

# OUT FOR THE COUNT

*Rob Symonds*

**The first part of an occasional series of articles during the year to mark the 80th birthday of the Morris Eight**

From time to time during 1934, as we celebrate the 80th anniversary of the first production of the Morris Eight, I will be publishing the outcome of the research I am carrying out into vehicle numbers at the British Motor Heritage Centre at Gaydon, where all the Morris Eight Progress Books are stored and made available for inspection with prior notice (see picture below).

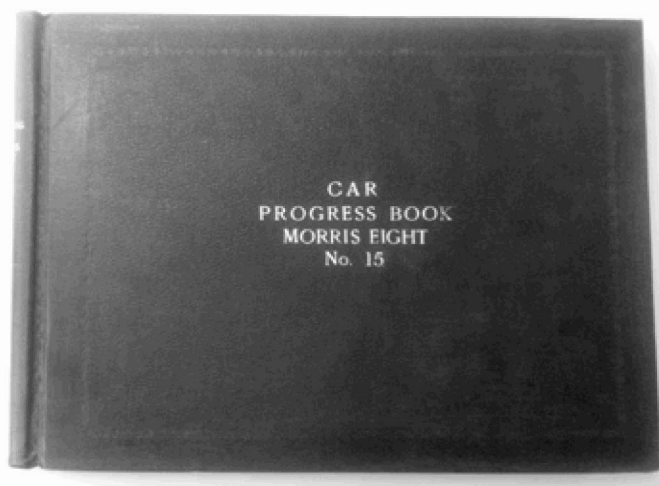
Ever since I joined the then Morris Eight Tourer Club in 1969, whenever Register members gather together of an evening, at some stage, someone will be unwise enough to ask the Eights question which they know no-one has the answer to: "How many open Eights were actually made?" Fairly soon afterwards someone will offer the cynical notion that more are claimed to survive than were actually produced!

So, as a fitting way to mark the 80 years since the Eight was launched, I decided, late last summer, to embark on the major project of counting all the Eights, finding out how many tourers and two-seaters were made, and, along the way, counting the vans, chassis, export and lefthand drive models, as well as the numbers going to the GPO and the military.

How to embark on such a project exercised me for a while: a quick piece of arithmetic was depressing. According to our late historian, Harry Edwards, the total number of Pre-Series, Series I and Series 2 Eights was in excess of 220,000, so manually recording them at one every 3 seconds would take about 200 hours or, at five hours solid work a day, 40 visits to Gaydon, plus all the adding up and collation afterwards. No, a more sophisticated approach was needed and I decided to make a computer, and in particular an Excel spreadsheet, do a lot of the work. Anyone who knows about spreadsheets will be familiar with their ability to add up columns of numbers but I needed to go one better and so I designed a data entry form to speed up

the input of information, and its collation. (See the right hand side of Box 1). The counting on each page of the progress book is greatly speeded up by not having to count and record each individual car. For each page, I quickly identify the commonest vehicle, click its box on the data entry form and then carefully count the far fewer examples of the other vehicle types. On clicking the "enter numbers" button, Excel then does all the necessary subtractions, checks that they make sense, and transfers the information automatically to the main record (see the left side of Box 1), with secondary information recorded accordingly on other sheets (listed bottom left of Box 1). When I first trialled the method I was delighted to find that I could record 15000 cars in about 4 to 4½ hours which is about one a second. At 15000 cars a visit, that came to about 15 visits to Gaydon. Still a daunting prospect, but do-able if spread over a reasonable time scale!

