

MORRIS RADIATOR BADGES

by Tom Bourne

A popular pastime while waiting at traffic lights or when stuck in a traffic jam is to study the technical specifications of the car in front. Almost all manufacturers now label the rear of their cars with a legend proclaiming the make and model of the car, the engine size, trim level, and often also the carburation details, number of gears, etc. However, how many people appreciate that, like the introduction of dipsticks on engines in Britain, this is a feature which had its origins in the Morris factory in Cowley?

The first Morris to have a badge on its radiator was the Cowley on its introduction in 1915. The previous model, the 'White and Poppe' Oxford, was devoid of badging, a fairly normal practice in those days, although it was becoming more useful for manufacturers to put their name, or their logo, either in badge form on the radiator shell or as a script on the radiator matrix, or both. The new Cowley's badge, however, identified the make and model of the car, setting a trend almost unique to Morris which was to continue until 1948. The detail in these cheerful little badges is often overlooked, and it is fascinating to study the changes which took place as the Cowley products evolved.

The new Morris Oxford of 1920 received a badge identical to the Cowley's, except of course for the model name, and the badges continued in this form until the first year of the Flatnose models, 1927. Changes in the badge design then became fairly frequent, the changes generally taking place with the change of model year (September to August), so that any references to dates in this dissertation refer to the model year. A certain amount of caution has had to be taken in interpreting observations, particularly of cars from the Flatnose era. Some cars are seen to have been fitted with replacement badges, and whilst present day restorers would take pains to ensure attention to this detail, earlier repairers may well have used a badge salvaged from a car of a slightly different age, either not appreciating the differences, or on the basis that a wrong badge is better than no badge at all.

The common theme to all these badges is taken from the City of Oxford coat of arms, and depicts an ox on the barry - wavy symbol used to indicate water and meaning a ford, enclosed in a shield. Except for the years 1932 and 33, when the badges were all in black, the ox was coloured red, and the waves of the ford coloured blue. The first style of badge, from 1915 to 1927, was delightfully simple, with a somewhat dainty and placid looking ox within a sharply tapering shield. The background to the lettering was in blue enamel. With the 1928 season, the badges took on an altogether more aggressive appearance. The formerly placid ox became 'rampant', with its leading leg raised high, its tail arched over its back, and the shield is now more square in outline. On the Oxford only, the shield is raised in bas-relief above the surface of the badge. The background to the lettering is now broken up by 3 horizontal lines on each side; on the Oxford these are red top and bottom with blue in the middle, whilst the Cowley has a red line in the middle with blue lines each side. The Oxford and Cowley used this style in 1928 to 1930 only, whilst the Minor used the same style for its first 3 seasons, 1929-31, the horizontal lines being blue each side of red, and the shield flush with the surface. The Morris Six was also the same basic design, but the letters, instead of being plated brass, were infilled with light green enamel, and the shield was raised in bas-relief.



Minor type 5 cwt light vans 1930-34. Colour details as the 1929-31 Minor cars. (O.H.V. and early S.V. versions, Badge part number 17286. S.V. vans had a change in part number to 35846 in August 1932 and to part number 37519 in May 1933.



Morris Series Z 5 cwt vans 1940-1953 (Badge part number 95461). A similar badge was used on the 10 cwt Series Y vans of the period 1940 to 1948 (chassis number 101 to 21607, Badge part number 95484).

The badge designers reached the zenith of their achievements with the 1930 and 31 seasons, with very elaborate 'wings' now incorporated into the design. The Isis retained the round shape for the main part of the badge, but is exceptional in that the 'Morris' name seems to have been added as an afterthought. The 1931 Cowley has become geometrical. The Oxford and Major are identical apart from the name. The details of these elaborate designs can only be appreciated by a study of the photographs.

The badges considered so far have the exposed areas of brass plated in nickel or chrome (according to the finish on the general brightwork) and polished. From 1932, however, the exposed areas are finished in satin-chrome, which is difficult to have faithfully reproduced by badge restorers now. This presents a predicament to owners, having to decide whether to retain a slightly worn original, or to restore and lose this finish.

