

Complete, even to authentic badge, the Gladiator should be one of our most successful sports/racing M.G.'s. Note good finish on body.

GLADIATOR IN THE

A NEWCOMER to the under 1500 c.c. racing car field is the "Gladiator", a beautifully finished, well designed fibreglass bodied car, owned by well known M.G. pilot, Barry Taylor.

The car is expected to be capable of speeds of about 120 m.p.h.

Powered by a sizzling hot M.G. motor, the Gladiator took more than 18 months of painstaking and laborious work to complete. All told it has cost approximately £1700; admittedly, a lot of money, but the finished product is so professional in every department that the outlay appears to be wholly justifiable.

Barry Taylor, a life assurance underwriter, has been connected with motor sport since 1949, when he achieved success in Bill Conoulty's cars. Those days, Barry worked for the Austin distributors, so it was logical that he favoured this make of car for competition purposes. In fact, in the first Redex Trial, Taylor was a member of an A40 crew which battled its way around the continent. So sick was the car after leaving Adelaide that no fewer than 15 sets of bearings were fitted to the motor. The crew got so much practice that they could drop the sump, throw in the new bearings and be on their way within 20 minutes.

Towards the end of that year, Taylor decided to enter sports car racing. He purchased a T.C., and Paul Meyer prepared it for his debut at Mt. Druitt.

During the following season, Taylor notched quite a few wins in the M.G., while every race meeting he was improving the car's performance.

Nineteen fifty five was Taylor's most successful season. He drove hard to finish a close second to G. Julius in the sports car race at Bathurst, while Druitt became a track where he invariably ran into the prize money.

At one meeting he took out the three sports car events on the near Parramatta circuit — a most creditable performance for any young enthusiast.

Barry's technical adviser was Paul Meyer, and by careful tuning and preparation, Taylor's stripped M.G. soon became one of the fastest on Sydney tracks.

While practising at Bathurst for the '56 meeting, Taylor had the motor revving at over 6,500 r.p.m. and at this speed the car became dangerous. During the last hour of practise the G's bearings gave out, and when he returned to his pit and stowed the car on the trailer he vowed never to drive the car again.

When Paul Meyers agreed that they had reached the maximum speed that the car could safely be driven at, he decided it was time to look for another car. "I wanted one which would travel faster yet hold the road better," explained Taylor. "Fortunately I had a spare motor, differential and gearbox which I smartly put in the car, and offered it for sale."

About this time, Taylor contacted Arthur Rizzo, who was specialising in the manufacture of racing chassis. Taylor's car's chassis is built along similar lines to the well known Rizzo Riley and Norm Crowfoot's Holden Special.

The chassis rails are connected in front by a T.F. cross member. The chassis is a ladder type, fashioned from 3½" 17 gauge tubing. The rear crossmember is lighter 1½" tubing. The front suspension is based on T.F. components with the exception of special coil springs, lower control arms and bushes.

An anti-sway bar has been incorporated for additional track holding.

The Gladiator's rear suspension is sprung with T.D. springs at a special setting.

The power department of the gladiator has been under the control of Paul Meyer and Barry Taylor. The XPAG M.G. motor has been bored and lined to 1498 c.c. and extensively modified. A hard chromed crankshaft has been fitted while the rods, shaft, pistons and clutch have been balanced.

The two drivers also lifted the compression to 10 to 1, and included a full race camshaft, while an extractor exhaust system with built-on inlet manifold has been incorporated. A Laystall-Alexander cylinder head with sodium cooled exhaust valves completes the hotting up of the engine. Fuel will be delivered by way of twin one and a half inch S.U. carburetors



Although basically Buchanan body, the Gladiator's shell is much modified, includes headrest for driver. Fibreglass is only half normal thickness.

RING

by ALAN GIBBONS

fitted with twin S.U. fuel pumps.

Taylor is certain that the motor in its present stage of tune will develop about 90 b.h.p. — a lot of horses for any M.G. motor to turn out.

Two years ago, when Barry Taylor was contemplating the Gladiator, Nat Buchanan was getting under way with his fibreglass bodies. Taylor approached the Anandale body works and eventually Buchanan agreed to build the young driver a special body.

