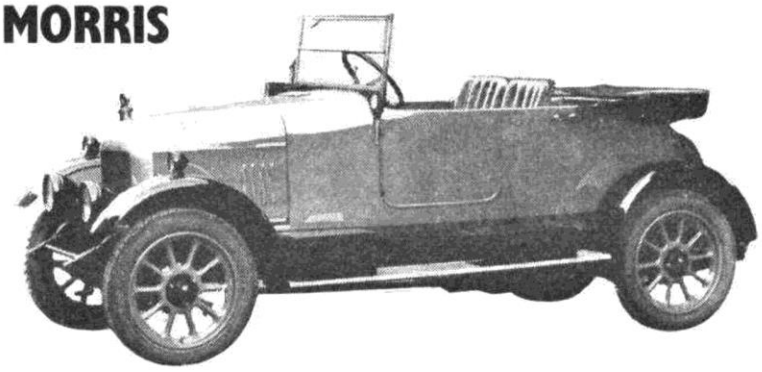
THE "BULLNOSE" MORRIS

by Lytton P. Jarman

(The author would like to thank Morris Motors Ltd., The M.G. Car Company and Bullnose Morris Club members, who have willingly supplied valuable information and photographs, without which this article would not have been possible.)



TYPICAL OF THE BREED.—This is the 1926 Morris-Cowley "Occasional Four," which cost £180, inclusive of front-wheel brakes, and which could be obtained in either grey or blue, with upholstery to match.

[I feel that it is an excellent thing to present a solid historical article at Motor Show time, as an antidote to yearnings over new cars and as nostalgic reading for the many grand old men of the motor industry who come together each October at Earls Court and have to wile away time on the exhibition stands. So last year I wrote a history of the Armstrong Siddeley and in this Motor Show issue I am delighted to present a detailed history of "bullnose" Morris and M.G. cars, a particularly apt subject at a time when the famous name of Morris is on everyone's lips in connection with the clever new Mini-Minor.

This article has been painstakingly compiled by Lytton P. Jarman, Hon. Sec. of the Bullnose Morris Club which caters for all Morris models with the bullnose radiator, i.e., made before 1927, of which it has over 200 on its books. The bullnose Morris, in Cowley and Oxford forms, was one of the most popular and successful of all British cars, some 168,000 being built between March 1913 and October 1926. It did much to oust the model-T Ford from its position as the World's most frequently encountered car and I am sure Mr. Jarman's masterful presentation of its history will give pleasure to a great many people, particularly present and ex-bullnose owners and those who were employed by the companies associated with the production of these excellent British cars. If this article produces more information on obscure aspects of the bullnose breed and induces more owners to join his Club, I know Mr. Jarman will feel that his labours have not gone unrewarded.—Ed.]

THE early Morris cars were assembled from "bought-in" components and, for the purpose of this article, it is more convenient to divide them into those fitted with White and Poppe engines, Continental "Red Seal" engines, Hotchkiss engines and finally Morris engines, rather than into the usual "Edwardian" and "Vintage" categories.

The "White and Poppe" Period
(*March 27th 1913 to July 1915*)

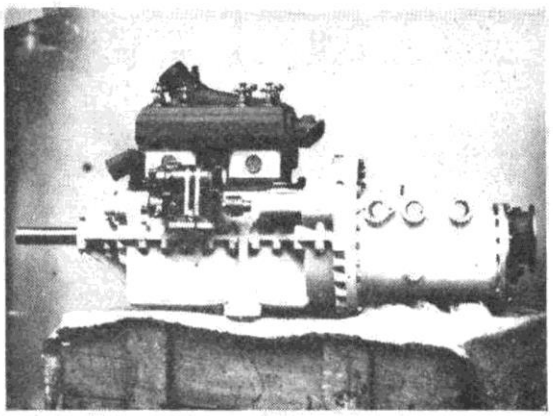
Mr. Peter Auguste Poppe, a Dane, was with the Steyr Armament Works in Austria when they were manufacturing Swift (of Coventry) bicycles under licence, and from them gained knowledge of interchangeability of parts. When in Coventry he met Mr. White, and in about 1899 they together formed the firm of White and Poppe, which I did hear had the distinction of being the first firm to produce interchangeable parts in this country, although someone has disputed this by mentioning grandfather clocks. The first White and Poppe works were in Drake Street, Lockhurst Lane, Coventry, and early in 1914 a new factory was commenced in Holbrook Lane, Coventry.

Mr. W. R. Morris bought carburetters from White and Poppe for his motor-cycles and at the Olympia Shows of 1910 and 1911 discussed with them the possibility of producing a small car engine. Designs for a T-head engine proceeded and Willans and Robinson Ltd., of Rugby (now the English Electric Company), who made engines for the Duryea car in 1904, were the only firm that would undertake the casting of the complicated design of the White and Poppe cylinder block. This complication of the design of the cylinder block led to delays in producing the first castings. Another story I have heard to explain the delay is that White and Poppe had engaged some new draughtsmen, and one of these drew the cylinder block half full-size but forgot this when inserting the dimensions. Willans and Robinson consequently produced the first block half size! Let me hastily add that I wouldn't like to try to substantiate this story.

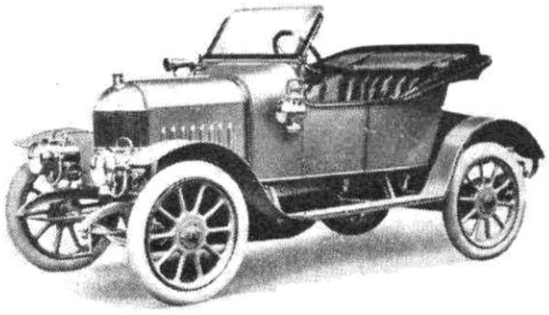
As a result of the delay in producing castings the prototype Morris Oxford was fitted with an engine having a wooden cylinder block, and the car was displayed at the North of England Motor Show at Manchester in February 1913 still fitted with this engine. As this is the most unusual engine fitted to any Morris I think it merits further description. The wooden cylinder block was fitted with brass valve caps, and the water outlet and the inlet pipes were of cast-iron. It had no core plugs in the inlet and exhaust manifold or water jackets, and there were no set screws holding the inlet and exhaust tappet guides in the cylinder base. The exhaust outlet elbow was at an incorrect angle and was *solid*, and the sump was made of wood. The wooden block survived in the White and Poppe works until 1931, because in error it was stored as a pattern.

Photographs of a Morris Oxford car appear as early as December 5th, 1912. These photographs are clearly fakes. The car was not registered and actually had no engine. The front view shows a distinct "black-out" under the radiator and the same attention has been paid to the three-quarter view. Actually the first complete Morris Oxford did not leave the works until March 27th, 1913. It was a two-seater flush-side torpedo-bodied car painted pearl grey, with leather upholstery and cape hood. The magneto was a German Bosch ZF 4, the lamps were Powell and Hanmer, and the spare wheel was supplied without a tyre. The price was £175, and this first car was delivered to Mr. Gordon Stewart, of Stewart & Ardern Ltd. This car was chassis number 101 (engine number 5,775) and it is amazing to find that the second (chassis 102) is still in existence. It is worth mentioning that the chassis frames for these cars were imported from Belgium. Although the body has not lasted the years, chassis 102 is at present in Bristol Museum awaiting restoration.