The change in badges with the introduction of the 1932 models was the most dramatic in this story. The new shield-shaped design was standardised over the model range, and was continued in the same basic form on almost all models up to 1948. However, the greatest contrast to the extravagant designs of 1930 and 31 was that the new badges had all their enamelled parts in black. This was so for the 1932 and 33 models, but for 1934 the ox and the ford regained their red and blue colours, with the general background, and the lettering, continuing in black. It is this design which will be best known to the majority of club members. It has not been possible to attribute any credible reason to the use of all-black for 1932 and 33, so this must remain a mystery. However, the change back to using colours in 1934 does not seem to have been universal, as 1934 Morris Cowley-Four cars have been seen with both all black and coloured badges, both seeming to be in original condition. This could not have been a carry-over of old stock, as it was a new model name for the season.

Generally, the models up to 1935 (pre-series models) had the name of the model in words on their badge, i.e. 'Morris Sixteen Oxford' 'Morris Ten Four' 'Morris Fifteen Six' etc, the exception to this being the 25 hp which had numerals for the '25' enclosed in inverted commas. With the change to the series models, the badges simply described the horsepower in numerals, i.e. 'Morris 10' 'Morris 18' etc. The exception here seems to be the Morris 8, where the use of 'Eight' or '8' seems to stray onto either side of the change from pre series to series I. Most of these badges appear to have been made by G.A. Miller & Sons or J. Fray Ltd. of Birmingham.



Morris Oxford and Cowley, 1928-30 (chassis 215001 to 341406, Badge part number 17389 for the Cowley, part number 17388 for the Oxford). On the Cowley the short horizontal lines are blue-red-blue, the inner circle blue and the shield is flush with the badge surface. On the Oxford the short horizontal lines are red-blue-red, the inner circle is plated and the shield is in bas-relief. 'Rampant' ox, with front leg raised and the tail up over the ox's back.



Morris Minor 1929-31. Details of colours are as the Cowley badge for 1928-29. (Chassis M101 to M34699 and SV101 to 5535. Badge part no. 35846).



Morris Eight Pre-Series models. Red ox, blue waves and black background. A similar badge with a black ox on black background and waves was used on the Family Eight Minor of 1932/3. Side valve versions of the Morris Minor from chassis SV-5536 had the word 'Minor' on a badge part number 37176.



1935 Morris Twelve-Four. (Chassis 7721 to 15970, Badge part no. 66212).



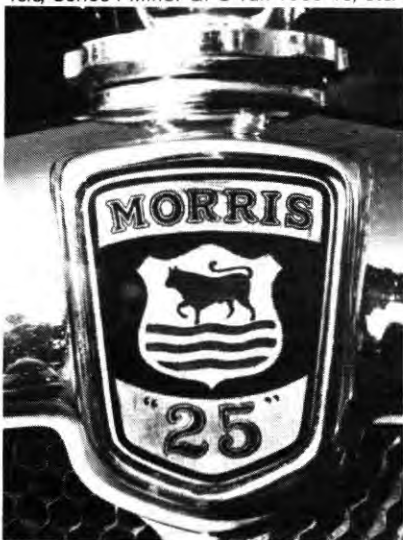
Morris Ten-Six 1934-5 (Chassis 14281 onward, Badge part no. 65458). Red ox, blue waves and black background. Similar badges were used on the 1934-35 Ten-Four (Badge part no. 654468), 1934 Cowley-Four (earlier Cowley cars, 1932/33 had black badge part no. 65092), Cowley-Six (chassis 501 onward, Badge part no. 66213), 1934 Minor, 1935 Twelve-Four (Chassis 7721 to 15970, Badge part no. 66212), 1935 Fifteen-Six, 1934 Oxford, Oxford Sixteen and Twenty of 1935, 1934/5 Isis, Series I Minor GPO van 1935-40, etc.



