



## Contents

Foreword by Nick Stephenson, Rover Group	6
Introduction	7
1 The pre-war years	8
2 The 1940s	40
3 The 1950s	54
4 The 1960s	90
5 The 1970s	134
6 The 1980s	180
7 The 1990s	204
Appendices	
1 MG PROTOTYPES WITH DO CODE-NUMBERS	238
2 THE COMPLETE MG EX-REGISTER—1929-77	238
3 THE ADO CODE-NUMBERS	241
4 THE XC CODE-NUMBERS	243
5 OTHER RELATED PROJECT CODES	243
6 CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS	243

## Introduction

The subject of motor cars, and sports car in particular, has been one of the major obsessions of the 20th century. Small boys of all ages have been fascinated by cars ever since Kenneth Grahame's Mr Toad first went 'Poop, poop!' Within the sports car clique, there are a select few marques that command an obsession greater than all the rest: at the top of the heap must surely lie MG. Why this should be is a matter that fascinates historians and enthusiasts alike, but perhaps the key is that MG sports cars have always been desirable, yet affordable—never unattainable.

One man was at the heart of the MG marque, Cecil Kimber, who drew around him, like moths to a flame, a corps of men who seemed to dedicate their very souls to working for MG. With Kimber's enforced departure in 1941, and tragic death just four years later, his mantle was passed to others. Over the years, the fortunes of the marque have waxed and waned with the tides of mergers and reorganization—mostly away from the heart of MG affairs, but always with a governing influence—and for a while in the last decade, it looked as though the days of the octagon were numbered. Thankfully, recent events have proved that not to be the case, and MG seems to be faced with an exciting future.

Of course, many books have been written about MG, but in this volume, I have tried to capture a sense of not only the cars (including many that were still-born), but also an inkling of the spirit of the people who made MG what it was. I hope that reading it gives you at least half as much pleasure as it has given me during the 12 years that I have spent researching and writing it.

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