Fifty per cent thinner than a standard Buchanan fibreglass body the Gladiator is quite different in design, too.

Here's how it differs from the usual run of Buchanan bodies: It does not feature any louvres on the bonnet nor has it the bulge on the left hand side. There is no passenger door, and no boot lid. It has a neat flaring which acts as a head rest (foreign to Buchanan cars) while the entire underneath is enclosed by a fibreglass undertray.

In addition, it has a divided cockpit and wrap around driver's screen, similar to a D-type Jaguar.

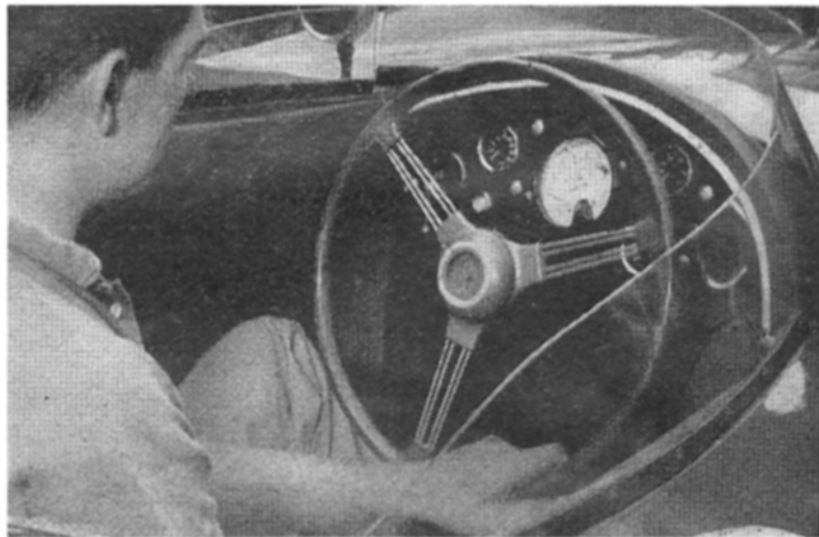
Yes, irrespective of how you view the Gladiator, it is vastly different to a Buchanan body.

As an additional safety precaution, Barry Taylor has built three roll bars into the car. One is bonded to the rear bulkhead of the cockpit while the other two are mounted on the chassis.

Let's have a look at the rear end of the Gladiator.

M.G. specials are almost a forgotten breed of car now, but Sydney enthusiast Barry Taylor has just put one together which shows that such cars are not outclassed.

Good driver protection is provided by wrap around plastic screen. Instruments include electric tachometer.



GLADIATOR IN THE RING

The differential is probably the most complicated component of the entire car. For this portion of the engineering. Taylor sought the help of Ray Alberry, and as a result, the car has an Austin crown wheel and pinion, hemisphere, carrier, etc., M.G. sun wheels and planetary gears. There is an M.G. housing at either end, while the centre housing is that made by Austin.

This set up which might sound rather complicated, is basically very logical. By using Austin's central housing, Barry Taylor is able to utilise the full range of Austin diff. ratios in a similar manner to that followed by Lotus.

In a short time he can change to any one of the following ratios: 3.6 to 1, 3.9 to 1, 4.125 to 1, and 4.33 to 1.

The gearbox problem has been overcome by the use of a standard T.C. unit, with slight modifications, while T.F. brakes with drilled and turbo finned drums will bring the car to a rapid stop. An A.T.C. master cylinder is mounted forward of the brake pedal. Fifteen inch wheels have been used and 5.90 x 15 tyres fitted. These will be altered to 5.50 x 15 when required.

There is some mystery about the origin of the Gladiator's radiator. Barry purchased it from a Sydney Morris dealer who was unable to tell him the model for which it was originally produced. It does not appear to have been modified, yet the outlet is on the wrong side of its tank to fit a Minor or Oxford.

