



Minor sets new World Record



*Image scanned from the June 1930 edition of **Morris Owner** magazine*

Miss Mabel Oliver, a New Zealander established an endurance World Record with her Morris Minor Tourer at Auckland's Mangere Speedway in March 1930 when the car was driven non-stop for 24 hours. The Minor Tourer was described as being 'stock' (i.e. unmodified) except for the fitting of a larger fuel tank and the removal of the hood. However a third headlamp was also fitted to aid night visibility as was a tonneau. Like a number of other Minor sporting achievements, Morris Motors made little capital from this success, relegating the event and story to three short paragraphs and a similarly sized image in the June 1930 edition of *Morris Owner*. The Cycle & Motor Supplies advertisement (see page 4) announcing the news appeared in the *Evening Post* (a Wellington based evening daily newspaper) and was recently found by Australian PWMN member Dane Hawley during the course of an internet trawl of period Australian and New Zealand newspaper archive websites.

Little is known about Miss Oliver and her achievement except to say that the 1062 miles (the 1076 miles quoted by the *Morris Owner* is incorrect) were covered without a stop at an average speed of 44.25 mph. This in itself raises some interesting questions. Apart from the very obvious 'toilet' considerations, how was oil replenished on the move? Without a doubt the engine was consuming liberal amounts of this essential substance, as evidenced by the dark patch on the bottom half of the radiator, as shown in the *Morris Owner* photo. (This particular oil leak was a common fault on the OHC Minor.) It is also stated that the car was refuelled from another vehicle 'running behind', presumably filling a larger fuel tank fitted somewhere towards the rear of the car.

Whatever the system employed to keep the car running continuously throughout a 24 hour period much credit must go to the car, its intrepid lady driver and the back-up team. However that can't be said of Morris Motors Ltd. who once again failed to exploit this significant achievement.

Despite this lack of fanfare on the part of Morris Motors, Mabel's achievement was big news in the Antipodes, with stories appearing throughout March in a number of city daily and evening newspapers across the region. It's clear from these reports that the story originally appeared on 'the wires' as little new detail surfaces in any of them. What is learnt is that her only female record breaking rival was the Honourable Mrs Victor Bruce (famous in her own right within UK racing circles at that time) who had driven a Bentley for 24 hours non-stop at the Montlhery, circuit in France the previous year. One of the reports of the Auckland attempt goes on to state that the Minor was examined by engineers after the event and was given a clean bill of health and "...could have continued indefinitely."

There is also some confusion as to the date of the event, which is recorded as being the 24th February 1930 by the *Motor Sport of New Zealand* website and as finishing on "Saturday at 5:00 PM" by the Morris distributors Cheney. The earliest report is dated 11th March which makes the most likely date for the completion of the record attempt as Saturday 8th, unless of course news travelled very slowly in the early thirties.

Does this record still stand today? Unlikely as it sounds It may well do so. While cars of a similar capacity will have successfully completed endurance events such as the Le Mans 24 hour race, those participating will have stopped many times for fuel replenishment and driver changes. Record attempts of the type described continued to feature throughout the thirties through to the end of the fifties but a quick Google search doesn't provide an answer to the question. It would indeed be an amazing feat if the record still does stand to this day; a tremendous testament to the mechanical reliability of the Minor plus of course to the fortitude of its driver, Mabel Oliver.

Historical Footnote: It was assumed that 'Miss' Mabel Oliver was a youngish person at the time of this attempt but some further investigation by our intrepid Australian 'delver' reveals that she may well have been into her forties by the time of the record attempt. Dane Hawley has established that a certain Mabel Oliver passed her Junior Civil Service examinations in 1906 in Auckland, the record attempt venue, while the photograph also suggests a slightly older personage.

(Special thanks are due to Dane Hawley for his help in the preparation of this short article)



Morris Minor Creates World's Endurance Record

S. A. Cheney (South Australia), Ltd. have received cabled information in regard to the 24-hour non-stop reliability run accomplished by a stock Morris Minor model at the Mangere Speedway, Auckland, New Zealand.

Driving a stock model Morris Minor tourer for 24 hours without a stop, Miss Mabel Oliver completed the last lap at 5 p.m. on Saturday, covering a distance of 1,062 miles, at an average speed of 44 $\frac{1}{4}$ miles per hour. This created a world's endurance record for light cars.

At no time during the 24-hour run did the car stop, refilling being accomplished from time to time by a following car.

The car was a stock model tourer, the only alterations being the removal of the hood and the provision of a larger petrol tank.

The test was conducted under the official supervision of the Auckland Automobile Association.

