

BULLETIN

vol 2 no 2

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MY FIRST MG

By Pat Mullen

In 1941, when I was a boy of twelve in England I found a motoring encyclopedia which had been published weekly, in sections during 1933. Under the "M's", a little before Minerva, appeared two pages on MGs: there were a few paragraphs and a small drawing of each of the three main models for 1933 - the J type "Midget", the L type "Magna" and the K type "Magnette". I read every part of the entire encyclopedia at least once but the MGs appealed to me so much that I knew most of the text by heart and decided that one day I would own an MG. Little did I realize that in fact I would own four of these overhead camshaft MGs and also a later model "TC". The famous Midgets, Magnas and Magnettes were to prove the most worthy and well-loved sports cars ever built; members of the "Triple M" register of the MG Car Club in the U.K. are the most enthusiastic group of people one could imagine; many still race their machines and go all out to win, although the youngest car is now (in 1976) forty years old.

In 1949 I bought my first motorcycle, (a 1936 Rudge "Rapide") but never really enjoyed getting wet through in the British weather. Even so, in January 1951 I changed the Rudge for a new Norton which used to lose its front braking in wet

weather and its rider in almost any weather. I never managed to get it to corner properly or to stay upright on London's wet wooden paving blocks. I did however develop a certain facility for stepping off it when catastrophe threatened! In the seven months that I owned the Norton I had more alarming incidents than in the rest of my motoring life put together.

In January 1950 I had had my first ride in an MG; it was exactly the same model as Ed Richardson's, even to the colour, a red 1931 "D" type four seater Midget owned by my good friend Robin Berens.

We roared up Great Titchfield Street in the centre of London's "West End", past the Polytechnic where we were both first year Engineering students, and shot into Great Titchfield Street and a stream of traffic through which we sped, taking advantage of every gap and the D Type's overall width of four feet. Robin has the ability to place a car within an inch and this, together with the staccato crackle of the exhaust and the inimitable sound of an overhead camshaft doing its thing, convinced me for the second time in my life that I had to have an MG.

However, buying the Rudge had left me penniless and MGs were not only more expensive to buy, they were far more expensive to run. For the next eighteen months therefore I had to be content with riding motorcycles and acting as mechanic to Robin when he raced the "D" type at Silverstone at MG Car Club meetings.

However, I bought the first edition of John Thornley's "Maintaining the Breed" when it came out in July 1950 and decided which models I wanted. It turned out that I wanted them all but that the only model I could afford was the original "M" type and I bought a 1932 model for 80 pounds in August 1951. It was in good condition (the owner claimed he had completely overhauled the engine) but it had nonstandard headlamps (from a farm tractor!) and had very little power. Its brakes were almost non-existent but this is perfectly standard on the M type and there is the advantage that a driver whose first car is an M type develops the habits of watching out for trouble on the road a long way ahead and of using his or her gearbox to slow down the car. I deliberately use the word "her" because I remember the time in 1937 when my mother found that our 1932 Jowett had lost its brakes on a hill; she crisply double declutched into second gear to slow the car down, before running the side of the car into an earth bank, thus averting a serous accident.

My M type was pure delight from the day that I bought it.

It was maroon in colour and my parents immediately named it

"The Red Peril". It had a 6' 6" wheelbase and 4.00 x 19"

motorcycle tires fitted on to bolt-on wire wheels, set on a 3' 6"

track. Its top speed was alleged to be 60 mph but the wind

had to be favourable even after I had cured the initial lack

of power.

The engines of all the 1929 to 1936 ("Triple M") MGs are

little jewels. In the "M", "D" and "J" types the crankshaft runs in two main bearings; the bore and stroke of the four cylinders are 57 mm X 83 mm giving a swept volume of 847 cc. On all the Triple M cars the single overhead camshaft is driven through bevel gears and a vertical dynamo (generator) at the front of the engine. This vertical dynamo is both a major strength and a minor weakness of the design. It feeds back very little vibration from the camshaft to the crankshaft because the dynamo dampens any sudden changes in speed which the action of the cams might otherwise impart to the crankshaft, while still maintaining very accurate timing. On the other hand there is a problem of oil leaks.....!

