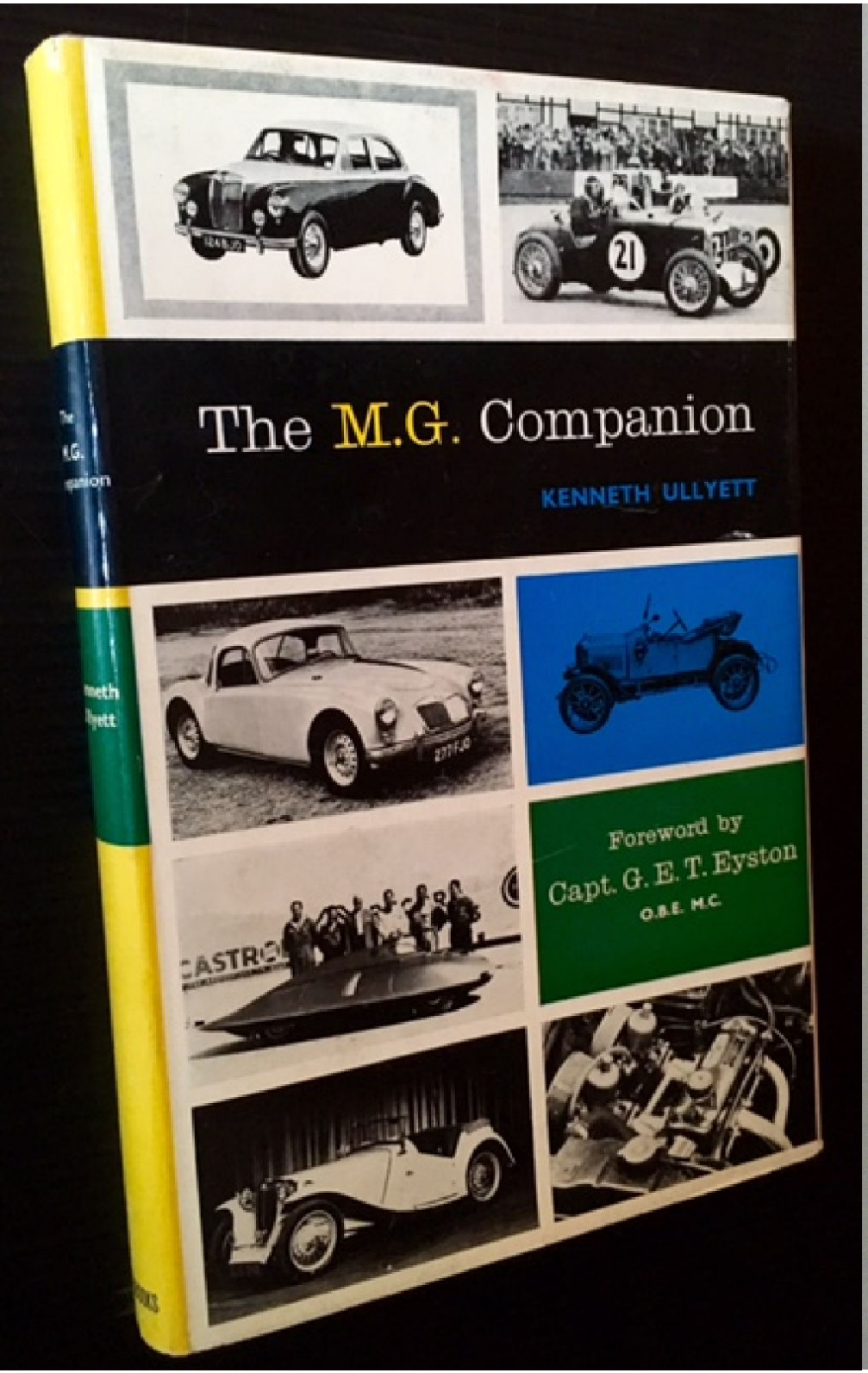


ILLUSTRATIONS

Three

PAVLOVA WORKS

If Cecil Kimber ever needed any memorial other than the world-wide fame of the MG, it is to be found not in the Sign of the Octagon which he created, but in Abingdon and all it stands for.

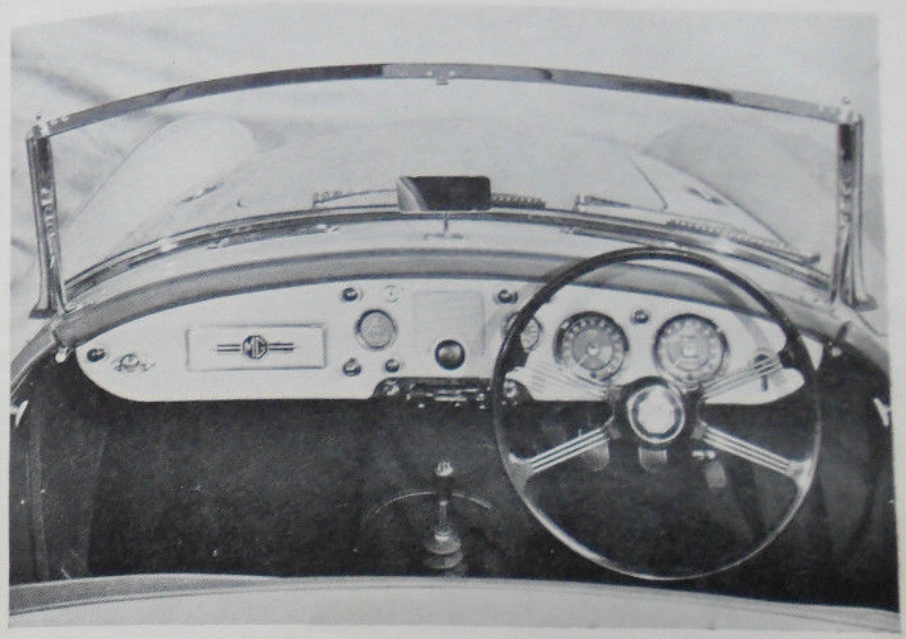
For thirty years the very name of this historic Berkshire village has meant 'MG' to sports-car enthusiasts throughout the world. F. Wilson McComb, MG historian and editor of *Safety Fast*, calls it: 'that sleepy little Thames-side village where the cows leave octagonal hoof-marks'. Surely a very apt remark, when you reflect that this mellow, brick town, filled with a thousand years of history, now sees daily convoys of MG's *en route* for all quarters of the globe.

