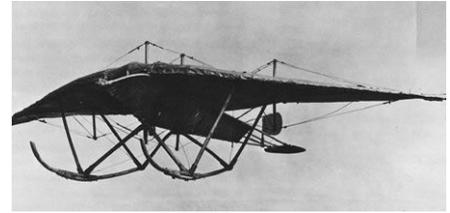


ERIC CECIL "GORDON" ENGLAND (1904-06)

He was born on 5 April 1891 and on leaving the College was apprenticed in the Great Northern Railway shops at Doncaster.

In 1908 he became associated with Pemberton Billing in aeroplane development and afterwards joined Josse Weiss in aviation research work and produced with him the Weiss inherently stable glider, on which in 1909 he set up a record by remaining in the air for 58 seconds.



He held Pilot certificate number 68 and went on to produce airplanes and owned a Hanriot plane.

During WW1 he was a test pilot from 1914 to 1916 and then managed airplane works and designed airplanes.

After the war his interest turned to motor racing and in 1922 he obtained a chassis version of the new Austin 7 which he tuned and entered successfully at several events. This led him to make and sell a series of cars to the public based on his racers.

He believed that car performance was being held back by the heavy coachwork being fitted to many models and set about designing bodies largely of plywood covered with fabric and fixed to the chassis with three rubber mountings. To make these George England (Motor Bodies) Ltd was established in 1923 taking his father's name.

The first model to be sold was the "Brooklands" bodied Austin 7 and although the racing version had been fabric covered the production version was aluminium panelled. Each one was supplied with a certificate stating that it would attain 80 mph (130 km/h). One such car was a 1924 Austin Brooklands, Seven Supercharged Sports Racer, "Mrs. JoJo". This is one of the most famous Austin Seven racing cars and has an exciting and remarkable story to tell. The car was created by him as a modified Cup model with a special chassis and engine to which he added a lightweight body. After careful development it won the JCC 200 after an epic struggle. The 1924 machine was built by Gordon England and was the result of several record breaking sessions and race wins in 1923.

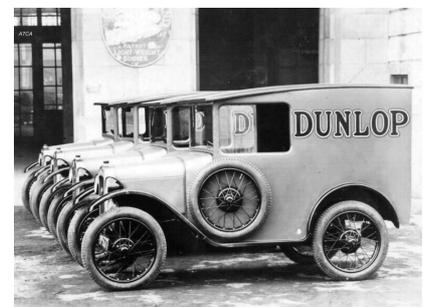


The "Cup" model followed in 1925 and then a fabric saloon which came out before the official factory version. In 1927 almost 20,000 bodies were supplied for the Austin 7.

Work extended beyond Austin and in 1925 a Rolls-Royce was fitted followed by work on Bentleys, MG, Morris, Standard and Wolseley. The Putney premises were outgrown and in 1927 the company moved to Wembley and exhibited at the London Olympia Motor Show with an Invicta on the stand.

He co-piloted one of his own cars in the 1925 24 Hours of Le Mans, but failed to finish the grueling race.

In 1928 the Holbrook Company of Hudson, New York became the sole US licensee of the Gordon-England patent lightweight body. Before Holbrook produced a single example, the British firm bought a controlling interest in Holbrook, hoping to establish a US branch. The company was reformed as Gordon England (1929) Ltd and claimed to be making 35 bodies a day. Unfortunately, the Depression put an end to the experiment months later and the combined firm declared bankruptcy at the beginning of 1930.



He was Deputy Chairman of Aero Engines Ltd in 1932-33, Director of Vacuum Oil Co 1935-42, Managing Director of General Aircraft Ltd 1936-43 and Chairman of Engineering Industries Association from 1940 to 1944. He was also a member of the Lord Gorell Committee on Civil Aviation from 1941 to 1944.

In 1945 he unsuccessfully contested the Bury St Edmonds seat in the General Election.