The little car proved to have exceptional durability and roadholding in 1929 and mine continued the tradition in 1951/2 (although after 19 years of stress the differential broke and showed evidence of metal fatigue - but of that, more anon). After about two months I ran it through heavy traffic for several miles on the way to the Farnborough Air Show and its lack of fan and waterpump must have weakened the cylinder head gasket because once I started to drive it hard again the engine started "missing" on cylinders 2 and 3.

Inspection showed a blown gasket and being a curious type I decided to strip the bottom of the engine too. To my surprise it was in perfect condition. The pistons and rings were clean and exactly to specification, the bores had no ridge and even the "big-ends" (rod bearings) showed no signs of gouging - all this in an engine with no oil filter apart from fine gauze in

the oil-sump!

I put the engine together again and it worked well - apart from the strange lack of "urge". Where was the power? I had checked the brakes for binding, wheel-bearings for tightness and all lubricants for correct viscosity. The ignition was "spot-on" and it timing was varied by hand with a lever behind the steering wheel so it certainly could not be a jammed auto-advance. The valve-clearances specified (.004") on the engraved brass plate on the side of the valve-cover; this stated that the inlet valve had to start opening at 9 degrees ATDC - mine assuredly did.

One night, after all my engineering studies were finished, I sat mulling over the problem. Suddenly I realised that I had checked neither when the inlet valves closed nor when the exhaust valves opened and closed. I grabbed a feeler gauge and the starting handle. To my amazement I found that the centre of the opening period for both inlet and exhaust was about 25 degrees too far retarded. Somehow I had a camshaft which appeared unworn but which opened the valves for too short a time. I retimed the engine by one tooth (25.7 degrees) and went for a trial run. The increase in power was amazing and I was overjoyed. Although the official BHP for the M type was a mere 20 BHP at 4000 rpm, the little 847 cc engine only had 1134 lbs of car to pull and I only weighed 140 lbs (complete with ex-RAF flying jacket) in those days.

I still don't know where that camshaft came from but it

was probably from an o.h.c. Morris Minor from which car the 1929 MG "M" type had been derived.

In November 1951 another great friend of mine, Ralph Shute, and I were driving our two M types (his was a 1929 model with headlamps and radiator in brass) to my home around midnight when we were stopped by a red traffic light on a steep hill. Like all young fellows who had been taught to drive in the British Army's Royal Armoured Corps, I took a great pride in not allowing a vehicle to move back even one inch when restarting on any hill, however steep Unfortunately on this occasion the torque from the engine applied against the braked rear wheels was too much for the back axle's differential casing. There was a loud bang and my car failed to move forward. Ralph, whose car was behind me, bounded out and gleefully informed me that there was a trickle of oil running downhill from the centre of my car. As his was a 1929 model and mine a 1932, (and the cut-off date for a true "Vintage" car is December 31, 1930), he was also good enough to point out to me the inadvisability of driving "modern tinware" instead of true vintage machinery. I remember that I was unable to think of a suitable response to his kind remarks at the time. To add to my mortification, he then drove home the young lady who had been my passenger and I crawled under the car to remove the propeller shaft and the cracked differential casing; this gave little opportunity for me to exchange pleasanteries with Ralph's sweet young thing who had perforce to keep me company. However, Ralph had the decency to tow me the 12 miles home at about 2 a.m.

I had the casing welded but a tooth had been chipped and although "The Red Peril" ran well, with no trace of its malady I was determined to find a new differential. I bought a second hand complete back axle for 10 pounds which had a ratio lower than the standard one and so the acceleration improved accordingly.

Shortly after this I had an unfortunate meeting with some black ice on an ess-bend resulting in my learning how to refinish fenders. I had to buy a new torpedo-shaped Lucas sidelamp and was forced to pay the equivalent of 85 cents for it.

I took advantage of this episode to improve "The Red Peril" cosmetically. I fitted a pair of new headlamps and (forgive me!) I cut down the height of the metal frame for the convertible top and had a new fabric "hood" (top) made. These improvements, together with my paint job produced one of the best looking "M" type MGs I have seen. Even Ralph admitted that, for a non-vintage M type, it was pretty good. He then borrowed a sidescreen for a midwinter journey across England.