However it fits the Gladiator like

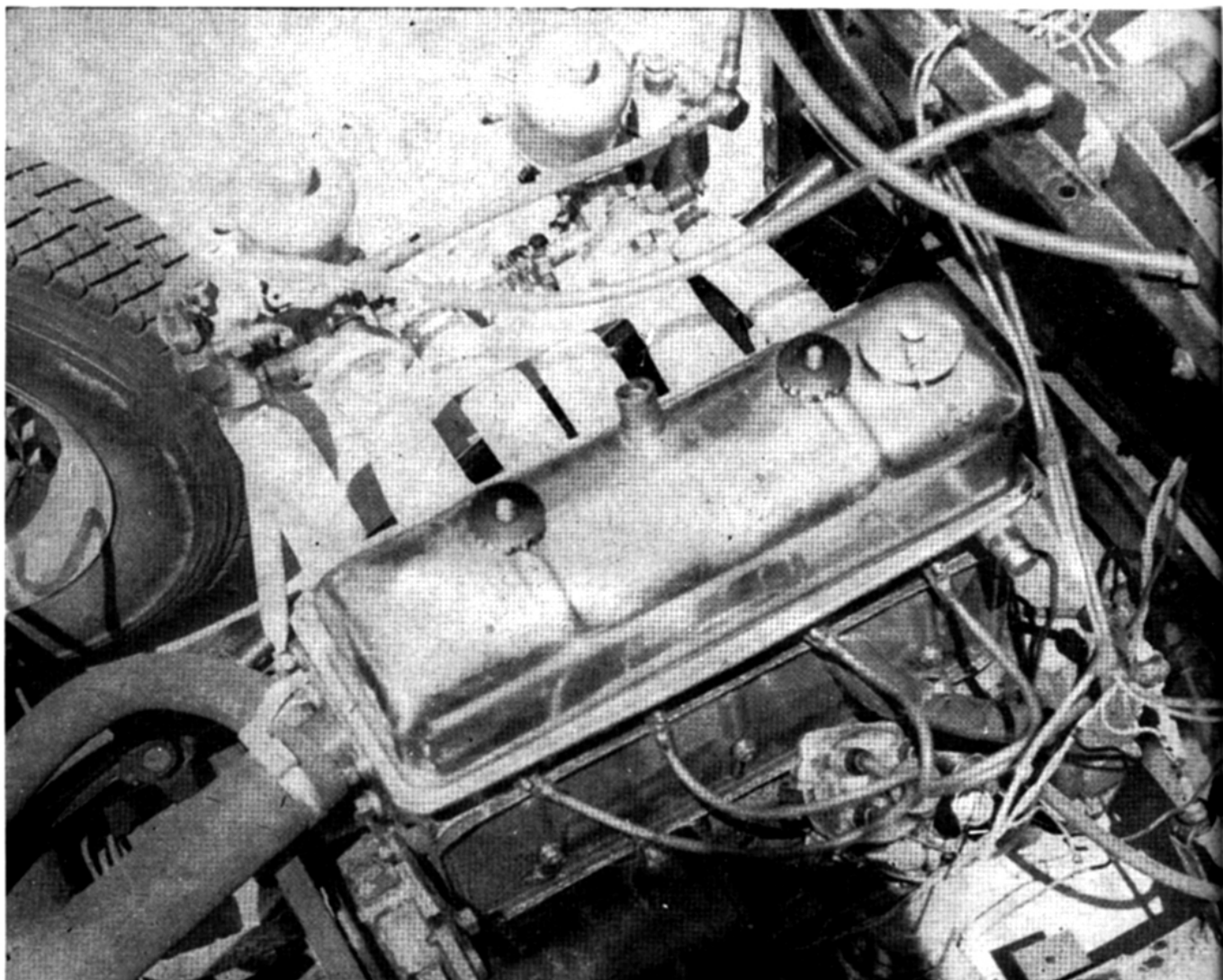
a glove and cools the motor efficiently so Taylor is not greatly worried about what vehicle it was originally intended for.