Kim was building his early cars in the former Clarendon Hotel stables, and in Pusey Lane. By 1925 it became obvious that the Pusey Lane works could no longer cope with increasing demand for MG sports cars, so larger premises were taken in Bainton Road, Oxford, the old factory being handed over to the Garages as a commercial-vehicle depot. It was at Bainton Road work started on the 14/40, production being some six cars a week.

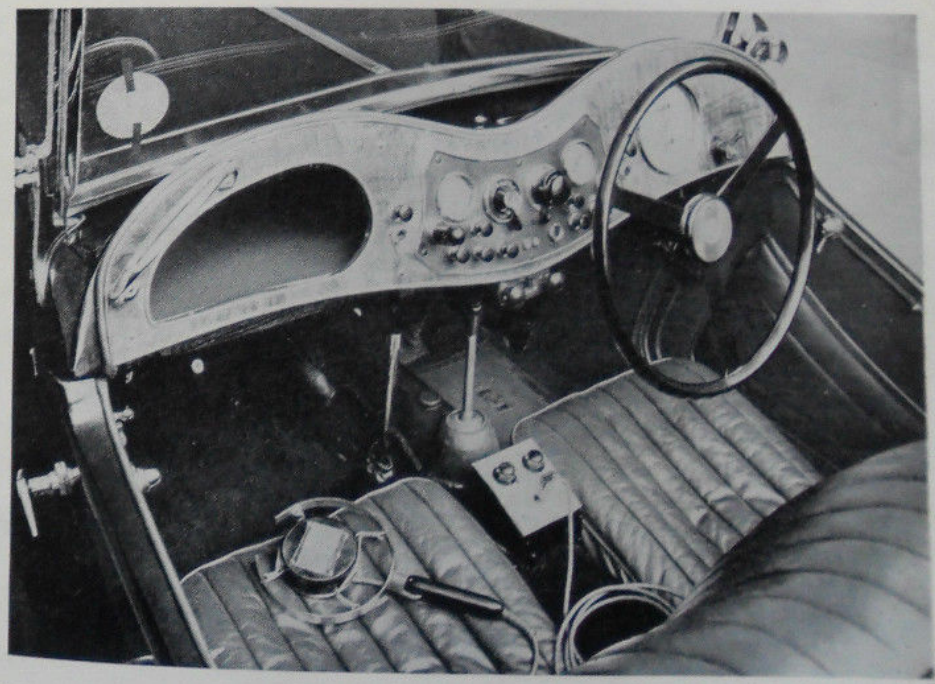
Two years later, the Bainton Road factory was given over to the Osberton Works for the production of Morris radiators, after a spell of occupation by a holiday caravan company, and MG moved to a new 16,000-sq. ft. site in Leopold Street (where second-hand MG's were handled for the first time), and eventually another factory was opened in Edmund Road, Cowley, close to the main works of Morris Motors.

'It is, we believe, the only factory of its kind in the world devoted solely to the manufacture of sports cars,' Kim told the motoring Press. The factory cost them £20,000, and they could push production up to 35 cars a week. It was here in 1928 that the MG Midget first came to life, and, in the same year, the 18/80 Six Mk. I. But within a year Kimber was forced to realize he needed yet more *Lebensraum*.

A fortunate chance came when he heard that the Pavlova Leather-works in near-by Abingdon had space to spare. This family business was at a climax of production during the 1914–18 war, making fleece-lined leather trench coats for soldiers, so naturally there was space to spare at the works when production came back to peace-time



Sensible controls of the modern MGA permit motoring 'safety fast'.



The police are long-established users of specially-tuned MG's. Here is the cockpit of a bored-out police TA, showing radio controls.

Furthermore, what at the outset had appeared to be a rather bleak T.T. (following the cancellation of certain entries, team changes, and the death of Tim Birkin), now took a more challenging turn. Brian Lewis (Lord Essendon) and Rose-Richards were driving straight-eight Alfas. The Rose-Richards Alfa had already been driven at Le Mans by Chiron, where it had a power-slide and nearly killed the co-driver, Cortese. Lace and Field were driving Invicta. And powerful opposition came from the Rileys entered by Victor Gillow and Freddie Dixon.

Nevertheless, the Abingdon team promised full support to Nuvolari, and Alec Hounslow of the works team was granted the honour of being Tazio's mechanic.

The race is graphically described by Richard Hough in *Tourist Trophy* (Hutchinson), in the 'Golden Age' section.