In those days I saw no need to buy anti-freeze. Instead I used an electric heater in the garage. When away from home, a "paraffin" (kerosene) heater under the bonnet, together with an old coat over the radiator, kept the motor warm. An English winter is mild by Canadian standards and I had no trouble with frozen engines.

One of my friends had a 1933 "J2" MG with cycle wings, similar to Mike Dohrendorf's. It had centre-lock knock-off wire wheels, a fold-flat screen, two humps on the scuttle in front of the driver and passenger, a huge slab petrol tank on the back; in short, it was the archtypical MG and I began to think about how I might acquire it. But that is another story

FIN



Jaguar





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PROMENADE PRINTANIERE

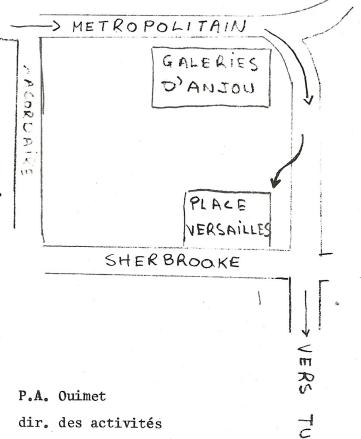
Soyez tous prêts! Les activités automobiles débutent le dimanche 16 mai avec notre première sortie printanière qui nous mènera dans la pittoresque Vallée du Richelieu. Des réservations sont faites dans une Auberge pour le dîner.

Nous nous rencontrerons à 9:45 AM au Centre Place Versailles (jonction Autoroute 25 menant au Tunelle Louis Hyppolite Lafontaine et de la rue Sherbrooke; prenez la sortie rue Sherbrooke.)

Cette année nous serons ponctuels. Le départ aura lieu à 10:30 heures précises.

Mille regrets pour les retardataires.

A bientôt



SPRING TRIAL RUN

C'est un départ! They're off! And so will we be on Sunday may, 16th when we gather for our first outing which will take us in the Richelieu Valley. Reservations have been made in an Auberge for lunch.

We will all meet at Place Versailles at 9:45 AM (Junction of Autoroute 25, which leads to Tunnel Louis Hyppolite Lafontaine, and Sherbrooke St); use the Sherbrooke Exit on Aut.25. See Sketch.

This year time schedule will be met so we will leave at 10:30 sharp no pity or regrets for late comers!

See you soon

P.A. Ouimet activities director

AUTO - CLINIQUE

LES RAMPES D'INSPECTION

(par P.A. Ouimet)

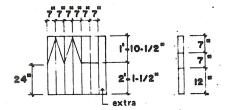
Depuis quelques années, on a mis sur le marché des rampes d'inspection pour aller sous les autos. Toutefois, les rampes métalliques coûtent maintenant \$ 54.95 plus taxe.

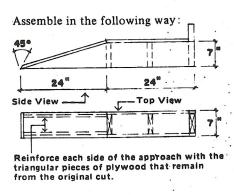
Voici une solution plus économique. Des rampes en bois. Légères et faciles à construire, et elles peuvent être rangées verticalement.

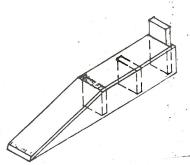
Donc sauvez de l'argent en les faisant vous même.

Voici ce dont vous avez besoin.

- 1. 1/2 feuille de contreplaqué 4' x 4' x 3/4"
- 2. 2 planches 2" x 6" de 26" de long
- 3. l boîte (100 vis) de 11/2 " x 10., FHWS, chromés au zinc.
- 4. Une poignée de clous à finir #6
- 5. Une perceuse "counter-sink" $11/2 \times 10$ (sauve beaucoup de travail)







Coupez et assemblez tel qu'indiqué. Le tour est joué.

