

TRIPLE-M REGISTER BULLETIN

December 2020/January 2021



THE MG CAR CLUB LTD



Above: Andrew Fock provided this seasonal photograph with the following caption: "Father XPAGMUS arrives in J3418 with gifts for the sticky fingered MG Midgets. The good news for true believers with broken differentials is we also have contacts with the tooth fairy...!" Father Christmas, aka Graeme Jackson, appears a little over-dressed for the Australian sunshine in December.

Below: Bob Walker in more traditional garb with "Egreмонт" near Masham in the Yorkshire Dales on New Year's Day 2010. Photo Beth Walker



BULLETIN No 118 December 2020/January 2021

Front Cover Picture:

J4199 at Bovingdon Camp in Dorset while competing in the 1935 London to Bournemouth Trial. See Simon Cauthery's article in this issue.

Editorial:

This time last year, the Editorial was looking back on a very successful year of competitions and events and looking forward to the Stilton and Pork Pie Tour in September. What a difference a year makes!

At the time of writing, we have no idea how the year will pan-out but we do have dates in the diary for a number of events; how the virus will affect those, and all the other usual events, is not yet clear

Planning of other Triple-M events continues and, as things become clearer, the Forum will be updated. Most important, is the planning for the 60th Anniversary of the Register in 2021; my request for suggestions a year ago was rather overshadowed by subsequent events so there is now an urgent need to make your suggestions to the Committee. See Dick Morbey's report for more information.

By chance, this issue has ended up with more emphasis on 6-cylinder models than is usual but I make no apologies as it makes a change from P-types and J-types that tend to dominate. In two of the articles, the cars featured are some of the rarer Triple-M models and a third article tells the convoluted tale of an N-type in Australia. Add to these some technical and historic articles, plus a single competition report, and we end up with an eclectic mix of articles and features which I hope has something of interest for everyone. Happy reading.

Digby Gibbs

Bulletin Subscriptions

Enclosed with this issue is the renewal form for 2021; please read the notes and then return as soon as possible.

I appreciate that you will be receiving this Bulletin in January, so it will help considerably if you can renew your 2021 subscription promptly as our Printers will require print quantity numbers confirmed for the February / March issue as soon as possible.

For those who have already set up a Standing Order please ignore the enclosed renewal form.

With many thanks, in anticipation, of your cooperation and with the best MMM wishes for 2021.

Paul White (MMM Bulletin Subscriptions).



Chairman's Jottings By Jeremy Hawke

Firstly, may I wish a Happy New Year to you all (and good riddance to 2020, which has given us all very little to be happy about). Besides

Covid putting a damper on the majority of events last year, we also lost too many MMM friends who will all be missed. For the rest of us, at least this year offers every prospect of being able to get out and about a little bit more as the world moves somewhat hesitantly to a post Covid state. Driving around on your own is all very well but MMM owners do like to get together for a good old chin wag – it's only when you're forcibly deprived of something that you realise how much you miss it.



Driving around on your own is all very well but MMM owners do like to get together for a good old chin wag – it's only when you're forcibly deprived of something that you realise how much you miss it. As I write, things are still very much uncertain with regard to events early in 2021 but at least most organisers are talking in terms of postponement, rather than cancellation.

On the Committee front, new members are shaking up the status quo and I think this is a good thing (I never thought of myself as one of the "old boys"!) and a number of new initiatives are in the pipeline. As part of a bigger club (the MGCC) there are the inevitable hoops to jump through, but we hope to begin rolling these out in the near future. Hopefully, you will all be in the right mood to get out and try new things as the opportunities arise; I for one will be happy to be out and about in the J2 again.

The coming year is the Register's 60th anniversary and, whilst things are still "fluid", we are looking to mark the event in a number of ways; one of which is getting some of those early cars together – Numbers 1 & 2 (and their owners from 1961) are keen to show the rest of us how to drive! Also, we are in the fortunate position that MMM Register event organisers are a shrewd bunch and whilst they don't intend to make a profit, they invariably do. This builds up and is effectively your money, so all ideas on how you'd like to see it utilised would be welcomed by the Committee.

All the best, stay safe & keep hanging in there, I'm sure that things will improve throughout the year.

Jeremy Hawke

Secretary's Update

By tradition, the December/January edition of the Bulletin arrives on doormats in January, so my first pleasant duty is to wish you and all those who hold dear a very happy, safe, healthy and rewarding 2021. Who knows what it will bring, but let us all hope for the very best!

Although we are in our fallow season here in the Northern hemisphere, the Register committee and its members have been more than normally busy. Thanks to a recent infusion of fresh blood in the persons of our treasurer John Summers and newly elected committee member Tim Luffingham, we are preparing to launch a number of fresh initiatives, the fruits of which you can expect to see in the near future.



John, in addition to his financial duties, has wide-ranging experience of historic motoring on two and four wheels. He is helping us to develop an even closer relationship with the MGCC in a way that should further benefit the shared and reciprocal interests that exist for present and future MGCC members and for the Club itself.

Tim is part of this dialogue with the MGCC and has also been given the brief of coordinating events, tours and other sociable activities. At the heart of this will be opening up more opportunities for owners to derive enjoyment from using their cars in whichever environment most appeals to you. In addition to making full use of the enthusiasm of our loyal volunteers to help run established events, we have linked with outside organisations to create opportunities for touring and other events tailored specifically for Triple-M cars. These will be within mainland Europe as well as the UK. These are just two initiatives that the committee has been working on for a little while now.

Another development can be seen with our Facebook presence. Until recently the Register has had a relatively static Facebook page but now, thanks to input from Cathelijne Spoelstra, we have established a fully fledged Register Facebook group. You can find it on Facebook as The Triple-M Register Members Group. It is attracting excellent support and already Members have been posting interesting photos and comments. Take a look – it's an interesting and valuable resource – and not at all scary!

Members of the MGCC are encouraged to sign up and post and share Triple-M related snippets which you feel may better suited to Facebook rather than our website forums.

The intention is that the Facebook Group complements the Register's popular website Forum. But rest assured, the Forum (b.2003) will remain a vital part of the Register's toolkit as a focus for technical queries as well as historical discussions. It holds long-lasting information on all aspects of the Register and, in fact, we are considering committing additional resources to it – watch this space!

'Watching this space' is likely to be a factor in 2021, as we cannot say with certainty which events will take place as planned. A possible early casualty may be the MG/Triumph Spares Day, scheduled for 7th February at a new venue, Telford, but with a possible fallback date to April. Look at our website events page for updates on this and the other scheduled events (many of which are also listed in this edition of the Bulletin). This will include details of the various events in 2021 through which we will be celebrating the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Register.

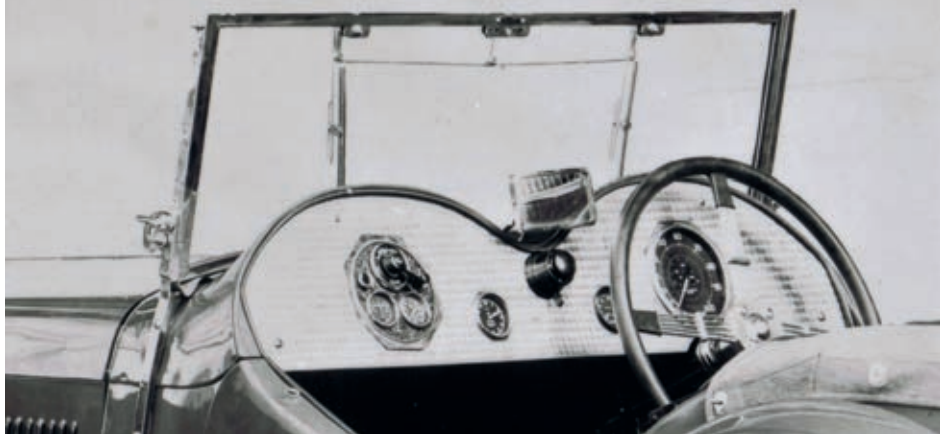
The 2021 racing programme is on pretty solid foundations and we are hoping that things will improve so that spectators will be able to attend and enjoy all aspects of the races as well.

Back to the cars – we would be very grateful if all owners took a moment to check that they have updated the Register with information about their cars. A brief summary of the details we hold can be seen via the Pictures\Members' Cars section of our website. If you would like the facility of directly viewing and updating the personal details that we hold, as well as fuller details of your car, please contact me and I will happily arrange this for you. Many owners have taken up this opportunity and have reported favourably!