Says Hough:

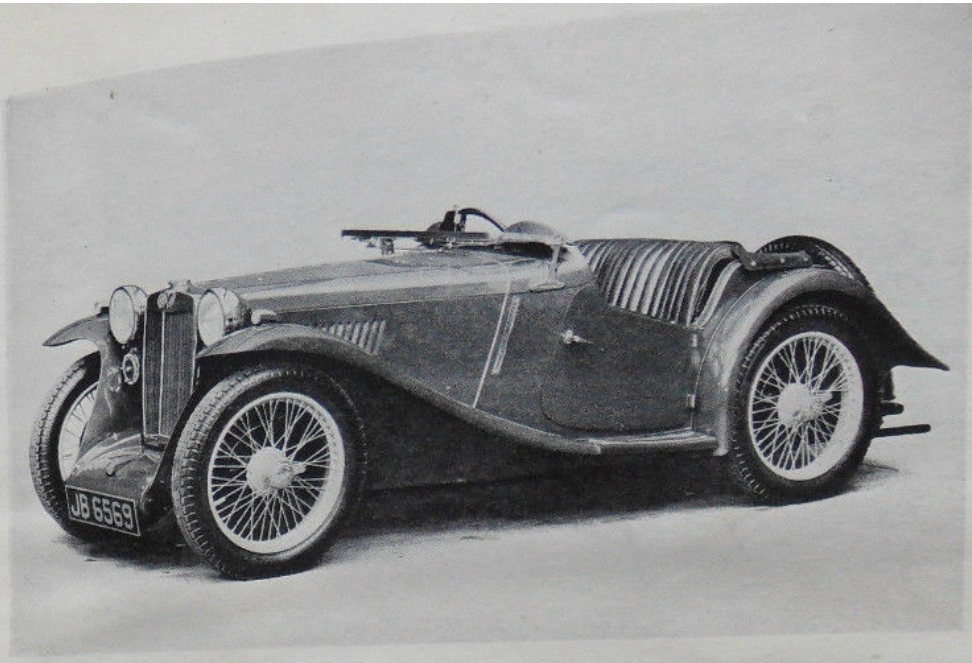
'Nuvolari saw this car for the first time on the first practice morning, soon after breakfast on Wednesday. The working principles of the Wilson box were explained to him by a blend of sign language and odd Italian words; there was no interpreter, and Nuvolari knew no English. In a very few minutes he climbed in beside Alec Hounslow and set off.

Some wild things have been written about Nuvolari's practising at Ards, including a report that he had executed three 360-degree turns in Newtownards Square on his first lap.' ('Yes,' says John Thornley, 'the score on the very first lap was three complete gyrations in the Square, a rearward visit to within inches of the famous butcher's shop in Comber, and an excursion up the escape road at the Dundonald hairpin. Otherwise the lap passed off without incident!')

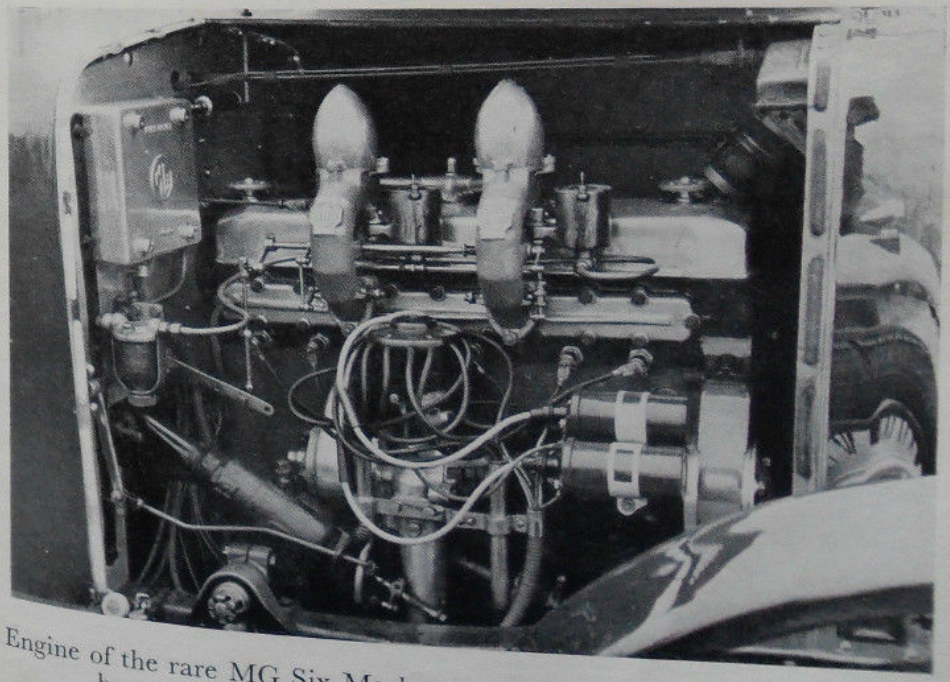
'Determination and concentration—each to the ultimate degree—made him the greatest champion of all, and he displayed these qualities in familiarizing himself with this new and impressive car, and in refamiliarizing himself with the course. The main impression he gave was one of extreme enjoyment . . .

It is true he took a little time to get the hang of the box, but he was soon preselecting the appropriate gear for the next corner as he straightened out from the last. And it is true he went through eight sets of tyres rather quickly (he used two in the race), but then what is practice for if not for experimentation?'

Alec Hounslow told me: 'Who can blame Tazio for taking time to get the hang of the box? He soon understood about preselection, and snicked the lever back to third, but then he forgot to press the pedal.