Above left The **Morris Owner** June 1930 snippet while the Cheney 'ad' (right) is very similar

Further newspaper snippets can be found on the next pages

WORLD'S RECORDS.

Morris Minor's Great Feat.

THE Morris Minor, since its release in Australia, has created a number of records, but one of the most astounding that this wonder car has yet accomplished was recently achieved by Miss Mabel Oliver, at the Mangere Speedway, Auckland, N.Z.

Driving continuously for 24 hours without being relieved—the car being refuelled whilst travelling—Miss Mabel Oliver and the Morris Minor established a world's record by completing 1062 miles in 24 hours, at an average speed of 44½ miles per hour. The only other woman driver to hold a 24 hours' endurance record is the Honourable Mrs. Victor Bruce, who drove a Bentley at Montlhery last year. Miss Mabel Oliver has thus achieved a record which stands alone in the Morris Minor class.

The car was a stock model tourer, the only alterations being the removal of the hood and the provision of a larger petrol tank. The test was conducted under the official supervision of the Auckland Automobile Association.

NON-STOP RUN

Morris Creates World Record

Driving a stock model Morris Minor tourer for 24 hours without a stop at Mangere Speedway, Auckland, New Zealand, Miss Mabel Oliver covered a distance of 1,062 miles, at an average speed of 44½ miles an hour, thereby creating a world's endurance record for light cars. Refilling was accomplished at intervals by a following car.

The car was a stock model tourer, the only alterations being the removal of the hood and the provision of a larger petrol tank. The test was conducted under the official supervision of the Auckland Automobile Association.

The only other woman driver to hold a 24 hours' endurance record at present is Mrs. Victor Bruce, who drove a Bentley at Montlhery (France) last year. On the completion of Miss Oliver's run expert engineers went over the car, and reported it to be in perfect condition and capable of continuing indefinitely.

Extracted from *The Brisbane Courier* 11th March (left) and *The Mail Adelaide* 15th March (right) Below Motorsport NZ website entry

Part 1 - Early Records

Established in New Zealand, prior to the Control of MANZ (Inc).

½ Mile Standing Start (Under 750 cc)

G.Smith, Austin, 100.17 mph, Murawai 18.07.36

1 Mile Standing Start (Under 1,100 cc)

R.A.Dexter, Riley, 54.895 mph, Murawai 21.05.33

1 Mile Flying Start

Under 750 cc, G.Smith, Austin, 93.91 mph, Murawai, 7.03.37.

Under 1,100 cc, R.A.Dexter, Riley, 92.79 mph, Murawai, 23.03.38.

Under 1,500 cc, C.Edwards, Bugatti, 75.00 mph, Murawai, 21.05.33.

Under 2,000 cc, G.Mathieson, Miller, 76.27 mph, Murawai, 21.05.33.

Under 5,000 cc, A.Tuckett and F.Brewer, Ford, 92.67 mph, Murawai, 27.03.38.

Unlimited cc, N.Wizard-Smith, Rolls Royce-Cadillac, 146.341 mph, Ninety Mile Beach, 12.01.30

5 Mile Flying Start

C.W.F.Hamilton, Sunbeam, 100.27 mph, Murawai, 22.02.25

10 Mile Flying Start

N.Wizard-Smith, 164.084 mph, Ninety Mile beach, 26.01.32.

100 Mile Flying Start

G.Smith, Riley, 70.74 mph, Mangere, March 1931

6 Hour Period Record

Under 750 cc, P.Seabrook and R.M.Grierson, Austin, 60 mph, Mangere, 18.01.30.

24 Hour Period Record

Under 850 cc, Miss M.Oliver, Morris Minor, 1,062 miles, 44.25 mph, Mangere, 24.02.30.



Morris Minor
creates
World's Record

Miss Mabel Oliver, driving a Morris Minor continuously for 24 hours, has established a World's Endurance Record.

This feat was accomplished, *without a single stop*, at Mangere Speedway, Auckland,—the car being refuelled while travelling, and at the end of 24 hours continuous running, 1062 miles had been completed, *at an average speed of 44½ m.p.h.*

The car driven was a stock model Tourer, the only alterations being the provision of a larger petrol tank and the removal of the hood. The test was conducted under the official supervision of the Auckland Automobile Association.

The Morris Minor is thus the only car in its class driven continuously by one driver, to successfully establish a 24 hours World's record endurance test.

These facts speak louder than any words, and prove that the Morris Minor is not only the World's Economy Car, but has an inbuilt capacity for endurance, *that once again confirms its leadership in the light car field.*

PRICES:
TOURER £210
FABRIC SALOON £232
(Main Ports)

MORRIS MOTORS LTD.
Distributors:
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133 FEATHERSTON STREET, WELLINGTON

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