

The MAGazine

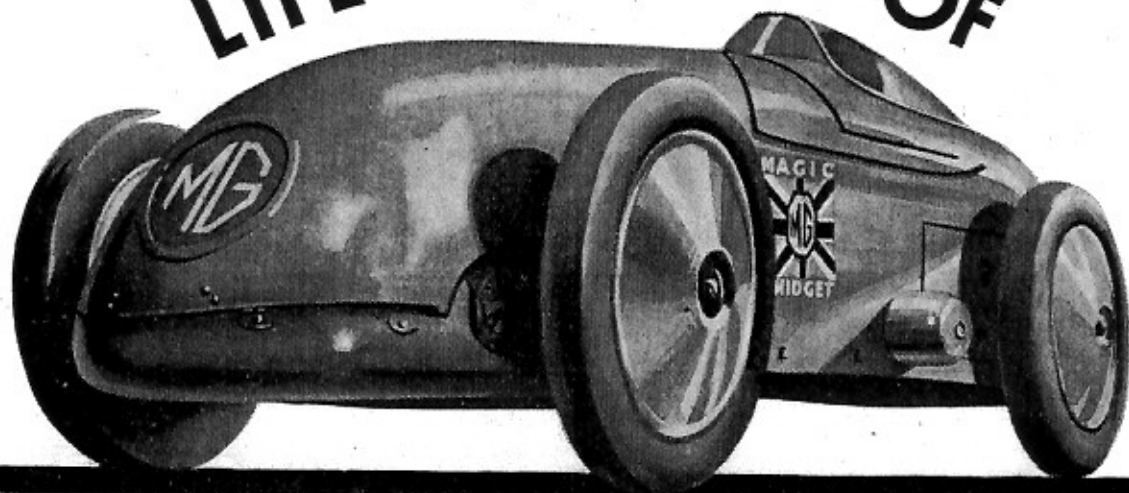
VOL. I NO. I
MAY - 1933



A Magazine designed to
interest motoring enthusiasts
in general and those who
own M.G. Cars in particular



LIFE HISTORY OF



THE WORLD'S MOST INTERESTING BABY

SHORTLY after Eyston's "hundred in the hour" for the first time with a baby car, which ended up in flames and a spell in hospital for its driver, a new record-breaking M.G. Midget, The Ex.127, as the Magic Midget was known in those days, first showed its paces at Montlhery Track, Paris.

The first run of success was recorded on October the 17th, 1931, when, with Eldridge at the wheel, a fraction over 110 m.p.h. was reached, and the International Class "H" record for the five kilometres captured from Mrs. Stewart's Austin Seven.

Two months later, to be precise, on Tuesday, December 22nd, George Eyston started his series of marvellous record-breaking runs, which have made him, as a baby car driver, and the "Power-plus Supercharged" Magic Midget, world-famous.

On this particular Tuesday, Eyston arrived at Montlhery at lunch time. He immediately jumped in, or rather, fitted himself into the driving seat and took the car round the track for a few warming-up laps. Then followed a run at 114 m.p.h., during which he captured the 5 and 10 kilo and the 5 and 10 mile records, all at a decimal

point over the main figure, and before five o'clock left the track, placing the baby in the efficient hands of Jackson, its chief mechanic.

The next job of work for the M.G. was to take the records for the flying kilo and mile, which records had not yet been attacked by the Midget. Certain difficulties presented themselves in connection with this attempt. Timing arrangements at that period made Montlhery unsuitable, and Brooklands was closed. It was necessary, therefore, to find some place where the possibility of two miles a minute could be considered. Subsequently, early in January, 1932, Eyston and a party gave the sands at Pendine a "once over," and immediately decided to make the record attempt there the following month.

Considerable sensation was caused by the opening up, once again, of Pendine for record attempts, since it has not been used for this purpose since poor Parry-Thomas met with his fatal accident; anyway, on February 8th, a large gathering of Press, Film and other interested spectators mustered to see the attempt.

The car itself had a re-designed body, with improved stream-

lining, designed by the M.G. engineers, blazoned with M.G. on the front air intake, and "Magic Midget" top and bottom of the Union Jack painted on either side.