1935 MG PB two-seater.



Engine of the rare MG Six Mark III. Note curiously-shaped S.U. carburetters, and dual distributor with twin ignition coils.

high-octane fuel is so generally available that Stage 2 or progress to Stage 2 will probably be preferred. But for MG users in other parts of the world, Stage 1a may be very useful. This Stage 1a applies expressly to the TD series, but could be modified in certain circumstances to the other series.

First, the ratio is raised to 8·6:1, and head, ports and manifolds polished as in Stage 1. Then (as will be described in greater detail in Stage 2), larger inlet and exhaust valves are fitted, using inlet valves (MG 862/460) and the special sodium-cooled exhaust valves (MG 862/466).

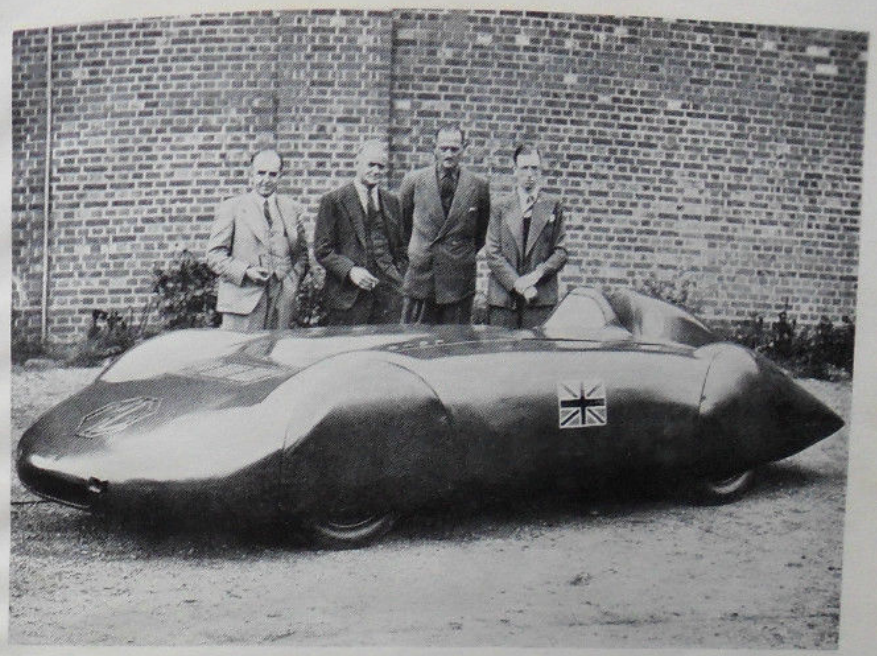
These exhaust valves have larger stems and so require special bronze guides (MG 862/467) and special cotters (MG 862/468). These bronze guides should be pressed in to stand approximately 24 mm. above the top of the head face; they are in fact longer than the standard guides, so protrude farther into the exhaust port. Stronger valve springs must be fitted, to counteract the effect of the increased valve weight. Springs should be 150 lb. (Parts No. MG 862/462 and 463), and details of fitting are given in Stage 2. These will prevent bounce up to a maximum of 6,000 r.p.m.

If one does not mind the slight extra trouble involved in cutting the cyanide-hardened valve-stem shrouds, these may be cut off close to the top, leaving just the top collar and $\frac{1}{8}$ in. of the tubular portion to locate the inner valve spring. A grinding wheel must be used to shorten them, owing to the toughness of the cyanide-hardening, but it is worth the trouble entailed to help compensate for the additional valve weight. To reduce some of the rocker friction, remove the thrust springs between the rockers on the shaft, and replace them with steel distance tubes, leaving about 0·003–0·005-in. end-float.

If trouble is experienced with the cylinder-head gasket in this Stage 1a tune, use a competition gasket (MG 862/472), or, on a car used solely for racing, a gasket cut from 20 S.W.G. silver-finishing auto-body steel may be fitted. To accommodate this gasket, it will be necessary to lap the cylinder head and block faces together with valve-grinding compound.

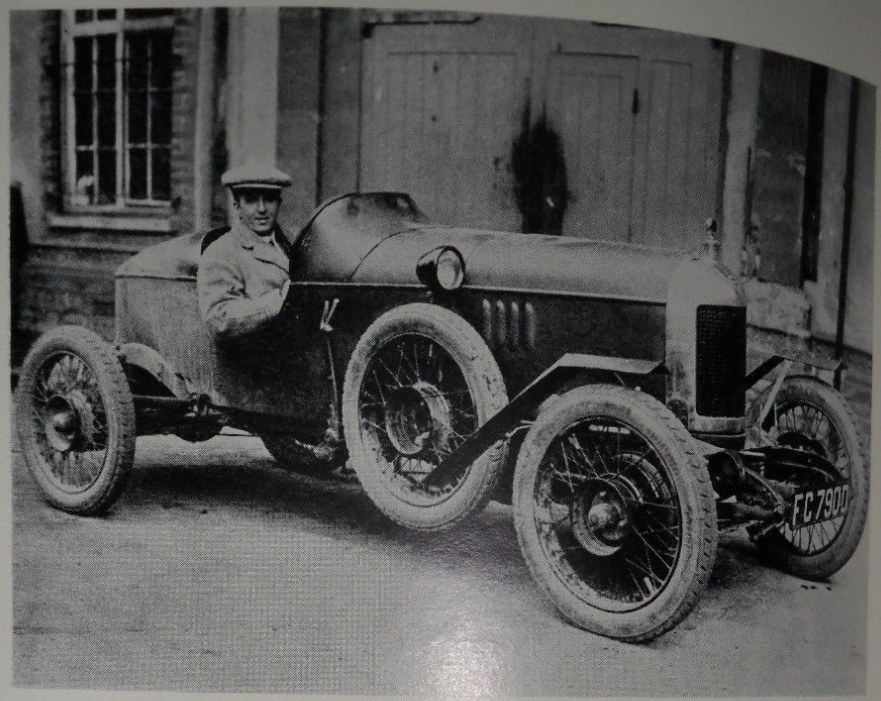
The larger $1\frac{1}{2}$-in.-diameter S.U.'s should be fitted (details in Stage 3), and it is also suggested that the thermostat bellows and valve be removed, and the small by-pass pipe (from lower radiator pipe up to the side of the thermostat body) should be plugged up.