In closing, I would like to mention one of the Register's trophies, the John Kidder Memorial Trophy. This is awarded annually to the Member who, in the committee's opinion, merits the award on the grounds of either a notable performance during the year or a noticeable contribution to the Register during the year. The 2020 recipient is Tim Sharp who, in addition to being a sparkling performer in his PB, was also of immeasurable help to the Register in dealing with organisational complications that arose at the back end of 2019 and early 2020. Thanks and congratulations, Tim! Until next time, please stay safe!

Dick Morbey

TECHNICAL: FITTING A NEW J2 DASHBOARD.



Martin White

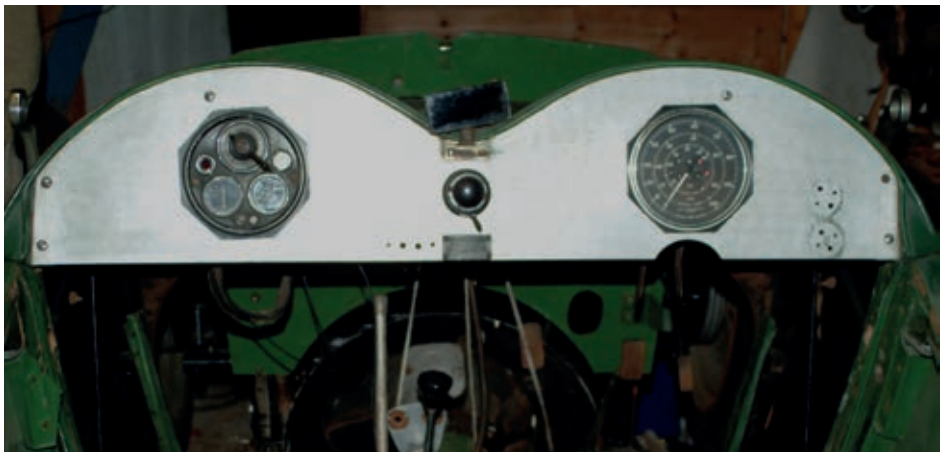
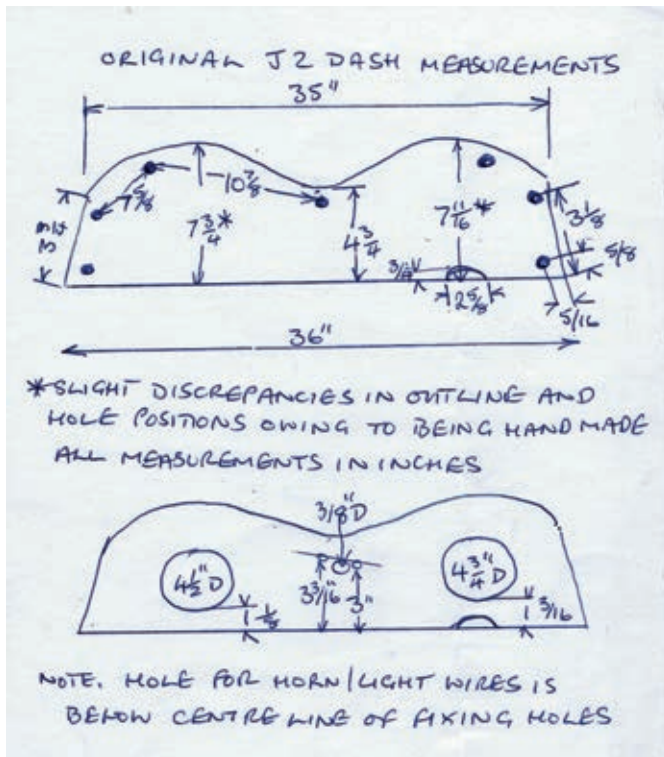
I recently replaced the dashboard on my J2 with a nice new reproduction item; needless to say, it was not that straightforward - but is it ever? The J2 still has its original body and I have an original dashboard which has never been fitted to my car. For reference, the factory manual has a larger photo of the dash than the one in Blower.

The first job was to find the original screw holes in the woodwork; I did this by screwing the old dash in place to check how it looked. This proved that there were seven holes rather than the five shown on the photographs. However, it does look as if these were drawn onto the photo, as was the mirror, as they do not show on the rear-view picture and, interestingly, the bottom corner screws would actually miss the woodwork!

At this point, the first problem became obvious; the contour of the scuttle was different to the dashboard, being too close at the centre. I wonder how many of you knew that the central round-headed chrome screw in the centre of the scuttle is not only for fixing but is also an adjusting screw; unscrewing it slightly brought the scuttle into line. It was also now obvious that the piping that surrounds the dash has to be very thick – about 3/8" diameter.

The next task was to drill the fixing holes in the new dashboard. Having covered it in masking tape to prevent scratching, I overlaid the old dash to mark up the hole positions. Inevitably the reproduction dash was not the same shape though fortunately it was on the large side so could be cut down to suit.

The hole for the instrument panel was also too large but luckily not a problem. This hole is smaller than that for the speedometer and is not positioned so that its centre point is symmetrical with the centre of the speedo but somewhat lower.



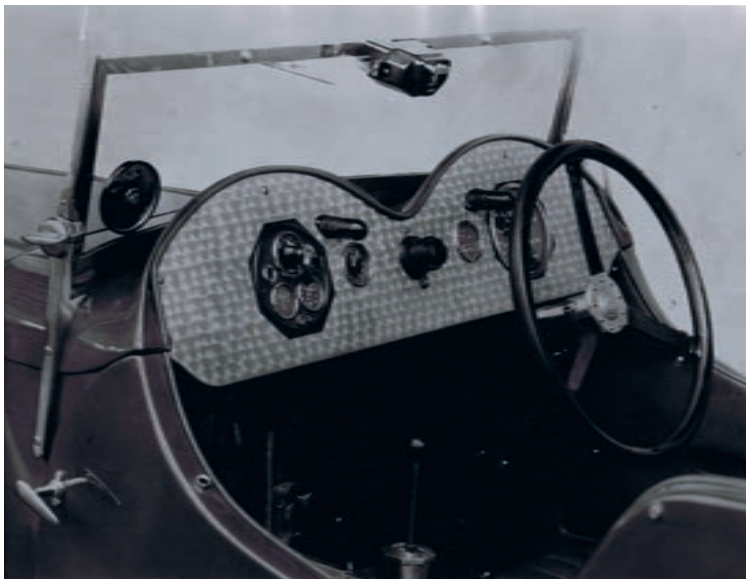
Drawing prepared by Martin White to show the critical dimensions. The dashboard from Peter Lansdown's very original J2 (J3485) for comparison with Martin's drawing. Note that the mirror is non-standard as are the various additional holes.

There is a good reason for this; the hole is only circular for convenience in manufacture, the extra clearance allows for the 2-pin plug sockets to be fitted without shorting on the dash. Once fitted, the instrument panel and speedo are symmetrical. For extra safety I fitted an in-line fuse in the feed to the +ve socket.

The next point of interest is the position of the fixing screws for the horn/dip switch. They are not horizontal or parallel to the bottom of the dash; the left screw is slightly higher than that on the right. The result is that the two visible screws on the switch cover are also not horizontal and the switch looks lopsided. This matches the factory photo but, as noted previously, this appears to be loosely positioned as it does not show in the rear-view. It is also too high as the fixing nuts would be inside the woodwork! It would appear that MG did not bother about the position of the screws; all they wanted to achieve was that the dipper button should operate through the same angle to vertical in either direction, which is what it does.

Incidentally, it is much easier to fit the switch if you tap the holes in the dashboard (2BA) rather than drill clearance holes.

While the dash was out, I attended to some loose "lift-the-dot" studs and aero-screen fixings. I used 2BA studs and screws but, instead of struggling to get the nuts on, I used a strip of brass 31/2" long x 1/2" wide and 3/8" thick with a hole drilled and tapped 2BA at one end. This can be slipped between the metalwork and the wood and makes the job easier.



The print of this works photo has a pencil note on the rear suggesting it is a J2 but the sweep on the top of the door would suggest a L1 Magna.

Car News:

When I saw that Colin Murrell's distinctive D-type special was listed for sale by Tom Hardman, I made contact with Colin and he provided the following information:



I always had a soft spot for Mike Davies-Colley's PA. I knew that it had been on the market for some months but did not give it a second thought until I had a chat with Mike at Donnington in July and found out that there had been some interest and that someone was looking to part exchange an M-type for the PA.

I hadn't realised that Tom did part exchanges but still thought nothing about it until a few days later when I had a "light-bulb" moment! A further chat with Mike was followed by a trip to see the car and, to my surprise, a deal was done although I did have regrets as I would have liked to keep the D as well!

