Andrew Hedges

The Editor Interviews The Amateur Racing and Rally Driver, International Powerboat Racer And British Olympic Bobsleigh Team Member Who Went On To Become The Most Successful Post-War Works MG Driver

E. How did you first become interested in cars ?

A.H. I was always interested in cars and bikes from first having Dinky Toys as a child, but my grandfather was a great friend of old Bill Morris *(founder of Morris Motors, later to become Lord Nuffield – Ed)* and Cecil Kimber *(founder of M.G. – Ed)* both of whom lived nearby. On my mother's side there were two uncles who were mad keen on bikes and cars – particularly Morgans, but they were both killed in the war.



Red Label Bentley.

Believe it or not the first car I raced was a vintage Red Label Bentley. This was followed by an Austin A40 and an Austin-Healey Sprite, both of which I raced, sometimes towing the Sprite behind the A40. The A40 was prepared by Alexander Engineering (Michael Christie) and Don Moore in Cambridge Then I bought a Sebring Sprite, a super little car built by John Sprinzel which I campaigned all over Europe – wherever I could get starting money - and managed to win my class in the Autosport Championship. In those days I was part of Scuderia Light Blue with Bill McCowen (AC Bristol), John Todd Jnr (Peerless) and Philip Martyn, who owned an early F3, the name of which I cannot remember. *(Philip, an international sportsman and backgammon player went on to marry Nina Rindt, widow of Jochen – Ed).*

Then in 1962 I got a call from Marcus Chambers, Competition Manager of MG. *"Would I join the Works Team to race an MGA with Jack Sears at Sebring ?"* My first Works drive and we finished 16th overall and runner-up in our class with the other MGA, driven by Jack Flaherty and Jim Parkinson, third. That was the first time I met Steve McQueen who was sharing a Sebring Sprite with Stirling Moss.





Andrew in the Austin A40. Picture: Christobel Carlisle.



The Sebring Sprite - Coupe de Salon, Montlhèry.



Jack Sears and Andrew with the MGA on their way to 16th overall and runner-up in their class at Sebring, 1962.

It must have been about that point that I had lunch at the Steering Wheel Club with Dick Jacobs who had had three special MG Midget coupes built by the factory and I was invited to take the place of Tommy Bridger who had retired from racing. These were very pretty cars designed by Syd Enever along the lines of a scaled down Aston Martin DB4.

The other cars were driven by Alan Foster, as my team mate, and John Milne from Scotland who mainly campaigned his in the North. They were so successful that the factory was inundated with enquiries from all over the world as to when these cars would be available and at what price. It was decided that the disparity in price compared to the relatively cheap Midget could not be justified, but I believe the seeds had been sown for the higher priced MGB GT which followed later.

One highlight I remember occurred at Brands Hatch on the full GP circuit when the heavens opened and we managed to win our class and I finished 7th overall behind five Ferraris and one Zagato Aston Martin! Another memory was at Snetterton for the Autosport 3 Hour Championship Race which finished in the dark. Shortly before the start some kind gentleman in a transporter backed into my car in the paddock, smashing the offside lamps and wing. After frantic work with insulating tape I made the start and again won our class with Alan second.



The MG 1100 in the 6 Hour 'Motor' race at Brands Hatch, 1963. Andrew Hedges sharing drive with Alan Foster.

On 1st October of 1962 The MG 1100 saloon was announced and Dick Jacobs entered one for Alan and I to drive in the Brands Hatch Motor Six-Hour Race only five days later – the model only having been homologated on 5th ! Thanks to some cunning pit work by Dick Jacobs we were placed first in the 1,300cc class. All the class winning cars had to be loaded onto a transporter, put at the disposal of 'The Motor', and were taken away for journalists to test and report. I have a cutting here. *" Almost all the winners that we had tried felt like racing cars, most of them felt like racing cars that had been racing for six hours. The exception was the MG. Put back the few bits of minor trim that had been removed and Auntie could have driven it to the shops herself."*

I carried on in 1963 and '64 racing for Dick Jacobs with the Midgets before he returned them to the factory after three successful years. Dick showed me his accounts for 1964 when the team could not have had a better result. With starting money, prize money and bonuses from Castrol, Dunlop, Ferodo, Lucas, Champion and BMC the income was £750. Not allowing for postage and telephone calls the outgoings were £876 – rather different to today ! When we drove for Dick, we did so for the fun, enjoyment and his superb car preparation. It was a great era and the cars were fantastic for their time and produced some formidable results.