Morris Eight Series I 5 cwt vans 1935-39 (Badge part number 38419).



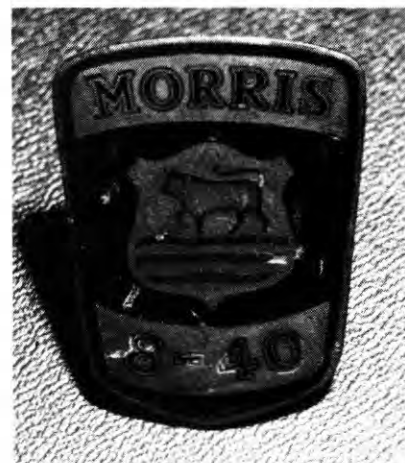
This style of badge was used on the Series I Eights (Badge part number 38225) and Series II Eights (Badge part numbers 39052 & 39054, a change in part number may only be due to stud length). Similar design badges were used on the Series II Ten (Badge part number 66351 from chassis 49341 to 108704), Twelve (chassis 49341 onward, Badge part number 66534), Fourteen-Six, Sixteen-Six (chassis 39141 onward, Badge part number 46905), Eighteen-Six (chassis 39141 onward, Badge part number 54271), Twentyone-Six (chassis 39143 onward, Badge number 46907), and Twentyfive-Six (chassis 39143 onward, Badge part number 46908). Series III Ten (chassis 108711 to 122430, Badge number 67347), Fourteen-Six, and Twentyfive-Six (Badge number 46908).



1933 Morris 25. All black for 1933 while the ox became red with blue waves for 1934-5. (Chassis 5611 onward, Badge part number 41617).



1934 Morris Cowley-Four.



Early Morris Eights assembled in Australia carried the "Morris 8-40" badge.

With the exception of the 'Empire' Oxford, which followed the normal Oxford badge style, the products of the Morris Commercial factory at Adderley Park, Birmingham, had radiator badges totally different from the Cowley products. The light vans from Cowley, however, had radiator badges similar to the car from which they were derived. As with their technical specification, the badges on the vans were often several years behind the design for the cars. Due to their low survival rate, it has only been possible to observe a small number of vans, and it is realised that these survivors may have been repaired at various times during their careers. The following narrative is, therefore, somewhat tongue-in-cheek, and open to correction. The Cowley-based light van range had the words 'Morris Light Van' on its radiator badge, which was otherwise identical to the earliest type of car badge, but with the addition of two full stops, one each end of the word Morris. This design remained in use from 1924 to 1935, the only change being in 1930 when the ox became rampant, with its tail up and front leg raised, but still retaining the remainder of the early design. One early van with 'squashed bullnose' radiator has been seen to have a similar badge, but with the words 'Morris Commercial'. This may correctly be a type of badge used on vans prior to 1924. The 5 cwt van based on the Minor, from 1930 to 1934, had the round type Minor badge as on the 1929-31 cars, but with the words 'light van' instead of 'Minor'. The series I Minor vans for GPO use, from 1935 to 40, had the same badge as the 1934 Minor car. Vans do not seem to have had the relapse into all black badges which the cars had in 1932 and 33, due to the different design of badge in those years. The series vans had badges following the current design on cars more closely.

The 5 cwt Morris 8 based van, both series I and series Z, had the word 'Van' in place of the figure '8' on its badge, which was otherwise identical to the current car. The series II 10 cwt van, however, had a temporary throwback to earlier days, with wings on either side of the badge, and the wording 'MORRIS TEN CWT'. This is probably why these vans are now often erroneously called 'Morris 10 vans'. The badge on the series Y van returned to normal, being similar to the series Z.

