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Welcome to the SVW Newsletter.

This month we look at a rather special SA that has resurfaced in the USA, a factory rally-prepared VA Tourer, a superb VA Tickford in South Africa and John Arkley's beautiful SA Saloon restoration. We're all looking forward to what we hope is an especially good year that will enable us to make use of our lovely cars to a greater extent compared with the past couple of years.

Remember to book your hotel stay for the SVW Event in Lincolnshire (26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> July). All details are on the website, but you're welcome to contact me if you have any queries. At the time of writing, twenty rooms have already been booked.

## REGISTER CHAIRMAN'S JOTTINGS

As I write these jottings in late January there are indications that we may be getting back to a more normal situation and be able to participate in many more activities and events with our MGs again, plus hopefully our European and Overseas members will be able to join us again in the UK.

Hopefully many of you have already made your bookings for the Register's major event this year which is based at the Petwood Hotel, Woodall Spa, Lincolnshire (details on the SVW website). For those who do not know, the Petwood Hotel was occupied by 617 Squadron (The Dam Busters) of the RAF during the second world war and there is a small museum dedicated to them on site.

As Chairman, one of my pleasurable duties is to send welcome letters and a copy of the latest SVW Review to our new members. Despite the restrictions of last year there were a number of cars which changed hands (9 UK, 1 Sweden, 1 Canada) and, already this year, 2 in the USA, 1 in Sweden and 1 in the UK.

So may I repeat my welcome to our new members and I am sure you will all also welcome them when they are seen out in their cars or at events.

One of the other tasks I have completed is to update the list of SVW articles of interest on our website. Whilst many of you use our Facebook or E-Group sites to get answers to your queries, we still maintain the Index of Articles where normally you will find more detailed articles relating to your question. Many of you keep copies of the SVW Review, Safety Fast and MG Enthusiast; the index is very useful in locating the actual magazine page containing the answer to your question. I, like most of you, can recall seeing an article but remembering its exact location is a problem. For those of you who do not keep the magazines we can supply copies of the relevant articles.

Enjoy your SVW Motoring.  
Jim

## **URGENT HELP REQUIRED**

The SVW Register is looking for an MGCC member / SVW owner to take on the advertising role for our annual publication - The SVW Review - for 2022 and beyond. This entails servicing our long-term advertisers in terms of agreeing the advert content / size and invoicing on behalf of the Register. In addition we already have some new advertisers to help through the process and we also need to reach out to find additional advertisers. This task is normally concentrated in early spring. The fact that advertising revenue no longer covers costs puts The SVW Review at risk. The volunteer would not need to join The SVW Committee, but would be most welcome to do so. If interested, please email [info@svwregister.co.uk](mailto:info@svwregister.co.uk).

## **SA Saloon Resurfaces From Hibernation**

New owner Landon Hunter from Pennsylvania made contact in January via our MGSVW email group. He is now the proud owner of SA0720, a 1936 Saloon. As he said “I aspired to ownership of a specimen of this grand design since the very moment I first set eyes upon the SA that was seen on the floor of the BMH museum outside Gaydon nearly 14 years ago”.

Landon’s SA had been bequeathed to the Owls Head Transport Museum in Maine some 20 years ago from the Dick Cobb collection.

It is not without its glitches in the form of a gear change that “feels as precise as a cooked piece of spaghetti being pushed forwards from its end, and gauges displaying some sort of palsy-like behaviour”, together with copious oil leaks!



SA 0720 in its new home and (below) the colour of much of the engine and components.



Landon was especially intrigued about the colour of his engine, which is a metallic blue, as shown in the photo of his oil filter housing. There was a moment of excitement when John Gray in NZ referred to the blue engine colour used by the MG Factory Competition Department. Normally an SA engine would be painted mid-Brunswick Green. The Competitions Department typically prepared cars for racing / rallying and this was generally confined to the sporting pre-war models, such as the Q and R Types. We think it more likely that SA0720 had its engine painted in more recent years in a colour that pleased the owner and is perhaps too bright for the Thirties era, so is unlikely to have any sporting provenance. It is fitted with its original engine QPHG 1002. This does highlight the fact that some blue engines or components out there may have had special attention by the factory! You can read more on blue painted MG engines below.