The special works Jacobs lightweight racing Midget - styled by Syd Enever.

1964 was also the year I joined Paddy Hopkirk for the first time at Le Mans with the MGB as an official Works entry. That was the time that Paddy fell off his Moulton bicycle in the paddock and started the race with sore gravel wounds. That was really the only drama as in the race the car ran like clockwork, moving up to 35th place of the 55 starters after the first hour and was 27th by midnight, averaging just over 100mph. Top speed through the speed trap was 139mph – not bad for a fully trimmed and carpeted production car, the only modification being the 'droop-snout' nose. Apart from the replacement of a tyre with a slow puncture, the only unscheduled work on the car was the replacement of the quick-release filler cap, broken at the hinge by the clumsy action of a French 'plombeur'. The new one was kindly donated by Marcus Chambers, now with the rival Sunbeam Tiger team in a neighbouring pit. Again, a sporting gesture which one would be unlikely to come across today.

At the end of the race we finished 19th overall, taking home the 'Motor' Trophy for the highest-placed British finisher at an average speed of 99.9mph. We repeated the success the following year, finishing 11th overall.





Top right: Silverstone, 1964, Andrew avoids spinning MGB.

Right: Andrew driving MG Midget at Zandvoort.



Andrew with Paddy Hopkirk at Le Mans in 1964. They finished 19th overall and were the highest placed British finishers.

Andrew Hedges



The Editor Interviews The Amateur Racing and Rally Driver, International Powerboat Racer And British Olympic Bobsleigh Team Member Who Went On To Become The Most Successful Post-War Works MG Driver

In the June Issue we covered Andrew's introduction to Motorsport with a Vintage Bentley, Austin A40, MGA, MG Midget Coupe, MG 1100 Saloon and MGB

Ed. You also raced a number of times in the Targa Florio.

A.H. Yes, there's a photograph here of a rather bent GTO Ferrari. I had hit an Alsatian in practice and a bridge in the race. I think that would have been 1962. Practice on the Targa could be more dangerous than the race as the roads were open to normal traffic and the *'swervability'* of a donkey cart is not that impressive! I faired rather better in 1965 with Paddy in one of the Dick Jacobs' Midget coupes which, by this time, had been returned to Abingdon and entered by the Works. We finished 11th overall, just conceding the class win by 65 seconds to a very quick, locally driven Abarth Simca.

In 1966 I returned to share a Works MGB with John Handley who was more regularly seen racing the Works Mini-Coopers. The other car was shared by Timo Makinen and John Rhodes. For some reason our car had arrived without bumpers and was in trouble with the scrutineers. This was solved when a spectator's MGB was spotted in one of the car parks and he was delighted to offer his bumpers for duty in return for a VIP tour of the MG factory and a set of new bumpers on his return to England! This was the occasion when we all visited the funfair in Palermo one evening after practice and terrified the locals with some bravado driving. Timo thought it would be a lot more exciting if the electric power could be turned up to increase the speed and after an hilarious session with the operator, who eventually succumbed to most of the contents of a bottle of whisky, the mechanics located the master control lever and moved it to maximum volts. The results were spectacular, the locals abandoned the track and watched in horror, the sparks flew, the air was thick with the smell of overheating electric motors and it all came to an inevitable



Targe Florio - the wrecked Ferrari GTO - after hitting a dog! Andrew is sitting on the wall.



Andrew in 1964 - the MG was probably one of the last true production sports cars to run at Le Mans.

halt when someone totally inverted a car and another went straight off the track through the barrier!

In the race all went according to plan with Timo and I doing the first stints and pulling out a one minute lead over the best placed Ferrari to lead the 2-litre GT class. After three laps when we came in for refuelling and driver change we had increased our lead by a comfortable five minutes. John Handley took over from me and on his second lap the heavens opened and he went off the road on a bridge and into the river bed. Apparently, he was on the point of retiring when a crowd appeared and literally picked the car up and carried it back onto the road. Amazingly, the only damage was a bent exhaust pipe and Stuart Turner, the team manager, was none the wiser. Meanwhile, the other car, driven by John Rhodes started to lose a lot of oil and with 45 miles to the lap feared that he wouldn't reach the pits. Eventually, in one of the villages he found a garage, topped up and staggered back to the pits where the mechanics over-filled the sump, Timo took over and both cars managed to finish 1st and 2nd in the 2-litre class. It was interesting looking at the record books to see that the MGB's race average, despite the appalling weather, was fast enough to have won the Targa outright five years previously, out-performing cars such as the Ferrari, Maserati, and Mercedes of the Moss-Collins-Hawthorn-Fangio era.