The great thing is that the PA was prepared for the 2020 season, so is ready for any activity; a local run, a European MMM/MG event, a sprint or hillclimb and possibly even a return to the racetrack in the future. Mike is happy that the car has stayed within the MMM Racing family and that it is going to be used and that he will see it in the future.
Colin Murrell.



PA0786: previously raced by Mike Davies-Colley and now ready for a new life with Colin Murrell.

Photo by Steffie Broch

BISHOP CAM STEERING BOX: OIL SEAL MODIFICATIONS AND OTHER INFORMATION

Jon Pedoe

I took my PB steering box apart to fit a modern oil seal to the peg-shaft, and at the same time, tried to learn a little more about the history of this device and why it gets a lot of criticism from some quarters – now I am a little bit wiser, and thought this would raise a smile on some faces – particularly those who already know its gremlins.

First, the oil seal modification. I found the casting is too small to machine out to take a modern seal. The casing was 31mm OD at the end (as cast, not machined), and the hole for the shaft was not quite centre. The seal I wanted to use is $\text{Ø}29 \times \text{Ø}19.5 \times 5$ – a standard seal from Simply Bearings, and the resulting minimum wall thickness would have been too small, at less than 1.5mm. My peg-shaft is an oversize new one at $\text{Ø}19.5$ from Andy King. So the answer was a bush to carry the seal. Not really rocket science is it? However, there were a few things to take into account, and which were as follows:

1. The hole for the shaft was already finished and reamed, so the bush bore had to be dead concentric, dead size and straight with the existing hole – the new bush was therefore turned in the lathe in one operation to achieve concentricity – bore and OD at the same set-up and without turning it round in the chuck for any reason.
2. The seal must run on the plain shaft diameter, of course, away from the splines – this meant that I had to lose about 8mm of engaged length of shaft in bore, but it was necessary, so the first job was to machine the end face of the casing boss – the hole is bored square to the machined top (cover) face so this made it easy to clamp on the milling machine table.
3. The new bore in the casing for the bush must be dead concentric with the already finished hole, so it was bored using a small boring head, with a small and increasing setting for the boring tool, and moving the machine table until an even witness was seen all round in the existing bore – then the table was clamped, and the new bore produced.

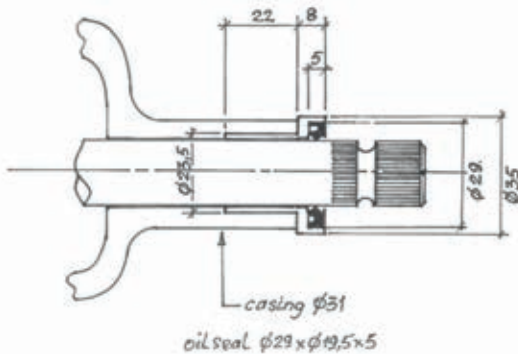
After a pre-assembly of bush and peg-shaft to prove it went together satisfactorily, the bush was installed using Loctite 638. Then a small 2BA screw was fitted as an anti-rotation / securing device should the bush ever come loose. The seal was fitted and that's that.



**Machining the casing bore to
take the bush**



Bush installed (lock-screw not finalized)



Second, I read some criticism recently when looking into the “patent” (patent no. GB223963 from 1924) for the Bishop Cam steering gear. It is described as crude, and technically inferior to other steering box types, particularly the Burman Douglas and Marles Weller, despite the fact thousands were made and fitted to many cars up until the late 1950’s. No doubt there are those who know the answers to this, however, it is interesting to me and with no knowledge of other steering box types for comparison, this is what I found:

- The worm shaft helix angle is about 12 degrees. The peg and groove angle is 30 degrees. The lever arm moves within the box over an angle of about 38 degrees each side of the straight ahead position. At the “straight ahead” position, the peg (or pin) sits about 3.5mm in front (overhangs) of the worm centre-line. As the peg moves in the groove, it comes over the worm centre-line at a lever angle of about 28 degrees, and at full lock, the lever is again at about 3.5mm the other side of the worm centre line.

- As the lever arm is turned away in either direction from the 28 degree position, the peg moves out of proper engagement with the worm. This has two significant consequences; firstly, the peg angle of 30 degrees is no longer correct to fit the groove, and the peg contacts the groove in a completely different way (as shown on the sketch below) and secondly, as the peg moves away from the worm centre-line it “drops” but this drop is more or less cancelled out by the miss-fit of the peg in the groove (it is actually trapped), which “lifts” the peg.

The extent of this problem is dependent on the geometry of the parts – the helix angle, the peg and groove angle, and the length of the lever arm. It seems that this is not any deliberate design feature at all, but rather a major design deficiency. It seems the designer tried to share the “grief” equally each side of the travel, and that’s why the deviation from the centre-line is equal at about 3.5mm each way from the fully engaged position.

The only way to maintain the correct fit of peg in groove would be for the peg to travel along the worm centre-line, like on a lead screw on a centre-lathe, or as on some other steering box designs.

Now, I took my steering box and measured the gap between lever arm and closing face at different lock (i.e. travel) positions. Obviously when these devices were originally assembled, it had to be ensured that the peg would never seize in the worm, despite some rise and fall of the peg-shaft over its full travel – particularly at any position away from straight ahead, so I think the worm groove was dressed out by hand (or maybe on a machine) on some form of jig, which measured the rise and fall of the peg-shaft over its travel. This is referred to in “Blower” on page 414 (11th impression, 1970) as....”the cam track is slightly relieved at either end so that there is no play at the centre position but a slight amount towards each lock”. Measurement of the worm groove showed that it was indeed slightly wider and deeper at the ends. I also found that the gap between lever arm and closing face was slightly bigger at the ends of travel, so it appears that the worm groove has been dressed as described in Blower.

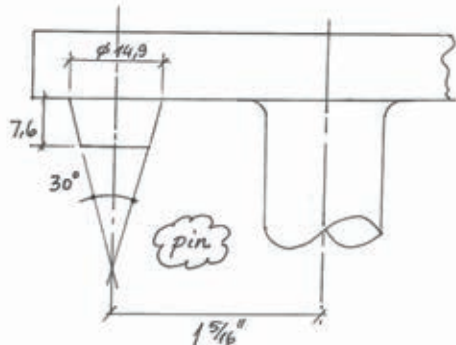
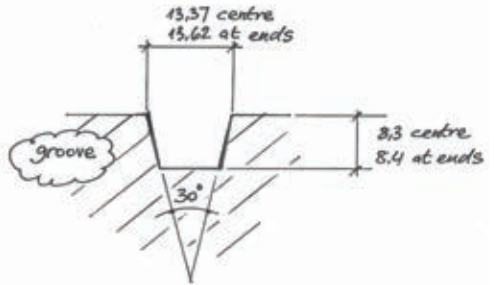
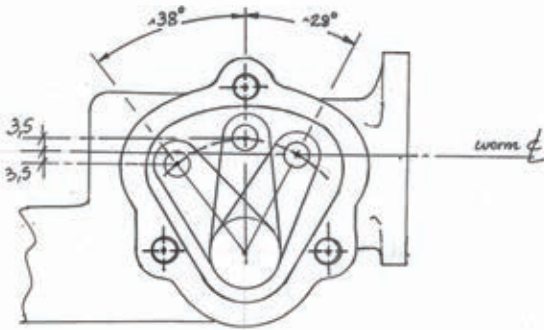
I guess that there were some differences between each steering box, depending on how accurately the finishing operations were on the worm groove, and this would account for slackness or tightness at any particular steering position. My measurements are shown here, but would no doubt vary from one box to another.

