



# Mr. MG

A biography of  
John William Yates Thornley O.B.E.  
(1909-1994)

by Peter J.H. Thornley



## THE AUTHOR

A second child, Peter was born in 1944 in a period when the Second World War was disrupting family life for his parents and elder sister. By the time normal life resumed and John had returned to MG Abingdon, Peter was old enough to start appreciating the tremendous advantage it was to have a father who worked with sports cars. He occasionally had the chance to see the unique MG factory from the inside, and to be present on many historic occasions for the marque. He remembers attending the first Silverstone tests of the Le Mans MGA in 1955 and of early visits to his father's office whilst it was in temporary premises in Abingdon town centre.



Peter was educated at various schools around the country, but it was not until he arrived at Grenville College in Bideford, North Devon that he finally started to make progress. By mutual agreement, he didn't join the MG Car Company as John did not want his son working for him, and he didn't want to work for his father. As engineering was the area that John knew, Peter served an apprenticeship at Cam Gears in Hitchin, and attended Letchworth Technical College. He then continued his engineering pursuits with TRW until 1976, when he and the family emigrated to the United States to work for Continental Cars Distributor. He joined American Isuzu Motors Inc. in 1980 as a Service and Parts representative and stayed for the next 22 years.

Married for 30 plus years to Beverly Chapman, a New Zealander, and living now in Atlanta Georgia, they have two adult children, Nicola and John. Peter has now owned and maintained his M-Type for some 40 years, he also runs a 1972 MGB and is carrying out a long-term rebuild of a 1933 L2.

This biography of his father was begun before John died in 1994 and much information on the early period was gleaned from tapes of conversations recorded on visits from America during the last few years of his life. However, Peter has been able to add to this his own memories of events and those of others who knew and worked with John.

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... og er købt for medlemmernes kontingent.  
Pas på den, som var det din egen –  
husk at aflevere den efter lån