For maximum output, the tappets should be opened up to 0·022 in. As much as 2 b.h.p. will be lost with the tappets closed to the standard 0·019 in. hot. Use carburetter jets 0·09 in., and needles L.S.1 (weaker, E.L.) put in with the shoulder $\frac{1}{32}$ in. below the face of the dashpot piston, and mixture adjusting nuts screwed down about seven

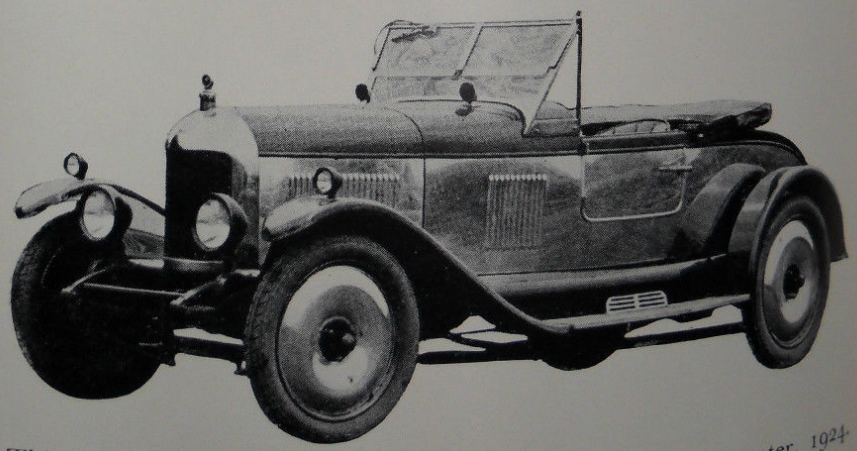


Cecil Kimber, Lord Nuffield, 'Goldie' Gardner and Reid Railton with the 200-m.p.h. car based on the old 'Humbug' chassis.

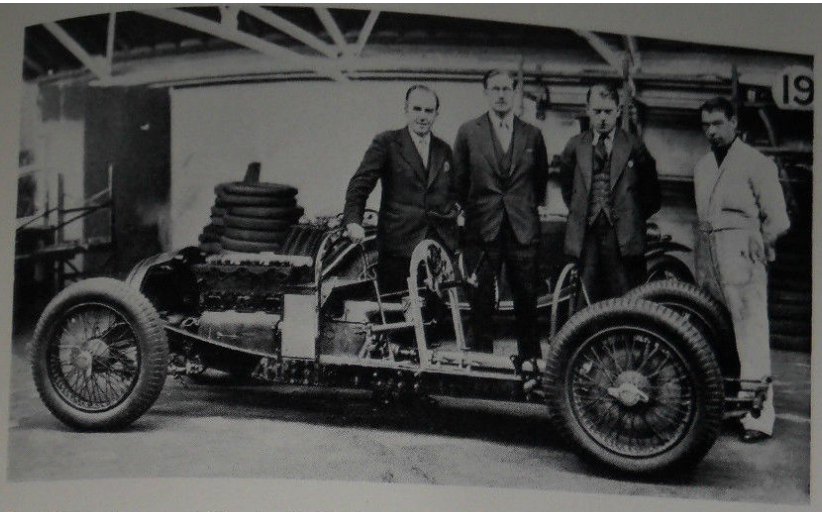
MG enthusiasts in the United States: (*L. to R. clockwise*) Tom Gahman, Harold Lance, Jack Hargreaves, Dick Dohmen, Bill Wood, and John Vlossak, founder of the Detroit Club.



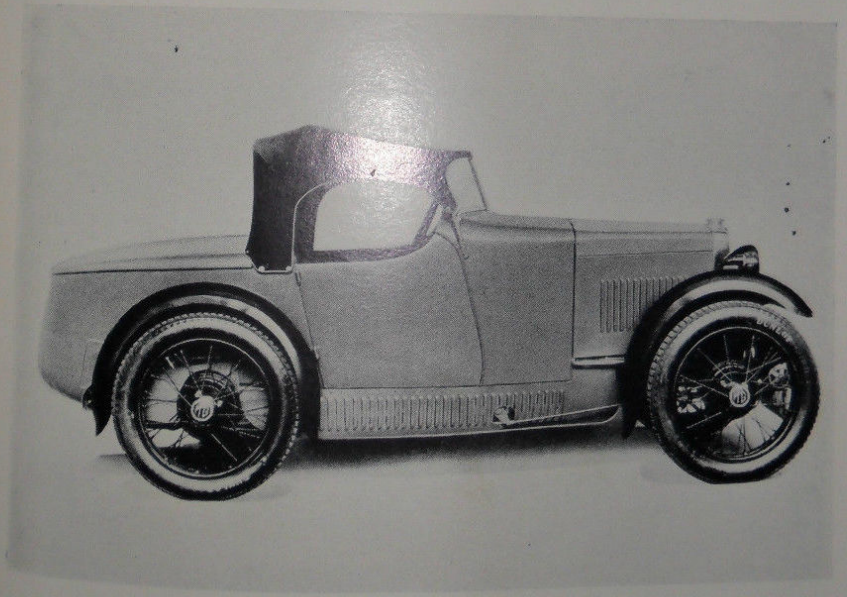
'Kim' at the wheel of 'Old Number One,' FC 7900.