*continues overleaf*



Above: A Morris Eight Progress Book

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X
1	CH NO	DATE	SLID	FIXD	TOUR	2STR	VAN	CHAS	DISM	TOTAL		EIGHTS DATA ENTRY												
320	10311	20/11/1934	16	4	0	7	0	3		9440		START CH. NO. CARS/PAGE 30												
321	10341	20/11/1934	12	4	0	8	3	3		9470		10911 DATE 27/11 ddmm 1934 yy												
322	10371	20/11/1934	6	12	3	3	4	2		9500		COMMONEST:												
323	10401	21/11/1934	8	10	0	9	3	0		9530		SALOONS TOURERS 2-SEATS VANS CHASSIS												
324	10431	21/11/1934	8	10	3	6	3	0		9560		SALOONS Export LHD GPO Military												
325	10461	21/11/1934	7	11	5	3	4	0		9590		SLIDING HEAD 3 1												
326	10491	22/11/1934	9	6	6	9	0	0		9620		FIXED HEAD 10 5 2												
327	10521	22/11/1934	6	16	2	6	0	0		9650		TOURERS 5												
328	10551	22/11/1934	8	10	5	4	3	0		9680		TWO SEATERS 5												
329	10581	23/11/1934	13	4	6	2	5	0		9710		VANS 5												
330	10611	23/11/1934	14	6	3	5	1	1		9740		CHASSIS 5												
331	10641	23/11/1934	11	6	6	5	2	0		9770		ENTER NUMBERS												
332	10671	26/11/1934	11	8	6	0	5	0		9800		EXIT												
333	10701	26/11/1934	9	10	3	5	3	0		9830														
334	10731	26/11/1934	16	8	0	3	3	0		9860														
335	10761	27/11/1934	15	15	0	0	0	0		9890														
336	10791	27/11/1934	27	3	0	0	0	0		9920														
337	10821	27/11/1934	21	9	0	0	0	0		9950														
338	10851	27/11/1934	26	4	0	0	0	0		9980														
339	10881	27/11/1934	15	5	0	0	0	0		10000														
340																								
341																								
342																								

Box 1: A typical view during data entry (above)



## SOME MISCONCEPTIONS AND APPROXIMATIONS (an extract)

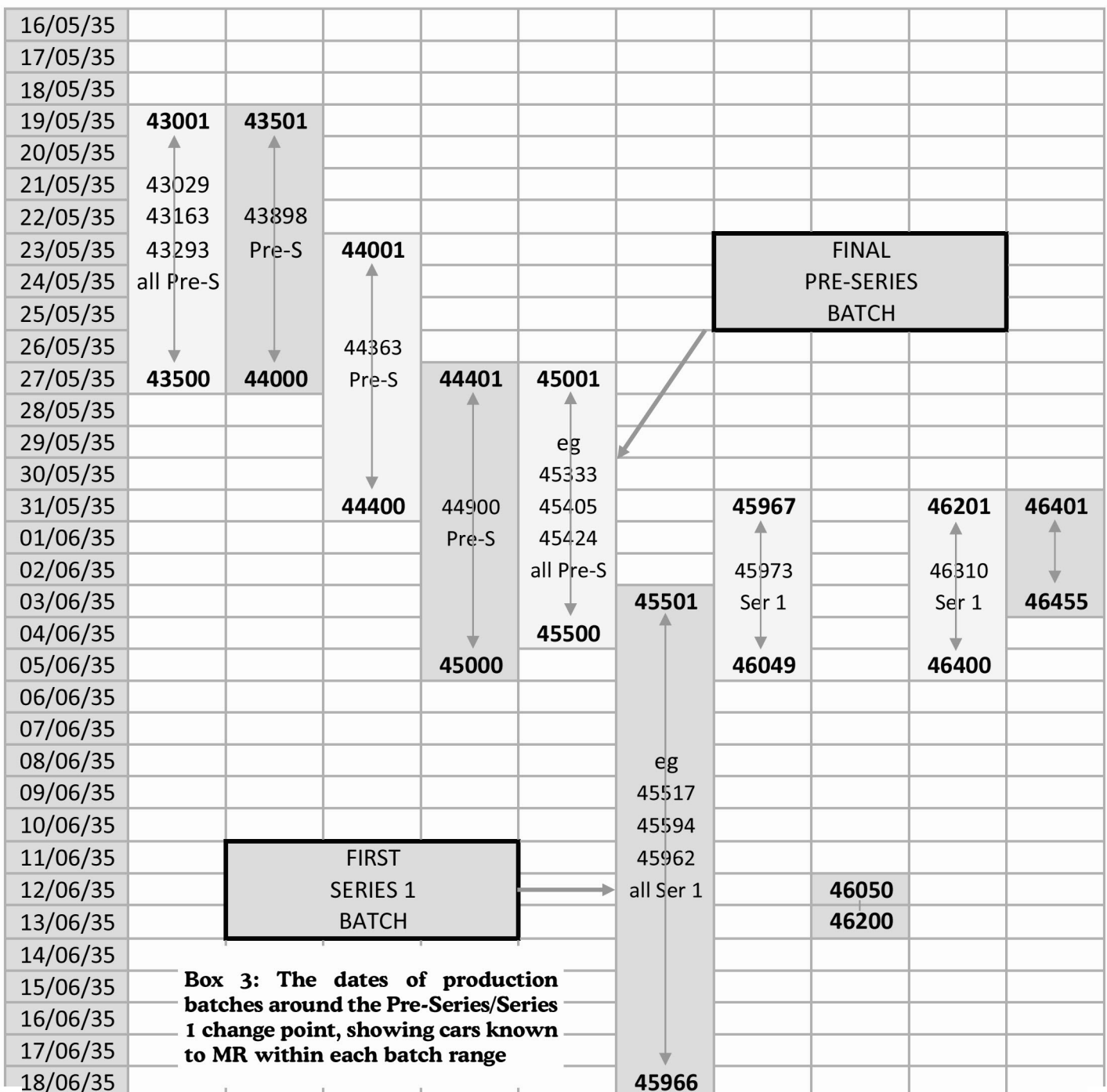
(Harry Edwards, The Journal, Spring 2008)