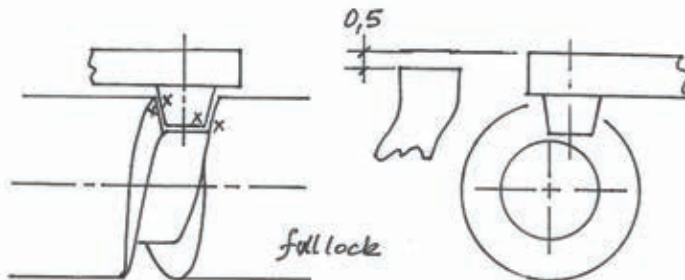
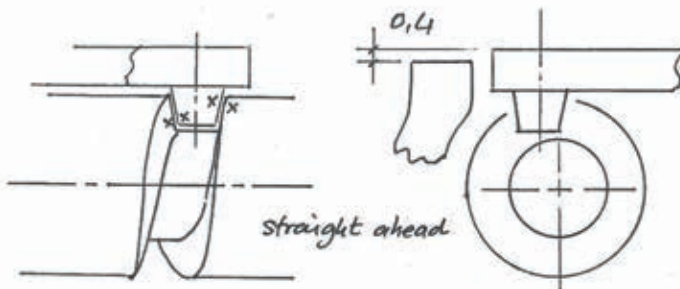
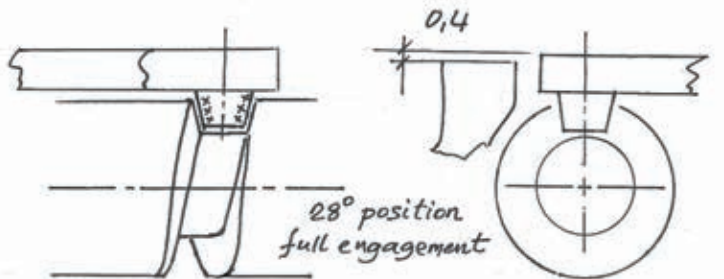


Lever arm at straight ahead position –
peg overhangs worm centre-line



Worm groove appears to have been dressed after machining





x = contact between peg and groove

So there are more questions than answers here; and with so many of these steering boxes made, much must have been learned along the way by the manufacturer, and it would be really good to know the facts of how these steering boxes were assembled and set up when new to optimize the fit of the peg in the groove over its full travel.



**MG CAR CLUB WISCOMBE HILL CLIMB
12th September 2020**

Report and photographs by Colin Murrell

In September we were treated to “Wonderful Wiscombe”, set in the stunning grounds of Wiscombe Park near Honiton in Devon. The event, which is organised by the South West Centre of the MG Car Club, has a long established history dating back to the early seventies. It is a firm favourite with competitors and spectators alike.

A lovely sunny day greeted us along with the autumnal colours in the trees throughout the Park. The following Triple-M cars were competing:

1	Frank Ashley	M-type 1929
4	Andrew Morland	PA 1935
7	Keith Richies	PA 1934
102	James Burmester	PA Single seater. 1935

We thank the MG Car Club Southwest Centre, Wiscombe Park, the hard working marshalls and organisers and all other volunteers for making this a really good event. Special mention to Mike Dalby who was a volunteer Marshall and arrived in his M-type.

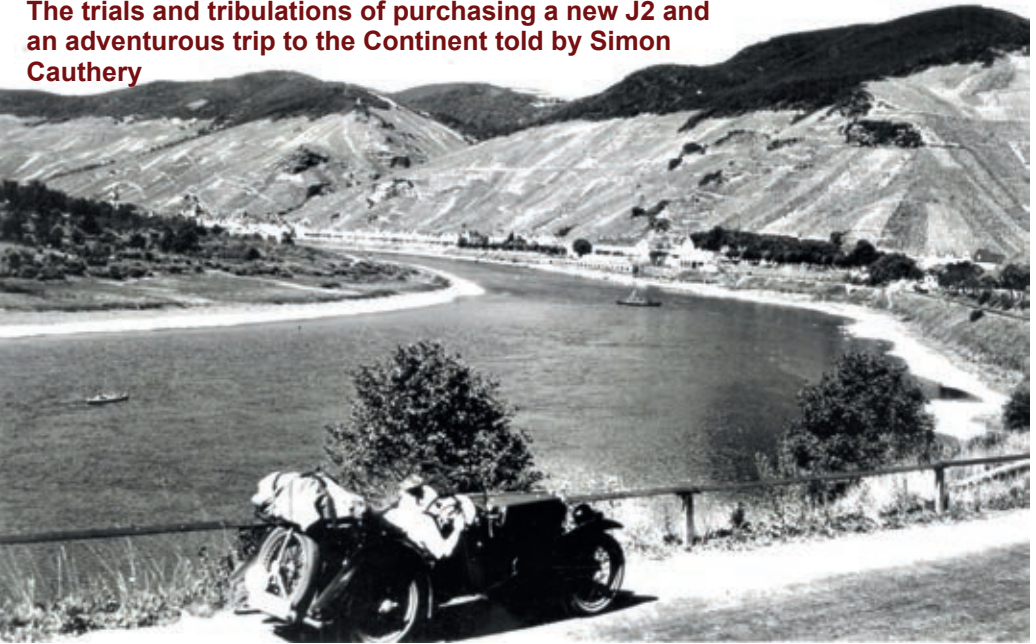


Mike Dalby's well travelled M-type in the car park.



J2 Travels in Germany in the Summer of 1934

The trials and tribulations of purchasing a new J2 and an adventurous trip to the Continent told by Simon Cauthery



I was intrigued by the photos of Ronald Cauthery's J2 in Germany that Simon posted on the Forum, particularly as my father had undertaken a very similar journey in a PB in 1937. The story of how Simon tracked down his father's old car, and it's subsequent restoration, appears in the 2007 Yearbook.

After the J2, Simon's father Ronald owned a 2 litre Lagonda and a drophead Jaguar before coming down to earth after the War with a Morris 12. Simon's previous historic car was a 1930 Austin Heavy 12 (2-seater with dickey). He describes it as a lovely car but so slow (28 bhp from 1.9 litres) weighing over a ton.

I have owned my father's first car (MG J2 J4199) since 2005 when it came my way by pure chance after it had stood unused for 50 years and had only changed hands 3 times in between. It was quite a challenge, to say the least, to ring it back to life again but that's another story. (See 2007 Yearbook for the full story).

Although my father had mentioned that he had a J2 before the war and before he married, I never really followed up on it which I now bitterly regret. After he died I found several old photos, many of them from a trip to Germany, one of which showed the rear numberplate and registration number of ALX 934. This was the clue to tracing the car and its eventual purchase.

On joining the MG Car Club and Triple-M register, I was able to obtain copies of all surviving paperwork relating to J4199 which put a time scale on his ownership and use. The car was purchased from University Motors and registered on November 1st 1933.



My Father was, at that time, stationed at RAF Henlow in Bedfordshire on a two year engineering course. He must have been quite critical of his new purchase as, by the following January, he was writing to complain that he couldn't achieve more than 68 mph (brave man!). Advice was given (by return of post as always) to "synchronises the carburettors and check float chamber levels", as well as valve clearances, plugs, etc.

A follow up letter went on to complain of "a distinct lack of power on hills". Apparently, my father had also said that he had just had the engine decarbonised (so soon?). The reply from MG was that, if the garage had replaced the valve guides, he should check that the modified type had been fitted and explained how to check this. Father replied that these were the modified type so MG then suggested the possibility of a warped head or incorrect length of valve stems leading to incorrect timing. They went on to suggest that he brought the car over to the "Central Motor Institute" in Hitchin for a check.

This was duly arranged and CMI wrote to the MG service people on February 6th that performance was now satisfactory and they replied that they were sending two M6 carburettor needles and a headlamp tie bar to be invoiced pending return of the broken part. M6 needles are what it still has although now on 1-1/8" carbs.

All was well until the next set of correspondence in April 1934 when it seems that my father took the car to Abingdon for more work, complaining about rattling from the gear level and wanting the steering drop arm checked (why?). On April 6th he collected the car with gear level modified and lift-a-dots replaced on the hood flap "as necessary". Mileage then was noted as 3,725. On April 7th my father wrote that the remote was still rattling and MG service then said they would send him a complete new remote assembly in exchange for the old one. The internal instruction for this, from a Mr Macfadyen, stressed that particular attention be paid to "such items as spring loading the lever etc".

The MG people must have been fed up with father by now as he wrote again on April 16th to say that the remote gear level still rattled. They said that they would like the car back in the Service Department for examination. Macfadyen's letter also told of an attachment devised by another J2 owner that he had seen which might be of interest. This was a "a long coil spring fixed over the gear lever, which pressed on a disc which rubbed on the top of the remote control, the spring being held in position by the gear lever knob". A sketch was enclosed in case my father would like to incorporate this.

The next letter confirms that the car was booked into the Service Department for the 28th April (a Saturday). Internal memos then detail work required; "engine vibration not excessive, chatter in gearbox on over run, excessive piston slap when cold and pulling hard, oil gauge pipe rattles badly om column". Mileage now noted as 4,369. To this was later added "to check fuel system as pump ticks all the time and give a general engine tune". He was charged 15 shillings (75p) for the tune up. On May 5th my father signed the "Official Pass-out voucher" to accept the car in good condition. He requested a written report on condition of car and work done. It is quite surprising that he had covered nearly 5,000 miles in that first six months, in winter as well.