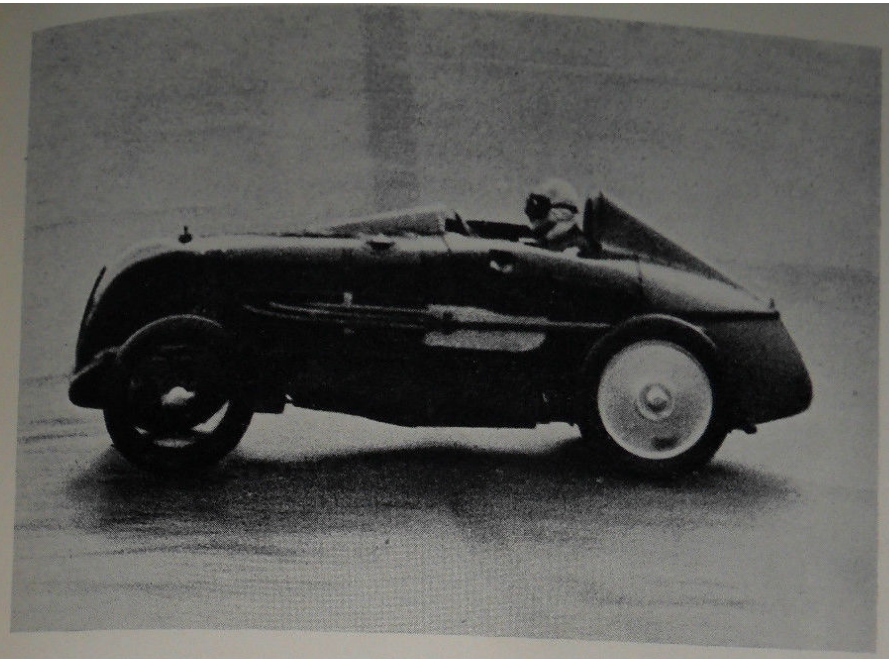
This is believed to be the first production-model MG 2-seater, 1924.
Bodied by Raworth of Oxford.



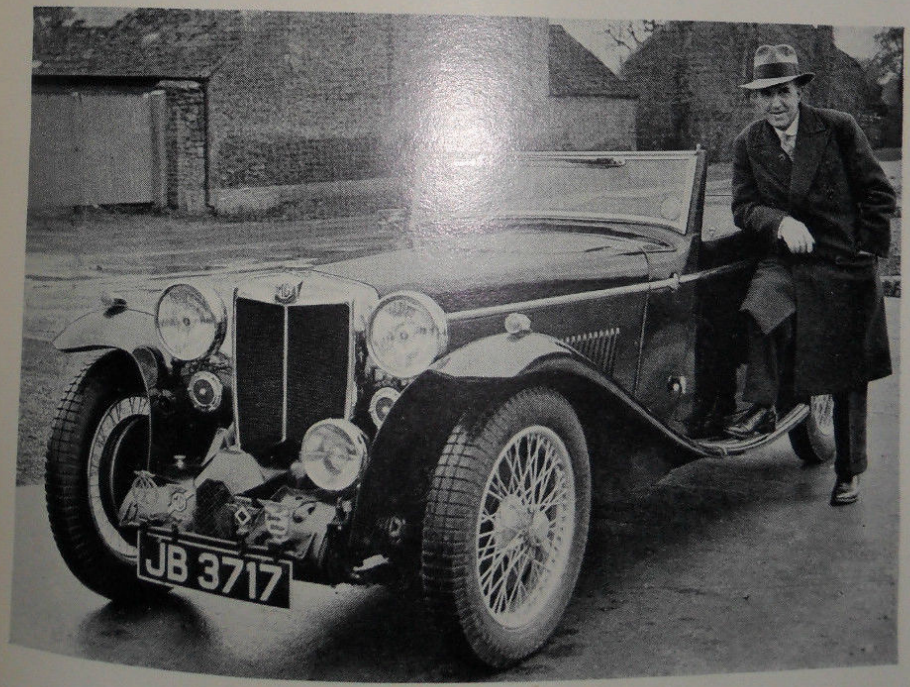
Cecil Kimber and Capt. G. E. T. Eyston with Reg Jackson and 'Nobby' Marney with the 'Humbug' chassis at Abingdon, based on the K.3 with oblique transmission in the EX.127 manner. The 'Humbug' had a body finished in wide cream and brown stripes.



First production model 1929 MG Midget.