Save for one hitch when the pen on the R.A.C. timing apparatus ran dry, and a run was unrecorded, the attempt was successful and uneventful, the speed being raised to 119.45 m.p.h. with a record figure of 118.36 for the flying kilometre and 118.38 for the flying mile.

The "Magic Midget" made its bow at Brooklands on Whit-Monday, 1932, when it sped round the outer circuit to the tune of 112.93 m.p.h., taking the lap record for the 750 c.c. class from the Austin "Seven," and raising the figure by almost 10 m.p.h.

The British Racing Drivers' Club 500 miles race next claimed the attention of the "Magic Midget," and, driven by Eyston and Denly, this precocious baby held the lead from its grown-up rivals for 128 laps, its fastest four laps being at 107.40 m.p.h.

It has been claimed that sudden deceleration to avoid the debris thrown on the track by the ill-fated Bentley caused the engine trouble which necessitated re-

MAGIC MIDGET LIFE HISTORY
(Continued)

tirement shortly after 3 o'clock, letting Horton's M.G. in to the lead to win the race at 96.29 m.p.h.

As a grand finale to 1932 achievements the "Magic Midget," again in the hands of Eyston and Denly, captured 14 International Class "H" records at Montlhery during the latter part of December. The engine was somewhat modified by the fitting of the new type cylinder head and supercharger induction. The body also underwent alterations,

the most noticeable being the special covered-in cock-pit or conning tower, making it in effect a saloon record car.

During these last attempts two miles a minute was achieved for the first time by a 750 c.c. car, the speeds for the actual records being as follows:—

1 km.	...	120.56 m.p.h.
1 mile	...	120.56 "
5 kms.	...	120.52 "
5 miles	...	116.71 "
10 kms.	...	117.42 "
200 kms.	...	95.52 "
500 kms.	...	91.77 "
1000 kms.	...	91.77 "
200 miles	...	95.02 "
500 miles	...	95.50 "
1,000 miles	...	88.36 "
3 hours	...	94.59 "

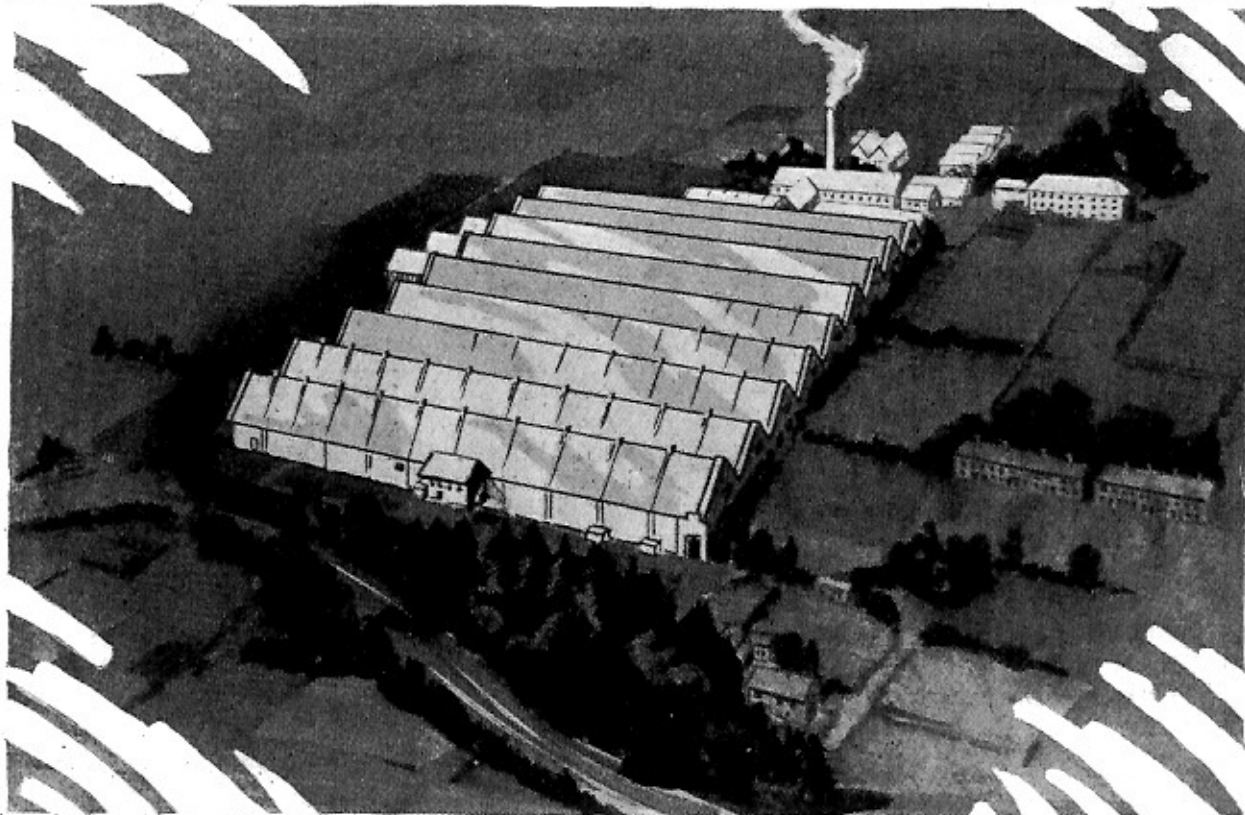
6 hours	...	92.79 m.p.h.
12 hours	...	86.67 "

