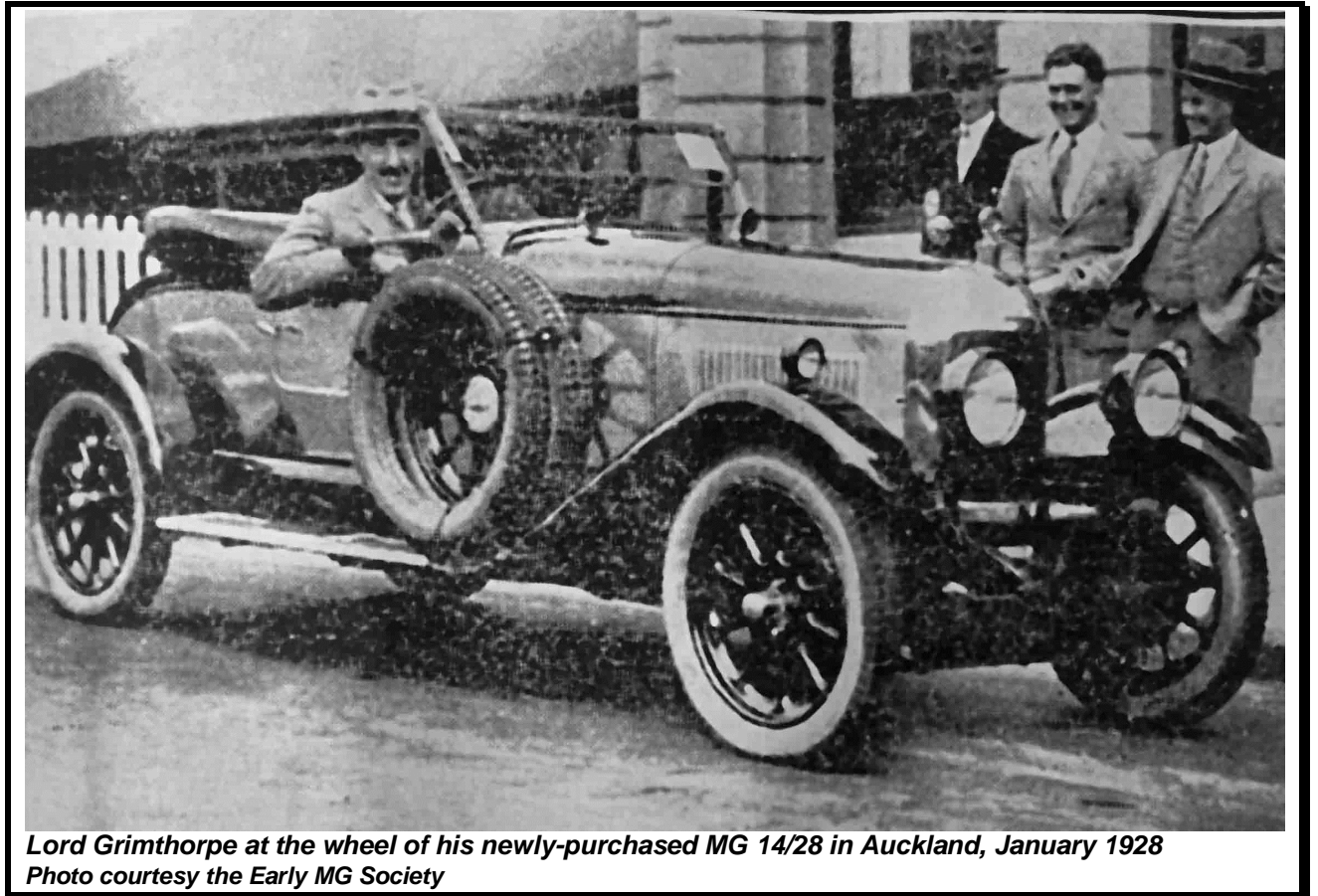


# THE PRE-WAR MG REGISTER OF AUSTRALIA

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**NEWSLETTER No. 1/2018: March**



*Lord Grimthorpe at the wheel of his newly-purchased MG 14/28 in Auckland, January 1928  
Photo courtesy the Early MG Society*

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

## Your National Executive

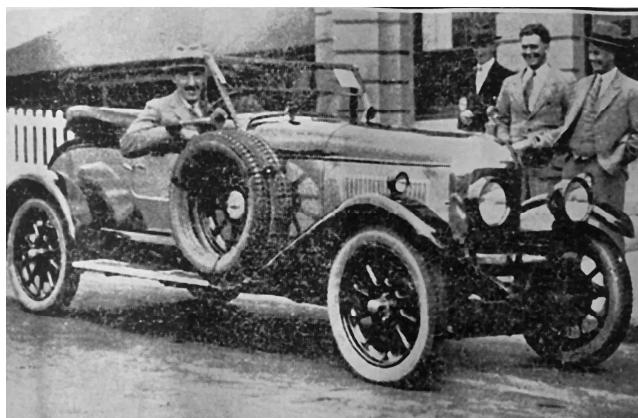
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## Contact Your State Correspondent

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:

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### COVER PICTURE...



### Cover Photo

With critical help from Gordon Vogtherr in Hastings, New Zealand, Chris Keevill from the Early MG Society in the UK has pieced together the fascinating history of Lord Grimthorpe's MG 14/28, and the car recently purchased from the Beer Collection and now in the hands of Richard Cottrell in England. See page 5.

## STOP PRESS

### OHC MGs Wanted!

The **Morris Registers' of Australia** are having their National Rally at Hervey Bay this Easter and will be combining with the **Vintage Minor Register** (International group) to hold the second International Rally. This means that many of the early OHC MG models are also invited. Interested? Contact:

### Col Schiller

Ring 0419 686 254 or email [colin.schiller@bigpond.com](mailto:colin.schiller@bigpond.com)

...for more information.

### Editorial Contributions to:

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## Editor's Soapbox

Hello Everyone



Another fabulous year of Pre-War MG activity is well underway as you will read in these pages. From New Zealand to Western Australia, Pre-War owners are well and truly up and running. Among the activities in this an "off" year between our own biennial weekends, celebrations have already started commemorating the launch of the little M-type Midget MG in 1928 ninety years ago. While we enjoy reading about the exploits of the very early MGs, those based on the bullnose Morris and their successors, indeed we have a feature article from Chris Keevill in this edition, there is no doubt that the M-type, the first of the Triple-M cars, heralded a new era for the MG Car Company and one that launched the legend of the cheap and cheerful sports cars for which MG is largely remembered. Unashamedly, we pay tribute to this automotive milestone with coverage in our colour centrefold pages and an article by Robin Page.

We also have a story from our occasional UK contributor, Philip Bayne-Powell, on Barbara Cartland, the prolific author of romance novels from the 1930s who set up a race at Brooklands using MGs. Coincidentally, Barbara popped up on my Facebook feed recently, and I was able to pinch a few additional images to illustrate Philip's story.

In other articles, Ross Kelly talks about his recent purchase of K3004, Harry Hickling and others add grist to the mill of the Moveable Cultural Heritage debate, and we finally have a report from our reluctant but keen NSW group. John Hurst and Peter Holsgrove have put themselves forward as the "not the NSW correspondents" - they wish! Ross is one of several of our collective to whom we all owe a debt of gratitude for the way they have thrown themselves whole-heartedly into Pre-War MGs and made some exceptionally rare and valuable cars available to all of us by the spirited way they display and use them. Frank Bett, who first restored K3004 back to its original slab tank configuration during the 1960s, and used it in anger at the first MG National Meeting in Sydney back in the 1970s, would be thrilled to see it out and about again.

Someone else we owe a huge debt to is Tony Sloan, our out-going Registrar. For the best part of 40 years, Tony has been keeping track of the comings and goings of our cars, no mean feat at the best of times. Tony signs off below and we wish him well as he tries to squeeze into his P-type Special.

And finally, reason has prevailed in England and the home MG Car Club has recently agreed that the Raworth MGs produced by Kimber in 1923 are in fact the "start of it all". This means we can all breathe a sigh of relief and plan for some exciting Centenary celebrations in 2023. Thank you to overseas director Peter Cook for finessing this issue through some opaque governance processes at Kimber House.

Malcolm

## Patron's Comment – Walter

*Patron the Younger Walter Magilton is heading for Alice Springs...*



As I write this, we have just had our Melbourne Club annual Concours d'Elegance with a very good attendance of Pre-War cars in spite of the day being very wintery, cold and raw. As this is the 90<sup>th</sup> year of the charismatic little M-type, it is natural that it gets some additional attention. We had three on the floor of our last general club night (with talks from Ian Mawson and Robin Page) and no less than seven out of a total of sixteen Pre-War MGs at the concours. Absolutely wonderful to see so much restoration going on with these "mighty midgets". Unfortunately we missed seeing Peter Kerr and his M-type as he had a fall and ended up in hospital. Careful Peter, we don't bounce like we did when we were young!

The annual National Meetings are the fabric that really binds our various centres together and has done for many years (48 so far). We all know that this year it is in Tasmania and next year it will be in Queensland with 2020 being hosted in Albury-Wodonga by the Melbourne Club. There is a possibility, and a possibility that is growing stronger, that in 2021 it will be held in Alice Springs. This has been a dream of mine for quite some time; something I share with Murray Arundell. I believe that the Gold Coast are raising the matter at the delegates' meeting at Easter. The Alice has much to offer at this stage and is not as far for the eastern states to travel to as it is for WA and, depending on the route taken, is shorter for WA enthusiasts than to some of the eastern state venues they have travelled to in recent years. In my mind, this could be one National Meeting that we would really remember and that anyone attending would be a winner.

If you see the Triple-M Bulletin from England, it was very nice to see a good write-up of our Yamba meeting in the October/November edition last year. Words by Rob Dunsterville, photos by Matthew Magilton and a gloriously evocative atmospheric one by Shirley Davies. I think we may have frightened off any international visitors from ever attending any future such rallies by that one photo alone.

It is also good to see that more and more MG Centres are starting to see that 1923 was the first year that a car that could be regarded as an MG rather than a Morris Special was marketed. This is in spite of 1924 being spouted about by retailers of the very modern MGs. This 1924 date started many years ago to bolster declining sales as it was convenient to market anniversary models even if the date was a lie. The home MG Car Club centre has recently declared that the centenary "year" in England and Europe will be celebrated from June 2023 to June 2024.



Finally, Denise and I are off to Ulverstone in our TA at Easter for the National Meeting. We hope to do some touring in the car after the meeting and also see many of you there.

OOE

## Patron's Comment – Ray

*Patron the Elder Ray Fowler reminisces about the day the world water speed records tumbled on Kogarah Bay...*



The story in the November Newsletter by our amazing historian, Graeme Jackson, about Wild Bill, his TA and concluding with the photos of Keith Barry and Firefly 2 took me right back to the 1950s and Kogarah Bay. I was there that very day! I was just 20 at the time and living in Haberfield, not too far from Kogarah Bay in those days, so I knew the record attempts were happening and made sure I fired up the J2 and was there at dawn to watch the excitement, especially as I knew the hydroplane had an MG engine fitted. What I didn't realise was that Firefly 2 had Wild Bill's TA motor fitted, so that aspect of Graeme's story was quite an eye-opener for me. But I did realise that the little hydroplane was going to be fast, as Keith Barry already had the record under his belt from previous attempts a year or so earlier and this time he was going to be faster.

Keith was one of those self-taught natural engineering wizards with great knowledge of camshafts and propellers. Kogarah Bay was like glass in the early hours of the morning and the small crowd who had gathered to watch were holding their collective breath while the attempts were on. Keith had to do a run in both directions and I can still see Firefly 2 screaming across the water at over 80 mph. Unfortunately, on his return run there was some chop in the water from an early morning fishing boat and he had to back off a bit otherwise he would have done a Donald Campbell and flipped. The resulting average speed of 78.0 mph was a new world record anyway and I think it still stands today. It was a memorable occasion. Thank you Graeme.



I don't really know where my time goes, but here I am several months since I last wrote about the engine for my new Fowler J2 and I still haven't fully assembled everything. I can report that the crank spins beautifully in the mains and I have now assembled the conrods and pistons and they are in place and I have an oil filter fitted. Everything turns over nicely so I know there should be no problems when the engine fires for the first time, and I now have a Vertex Scintilla magneto ready to install. I'll be putting the head on soon. In my defence, I was side-tracked into dealing with the chassis which has been cleaned up with fine soft sand-blasting, filling on the outside of the rails and painted gloss black. I have also been finishing off supercharging my son's MG TF and re-assembling the car so that he can now drive it. And to top things off, my little Y-type, my daily driving car, broke a crankshaft and needed to be dealt with quickly. As with all of you, Christmas slows me down too.

## From the Registrar

*Tony Sloan signs off...*



Well here we are at my last "From the Registrar" and as usual I am having a mental block. I know there has been a lot of movement in our cars lately, especially some significant ones, and I hope to capture them all in the new Register. Ross Kelly has confirmed that he has bought K3004 from Bruce Croft as reported elsewhere, but he also advises that C0261 has been sold "to Southern Australia" which is geographically more specific than "Oceania" as reported in the last Newsletter. No doubt the new owner will put their hand up soon!