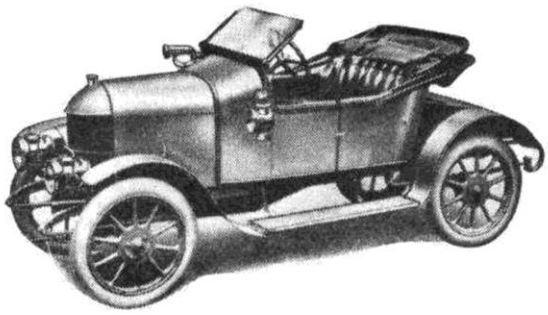
The Motor Show of 1913 saw the introduction of the De Luxe model. This had a larger track and wheelbase, the rear springs were underslung, and a new front axle and steering gear layout was used which eliminated "wander," which resulted from hitting a pothole on the earlier model. For the 1914 season two chassis types



CLEVER FAKE.—The White and Poppe engine which, for reasons divulged in the text, became known as "the wooden horse of Holbrook Lane."



The 1914 Morris-Oxford " Standard " model, code word Stanmodo, which cost £180 fully equipped.



The 1914 Morris-Oxford " Commercial " model, code word Commero, which cost £175 fully equipped.

were available, therefore, the standard chassis being priced at £160 and the De Luxe chassis at £180. Two body types were available on the standard chassis and both were torpedo two-seaters. One was known as the " Standard Model " priced at £180 and the other as the " Commercial Model, " priced at £175. The " Commercial Model " differed from the " Standard Model " in having a rather narrower body and a rather poorer quality finish. A quick way of distinguishing a Standard Model from a De Luxe Model is by the doors; the doors on the " Standard Models " extend to the bottom of the body, whereas the " De Luxe Models " have shallower doors.

Four body types were available on the De Luxe chassis. These were a torpedo two-seater known as the " De Luxe Model " priced at 190 guineas, a " De Luxe Model Coupé " priced at £225, the " Delivery Van " with a mahogany-panelled body at £230, and the " Sporting Model " priced at £220. The " Sporting Model " was most interesting, being a single-seater. This must be the only Morris monocar ever offered to the public. Although this car had mudguards and headlamps it had no hood or windscreen and its distinctive appearance was accentuated by the fitting of disc wheels.

I think the first record of a Morris in competition was at the Caerphilly hill-climb in June 1913, with W. R. Morris himself at the wheel. At Whitsun 1914 six Morris cars, including Morris in a coupé, competed in the London-Edinburgh-London trial. A Morris also took part in the Ladies' Race at Saltburn in July 1914, the Dutch Six-Day Reliability Trials, the Oxfordshire Motor Club annual hill-climb and in the Coventry and Warwickshire Motor Club hill-climb.

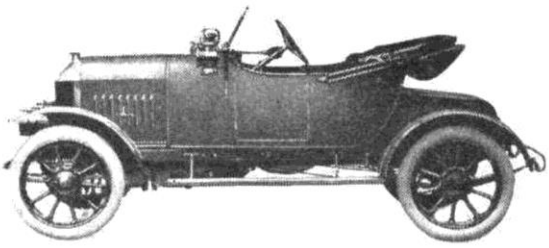
In December 1913 one of the De Luxe cars was taken to Brooklands to demonstrate its excellent top-gear performance. Immediately the car arrived, with the engine still running a pencil was placed on the radiator cap. Although the gusts of wind were only shielded by the windscreen the pencil remained vertical. The straight was then visited. The driver engaged top gear, dismounted from the machine, and walked leisurely by the side, occasionally correcting the car's course. The speed was not more than three m.p.h. Further to demonstrate the remarkable low speed pulling powers of the engine the driver dropped a handkerchief overboard while in top gear. He got out, walked back, picked up the handkerchief and finally overtook the car, which was still travelling forward in top gear. The car was finally taken on the Track and attained a speed of 45 m.p.h.

A new Oxford was planned for 1915 with a White and Poppe engine, long chassis and bevel drive. The engine, which was to have a stroke of 100 mm. as opposed to the 90 mm. stroke of the earlier ones, was designed by Mr. Poppe. This never materialised because of the war, during which White and Poppe obtained armament contracts.

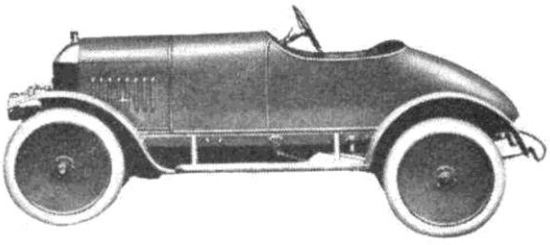
The coming of war did not completely stop the manufacture of Morris cars. As far as White and Poppe models were concerned deliveries continued, and in a small corner of his works Morris continued to build cars in very small numbers. However, this does mean that there was a period about 1915 when the Oxford was being built as a cheaper, smaller and lower-powered model than the Cowley. The last White and Poppe engine was tested on June 13th, 1915, but Morris was building the Oxford in such small quantities during the war that he didn't use up his stock of White and Poppe engines until about 1918. Approximately 3,000 White and Poppe-engined Morris cars were built, and of these 26 are definitely still in existence. One of these is in Shrewsbury waiting hopefully for someone to find it a body.

White and Poppe were eventually absorbed by Dennis Bros. Auguste Poppe and his son Erling joined the Rover Company and were responsible for the 1925 14/45 Rover. Although the name of White and Poppe will always be associated with Morris cars, it must be remembered that they were carburetter manufacturers in their own right and made engines for, among others, the 1904/5 Globe and the 1915 Austin Fifteen. A personal achievement of Poppe's was his " K Formula," published in 1912. This was one which he had devised to estimate the performance of different vehicles. It worked purely on engine bore and stroke, final-drive ratio, road-wheel size and loaded weight. In 1924, motoring publications still talked of this ingenious formula.

The take-over of White and Poppe by Dennis Bros. was in 1919 and Mr. Poppe left for Rovers in 1924. Dennis Bros. moved to Guildford and the old Lockhurst Lane works now belongs to Courtaulds Ltd. and the Holbrook Lane premises are now Dunlop's property. Both Mr. White and Mr. Poppe died over twenty years ago, Mr. White leaving no family, while Mr. Poppe's family of one daughter and three sons is now split up, Erling with Vernon Industries in Liverpool, Gunnar in Birmingham and Olaf a director of Rovers in Solihull, while Ingrid is in Norway.