Going back to 1963 another great event was the Tour de France with John Sprinzel in the ex-Le Mans 'droop-snout' MGB. In those days the event lasted ten days with about half the nights spent in hotels. The overall sponsor was Shell and there were big money prizes for winners of each individual stage, hill –climb or race. So you did not have to finish to be in the money, which was an unusual touch. There were tents full of food and drink at many controls and a huge five-course dinner at the circuits. On the road stages food would be served on the basis of one course per control – you might get your oysters and Chablis starter at one control, the roast beef a few miles along the road and peaches and brandy at a third control. Remember, this is France we are talking about, and at a time when drinking and driving was still socially acceptable – not that we took more than a token sip or two.

As you passed through each region the cars would be showered with gifts of the local speciality. At the circuit in the Cognac region, for instance, Monsieur Martel himself would hand out half-bottles of his best five-star. We were just glad that we had service crews to carry all this loot.



The ex- Le Mans droop-snout MGB on the Tour de France in 1963.

The entry list always read like a *"Who's Who?"* of motor sport with grand prix drivers in their Ferraris and Porsches, most of the top rallymen in whatever exotica they could lay their hands on, and the factory teams anxious not to miss out on the tremendous publicity to be gained. Policing was exceptional and virtually every car had a motorcycle escort through the towns – often, I remember, it was quite hard and a bit nerve-wracking to keep up with the gendarme motoring at 80mph through dense rush hour traffic, his whistle glued to his lips, blasting at any poor Simca driver who dared to exercise his right of way. To see the procession of these raw and powerful race cars attracted millions of spectators who would gather at every junction whatever the hour. At each circuit knowledgeable commentators would keep the vast audience on its toes - the cheering and clapping far exceeding anything I have seen at a normal race meeting.

Back to the race and we gradually worked our way up the ranks until we reached the foggy Pyrenees where there were two hill-climb tests which we stormed up through the mist to take half a minute off the leading Ferraris. Suddenly we were in fourth place behind two GTO Ferraris and a Porsche 904 – in an MGB! Next morning the banner headlines in L'Equipe, the French 'Sporting Life', screamed *"Sprinzel-Hedges MG batters Ferraris"* as if they could not quite believe it themselves.



Andrew talking to Keith Greene before the start of the 1965 Nürburgring 1000km race.



Keith Greene starting his stint in the 1965 Nürburgring 1000km race.

Sadly, our glory did not last long, as the following night I had a little nap. Unfortunately, I was driving at the time! I woke up surrounded by beautiful faces, thinking for a moment that I had gone to heaven and these were angels. A closer look revealed them to be nuns at the local clinic.

Unfortunately this excursion put me out of action for a while, thus missing the 3 hour race at Snetterton where I was due to drive one of the Dick Jacobs' Midgets. At the time I had maximum points in the 'Autosport' Championship next to Roy Salvadori and Mike Beckwith, both of whom retired at Snetterton which would have left me the winner.

Sadly, our glory did not last long, as the following night I had a little nap. Unfortunately, I was driving at the time!

John Sprinzel and I had a repeat performance in the Tour de France the following year, with another 'droop-snout' MGB. Once more we crept up the leader board and by coincidence were within five km of the spot where we had crashed when we stopped again, this time with a blown head gasket.

Later that year I teamed up with Keith Greene, son of the legendary Syd, for the Nurburgring 1,000 kms in what turned out to be the Jacobs Midgets' greatest run. Keith and I won the 1,300 cc Prototype G.T. class with team mates Alan Foster and Chris Martyn second and we were the highest placed British finishers.