ETC

- William Ayoub knows where is a 1952 Mercedes 220 Convertible for sale in Montreal. It needs a full restoration; speaking of Mercedes, William will have his 190 Sl out for our first run.
- Ed Richardson tells us that the next trip to England will be a buying trip. He is looking for a 1930-1938 Vintage Motorcycle 500cc. Will Ed wear the same white crash helmet he wears in the MG?
- Hugh Jockel now has the receiver instrument for his R-R intercom still looking for the transmitter-which is on a spring loaded reel.
- Denis Turgeon has redone interior, front end, top, side curtains, dashboard, etc, on the MGTD which he bought from Gilles Desroches. Anyone knowing of a TD drive train please contact Denis.
- Zaven Darakjian has a 1966 Princess Vanden Plas completely overhauled. Contact at 861-3214.
- Pat Mullen and Mike Dohrendorf are pleased to announce that they have received info regarding the way that you put together the gears and things that are slipped on to the end of on MgJ2 crankshat It is confidently suspected that they will not be surprised by Ed Richardson while they are taking his MG to pieces to find out how its engine is put together.
- Ed Richardson and Olaf Dohrendorf have both ordered crankshaft for their MG, S.
- Ed Richardson wishes to annonces that he will have both of his cars out this year. Did we not see them las year?
- Steve Wied tells us that he has Lucas PL headlight assemblies and bulbs can be obtained at Austin Sales ant Service. Contact our friend and concours judge, John Manley.

- Those of you who want to buy the Ferrari 250 GT belonging to William Ayoub are too late. It has been sold to Vancouver.
- Reliable sources tell $\,$ us that Bob Marshall has acquired a very $\,$ original 1275 Cooper S $\,$ finally -
- Dick Hills has a badge bar with mounting brackets. He says it is from an MG and he will give it away. The only consideration is that the person who takes this gem away must drink 2 of his home made beers. 695-5259.

ENCOURAGEZ NOS ANNONCEURS!



GYMKHANA

Dimanche 13 juin à 13:00 hres Sunday June 13th at 1:00 pm

Endroit:

HEWITT EQUIPMENT

Place :

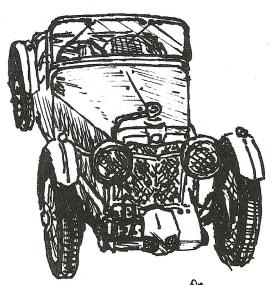
5001 Transcanadienne,

Pointe Claire.

Prendre sortie boul. des Sources Take exit boul des Sources .

> A bientôt, See you there

> > Brian McEntee



1933 MG K3 MAGNETTE

SINGER CARS BY PHILLIP AVIS

Singer may not be a make known to many in Canada but it is well known, though not often publicised, in Britain and Europe.

The company was best known for its sports nine series of sports cars from 1932 to 1951 and after that, for its excellent, though not too harsome 1500 c.c. roadster that was built from 1950 to 1954. In 1956 Singer was bought out by the Rootes group and, after Rootes purchase by Chrysler of great Britain, the name was phased out in 1970. Willian Rootes himself started out as an apprentice at singer's factory. So impressed was he with the singer "10 H.P." a small 10 97 c.c. light car that he opened a dealership and contracted a years production of these cars to sell. It marked the beginning of sir Williams Automotive Empire. This was just before W.W.I. the same car was a great favourite with the armed forces and the singers were kept in production through out the hostilities. A tribute to its simplicity and durability.

It was also Singer that started Lionel Martin on his great Automotive carreer. His modified Singer, raced at the popular Aston hill climb, formed the basis for his own Aston-Martin Cars.

The true sports cars came into their own in 1932 when the first nine won the glaciers cup in that years Alpine Trial. 1933 saw the introduction of the famous "Lemans" sports series as Singer entered that event qualifing with a lap speed of 50 M.P.H!

These little sports cars excelled in rallies and Trials with such noted names as George Murray Frame, Norman Black and Georges Barnes who won the R.A.C. rally in 1936. In facts Singer took first and second place in that event. The Lemans four cylinder sports cost less than the M.G.J and P types which where it's direct competition and was often faster than these cars seemingly not suffering from its two bearing crankshaft and

long stroke. The six cylinder Lemans super sports (clearly the best Singer by my reckowing - if only I could get a hold of one of those!) was more expensive but was very competitive in the 1500 c.c. class a fully race prepared Lemans topped the list still costing less than M.G.S racing magnettes!

