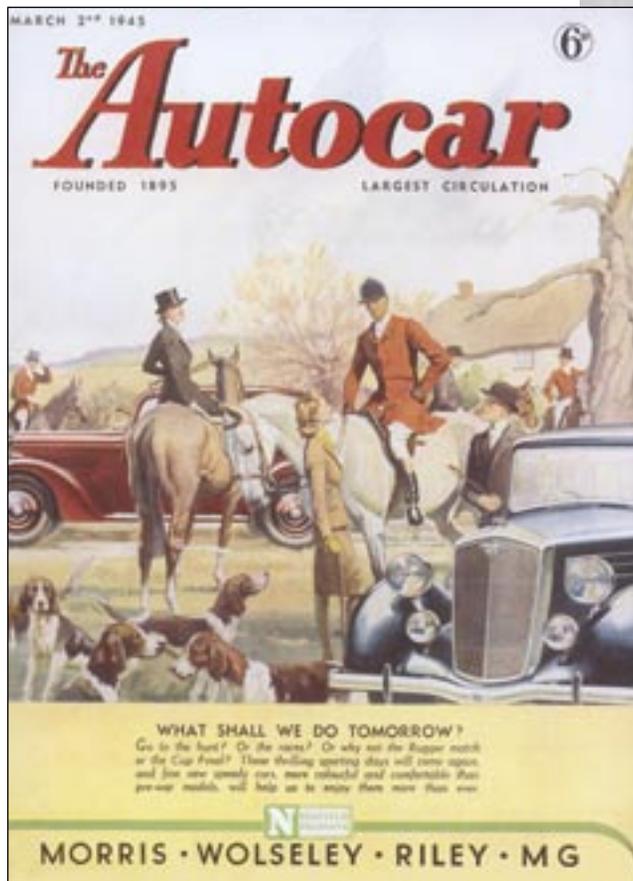


Good times are just around the corner - or were they? When this emotive illustration graced the cover of *The Autocar* on 2nd March 1945 plans were already being made to resume car production at factories around Britain. This Series III Wolseley summoned the revival of pre-war designs that heralded post-war production. (Author's collection)



Motorists unable to afford, let alone acquire, post-war models were satisfied with pre-war models that commanded inflated prices due to demand. In this London street two eclectic designs are evident, a Fiat 500A Topolino which was registered only a month before declaration of war, and a RHD British-assembled Citroën Traction Avant which carries wedding ribbons. The Fiat was among the smallest cars on the market while the Citroën was a firm favourite with those connected with motor sport. (Author's collection)

Getting a car into a presentable condition was one thing, but obtaining components to keep it running was another. Pistons, water pumps, clutch plates and carburettors were simply unavailable unless one had access to a manufacturing source or were prepared to buy on the black market.

During the years immediately following the Armistice it was not unusual to see cars fitted with odd headlamps or displaying some feature merely in order to keep them running. In time such innovation ended with introduction of the Ministry of Transport Test.

Austerity Motoring from Armistice until the mid-Fifties



A familiar sight at docks and railway stations around the country was the Scammell Scarab mechanical horse. Depicted in Manchester around 1949, these three-wheeled tractor units were highly manoeuvrable, a requirement when working at ports and on railway station platforms. (Author's collection)

For many people in austerity car ownership was never affordable, which meant that coach travel was popular. The vagaries of travelling by coach meant that vehicles sometimes broke down, as happened on this occasion in 1953 whilst a Grey-Green was en-route from Torquay to London. Pushing a coach called for a lot of effort, as well as some light relief, as can be detected from the look of the passengers, both aboard the vehicle and those doing all the hard work. (Author's collection)