In March 1965 I returned to Sebring to race one of the by now ex-Dick Jacobs Midgets with Roger Mac. This was the year of the amazing floods when, with five hours to go, the skies suddenly became overcast, and within seconds a miniature hurricane whipped along the dusty pit road and with a peal of thunder the rain came bucketing down in torrents. Within minutes the scene in front of the pits was chaotic. The low dividing wall between the track and the pit road trapped the water where it completely blanketed to a depth of at least six inches. We were creeping along at 20 mph, submerged headlights looming through the water, windscreen wipers flaying helplessly. The poor drivers of open cars were trying to stand up in their 'baths' to see over the low screens. Even in the closed Midget coupe I had to either stick my head out of the side window or hang out of the open door.

At first we thought the race would be stopped but as there was no word from the announcer the cars were kept running to entertain the 55,000 crowd who had been expecting a dominating all-American victory by the Chaparral-Chevrolet of Jim Hall and Hap Sharp over the Ford GT of Bruce McClaren and Ken Miles. In the BMC sports cars we came into our own and Timo Makinen, driving one of the Works Sprites, actually passed the leading Chaparral right in front of the pits, much to the amusement of all concerned except the poor Chaparral driver who was totally swamped as the Sprite cruised by.



In the pits at Sebring in 1965, Andrew and Roger Mac went on to win the class with car No. 68.



Sebring 1966 with Paddy Hopkirk, Graham Whitehead, Andrew and Stuart Turner.

Timo, who actually made up two complete laps on the race leader during the storm, commented in his characteristic 'Finglish' :

"The Sprite is about four inches deep with water inside. I am fabulous dripping. When I accelerate the water it rushes up to the back of the car around my shoulders. When I brake it all runs down to my toes. In the corners it slops from side to side. To empty the car I go fast round a corner and open the door at the right moment. It all fantastic fun!"

When one of the MGBs came in for a tyre change a mechanic, standing in nine inches of water, lost his balance while trying to lift the car on the quick-lift jack, fell backwards into the water with the jack on top of him and ended up completely submerged Another mechanic took a wheel off, dropped it on the ground, turned round to pick it up again only to find that it had floated off down the pit lane!

Towards the end the skies brightened and the sun began to come out but by then Roger and I had moved up the field and finished 12th in the GT category and winning our class.

I was back at Sebring in 1966 in the Prototype class sharing probably the fastest MGB yet built at Abingdon with Paddy who came in after only two laps with a broken rocker arm. Ace mechanic Nobby Hall fitted a replacement in only 17 minutes and within two hours we had carved our way back through the field, passing the leading Triumph TR4 prototype, all set for a comfortable ride to the flag. However, with only 1½ hours to go we were out with a rod through the side.

To be continued next month.



The Andrew Hedges/Paddy Hopkirk prototype was one of the most powerful and fastest MGB's built at Abingdon - Sebring 1966.

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In the July issue we covered Andrews experiencing the Targa Floria, Tour de France, Nurburgring 1,000 kms and Sebring.

Moving forward to 1966 I took part in what was described as the 'World's Longest Motor Race' which was really a replacement for the old Spa-Sofia-Liege Marathon, last run in 1964. It ran for 84 hours over the full 17.5 mile Nurburgring, but starting and finishing in the city of Liege. Again I was in a Works MGB paired with Julien Vernaeve, a Belgian BMC dealer who had made a name for himself racing and rallying Group 1 Minis. In the second car were Roger Enever, son of MG designer Syd, and Alec Poole, from the family BMC dealership in Ireland, who raced Midgets and later went on to capture the British Saloon Car Championship in a 1-litre Mini-Cooper. Every car was set a bogey lap time according to its group capacity. For the GT cars this was 16 minutes in the day (19 minutes at night) which represented 66mph during the day (56mph at night). This was quite a target for an MGB – particularly for over 5,000 miles ! I should say that an extra five minutes was allowed for refuelling every ten laps and twenty minutes for running repairs and service every fifty laps.

> ***. . . by which time we were lying 34th with 'only' three more days to go!***

We got off to a bad start when on the opening lap Roger went off where road menders had resurfaced one of the corners, leaving a treacherous coating of loose chippings on the circuit. He ended up in the ditch but was able to extricate himself and made it back to the pits – The MG having the honour of making the first pit stop. Believe it or not on my second lap I went off at the same spot, but made a much better job of it – clearing the ditch, ploughing my way through a hedge, and ending up in a field. With smashed lights (we had started at midnight) I had trouble finding my way back on to the track. Eventually I found the hole in the hedge and took a running jump out of the field on to the circuit. I hobbled back to the pits, having lost 4½ minutes. Apart from the lights (one headlight was completely missing) all the front jacking points were smashed, bodywork crumpled and fuel pouring out of a ruptured tank. Amazingly, the gallant mechanics had me back in the race within a couple of minutes, but I was back again later in the night for more running repairs to the fuel tank, by which time we were lying 34th with 'only' three more days to go !