My particular example is a 1933 - 4 seates sports fitted with the 4 cylinder 972 c.c. 0.H.C. engine (in my view the six would have been better for the tourer - but anyway) even with a bore and stroke of 60 x 96 and the two bearing crankshaft it can safely rev up to 5000 R.P.M.

This car (British registration: AGX-857) is rare, by Singer standards, in that it is fitted with thin zenith carbs. This was the only year they were used and even then not on all modes! in the sports range. As far as I know, AGX-857 is the only example of the model in Canada and probably the U.S. as well. I know of only a '33 chassis but that is all.

The Lemans tourer follows the tradition al ideal of the British sport car during the 1930's: small, lively high-reving engine, light chassis and body and, of course, large 5.00 x 18 wire wheels! The whole car weights in the region of 1300 pounds, that's less than a temporary Honda or Volks Beetle. The body is aluminum over ash frame with steel fenders and bonnet. The front wings are the cycle type but don't turn with the wheels. A fold flat screen is fitted (alot of use it is, my head sticks over the top when its up!) the "cockpit" is somewhat cramped for a six footer like myself, people were obviously shorter then, evolution ?!... Any how, I manage all right. You sit high by todays standard and look down the narrow bonnet wich covers more of your legs than the little engine. Both fenders are clearly visible to the driver topped off with their small sidelamps. Your knees spray out either side of the steering wheel and your legs disppear into somewhere deep under the dashboard down to the somewhat closely-placed pedals (usually easiestly operated with toes! Loontrols are simple: the large steering wheel with a responsive 11/2 turns lock to lock the gearbox, which is fitted with Singers "Perm-Mesh" is notchy but smooth in operation. The patented "Permesh" enables one to execute quiet down-shifts without double-declutching by merely holding the throttle open when declutching instead of letting it off in the normal way. It works quite well as long as you don't hold the throttle too wide, or the engine over revs something terrible!

Driving the car, one finds the chassis is, oh, shall we say, somewhat flexible, ondulations in the road seem to "wash" through the car, as the chassis twists over them, like waves! most alarming for someone not used to old cars! Performance is also worthy of note! Ist gear ratio (24.4:1) is probably fine for climbing brick walls but isn't much good for getting you away from the lights with the rest of traffic; second (12.4:1) is a slight bit better, in third (7.5:1) you really have to wind that engine up to get your speed, fourth (5.57:1) is more or less a cruising gear. It should be noted that reverse with a ratio of 33.6: 1 would be perfect from driving backwards up mountains, anyone wishing to attempt an expedition up the Alps please let me know! I've found 1st gear is the handiest for waking up the nieghbours, silence not being the Lemans' forte in any respect-tor speed comes out to be around 70 M.P.H. but I have been unable, due to various carb and electrical problems, to get more than 50 out of mine. At the moment the car lacks a convertible top; the original, which was in a bad state, was smashed in shipping. My starting handle was also lost! an un original steering weel has been put on but I should have the proper one by summer end. I bought this car in England in oct of 75 from a man in Sunbury, near Heathrow airport. His father who worked to Fraser Nash during the 30's and 40's and himself had spent close to five years restoring the car! But owing to his regular transport (a Lotus 2 + 2 lan) needing a complete overhaul he was forced to sell the Singer to finance his rebuilt. I wouldn't say the car is concours material yet, I think there are a few details to attend to but it is a very nice example of the marque and vintage motoring in general.

I'm looking foward to the summer events to see how the car fares in some of the gymkanas, etc, especially against cars like Mr. Richardson's D-Type M.G. tourer. After seeing him run in an event last summer I think, performance and handling-wise, we are about matched.

My second car is a 1949 Singer "4 A" 4 seater roadster. This model was introduced in 1939 in basically the same form as the "A" roadster and after the war became the "4 A". It is the successor to the Lemans series. This car is a rarity in that it must be one of the few fitted with the original 1,078 c.c. 0.H.C, three bearing crankshaft engine, of 9 h.p. capacity (36 at 4000 RPM) and the original drive train. I am told it was not a strong point with these cars but I havent experienced trouble with mine yet. Well, I did buy the car with a dismantled engine (the water jacket was cracked) and I soon learnt the body had been extensively cut and modified! After getting the engine repaired and running the improvised body fell to pieces under its fibreglass repairs! With one of the greatest strokes of luck the world has ever known I stumbled onto another Singer 4 A with no engine or drive train (how else!) but a complete body lacking only running boards. These I obtained through the good offices of the North American Singer Owners Club later in the year.