It is with the early Pre-Series Morris Eights that some approximation queries tend to be asked. The earliest of the Morris Eights had a prefix "35/E" to the chassis number engraved on the car's identity plate. In mid 1935 this prefix was changed to "S1/E". Based on Morris Motors Ltd published reference material, the Pre-Series models were numbered from 35/E901 to 35/E48612, and in my first edition of my book (The Morris Motor Car, 1913 to 1983) I quoted those figures. Subsequent research suggests that the change over from prefix 35/E to S1/E is more likely to be in the region of chassis number 45424, built in June 1935. The Motor Industry Heritage Trust at Gaydon have the original Morris factory production records for the Morris Eight and in theory it should be easy to check where the change took place. Unfortunately, although these records list the production date of each chassis, they do not list the chassis number prefix, instead the code letters "ME" (Morris Eight?) prefix all chassis

number entries.

It is worth noting that the changes in specification did not come cleanly when the 35/E models finished and the S1/E models commenced. How convenient this would be, but it was not the case. Consider (for example) the change from the "Magmo" speedometer head (the type with the speed indicated within a window) to the "Aigmo" speedometer head (with a pointer), this occurred at chassis 72146 well into the Series I production and just to complicate matters the records add "except for chassis 72182 to 72211, 72640 to 72694, 73069 to 73070, 73441 to 73456, and 73898 to 73910". Another misconception is that of the change from fabric-disc on the propeller shaft to a Hardy Spicer needle roller bearing universal joint. This did not automatically occur on the change over from pre-Series to the Series I Morris Eight. Rather than bore the reader with a whole series of chassis numbers, suffice to say that between 42905 and 49000 there was a mixture of fabric disc and Hardy Spicer propeller shafts.

**Box 2**







Each Progress Book, by the way, lists 5000 vehicles in chassis number order, normally 30 to a page, with various dates for stages of the build, plus the vehicle type (sliding head saloon, fixed head saloon, tourer, two-seater, van, chassis). In addition, there may be indication of whether export, whether left hand drive, whether chassis only, whether for GPO or military use, as well as one-off comments. As you can see from Box 1, I have attempted to record almost of this information, typically in one page/30 car batches, settling for the build start date as the most significant one. In case you are wondering, the Progress Books contain no information as to whether 2 or 4 door, or vehicle colour (although this information is available for the Series E Eights).