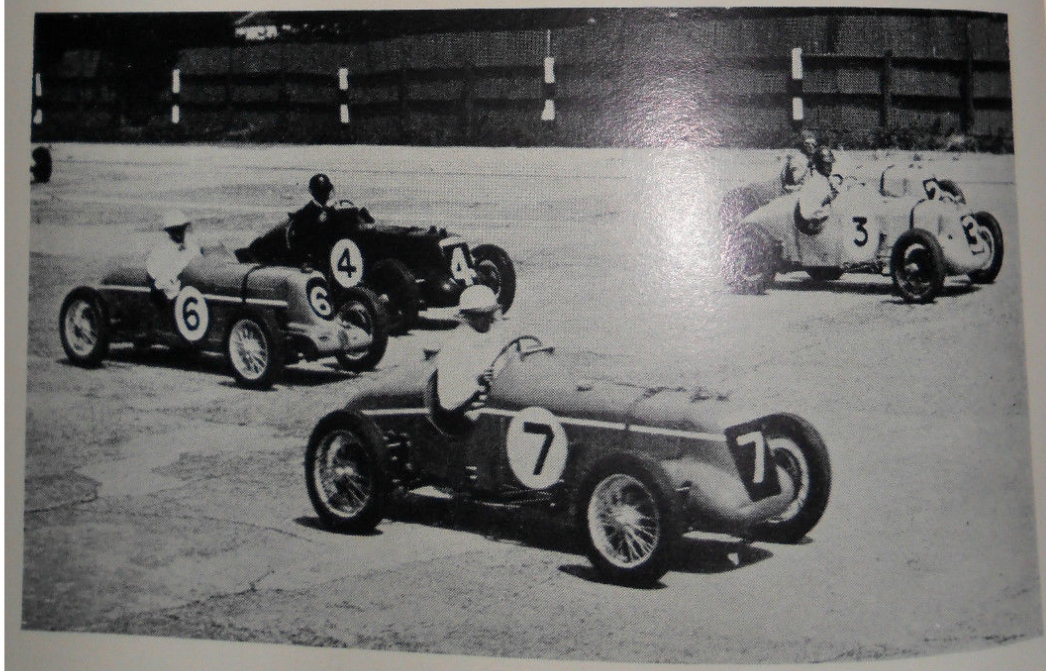


EX. 120, the first 750 c.c. car to reach 100 m.p.h., during its record-breaking Montlhery runs.

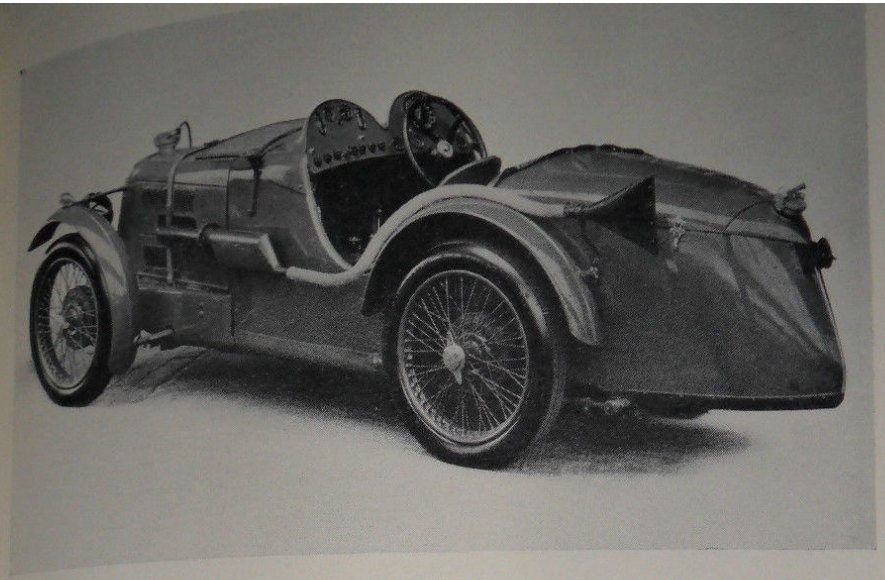


'Kim' with a special 'one-off' Corsica-bodied K.3.

Band-leader Billy Cotton with the K.3 Magnette he raced at Brooklands in the 1930's. Also in this picture are 'Wilkie' Wilkinson, today associated with the Ecurie Ecosse team, and (holding champagne bottle) Hugh P. McConnell, R.A.C. scrutineer.



A bunch of MG R types at Brooklands.



C-type Montlhery Midget in production trim. The blown version was marketed at £345.

Supercharged PB-type of the 'Cream Cracker' team, driven by Maurice Toulmin in 1936.

MGA Twin-cam, one of the most potent sports cars of today. The power unit develops 107 b.h.p. at 6,500 r.p.m.

MGA 1600, with disc brakes to match the enhanced performance.

carburetter air intake in turn through a length of rubber tubing, and noticing if the noise produced by the incoming air is at both. Any variation in the intensity of the sound indicates that one throttle is set wider open than the other. When the same intensity of sound is given by both carburetters, the coupling shaft clip should be tightened to ensure that the carburetters work in unison.

Joseph Whitehall described a simple and ingenious S.U. balancing device, in effect a manometer, in the issue of *Road & Track* for March 1960. This uses J-tubes filled with water to which a drop of detergent is added (to reduce spurious surface-tension effects), and also a small quantity of soluble food colouring. The manometer balancing is achieved by taking small plastic tubes (of the screen-wiper variety) to a 'sensing head' placed at the carburetter opening after the air filters are removed.