By midday we had moved up to 19th place with the Ennever/ Poole car in 8th. The leader was the Equipe National Belge Ferrari setting a pace which nobody could match. Our next problem was the wire wheels which had started to shed spokes. In fact Alec Poole had lost time out on the circuit changing a collapsed wheel. We had a reasonable stock of spares but an SOS was sent to Abingdon for fresh supplies, just in case. In the meantime we were instructed to slow down a little to save wheels and suspension. By now we were up to tenth with the other MG in fourth behind one of the Works Porsche 911s, a remarkably fast Swedish-entered Volvo and the leading Ferrari.

The second night brought dramas among the leaders with the yellow GTB starting to look very battered, having been off the road twice and the Volvo dropping back with





In 'The World's Longest Motor Race' the eventual winner comes in after a first lap excursion.





The second MGB of Alec Poole and Roger Enever, only dropping out after breaking a half-shaft in the closing hours.

overheating and water pump trouble. We now moved up to sixth.

By half time the second place Porsche had been disqualified for reversing out on the circuit and the fifth placed Alfa Romeo had disappeared off the lap charts. Now we were third and fourth, having clocked up some 2,500 miles. There were muffled cheers in our pit when the second placed Volvo dropped right back and we moved up to second and third behind the Ferrari. However, just behind us danger lurked for the remaining Alan Mann Cortinas had been playing a waiting game with the strong entries of Ickx/Staepelaere and Elford/Neerpasch. During the early hours of the next morning the Elford/Neerpasch car passed us to take third place and Enever and Poole were let off the leash to see if they could bait the Cortinas into speeding up which had the desired effect when Vic Elford's car started to overheat and finally blow up. The second Cortina gave up the chase and Jacky Ickx decided to drop back and play for a safe finish in the touring category. So with 24 hours to run, the status quo was resumed with the two MGs in second and third spots.

Obviously, we had no chance of catching the Ferrari on the road but there was concern in their pit for their less-experienced and now very tired second driver. Poor Lucien Bianchi, their number one, had been forced to do more than his fair share at the wheel, driving one spell of over 18 hours.



The MGB victory in the 84-Hour Marathon de la Route in 1966 was one of MG's two outright international post-war wins. Andrew is pictured with his team-mate Julien Vernaeve.

Incidentally, we were changing drivers about every 7½ hours, which gave us time for a proper meal and six hours sleep.

Then came the big drama of the marathon! In typical Nurburg style, the heavens opened and within seconds the track, which by now was thickly coated with rubber dust, was turned into a skating rink. The very first casualty was the poor number two Ferrari driver who put the GTB off the road in no uncertain manner. Now we were first and second overall – but not for long – as Roger Enever aquaplaned off the track by the pits landing in a ditch on its side, costing him 18 minutes and a drop to fourth place. At the same time I came in to change to wet tyres, which allowed the Ickx/Staepelaere Cortina to take the lead with Julien and I in second and the Volvo having recovered to take third place.

With 12 hours to run the battle with the Cortina was well and truly on, as Julien took over for the final early morning spell. He gradually whittled away the Cortina's advantage and put the MG back in front. Alec Poole also managed to bring the other car back into second place, so once again it was MG 1-2.

But our luck did not hold. As the Enever/Poole car pulled away from the refuelling pits (situated in special bays just before the main pits) a half-shaft snapped and, as the car would have been disqualified if it were pushed to the pits or if a spare had been brought to the car, there was nothing to do but accept retirement. That left just one car running with me to drive the final stint against Jacky Ickx in the Cortina with the third-placed BMW 2 litre BMW seven laps down. Swerving to avoid a carefully aimed champagne cork I crossed the line to take the chequered flag three laps ahead of the Cortina. We had covered 5,620 miles in 84 hours, only 14 cars were still running at the end and the MG was the only survivor in the GT category –-one of MG's only two post-war international outright victories. Back in England Stuart Turner had expected us to win the class, but took some convincing that an MGB had actually won outright.