The 1914 Morris-Oxford " de luxe " model, code word Univo, which cost 190 gns., with five " best English lamps," bulb horn, spare wheel and tyre, tool roll, jack, pump and oil-can.



The 1914 Morris-Oxford " Sporting " model with single-seater body on a " specially picked and tuned-up " de luxe chassis, code word Speedo, which cost £220 fully equipped with three lamps, etc.

At this juncture it should be emphasised that the Hotchkiss-made engines fitted to Morris cars were not of French design. However, they were manufactured with French machine tools and so had metric threads, unlike the Continental " Red Seal " engine. I have heard that Crossleys were never successful in making Bugattis under licence, as they had difficulty in converting metric to English units. But in order that Whitworth spanners could be used on the engines of Morris cars, Hotchkiss adopted the much simpler expedient of merely producing Whitworth heads on nuts and bolts with metric threads! Besides making engines for Morris, Hotchkiss also built flat-twin air-cooled engines for B.S.A. and about 200 o.h.v. four-cylinder engines for the Scottish firm of Gilchrist Cars Ltd.

From September 1919 both the Cowley and Oxford had an 11.9 h.p. engine and at the 1922 Motor Show a 13.9 h.p. engine was introduced as an alternative for the Oxford cars.

Only during the Hotchkiss period can it be said, with justification, that the Oxford was merely a better equipped and more refined version of the Cowley, both cars having virtually identical chassis and engines. Later models differed in chassis length, radiator size, body dimensions, transmission details and brakes, as well as body fittings.

The Hotchkiss-engined Morrises were the first Morris cars to be fitted with a cork-lined clutch running in oil, as standard: the first cork-clutched Morris was Mr. Poppe's original two-seater painted tetryl colour and known in the works as Yellow Peril, but this was non-standard. Surely these Morris cork clutches were one of the best clutches fitted to any vintage car, irrespective of price?

When first introduced in 1919 the Hotchkiss engine had a bore of 69 mm. and a stroke of 100 mm. (1,495 c.c.), but at the 1920 Motor Show it was changed to 69.5 by 102 mm. (1,548 c.c.), and at the same time the ribbed exhaust manifold was dropped.

Right up to the end of the Hotchkiss period certain components such as crown wheels and pinions, and even door hinges, were still being obtained from the United States. It is interesting to note that these door hinges can still be purchased, ex stock, from the manufacturers in Detroit, although they are a little costly (126/6d. per pair)!

During the three-and-a-half years of the " Hotchkiss " period about 13,000 Morris cars were produced and of these I know of only 35 that still remain with us.

Morris bought up the Hotchkiss concern at Coventry in May 1923, and from this date we can consider the engines to be of Morris manufacture.

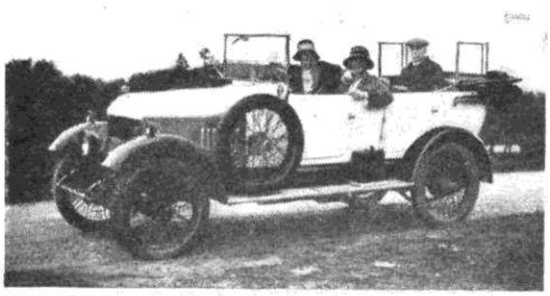
The " Morris " Period
(*May* 1923 *to October* 1926)

Morris was finding the Hotchkiss engine mechanically excellent, but he realised that they were not being made in large enough quantities to enable him to produce cars at the rate he wanted. The really significant change which took place when Morris acquired control of Hotchkiss et Cie in May 1923 was not in the mechanical specification of the engine but in the fantastically increased rate at which these engines were produced, and, of course, the consequent increase in car production which this made possible. Over the next three-and-a-half years he produced some 150,000 cars, nearly ten times as many as in the preceding three-and-a-half years, and we know of 120 of these cars which exist today. This increase in production was due to vastly improved manufacturing methods and enabled costs to be reduced still further. At the end of 1920 a four-seater Cowley cost £525, but by 1926 the price had been reduced to £182 10s. The cheapness and high production rate of the Morris led one wit to refer to them as a model-T Ford with an Oxford accent!

The last Cowley of this period was basically similar to the first 1915 model. The flat radiator was introduced on all models at the opening of the Motor Show on October 22nd, 1926.

The Gosford Street works, where all the Hotchkiss engines, and Morris engines we have considered were produced during the period, is now a Coventry Income Tax office but still in the centre of the tiled floor is a mosaic of the Morris badge. (Slightly further down Gosford Street is a large hardware shop and above the doorway the engraved name " Calcott Bros." can still be seen.)

Nearly all the Morris cars produced were either standard four-cylinder Cowleys or Oxfords. There are, however, a few special models produced in comparatively small quantities but which are none the less of great interest. These are discussed below.



SILENT SIX.—A 1924 Morris Silent Six four-seater. The photograph was taken by Sir Miles Thomas while he was on his honeymoon; seated in the car are his wife, Mr. Barton, who was one of the first managers of Morris Garages, and Mrs. Barton.

The Six-cylinder Morris Oxford
(1915 *to* 1925)

It is quite wrong to imagine that the first six-cylinder Morris engine was the Isis engine introduced in 1928. Morris was experimenting with a six-cylinder engine as early as 1915, although unfortunately I have but a negligible amount of information about this engine. However, I believe only one of these was made; it had side valves and was designated the " D-type."

After experimenting with the D-type six-cylinder engine Morris produced the E-type six-cylinder engine. The dimensions of the E-type engine were 70 by 102 mm. (2,355 c.c.), and what is particularly interesting is that this engine had overhead valves. Only two E-type engines were built and both these were shown at the Olympia Motor Show in 1920. One was shown as an actual exhibition engine and the other was in a small saxe-blue saloon with black mudguards. This is a really interesting car because, besides being the first Morris car to have six cylinders instead of four and to use overhead valves, it was also the first Morris to have wire instead of artillery wheels and ½-elliptic rear springs instead of ¾-elliptic rear springs which I think were fitted to all four-cylinder Morrises from March 1913 to October 1926. However, most of the other parts for this car were standard Oxford components. This six-cylinder E-type saloon passed into the hands of a person, believed to be a farmer, after the Motor Show.

All Morris cars from September 1919 to May 1923 had a Hotchkiss-built engine. The two 1920 E-type six-cylinder engines are an exception to this rule. They were built entirely by Morris at Cowley, and not by Hotchkiss et Cie at Coventry.