These achievements, to mention only a few of the accessories, have been assisted by Wakefields' Castrol, K.L.G. plugs, the "Power-plus supercharger" and Dunlop tyres.

Incidentally, M.G. holds all the existing records in the International Class "H," the greatest part of this unparalleled achievement being due to the efforts of George Eyston and Denly and Jackson, with the "Magic Midget."

G.C.T.

WHERE THE "MAGIC MIDGET" WAS BORN



THE M.G. CAR COMPANY'S HEADQUARTERS, PAVLOVA WORKS, ABINGDON-ON-THAMES, BERKSHIRE

WE are most anxious that THE M.G. MAGAZINE should be of interest to **YOU**
We should be sincerely grateful for any suggestions you may offer for its improvement.
Will you please favour us with your criticisms?
It is intended that THE M.G. MAGAZINE shall be your magazine, and we want you to have a word in its editorial policy.
WILL YOU SAY THAT WORD?
Address your letters to: The Editor, THE M.G. MAGAZINE, 418-422, Strand, London, W.C.2

AN OPEN LETTER TO OUR READERS

FROM



MR. CECIL KIMBER

TO ALL M.G. OWNERS

THE Editor has asked me to write a few words of welcome to you, that ever-growing body of enthusiasts, for whom this new magazine has been planned and produced.

Through its pages we hope to interest you and keep you informed of all branches of motoring sport, of M.G. activities at home and abroad, and of factory developments and news. In short, our object is to provide a journal to knit together still closer the many friends the production of M.G. cars has created both for me, personally, and for those connected with their making, their sale and their use.

Cecil Kimber

THE MILLE MIGLIA

Everyone knows, by now, of the unprecedented success of the M.G. Magnettes last month. This event is held over 1,000 miles of ordinary open roads through Italy, and the course, shaped like a figure "eight," runs from Brescia in the North down to Rome and back again: a single, giant lap



*The Magnificent
Team Prize awarded to
the M.G. Magnette Team*

THE scene is Brescia, an old-world town in Northern Italy. It is two o'clock in the morning. Nobody has been to bed, and for an hour or more an endless procession of men, women and children have been making their way towards the eastern end of the town, where a black ribbon of road comes in from Verona.

Lovely ladies have ousted the Press from their "tribuna." A gang of rowdies has taken possession of the grandstand. Impudent, bullet-headed schoolboys grin from the branches of the chestnut trees.

The buzz of conversation fills the air. Arc lamps make the enclosure in the boulevard as bright as day. A band plays.