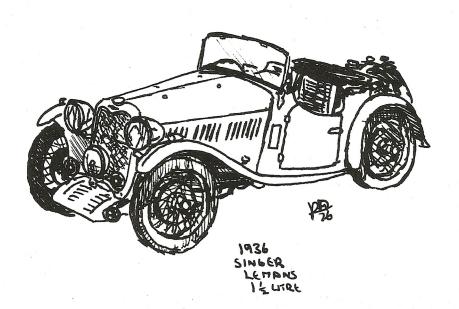
Ouimet noticed it sitting in our driveway, resplendant in its primer and body filler and he stopped to take a look and filled me in on the club and its activities. At 18 I mus rank as one of the jounger members! Anyone, as it stand now the 4 A is 2/3 complete needing mostly chrome plating, painting and some trimming. Pierre put to me a question I hasn't really given any thought to; why do I like Singers anyway? Well, they have everything I like in a sports car on one model or another and they make a change from the M.G./Jaguar diet that's pushed so hard these days. I'm getting a bit tired of the constant attention to the suddenly "ominipotent" M.G.T.C.'s T.D.'s and T.F.'s, far too over publicised in my view.

Singer has been an "underdog" company for many years and in the U.S and Canada has been almost totally forgotten... How many Americans can remember the 1500 c.c. 4 AD roadsters that often thrashed the opposition from abingdon during the 1950's? In that sense I suppose I feel a closeness to Singer for being so "left out" of the old car field. After all; Singer owners have to stick together we've only got each other!

Lastly, may I extend an invitation to anyone who knows of Singers to give me a call be it if you know the where abouts of a car, parts of cars or just if you'd like to talk about them or see my own examples I'd be pleased to hear from you.

My number is 620-0051 and I'm home week days after 6 p.m. and most weekends

Cheers:



MONTHLY GATHERING

It has now come true, a monthly gathering will be held every FIRST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH.

at:

BONAVENTURE HOCKEY RING

6605 Côte de liesse.

Remember, as it will be at the same place month after month. It is the best time to bring photos, ideas, to discuss anything you want.

So see you there

April 2 nd

May 7

June 4

July 2

Aug 6

Sept 3

Oct 1

Nov 5

Dec 3

JANUARY --- BREAK TIME

Nota: Some of these during summer might be held at some member's place, but if it happens you will be notified in advance.

Pierre

ACTIVITES 1976

- 1. 26 MARS (vendredi 8 oo pm): SOIREE DE FILMS
- 2. 23 AVRIL (vendredi 8⁰⁰ pm): SOIREE SOCIALE

 DEGUSTATION DE VINS &
 FROMAGES
- 3. 16 MAI (dimanche 09:45): PROMENADE D'ESSAI
- 4. 13 JUIN (dimanche 1 on pm): GYMKHANA
 - 5. 11 JUILLET (dimanche 10⁰⁰ am): CHASSE AU TRESOR
 PIQUE-NIQUE
 - 6. 1^{er} AOUT (dimanche 9⁰⁰ am): GRANDE PROMENADE A UPPER CANADA VILLAGE
 - 7. 22 AOUT (diamnche 1 OO pm): SLALOM
 - 8. FETE DU TRAVAIL: GRAND PRIX MOLSON, TROIS RIVIERES
 - 9. 19 SEPT. (dimanche): CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE, PIQUE NIQUE (cueillette de pommes au verger?)
 - 10. 10 OCT. (dimanche 12^{00} pm): RALLYE # 1 (2^{e} essai)
 - 11. 31 OCT. (dimanche 1^{OO} pm): PROMENADE D'ADIEU DANS
 LE PITTORESQUE MONTREAL

Si vous avez des suggestions, n'hésitez pas à me contacter à 694-1135

Pierre A. Ouimet dir. act.

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