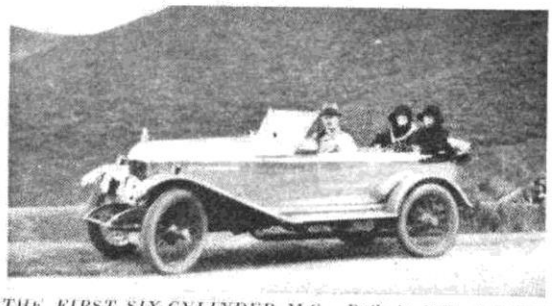
After only one E-type car had been built and one additional engine, the E-type six-cylinder design was superseded by the F-type. The F-type is sometimes referred to as the Morris Oxford Six and sometimes as the Morris Silent Six. The most notable difference between the E-type and the F-type six-cylinder engines is that the F-type used side valves instead of overhead valves. The F-type, which was rated as 17.9 h.p., also had the slightly different dimensions of 69.5 by 102 mm. bore and stroke (the same as the Cowley), giving a capacity of 2,320 c.c. and developed about 39 b.h.p. at 2,800 r.p.m. The F-type and E-type chassis were similar in so far as they both had ½-elliptic rear springs and wire wheels. The F-type chassis had Hartford shock-absorbers fore and aft at a time when Morris favoured Gabriel Snubbers for their four-cylinder models.

Very few F-type cars were built but the production life of this model was by no means a short and merry one, as I will explain.

The first F-type was completed in 1921. It was a most luxurious coupé specially built for W. R. Morris. This car differs from other F-type six-cylinder Morrises in a number of respects. First, it is still in existence and can be seen at Cowley. Secondly, the engine was built throughout by Morrises whereas other F-type engines were built by Hotchkiss et Cie; the engines for the 1921 four-cylinder Morris Cowleys and Oxfords were also built by Hotchkiss et Cie. Finally, this first F-type engine really did work and was uncannily quiet, smooth and reliable. I gather that in this respect it differed most markedly from other F-type engines. This car's last journey was to Le Mans in 1926, Morris just having acquired the old-established firm of Leon Bollee of Le Mans.

At least another F-type six-cylinder car was completed by October 1922, a pretty steady rate of progress, as a china-white cabriolet was shown on the Morris stand at Olympia that year. The cabriolet was priced at £575 and was available in chassis form for £375. Also on the Morris stand at Olympia in 1922 was an exhibition F-type engine, number 104, and this beautifully-finished engine is now in the Apprentice School at Cowley.

The first side-valve six-cylinder car was supplied to W. R. Morris



THE FIRST SIX-CYLINDER M.G.—Built in 1924, it had an F-type engine and chassis. This car used to appear nightly in an Oxford play called "Six-Cylinder Love," starring Edna Best.

and I gather the next five were supplied, respectively, to Mr. Hainsworth, the Manager of the Hotchkiss works, the Prince of Wales, the Earl of Macclesfield, Mr. Watson, the soap king's son, and Mr. Frank Woollard, M.B.E., who became a director of Morris Motors in 1926. The delivery of these five was probably completed by early 1923.

Early in 1924 one or two of the larger Morris distributors were actually offering a very few of these six-cylinder models for sale in the normal way, and in fact two of these distributors have provided me with the chassis and engine numbers of three of these F-type cars. The first F-type car built in 1921 for W. R. Morris was allotted a normal Oxford chassis and engine number (9,641 and 16,462, respectively), but it appears that after this the six-cylinder chassis and engine numbering commenced at F101. As near as can be ascertained between 25 and 50 six-cylinder cars were built and it seems that, with the exception of the first F-type engine, all the engines for these cars, even for those built in 1924, were built in one batch by Hotchkiss et Cie in late 1922. So here is an exception to the general rule that after May 1923 all Morris cars had Morris-built engines.

Now let us consider how the F-type six-cylinder Morris Oxford performed on the road. At this juncture let me say, that I have never driven an F-type Morris and I have to rely on hearsay. Unfortunately this is not always accurate, as stories get distorted over the years. This is well illustrated by the popular story that four-cylinder Oxfords and Cowleys, of the post-White and Poppe period, are always breaking half-shafts, and yet at a recent club rally a census was taken and it was found that although every Morris owner carried a spare half-shaft none had experienced one breaking. Getting back to the F-type, however, I understand that the worst of its many weaknesses was its distressing habit of breaking crankshafts. The engines evidently seriously overheated, due to there being a sand trap in the engine casting and this led to severe misfiring on numbers five and six cylinders, and as a result the crankshaft broke. A car was, none the less, road-tested by one of the motor journals in December 1922 and it showed promise, particularly as the petrol consumption was recorded as 36.4 m.p.g. at an average speed of 34 m.p.h. and 60 m.p.h. was easily obtained in top gear. The very high axle ratio of 3.5 to 1 must have partly accounted for these truly excellent figures. However, another journalist is believed to have refused to road-test it as it vibrated so badly.

The most serious failings were presumably ironed out by the time the car was offered to the public in 1924, and when one was tested in February of that year the testers complained that the car was, if anything, overcooled. I could understand them saying this of an Austin 12/4 of this date, for example, but I cannot believe it about an early Morris!

I have corresponded with two people who actually had these F-type Morrises. One remembers that the engine of his particular car was so tightly assembled that it had to be started with a crow-bar and that the engine seized up on more than one occasion. The main thing another owner remembers about his car is that he was jolly pleased to get rid of it! Also he remembers the suspension gave a very rough ride, and possibly due to the lightness of the flywheel and clutch assembly the engine didn't have a very much better low-speed performance than the four-cylinder Morris, and the advantage of the six cylinders could only be felt at the higher revs., when the engine seemed to wake up. This particular car, however, did make a successful journey from Manchester to the Great Exhibition at Wembley in 1924.

The general impression I have of the F-type, other than the very first one, is that it was a thoroughly unsatisfactory car. There were presumably also production difficulties with this car; at any rate its production was discontinued. The remaining parts went into the foundations of the new Morris Radiators branch factory which was being built.

A six-cylinder car was built for W. R. Morris in 1925. It seems to have an F-type chassis frame, but artillery instead of wire wheels and front-wheel brakes. What the engine type is I don't know. It might be an F-type assembled from left over parts or it might be of an altogether different type. I wonder if it could possibly be an experimental "Isis" engine. The body was a two-seater fixed-head coupé designed by Mr. Pratt of Hollick and Pratt of Coventry, the lower half of the body being polished and lacquered copper. The upper deck of the body was of polished aluminium and the mudguards and valances were painted maroon. I have not yet finally made up my mind whether this car or the Sports Cowley is the ugliest Morris of all!

The M.G.
(*May* 1924 *to October* 1926)

In discussing M.G.s it is logical to start with Cecil Kimber joining Morris Garages in 1922 as General Manager. At this time Morris Garages were, and indeed still are, large distributors for Morris cars and as a profitable side line they built special bodies, particularly "Chummies," on the standard Morris chassis.

As early as 1914 Morris Garages had a Chummy body built by Hollick and Pratt of Coventry and put it on a 1914 De Luxe Morris chassis.