In the first of my Eight counts, I am reporting on the Pre-Series Eights, chassis numbers 901 to 45500. The choice of this second number as the cut-off between Pre Series and Series I is a contentious one but I think it can be justified. When Harry Edwards wrote his book "The Morris Motor Car" in 1983, he quoted 48612 as the last Pre-Series Eight but he changed this at a later date, as printed in the The Journal of Spring 2008 (See Box 2 earlier), where he goes for "in the region of 45424". Indeed, there is still a loose leaf note from Harry inserted in the relevant Eight Progress Book at Gaydon, stating that he thought the change over occurred "sometime during the day of June 3rd, 1935". However, on re-visiting the Progress Books, I am prepared to settle more specifically for the final Pre-Series car as 45500 as I think looking at the batches and ignoring the actual dates is more revealing. See Box 3 for the details backed up by members' car numbers, but my view is based on a combination of the following facts and reasonable assumptions. Firstly it is evident that although the Progress Books are in chassis number order, this certainly does not constitute a date order. Instead, as Box 3 demonstrates, batches with consecutive chassis numbers were produced with the dates leaping back by as much as two weeks on occasions. This can be explained, I think, by the fact that more than one line of Eights was running and at the start of each line the chassis numbers were assigned in batches on an ad hoc basis. If there was a problem on a particular line then it could easily fall behind. Think too, of the logistics of assigning chassis plates. At the later Series 1 to Series 2 switching point a clear executive decision was made to

finish Series 1 at 165000, and this is shown in the Progress Book. I think that a similar executive decision was made for the Pre-Series to Series 1 switching point but it simply wasn't recorded, as the cars themselves were not changing in any significant way. It makes sense to think that the chassis plates were pre-stamped as a separate operation rather than on the line on the day. So, Morris were unlikely to decide to make the switch at some "funny" number like 45487 and very likely to settle for a nice round number like 45500 and the fact that a new batch starts at 45501 is consistent with this. Box 3 shows that all the known Eights in those batches up to and including 45000 are Pre-Series, and all those in batches after and including 45501 are Series 1. So, I rest my case!

Having settled for Pre-Series ending at 45500, the following Pre-Series numbers can be revealed:

### **Chassis Numbers 901 to 45500**

<b>Sliding Head Saloons:</b>	<b>24394</b>	<b>54.7%</b>
(Export: 1853 LHD: 690)		
<b>Fixed Head Saloons:</b>	<b>9866</b>	<b>22.1%</b>
(Export: 2560 LHD: 447)		
<b>Tourers:</b>	<b>2650</b>	<b>5.9%</b>
(Export: 720 LHD: 59 Military: 53)		
<b>Two-seaters:</b>	<b>3626</b>	<b>8.1%</b>
(Export: 1466 LHD: 152)		
<b>Vans:</b>	<b>3058</b>	<b>6.9%</b>
(Export: 166 LHD: 89 GPO: 25)		
<b>Chassis:</b>	<b>985</b>	<b>2.2%</b>
(Export: 498 LHD: 62 GPO: 421)		
<b>Dismantled:</b>	<b>21</b>	
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>44600</b>	

I conclude this first account of Morris Eight numbers by showing in Box 4 a list of the very first Eights in chassis number order. Presumably these first cars were built slowly on an experimental basis to perfect the exact method of assembly to be used on the production line. The dates show that the National Rally at Thorseby, set for 9/10 August this year, corresponds very closely with the exact eightieth anniversary of the start of production. All the more reason for a huge turnout of Morris Eights that weekend!

CH. NO.	START BUILD DATE	TYPE	COMMENT
901	24/07/1934	Saloon (FH)	<b>First FH Saloon.</b> Show finish, originally chassis only. Not despatched until 17/01/1935
902	24/07/1934	Saloon (FH)	Show finish, originally chassis only. Not despatched until 17/01/1935
903	24/07/1934	Chassis	Show finish. Not despatched until 17/01/1935
904	03/08/1934	2-Seater	Not despatched until 06/09/1934
905	03/08/1934	2-Seater	Not despatched until 06/09/1934
906	03/08/1934	2-Seater	Not despatched until 06/09/1934
907	17/07/1934	Saloon (SH)	<b>First SH Saloon.</b> Not despatched until 31/01/1935
908	17/07/1934	2-Seater	<b>First 2-Seater.</b> Eventually despatched 2nd hand 27/7/1938(!)
909	17/07/1934	2-Seater	Eventually despatched 2nd hand 17/3/1939(!)
910	17/07/1934	2-Seater	War Office. Despatched 04/10/1934
933	13/08/1934	Van	<b>First Van.</b> Despatched for export 24/01/1935
1211	21/08/1934	Tourer	<b>First Tourer.</b> Despatched for export 13/09/1934

**Box 4: The very first Eights — note the first start was 17/07/1934**





# OUT FOR THE COUNT

Rob Symonds

## Pre-Series and Series 1 Morris Eight data

The second part of an occasional series of articles during the year to mark the 80th birthday of the Morris Eight

I have been continuing my visits to the British Motoring Industry Heritage Centre archives at Gaydon and am now within sight of completing my survey of Pre-Series, Series 1 and Series 2 Eights.