The main thing occupying my mind at the moment is the sadness at selling PA1299 and planning what I must modify on PA0481 to accommodate my leg difficulties. I feel a lot happier making changes to PA0481 as it is a "work in progress" rather than hacking into PA1299. You can see my ad for PA1299 in our Market section, plus I'm selling the trailer that was made especially to move pre-war MGs around!

The 2018 Register is in first draft form and I will be sending copies to the various State correspondents for checking by the end of the month.

By the next Newsletter there will be a new Registrar and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have helped over the last 40 years. There are too many to mention individually, but when Walter Magilton and Alan Bail gave me the job, little did I know how long I would be doing it and what immense enjoyment it has given me. Hopefully current records are accurate and that the new Registrar will have a gentle start.

I am sure that Malcolm will twist my arm to write an occasional piece for the Newsletter but for now its farewell.





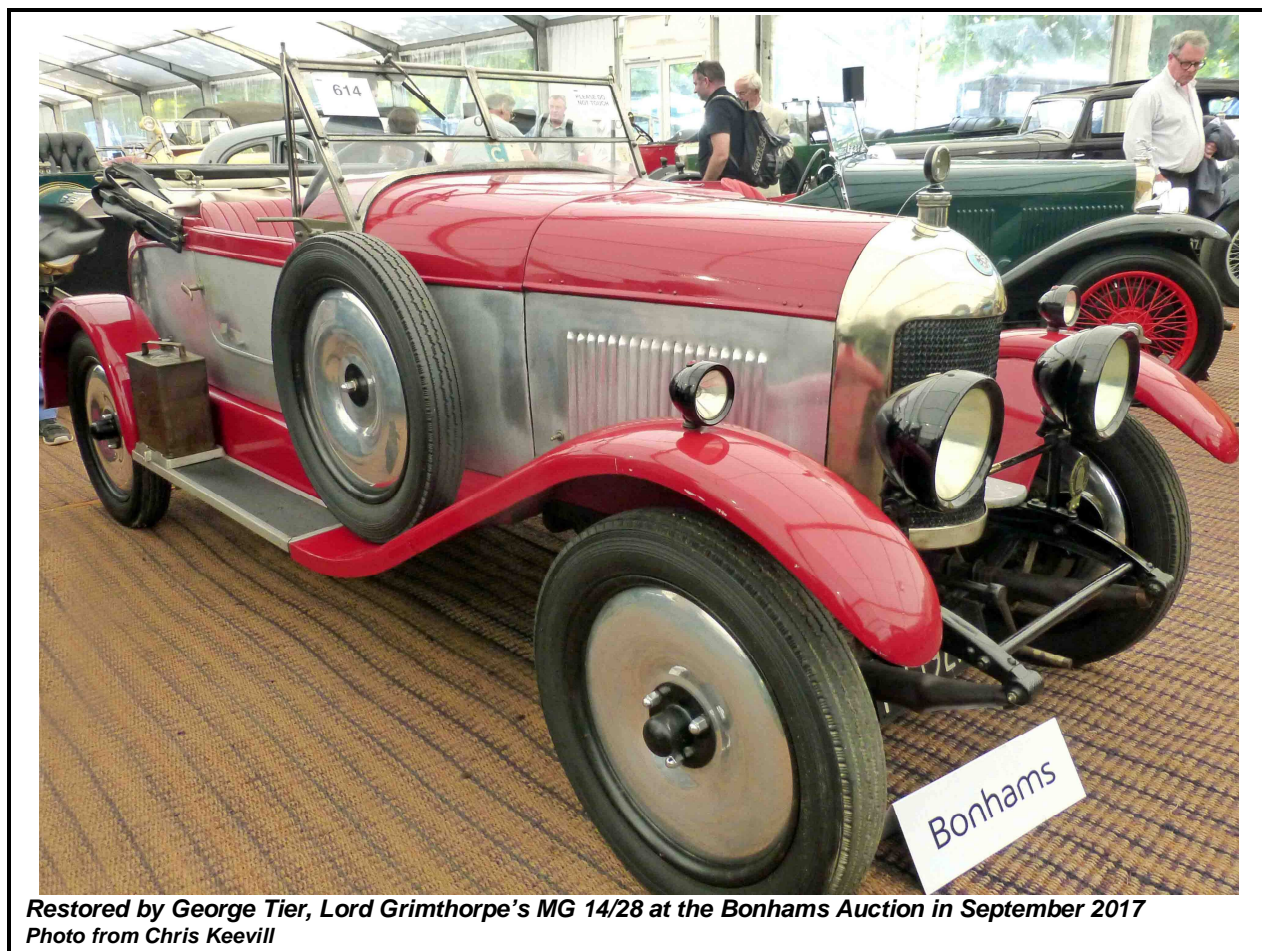
## HISTORY - Lord Grimthorpe's MG

Early MG Society historian Chris Keevill has been chasing the story behind one of New Zealand's early MGs...

The Bonhams auction at Beaulieu Autojumble, in September 2017, included a car that caused a flurry of interest amongst enthusiasts for early M.G.s. It was a car belonging to the Beer family, which had been imported from New Zealand in the 1980s, but never registered for use on the road in the U.K. Details of the car were published in Phil Jennings' "Early M.G." in 1983, which also featured an article entitled "The Seven Year Itch" written by the New Zealander, George Tier, who restored the car in the 1960s. Coincidentally, earlier in 2017, your Scribe received by e-mail a photo of Tier's car, taken in 1980 at a car show in Rotorua, N.Z., soon after the restoration was completed. The photo was sent to us by Malcolm Robertson, the editor of the newsletter of the Pre-War M.G. Register of Australia. Malcolm is a good friend of The Early M.G. Society and always shares information which might interest us.



In February 2017, Malcolm was driving a WA MG in New Zealand as part of an entourage travelling via the Art Deco festival in Napier to the Pre-56 MG rally in Whanganui. The group met up with an elder of the New Zealand SVW fraternity, Gordon Vogtherr who used to own a VA tourer, and who had the photo of the red Bullnose. Via Gordon, we were able to find that its restorer, George Tier, is still very much alive and 'playing' with ancient motor cars in his 80th year. Gordon provided Mr. Tier's address and phone number, so when it was announced that the car was to be auctioned, your Scribe rang Mr. Tier and a lengthy correspondence about the car began.



Restored by George Tier, Lord Grimthorpe's MG 14/28 at the Bonhams Auction in September 2017  
Photo from Chris Keevill

We already knew from the details in "Early M.G." that the remains of the car from which George Tier began his restoration were minimal. George was (and still is!) a very determined fellow, and not without considerable knowledge and skill in respect of old cars. In the 1960s he owned a Morris dealership, which he then amalgamated with an Austin dealership acquired in 1970. He had never been involved with vintage vehicles, but harboured a desire to own one, and it was when he was in hospital for a spell in 1963 that a fellow patient told him about the remains of a vintage car lying on a farm at Ruawai, which he subsequently purchased. Those remains he recognised as being mainly Bullnose Morris Oxford components.

I asked George why he chose to rebuild the car as an M.G. Super Sports. He replied - "Because it was widely known to be an M.G. and Lord Grimthorpe's car at that."

Why the connection to Lord Grimthorpe? Sir Ralph William Ernest Beckett, the 3rd Baron Grimthorpe, (to give him his full title), was a banker and breeder of race horses and a partner in the Leeds bank, Beckett & Co., which became part of the Westminster Bank. Born in 1891, he was educated at Eton and Oxford, served with distinction in both

World Wars and frequently competed in the Cresta Run at St. Moritz.



**George Tier's car at Rotorua in 1980**  
*Photo from Gordon Vogtherr*

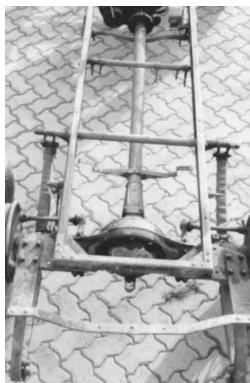


**Sir Ralph William Ernest Beckett**  
*Photo courtesy EMGS*

Grimthorpe often used his huge wealth to help worthwhile but cash-strapped companies keep going. One such venture was with Airspeed, the aircraft manufacturer, which was set up in 1931 by Nevil Shute Norway, who later found fame as Nevil Shute, the successful author. Shute was an aircraft designer who had been with Barnes Wallis at Vickers Airship Company where they worked on the R100 airship. Lord Grimthorpe was Airspeed's main financial backer for its first three years. Despite producing some successful aircraft, Airspeed could not compete with the big firms and became part of De Havilland in 1940.

When Lord Grimthorpe bought his 1925/26 Bullnose M.G. Super Sports two-seater from the Auckland Morris dealers Harrison & Gash in January 1928 (see our cover photo), it is thought that he planned an extensive tour of both the North & South Islands. However, it seems he cut short his tour when in Wellington, on the southern coast of the North Island and took a passage home to England. He left the M.G. in Wellington to be collected by the supplier, Harrison & Gash, and taken back to be sold. This they did, but it proved difficult to sell and the firm's salesman, Jim Henley, began to use the car himself.

Whilst the M.G. was still running on the firm's trade plates, Jim Henley was stopped by the police while taking two girlfriends for a day at the races. He was given a ticket for using the car on trade plates for pleasure, rather than business! They did eventually manage to sell the car to a local sawmiller's son called Len Hawkins. Many years later, when the restoration was complete, George Tier took the car and showed it to Len, who commented that the paint was originally a deeper red – claret in fact.



Next the car passed to Jim Hayes, who had been a salesman in the 1930s at a local Morris dealer. Eventually the car ended up on a farm. Didn't they all? A farmer in Ruawai, George Wilson, owned it and converted it into a van which they used for going beach fishing. Even then, it was still known as the M.G. Van. It was from this farm that George Tier purchased the remains in 1965 and set about returning it as closely as he could to its original appearance. The parts of the car that remained did not even amount to those shown in the illustration left! The front section of the chassis frame, together with the rear axle case and main springs had been looted to make a farm trailer. The remains that George actually got comprised: the very rear few inches of the chassis, complete with the quarter elliptic springs; the diff housing with a Ford Model T crown wheel and pinion; the front axle, with springs, but minus one brake drum; the original engine, minus magneto & carburetter; the original gearbox, with top missing, half full of water, but with brake and clutch pedals attached; the radiator minus badge, badly trampled by cattle; the bonnet top, one side panel and bonnet 'slam' boards; and finally, tracking rod and steering tube.

The windscreen frame had gone – probably to the scrap man, as it was nickel-plated brass. The steering box, drop arm and engine mounting bracket had been removed and used to make a soil dresser device on the farm.

Never the less, George set about acquiring replacement components with which to begin his restoration project, beginning with a Morris Oxford chassis frame of the correct period. At that time there were two Bullnose M.G.s known to exist in New Zealand. A two-seater and a four-seater, both owned by Bert Tonks. George visited Bert and engaged him to make a replica of the 2-seater body. Bert Tonks also manufactured for George, replicas of the unique M.G. cranked steering drop arm and also the mounting bracket for the steering box – both of which had been looted from George's kit of parts.

The car was beginning to take shape. We must remember that spares for the rarer vintage cars were very difficult to find in New Zealand, compared with the sources that enthusiasts in Great Britain enjoyed in the 1960s & 70s. In the remote areas of the Antipodes, they had to mend and make do, so the tenacity with which they managed to complete projects such as this, is to be admired.

George used seats from a Morris 8 and door handles from an old Singer. He never managed to find a pair of 'Cruiser' scuttle ventilators to replace the originals. He had set himself a deadline of having the car ready for the 1972 International Rally at Nelson, at the top of the South Island. He made the windscreen himself, with only some photographs to copy – a commendable effort, if not perfectly accurate.



From the time he acquired the remains of the car, George was corresponding with the Bullnose Morris Club in England, and many of his letters to and from the club historian Lytton Jarman are in the car's extensive history file. Jarman owned a Bullnose M.G. jointly with Robin Barraclough at that time – so he knew a great deal about them, and the specific differences between a Morris Oxford and a Bullnose M.G.



There were a couple of salient points in their correspondence that encouraged Jarman to feel that George's car was in fact an M.G. You'll recall that the original gearbox, complete with clutch and brake pedals attached was with the remains George acquired. At The Morris Garages, during the process of turning a Morris Oxford chassis into an M.G. Super Sports, they cut a segment from the right hand side of the foot-pad on the brake pedal. That made it into a reversed 'D' silhouette. This was done in order to give room for the driver's foot on the right-hand throttle pedal, which was a feature of the M.G. Super Sports. Morris cars had central throttles at that time. The correspondence between George Tier and Jarman confirmed that the pedals on the original gearbox were as shown (left) and presumably from an M.G.

Another item from the correspondence brought forth an even more positive response from Lytton Jarman. George Tier furnished Jarman with the number of the car's original engine, which came with the components he'd acquired. Armed with that engine number, Jarman was able to go through the original Morris factory Progress Books, which record which engine was fitted to which chassis, and the exact type of chassis.