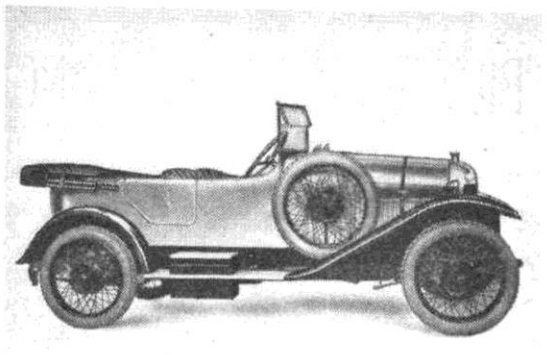
In 1923 Cecil Kimber won a gold medal in the M.C.C. London-Land's End Trial driving a Cowley Chummy, the Chummy body presumably being built either for or by Morris Garages. 1923 was altogether an excellent year for Morris in the Land's End Trial and a gold medal was won, amongst others, by the Morris driver Mr. W. Cooper, who had made quite a name for himself driving Sports Cowleys, which were, of course, a Morris Motors' product.

At the 1923 Motor Show Morris introduced an "Occasional Four" body on the Cowley chassis, and this model was considerably cheaper than the Morris Garages Chummy, the two models being virtually the same. At the same time, however, they discontinued the Sports Cowley and the market which was now open to Morris Garages was one of providing handsome and sporting motor cars using basic Morris components.

Advertisements for these cars appeared in the *Brooklands Gazette* as early as October 1924 and they were referred to as the "M.G. Super Sport Morris." Note the early use of "M.G.," and what is even more surprising is that even at this early date the initials "M.G." in the advertisements were enclosed in an octagon, although the octagon did not appear on the cars until 1927.

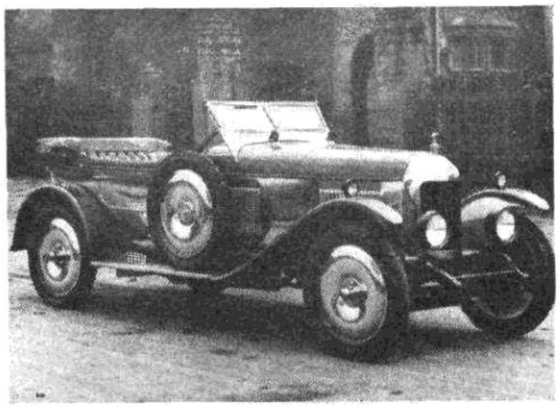
Almost certainly one of the earliest of these cars was the one supplied in May 1924 to the same Mr. Cooper, whom we have already mentioned as winning a "gold" in the 1923 London-Land's End Trial. This car followed the pattern of the later M.G.s in having the distinctive features of small ship's-type ventilating funnels on the scuttle, raked windscreen, disc wheels and a beautiful four-seater polished aluminium body with the mudguards and upper part of the

Continued on page 854



PROBLEM CAR.—This is probably an extremely early M.G., as it has no front-wheel brakes and is fitted with a Morris Motors' windscreen instead of a raked screen as used on later M.G. cars.

THE "BULLNOSE" MORRIS—continued from page 851



HANDSOME SPORTING MODEL.—The M.G. Super Sports four-seater of 1924. Very few M.G.s were built that year and those that were did not have front-wheel brakes.

body painted blue, with blue leather upholstery to match. An alternative colour to blue for the upholstery, mudguards and upper part of the body was maroon. The carburetter was a Solex MHD 30 mm. (bronze, of course), the compression was raised to 5 to 1, the flywheel was lightened, the road springs flattened and steering raked, and it had only rear-wheel brakes, four-wheel brakes becoming standard by mid-1925. It is interesting to note that the long Oxford chassis was introduced in October 1924, and it is thus probable that pre-October 1924 M.G.s were nine inches shorter than the later ones and also had smaller radiators.

All 14/28 M.G.s, as these cars were known, were basically similar to this car of Mr. Cooper's.

14/28 M.G.s were available in two-seater and salonette form as well as in four-seater form. The two-seater and four-seater aluminium-bodied M.G.s are undoubtedly amongst the most beautiful of vintage cars, but the beauty of the salonette is questionable. A few 14/28 M.G.s had steel bodies, and in fact the 1926 M.G. in the Montagu Motor Museum has a two-seater steel body.

A particularly interesting M.G. produced in 1924 was an aluminium-bodied four-seater tourer based on the 17.9-h.p. F-type Morris chassis. I think this is one of the prettiest looking cars ever built. It is the very first six-cylinder M.G. ever built, but this is not its only claim to fame. Its other claim to fame is that it appeared nightly in an Oxford show called "Six-Cylinder Love," starring Edna Best.

In 1925 Cecil Kimber completed his well-known "special," which is often referred to as the first M.G., and two other trials' "specials" were produced in 1926. I will leave the discussion of these until later.

Except for a very few M.G.s built in the 1924 season, the following is a list of the actual numbers of M.G.s that were built :—

	Season	*Built in 1924*	*Built in 1925*	*Built in 1926*
Sports two-seater ...	1925	3	90	0
Sports four-seater ...	1925	3	33	0
Sports salonette ...	1925	0	6	0
Sports two-seater ...	1926	0	14	107
Sports four-seater ...	1926	0	5	60
Sports salonette ...	1926	0	3	12
Totals :		6	151	179

101 Sports two-seaters
214 Sports four-seaters
21 Sports salonettes
336

I know of only five of these pre-October 1926 M.G.s which are still in existence.

The Sports Cowley
(1921 *to* 1923)

The Sports Cowley was introduced in March 1921 and was priced at £398 10s. The chassis was a standard Cowley one of the time, with one or two modifications. The engine was claimed to be "specially tuned," a delightfully vague term, and fitted with what was termed a "free exhaust." A higher axle ratio was used, being 4.4 to 1 instead of the standard one of 4.75 to 1. A six-volt Lucas Magdyno, which was standard on the Cowley at that time, was fitted, but like all magdyno-equipped Cowleys there was no starter motor. The twelve-volt dynamotor was an optional extra for the Cowley. The body was a polished aluminium two-seater, and aluminium discs usually covered the artillery wheels.

In their day it would seem that these cars were much commoner than is generally supposed. An owner of one of these cars was our Mr. W. Cooper, who became a familiar figure in M.C.C. long-distance trials. At the end-of-season Brooklands Meeting in 1921 Mr. Cooper in his Sports Cowley provided transport for Sir Julian Orde and also transported "Ebby" by Sports Cowley to the starting line. In the 1922 London-Land's End Trial Mr. Cooper's Sports Cowley unfortunately stopped on a non-stop section, but nevertheless Mr. Cooper managed to gain a silver medal. As we have already mentioned, in the 1923 London-Land's End Trials Mr. Cooper, in his Sports Cowley, won a "gold" and in 1924 forsook Sports Cowleys for M.G.s.