Swerving to avoid a carefully aimed champagne cork I crossed the line to take the chequered flag.



The last official works MG entry from the factory was the two-car MGC-GTS team of Andrew, Julian Vernaeve and Tony Fall. They gave the Porsches a run for their money before finishing in 6th place.

The following year, 1967, Peter Browning took over from Stuart as Competitions Manager at the time of the British Leyland takeover and the MGC was announced in October at the London Motor Show. By this time Geoff Mabbs and I had tested the GTS, a lightweight special-bodied competition version, at Castle Combe. In March 1968 Paddy and I were entered for Sebring where the car ran faultlessly to finish tenth overall and third in the prototype class behind the winning Porsches.

In June I was back in the Marathon de la Route with Tony Fall and Julien Vernaeve. After 67 Hours we were running third overall and catching the leading Porsche 911 when severe brake pad wear caused thr front pads to wear right through and the back plates to become welded to the discs. After a panic pit stop, Tony was forced to do two completely brake-less laps having to move out of the pits according to the rules to avoid disqualification. We finally finished sixth overall running only ten miles short of the leading Porsches at the finish.

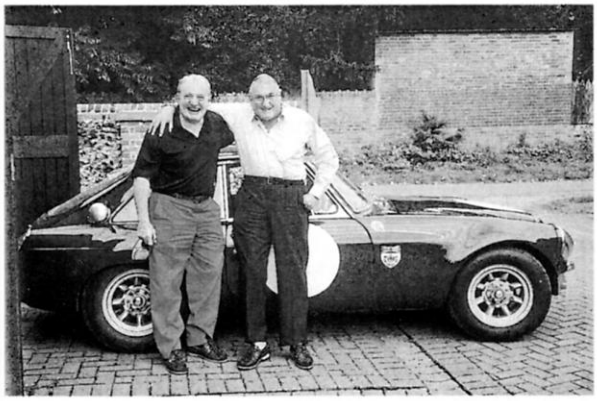
This turned out to be the MG Works swansong as after fifteen years British Leyland closed down the Competitions Department. However, the two MGC GTS were entered by British Leyland North America for Sebring in March 1969 where Paddy and I were once more team mates to finish 15th overall. To celebrate the past I recently had Ron Gammons of Brown and Gammons, the MG specialists, create a replica of the GTS and I have a photograph of Paddy and I with the car outside my UK home.

Ed. During this time you managed to fit in some tobogganing, bobsleighing and powerboat racing.

A.H. When I first started racing in the A40 I was working in the family meat business but prior to that in 1954 my father had sent me to spend two years as work experience in Basel with Bell AG, at that time the largest meat firm in Switzerland. It was there that I met ''Cha Cha'' and Rene Theler, Hans and Robi Kuderli, Gunther Sachs and other lively lads who introduced me to the Cresta and the Bob in St Moritz. In fact I raced for the Basel Bobsleigh Club long before getting involved in the British Bobsleigh Association. Robi Kuderli shared the Sebring Sprite with me at the Nurburgring. When you and I first met at Suvretta House in



Andrew and Paddy at Sebring in March 1969.



Andrew with Paddy recently with the replica GTS.

St Moritz in 1959 Bill McCowen and I had just had a prang on the Bob Run and I remember you and your cousin Mike d'Abo took our place in the Swiss Boblet Championship the following weekend. The photograph with the British Bobsleigh Team was taken in 1964, the year of the Olympics at Igls (Innsbruck) when Tony Nash and Robin Dixon won the Gold Medal. You will see on the extreme left Robin Widdows, with whom I shared an MGB GT at Mugello in 1966 when we won our class and finished third overall behind two GTB Ferraris. This would have been 'Wids' first Works MG drive although he had started with a Midget – supplied by me at Jack Barclay and funded by the late Eddie (Viscount) Portman, a great motor enthusiast, to whom, incidentally, I introduced Penny, later to become his wife. 'Wids' went on to Formula 3, Formula 2 and a single Formula 1 drive at the British Grand Prix for Cooper before retiring from the sport. Standing fourth from the left in the photograph is Guy Renwick who also joined me powerboat racing. Top centre is British Bobsleigh Team manager Tony Brooke known as the 'Brookemeister' who was also something of a racing driver. *(He owned and raced the ex-Raymond Mays Vauxhall-Villiers now campaigned in VSCC events by Julian Ghosh – Ed).*

I took up riding the Cresta at the same time, becoming a Life Member of the St Moritz Tobogganing Club in 1966. I took the Cresta rather less seriously than the Bob but in those days one kept fit by riding the Cresta in the morning, having a good lunch in the Sunny Bar of the Hotel Kulm and strolling up the road to the Bob Run in the afternoon.