All M.G. Super Sports chassis were dispatched from the Morris factory simply as a rolling chassis – driveable, but with no coachwork. The chassis into which George's engine was fitted was confirmed to have been in exactly this category – i.e. a Morris Oxford chassis without a body fitted. To our chagrin, the progress records do not record the destination or purchaser of those chassis. Jarman's response to receipt of the engine number was thus:

10th July 1965

Dear Mr Tier,

*Engine number 103846 was originally fitted to chassis number 91325 which was a four-seater Oxford chassis fitted with front wheel brakes and left the factory on the 18th May, 1925. As it left the factory as a chassis it could quite well have gone to Morris Garages to be fitted with an M.G. body, but the Morris Motors records would not of course show this.*

With kind regards,

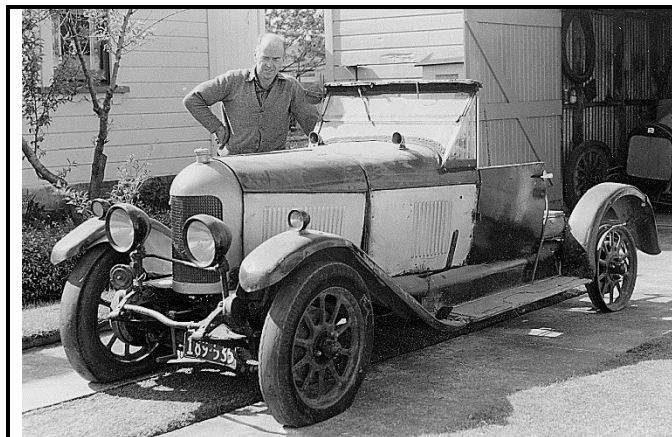
*Lytton Jarman  
(Bullnose Morris Club Historian & Librarian)*

So – the indications that George's car was originally an M.G. are fairly tenuous, but certainly present. At the viewing before the auction, I took the opportunity to have a close look at the car. I checked the wheel-base and can confirm that contrary to Bonham's information, the car was rebuilt on a correct long-wheelbase Oxford chassis – not a Cowley chassis, as was reported.

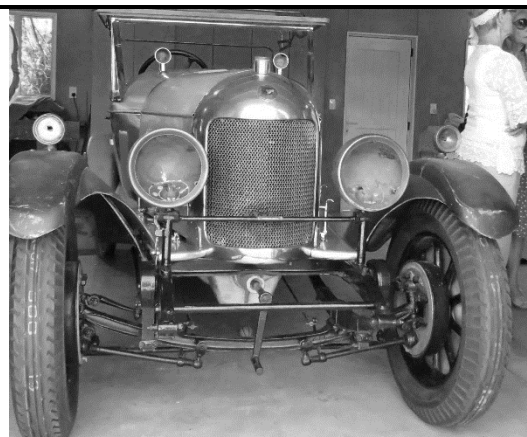
Is it the same car that Lord Grimthorpe bought in 1928? The Kiwis all believe that it is, and George Tier's conversations with the previous owners seem to reaffirm that view. Can it be termed an M.G. now? I'll leave you to make your mind up.

*Malcolm adds a footnote:*

Stuart Taylor and his family hosted an Art Deco morning tea at their home in Havelock North, near Napier, for the Gary Wall entourage in February 2017. Neighbours and friends were invited as well to view progress on the MG 14/28 four-seater tourer that Stuart had been working on since the car was passed to him by his uncle, Bert Tonks many years ago. Among the guests was New Zealand's elder SWW statesman, Gordon Vogtherr, with his photo albums of cars he has owned, seen, ridden in or dreamt about throughout his long life in New Zealand. It was Gordon's photo of the two-seater 14/28 restored by George Tier that catalysed this article by Chris Keevill. More of Gordon's photos will appear in these pages in due course.



**The "other" MG 14/28 rescued by Bert Tonks...**  
Photo from Stuart Taylor



**...under restoration by Stuart in Havelock North**  
Photo from Malcolm Robertson

## **SOCIETY - Barbara Cartland's Ladies Race at Brooklands...**

*The greatest motor-racing hoax of all time took place at Brooklands and the novelist Barbara Cartland and a group of her friends very nearly pulled it off. Philip Bayne-Powell recounts the story of a novel event for society women in 1931...*

Barbara Cartland was an extremely prolific writer of romantic novels, with her first book published in 1923, and continuing for many decades, eventually producing nearly 700 books, which sold 750 million copies. She was still writing novels at the grand old age of 97. She lived in the headlights of society, and regularly reported on events to the newspapers. She became Mrs Alexander McCorquodale in 1927, but divorced him six years later to marry his cousin. She was also the Chief Lady Welfare Officer for Bedfordshire during the war. She also has the unknown honour of inventing the aeroplane-towed glider.

The idea of Barbara Cartland's Ladies Race at Brooklands all started when a male racing driver brought up the subject of lady drivers, saying that they couldn't drive, which caused some hilarity at one of her parties. Barbara reckoned that women could drive as well as men, and to prove it she would put on the first women's race at Brooklands.



**Barbara Cartland (far right) with her "drivers".**  
*Photo from Illustrated London News*

She asked many of her friends, who were not really racing ladies, although she got two to enter. One was the Hon Mrs Joan Chetwynd, who had set a record in 1929 Six Sports Car race with an average speed of 82.98mph in a Lea Francis. She and her husband knew Cecil Kimber well and it is likely that they arranged for Kimber to provide the MGs for this jaunt. The other racing lady was Paddy Naismith, who regularly raced her boyfriend's supercharged Salmson. The rest of the ten drivers were from Barbara's society set. They were Miss Hylda Banks, Mrs Wardrop, Princess Imeretinsky, Lady de Clifford, Miss Kathleen Meyrick, Miss Clare Dean and Miss Elizabeth Makins.

So on November 24th 1931, all the ladies convened at Brooklands, and to meet their cars, which were all MGs provided by Cecil Kimber. He was always looking for a good excuse to publicise his cars, so was pleased to respond to Barbara's plan by providing the ten cars. Of these three were C-types, with three reported to be blown, while the rest of the cars were M-types. From the pictures taken, it appears that some of the ladies had male mechanics, who were probably the MG drivers, who had brought the cars down that morning.

Barbara herself had bagged Lord de Clifford as her mechanic, who told her to "push this and pull that" to enable her to get round! Barbara had been in touch with all of the newspapers, and had arranged for British Movietone News to film the whole event, which they did. Only the Motor and the Daily Express turned up for the press and wrote up the event afterwards.

The "race" itself was a bit of a farce, as they hadn't agreed on how many laps were to be completed. The track was being repaired at this time, with large parts of the Members banking being dug up, so that the cars had to weave around the workmen! The Motor reported that "they tore off the mark, crossing and recrossing each other's bows in about as dangerous a manner as it is possible to imagine".

Princess Avril Imeretinsky spun her car completely round, which she described as "a delicious thrill". After a lap or two (accounts vary), it was all over, with Paddy Naismith coming in first. However for the film crew the finish was not very spectacular, so a staged finish was run, with the cars starting from the far end of the Railway Straight. This produced a close finish, bonnet to bonnet.

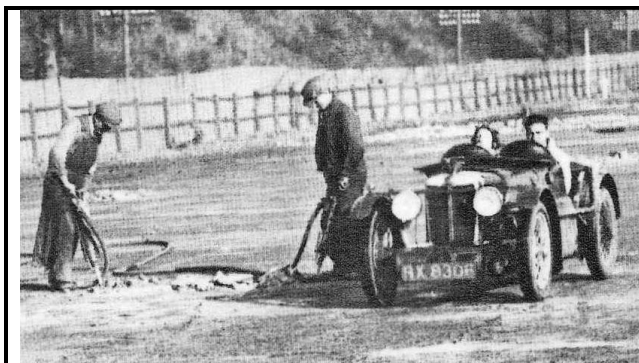






The race winner was then decided as Princess Imeretinsky, who sat on the tail of her C-type and said to the camera "I think we have proved that women can drive as well as men". The Princess married a Georgian prince and later became the fourth wife of Mr Ernest Simpson, whose wife left him to be with King Edward, who abdicated for this divorcee. Second place was awarded to the Hon Mrs Chetwynd, who you may know bought a new C-type, (C0260), and raced it in the May Double Twelve race of 1931, and since she still owned it at this stage, she brought it down for herself to drive. This car is now owned by Hamish McNinch. Third place was awarded to Miss Paddy Naismith (in C 0263, now owned by Chris Cadman, after being restored by the author).

The film crew now wanted some pictures of a race in progress, so the cars went to the Byfleet Banking, where they were filmed on the move, with Mrs Chetwynd speeding round at 75mph, overtaking the slower drivers. Further filming was done of the cars in the pits, changing tyres and refuelling.



**Workmen repair the track as Miss Paddy Naismith races her MG Midget - November 1931**  
Photo from Phillip Bayne-Powell



**Three of the C-types with their male mechanics, with Joan Chetwynd in her car at the front.**  
Picture taken from the Movietone News film

As a publicity stunt this event was quite a success, but as a race and publicity for women drivers it was pretty much a farce, and elicited several complaining letters to the Motor about it, including one from Mrs Chetwynd herself. After this event Barbara arranged to get a ladies reading room set aside in the Club house; this is now commemorated in the Barbara Cartland Room (opened in 1994) that can currently be seen at Brooklands, laid out in the period of the 30s, with a 78rpm record on the gramophone, as well as many pictures of Barbara and her society and racing friends.

Dame Barbara Cartland (as she had become), revisited Brooklands for a BBC programme "The Power and the Glory", when she was at the great age of 97. Ken Rees brought the C-type (C0261) he owned at the time, and took Barbara for a fast run on the banking. He remembers looking across to Barbara to see how she was enjoying it, only to be shocked to see her false eyelashes had come loose in the wind, and were working their way up her forehead like two black caterpillars!!

Barbara Cartland died in May 2000, aged 98, and is still remembered throughout the world for her many novels.



**The "Start"...**  
Picture taken from the Movietone News film

Footnote: The author would like to thank the Brooklands Motor Museum for information from their archives. Also additional assistance was kindly given by Barry Foster and Hamish McNinch.

## The M-type MG Midget - Celebrating 90 Years...

As it turns 90, Robin Page takes a look at the place in MG History the original M-types holds



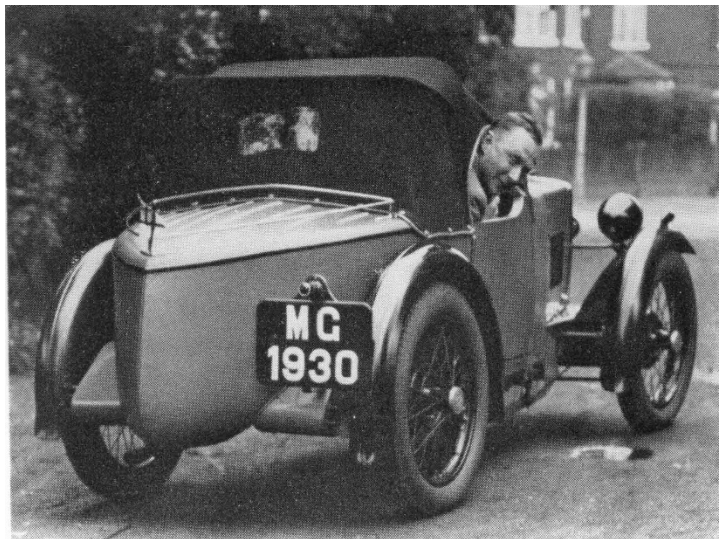
The M.G. 'M' Type Midget is undoubtedly the most significant of all of the many models of M.G. cars. This is because it led what might be called the 'sports car revolution', saved the Morris Garages from financial extinction and kick started the M.G. movement! Austin 7 lovers will correctly observe that this 'revolution' really started with the 'Baby Austin' of 1923, but, Austin failed to follow through the development of that car, effectively leaving the running and the market to M.G. The Austin 7 had brought affordable motoring, and affordable motorsport, to the masses and it took until mid-1927 for the penny to drop for William Morris who finally realized the market potential for small affordable cars and set in train the development of the Morris Minor.

Simultaneously, Cecil Kimber and his colleagues saw the about to be launched Minor as an ideal platform for a small sports car and both it and the new 'M' Type Midget cars were eventually released at the Olympia motor show late in 1928. It had been a real rush job and of the two cars shown one had no engine. Considering the tortuous process involved in model development nowadays the mind boggles when looking at how quickly Kimber was able to achieve this.

The car was exceedingly well received at the show by both the press and the public with 200 orders being taken by the time the show ended. This was remarkable as at its price of £175 it cost £50 more than the Minor and these orders rested solely on seeing the car on the M.G. stand and before a wheel had ever turned in a road test! The Autocar magazine accurately foresaw the future and said, "The M.G. Midget will make sports car history". The Olympia success moved Kimber immediately to order 498 bodies at a cost of a little over £6 each from the Carbodies company and production of the 'M' Type commenced in the Spring of 1929.

Kimber's quite straightforward modifications to the Morris design included a lighter, boat tailed, fabric covered two seater body, lowered suspension, an increase to the rake of the steering column, some minor modifications to the gear change and pedals and some tweaking of the engine. One very effective stylistic change was to fit narrow louvered valences to the body, below the level of the doors, that gave the car a lower and more sporting look.