Suddenly there rings out the shrill note of a bugle. In the distance is the glare of approaching headlights. The murmuring of the crowd dies down and one hears the rapidly-nearing note of a racing car exhaust. A babble of excited comment breaks out afresh. . . .

A low, green car rushes through a temporary triumphal arch and skids to a standstill, with brakes hard on, beside the timekeeper's table. It is stained with the dust of many provinces. On the bonnet are painted the Union Jack and the red, white and green of Italy. Grimy, cramped and almost dazed

after eighteen hours at tremendous speed, the occupants are helped from their seats. One is Capt. G. E. T. Eyston, one of Britain's foremost racing drivers, and the other is Count "Johnny" Lurani, the most brilliant small-car exponent in Italy.

Cheering, frantic with excitement, the crowd throngs the road round the victorious car. It is an all-British M.G. Magnette, the first car "home" in that most gruelling of all road races: the Italian "Thousand Miles." It has beaten all comers in the 1,100 c.c. class and, as we shall learn later, finished 15th in the general classification, thus making better time than many foreign cars with much larger engines.

While the populace still chatters excitedly, Eyston, an arm-letted official by his side, drives slowly into the compound reserved for the winning cars. There is a cry of "Macchina!" and a blaze of light up the long avenue heralds the approach of an Italian rival who started an hour before the victorious Magnette. His car is swallowed up by the crowd, congratulating the first finisher of Italian nationality, when suddenly a fresh shout

THIS EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNT OF ONE OF THE MOST THRILLING OF RACES IS FROM THE PEN OF

H. E. SYMONS

THE DISTINGUISHED MOTORING JOURNALIST,
AUTHOR AND COMPETITOR IN INTERNATIONAL
MOTORING EVENTS

rends the air, sending the spectators scurrying for safety.

"Another Inglese!" Sure enough, it is a second low, green car: the M.G. Magnette driven by Earl Howe and H. C. Hamilton. But for an inopportune puncture, the two British vehicles would probably have finished side-by-side. As it is, the latest arrival is second in his class, on time, only 90 seconds behind the winner and 42 minutes ahead of the fastest Italian 1,100 c.c. survivor.

More wild cheering. Lord Howe is heard to remark that this is the finest race in which he has ever driven. Then the little group of English mechanics, onlookers and helpers takes charge of Lord Howe and Hamilton, Eyston and Count Lurani, and carries them off to the two things they want most in the world: a meal and bed!

* * *

Thus did the M.G. Magnettes, in their very first road race, score an unprecedented success

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THE MILLE MIGLIA

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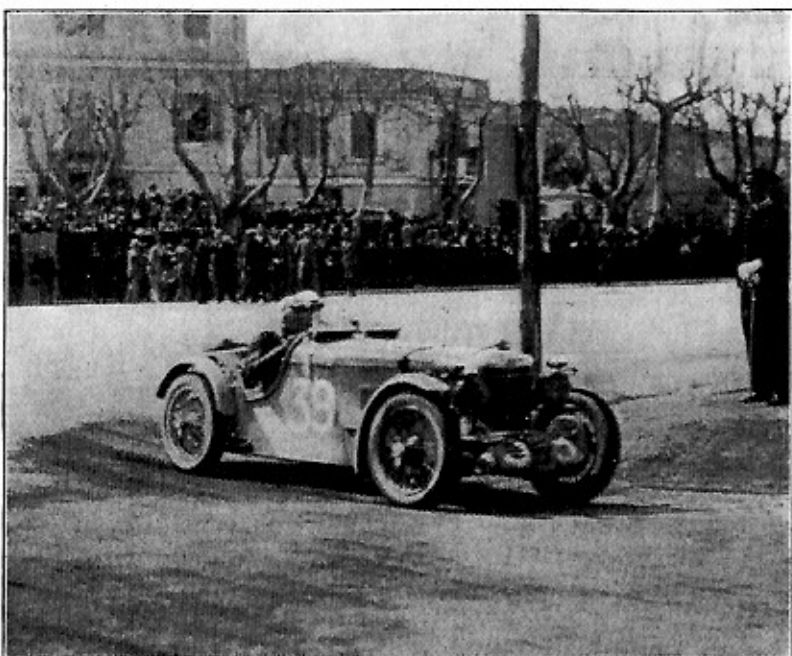
for England. In those eighteen hours of relentless battle, against the flower of the European motor industry, they acquitted themselves magnificently, proving their right to be classed among the finest sports cars built anywhere in the world.