The last letter on file is dated May 7th (and probably the last as the guarantee would have expired on May 1st) gave the detail requested. "A new gearbox was fitted to rectify the bad vibration and the propeller shaft checked for truth. Engine front end modification refitted, the front main ball-race renewed, petrol system checked and new interior to petrol tap, speedo regulator refitted, steering drop arm checked. Ok and a general tune-up". Signed by a Mr A M Melville. What seems remarkable, from our present-day experiences, is the effective and prompt response from the makers addressing all my father's complaints without any quibble. I think this account is worth telling as an example of the experiences of a new MG buyer in the '30s which may or may not be typical.

And so the J2 was ready for its continental trip. This must have been in the Summer of 1934 as he appear to have parted company with the J2 late in 1934 as it was next shown in a Brunell photo competing in the Great West Motor Club London to Bournemouth Trial in March 1935 but apparently not with my father.

I don't know who my father's travelling companion was; unlikely that or was my mother who was not really on the scene then and, in those times, it would probably have been frowned on for an unattached young woman to go off on such an adventure! From the various photos we can make a good guess at his route which was probably via the Harwich-Hook of Holland ferry being nearest to Henlow where he was stationed.



From the Hook he appears to have travelled towards Cologne and up the Rhine via Koblenz, Boppard and the Lorely to Heidelberg before heading for the Black Forest. He then visited the historic towns of Nordlingen and Rothenburg and possible further into Bavaria before returning home. We don't know if he retraced his route or came back a different way and the photos don't help.

The photos which are approximately 3" x 4" show views of Koblenz and Heidelberg from the Rhine and views on the route as well as Nordlingen and Rothenburg and wooded scenery. Unfortunately, the only photos actually showing the J2 are when being loaded/unloaded from ferry, location unknown, although the uniform of an onlooker appears to be continental. The other was taken, apparently, heading south from Koblenz. In the 1950's when father was stationed in Germany, I would have spent school holidays there and one Summer we drove down in his Austin A90 'Atlantic' to Austria and returned via some of the places he had visited over 20 years earlier. I particularly remember the wonderful old town of Rothenburg, seemingly little changed over hundreds of years, and then back through the Black Forest where I remember him saying that he believed he had stayed at an Inn there in 1934.



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before visiting**

60th Anniversary Suggestions From Christian Höptner

In Bulletin 117 I requested suggestions from readers as to what events they would like to see as part of the celebrations. Although based in Germany, Christian enjoys participating in UK events and has obviously given this some thought and come up with some worthwhile suggestions. His letter was written in November, so things have changed a bit since then but still very fluid. As mentioned in the Editorial, any suggestions would be appreciated.

Thank you for "editing" or doing the bulletin - you are creating enjoyment!

In your foreword, you are pointing out the 60th anniversary of the Triple M register next year and asking for suggestions. I took part in the 50th anniversary celebration week in June 2011 and some months ago I made some suggestions to my good friend Dick Morbey to investigate. These were:

- A tour in the New Forest
- A trip to the Isle of Wight
- Worcestershire - perhaps considering a Show-ground which would also be suitable for camping, or basing the event at different hotels with an "overflow" campground or selecting a holiday park with little residences/huts?
- A re-run of the 40th anniversary rally - in particular the re-run of the Abingdon trial in the Cotswold - on public roads, of course.

Main reason to contact you is that, In the current situation I do not think it makes any sense to go ahead with any form of planning. My prognosis is that during the first quarter / first 6 months of 2021 we will see how the situation develops. Another big question mark is behind the possibilities of free travel - when will we be back to normal? Therefore I would suggest moving the anniversary celebrations to 2022 and label them as "60 + 1" anniversary or similar. Vintage Monthery, that was planned for May 2021, has also been moved to 2022 - very sensible decision.

Instead I would like to suggest the following:

A single day meeting with a tour? This could be a meeting, based at a nice hotel / pub with a sufficiently large car park or lawn behind. Start the meeting late morning with a nice tour with some exercise (again, how about a run in the Cotswolds? - relatively central location but that is obviously a matter of perspective). This would be followed by a buffet lunch with plenty of opportunities for gazing at cars and socialising and then back home in the late afternoon. This should be far easier to organise at relatively short notice than a full three day meeting. At least that is my suggestion – it would be nice if we could have something bigger but the circumstances do not permit any serious planning at this time.



Christian Höptner enjoying one of his regular trips to the UK, seen here at VSCC Silverstone in 2016.





A historic gathering of three K3s in Switzerland just before the Ollon-Villars Hillclimb in 2017. The climb is 8Km from the valley bottom to the ski resort and a repeat event had been planned for 2020 but hopefully might now take place in 2021. The photo supplied by John Gillett shows K3024, K3026 and K3030; a gathering probably never seen before

NA 0550

By Andrew Fock

When researching MGs PreWar, there are some cars that seem to continually appear in the narrative, their stories intertwined with those some many others. NA 0550 is one of those cars.

I first became interested in NA 0550 after a discussion about guarantee plates with the owner of NA 0278. NA 0278 was missing its plate and the owner asked where to get one. The problem was, and is, that the original plate still exists but is on NA 550. So how did it get there?

NA 0550 (800AN) started its life in November of 1934 being imported via Morris Industries as a CKD kit to Lanes Motors of Melbourne Australia. The body, likely assembled by Martin & King, was a two-tone red 2-seater with red upholstery and standard UK roadster body. It was first registered on the 1st December 1934 with the Vic. Registration number 185-664 to a Mr J Clarke. Not long after, it passed into the ownership of Dr Reginald Ellery.

Ellery was a prominent Melbourne Psychiatrist. Married to Mancell, a renown Opera singer, they were part of the fashionable Melbourne Bohemian / Communist set in the early 1930's. Ellery also had a passion for Motor sport. He was an active member of the Light Car Club of Australia and often acted a course official and course doctor during their events.

In January of 1935 he was acting as a course official for the LCCA at the Centenary 300 race at Phillip Island when Campbell Graham in PA 0595 crashed¹. He attended the accident and at the subsequent Coroner's investigation gave evidence:

"Two MG cars, driven by Graham and McKay, were approaching the Needle's Eye. Graham seemed to be overtaking McKay and the cars appeared to be almost level. Graham had the inside running, and at one moment the cars seemed very close. Graham's car then skidded, running almost broadside across the track with the nose pointing toward the scrub. The car continued to broadside along the track toward the side of the road and into the bushes, where it overturned, shot into the air and landed upside down about 20 feet away, or about 50 yards from the point at which it skidded. The men were thrown out as the car shot into the air."

Ellery competed NA 550 in several events, notably the 1935 LCCA 24-hour trial where he was teamed up with Les Jennings a well know Local racing driver who campaigned an Aspinall bodied L type that had a factory prepared K series engine (L0546, 26KAS) and ENV C type manual gearbox.

¹ Imported by Lanes with a PSGB for the 1934 AGP and now owned by Graeme Jackson



Reg Ellery and Les Jennings in NA 0550, LCCA 1935 24-hour trial ("The Car")

Ellery also ran NA 0550 in the LCCA 12-hour trial in May of 1935 and the C.O.R. Rally in 1935. We also know from the papers that the good Dr Ellery rather liked his speed both on and off the track!

SPEED OF DOCTOR'S MOTOR-CAR

DANDENONG, Monday. — Reginald Spencer Ellery, medical practitioner, of Collins street, Melbourne, was charged at the Dandenong Court of Petty Sessions to-day, before Mr. Wilkins, P.M. and honorary justices, with having driven a motor-car through Dandenong at a speed dangerous to the public. He was also charged with having allowed his motor-car to make an offensive noise. Dr. Ellery pleaded not guilty to both charges.

It was stated in evidence that Dr. Ellery drove his car along the main street at 50 miles an hour, and that the car made a loud noise.

Dr. Ellery admitted that he drove his car through the town at 45 miles an hour, but denied that he had driven dangerously. The brakes on his car were very efficient, and he had had the silencer on the exhaust reconstructed so as to eliminate noise.

Announcing a conviction on both charges, Mr. Wilkins said the Bench considered that a speed of 45 miles an hour through a town like Dandenong was dangerous.