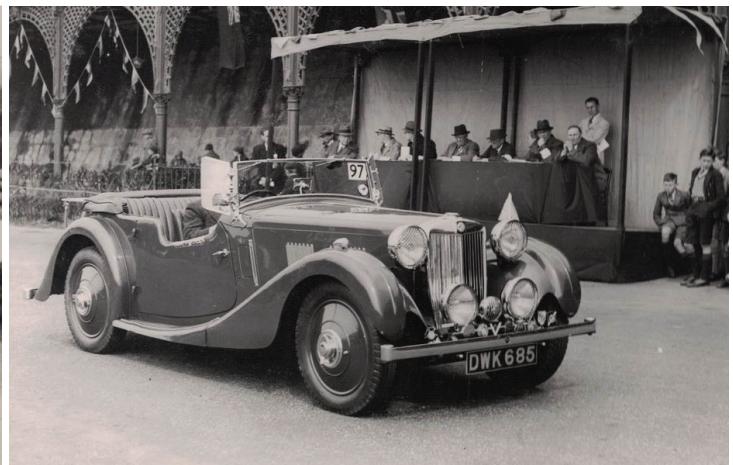
# Rally Prepared VA Tourer

John Gray's VA Tourer, chassis 1770, remains very original and seems to have been prepared by the factory for rallying. John told us: "We were aware when we purchased it, that it had been entered in most of the major British Rallies from late 1938, until the start of the war. The car had also been awarded the 'Coachwork' trophy for its class at the 1939 RAC. We were fortunate to have been contacted by Gary Perry in early 2016 to say that a UK MG Car Club member had informed the club that the RAC trophies, pennants and an extensive photo album of the rally history of an MG VA car were coming up for auction in Bristol and the car was traced back to me. I purchased the auction lot, which gave a great boost to the car's history, as there were around 28 photos, including of Mr Clarke with the car and trophies".

Back to the engine colour, John says "The main engine components had been originally painted the usual red for a 1938 dry clutch car, however all engine, head and other components back to and including the steel bell housing were overpainted with an unusual muted mid to darker metallic blue in a satin finish. Some smaller components, including the water pump and steel pipes coming from the pump had only ever been painted the same metallic blue colour, which possibly indicates that this colour was applied from new at the factory. The gearbox was painted the usual MG red and the AC air cleaner black over green".



VA1770 taking part in the Blackpool Rally



John Gray's VA Tourer, RAC Rally parade  
Brighton 1939

John continues: "I had been aware of the unusual blue colour on the engine since buying the car but was unaware of its significance, until a New Zealand early-MG enthusiast, Peter Croft, visited to view the new purchase. One of his first comments was to ask the history of the car as in his opinion the metallic blue paint indicated that the car had been through the MG Competition Department, as he opined that colour was their signature and looks age-appropriate. Peter Croft is a stickler for originality on all his cars and said he had seen this colour on other original MG pre-SVW cars in the UK. Further intrigue comes from the original generator on the car, which is a Lucas Special Equipment item, outputting approximately 21 amps which would have been factory supplied to power the pair of Lucas FT67 driving lights originally fitted for rallying. The Lucas applied paint to this generator's end plates is also a very similar satin finish metallic blue/grey, but in a darker hue".

DWK 685 was first registered in Coventry to Mr Sidney Charles Clarke of Queens Road, Nuneaton. He was a picture theatre proprietor. Rallying in those days usually entailed driving to the event, taking part wearing a traditional flat cap, then driving home again. Mr Clarke's son was also named Sidney Charles Clarke and he is listed in Census records as a Motor Mechanic. He co-drove with his father in all the rallies and John has several photos of him driving the car in the events. Mr Clarke senior was an air raid warden during the war and was tragically killed in a major German bombing raid on Nuneaton on 17<sup>th</sup> May 1941. SC Clarke junior went on to own an HRG sports car in 1947 and then a Ford V8 powered J2 Allard in 1950, both of which were used in numerous motorsport events, with considerable success.

Interestingly, Lilian Roper also took part in the 1939 RAC Rally in a VA Tickford, together with two SAs and two WAs!

## VA Tickford in South Africa

I was in touch with David Ginsberg in recent months regarding acquiring a head gasket and I managed to get one out to him for future use. David took this lovely picture of VA1676 at Millers Point in Simonstown, Cape Town on the occasion of his son Saul's wedding on 16 December 2021. David says "It's been in my custodianship since 1986 and has been used for all our family weddings since then. Saul helps me keep the car in good working order".



VA1676 at Cape Town

David went on to say "We recently had to repair the starter motor. It's a peculiar one - Peter Jack used the innards of a TC starter and the back plate of an early MGB as the original armature was shot. The M418A starter has the pull start on the body, plain backplate and 11 teeth, whereas the M418G has a different back plate and armature, and 10 teeth. The MGB backplate needed adapting to fit with new holes for the screws. It's a successful repair and stronger than the original as the field coils are slightly bigger".

Note: the SA and WA use different versions of the M418G.



Standard markings on a VA starter motor

## Bangers and Cash

The new series was due to air from 20<sup>th</sup> January. This date had been delayed several times, meaning the previous episodes have been repeated to death. We can now expect to see Mark Boldry with the family SA Saloon in one of the episodes, which should have been screened on 10<sup>th</sup> February. If you recall, a pair of SA Saloons were auctioned by Mathewsons before covid-19 hit and both were bought by John Arkley as restoration projects. John made remarkable progress and SA2678 was finished last November. Following the auction, the production team filmed the Boldry SA Saloon at their home in Yorkshire, conveniently located not too far from Mathewsons, to see what a good example of a similar car should look like. More recently, the production team visited John to report on progress and this will probably be held off for a future programme. As John said “The last owner’s daughter and mum came to see it and they filmed lots of tears”!



Superbly restored in record time!

A spin-off show is in the pipeline called Bangers and Cash Classic Car Restorers, an episode of which is expected to document more fully how John achieved what was a very brave restoration. The other SA is chassis 2859, which John hopes to start soon.



The two SA Saloons fresh from Mathewsons

And finally.....



John Dutton's granddaughter Annie and husband Daniel  
with SA Saloon wedding car last August in Kent