Having passed the Series 1 to Series 2 change point, which, unlike the Pre-Series to Series 1 change point, IS clearly marked in the Progress Books, I am now in a position to report on the Series 1 numbers and invite comparison of the Pre-Series and Series 1 production figures.

All the relevant figures are set out in the table below. It should again be noted that no indication is given in the Progress Books about the number of doors for the sliding head and fixed head saloons, and that Morris's own labelling of the open cars was either as tourer (with 4 seats) and two-seater (with, you guessed it, 2 seats). There never was a two-seater tourer!

I have taken the Series 1 vehicles to begin at chassis number 45501 (see my article in Morris Monthly, February 2014) and to end (as shown in the Progress Books) at chassis number 165000. This makes a total of 119500 Series 1 vehicles, with the first appearing in early June 1935 and the last in mid March 1937.

Only 44600 Eights are Pre-Series, so rather than compare actual numbers I have chosen to compare the %s, and a

few notable differences emerge.

Unsurprisingly, as the Pre-Series and Series 1 figures show, saloons were always the major part of production, but this fell from 76.8% for Pre-Series to 67.1% for Series 1. A swing away from sliding head to fixed head saloons is evident, since sliding head fell from 54.7% to only 41.1%, whereas fixed head saloons rose from 22.1% to 26.0%.

There was a similar swing for the open cars. Pre-Series two-seaters exceeded the tourers (8.1% to 5.9%) but with the Series 1 cars there was a turn around, with two-seaters falling to only 5.5% as tourers rose to 7.4%. Overall, therefore at this stage, the two-seaters are rarer than the tourers, but we will have to wait for the Series 2 figures for a final comparison. Note also that a significantly greater proportion of two-seaters (more than a third) went for export.

The final section of the table gives the combined figures for Pre-Series and Series 1 vehicles, a total of 164100.

From Series 2, chassis number 165001 onwards, vans continued to be labelled as Series 1, so I may have to rethink how the next lot of data is presented!

*Acknowledgements: Thanks are due to the staff at BMIHT archives, Richard Bacchus, Derek Tew and Jan Valentino for their tolerance and forbearance during my many visits.*

		SLIDING HD	FIXED HEAD	TOURERS	2-SEATERS	VANS	CHASSIS	DISMANT	
PRE-SERIES	TOTALS	24394	9866	2650	3626	3058	985	21	44600
	%	54.7	22.1	5.9	8.1	6.9	2.2	0.0	
	home	22541	7306	1930	2160	2892	487		37316
	export	1853	2560	720	1466	166	498		7263
	lhd	690	447	59	148	89	62		1495
	gpo					25	421		446
	military			53					53

		SLIDING HD	FIXED HEAD	TOURERS	2-SEATERS	VANS	CHASSIS	DISMANT	
SERIES 1	TOTALS	49161	31033	8865	6619	12036	11785	1	119500
	%	41.1	26.0	7.4	5.5	10.1	9.9	0.0	
	home	45773	23458	6373	4500	11565	5040		96709
	export	3388	7575	2492	2119	471	6745		22790
	lhd	1047	941	133	329	216	35		2701
	gpo						4807		4807
	military			89					89

		SLIDING HD	FIXED HEAD	TOURERS	2-SEATERS	VANS	CHASSIS	DISMANT	
PRE-SERIES plus SERIES 1	TOTALS	73555	40899	11515	10245	15094	12770	22	164100
	%	44.8	24.9	7.0	6.2	9.2	7.8	0.0	
	home	68314	30764	8303	6660	14457	5527		134025
	export	5241	10135	3212	3585	637	7243		30053
	lhd	1737	1388	192	477	305	97		4196
	gpo					25	5228		5253
	military			142					142







# OUT FOR THE COUNT

Rob Symonds

## Series 2 Morris Eight data and Overview

The third part of an occasional series of articles during the year to mark the 80th birthday of the Morris Eight

This is the latest instalment of Morris Eight counting activities at the BMIHT archives at Gaydon. It gives new information about the Series 2 vehicles, and allows a complete overview of the entire Pre-Series, Series 1 and Series 2 production numbers. For purposes of comparison I have included the earlier data for Pre-Series and Series 1 vehicles in the table below.