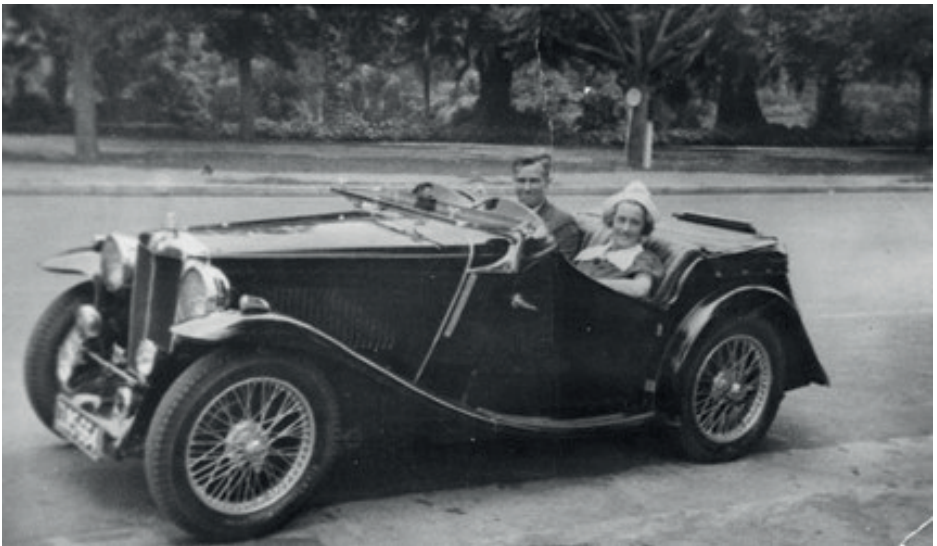
Dr. Ellery was fined £5 on the charge of having driven at a dangerous speed, and £1 for having allowed his car to make an offensive noise.

The Argus, 16 July 1935

These charges were clearly ridiculous, as to describe the melodic sound of an NA's exhaust at an alleged 50mph as "offensive" is quite preposterous and clearly should have been thrown out!

As part of the Melbourne interlectua and art set of the 1930's, Ellery had substantial Communistic tendencies despite the paradox of his lavish (some would describe as decadent) lifestyle. At the end of 1936 he sold the NA and set off on a tour of Europe including some 40 Psychiatric hospitals and clinics. This culminated in travel through the Soviet Union where he was taken of a carefully scripted tour of the "Soviet Worker's Paradise".

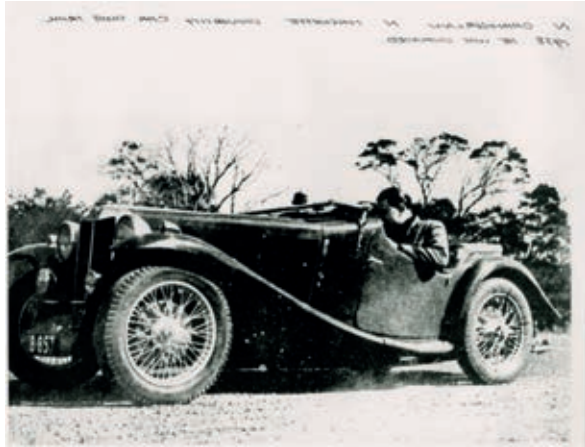
NA 0550 was then sold to Norman Chamberlain at that time a medical student at Melbourne University and a founding member of the University Car Club with Robert Manser (NA 0281) and A.J. Clarke (NA 0279).



NA 0550 circa 1938 with Norman Chamberlain (Chamberlain family collection)

In my article in last year's MMM-Yearbook², Norman Chamberlain appears in a rather interesting photo taken during the 1938 intervarsity trial in NA 0415, an ND that was imported second hand in 1937. The chassis of which now appears to be under the car currently identified as NA 0391. Why Norman was in this car and to whom it belonged has proven difficult to ascertain.

² Antipodean 2019 MMM-YB



Norman Chamberlain, NA 0415 1938 University trial
(Alan Bail Collection)

Norman Chamberlain was from a wealthy family in Brighton Melbourne and in 1937 the NA 0550 was bought for him by his parents (who did not drive) to stop him buying a motorcycle! He subsequently served with the RAAF during WW2 and post-war worked as a respected General Practitioner in the Brighton area owning several desirable cars, although the MG remained special to him such that his grandson was well aware of it when I contacted him.

In 1940³ Norman sold NA 0550 and it next appears in 1946 in the hands of Russel McClaren repainted painted black and white. It is notable, at this time the doors had been rehung from the front and the trafficators were still present.

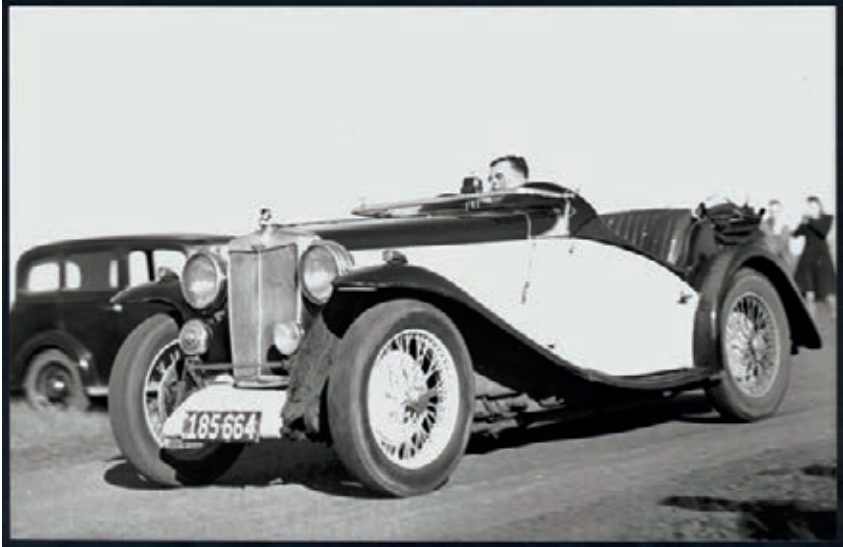


L to R, PA 1429, NA 0550 and
PA 0488 circa 1946

³ Which would correspond with Chamberlain finishing his Residency and joining the RAAF.

After passing through several hands and appearing at several competition events including Rob Roy hill-climb in 1947, it ended up with Bill Lockington in 1948⁴.

J3763 had been imported into Australia in 1934 by George Martin⁵. Prior to its export it was upgraded by the factory to near J4 specs, with 12th brakes, outside exhaust and a close ratio cross tube ENV manual gearbox⁶. In late 1949 when running a Fisherman's bend race circuit, Rod Jackson blew up the engine doing over 7000 rpm and the car was subsequently broken up. Bill Lockington got the gearbox and transferred it into NA 0550. He also added triple carburetors, high compression pistons and a tall rear axle ratio.



NA 0550 Rob-Roy Hill climb circa 1950



"The Age". 06 MAY 1950

⁴ Later to own NE 0516

⁵ 2017 MMM-YB Graeme Jackson J types, A tale of 3-Js

⁶ Often described as a J4 in Australian news reports. The gearbox while very close ratio was not in fact one of the very rare J4 boxes but most likely a C type box.

After competing in the car for a few years, Bill sold it in mid 1950 though to whom is not currently known. That owner however, wrapped it around a pole in St Kilda not long after with the wreck subsequently coming up for auction.

Bob Portingale's father bought and sold used cars in the 1950's including several MGs. Bob, then about 17 suggested to his father that they buy NA 0550 and they repair it together as a project. After submitting the winning bid, the car was duly towed home.



The "pranged" NA 0550 with Bob Portingale 1952.(Portingale collection)

On inspection, the chassis and front axle were bent and the gearbox bell housing and diff case both cracked. The chassis was straightened but bolted back together rather than riveted, and the gearbox and diff both welded. Finally, the car was painted cream and was reregistered YW-547 in September of 1952. Bob commented that with the close ratio ENV box, the car would do 40 mph in first!



NA 0550 post repair 1952.
(Portingale collection)

Bob kept the car till about 1954 when it was sold to Keith Dow. It then passed to George Jennings. Bob's Portingale's repairs could not have been too bad as Jennings successfully raced the car at Phillip Island and Fisherman's Bend (amongst other events), winning the MG handicap in June of 1958. However, by November of 1958 the car was once again for sale.



George Jennings NA 0550 Phillip Island 1958 (Bail Collection)

By 1961, Bill Lockington had acquired NA 0516 (NE) in a fairly sorry state with a Sunbeam engine in it and was looking for parts to restore it to its former glory. He spent some time acquiring N types to get all the parts he needed to return it to its original state which had included a close ratio ENV gearbox. NA 0550 was found semi abandoned on the nature strip of a house in Balwyn. He negotiated with the owner to purchase it and placed the car into storage in his factory. At the same time Walter Magilton was rebuilding NA 0281 (Aspinall bodied NA raced in the AGP at Lobethal in 1939 by Robert Manser). He made a deal with Lockington that he could have the car if he removed the ENV gearbox⁷ with Bill then putting it into NA 0516. Walter swapped the box for a P Type one and got the NA 0550 going. He later swapped the engine from his car (558AN) into NA 0550 taking the guarantee plate and putting it on NA 0281 to avoid any issues with the Registration Branch⁸.