It was Lord Howe, I think, who conceived the bold idea of flinging the gauntlet into the Italian camp. From its very start the fascination of the "Mille Miglia" had gripped his imagination. For the last three years he has been a passionately interested spectator. Often, as we have stood together in the April sunshine, watching the cars roar down the road to Rome, he has told me of his longing to drive in this race.

"But when I enter," said he, "it shall be with a British car."

It was not until the M.G. Magnette made its appearance that our premier driver could even think of taking part. But one glance at the trim, low chassis, displayed for the first time at the last Olympia show, satisfied him that here was the car he sought: one with which he could challenge the élite of the small car world.

Followed a period of debate, of anxious consultation. At the Works at Abingdon research-work



Eyston's Car, Count Lurani at the wheel, entering Rome at the finish of the Race

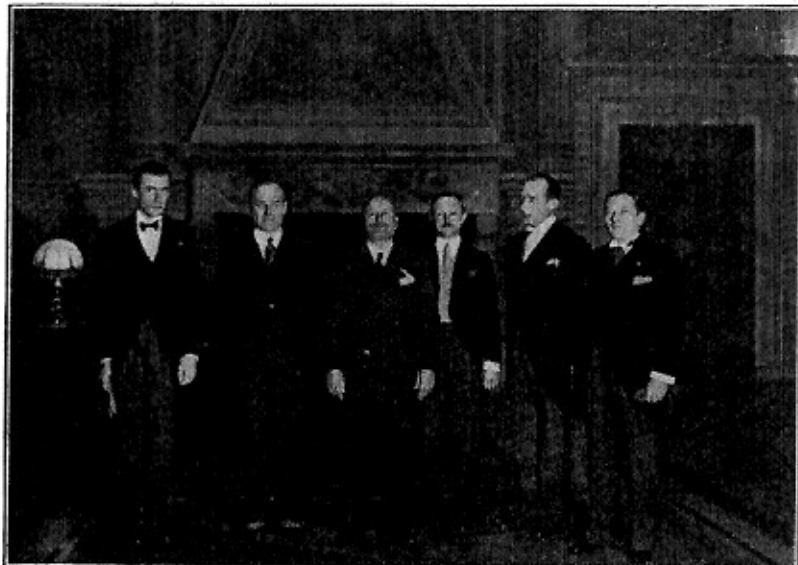
went on unceasingly, perfecting this part, modifying that; experimenting with carburetter settings, plugs and fuels. Carefully the organisation of the team proceeded; drivers were picked, refuelling stations arranged. Mr. H. P. McConnell agreed to act as team manager.

At length all was settled; Lord Howe and that brilliant young driver, H. C. Hamilton, were to share the wheel of one car; Sir Henry Birkin and Bernard Ruben would take turns in driving the next, and Capt.

G. E. T. Eyston and Count Lurani were asked to handle the third car.

The cars corresponded with their catalogue specifications, the only variation from standard being the counterbalanced crankshafts, designed to relieve the main bearings of excessive load and thus to keep down the oil temperature. Six-cylinder, supercharged, overhead camshaft engines of 1,086 c.c. were used, with bores and strokes of 57 mm. and 71 mm. respectively. The maximum power was developed at 6,800 r.p.m. while 6,250 r.p.m. gave a road speed, on top gear, of 110 m.p.h. And this, with a back-axle ratio of 4.89 to 1! The Wilson self-changing gearbox was one of the outstanding features of the M.G. entries. Although used for the first time in a road race, it demonstrated beyond a shadow of doubt that it permitted higher averages to be maintained on mountainous stretches and afforded greatly increased safety when descending long, winding passes at high speeds.