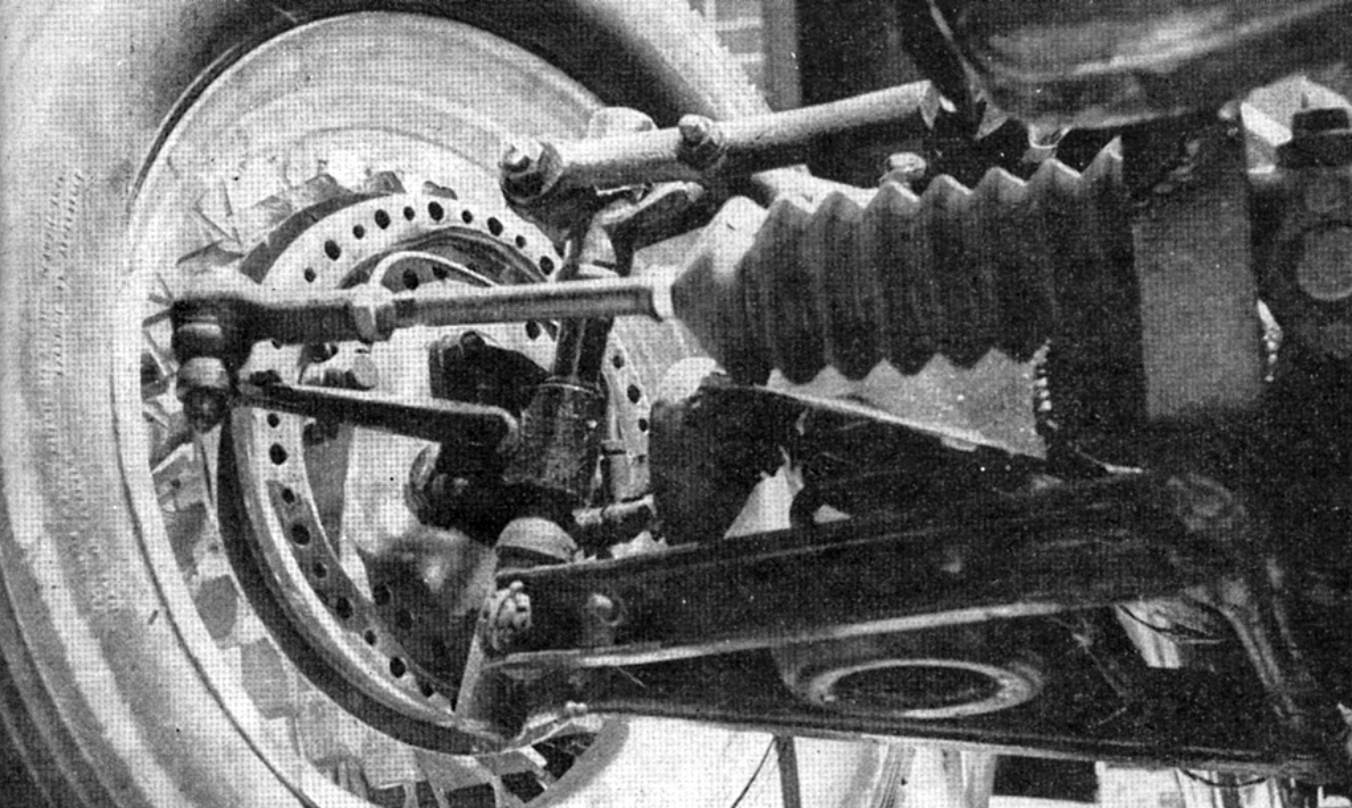
An M.G. T.F. rack and pinion steering box has a universal added to bring the wheel towards the centre of the driving cockpit. All instruments are carefully arranged. He has installed an electric tachometer, the usual oil pressure and temperature gauges and a water temperature gauge. Ignition and light switches and a green warning light and horn button complete the car's panel.

The passenger's seat has been based on the car's fuel tank. Shaped like a huge inverted L, the tank is covered with foam rubber and a plastic imitation leather loose cover.