NA 0550 under Magilton
ownership 1964.
(Magilton Collection).



⁷Discussions with Karl Weismann, the current owner of NE 516 confirmed that the ENV gearbox in that car has the scars described by Bob Portingale from its crash in 1952.

⁸VIN followed engine numbers rather than chassis numbers at that time.

NA 0550 was then sold to John Dalton who was a dealer in old MG cars and parts.

In the late 1960's Brian Jennings (Son of Les Jennings mentioned earlier) was looking for a 6 cylinder MG to make a copy of the Aspinall L type that his father had campaigned so successfully in 1933-35. He bought NA 0550 from Dalton as the donor car for this project. The damaged chassis required quite a bit of work including grafting on the rear part of another N type chassis (probably NA 0677) and extensive re riveting and replacement of the cross tubes. Discussions with Brian Florrimell (now in his 90's) who did this work confirmed much of the previous damage as described by Bob Portingale. As the Jennings L type had also had an ENV gear box, a non-cross tube F type was sourced, and a new rear engine mount made up to support it. The original body panels were sold off and a new body made by Barry Hudson in 1970-71 with the project being completed in about 1978.



NA 0550 as completed by Brian Jennings circa 1978.

At some time though all this, the car had acquired the guarantee plate from NA 0278. While no one seems to remember when this occurred, the most likely time is during John Dalton's ownership when he also had the chassis and remains of NA 0278. Brian kept the car until the early 1980's and after passing through several hands it ended up with Peter Kerr who has owned and campaigned it since, continuing its long and successful competition history.

NA 0550 Current state as with Peter Kerr (QLD).



TRIPLE-M RACING 2021 SEASON



A Preview of the Forthcoming Season Duncan Potter

After the World Pandemic, and the weather, decimated the 2020 Racing calendar Duncan Potter is hoping for a return to business as usual next year. These notes were written in mid-November when the situation was still very fluid so, as always, keep an eye on the Website for updates.

The good news is that we have a full season in prospect next year and an impressive number of new cars planning their debut on the track with us. I have spoken to all necessary global authorities and can confirm that.....we are going racing in 2021!

The current (21st November 2020) programme of events is as follows:

February 20th Goodwood Track Day. Organised by MGs on Track who have, again, given us a Triple-M Class. An excellent opportunity for drivers who are new to competition or current competitors with new cars to test car and driver.

April 17th VSCC Silverstone “Spring Start”. This will be a one day event in 2020.

April 24th & 25th MGCC Brands Hatch-The Mary Harris Trophy Meeting. This will be the “Big One” for 2020 with marquee, Saturday evening BBQ and lots of Triple-M cars racing and in the paddock.

June 19th VSCC Cadwell Park. We hope to have our usual Triple-M race and BBQ social event at this fabulous circuit.

July 10th VSCC Oulton Park.

July 18th MGCC Donington Park.

August 22nd VSCC Mallory Park. As with Cadwell, this should feature a Triple-M race and BBQ for socialising.

September 17th-19th Circuit des Ramparts at Angouleme – Prince Bira Trophy for Triple-M cars. Has been confirmed that we will retain the “guest grid” for 2021.

Also, and although no dates have been fixed, we hope to run a track day in March at Bedford Autodrome and, I suspect, that Castle Combe will be holding their usual Autumn Classic meeting in October.

So, there is a great year in prospect so get into the garage and get your car ready.....and if you don't have one then speak to Tom Hardman and buy one! More details to follow as things become clearer but, as always, let me know if you have any queries and I will be happy to help (Contact details on page 46).

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THE MG WITH THE ASTON MARTIN CONNECTION: CRESTA BODIED NB MAGNETTE NA0934



Time constraints meant that the tribute to Bob Clare in Bulletin 117 did not feature any pictures of the Cresta tourer that will always be associated with him. Thanks to Robin Lawton, who at the time of writing has the car for sale, we are able to publish these excellent pictures to make amends. I have also made use of some of Robin's sale notes for this description together with information from Bob's article referred to below.

The NA was acquired by Bob Clare as a collection of parts in the 1990s and there is a fascinating account of the restoration in the 2002 Yearbook. Unusually, this account includes some costings which should, perhaps, serve as a warning to anyone contemplating a rebuild! The original cost was £12,500 and rebuild cost, excluding Bob's labour, was £28,923 so a total expenditure of £41,423.

The Aston Martin connection comes from Jim Elwes who was a director of the Cresta Motor Company of Worthing as well as being a works driver for Aston Martin. Apparently, the Cresta Motor Company took delivery of the N-type demonstrator and were impressed by the advanced chassis design but disappointed by the style and comfort of the body. The company directors agreed that Jim Elwes could approach Ernesto Bertelli (chief designer for Aston Martin and proprietor of Bertelli's bodyshop) to supply and fit light-weight bodywork to the N-type chassis. Cresta purchased 10 or 12 chassis from MG which were then fitted out with the attractive bodywork that closely resembled the Aston Martin MkII of the period.

Research carried out by Bob Clare at the time of purchase identified two other Cresta bodied cars, NA0788 which is in Switzerland and NA0819 in Germany. At that time, Bob thought that another might exist (NA0713) but even with his expertise as the MMM Registrar was unable to locate it.





NA0934 was supplied as chassis to University Motors in January 1936 and then fitted with bodywork by Bertelli and supplied to Cresta Motor Co. Bob was able to trace a number of the previous owners, including Philip Bayne-Powell who provided a lot of background information, all of which is detailed in the Yearbook article.



Photo above is from the Register archives and the note on the rear states “Jim Elwes Cresta N Type”. If this is correct, then we could speculate that Jim Elwes ran this car as a demonstrator and it might even be the prototype? Extra information would be welcome.

Robin Lawton

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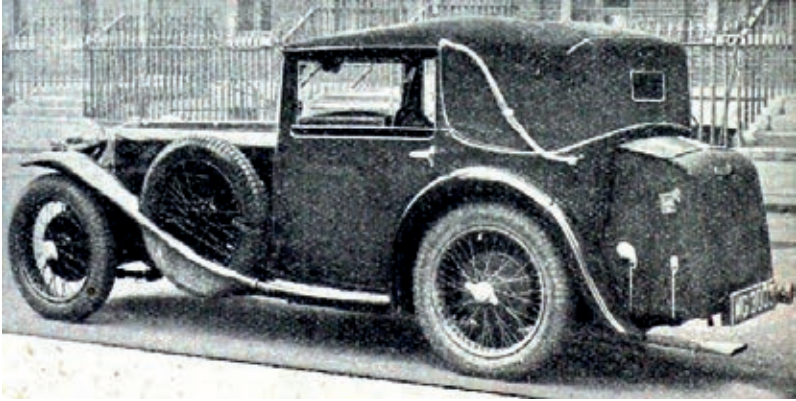
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FACEBOOK POSTINGS
Supplied by Cat Spoelstra



Cat posted this on Facebook and thought it would be of interest to Bulletin readers. I was rather pleased to have my initial “guess” of it being a L1 Carlton Magna confirmed by others including Mike Allison, Rob Constant and Ian Holmes. Cat thinks the registration could be MG3003 and Mike Allison confirms this was issued to a 1933 L-type but no information on the type.

Reference to Richard Monk’s “MG Collection” has photographs of Anthony Littlejohn’s Carlton (L0616) and the information that University Motors acquired a number of L1 chassis some of which went to the Carlton Carriage Company who produced this stylish drophead coupe. The number of Carlton Magnas produced is not recorded and L0616 may be the only remaining example.

Philip Bayne-Powell who has extensive knowledge of special bodied MGs was not able to add to the information on this model but confirmed that the Littlejohn car may well be the only one. Philip advises that the previous owner was Adrian Goble who had undertaken a cosmetic restoration and that Anthony Littlejohn then did a lot of work on the mechanicals of the car. The car looks spectacular in the Richard Monk book and in the photos provided by Ted Hack which show the car at Prescott during the MMM Register 40th Anniversary event in 2001.





Correspondence: K3003

From Philip Bayne-Powell

With reference to the letter from Rob Dunsterville in the September Bulletin, I can confirm that between us, Gary Schonwald (K3020) and I produced the K3 body timber framing plans.

When I got K3003 from the estate of the late Stuart Milton, it didn't have a body as it had been found in a scrapyard in a parlous state. I got in touch with Syd Beer, who was, at that time the only person in the UK with a slab tank K3, to see if I could get dimensions from his car to produce my own. He didn't believe that I had K3003, as he had information that it had been scrapped in Germany, and produced a chassis rubbing with K3003 stamped on. This turned out to be from the cloned K3003.