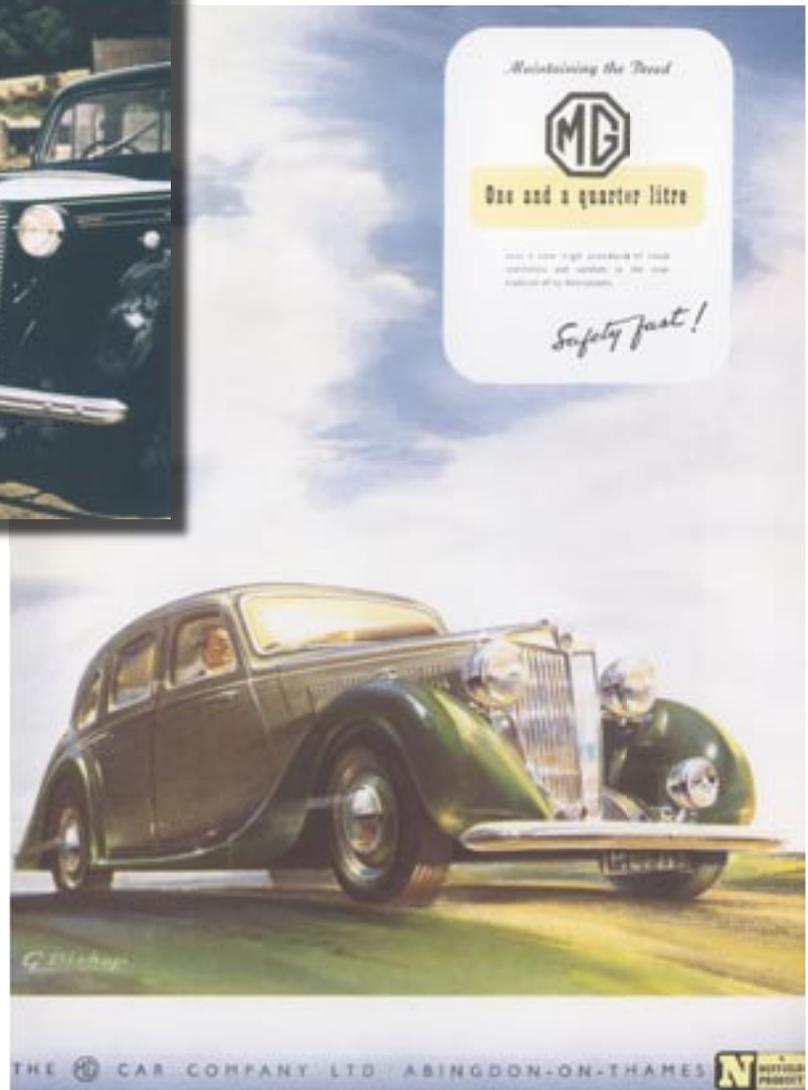


A New Car?



Production of Vauxhalls was under way at Luton when this photograph was taken in 1947 at Padstow in Cornwall. 12hp saloons were priced at £330 plus purchase tax of £92.8.4d while 14hp models cost £435 plus £121.11.8d purchase tax. (Author's collection)

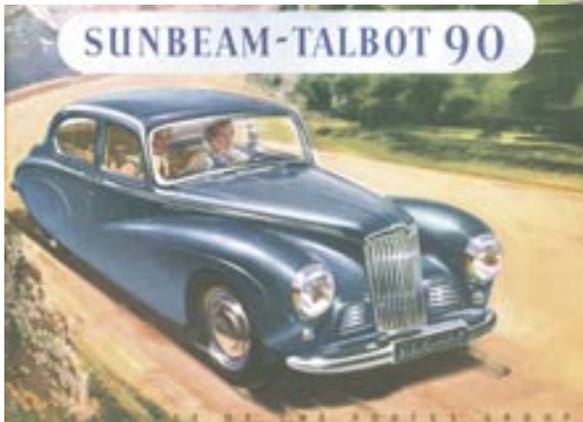
Introduced in 1947, the MG YA/YB 1¼ litre saloon was originally proposed for 1941 had war not intervened. Artistic licence suggests this to be a much larger and faster car than it actually was. A nice machine if available, but like the greater majority of cars, they were exported. (Author's collection)



A New Car?

It was 1948 before any of the new generation Rootes models went into production. The styling of this Phase III Hillman Minx was influenced by Raymond Loewy and his work for Studebaker. The full-width styling echoed themes emanating from America, and the car sold well in the United Kingdom. (Author's collection)

Rootes introduced the Sunbeam-Talbot 90 in 1948 which was replaced by the MkII in 1950, itself supplanted by the MkIIA in 1952. Produced as a saloon and sports convertible coupé, it is the MkII that is depicted here, its top speed of 86mph being appreciated by a sporting clientele. The car's interior was most attractive and well-equipped, and the manufacturer maximised on the model's success in winning the 1948, 1949 and 1950 International Alpine Trials. (Author's collection)



Luxury and Speed in Austerity

While most people could only dream about buying cars in times of austerity, there remained a select few who were able to afford the best the motor industry could offer. Rolls-Royce, for example, sold all the cars it

could produce, though the Bentley marque was deemed to be a lot less ostentatious.

While most Bentley customers were happy to specify standard pressed steel bodywork, an exclusive clientele insisted on their motorcars having coachwork hand-built by bespoke coachbuilders. At the time when a 'basic'



During the early 1950s cars such as this W.O. Bentley-designed Lagonda could be purchased cheaply on account of their size and fuel consumption. Lucky are those motorists who bought these cars as they are now valuable collectors' items. (National Motor Museum)

Between the wars Alvis built a formidable reputation for itself in motor sport and attracted a discerning clientele. In 1946 the TA14 sports saloon was introduced, which was essentially a pre-war design. More expensive than Rovers, the Alvis competed with Armstrong Siddeley and Lea-Francis. (Author's collection)