The Minor had an 847cc overhead camshaft engine sourced from Morris's recently acquired Wolseley company. Wolseley had developed this engine from the large V8 Hispano-Suiza overhead camshaft aircraft engines they had built under licence during WW1 as the Wolseley Viper. One feature of the 847cc engine was the drive for the overhead camshaft coming off the front of the crankshaft, via bevel



gears to a vertical drive incorporating the generator, to a further set of bevel gears at the front of the camshaft. An engine developed by the E.G. Wrigley company in the mid-1920s that used this method of driving the camshaft probably inspired this innovation. Wrigley had been another Morris acquisition. The Morris people soon found this engine a little too sprightly for the new Minor and de-tuned it, eventually replacing it with a side valve engine in 1933. The engine, whilst relatively complicated but being 'sprightly' was suitable for Kimber's purposes and, given the speed with which the 'M' Type project came together, he probably did not have much option other than to make the most of the engine he was given and get on with the project.

It is obvious that the birth of the 'M' Type was a 'bit of a Barnaby' coming out of a snap decision to develop the car from what was available with the Minor. It was not initially developed with racing in mind. Had this been the case Kimber would have found his cars racing with 847cc engines in a 1,000cc class. Also, probably because of his personal success in 'Old Number One', and wins by 14/40s, Raworths and 14/28s in various trials between 1923 and 1927, Kimber seemed to be more interested in trials than racing. Thus the first competition event that 'M' Types entered was the 1929 High Speed Trial run at Brooklands at the Junior Car Club Members Day where the five Midgets entered each received a 1st Class award.

Participation in the 1930 Double Twelve race was organized with Kimber's blessing and support by a bunch of privateers known as PERR - the initials of Pollard, Edmondson, Roberts and Randall. These were four well-heeled gentlemen who applied an analytical approach to their motor racing alongside the requisite pounds, shillings and pence. They won the team prize and their success was seized upon in subsequent M.G. advertising. Through 1929 'M' Types also won five 1st Class awards in the MCC High Speed Trial at Brooklands and a 3rd place in the Mont des Mules Hill-climb during the Monte Carlo Rally. In 1930, in addition to the already mentioned PERR's success, 'M' Types won eighteen 1st Class awards in the London to Lands End Trial, 1st in Class in the Monte Carlo Mont des Mules Hill-climb and 5th place in the 1,100cc class in the Spa Francorchamps 24hour race, notably the first car under 1,000cc to finish a 24 hour race!



With the momentum arising from the early successes Morris Garages began to seriously look at developing cars with racing in mind. It was a great tribute to all concerned that they were eventually able to extract more than substantial performance increases out of the original engine over the immediately ensuing years. The little 'M' Types went on to further successes whilst the boffins in the factory worked fast on development of the next generation of Midgets.

Interestingly, when the Wolseley engines first arrived at the Morris Garages, staff had been under strict orders NOT to remove the rocker covers let alone fiddle with the timing. But the troops knew that there was something amiss in the engine setup and eventually succumbed to temptation to discover that the valve timing was abysmal with no overlap between exhaust closing and inlet opening. Worse still, there was a delay of 2 degrees where inlet and exhaust valves were both closed and having a good old rest. For the Double Twelve cars a 7 degree overlap was used and by 1931 the use of 35 degrees of overlap released a whole herd of hidden horses.

This new little car went on to become the most popular sports car of its time and when production ceased in mid-1932, 3,235 'M' Type Midgets had been produced. It was very popular for club level motorsport, including trials and hill climbs, and was easy and fun to drive and could be maintained by DIY owners. The poor quality of petrol in its time meant that head removal for a 'decoke' was a common task for owners, such jobs often being done on the kitchen table. Such an everyday task at that time is now a challenge for today's owners. Progress?

Kimber and his team certainly got the fundamentals right and the 'M' Type's basic 'look' from the now iconic M.G. radiator to the rear of the doors was retained for the next 25 years, through to the TF (the metal one, not the plastic) and including the three large SVW cars. There were something under 30 variants that had that M.G. 'look'. The run of very similar looking models was finally broken by the leap in design of the MGA.

As a tribute to the car and as an example of the 'M' Type Midget's versatility - in 1930, one completed 100 consecutive ascents of Beggars' Roost hill climb, a notorious 974 foot climb on a rough unsealed track with a maximum gradient of 1:3.58. This took a little over 7 hours with the engine running non-stop as confirmed by an RAC observer who spent the day as a passenger in the car. The same car, with no further mechanical attention, then headed off to the Edinburgh Trial which included a 1:4.5 climb and picked up a Gold Medal along with 14 other Midgets. By the time it returned to London via the Lake District it had covered 930 trouble free miles and went back to its daily life of 'pottering around town' before heading off to further competition successes.

One can but wonder at how much we might, or might not, have advanced with our application of modern technology to our Pre War cars. Think, billet crankshafts, cleverer camshafts, twin carburetters, sophisticated pistons, exhaust headers, etc, that are in many of today's 'preserved' Midgets. Quite amazingly, 80 years after the Beggars' Roost success, the same Midget, accompanied by 10 others, attempted to achieve 100 ascents between them over a two day period. They managed but 66. That less than fulfilled re-enactment has to increase our respect for our cammy loving forebears.

A particularly special 'M' Type development was EX120, the first MG specifically designed for record breaking. With a lowered capacity of 750cc and in the hands of George Eyston it went on to exceed 100mph, a record for an engine of this size at the time. Not long after this the 'M' Type based 'special' completed an hour at a speed of 100mph.

The Midget arrived in the middle of the great depression. The car companies were struggling at that time, many disappeared, and the sales success of the Midget was responsible for saving the Morris Garages and provided a welcome addition to the Morris group's coffers.

The popularity of the Midget at the grass roots level soon led to owners wanting to form a club. In 1930, John Thornley, a new 'M' Type owner was instrumental with fellow enthusiasts in establishing an MG Car Club and became its first secretary. He visited Abingdon and succeeded in gaining Cecil Kimber's support for the Club, eventually bringing it under the Morris Garages umbrella. That first club spawned the huge M.G. movement, and worldwide network of clubs of which we are now all a part. This was a direct result of the success and popularity of M.G.'s first small sports car. Thornley went on to embed himself in M.G. folklore but that is another story.

Development of the 'M' Type continued over its short life with a late change from fabric covered to steel clad bodies, but with only 230 metal panelled cars being produced. Cables replaced push rods to operate the brakes, and a small closed car, 'The Sportsman's Coupe', was introduced. This was a boxy looking three seater of which 350 were built. The 'M' Type was initially priced at £175 which is interesting to compare with the £50-60,000 or so figure the car can now command. Perusal of the current UK Triple M Register competition results shows 'M' Types continuing to do very well in Pre War MG competition. There are currently 26 'M' Type Midgets in the Pre War M.G. Register of Australia.

This cute little M.G. remains a truly significant part of M.G. history!



**A Product of  
Enthusiasm!**

The 8/33 M.G. Midget Sportsman's Coupe, £243

**The MG Sports**

*"Faster than most."*

The idea of the M.G. Sports car was conceived in a moment of enthusiasm! It was designed by an enthusiast, is built by enthusiasts and is sold by enthusiasts.

Can you wonder that M.G. owners are themselves enthusiastic?

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8/33 M.G. Midget Sports, from £185    18 80 M.G. Six Sports, from £310

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## A Lifetime Obsession...

Ross Kelly announces the birth of his latest child...



MGs have always been an obsession. This desire leads to my marriage to the first wife who was foolish enough to lend me the five hundred dollars to buy an MG TF. The TF provided a couple of years of transport and many memories: wet, cold, sunburnt, bee stings in delicate places and suicide doors that almost hit the back guards after being opened at 70kph - OOPs. The TF was sold to help fund a trip to Europe, ostensibly to see the sights; Georgia's priorities – castles, ruins and French patisseries, mine – MGs preferably pre-war. Visions of visiting Terry and Barry Bone who were famous for pre-war MG cars and spares did not happen and our money was spent on engine repairs to the VW camper. We saw the sights, ate the delicious pastries but never made it to see the MG Bone yard.

Fast forward to 2003, a lazy Saturday afternoon perusing the Book of Dreams (aka Unique Cars), an MG J3 for sale and my journey into the world of Triple-M (Midget, Magna and Magnette) MGs and MGAs began. I have been fortunate to own and drive some great MGs: MG TC and TF, MGAs and Triple-M cars:

- MGA 1600 and MGA Twin Cam both restored to concours plus by Dan Casey;
- MG TC, crashed into my neighbour in the first week, rebuilt by Joe Wilson and supercharged by Norm Goodall;
- The "Australian J4", actually J3 3763, which has taken us on many great MG journeys including from Italy to the UK and Aussie outback adventures;
- C type Monthèry Midget C0261, best driven at 4000rpm plus;
- Supercharged L1 Magna special, lightweight and quick;
- Two MG NBs including the NB Special, which has given me many hours of fun at Mt Cotton Hill Climb, Leyburn Sprints and other speed events in the Eastern states and South Australia.

Owning one of the MG K3 road-race cars was always a dream, one that I never expected to become a reality... But, soon after the Yamba Pre-war MG event in October 2017, I received an unexpected phone call from Di Hiley advising that K3004 was for sale. Consultations with the current wife, and discussion with Westpac to see if they wished to take a share in the car, resulted in K3004 taking up residence in the garage.



**K3004 at Mannin Beg in 1935...**  
Photo from Ross Kelly



**...and at Albert Park 1959 wearing the Ausca body.**  
Photo from Ross Kelly

K3004 has been a racer taking part in many events in the UK and Australia from 1933 through to the early 1960s. During this time K3004 has had a succession of changes to the body to improve performance including fitting of AUSCA fibreglass by Jim Gullan. Purchased in early April 1933 by G.F.A. Manby-Colegrave, K3004 made its first race appearance on the 17th April at the Brooklands BARC event. In the hands of Manby-Colegrave, and subsequent owners Billy Cotton and Mrs C.D. Corbett-Fisher (Driver: H. Stuart-Wilton), K3004 enjoyed much success and disappointment. A highlight was the awarding of a Brooklands 120mph Badge in May 1937. In 1950 Jim Gullan advertised in Autosport for "K3 Wanted". He subsequently purchased K3004 from a Mr May of Weybridge and exported the car to Australia in 1952. Jim Gullan raced the car with mixed success in many events in Victoria from 1952 to 1961. K3004 was then owned by M. Robertson, Jim Gullan again, Frank Bett, Max Henderson and for the last twenty years by Bruce Croft. Frank was the first to restore the car back to its original slab tank form.

I expect to have the car out and about in late March on completion of minor repairs and for K3004 to have its first outing on the track at the Winton Historic in late May. We are working on removing the current part owner Westpac with the sale of two very fine Triple-M cars: J3 3763 and the NB supercharged Special.

I must thank Georgia, the ex-girl friend, first wife and current wife who for forty seven years has always encouraged my passion for fly fishing, MG Triple-M cars and of late other fine British marques. Thank you to my many friends especially Norm Goodall, Jeff Newey and Dan Casey who have helped tirelessly on the restoration and maintenance of the cars. And especially to a patient Norm who finally after fifteen years said that I have at last passed the 2nd year of my motor mechanic's apprenticeship. I believe the assessment read in part "great at dis-assembly and misplacing vital components, fairly useless at re-assembly, and highly unlikely to master the technical aspects of Suck Squeeze Bang Blow mechanics".





*Ross Kelly in K3004 at home in Queensland after the delivery.  
Photo from Ross Kelly*



*Jim Gullan in K3004 at Templestowe Hillclimb in 1952  
Photo from Ross Kelly*



**Pictorial Feature**



**Tony Basham's M-type (M2551) in Victoria for the 90<sup>th</sup> celebrations**  
*Photo from Malcolm Robertson*



**Part of the 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday line-up of M-types at the MGCC Concours, AOMC European Day in Victoria, Feb 2018**  
*Photo from Tony Basham*