Production of the Sports Cowley ceased in 1923 and I know of only one surviving example. Over the years this survivor has acquired balloon tyres, front-wheel brakes and a different lighting set. The front lamps fitted as standard on the Sports Cowley were a couple of side-cum-headlamps mounted on the mudguards. In late-1924 Stewart and Ardern Ltd. fitted sports bodies on to perfectly standard Cowley chassis and offered these cars for £225, which was about £125 cheaper than the current two-seater M.G. I don't think these cars met with much success, and I feel that it would have taken a very good-looking Morris sports car indeed to have competed successfully against the really handsome M.G.

The Morris Oxford Sports
(1923)

I have already described the White and Poppe-engined Morris Oxford "Sporting Model." In the early 'twenties there was an 11.9 h.p. (not 13.9) Hotchkiss-engined Morris Oxford Sports offered in chassis form only, and this was described as being "specially tuned" (again wonderfully vague). For the 1923 season this chassis was priced at £195 and to confuse things still further there was also an Oxford Sports chassis available with a 13.9 h.p. engine without a starter, for £220. A standard 11.9 h.p. Oxford chassis of the time, with starter, cost £220.

I have also seen an advertisement for a new Morris Oxford Sports in May 1924, and if it was an M.G. it was an exceptionally early M.G. I wish I had some more details of the little known Morris Oxford Sports. I know of no surviving examples and presume that only very few were made.

In addition to these rarer production types there were one or two "one-off specials," other than Kimber's, which deserve mention.

In the matter of sheer speed the most successful of these was undoubtedly A. E. Keen's tuned Cowley, which became known as the "92 m.p.h. Cowley."

Mr. Alfred E. Keen's "Special"
(1922)

Alfred Keen joined Morris towards the end of 1902 as an apprentice at the Longwall Street premises, and eventually rose to be director of Morris Motors Ltd. in 1933.

In 1922 he selected at random one of a batch of Cowley engines which were being unloaded from the lorry which had just delivered them from the Hotchkiss et Cie works at Coventry. Keen proceeded to tune his engine by polishing the ports, raising the compression, lightening the flywheel and reciprocating parts, and so on. By the time he had finished the Ricardo slipper-type piston, which only had one piston ring, and the gudgeon assembly weighed a mere six-and-a-half ounces, and the drilled and balanced connecting rods weighed only 18½ ounces each. Basically, however, it remained a standard Hotchkiss engine as used by Morris. This engine was fitted into a modified Morris chassis which carried a very light stark single-seater body. The car occasionally was fitted with very ineffective mudguarding and two tiny headlamps.

The car was extremely successful in sprint events and hill-climbs. It is probably best known for returning the speed of 93.7 m.p.h. on the Aikman Street which runs from Cirencester to St. Albans. I think the last two events in which the car competed were the Portheawl sand races and Caerphilly hill-climb in 1924.

These achievements in tuning-up a standard Morris are, in my opinion, outstanding and I feel that Keen seldom receives the credit which he deserves. My favourite story which I have heard about this car concerns the occasion when it competed in an event between the Oxford University and City motor clubs. One of the University members made a protest about the results, claiming that it was impossible for a Cowley to beat a Bugatti.

" Coppernose Connie "
(1925 *to* 1930)

In complete contrast to Keen's " special " there was what must have been the slowest " special " of them all. This was a large fabric-bodied saloon affectionately known as " Coppernose Connie." " Connie's " make up was a 12-cwt. Morris Commercial chassis powered by an 11.9 h.p. Cowley engine. On this was mounted a large special five-seater fabric limousine body by Morris Garages, and an outsize *copper* " Bullnose " radiator, which is believed to have been hand-beaten by the then radiators-branch Works Manager, Mr. Davies. Mr. Davies was associated with Mr. H. A. Ryder from the earliest days of the Osberton Radiator Company, which eventually became Morris Motors' Radiators Branch.

From about 1925 until 1930 " Connie " plied for hire in the streets of Oxford. It is understood that she was seen within the last year in the vicinity of Wargrave.

" The Red Flash "
(1926)

The " Red Flash " was built by Mr. H. R. Wellsteed of Cardiff, for racing at Brooklands. It is basically a Morris Oxford, although this is not immediately apparent at a casual glance. However, the familiar radiator can be seen underneath the cowling.

This car was driven by H. R. Wellsteed at the 1926 B.A.R.C. Easter Meeting at Brooklands, lapping at 71.62 m.p.h. before it retired. It appeared again at Brooklands in 1928 as the Wellsteed and entered by Cyril Paul, who lapped at 78.31 m.p.h.

At least one other Morris had raced at Brooklands prior to the " Red Flash," Mr. Sommers had raced a Morris at Brooklands in 1922, and because it was a more or less standard Cowley, it was given a fairly generous handicap which made it a hot favourite. However, it proved to be just a bit too standard.

" Imshi "
(1920)

" Imshi " was an 11.9 Morris Oxford two-seater which set out from London on December 19th, 1920, and for six months toured France, Italy, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Spain. It was driven by John Prioleau, the *Daily Mail's* Motoring Correspondent at that time, and the purpose of the journey was to prove to the public the reliability of the Morris car. Before setting out on the 7,000-mile journey the car had already covered 14,000 miles. The adventures of this historic Morris Oxford are covered in " The Adventures of Imshi," by John Prioleau, a 358-page book published in April, 1922.

After its famous journey " Imshi " passed through Morris distributors' hands and showrooms, and when it returned to Morris Motors they fitted it with a later radiator, different windscreen, repainted it maroon (originally white) and a copper dashboard, which, when polished, brought many a blush to damsels of the short skirt era!

Later, a conversion to electric lights was carried out and a tiny six-volt dynamo balanced itself upon the top of the magneto, driven by a little leather belt; this charged a celluloid accumulator about the size of a wireless battery, housed in the large toolbox on the running board. In 1931 it changed hands for £7 10s. It was used as a general hack until 1933 when its owner bought a 14/40 Vauxhall, and about 1934 or 1935 it made its last journey to " The Bottle Dump," near Bletchley, where it was " put to the axe."

There was a second " Imshi," which was only a shadow of " Imshi I " and lived off " Imshi I's " reputation. This was a 1922 standard dark blue 11.9-h.p. Oxford with a polished aluminium dashboard which left England with 1,000 miles on the speedometer. It carried a supplementary paraffin side and tail lamp outfit, an extra spare wheel and a well-equipped spares' locker fitted out by her makers. It was nearly written off in an argument with a locomotive during its travels, but was straightened out and completed its journey. The route this time was, with Prioleau at the wheel, Holland, Rhineland, South Prussia, Bavaria, Czecho-Slovakia, Prague, Austria, Hungary, to Budapest.

M.G. Trials " Specials "
(1925 *to* 1926)

In March 1925 Kimber completed his well-known " special." It was first registered on March 27th, 1925, which is twelve years to the day from the delivery of the very first Morris car in 1913. This car is often referred to as M.G. No. 1 and Kimber never seems to have had any doubt in his mind that this was so. I presume this is because it was the first M.G. he started to build, it possibly being started in 1923, although there is no evidence at all to prove that this was so. However, other M.G.s were completed, taxed and on the road well before Kimber's " special " was completed.