Variations on the radiator badge theme are frequently found on the handbooks, sales brochures and other technical literature which emerged from the prolific Morris Oxford press. One must be aware of a certain amount of artistic licence in interpreting illustrations in sales brochures. A good example of this is the brochure for the 1930 range, where the artist has incorporated a seemingly authentic radiator badge onto every illustration; those for the Isis and Minor being correct, but using the previous year's style for the Cowley and Oxford. He must have had a sharp rap over the knuckles for this, as one searches in vain for any replica of a badge in the 1931 catalogue. Variations on this theme in the literature feature replicas of radiator badges with the words 'Morris Cars' 'Morris Vans', or even 'Morris - Buy British and be proud of it'. The Morris dealers enamel signs which once adorned garages in almost every town in Britain also followed closely the logo of the radiator badge. The most common of these are the same design as the badge on the 1928-29 Oxford, although they must have been current throughout the 1930's, and varieties of wording, such as 'Morris Retail Dealer' 'Morris Sales and Service' etc, were used. A Morris dealer of the 1930's could complete his adoption of the corporate identity by wearing a lapel button hole badge reading 'Morris Universal Service'.

The ox and ford logo continued to be used on badges for most of the post war range of Morris, with the notable exception of the Marina and Ital, but the designs were not consistent over the range, and car spotters now had to refer to the side or rear of the car to find its model name. The halcyon days were over.

Each of the letters and numerals on these badges of the 1930's has a fine line traced around it. This surely helps the visual impact of the badge, and it continued into sometime in 1946 on the 8's and 10's, (possibly in the form of old stock) after which this fine line was discontinued. The series III Morris 12 revived some of the extravagance of earlier years with its 'blazing sun' effect. The crescent enclosing the numerals is in blue, with the remainder of the background in black. The series M 10 with the redesigned, rounded, radiator shell had a completely new design of badge, which bears some resemblance to Austins of the same era The new post war models of 1948 did not, however, quite put a stop to all the old traditions. The Morris Six series MS, as well as retaining a prewar style of radiator shell (to please Lord Nuffield, it is said), also had a badge of the same era to suit. This was the familiar 'shield' style, but without a model description, just the word 'Morris'. The model names were now in trim on the side of the bonnet or the front wings, and on the rear of the cars. The series E and M and the last of the series III models had the earliest forms of this with their boot badges, which incorporated a small red reflector as well as the model name in words (e.g. 'Morris Eight' etc.).

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to the many Morris owners who have been totally unperturbed at having close-up photographs taken of their cars at rallies and events. Some owners of rarer cars have co-operated by allowing access to partially restored vehicles, and many have endured questioning to establish the authenticity of dubious badges. Harry Edwards has given generously of encouragement and advice throughout this project.



Morris Commercial badge with the words "British to the Backbone" beneath the Company's name.



Morris Commercial. Typical aluminium radiator.



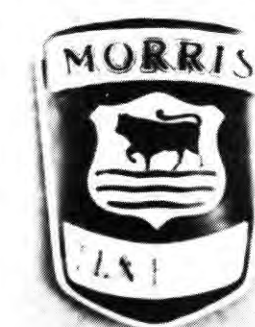
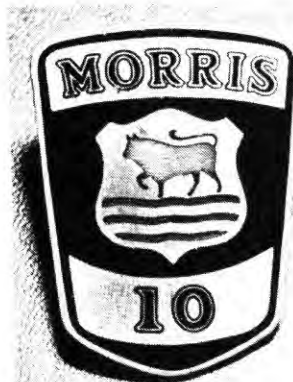
Morris Isis 1930-31. Blue background and inner circle. Blue letters for "Morris motors" with red horizontal lines.



Morris Commercial International Taxicab, Type G, 1929-32.
G2 Taxicabs used a badge similar to the 'thirties Morris Commercial badge with the world surrounded by the words "International Taxi-Cab".



Morris Oxford 1932-33.
The "M" cover over the starting handle hole was common in size and design for all the contemporary Morris models that had this fitment.



1934-35 Morris Ten-Four.

Morris Ten Series II and Series III. Note the fine lines around the lettering, unlike the Series M Ten illustrated elsewhere.