**Robin Page in his beautifully presented M-type (M3278)**  
*Photo from Robin Page*



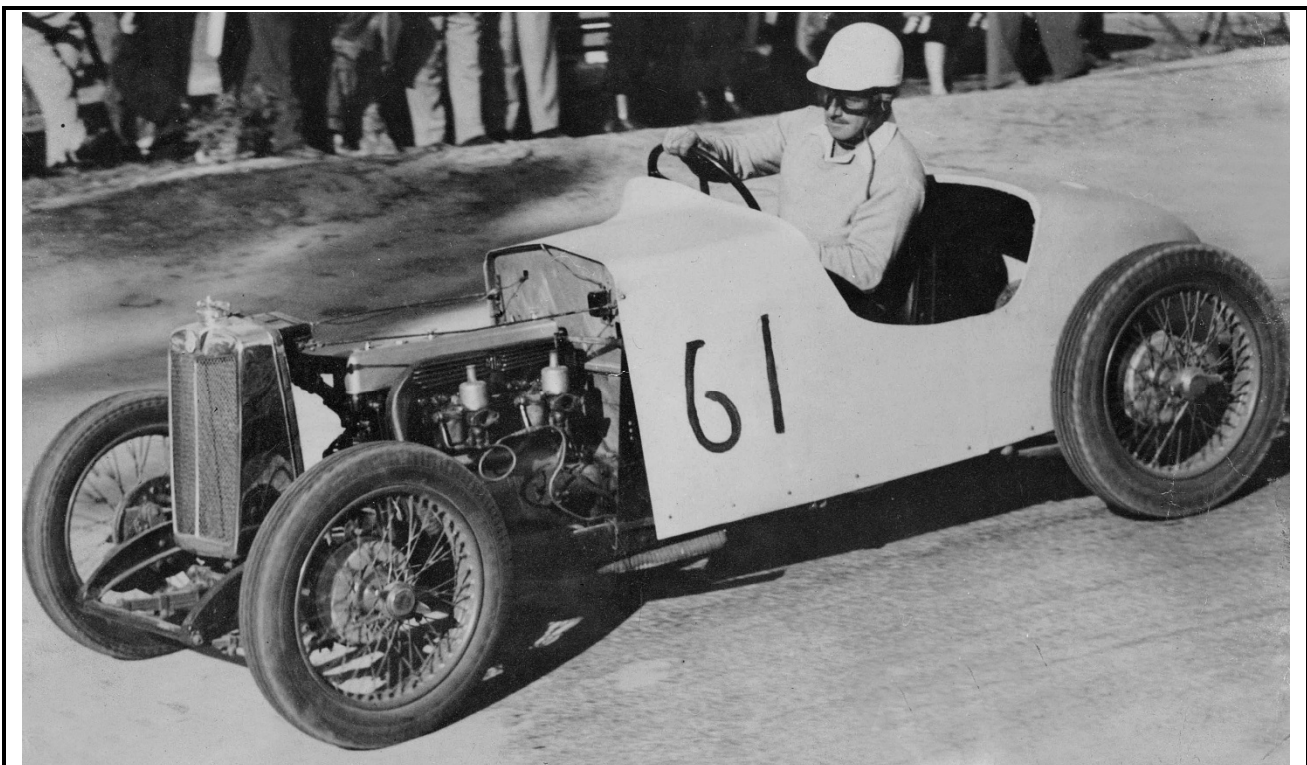
**Michael Carr's K1 Special (K0434) at a recent VSCCA event in Sydney with John Hurst at the wheel.**  
*Photo from John Hurst*



**Pictorial Feature**



*Patron the Younger Walter Magilton wrestles his TA (TA0988) at the motorkhana in Victoria  
Photo from Matthew Magilton*



*This evocative period photograph of an F Magna at full tilt came to light recently. Does anyone recognise the car or the driver? See our Letters page...  
Photo from Ron Taylor*



## Views on the Moveable Cultural Heritage Legislation

Harry Hickling writes from Melbourne...

I read Ross Kelly's *Pointed Tails* comments in the November Newsletter with interest, and Tony Sloan's posed question regarding the applicability of the heritage act to Australia's veteran, historic and pre-war cars, including of course our notable MGs. I personally have been caught within this net and made aware of the legal action, fines, and criminal charges associated with an export of a car that had left Australia, advertised by Bonhams and then a complaint lodged under the Act. The car missed the Auction, cost large amounts of money in shipping, storage, and consequential damages but in the end I received an export permit for the vehicle. At the time, I had no appreciation of the Act and how much damage that could occur simply because an individual or car club decides to lodge a subjective complaint about a potential export under the Act. So, with this experience behind me, let me share some facts and opinions. Also noting that I am passionate about Australia's rich and culturally significant automotive history and I clearly want this preserved.

Firstly, for the vast majority of our cars, should you wish to export it for sale or place it at Auction with any expectation that the vehicle may be attractive for an overseas buyer, then you should apply for the export permit. Probably six months in advance. The process is straight forward and in all likelihood an export permit would be granted as there would need to be very compelling grounds for the Department of Communications and the Arts to refuse the export.

Secondly, it is important to note that all of our pre-war cars actually fall within the Act if they have been in Australia for more than 30 years. Therefore, it is clearly important that you apply for an export permit if you plan to export the vehicle either for sale or permanently. If it is a very significant cultural item, the act technically requires you to obtain a temporary export permit prior to shipping. Regardless of this, due to totally separate issues, make sure you have an import permit for your car before it leaves Australia to facilitate its re-entry back into Australia.

Unfortunately, individuals are now making a habit of lodging complaints about cars at Auction to try to block their export, so my simple advice is to apply for the Export Permit in advance and have it available. Do this proactively, otherwise you risk the outcome, stress and financial loss Cathy and I were faced with.

Thirdly, there is a list of banned exports in the public domain that lists all artifacts that have been refused export permits up to 2015. There are actually no banned motor vehicle exports within this list. Important examples of steam engines and Australian engineering are included.

Here is my opinion of the act and how it should be applied. In my view, with regard to motor vehicles, the Act is subjective and far too open to interpretation and abuse by well-meaning individuals or car clubs that want to prevent further export of our wonderful collection of Veteran and Pre-War cars. Due to the severity and consequential damages to the owners of historic vehicles, there needs to be a clear obligation on the Department to ensure that export restrictions are only applied in the most extreme cases and where a clear heritage case exists against transparent criteria. This means firstly, a clear articulation of why the vehicle is culturally important, and secondly, an assessment of whether an export restriction is actually warranted for the vehicle. To support this, a very precise and narrow interpretation of the act is required that can be clearly articulated, understood and objectively assessed. It should be drafted and circulated as a discussion paper to ensure that it can be debated, agreed upon and understood. In part this is happening behind closed doors over recent years to specific agendas.

I believe the following key criteria should apply for determining if the vehicle should be classified as being of significant and important Australian Cultural Heritage and assessed as potentially being a prohibited export (i.e. refused an export permit). These criteria are:

- 1) The Act should protect examples of Australian engineering within the context of the Australian Automotive Industry and Motorsport that represent truly unique, groundbreaking design and are of notable importance due to their provenance, design and associated historical significance.
- 2) The Act should protect examples of motor vehicles of outstanding international and recognisable achievement in motorsport by a notable and internationally recognised Australian driver or a motor vehicle establishing a unique Australian achievement of International note.
- 3) The Act should not include or consider important cars, just because they are an important or the oldest Australian example of a particular marque, e.g. a K3 Magnette. Such cars are available across the international market place and are no less important or significant internationally as they maybe to Australian heritage.
- 4) A clearly articulated and transparent set of guidelines and criteria are required, with examples of what may or may not fall within the criteria for further assessment.

I would view the following examples as requiring protection:

- a) The surviving example of the Tarrant motor car (right), as I understand it is Australia's first truly designed and built motor car. Certainly the oldest surviving vehicle of its type of unique Australia importance which warrants protection in its own right.
- b) An example of an "Australian" and earliest surviving Australian designed and built Holden and Ford motor-cars. Examples of any ground breaking prototypes and cars that set new standards in Safety, Performance and Design internationally.
- c) Examples of Australian designed and built racing cars of international provenance or a racing car with significant and unique



Australian modifications of international prominence or significant example of Australian engineering expertise within motorsport or the car industry.

d) Unique and important examples of the early era of Australian automotive industry.

e) Motor vehicles of great Australian relevance and importance that have achieved records of international importance, including world speed record attempts and trans-continental crossings.

For example, I would argue, Jack Brabham's F1 BT19 Brabham racing car - the first car bearing its driver's name to win a World Championship race - should fall within the Act and warrant assessment as a prohibited export. Similarly, I would include the 1928 Chamberlain Special race car, that was fully designed and engineered in Australia and cars such as Sir Francis Birtles' Bean that completed Australia's cross-continent expedition and first the London to Melbourne trip as being of significant cultural heritage that warrants assessment for inclusion on the prohibited exports list.

The article discussed two cars in particular: The Q type and Malcolm's Airy Coupe. So with great candor and having known both cars for many decades, let me share my assessment within the context of the proposed criteria.

Firstly the Q type. A wonderful car and my congratulations to Peter Ison, Richard Moore and John Lackey for unearthing it, its wonderful restoration and under John's ownership making it available to us all to admire. Clearly the Q type, one of eight cars, is a remarkable and internationally important car. However, does it rank as warranting classification of such significant Australian Cultural Heritage that its sale on the international market should be blocked and its export prohibited? Well the car has some importance within NSW as having competed at Bathurst and local NSW events. However, Hope Bartlett and John Peek who campaigned the car did not establish any unique level of international results or recognition with the car. The car under no measure warrants it to be listed as a Prohibited Export and should be free to be sold on the international market.

Of course a discussion of the car's importance in regards to being important Australian Cultural Heritage is subjective. In some respect, its ownership by Jumbo Goddard is of greater personal interest to me. Every racing car is defined by its ownership, sporting success and the drivers who wheeled it in anger. In this regard the car does have some importance in terms of Australian Cultural Heritage. However, if this car was prohibited from export it would be hard to draw a line on any historic Australian racing car from being exported, and clearly this is not a desirable thing.

To test my proposed criteria, let's consider a hypothetical question: How would we rank the Q type if it was not campaigned by Hope Bartlett but in fact was the car that launched Jack Braham's career and was international recognised as such. This is an interesting question and worth debate. If this was in fact Sir Jack Braham's first race car, then yes indeed the car would be of significant importance regarding Australian Cultural Heritage. Under my second criteria above, the car would need to be assessed and potentially prohibited from permanent export. However, coming back to the purpose of the Act, not every race car owned by Jack Braham that may have played a role in launching his career needs to be retained in Australia. In this regard other more important Brabham race cars designed and raced by Jack Brabham are hopefully retained in Australia and of greater value to retain here and display. So unless the hypothetical Brabham Q Type truly stood out in terms of Jack's career, and limited or no other examples of his race cars are retained in Australia, then it should not be granted an Export Permit.

The Airy Coupe. Well this MG represents a far more important example of Australian Cultural Heritage. Based on my first criteria the Airy Coupe represents one of the most elegant examples of early Australian Motor Vehicle body design and engineering by Martin and King. Does this mean however, that the Airy Coupe, should be prevented from being permanently exported overseas? Well quite possibly! There is a group of very import early Australian coachbuilders, Melbourne Motor Bodies, that formed the basis for Ford, Holden, Australian (motor cars), Kellows in Melbourne, etc. Furthermore, the Airy Coupe is possibly one of the finest pre-war examples of Australian coachbuilding using traditional timber fabrication and design. If you consider the rarity of these cars then certainly the Airy Coupe is right up there in regards to Australian Cultural Heritage. The original intention of the act was not to prevent every work of art to be banned from export. Its intention is to preserve important examples so they could be retained and preserved within Australia. The assessment would then be: yes the Airy Coupe represents an important piece of Australia Movable Cultural Heritage. However, assuming sufficient examples of the work of early Australian coachbuilders have survived and retained in Australia, then the Airy Coupe should be granted a permanent export permit. If however, it is the only remaining example, which it well maybe, of an elegant Australian designed and coachbuilt two door coupe then yes this is truly of the status of an Australian Cultural Treasure, whereas I find it hard to reach that conclusion for the Q type.

Other Considerations. Perhaps the Act, with regards to these Class B moveable cultural heritage (our cars) provides an opportunity for us to identify what cars are important and why. And then impose not an international restriction on their sale or export, but obligations on their owners to protect the artifact as if it was a Heritage Listed House. For there is in fact nothing stopping Malcolm from sending the Airy Coupe body work to the tip and making a wonderful example of an SA Keller or equivalent special out of the SA. Whilst sacrilege, this has happened to numerous K1 saloons, etc. potentially resulting in a more valuable car at a lower cost to restore!

Having such a list, would encourage current owners to actually record the cultural importance of their cars and provide a permanent historical record. Just like the heritage Australia site, this will promote the value and significance of the motor vehicle and will generate sufficient interest, demand and in turn financial resources to preserve our culture heritage - regardless of whether the motor vehicle resided in Australia or not.

In my experience this approach will yield a far more superior outcome than trying to embody some desire to artificially restrict the sale and export of our cars. This will simply send them underground, reduce their value and in turn the ability of their owners to preserve them or justify investment in their restoration. Possibly on a final note, the increasing desire to restrict exports of motor vehicles within the Act, seems to ignore the fact that more often than not far more important cars have already been exported out of Australia. Yet the Luxury Car Tax and Import regulations make it nearly impossible to bring them back! Where is the sense in that!

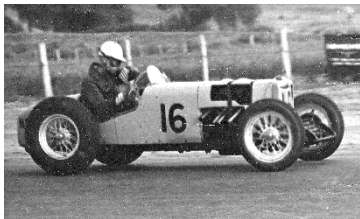
*Footnote:* John Lackey reports that he has received an export permit for the Q-type and that the car is still for sale. Malcolm reports that he hasn't sought an export permit for the Airy Coupe, and anyway it is not for sale. ☺

*Ian Pardy writes from Sydney...*

I read with interest the points of view in the last newsletter. I was unaware we even had such an Act! Whilst I sympathise with Ross's frustration in not being able to obtain a fair or reasonable return on the many hours and much money spent on restoring our cars, I would suggest anyone who goes into the undertaking goes into it eyes wide open. In short, making money, breaking even or even getting close is a situation limited to a very few. And I feel confident the inability to recoup a fair recompense for time and money spent is not limited to our marque, population or geographic locale. We are part of a 'hole in the pocket' world-wide enthusiast club!