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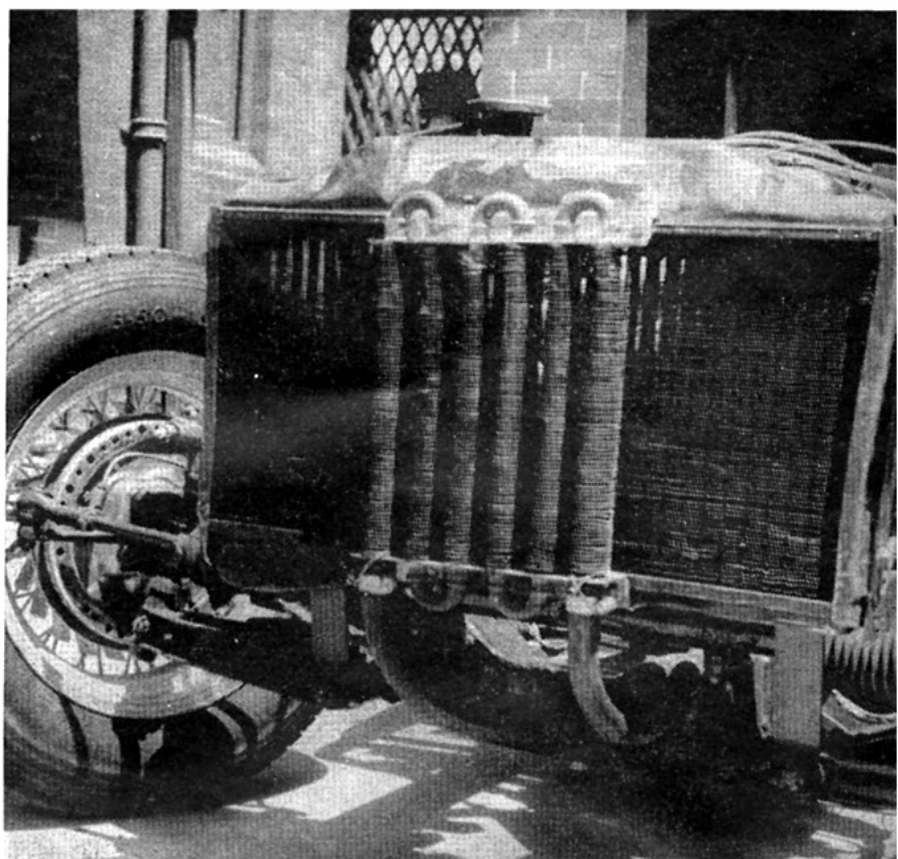
In a straightforward attempt to get extra power, Taylor fitted a Laystall-Alexander light alloy head to the bored-out M.G. motor.





Careful attention has been given to the front end. Steering is by M.G. T.F. rack and pinion, but T.F. brakes have radial fins.

In front of the water radiator of doubtful origin, is a large oil cooler — an essential racing M.G. additional component.



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This is quite comfortable even whilst travelling over city roads, although the seat level is high. This follows a similar pattern to the D-type Jaguar where the passenger sits some four inches above the drive and is completely exposed.

However, when the Gladiator is a single passenger car, a fibreglass tonneau cover completely encloses the passenger cockpit and adds to the neat, streamlined appearance of the vehicle.

Barry Taylor has concentrated on driving comfort. There is a full wrap around windscreen, while the well padded sponge rubber headrest gives the pilot plenty of support. Vision from the driving position is exceptionally good.

From the moment Arthur Rizzo first started the chassis for the Gladiator, Barry Taylor and his advisers have given hours of study, based on racing experiences, to the simplicity of the car.

For instance, the entire body in shell form weighs only 56 lb. (excluding bonnet and under tray), can be removed from the car by undoing eight bolts. As the chassis is hooked up to the dash panel the machine is still mobile when it is without the body.

It is little items such as these two which are so important to any racing driver, and his pit crew, when adjustments have to be made to a car while in the pit area. At times, when seconds can mean the difference between winning or losing a race, simplicity is so very important.

The final touch to this well finished racing car is the badge which is affixed to the metal mesh covering the air intake and which bears the name "Gladiator". Surrounded by a triangle and featuring a dagger, this crest was well known during World War II as a colour patch for the Royal Marines, of which Barry Taylor was a member.

If the Gladiator upholds the traditions of this force of men—if it can fight as hard as the marines—then it is going to be a formidable opponent to any racing car in the under 1500 c.c. sports car class.

CHASSIS SPECIFICATIONS

Wheelbase, 96". Track, front, 51½"; rear, 50". Clearance, 4½". Weight, 11¼ cwt.

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