" Dragonfly I "

Kimber's " special " consisted of a specially-evolved chassis frame with ½-elliptic rear springs, and into this frame was mounted a very slightly modified 1921 11.9-h.p. overhead-valve Hotchkiss engine of the type built for Gilchrist Cars Ltd. of Scotland. It is *not* a side-valve Cowley engine converted to overhead valves. The standard Morris brake linkage was modified so that the outside handbrake operates the rear wheel brakes and the footbrake operates the front wheel brakes. The body is a narrow steel two-seater which was originally painted dark grey.

Its first road trip was in the London-Land's End Trial of 1925 in which it won a " gold " in the hands of Cecil Kimber. After this the car passed into private ownership for a short while, a firm in Stockport sold it to a local gentleman, and it was later discovered on a scrap dump in White City, Manchester, by an employee of the M.G. Car Company. It is also known that the car was seriously damaged in a road accident on December 12th, 1932. It was re-registered as FMO 842 in March 1950, but has now been re-registered as FC 7900 by the Company, which is really good news.

In 1926 two more M.G. trials' cars were built, based on the current 14/28 M.G. These cars were known as " Dragonfly I " and " Dragonfly II. " I have a photograph of " Dragonfly I " and it is nothing like so attractive as Kimber's " special." I have heard that the " Dragonflies " were quite successful, but I know nothing about them.

Mr. N. D. Routledge's M.G. Special
(1925)

Mr. Routledge's four-seater Cowley is well known at V.S.C.C. events. In my opinion, Mr. Routledge's achievements with this more or less standard Cowley are truly outstanding. In the Light Car Race at Silverstone, Routledge always seems out-handicapped and yet he is never far behind at the finish. I think his best performance in his Cowley was in the One Hour High Speed Trial. He had to run in the 2-litre class as the Cowley has a capacity of 1,548 c.c., but even so he won an award. The Cowley does this with utter reliability.

Routledge was wanting a rather faster Morris, but refused to try and get this by messing up his Cowley. He then had the good fortune to acquire some 1925 M.G. bits and pieces which were the only remains from a car W. H. Charnock used to own. With these bits as a basis Routledge started to build a car on the lines of Kimber's " special." He should feel well pleased with the result. The car really goes and certainly looks like a motor car. Unlike so many people he didn't seem to tire of the whole project when it came to body building, and just throw a few pieces of aluminium on to the chassis as a susbtitute for the body. The secret of this car's fine performance lies in the ingenious use of twin carburetters. It is a really splendid vehicle, and must be the last " Bullnose " to be built!

Ashton's " Special "
(1923)

Probably the most ingenious " special " of all is the one constructed in the blacksmith's shop in Abermule some twenty years ago, and this " special " is still in use. It is a 1923 Morris Cowley converted into a three-wheeler with a mid-mounted mower attachment; this was the first mid-mounted mower in Montgomeryshire!

(*Footnote.*—Mr. Ashton is a Kerry man.)

Table 1—CARS BUILT (1913-1926)

Date	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	*Total*
Approx. number built ...	900	2,000	163	685	1,128	204	387	1,932	3,076	6,956	20,048	32,819	55,582	42,821	Approx. 168,000
Number known to exist ...	14	10	0	3	1	0	0	2	6	14	35	23	54	52	214

Table 2—SPECIFICATION OF ENGINES FITTED TO MORRIS CARS (March 1913 to October 1926)

FOUR-CYLINDER

Ref.	*Make*	*Morris Model to which Fitted*	*Date*	*Bore mm.*	*Stroke mm.*	*Capacity c.c.*	*R.A.C. Rating*	*Approximate B.H.P.*	*Valves*	*Carburetter*	*REMARKS*	*Ref.*
I	White and Poppe	Oxford	Mar. 1913—1918(?)	60	90	1,018	9	15 at 2,300 r.p.m.	Side in "T" head	White and Poppe No. 25	First engine tested 21.3.13. Last engine tested 13.6.15. Numbering commenced at 5769. Numbering ended at 8278.	I
II	Continental	Cowley	Feb. Sept. 1915 — 1919	69	100	1,495	11.9	?	Side in "L" head	Horizontal Zenith	Known as the " Red Seal." Only 1,500 engines made.	II
III	Hotchkiss	Cowley and Oxford	Sept. 1919 — 1920	69	100	1,495	11.9	?	Ditto	Ditto	About 16,000 engines made	III
IV	Ditto	Ditto	May 1920 — 1923	69.5	102	1,548	11.9	24 at 2,350 r.p.m.	Ditto	S.U. or Zenith		IV
V	Ditto	Oxford	Oct. May 1922 — 1923	75	102	1,802	13.9	28 at 2,350 r.p.m.	Ditto	Ditto		V
VI	Morris	Cowley	May Oct. 1923 — 1926	69.5	102	1,548	11.9	24 at 2,350 r.p.m.	Ditto	Smith	Aluminium pistons replaced cast iron pistons at engine number 66931 in September 1924. Steel con.-rods were used throughout the period. About 95,000 engines made.	VI
VII	Ditto	Oxford	May Oct. 1923 — 1926	75	102	1,802	13.9	28 at 2,350 r.p.m.	Ditto	Ditto	Aluminium pistons replaced cast iron pistons and duralumin con.-rods replaced steel con.-rods at engine number 41331 in May 1924. About 52,000 engines made.	VII

SIX-CYLINDER

VIII	Morris	Oxford Six	1915	?	?	?	?	?	Side(?)	?	(Only one made(?)) Morris D-type six-cylinder.	VIII
IX	Ditto	Ditto	1920	70	102	2,355	17.9	?	O.H.V.	Zenith	(Only two made.) Morris E-type six-cylinder.	IX
X	Ditto	Ditto	1921	69.5	102	2,320	17.9	39 at 2,800 r.p.m.	Side	Skinner Union	(Only one made, engine number 16462.) Morris F-type six-cylinder.	X
XI	Hotchkiss	Ditto	1922 — 1925	69.5	102	2,320	17.9	39 at 2,800 r.p.m.	Ditto	5-jet Smith	(Only 25-50 made, numbering commenced at F101.) Hotchkiss F-type six-cylinder.	XI