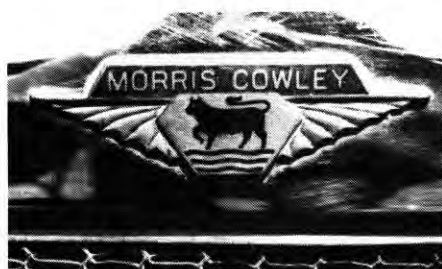


Morris Commercial badge, black lettering on a yellow background. outline of badge and individual letters in chrome plate. Fitted to the CV and LC range of vehicles.



Boot lid badge to be found on some post-war Series E tourers bodied by the Australian firm of T. J. Richards & Co. of Adelaide.

Morris Commercial PV Van, 1939-1940 and 1946-1953.



Morris Cowley 1931. Blue background to the lettering. Red ox (Chassis 341407 to 358192).



Morris Minor Million of 1961.

Model designation is missing on the badge fitted to the Series MS Morris Six of 1949-53.

Morris Commercial badge used on models including the C-type and T2. The slogan "British to the Backbone" was adopted by the Company during 1934 and this was later added to the badges under the words "Morris Commercial". Still later the slogan was moved to the circle surrounding the world.



Morris Oxford 1920-27 (Badge part number 16131) and Morris Cowley 1915-27 (Badge part number 16132). Red ox, blue waves, blue background to the lettering.



This badge is basically the same as the Oxford and Cowley 1928-30 but is probably a modern reproduction. The letters are thinner and the ox legs fatter.



Morris Six, 1928 & 1929. Inner circle is plated with shield in bas-relief. Letters filled in green with a blue background.



Morris Major 1931 (Chassis numbers MJ.101 to MJ.4125. From MJ.4126 the Major had a shield shape badge, part no. 55206). A similar badge to that above was used on the 1930-31 Oxford. Blue background to the lettering (Chassis LA101 to LA23746, Badge part no. 45152).



Morris Isis 1930-31 (Chassis numbers IS.101 to IS.4039). Blue background and inner circle. Blue letters for 'Morris Motors' with red horizontal lines. (Badge part number 40204).



1934-5 Morris Isis



1934 Morris Oxford. Chassis 34/O.32384 to 35637. (Badge part no. 46325). A similar badge, probably in black, was fitted to 1932/33 Oxford Six (Chassis LA23747 to 32383, Badge part no. 45907).



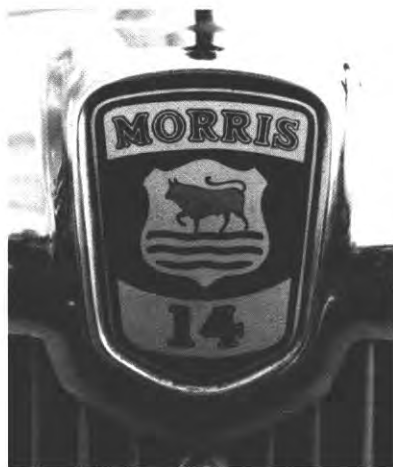
1935 Morris Oxford Twenty (chassis 35/OT.35638 to 39140, Badge part number 46465). The Oxford Sixteen had a similar badge (chassis 35/O.35638 to 39140, Badge part number 46434 — later superseded by 46464).



"Bullnose" M.G. 1925/6. The centre of the badge identical to the contemporary Oxford except the front leg of the ox is raised although the tail is down. Outer circle reads "The M.G. Super Sports" on a blue background.

This badge probably started life as a dash-board supplier's plate for Morris Garages. it now decorates a home-built special.





Morris Fourteen-Six, Series II & III similar design.



Morris Sixteen-Six Series II



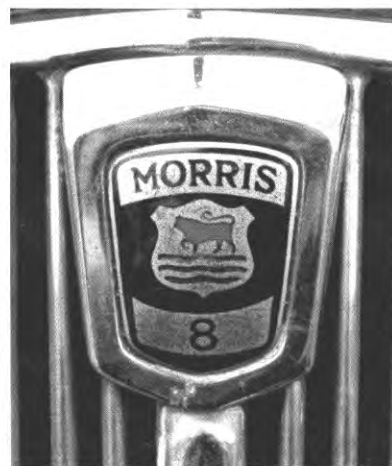
Particular to the Series III Twelve-Four. Blue crescent while the rest of the background was black. Red ox and blue waves.