One or two clarifications are needed, not least as a consequence of comments made after the Series 1 data was presented.

To begin with, I may have caused some confusion over dates quoted for the Series 1 to Series 2 change over. This is clearly marked in the Progress Books with 165001 as the first Series 2, but van production and chassis numbering muddies the waters considerably.

The last nine Series 1 cars (a tourer and eight 2-seaters) were started on 22/7/1937 with chassis numbers in the range 160221 to 160230. This is because only vans and bare chassis had numbers 160231 to 165000, with build start dates from 16/5/1937 all the way to 10/3/1938.

The first Series 2 cars were started on 21/7/1937 (yes, a day before the last Series 1 cars!) at chassis number 165001.

From this point onwards it is definitely best to consider chassis numbers in preference to build dates as the following will confirm.

165001 to 200900, 21/7/1938 to 2/5/1938, were cars and chassis only.

200901 to 204000, 11/3/1938 to 16/12/1938, were vans only.

204001 to 205000, 11/3/1938 to 12/9/1938, were cars and chassis only.

205001 to 219000, 2/5/1938 to 19/12/1938, were cars and chassis only.

219001 to 221837, 19/12/1938 to 1/2/1940, were vans and chassis only.

Of course, there were never any Series designations for vans, so at some later date I will remove the vans from the data and make some more detailed comments on the cars production alone.

Suffice it to say that the figures reveal that 2-seaters are the rarest of the cars at 5.9% of overall production, of which only 3.8% were for the home market. Furthermore, the Series 2 2-seaters are the rarest of all the 2-seaters at a mere 1.2% of the total, with 0.8% going to the home market.

If Series E owners are feeling a little neglected at this point, I should say that I have some pre-war E figures to present in a later article!

*Acknowledgements: Thanks are due to the staff at BMIHT archives, Richard Bacchus, Derek Tew and Jan Valentino for their tolerance and forbearance during my many visits.*

PRE-SERIES		SLIDING HD	FIXED HD	TOURERS	2-SEATERS	VANS	CHAS	DISMANT	
	TOTALS	24394	9866	2650	3626	3058	985	21	44600
	%	54.7	22.1	5.9	8.1	6.9	2.2	0.0	
	home	22541	7306	1930	2160	2892	487		37316
	export	1853	2560	720	1466	166	498		7263
	lhd	690	447	59	148	89	62		1495
	gpo					25	421		446
	military			53					53
SERIES 1		SLIDING HD	FIXED HD	TOURERS	2-SEATERS	VANS	CHAS	DISMANT	
	TOTALS	49161	31033	8865	6619	12036	11785	1	119500
	%	41.1	26.0	7.4	5.5	10.1	9.9	0.0	
	home	45773	23458	6373	4500	11565	5040		96709
	export	3388	7575	2492	2119	471	6745		22790
	lhd	1047	941	133	329	216	35		2701
	gpo						4807		4807
	military			89					89
SERIES 2		SLIDING HD	FIXED HD	TOURERS	2-SEATERS	VANS	CHAS	DISMANT	
	TOTALS	20902	15481	3573	2734	4112	10035	0	56837
	%	36.8	27.2	6.3	4.8	7.2	17.7	0.0	
	home	19500	11772	2566	1808	3961	1580		41187
	export	1402	3709	1007	926	151	8455		15650
	lhd	288	264	51	84	69	14		770
	gpo					8	1470		1478
	military					10			10
ALL EIGHTS (exc.Series E)		SLIDING HD	FIXED HD	TOURERS	2-SEATERS	VANS	CHAS	DISMANT	
	TOTALS	94457	56380	15088	12979	19206	22805	22	220937
	%	42.8	25.5	6.8	5.9	8.7	10.3	0.0	
	home	87814	42536	10869	8468	18418	7107		175212
	export	6643	13844	4219	4511	788	15698		45703
	lhd	2025	1652	243	561	374	111		4966
	gpo					33	6698		6731
	military			142		10			152