My first power boat racing experience took place in the early sixties when I joined Keith Schellenberg and Norman Barclay for the Cowes/Torquay on board 'Blue Moppy', a great Miami built boat. In those days we stayed the night at the Palace Hotel in Torquay for a night of frivolity and raced back to Cowes the following day. The first photograph shows 'Canadian Moppy', another Bertram from Miami owned by





The British Bobsleigh Team in 1964.
Andrew is on the extreme right.

my old Canadian friend and later employer Chuck Rathgeb taken on the London/Monte Carlo. The rest of the crew, apart from Chuck and I, were Tim Powell and Guy Renwick who was navigating when we hit the Mixom Rock off Selsey Bill – putting us out of the race. The second picture is of 'Tramontana' owned by Tim Powell and Norman Barclay and fitted with four Jaguar 3.4 engines. We were practising for the Miami/Nassau and Bahamas 500 races before hitting a submerged wreck in the Solent. That put paid to that although I did the Miami/Nassau with 'Lucky' Lucan *(the missing peer – Ed)* in 'Migrant' when we were the first single engined boat to finish.

In 1963 I went to work for Jack Barclay. He was a wonderful man and gave me great support in the early days, especially as I encountered some initial opposition from my parents, whom he knew well. Incidentally, he was one of the founding members of the BRDC. That was the time of the Silver Cloud and Bentley S series but I also sold a lot of MGs with my racing connection. Jack was quite happy as long as we made money. At that time we took on the Fiat agency and I remember one of my bigger deals was selling you a Fiat 500 with an Abarth conversion for use in London ! They had just introduced the 2300 Coupe, quite an elegant and sought after car, one of which I managed to write off on a demonstration but amazingly the chap went ahead with the purchase. Annabel's, the nightclub, had just opened across the square and we used to stroll over for cocktails after work – great days.

To be concluded next month.



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In this issue we cover Andrew's final events before retiring from Motorsport and his subsequent life in the Middle East.

A.H. When British Leyland began winding down the MG Competition Department I started driving for Donald Healey amongst others. For Donald I raced at Le Mans four times. In 1966 and '67 with Clive Baker in a streamlined Sprite – our best result coming 15th. In 1968 in a Healey Climax, again with Clive when engine trouble put us out. Finally, in 1970 I shared the Healey Repco Brabham with Roger Ennever when we broke down on the last lap while lying 14th. That was the year it rained for 16 hours!

E. How did you manage in an open car with your glasses ?

A.H. It was never a problem. I just put goggles over my specs and pressed on. It was the same with the Cresta and Bob.

E. Any other interesting cars ?

A.H. In 1964 I drove the ex-works Aston Martin DB4GT VEV 1 for Alec Rock of Dimplex Radiators. A really fabulous car which I remember racing at Montlhéry and over here. A Lotus 47 with Julian Sutton in 1967 and '68 and in 1969 a Ford GT40 with Piers Weld-Forrester at Montlhéry, Sebring and Daytona where I was timed at 220 mph – the fastest I had ever driven – and still a Porsche 917 came by! From the sublime to the ridiculous I also raced a Mini based Unipower GT for Piers who owned the company at the time. Then there was my last Targa Florio with Dan Margulies in a Porsche Carrera entered by Chuck Rathgeb. I can't quite remember our placing but we did finish – which was always an achievement on the Targa.

E. You also did a certain amount of rallying ?

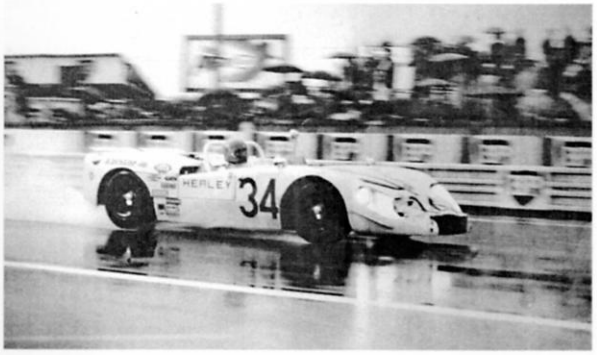
A.H. There was the famous London to Sydney Marathon in 1968, which is a book in itself – in fact one of my co-drivers Innes Ireland did just that with input from Michael Taylor and I. *(Andrew will recall his memories of this great event in*



The streamlined Sprite at Le Mans, 1967.