The fact is we do it because we are passionate about the cars and have great empathy with their marque heritage. And I think that is the starting point for the legislation. Not all heritage can be turned into a tangible \$ value. Yes, by exporting cars you may in fact do better financially in another part of the world at a given time, but surely protecting what is deemed important culturally has value to a nation as well. Should the public purse be dipped into because someone, without consultation, decided to restore an interesting car and want reasonable recompense for the exercise – good luck selling that idea to the general public! Perhaps prior to buying or undertaking a restoration there needs to be a step in the process where the recognised marque club and the overseers of the legislation adjudicate on the 'cultural value' of a car where there could be issues down the track. A heads up if you like for buyers/restorers. Or maybe a register is submitted and updated by the nominated club outlining cars of 'Cultural Heritage' interest such as they are known to the club which can be used by the evidently anonymous public service adjudicators on such matters? Then if the car is accepted on the 'Movable Cultural Heritage' list perhaps then the individual should be able to receive some tax benefits for a car's restoration and running costs – maybe this is a possibility that could be argued going forward by motoring clubs? The quid pro quo being the car cannot be exported once placed on the list.

This of course goes back to some form of definition. I don't think it can be based solely related to racing pedigree. For example the standard TA of Douglas Bader – I am unaware of any racing pedigree for the car but the fact that a person of noted importance owned it at some time gives rise to its cultural importance. And yes, I acknowledge that trial by ownership is a somewhat fickle standard but again this brings us back to a working definition of 'Cultural Heritage'. I am sure many countries must already have worked their way through this thorny issue (bitsa cars, privileged ownership, racing pedigree etc.) and will be able to give some guidance – perhaps a letter to the Triple-M mob in the UK is called for?



Just on the Fowler J2 – I think the legislation needs to work both ways if it doesn't already do so – it should encourage Australians to reimport cars previously exported that meet the required 'Cultural Heritage' standard, perhaps with re-importation concessions on GST etc. As a small group of enthusiasts, we have the ability to give some backbone to the Movable Cultural Heritage legislation of our country and we should be encouraged to do so.

*Rob Dunsterville adds his two-bob's worth...*

The use of the term 'historic' attached to a pre-war MG in this context under discussion appears to mean, or ask, does it fall within the terms or conditions of the Cultural Heritage Act. A simple determination could be that as no pre-war MGs have the essential cultural attributes of being conceived, planned, designed or indeed built (chassis and engine) in Australia, then none of them has any unique Australian heritage. Therefore the Act does not apply to them. This interpretation implies that for a Bathurst winning Torana or Falcon built in Australia the Act would apply. If, on this basis, the Act does not include pre-war MGs, then whether one is labelled 'historic' or not is of little or no interest. The market will decide its value taking into account its condition and *curriculum vitae*, not whether it is labelled 'historic'. Anyway determining whether a pre-war MG is or isn't 'historic' opens up too much controversy and probably the letting of bad blood as people justify or discredit others deliberations!

## **Biennial Rallies - Follow-up and Heads Up...**

*Organiser Murray Arundell brings us up-to-date with what's happening...*

In the previous Newsletter we invited comment from members concerning the future locations for the Register's biennial Meetings. To be totally honest we were not exactly overwhelmed by responses. Those who did take the time (and we thank you) were evenly divided between holding the meetings at a place equally accessible to all, or to spread the meetings around to differing geographic locations. So for now in the absence of blanket objections to spreading the meetings around we will continue apace to organise the 2019 event.

While details this far out cannot be finalised, we are looking to hold the 2019 Pre War MG Register National Meeting in Nambucca Heads. We have two possible venues but there is a strong preference for one venue in particular. So at this stage we can say that the event will be based in Nambucca Heads NSW, which is approximately 200km south of Yamba, the home of the 2017 event. Also we're yet to finalise the date for the meeting, other than to say it will be in the same September/October period of previous meetings.

Once we're in a position to set final dates and finalise accommodation details we'll be making a formal announcement.





## Your Letters

*Dave Godwin writes from the Gold Coast...*

### **EXPRESSION OF INTEREST - PRE-56 EVENT, NEW ZEALAND 2019 - Sunday 3 March to Friday 8 March**

Laurel and I are considering touring New Zealand in our TA from February to March 2019, thereby incorporating their wonderful MG Pre-56 Rally to be held in Cromwell, South Island from 3rd to 8th March. We would love to enjoy the experience with like-minded MG folk from Australia and are fairly flexible with routes and timing, so as to please anyone interested in joining us. There is a lot to see in (North and) South Island and the roads are underutilised and wonderful to traverse. For more information, please contact me.

Dave Godwin

[murphgod@hotmail.com](mailto:murphgod@hotmail.com) or ring on 0412029277

*Harry Hickling writes from Melbourne...*

### **Mystery Magna**

I borrowed a period photo of a racing MG Magna from Ron Taylor recently (see page 14) and would be interested in hearing from any reader who may recognise the car. Whilst, the Magnas are probably not noted as a high performance race cars, they actually made their mark on both NSW and Victorian circuits as well as the AGP. There is also some confusion created by the nomenclature used by owners when entering the cars, and from contemporary commentators confusing Magnas with Magnettes.

The 1934 AGP lists the following three Magnas, of which the Jennings's Magna is the most well known achieving 3rd place in the 1933 AGP; 4th overall in 1934; and 3rd in 1935. The 1934 AGP Magnas being:

1. Les Jennings
2. R Anderson (DNF)
3. Johnny Summers (DNF)

The Les Jennings Magna was an F type and certainly shows the potential of the car.

In NSW, my own car F0861 was an F type Stiles Magna, and certainly had a strong racing pedigree with 12 inch hydraulic brakes, a split front axle system for independent suspension to improve road handling and grip. By 1957 the Stiles body had gone and it was a "rudimentary/crude square rigged body". Whilst we do not have a photo of the car in 1957, the photo in question on page 14 could easily be this car.

*Gary Wall writes from New Zealand...*

### **The Herve Collection**



I was most interested in the photo of the three K3s in Newsletter 3/2017 taken by John Gillett at the Ollon-Villars hillclimb in Switzerland last August 2017. After studying them I decided K3024 (the middle one) was a local car from the Herve Collection located in Aigle. And it would have been driven by the Curator of the Collection, Rene Rey. I know Rene always enters this biennial event which takes place in August/September every odd year.

The K3 is one of five MGs in the collection started in 1948 by Count Jacques de Wurtemberg. It comprises about 40 odd cars of historic interest from France, Italy and England. All in running order and housed in a purpose built two story premises. It is owned now by what Jacques called a Foundation to protect the cars from sale.

Another of the MGs in the Collection is the sole remaining WA Tourer of the nine that were built by Charlesworth of Coventry. The others are an early SA saloon, an MGA Coupe in factory rally trim and a TC. I have a feeling there could be another two. Not positive about this. I do know there are seven Avions Voisin. Other makes are Rolls Royce, AC, Lancia, Aston Martin, Talbot, Delage, Rover and Jaguar, plus a large number of others that I can't recall. The cars are located on the upper floor with storage and workshops below.

The village of Aigle is located at the eastern end of Lake Geneva. The Autoroute running east to Valais passes right next to Aigle. The Collection is not open at all times but is usually open on the last Saturday of the month in the afternoon. It was a great honour to have known Jacques during the last 10 years of his life. He was a true gentleman, very hospitable and always very interested in what one was up to. He would talk to you on the phone for hours. He died about 2008. The last time I visited the Collection was in 2010 when Heather and I were heading for France after staying with friends in Austria. It was 6pm that day but Rene was still at work keeping the cars polished up. The Collection is worth a visit if you are ever in Switzerland. The email address used to be [fond.herve@bluewin.ch](mailto:fond.herve@bluewin.ch), phone 024 495 35 70.



## Reports from Correspondents

*Peter Holsgrove and John Hurst report from NSW...*



This is just a little snippet from the Not The NSW Correspondents, having dried out after the Yamba dousing, which we must add was a most enjoyable weekend. The wet weather was more than compensated for by the dry humour! During shiraz-assisted negotiations at the dinner, it appears that Malcolm secured an agreement that a NSW report for the newsletter would be provided.

As usual there's not much to report locally, although there were four Pre-War MGs present at the recent VSCCA opening rally. Barry Shinfield's black SA (below) was looking very regal amongst its smaller brothers, with Rob Everett's lovely L Type now sporting new Blockleys much to the approval of knowledgeable bystanders such as John Holliday and Tim Shellshear. Also present was the Hurst F Magna, proudly displaying its newly painted maroon wheels and Longstone tyres, hastily ordered after the discovery at Yamba of cracks in the ageing valve stems, the tyres being fitted many years ago in NZ. The star of the show though, and making its VSCCA debut was the superb BRG K1 Special of Michael Carr, which aroused much interest and rekindled the K3 lust in one of the writers. This was made even more unsettling when he was allowed a drive of the gorgeous machine.

Present too was Patron the Taller, Ray Fowler, who is still beavering away on the next Fowler special, his eyes twinkling as he invents ever wilder ideas for increased performance. Not to be outdone by Ray's efforts, Peter Holsgrove installed a new Baynton Jones head and cam on J3058 and had several goes at resurrecting the valve gear before setting off to Yamba. In the course of this work it was discovered that somewhere in a previous life the block has been bored out and 60mm PB sized pistons fitted, apparently still with the two bearing crank! As the body was rebuilt as an aluminium door-less J4 design, it will henceforth be referred to as the "light-weight big bore model" J2. Unfortunately some uncharitable types might suggest the same description could be applied to the owner!

Whilst J3058 is not yet registered due to a bent carburettor needle, which made for interesting but fruitless attempts to load onto the trailer after the Yamba display, plus numerous oil leaks, a suspected jammed oil pressure release valve and sundry fettling projects, evidence of the potential power now available was demonstrated while loading onto the trailer. Having sat on axle stands for the last two years it was fired up and reversed out of the garage under its own power much to John Hurst's amazement. Moving forward to a corner in the Holsgrove drive then requires a steep upward climb of about 1 in 5 from a standing start and two attempts to proceed up the hill were thwarted when the engine stalled. Peter, who normally gets his MG fix from a TD, then realised he had selected 3rd gear due to the reverse gate on the J2! After hurriedly selecting 1st to avoid scrutiny from the onlookers, the J2 took off up the hill like a startled whippet with the new Excelsior tyres spraying asphalt and gravel over an increasingly excited John Hurst.



Reports from the south side of Sydney are that the Simpson SA is now sporting a modified exhaust system to allow more dignified ingress and egress from the Simpson estate. It has also been blessed with a new sunshine roof panel after the original demonstrated unique aerodynamic properties whilst being trailered to Yamba. Meanwhile Ron Taylor is pressing on with the rebuild of his F2 and was recently at the Hurst household poring over and crawling under F0581 with his camera, tape measure and notepad to aid in its repatriation.

At Beecroft, neighbours are enjoying respite from the language emanating from Peter Holsgrove's garage while Peter earns Brownie points by doing some paving in the summer sun. The J2, after its triumphant trip to Yamba, patiently awaits attention while Peter paves the way to marital bliss. And that's about it for now, so it's goodbye from me and its goodbye from him!

*Desna and Denis Jury report from New Zealand...*



Most of the local Triple-M owners from the Waikato, Bay of Plenty and Auckland were up at sunrise on November 26 travelling from Auckland, Hamilton, Morrinsville, and Tauranga on a not to be missed jaunt. As a magical summer day dawned, the group converged from far and wide at the riverside residence of Greg and Sue Martin for the first "unveiling" of PA0817 for over 50 years. The restoration of the PA is a new chapter in Greg's life with cars, and the day marked the culmination of two 'all consuming' years attending to the car. Greg's motivation to rebuild the PA comes from a lifetime interest in cars and driving, from his first Triumph GT6. Greg says that his ambition to restore a car in his retirement is a

dream fulfilled. As chance happened, Denis and Desna Jury were looking to reduce their car numbers as they had procured their L Type and acquiring the P from them was a great opportunity to take on a new project and to keep the car in the family!

The project has satisfied a lot of outcomes for Greg and he has enjoyed deepening and strengthening his knowledge about the MG and its workings – revealing and reaffirming for him the advancement in engineering that the car represents. The advanced engineering impresses and delights him - the overhead cam, the cross-flow head – he admires and gives great credit to the adventurous and forward-thinking designers, developers and engineers in

maximising the power of the car now that he has been inside the rebuild.

Greg says it was fantastic to have a great bunch of people around him for the restoration - older guys and younger guys with enthusiasm to do the work and with a huge interest in the car. With the engine rebuild he adds that he was particularly lucky to find Gus Lisignoli, well into his 70s, automotive engineer ex-motorcycle racer and previous experience with Triple-M engines... *un meccanico a regola d'arte!*

Gus has a great depth of knowledge and understood what was required, and he was prepared to take the time to use his skills to do a great job. Greg also admired the way he took the opportunity to have his apprentices learn under his guidance about things like line boring and white metalling bearings and setting up a pre-war engine. However, Greg has also wondered at times "what would those 1930's engineers think?" as he has used CNC and 3D printing technologies. He does enjoy the fact that in this day of mass production he can still deal with a vehicle like the PA himself – the certainty and simplicity of nuts and bolts.



The wealth of knowledge in the MG community and the accessibility and willingness of people to share and discuss and been a highlight of the last two years. The assistance of (NA owner) John McGarva (right), Greg's close friend since schooldays, has been immeasurable. John is an engineer with vast skills and experience.



The contact with other Triple-M owners in Hamilton, such as Donald McLeod (who has a PB) was great for measuring and comparing workings (memorably a drop arm which seemed to create a rather interesting steering geometry, and finding that the one Greg had was an inch shorter).