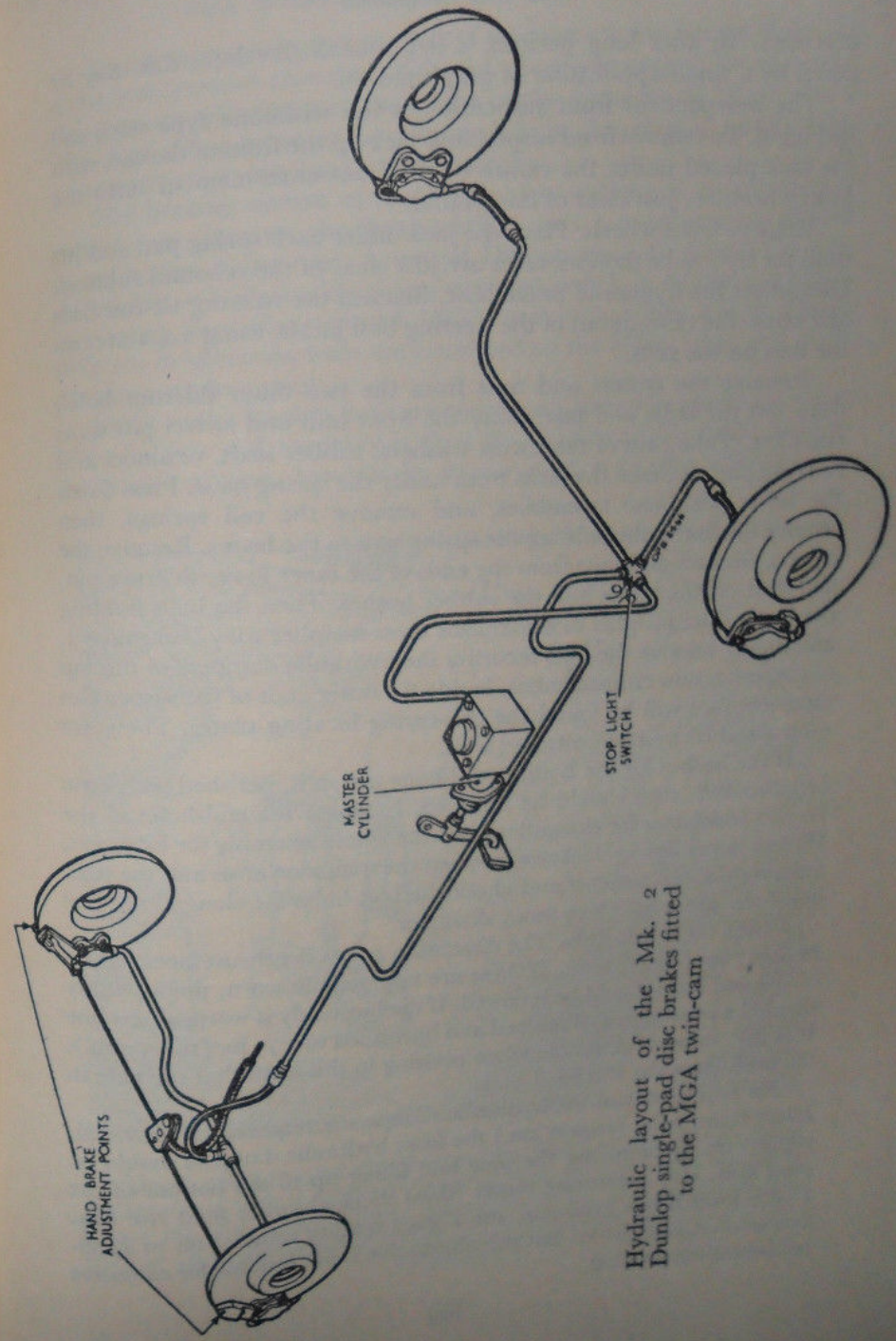
Every 3,000 miles (5,000 km.) or more frequently in dusty conditions, the air cleaner should be serviced as follows. Unscrew and remove the two bolts, remove the outer cover and withdraw the element from the body of each cleaner. Wash thoroughly in gasoline, drain and dry. Wet the element with S.A.E. 20 engine oil, and allow to dry before replacing. Reassemble the front element with the corrugations clear of the breather spigot in the filter case.

On later MGA's commencing with No. 24954, an additional accelerator return spring is introduced as a safety precaution, and the return spring is replaced by a new spring. These new parts may be fitted to earlier cars as follows: Remove the original accelerator return spring, and fit the new part (Part No. AHH 5621). Remove the accelerator cable and replace the anchor pin with the new part (Part No. AHH 5626), or fit the new accelerator cable (Part No. AHH 5625).

Fit the anchor bracket (Part No. AHH 5623) to one of the accelerator cable guide screws, and fit the auxiliary return spring (Part No. AHH 5624).

Chassis maintenance of the MGA is fairly straightforward. Steering, for example, is of the direct-acting rack-and-pinion type. It consists of a rack bar and toothed pinion, both working in the plain bearings of the housing. No adjustment for the bearing wear in the box, except by the fitting of the necessary new parts. When in new condition, the backlash of the tooth engagement is hardly perceptible, i.e., ·001 to ·003 in. (·025 to ·75 mm.).

All working parts of the steering rack-and-pinion are immersed in oil. An oil-gun nipple is provided in the centre of the box, and a nipple on the pinion housing enables the upper end of the pinion-shaft to be lubricated. Felt bushes are fitted to the steering column; they are impregnated with oil and graphite, and no lubrication should be



Hydraulic layout of the Mk. 2 Dunlop single-pad disc brakes fitted to the MGA twin-cam