The Ford GT40 shared with Piers Weld-Forrester in 1969 at Montlhéry, Sebring and Daytona.



The Healey Repco Brabham at Le Mans in 1970 - shared with Roger Ennever.



The Mini based Unipower.



The Porsche Carrera in Andrew's last Targa Florio.

a subsequent issue – Ed) Prior to that I had done the odd rally and had helped Stuart Turner with the pace notes for the Monte Carlo Rally in a Mini-Cooper S.

E. Did you take part in any other rallies ?

A.H. I did the RAC in a BMW 2002 Tii with a friend called Jeremy Rugge-Price. I did most of the driving while he did the navigating. From memory we were the first private entrant home. Then in 1976, probably my last event was the World CupTrans-Sahara with a Cherokee prepared by the Jeep people in Bedfordshire. Chuck Rathgeb was my co-driver and Tim Powell was in a sister car with Innes Ireland. We packed up somewhere in Algeria and were stranded in the desert which wasn't much fun. In the end we abandoned the Jeep, which was recovered two months later, and hitched a lift with Tim and Innes.

E. After you retired from competition you went into business in the Middle East.

A.H. That's right. I originally went to the Middle East in 1972 to work with Comstock International, a company owned by Chuck Rathgeb. By 1980 I was a permanent resident in Bahrain building up an oil and gas business for Heston Middle East which supplies qualified engineers to the oil. Gas and petro-chemical industry. I was also involved in construction during those early boom years, building hotels, hospitals and power stationsin Dubai and Bahrein. It was then that I started my liquor trading business – now greatly expanded. Shortly after, I became involved in oil and gas exploration and pearl farming in Vietnam. I am once more domiciled in Bahrain which people forget had oil long before the Saudis. One of my old Bahrainy friends once remarked, *'The trouble with our friends across the causeway is that they made the transition from Camel to Cadillac rather too swiftly!'* My latest project is developing new technologies to the region, in particular sewage and rain water treatment which is vitally important.

E. What is the motoring scene like over there ?

A.H. There are some great collections – the Crown Prince and his cousins for instance have literally thousands of cars and although there are speed limits they are not rigorously enforced all the time I have had some quite powerful cars over there. An Aston Martin V8 Vantage, Chevrolet Camaro and several BMWs.. The price of petrol is quite attractive – I could fill up my 7 series for about £12! I have just swapped it for a Mini-Cooper S. The Crown Prince was the prime mover behind the new Formula 1 circuit in Bahrain and I invited a few of my old chums over for the Grand Prix earlier this year. Dubai now has a fine circuit and I believe they are hosting various events including an historic meeting this coming winter.

E. But you are now spending more time over here.

A.H. To a certain extent, yes, since I am now semi-retired. Bahrain has a wonderful winter climate but I now find the summer just too hot, so I tend to come back here from June to September to see more of my family – I have recently become a grandfather – and friends. I take in some of the Formula 1 and historic meetings and am looking forward to attending the Goodwood Revival event. For some years I have kept a Bentley over here, initially several Turbo Rs, then a Continental T and now have just taken delivery of one of the new Continental GTs in which I enjoyed taking you and your daughter Davina for a 'burn up'. By way of contrast I have an innocent looking Morris Minor which has spent all its life in the village. Underneath the skin it is has an MG Midget engine, five speed box and disc brakes. A Range-Rover and a replica MGB Works team car complete the 'toy cupboard' – the MGC lightweight *(photographed last month)* having just been sold to France.

Blast from the past



Andrew with his Continental T Bentley and a group of friends after a convivial lunch at Gerry Stonhill's Mason Arms. The 'Blower' Bentley belongs to John May- 4th from left.



Austin A40 and Morris 1000. Barrie – 'Whizzo' Williams has just unearthed this historic photograph taken at Thornaby on Tees circa 1959 when Andrew (Austin A40) and Whizzo (Minor 1000) were chasing signatures for their International Race Licences.