Table 3—" BULLNOSE " PRICES, NEW

Model	*Type*	1915	1916	1917	1918	*Early* 1919	*Late* 1919	*Early* 1920	*Late* 1920	*Early* 1921	*Late* 1921	*Early* 1922	*Late* 1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	*REMARKS*
Morris Oxford (Four-cylinder)	Chassis						£335	£385	£445	£445	£410	£305	£278. 5.0	£220	£180/ £195	£185/ £205	£172.10.0	In the 1923 season either 11.9-h.p. or 13.9-h.p. engines were available. 13.9-h.p. engine cost £10 more than price given here.
	Two-seater						£360	£400	£535	£535	£510	£414	£378. 5.0	£330	£300	£260	£240	
	Four-seater						£390	£495	£590	£590	£565	£446	£409.10.0	£355	£320	£285	£260	
	Coupé						£450	£500	£675	£675	£595	£500	£446. 5.0	£390	£355	£305	£295	
	Cabriolet													£425	£385	£365	£330	Front-wheel brakes standard in 1925 and 1926 although cars could be obtained in 1925 for £10 less than price given here.
	Four-door saloon														£395	£385	£350	
	Landaulette																£360	
	Saloon landaulette																£385	
Morris Oxford "Silent" Six	Chassis													£375	£325			Except for the one special 1925 " Six " all had two-wheel brakes.
	Two-seater													£475	£440			
	Four-seater													£500	£460			
	Cabriolet													£575	£525			

Table 3 " BULLNOSE " PRICES, NEW—*continued*

Model	*Type*	1915	1916	1917	1918	*Early* 1919	*Late* 1919	*Early* 1920	*Late* 1920	*Early* 1921	*Late* 1921	*Early* 1922	*Late* 1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	*REMARKS*
Morris Cowley	* Chassis								£395	£390	£325	£325	£200	£185	£160/ £165	£145	£142 . 10 . 0	Front-wheel brakes standard in 1926 although the open (*) models were available without f.w.b. on request for £7 . 10 . 0 less than price given here.
	* Two-seater	£165 . 18 . 0					£315	£375	£375	£435	£375	£322	£278 . 5 . 0	£225	£198	£175	£170	
	* Four-seater	£194 . 5 . 0						£390	£525	£525	£425	£425	£315	£255	£225	£195	£190	
	Sports										£398 . 10 . 0	£351	£315					
	* Occasional Four														£215	£185	£180	
	Coupé																£195	
	Two-door saloon																£235	
	* Commercial Traveller's																£185	
M.G.	Two-seater															£350	£350	Kimber's "Special" reputedly cost £250 to build and was sold after the 1925 " Land's End " for £300.
	Four-seater														£395	£375	£375	
	Salonette															£475	£475	

Notes : 1. White and Poppe-engined models—prices given in text.
2. Where no price is quoted, it shows the model was not available during that particular year.

Table 4—TYPICAL " BULLNOSE " SPECIFICATIONS

Date	*Model*	*Engine**	*Clutch*	*Gear Ratios*	*Gear Change*	*Final Drive*	*REMARKS*
1914	Oxford	I	Hardened steel and bronze multiple disc	1st, 5¼ m.p.h. = 1,000 r.p.m. 2nd, 10⅜ m.p.h. = 1,000 r.p.m. 3rd, 17⅛ m.p.h. = 1,000 r.p.m.	Right-hand gate	3.5 : 1, (Std. 4.2 : 1, or (de luxe) 4.6 : 1 worm	De luxe chassis numbering commenced at 1001.
Feb. Sept. 1915 — 1919	Cowley	II	Two Ferodo-lined plates running dry		Central ball	Bevel	11-in. dia. brake drums.
Oct. Sept. 1919 — 1924	Cowley and Oxford	III, IV, VI and VII	Four-plate type running in oil (two plates with cork insets)	Reverse 18.5 15.2/8.17/4.75	Ditto	57/12 Helical bevel	Final drive of sports Cowley is 4.4 : 1.
Oct. Sept. 1924 — 1925	Ditto	VI and VII	Ditto	Reverse 17.2 14.13/7.6/4.42	Ditto	53/12 Spiral bevel	
Ditto	Oxford saloon and cabriolet only	VII	Ditto	Reverse 18.5 15.2/8.17/4.15	Ditto	57/12 Spiral bevel	
Oct. Sept. 1925 — 1926	Cowley and Oxford	VII	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto	On the Oxford 20 m.p.h. in top gear = 1,160 r.p.m. On the Cowley 20 m.p.h. in top gear = 1,200 r.p.m.
1924 — 1925 —1926	M.G.	VII	Ditto		Ditto	4.33 : 1	

* *See Table* 2. *Note :* On Oxfords only the Barker dipping headlamp was optional in 1925 and standard in 1926.

PLEASANT END-OF-SEASON BRANDS

Another season's racing at Brands Hatch ended on a pleasant note with the B.R.S.C.C.'s meeting on October 4th. Under almost heat-wave conditions, two new class records were set up, and the saloon car event provided one of the best-ever races on this 1.24-mile circuit.

Graham Warner won the opening race (10 laps for series production sports cars) with his Elite, after Chris Lawrence's Morgan had been in front for five laps. Another Elite, driven by Edward Lewis, was third.

Fifteen laps for Formule Libre and a close dice for the lead ensued between David Piper's 2.2-litre Lotus and Mike McKee in Jim Russell's F.2 Cooper. They passed and repassed for twelve laps, then McKee spun at Druids, restarting too far behind Piper to challenge him. However, in the course of their duel both lapped in 58.2 sec.—beating the existing F.1 lap record. But McKee's being a F.2 car, it meant that only Piper could claim the record. Brian Whitehouse kept his F.2 Cooper in third place throughout, having duelled earlier with Keith Greene's similar car. Twisk's F.2 Cooper was fourth.

By winning the 15-lap F.3 race that followed, Tom Bridger takes this year's *World Sports* Trophy. Leading on points before the race, Don Parker retired on the 11th lap; Pitcher was also out after two laps.

McKee and de Selincourt fought out the lead in the Formula Junior race, the former winning by a small margin after 12 laps. Both drove Elvas, as did most of the rest of the field, including Chris Lawrence (third) and Peter Jopp (fourth).

Graham Hill drove a nice race to win the 1,100 c.c. sports car event with a wishbone-suspended Lotus XVII. For once his opposition didn't come from Lola, but from Mike McKee's Elva, which kept within a second of him for nine laps and then spun, letting Alan Rees into second place on his first Lola drive. McKee managed to get past the Lola again, but could not catch Hill. Peter Gammon's Lola and Alan Stacey's works Lotus unfortunately non-started.

Words cannot do full justice to the 15-lap saloon car event which followed. Hutcheson (Riley 1.5), Leston (Riley 1.5) and Hill (A35) were principally involved. Dicing hard with Pilsworth's Riley, Blydenstein's Borgward and Kingham's Zephyr in the earlier stages, they managed to detach themselves in the end. When they came on to the bottom straight for the last time the two Rileys touched, wavered, and Hill was through to an incredible win. It will be a long time before a better race is seen at Brands. Blydenstein put up a new 1,301-1,600 c.c. record with a lap in 70 sec.

Last event of the day paired the seven fastest F.3 and Formula Junior cars. Bridger won yet again, from Robinson's Stuart Cooper Norton, with de Selincourt first home of the F.J.s, some 10 sec. behind the winner. So the 500s have still got it over the Formula Junior boys, but the Anglia engine might alter all that.—D.J.R.