

OVER THE COUNTER

—AN EXPOSITION OF THE MANIFOLD ADVANTAGES OF SNAPPY PIT-WORK WHEN IT COMES TO A MATTER OF WINNING RACES

By . . .

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THE success of M.G. cars during the past season has been considerable. That, in itself, is no strange thing. In fact nowadays one almost takes it for granted. What has been extremely gratifying to all concerned with George Eyston's team has been the great improvement in the team organisation and pit-work during the year. Pit-work in this country has in the past few years been a sadly neglected art. In the old days the English Sunbeam and Bentley teams were second to none in their systematic but lightning refuelling. Of late, however, there has been a strong tendency to belittle the importance of the "counter-jumpers," all attention going to the drivers and the cars, with, unhappily, much too much stress on the driver. Just recently, however, there has been a small revival. Teams have begun to realise what a tremendous amount of time can be wasted with the car standing still, time that can only be recovered by furious driving, dangerous for the driver and often fatal for the engine.

When the Eyston équipe was formed it was quickly apparent that in it lay an unrivalled chance of building up a really first-class full-bodied racing organisation. The cars—well, they were M.G.s. The drivers, all experienced and tried men, either at car racing or with motorcycles. All the mechanics had a long experience of racing work, and though not yet working quite together, were individually unrivalled. S. C. H. Davis, of *The Autocar*, was to manage the team, assisted by Temple, M.G.'s competition manager, and Cecil Cousins. One or two amateur, but very experienced, helpers were available to help with the control chart—notably Major Palmer, late of the Bentley team. And finally the writer of this article was



This snapshot presents an animated and atmospheric scene in the pits on the occasion of the 1931 German Grand Prix.

entrusted with the timekeeping arrangements, very much under Davis's guidance.

The first real job in sight was the preparation of really first-class pit equipment. The existing material was what might have been expected—adequate, but ordinary, just what everyone else had. Quite rightly, the team decided that the "ordinary" was not good enough for M.G.s—only the best would do. Supervised by the experienced Davis, various changes were made. First came the churns. These, at the start, were ordinary five-gallon oil drums, fitted with a half-cover and a handle at the side. They were infinitely lighter than the standard milk churns, but poured badly, and, owing to the sharp edges, were decidedly unpleasant to use.

The first modification was a curious spout or lip, projecting from the top of the cover and designed to prevent splash. Next came a modification to the handles. Finally the whole design was scrapped, and after one or two experiments a light metal churn was produced, holding six gallons, yet weighing no more when full than the standard five-gallon contraption. These new churns are by far the best I personally have ever seen, and can empty

their full load in just under four seconds. To cope with this quick emptying, special funnels were necessary. Numerous difficulties were incurred here, since the bodies of the various M.G. racers vary considerably, often necessitating special funnel shapes. For the T.T. cars and for the two-seater blown Magnettes, an ordinary circular funnel serves, complete with a baffle to prevent the fuel surging round the body of the funnel instead of running down the neck. For Eyston's single-seater, as used in the Isle of Man and B.R.D.C. races, an incredible squat affair on legs was built, to rest on the body of the car without straining the filler-neck.

This car, incidentally, was a nuisance, as it had only one filler cap, necessitating the provision of an air-vent through the funnel. The Magic Midget, too, has its special funnel, again supported on the body.

Jacks were the next consideration. Obviously double-quick-lift affairs are the only possible thing for racing, but they need careful design. Unless the various stresses and angles are properly calculated, the car may tend to lift off the jack at a touch, or the raising of the car may only be accomplished by a giant. Further,

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