# OUT FOR THE COUNT

Rob Symonds

## Morris Eight Complete Cars

The fourth part of an occasional series of articles during the year to mark the 80th birthday of the Morris Eight

The data printed in the previous article in this series was made more complex by the inclusion of chassis and van numbers, most particularly because the Series designation was never applied to the vans, which were simply labelled as "5 cwt".

For this reason, this time I am presenting the count for the complete cars only, to give a clearer picture of the numbers of each of the four car types for Pre-Series, Series I and Series 2.

Inspection of the data shows that well over a half of all Eights were Series I, with the rest Pre-Series and Series 2 in almost equal numbers, with slightly more Series 2 than Pre-Series.

As far as saloons are concerned, Sliding head production was always greater than fixed head production, although the proportion of fixed heads increased significantly as Pre-Series gave way to Series 1 and then to Series 2, going from 24% of Pre-Series to 36% at Series 2. Throughout the entire production, however, the % of saloons was pretty constant at around 85%, so the switch from sliding head to fixed head is clear. It is also noteworthy that fixed heads were much more popular than sliding heads for the export market.

The remaining approximately 15% of cars were therefore open Eights, with Pre-Series numbers favouring the

2-seaters over the tourers by 2 overall % points and almost 1000 cars.

As time went on, however, the trend was obviously away from 2-seaters in favour of the tourers with their four seats, so Series 1 tourers outnumber the 2-seaters by well over 2 overall % points and in excess of 2000 cars.

At the Series 2 stage there is a small shift away from the open cars, with the decrease in the % of 2-seaters continuing.

Overall:

- The commonest saloons are Series 1 sliding heads with 49161 out of total cars of 178904 or 27.5% of all cars.
- The rarest saloons are fixed head Pre-Series at 9866 or 5.5% of total car production.
- The commonest open Eights are Series I tourers with 8865 out of 178904 or just under 5% of total cars.
- The rarest open Eights are Series 2 2-seaters with 2734 out of 178904 or just over 1.5% of total car production.

It would be an interesting exercise to see if these proportions are reflected in the surviving cars, so if anyone fancies crunching a few numbers from the vehicle register I would like to hear their findings.

*Acknowledgements: Thanks are due to the staff at BMIHT archives, Richard Bacchus, Derek Tew and Jan Valentino for their tolerance and forbearance during my many visits.*

PRE-SERIES		SLIDING HD	FIXED HD	TOURERS	2-SEATERS	ALL
	TOTALS	24394	9866	2650	3626	40536
	%	60.2	24.3	6.5	8.9	
	home	22541	7306	1930	2160	33937
	export	1853	2560	720	1466	6599
	lhd military	690 53	447 53	59 53	148 53	1344 53
SERIES 1		SLIDING HD	FIXED HD	TOURERS	2-SEATERS	ALL
	TOTALS	49161	31033	8865	6619	95678
	%	51.4	32.4	9.3	6.9	
	home	45773	23458	6373	4500	80104
	export	3388	7575	2492	2119	15574
	lhd military	1047 89	941 89	133 89	329 89	2450 89
SERIES 2		SLIDING HD	FIXED HD	TOURERS	2-SEATERS	ALL
	TOTALS	20902	15481	3573	2734	42690
	%	49.0	36.3	8.4	6.4	
	home	19500	11772	2566	1808	35646
	export	1402	3709	1007	926	7044
	lhd military	288 0	264 0	51 0	84 0	687 0
ALL EIGHTS (exc.Series E)		SLIDING HD	FIXED HD	TOURERS	2-SEATERS	ALL
	TOTALS	94457	56380	15088	12979	178904
	%	52.8	31.5	8.4	7.3	
	home	87814	42536	10869	8468	149687
	export	6643	13844	4219	4511	29217
	lhd military	2025 142	1652 142	243 142	561 142	4481 142

