

# 2019 - The Roadster's 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year

Compiled from material supplied by Barry Paine

## Conception of the Roadster - (1) - The Riddihough Tapes



**SINGER**  
*The greatest little Roadster of our Time*

From the inspiration of the Le Mans Model

**THE SINGER ROADSTER**  
9 H.P. 2-4 SEATER

With a heritage of distinguished performance, the Singer Roadster is presented as the first light car combining beauty of line, four comfortable seats, and exceptional achievement on the road. A car built for a specific purpose, and filling that purpose admirably.

PRICE £169 (tax works)

The SINGER Roadster is a workaholic, its work greater than that exhibited officially as the range of the car.

The SINGER Roadster is the tail of the Singer Roadster. It is remarkably strong and light - 1150 lbs. - and very easy to drive on the highway.

The SINGER is a 4-Stroke Engine. A complete gear box, steering, suspension, brakes, and other accessories are included. The SINGER is built in the Singer Plant, Detroit, Michigan, U.S.A. and is available in all parts of the world. The SINGER is a complete car and can be driven on the highway. The SINGER is a complete car and can be driven on the highway.

We start this story of how the Roadster came about with some Key Points from the Riddihough Tapes Booklet in the Jan/Feb 2018 Mascot:

**\*The Roadster was conceived in 1938 and introduced in March 1939.**

**\*It was the brainchild of Singer Body Designer W O Meek.**

**\*Parts from other models were used wherever possible, and there wasn't any (special) tooling, only rough jigs, the wooden frames being made using ordinary woodworking tools.**

**\*It was therefore cheap to produce, which enabled Singer to sell the cars at only £169.00.**

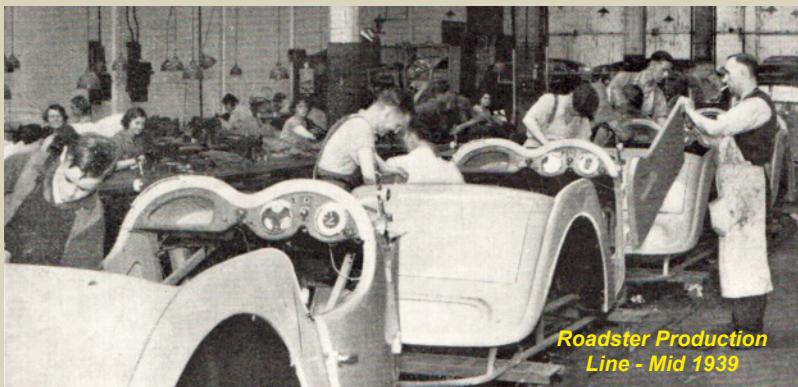
## Conception of the Roadster - (2) - In the Beginning.

It's almost impossible to mention the Singer Roadster without recalling our late, much respected, Roadster Registrar Bill Haverly. So we continue with extracts from a letter

to Bill Haverly from Singer's pre war Advertising Manager, Norman Riddihough in April 1981 in reply to questions from Bill, including a possible 'Australian' connection:

**Dear Bill.** Here's a somewhat belated reply to your letter of March 31<sup>st</sup>, but the winter seems to have been so depressing that I haven't felt much like writing to anyone. The Singer mag is very bright and I always enjoy it - hope you will continue to send any copies you have spare.

The Bantam Roadster from Australia<sup>(1)</sup> came as a complete surprise to the Works - and a good deal of envy from the sales staff, who insisted that they could sell such a model in this country. At that time, or sometime before, we had decided to give up the Nine Sports as it was uneconomic to manufacture in the small numbers we were selling. I think the news of the convertible from down under sparked off a project to make



Roadster Production Line - Mid 1939

an open four-seater nine at an economical and profit making price. I know a very intensive study was made [into] reducing manufacturing costs by utilising every component they could from other models, which eventually

<sup>(1)</sup>See Bill Haverly's Article on page 12 - Ed.

resulted in the Roadster. That indeed did produce a very profitable model. I am pretty certain that no Bantam convertible was ever seen in this country, and no parts were ever exported to use in its construction.

I, and indeed some other Singer engineers, used to maintain that a low priced Nine could be manufactured using the old-fashioned (but very effective) method of a frame of steel with ash wood body members and aluminium panels. With modern fabrication methods on a mass production basis, such a car could compete with the all steel shells used today. Not only that, but changing the design each year would be a comparatively simple exercise.

With kind regards and best wishes, ***Norman E Riddihough.***

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