Greg (right) has indulged himself in making many of the craft components; he has been patternmaking, model making, crafting the transmission tunnel and fabricating the fume seal brackets (to original specs, and sporting one of Donald McLeod's fabricated fume seals). Other components he has crafted include the rear tail light support, period style light reflector, headlight spider bars, brackets, bespoke period style clips and fog light stone guard. With the help of John McGarva, they refurbished the brake cross shaft from a dismantled heap of parts, including manufacturing the actual shaft (beware, the keyways are not where you would intuitively think!)

Greg has a few things left to do to finish such as the interior upholstery panels, remaking a set of floor boards, hood and tonneau, rear carpets and brakes. He has the engine finished and it is running very smoothly. He is very satisfied with the outcomes, especially getting the time-consuming wiring loom functioning and the completion of his perfectly symmetrical dashboard with its instruments refurbished, refaced and redialled.



Greg says it was a proud moment showing the car to others who understood the amount of work completed and who appreciated it. Those gathered were thrilled to see the immaculate car running and almost ready for the road, and Greg was rewarded with lots of positive feedback. The visitors had more treats in store – a beautiful morning tea including fresh baking and genuine espressos and then a fantastic slide show tracking Greg's restoration journey. Following this wonderful morning we all headed off to the Hamilton Classic Car Museum to take a look at the collection including our favourite a 1960 Maserati 3500. And lunch in the

American style diner, surrounded by some very quirky memorabilia. The day also brought other rewards, making contact with several previously unknown Triple-M owners, hearing some great stories, and of course the generation of great conversations and memories.

*Murray Arundell reports from Queensland...*



Another Queensland Tropical Summer has gone and with the cooler weather approaching many of Queensland's Pre War MG owners will be breaking cover and hitting the roads. Some of them for the first time with their new owners. Over the Summer there has been a bit of movement in Pre War MG ownership. Ross Kelly has lead the charge with his acquisition of the ex-Bruce Croft K3. It will be great to see this fabulous example out and about and being used. The newly arrived F Type is currently being mechanically tidied up by the Classic Car Clinic before being sent off for body restoration. We expect to see this lovely and very original car out and about in the not too distant future. Spies have also reported that Matt from Abingdon Motors MG City has acquired an M Type from the Darling Downs.





**Bill Young's 14/40 in Mackay**  
Photo from Murray Arundell



**K3004 with a beaming new owner-Ross Kelly.**  
Photo from Ross Kelly

In my previous report I neglected to mention that Jeff Wigg had recently acquired a TA from NSW and over the summer Jeff has dived in and commenced a full restoration. On a recent road trip to Townsville I had the good fortune to visit Bill Young in Mackay and take a look at his 14/40. Bill like to use the car and takes it out regularly and particularly enjoys long road trips. Lets hope we can tempt him to make the trip south to the next Pre War MG Register National Meeting.

*Brian Oxley reports from the ACT region...*



I was looking through some old Triple-M Yearbooks and found an article I had written for the 1991 issue on Pre-War MGs in Australia's National Capital. I thought it might be of interest to compare what we had then with where we are now. Back in 1991 we had six pre-war MGs in Canberra; an M type, two J2s, a PA, an NA and an SA. The M type has gone to Queensland, one of the J2s is down on the South Coast, the PA now lives in Cobram on the Murray River and the NA has been transferred to WA but pleasingly it remains within the family. Over the years cars have come and gone but we now have five cars in Canberra and one next door in Queanbeyan which for some reason I did not include in the original article. We now have an F1, two J2s, two SAs and a "TB Special".

I acquired an F1 in 1996 and completed its restoration in 2013. My J2 was completed in 2006 and both cars have been driven alternatively virtually every week since then. We have our Tuesday lunch meeting by the Lake every week and the two cars take it in turns. Not very long distances but better than average road use.

Malcolm's SA coupe is rarely off the road and is a great example of how our cars can be used for the enjoyment of ourselves and others; but it is having some differential work being done at the moment. Malcolm added an SA Tickford to his collection in 2004 and it awaits a major restoration. Malcolm has also been working on a "TB Special" with a K3 type body (right) for what seems a very long time but it is now quite close to being finished.



The J2 in Queanbeyan has been owned by Brian Kimmings since 1971. He had the car in the UK before moving to Australia and shipped it to Darwin in 1976 where he disassembled it. He moved to Queanbeyan in 1982. Since then many important new parts have been accumulated, including a J4 style body, but it awaits a full restoration.

There is another J2, not strictly in Canberra but close by in a rural hobby-farm area called Wamboin which is owned by Dick Gregory. It has in fact been in Canberra three times over the years, the last time in 1993/96. It has an interesting history being one of the Britannia Motors racing team in Melbourne during the 1930s. It is in pieces and awaiting restoration. Since 1991 the pre-war car scene has changed quite a lot. We still have about the same number of cars but the owners have been reduced by about 50%. There are not many doing restorations anymore and the cars are not seen on the roads as they once were. It is noticeable that most of our local MG club members don't seem to have much interest in the pre-war cars. In addition it is getting much more difficult to find tradesmen who know what you are talking about let alone being able to do the job. And of course, in the intervening years, Harry and Cathy Hickling and their several pre-war MGs have come and gone from our borders. All a bit worrying, but at least there is an F1, a J2 and an SA seen regularly burning around our streets.

*Bob Bazzica reports from South Australia...*



The story of KN0386 first registered on 27/9/1935 - Once upon a time there was a guy by the name of Rob Dunsterville who was an Australian MG friend living in England, who was finding MGs for another famous Australian, Phil Redhead. It came to pass that two cars were found in a barn, both K types. They were sent to Australia and sold immediately, the KN went to a Mr Hocking of Melbourne, who then ordered a lot of spares for the project, but he eventually realised the job was too much, and put it on the market. Enter Robert Bazzica a would-be pre-war owner, who had previously been to England to buy a P type MG, but found that by Australian standards everything was rusty junk, so came home empty handed.

A quick check of KNs said that it was the best chassis ever made, with the biggest engine available. This sounded just what I needed, being a bit of a racer in my time. Then I saw a photo of Cecil Kimber's own special bodied KN by Corsica. As I worked on the car and stripped out the chassis, I realised that this car had been in continuous service,

and was bolt perfect. In other words, all the bolts were in their original holes and not been changed, and, as originality was the flavour of the year, I started the usual pulling out all the bolts cleaning them and putting the back in the original holes. This got very time consuming, and the project died a natural death for some years to come.

Over the next 30 years work was done bit by bit, and most people who saw the project thought it would be a deceased estate car! Over the years I had many ideas of what to do, but working in my little dark garage did not inspire and little was done. One of the highlights during this period was that I was offered the body of Peter Briggs' K3 in Perth, for me to build a replica of a K3. This was a great offer, but I still wanted to build a Corsica-bodied look-alike car like Kimber's JB3717. There are not many photos of Kimber's car existing, so I asked Jean Kimber Cook for more photos. She said she would find some, but this never happened, so using the one good photo I had, I continued to build the car.



The original Kimber car was sold and a few years later it was upgraded with a revamped rear end, and guards filled in with side panels like the SA, with windup windows and forward opening doors. I liked the forward opening doors, so I decided to go that way, rather than the rear opening doors as per Kimber's original car.

As KN saloons are very rare, I have built the body without chopping up the original frames and reworked much along the original lines. This idea was to enable the original body to be placed on top, and rebuilt to the four door saloon if somebody wanted to! I have kept the original turret in one piece, and the four doors in good order.

In April 2017 I decided to finish the project, and by December 2017 it was a complete, wired and running car. Currently it is un-supercharged. I will get it sorted and tuned, and then fit a SC14 Toyota blower. The reason for the big push to finally finish this car was that I had purchased a TD Arnolt coupe, a lovely car, but presently very rusty. Looking at the time involved, I have to live to 103 years old to finish all my projects.

Approximate status of KNs in the world is as follows: total production of KNs was 201 units. Of the original saloon-bodied cars six are now left in existence. Four-seat KN tourers by University Motors - seven left in existence. Four seat tourer Kimber car - just the one left. Four seat tourer (Bazzica's folly look alike) - one in existence. The car will hopefully be on display at the Tasmanian National Meeting this Easter.

*Allan Herring reports from Western Australia...*



Well we certainly flashed through the December/January Christmas New Year period very quickly, with not even a summer heat wave to boast so far. Again, no events to report on over here, with even fewer outings for us in either of the cars as we prepare to go to the National Meeting in Tasmania over Easter. We have only attended the Perth National Meetings over the years and have decided for several reasons to take the NA over to Ulverstone this year. Even though the NA will be transported over, we have nonetheless decided to drive over in the non-MG and then take the two cars to Tasmania. If I remember correctly, the last time we drove over was in 2007 towing the J2 on our trailer, so we decided it time to do the road trip again, as we had done on quite a few occasions during the 70s, 80s and 90s. Don't remember trips in the early 2000s up until the 2007 trip which was to attend the Beechworth Pre War Register's National Meeting. As I sit here fulfilling the Editor's time frame, I believe that we are relatively well organised with only a few loose ends to tie up now.

I am only aware of one Pre War car being rebuilt at present, and that is the Partridge F2 as Peter reported on in the July 2017 Newsletter. I believe that there is a reasonable amount of activity with suppliers in U.K. and couriers delivering here. I've no doubt that Peter will provide a detailed progress report as appropriate.

Meanwhile, I am still endeavouring to get started on the TB, being very mindful of the garage shortage, so until this is remedied, I cannot embark on total dismantling. I did comment in the past of the dire condition of the rear mudguards and I have recently decided to resurrect these instead of using others I have, as they are original parts of the car. I put a straight edge down the centre bead and found that the rear tip of the right mudguard was actually turning back forwards towards the wheel, not a great look. I subsequently made up a pair of wooden dies based on details sent from Frank Langridge in NZ, and got the press working to correct the curvature. So far, only some final panelling is required plus repairing broken wire beading, to restore reasonable shape.

Whilst on the TB bandwagon, I took particular note of the photo of Jacko's TB at Rob Roy on page 25 in the November 2017 Newsletter and went chasing a photo of our TB in one of the early York Flying 50s, as I recollected placing the racing numbers in a similar manner. I can understand the number 39, by why have we both been inclined to incline the number similarly? Interesting. I have attached the photo at York, (in the 1980s) for the Editor to do what he sees fit with it! This recollection brought back memories of more casual





times when bales of hay were placed at each tree and road sign, and away we went. Also at that time, there were healthy grids of early cars. Not so much the case now, although valiant efforts are being made to invigorate the older cars again.

I hope that we will not be the only Pre War car at Ulverstone, but either way, we are looking forward to breaking the pattern of the last 10 years of embarking on our Eastern States trips at the airport.

*Graeme Jackson reports from Victoria...*



**Christmas Breakup Sunday December 3rd 2017, Yarrowood Winery, Yarra Glen** - In chaos theory, the butterfly effect is the sensitive dependence on initial conditions in which a small change in one state of a deterministic nonlinear system can result in large differences in a later state. In the atmosphere, a tornado can therefore be influenced by minor perturbations such as the flapping of the wings of a distant butterfly. The pre-war MG fraternity is quite familiar with chaos theory which is often put into practice, and our register thrives in a climate of well managed anarchy, brought about in large part by the shortcomings of the organisers. What has not been appreciated until recently is that an atmospheric butterfly effect can be initiated by the opening of the butterfly of an SU carburettor on any early MG which lacks the sophistication of an air cleaner. It is likely that the induced low air pressure at the carburettor's mouth forms into a vortex which transmits through the bonnet or supercharger cover louvres, and amplifies to trigger instability of the earth's atmosphere, causing changeability in the properties of the dynamic systems which are undergoing nonlinear dynamics and deterministic chaos. Now that it has been pointed out, the reader will think it all rather obvious, really.

We have a quantum of MG mechanics, hood down cloud watchers, irreproachable meteorologists, and garbage collectors, who directly link the SU butterfly effect to the formation of the massive east coast low pressure weather system which caused the unrelenting deluge at Yamba for the duration of the National Rally, and for several weeks afterwards. Then, in the last week of November 2017, some unidentified nit wit flapped his/her SU butterflies firing up the MG in preparation for the pre-war Christmas breakup. As a direct consequence, Melbourne experienced one of the most intense, continuous, three days of rainfall on record. The rain had just started to ease, and the inclement weather was becoming distinctly more clement by the Sunday morning, when we assembled at the Warrandyte Bakery for a spirited dash and splash to the winery at Yarra Glen.

Sensibly, not wanting to make the weather any worse by fluttering their butterflies, the majority of people left their precious MGs at home, leaving Ed Taylor MG J3, Graeme Steinfort MG TA, Graeme and Jennie Jackson MG TB, and Tim Jackson Austin Seven Ulsteroid, all of whom have air cleaners, to brave the elements. The two routes to brunch on offer avoided the flooding across the Yarra River flats, one way took us through the Christmas Hills, appropriate given the season, and the potentially more scenic roads guided the drivers through the pea-souper fog via Kinglake; nothing to see here.

The tables grouped together on the outside decking at Yarrowood Winery café afforded the thirty four octagonalists a stunning outlook through the clear plastic floor to ceiling curtains, across the newly mown lawns and the ordered rows of grape vines to the Yarra Valley foothills. The chef turned out copious quantities of excellent food to feed the multitudes, including tasty pastries which could have been called buttered flutter byes had they had a quantum effect.