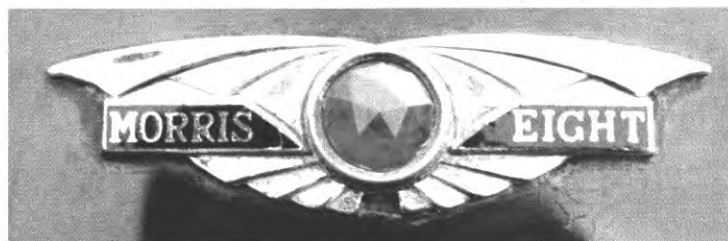
Morris Ten Series M, early type radiator design (Badge part number 84030).



Morris Ten Series M, later type radiator design. Top half has blue background, lower half with red background.



Morris Eight, Series E. (Chassis 54676, Badge part number 95509). Note the absence of the fine lines around the letters and number. Early pre-war examples were probably the same as the Series I & II Morris Eight (Badge part numbers 38225 & 39054).



Boot badge on Series E Morris Eight. A similar badge was used on the Series M Morris Ten-Four and late models of the Series III Twelve, Fourteen and Twenty Five.

Lapel button-hole badge of the 'thirties.



Type of badge fitted to vans chassis 30001 onward, Badge part number 16133. Probably 1924 to 1926.

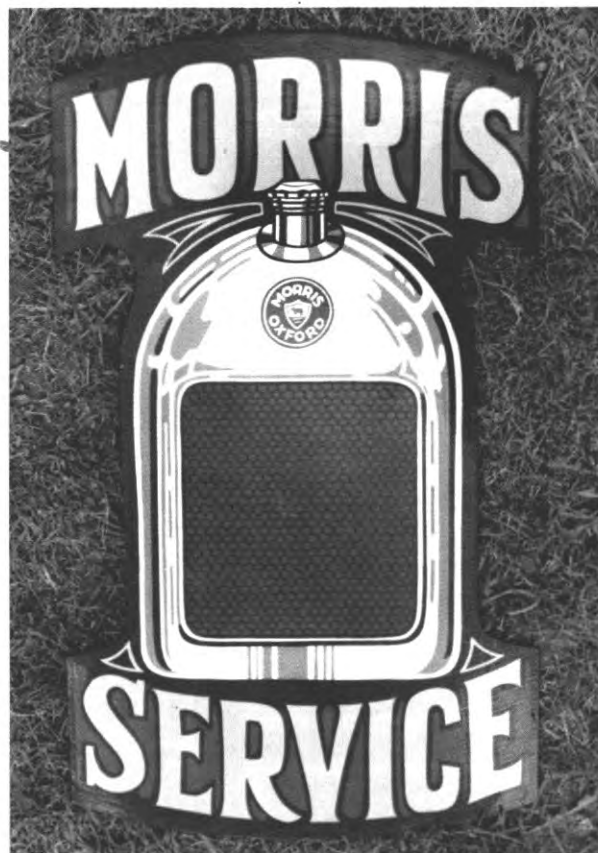




Morris Leon Bollée. W. R. Morris' attempt to sell the Morris in France in the late 'twenties. (Photo: Ted van Wyk)



Badge used on special nickel plated shell radiator for R-type Morris Commercial Ambulances and Shooting Brakes.



Early Morris Service sign showing a pre-1927 Oxford badge.



Series II Morris 10 cwt vans 1935-39. (Chassis numbered 15901 to 33303, Badge part number 66709).

Morris Dealer's enamel signs of the 'thirties.



Light vans, 8 cwt, 1927 to 1930. Other details as pre-1928 cars. (Chassis 156501 on, Badge part number 17286).



Light vans, 8 cwt, 1930-35. Note the red ox now with the tail over the back.