Of the preliminary tour of the course which the team made last January, under appalling weather conditions; of the last-minute scramble to get the cars ready



THE MAGNETTE DRIVERS RECEIVED BY IL DUCE

In the group are (left to right): Count Lurani, Earl Howe, Signor Mussolini, Sir Henry Birkin, Mr. Bernard Ruben and Signor Ferrari

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THE MILLE MIGLIA

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in time; of the lessons learned and minor modifications made during practice I can say nothing here: lack of space forbids. The full story of the great adventure would fill a book.

So let us skip the sea passage from Fowey to Genoa and the hectic days of practice, and get to the start of the race, from the beflagged, Fascisti-guarded enclosure in the wide boulevard out-

back. The loud speakers suddenly blared forth "Soldiers of the King," and, amid rousing cheers, the British cars accelerated away down the road to Parma, Bologna and . . . Rome.

From the very beginning it was an epic struggle. The principal rivals of the Magnettes were two redoubtable Maseratis, one of them being driven by the famous Tuffanelli, and "Tim" Birkin, in the rôle of "destroyer," which he loves to play, went flying southwards with the avowed inten-

Alfa Romeos—Boszacchini and Nuvolari—were only 11 minutes faster over this stretch.

As at Bologna, so at Florence: Birkin was the first car through. Hard on his heels came Lord Howe and Eyston. Despite the need for changing one or two plugs, oiled up on mountain descents, all three Magnettes were well ahead of record time thus far. Over the tortuous Raticosa and Futa Passes, where the wind blew cold despite the April sunshine, the M.G.'s really came into their own: their perfect road-holding, powerful engines and the marvellous Wilson gearbox enabled them literally to toy with their rivals.

After Siena, to everyone's regret, Sir Henry Birkin and Rubin were forced to retire owing to a broken valve. But the great driver had done his work: he had left Tuffanelli's Maserati with a wrecked gearbox on the Futa pass, while the second Maserati was already 50 minutes to the bad. Although now there



Earl Howe and H. C. Hamilton arriving at the Finish in Rome, one-and-a-half minutes behind G. E. T. Eyston and Count Lurani



side Brescia, in Northern Italy.

Long before dawn feverish activity reigned in the quaint old town, where even in the short years that I have known it, lofty, majestic modern palaces of white marble have replaced the picturesque old buildings with their tiled roofs. The narrow street leading to the start was choked with pedestrians. It was difficult for the cars, with headlights blazing and horns blowing, to get through at all.

The sun rose in a clear sky; a Fascist band played a gay air; the police pushed the crowd back so as to give the first cars off a clear run.

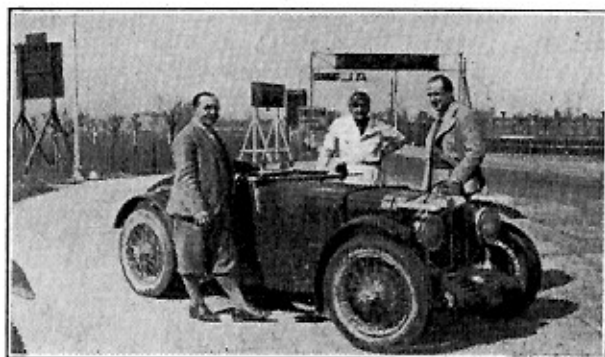
At seven o'clock the "utilitarian class"—low-priced vehicles with engines of under 1,100 c.c.—were sent off one by one. All were Fiats: neat, workmanlike little two-seaters. Then the larger "utility" cars were started and, some forty minutes later, the three M.G.'s stood lined up, ready for the start.

The Fascisti started to cheer. The crowd took it up and, growing in volume, the applause rolled up to the stately buildings of the city and came thundering

tion of breaking up the opposition.

This he succeeded in doing, and in the process added still further to the renown of the M.G.'s by averaging 87 m.p.h. for the first 130 miles to Bologna. And this, be it noted, over ordinary roads along which lorries rumbled occasionally, and where the crowd left barely room for the car to get through. Often it was like driving through a tunnel lined with human bodies. A swaying, bumpy bridge of boats was among the many hazards of this first section, on which Birkin overtook 35 cars.