Later, Gary Schonwald got in touch with me asking about how I was going to produce a body for my car. I told him the situation in the UK, after which he managed to persuade Noel Cobb (K3008) to let him take dimensions of the timber framework of his car. Gary sent me over the details of each piece of timber with all the relevant dimensions, and I got him to get several check dimensions so I could produce an isometric drawing of the framework, with all the reference number on (this can be seen on page 88 of the excellent K3 book by Grahame Cocks).

Once we had all the dimensions tied up, I took them to Len Goff, a well known maker of timber frames. He produced two bodies, one for me and the other for Gary. I then had them clad in aluminium by Wakefields of West Byfleet. They had been around for many years, and had produced Triple-M parts for me when I was the Triple-M Spares Secretary. Wakefields also produced the bodies for the racing Connaughts in their day.

I shipped out Gary's body to him in the USA and subsequently the car was finished, and back on the road again. Gary sold it to Dean Butler (the founder of Vision Express) and I saw it at Lime Rock race track when the Triple-M Raiders went there in 1995. Dean had re-bodied it by then, back to its pointed tail configuration so I wonder where the slab tank body went to.

The well known photo of K3003 that you had in the Bulletin is believed to be the cloned K3003, just before it was sent to Theodore Fork in Germany. Fork wanted to buy the K3 in which Nuvolari won the 1933 Ulster TT so that he could enter the 1934 Mille Miglia. However, Kimber didn't want to let him have that car, as it was doing the rounds of the MG dealers to promote the MG Car Company so the works were instructed to make up another K3 for Fork using a spare chassis, of which they had a surfeit (so many in fact that they were later used for the Q-types). The factory made the clone K3 in Mille Miglia fashion, as they knew Fork was going in for that event, and the narrow "Skimpy" body on the Nuvolari car would not have been suitable for two people driving for 18 hours or so in the coming Mille Miglia. Fork was annoyed that he hadn't got the Nuvolari bodied K3, but the chassis was stamped K3003 to keep him happy. However, the give-away that this was a clone, is that the font used for this car was different to that used for the Mille Miglia cars, with a more rounded 0, which originally was very oval, as can be seen in the K3 handbook.

FOR SALE

Philip Bayne-Powell is helping to dispose of some books from the collection of the late Bob Clare and has the following for sale:

MG – A Pictorial History	John Tipler	£12.00
Magic of the Marque	Mike Allison	£8.00
Magic of MG	Mike Allison	£18.00
Works MG 1 st Edition	Mike Allison/Peter Browning	£30.00
Works MG 2 nd Edition	Mike Allison/Peter Browning	£22.00
MG Log	Peter Haining	£5.00
The Classic MG	Richard Aspden	£10.00
MG by McComb	Wilson McComb	£12.00
MG 1911-1978	Peter Filby	£15.00
Great Marques - MG	Chris Harvey	£8.00
Tuning and Maintenance of MG Cars	Philip H Smith	£20.00
MG Workshop Manual 1957 (6 th Edition) hardback	W.E.Blower	£20.00
MG Workshop Manual M-type to TF1500. 1957 paperback.	W.E.Blower	£12.00
Classic MG Yearbook		£18.00
Triple-M Yearbook 1993		£4.00
A to Z of Cars of the 1930s	Michael Sedgwick	£10.00
MG Sports Cars–Autocar Road Tests		£10.00
Triple-M Register of Cars 1986; 2005; 2006; 2007.		£3.00 each
Triple-M Bulletins: June2001-Oct/Nov 2018 and April/May 2019 [105 issues total].		£60.00
Triple-M Infoletters: 63; 103; 118-145 [30 issues total]		£15.00
Octagon Car Club Bulletins: 177 (Aug 1984) to 191; 302 (June 1995) to 435 (August 2006). [54 issues total]		£30.00

Please contact Philip Bayne-Powell on 01483 811428 or e-mail 1942mgman@gmail.com to buy any book or to obtain further information





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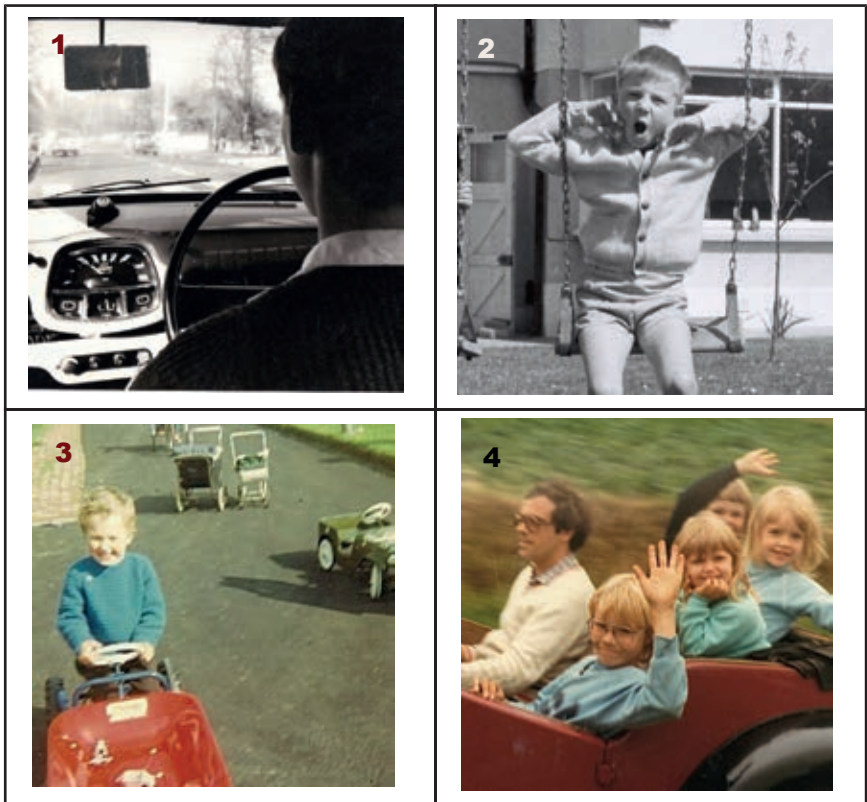

COMPETITION SECRETARY REPORT

As there has been very little activity in the various competitions since the last issue, it has been decided that Mike's report should be held over to the next issue when final year-end results can be reported. At this time of year, Mike Linward is fully occupied with the mammoth task of collating all the information for his section of the Yearbook so he is pleased to be excused duty this time.

Year-end Competition:

To fill the gap left by the lack of the Competition Report, here is a light-hearted test for the "old grey cells".

Can you identify the committee members who were brave enough to supply pictures showing them in their youthful days? There are no prizes, just self satisfaction and a warm glow if you are successful. Answers will be in the next issue as long as my "grey cells" are still working by then!





Continuing the childhood theme, these two were spotted recently at an antiques shop. Both were labelled as being French; the pushchair shows all the influences of 1930's or 50's automotive styling and is very solidly built.

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THE MGCC 90th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS IN NORTHERN IRELAND.



Due to the Covid 19 restrictions, the MGCC 90th celebrations have been very muted so it is pleasing to see that the sun shone on the Ulster Centre for this impressive gathering. Simon Johnson has provided these notes and the photos on this page. The photo on the back cover is courtesy of local photographer Ray Brown.

The Ulster Centre of the MGCC does not have many Triple-M owners and so it was down to me and my daughter Emily in our J2 together with Noel and Joan Cochrane in their PA special to represent the Register at this photo shoot. It was to celebrate the 90th Anniversary of the MG Car Club and took place at Parliament Buildings in the Stormont Estate.

There probably weren't many MGCC members, if any, in Ulster in 1930 (the Ulster Centre wasn't formed until 1968). Even if there were any, they could not have been photographed in front of this imposing building as it wasn't actually completed until 1932! Conway Square in Newtownards, might have been a more appropriate location as it formed part of the Ards TT circuit where MGs were so successful but, then again, they didn't start racing there until 1931.

There was quite an eclectic mix of models on display, the J2 being the oldest, and long-standing Ulster Centre member, Bill McMahon, brought along his new all-electric MG ZS EV – quite a contrast with the diminutive J2 almost ninety years older.

The Stormont Estate is only round the corner from my home but Emily and I couldn't resist a detour via Craigtantlet Hill Climb, part of which which actually runs alongside the perimeter of the Stormont Estate. No records broken, but "good crack" as we say here in "Norn Iron".



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