Christmas is traditionally a time of gift giving, and this year Loris Mawson was indeed fortunate to be presented with a new wet weather motoring outfit. The two heavy duty orange gar-bags replace the ones Loris wore in the MG M type at Yamba which needed ironing. She seemed very grateful, and Ian Mawson, full of pride and seasonal good will, said "She fills a gar-bag beautifully". Isn't that nice? The Register is essentially democratic, so the crowd was then asked for a show of hands to determine who would like to hear a Christmas oration from either Captain Mawson or Patron-the Younger, Walter Magilton. There being not a single raised palm, we got on with the business of chatting with friends, and discussing whether we should volunteer our cars for breaking droughts and causing the early onset of the monsoon. Suitably sustained and socialised we made our way homewards through the receding Yule tide.



**Christmas Break-up - Jennie Jackson - no chaos**  
Photo from Robin Page



**TB and TA at the winery**  
Photo from Robin Page

Lots of thanks to Jennie Jackson for her capable organisation of the day's proceedings with no chaos in sight.

**MGCC Meeting, February 14<sup>th</sup> 2018** - Each month, the Victorian MG Car Club engages one or other of the registers to conduct the club meeting, to provide the supper, to produce a guest speaker, and conduct a raffle. In February it was our turn. This year marks 90 years since the appearance at the 1928 Motorshow of the first of the MG Midgets, and appropriately three M types graced the gathering, those belonging to Jim Thompson, Robin Page and Ian Mawson. The latter gentlemen addressed the great unwashed, largely ignorant, modern MG masses about the critical role the M type played in the history of motoring, and in ensuring MG's survival during the early part of the Great Depression. Much of the presented material is reproduced elsewhere in this prestigious pamphlet.



**MG M-type 90<sup>th</sup> - three M-types in the Club rooms**  
Photo from Robin Page



**90<sup>th</sup> cake on Ian Mawson's bonnet**  
Photo from Robin Page

Our register showed a 20 minute film documenting the 1928 industrial manufacture at Cowley of the OHC Morris Minor, which included making engine, clutch and gearbox assemblies for MGs. This was of particular fascination to Yamba veteran, Peter Davey who drives an indecently fast Morris Minor Special at Rob Roy and who had helped Jim Thompson bring the M down from the bush for the night. Having such a talented driver in our midst was indeed a privilege. We also ran some film clips of racing at Brooklands in 1931 of the MG C types. They showed a gaggle of cars whizzing around the roughly paved embankment, and later the Earl of March and C.S. Staniland receiving the big silver cup for 1st in class, 1st overall, and the Team Prize after 1,548 miles of racing in the JCC Double-Twelve Hour Race. Freddy, Earl of March, later to become the Duke of Richmond and Gordon, was a great mate of Tony Gaze who talked him into building the motor racing track on his Goodwood Estate after the war. The Robin/Ian talk having concluded, the Jennie Jackson octagonal birthday cake sprouting two candles, 9 and 0, was plonked with some reverence on the louvered bonnet of the Mawson M type, for photographs. Job done, we now look forward to the MG Centenary in 2023.

**MGCC Conkers de Elephants Sunday 25th February 2018** - The Concourse held at the Mammoth AOMC All European Day, had relocated from last year's venue at Flemington Racecourse, to the ideal location at Yarra Glen Racecourse. MGCC proudly fielded 200 examples of desirable MGs of proper English heritage, and especially marked the 60th year of the club, the 60th birthday of the twin overhead camshaft MGA, and of course, 90 years since the appearance at the 1928 Motor Show, of the MG Midget M type. Robin Page had done his best to stir M owners into action, resulting in a gaggle of seven examples, each parading their individuality for our edification. His own, nifty shade of grey, immaculate little sports car had deservedly been promoted to the Master's Class for judging with other near-perfect MGs of each era. Tony Basham's blue fabric bodied M type had travelled down from Cairns and brought with it a number of medals it had won in 1931 for outstanding performances at Brooklands motor racing circuit and on trials.

Peter Kerr's car, conducted by Carole, was in restored mechanical health following some attention at the Ray Skewes establishment, and had also sprouted a new hood in the last week, fashioned for the tall driver wearing a bowler hat. With red wheels and black coachwork, Ryan Thompson's attractive M type, ex Barry Bahnisch, no doubt lost some concourse points on account of not having its engine fitted, but we look forward to soon seeing the car in action. The Karlsruhe kids, Peter Davey and Jim Thompson's much admired, beautifully restored French blue MG is being tuned for Historic Winton, where it will again be admired, rapidly motoring around the race track. We would love to compare its performance with Ian Mawson's fierce Midget. Ian's carries the racy Le Mans replica body work, and in common with Mark Alsop's machine, possesses lots of valve overlap and compression, twin carburettors and effective looking extractors.

At Yarra Glen, the crowd admired a fine line up of pre-war MGs, the successor models to the very successful M type. Aubrey Pavard's J2, Paul Acfield's J2, Walter Magilton's TA and Ed Taylor's J3 are each quite immaculate and a challenge for the judges to rank in order of excellence. Last year in preparation for Yamba, Ed had dismantled and rebuilt the much travelled MG J3, and his detailing work before the concourse ensured him a win in the pre-war class. Well done Ed. After some inactive years, Ian Northcote's P type is again in tight and tidy, well preserved original condition, sporting its attractive Sydney coach-built body with front mounted door hinges. Richard Millington's much loved boy racer TA and the Jackson MG TB were also on display. Four seater 6 cylinder OHC MGs were represented by the L type Magna driven by Tim Jackson and Andrew Fock's cream and green NA Mulette.

A carless, George-free, Marguerite Morgan preformed judging duties, Allan Reid left his PB and NA at home in favour of his MGA twin cam, John Nobel chatted, and Neil Cooke who had always thought that a Rover 90 was some sort of bionic dog, drove a car of that designation from the Taylor stable.

Finally, Ray Skewes is in hospital quite crook, with suspected heart problems, and may be facing an open heart valve grind and decoke. We wish him well.



## Market Place

**For Sale:** PA1299 - After 40 years of ownership the slow recovery of my right leg has meant I cannot comfortably drive PA1299 any more (due to the close proximity of the accelerator and brake pedals). A good home is sought! As many who have driven it will attest it is quite quick and mechanically rugged with replacement block, head and crankshaft. Oversize SU's give a nice increase in torque. The body is aluminium panelled on an American ash frame and is a precise copy of a J4. \$58,000 ono. Tony Sloan [aj.sloan@bigpond.com](mailto:aj.sloan@bigpond.com) 0400 288 841



**For sale:** Almost unused (one trip to Adelaide) professionally built tandem trailer. Tailor made to suite the P-Type or any other MG Midget. Fitted with brakes and 5 new tyres. Powder coated yellow and has a solid bed to allow use for other than car purposes. \$2800. Tony Sloan [aj.sloan@bigpond.com](mailto:aj.sloan@bigpond.com) 0400 288 841

**For Sale:** 1933 MG J3 (J3 3763) "The Australian J4". Ground up rebuild to 1934 Configuration in 2015. 4 cylinder OHC, 746cc engine. ENV cross tube crash gearbox, Marshall 100 Sc, Outside Exhaust, larger brake drums. Cream with red leather trim. Full and half tonneau covers. No wet weather gear. Extensive documentation of history & rebuild. Race history in UK (Brooklands & Shelsley Walsh) and Australia (Rob Roy, Ballarat, Phillip Island, Benalla) Qld Reg MGJ33. Ross Kelly: Mob: 0411 746215 Email: [grkelly@bigpond.net.au](mailto:grkelly@bigpond.net.au)



**For Sale:** 1935 MG NB (NA0860) Special. Fitted with "K3" style slab tank body. Supercharged 6 cylinder OHC, 1275cc engine, " ENV 100" pre-selector gearbox. Phoenix crank, Carillo rods, Marle pistons. Volumex supercharger. Black with green trim. Comes with roll bar (easily removed). Two tonneau covers to suit with or without roll bar. No Shipping, GST, LCT or Asbestos. Qld Reg BPO53. Ross Kelly: Mob: 0411 746215 Email: [grkelly@bigpond.net.au](mailto:grkelly@bigpond.net.au)



**For Sale:** MG J2 4418 is close to its original specifications after being completely rebuilt mechanically and bodily about 15 years ago by its previous owner. The car was one of five rolling chassis 1932 J2s sent as deck cargo to Australia in 1934. It is listed with the Triple-M Register and has been a prize-winner in concours competitions with Perth's MGTC Owners' Club. Extremely low mileage. Parts include racing screens and leather hood straps. Original hood supplied but needs restoration. Offers close to \$A60,000. Email [philiptheawells@bigpond.com](mailto:philiptheawells@bigpond.com), or phone 08 9390 8846, or 0409 689 924.



**Wanted:** A pair of front shock absorbers for a TA, round drum type. Walter Magilton 03 9844 3616

**Wanted:** Four 18" wire wheels to suit a very fast J2 using 4.75 tyres. Ray Fowler 02 9546 3650

### NEXT EDITION - July 2018

Tim Shellshear researches the history of his F-Magna (F1254) and Gary Wall swaps engines in his TA Tickford



John Hurst's watercolour of Tim Shellshear at Winton last year in his F-Magna (F1254)

## Mona Lisa's Moustache

What is a movable cultural heritage car?

I can't speak for anyone else, but in our case, TA1980 is an extraordinary example of engineering (specifically automotive engineering) between WWI and WWII. The car has never been pulled apart dismantled or restored., It is in pretty much the same condition it was when dispatched from Abingdon, with the same chassis, body, motor, diff, woodwork, wheels, tools, wiring etc. it has had since new., An amazing artefact, 80 years on, for a car that was probably designed to last for ten. It certainly is a treasure of information for anyone restoring a car (especially an MG) from the 1930s. But is it a historic car? It's never been owned by a celebrity or raced. It's also never been crashed, bashed, thrashed or smashed, and has never been off the road. Fully registered every year since 1938 (not historic or conditional rego). If it was the oldest continually registered car in NSW would it then be considered historic?

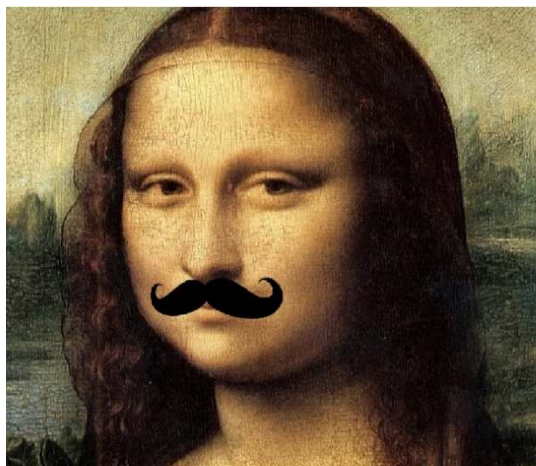


To keep it this way hasn't been easy or cheap (full rego now costs nearly \$1000 a year in mandatory charges). For at least the last half of the TA's life, we've been aware of preserving the car's integrity. However that means no trips to Europe or touring from Melbourne to Yamba like Ed Taylor's J3 or, God forbid, what Tony Basham takes on!

So if we have to keep the car in Australian, it's only fair that we should be able to use it right? Every time I see Tony or Ed driving their MG, they have a grin that makes their head look like a split watermelon.

So...

1. The cotton covered wiring (cotton is biodegradable) is disintegrating; replacement with a modern plastic insulated loom would be the safest and best fire prevention.
2. In NSW it is illegal for a child under 16 to ride in a car without seatbelts. So neither of my sons has ever been for a ride in an MG on the open road. Surely I can fit seat belts.
3. Blinkers are a must when using multilane roads these days for safety reasons alone.
4. Nobody looks at the ground for a single stop light so multi (3) eye level rear lights are a must.
5. As is a sealed beam/modern headlight conversion for night driving.
6. 16" wheels would improve the ride and handling and provide access to safer tyres.
7. A VW/Datsun steering box would "enhance the driving experience" according to the retailers of these conversions.
8. MGs modified to accept power breaking systems regularly beat us in concourses so that would be Ok too? (in the interests of safety)
9. Paint fades, wears, cracks and chips (the original red lacquer is not available anywhere in the world now) but a modern two-pack finish is brighter, shiner, more durable and "looks better" than anything from the 1930s
10. Of course a 5-speed gearbox (conversions are readily available) will also "enhance the drivability."
11. But these are best coupled to a modern Japanese motor to keep up with today's traffic.



So there we have it. A few minor modifications, to make the car usable and safe. Reasonable given the effort we have gone to, to keep it. I'm sure those responsible for applying a heritage order stopping us from selling it overseas won't even refund the mandatory registration charges in today's dollars that have been paid to keep it on the road (80 years X \$1000 minimum not including interest). A protection order to keep a historic car in Australia rather than selling to an enthusiast overseas, could be the equivalent of painting a moustache on the Mona Lisa.

Maybe there should be a world heritage listing for significant pre-war MGs?

PS I think I'd like to get me some of that split watermelon grin look. Has anyone got a TA or a P Type for sale that I could use, reuse, rework, repair, rehabilitate and race around in as was intended by Cecil Kimber?