Some idea of Birkin's feat may be gathered from the fact that the Italian "aces" on 2,300 c.c.



Mr. Hugh C. McConnell, Team Manager to the victorious M.G. Magnettes, with Sir Henry Birkin and Mr. B. Rubin



came into the picture a new rival: a little Fiat—a special job with a decidedly non-standard cylinder head, beautifully driven by Ambrosini and Menchatti.

And so on to Rome, the dreaded Radicofani Pass being tackled on the way, with Eyston and Lurani leading their class. They had taken only 6 hours 16 minutes to cover 380 miles. Lord Howe and Hamilton were through just 20 minutes later.

With the Eternal City behind them, Eyston and Lurani, still leading the entire field, embarked upon a second crossing of the Apennines, where the roads went from bad to worse. At Terni

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THE MILLE MIGLIA

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Howe had lost another 4 minutes to Eyston, who was now 12th in the whole race *irrespective of cylinder capacity.*

On the winding section through to Spoleto, and on by way of Perugia and Mucerata to the Adriatic coast, even the great Nuvolari's averaged dropped. But Lord Howe made up some of the time he had lost, and at Ancona was less than 2 minutes behind Eyston. The surviving Maserati had hit something hard and had had to have its front axle taken off, heated and straightened.

Night had fallen. With headlights cutting a path through the darkness the Magnettes roared north-west to Bologna. In the big public square the arc-lamps blazed down on an animated scene. Black-shirted Fascisti, carabinieri and police struggled with the over-eager crowd, striving to keep them beyond the flimsy palisades.

It was nine o'clock exactly when Eyston roared into the control, had his lead seal punched, and accelerated to the pits just beyond. The dynamo had given out and the battery was running

down fast. A new accumulator was fitted, with a little trouble, and in 14 minutes he got away again. In the meanwhile, Lord Howe turned up with a front shock-absorber adrift and a headlight support bolt sheared. Fortunately the parts required were hastily procured from the "practice" car and the "Motoring Earl" dashed off once more into the night.

Roaring into the darkness, now and again meeting cars which were hastily driven on to the grass and all lights extinguished when the racers' exhausts were heard, the green Magnettes passed north-easterly over the fast concrete road to Padua and through the almost Alpine stretch from Treviso, via Feltre, to Vicenza.

Looking round from the cockpit of the Magnette as it swayed and plunged through the night, Count Lurani, now acting as Eyston's mechanic, looked round and recognised the lights of Lord Howe's car behind. He dared not tell his driver, for he knew that, with the lamps failing fast, Eyston could not increase his speed. But, soon after Bassano, the lights of the second Magnette had vanished: Howe and Hamilton, it transpired later, were feverishly jacking up the

axle and changing a wheel.

At Verona, after a series of alarming skids, a tyre went on Eyston's car. The jack-handle had got lost *en route.* What to do? Lurani yelled at some of his compatriots who appeared, as they always do, mysteriously from the darkness. They lifted the car, the wheel was changed and then, racked with fatigue, Eyston drove into Brescia—to win the 1,100 c.c. class.

That his victory was no "fluke" is proved by the arrival, 90 seconds later, of Lord Howe and Hamilton in the second M.G., thus setting the seal on the prestige of British cars on the Continent.

The results? Well, Eyston and Lurani averaged 56.90 m.p.h. for the 1,000 odd miles, breaking the previous class record by over 3 m.p.h. Howe and Hamilton also beat the record at 56.82 m.p.h. The winner of the race, irrespective of class, was Nuvolari, on a 2.3 litre supercharged Alfa Romeo, at 67.46 m.p.h. The M.G.'s were not only first and second in the 1,100 c.c. class, but were the first foreign team ever to carry away the team prize given by the Automobile Club of Brescia.

I need say no more.

"THE GLORIOUS DESTROYER"

Sir Henry Birkin, Bart., and Mr. Bernard Ruben, in the Magnette in which they successfully "burst the opposition" in the Mille Miglia, establishing amazing speed records in the process

