

NOT ALL ARIELS ARE RED HUNTERS

OR

AN EXPLANATION AND LISTING OF MODEL CODES

From 1926 onwards every model produced was given a model code, which appeared to be the only reference used within the factory and in some cases were only used in the factory. Names only seem to have been used in publicity, never in the parts books, where the model code is always used and they were not too specific about the names, 'Red Hunter Single' being used one year and 'Hunter Single' the next. The accurate way to describe a particular model is to use its designated model code, rather than refer to the model name. To call an Ariel a 'Red Hunter' is particularly misleading as this could refer to a 250, 350 or 500 single as well as to a 500 twin, not to mention any of the competition models. There is a tendency to call any single a 'Red Hunter' when many are in fact 'Standard' or 'de Luxe' models and in fact only 7 of the 50 four-stroke models made between 1926 and 1958 were called 'Red Hunters' and that includes the KH.

These model codes were usually, but not always, applied with logic, starting in **1926** with fresh new designs by Val Page it was decided to use a new model code system. In the first year there were 4 models which were given the first 4 letters of the alphabet. A and B were the Sports and Touring side valves and the C and D models the Super Sports and Touring models. Over the next 4 years as new versions of the same machines were introduced they were given the next letter in the alphabet down to the model G, which was now the Super Sport with a very special specification.

A new group of three 250cc models was introduced in **1929** using the model codes LB, LF and LG and although they were always known as Colts, the factory does seem to have used this name until 1954. The L prefix stood for 250cc and represents the *model group* and the suffixes denoted the *model type* using the letters already in use for the larger machines, a system that was to remain in place for ever. The B suffix denotes side valve, F the standard model and the G suffix the sporty one. Perhaps the L prefix was used so that H, I, J and K would be available for future *model types*, after all someone must have been looking to the future when making a decision about these things or perhaps L was chosen for 'Lightweight'.

In **1931** the existing B, F and G models gained a prefix of V and as this letter is out of sequence it can be assumed that V stood for 'Vertical' at a time when the 'Slopers' were being made. Although as we shall see later the V comes to mean large capacity, vertical engined models as the smaller engined, vertical models receive their own *model group* letter.

Three new model groups were also introduced in 1931. The 350 inclined models took the next letter in the alphabet which was M, however the 250 versions of the same design retained the L prefix. L was used for 4 of the 5 designs of 200/250 capacity four strokes over the years, all the other models were given a new letter code when the basic design changed.

The 2nd new *model group* was the Slopers, which rather than use N, the next letter, used S, logically for Slopers. The *model types* continued as before which is why the 2-valve model is the SF or 'Standard' and the four valve, top of the range model, is the SG 'Sports', whereas logic would use SF for the 4 valve model.

The 3rd new *model group* was of course the Square Four, which was the 4F. Presumably, the F was used for the *type*, rather than G, as the factory looked on it more as a touring model and might put potential buyers off by calling it a sports model or perhaps thought of releasing a tuned version later as the G, heaven forbid! In 1932 when the 600cc version was released the 2 Square Fours were differentiated as 4F5 or 4F6.

A new *model type* was introduced at the same time as these new *groups*, which was of course the Red Hunter. It used the next letter available, which was H, the first model being the VH, a tuned version of the VG vertical 4 valve 500 single and exceedingly rare. The 2nd Red Hunter was the MH model, with 350cc inclined engine.

1933-38 was a period of rationalisation after the collapse of the old firm at the end of the 1932 season, when the Slopers, Inclined and 4-valve models were dropped from the range. New models were released, with new *model group* letters but these were actually smaller capacity versions of the existing VF and VG models. The 250cc size continues to use the L prefix and the next letter available, N, is applied to the 350cc size. Even post financial collapse and with a trimmed down range Ariel list 9 models from only 2 basic engine designs and 26 mudguards! The smaller side valves have also gone, the 250cc L model and the 350cc N model are available in F (Standard), G (de-Luxe), or H (Red Hunter) forms. The large capacity *model group*, V, is also available in side valve form as A (standard), or B (de-Luxe), versions. It will be noted that the G has been demoted to 'de Luxe' with the arrival of the H or 'Hunter' versions.

During the 1930's additional suffixes were used from time to time to denote various options that were available, such as a '3' to denote a 3 speed gearbox or a '2' to signify a twin port head. For 1932 only, the year was added as a suffix, e.g. VG32, something that BSA did consistently throughout the 1930's.

The G suffix having been downgraded from 'Super Sports' to de-Luxe it was deemed suitable for the new ohv Square Four introduced in **1937**. However the F suffix was re-used for the 600cc version, giving rise to some confusion, as a 4F can be a 1931-36 cammy or a later ohv model. To confuse matters further, a rare Square Four, the 4H, was also made, not a Red Hunter as might be assumed, but 'a slightly less luxurious version' or cheaper model.

In **1939** the release of 2 new models, well lightweight versions of the existing 250, called for a new *model group*, using the next available letter they became the OG and OH models.

During the **1939-45** war Ariels made the NG, OG and VA to war department specification and added a W prefix to the existing designations, thus W/NG, W/OG and W/VA. Although the W/OG is listed by many authorities, none are known to exist and they do not appear in the Ariel company despatch books.

Although usually called the Fieldmaster today, when introduced in **1948**, the new 500cc twin was called the Red Hunter or deLuxe Twin. K was chosen for the *model group* although logically it should have been P. The name Fieldmaster did not appear until 1956.

An A was added to the **1953** KH and the **1953-54** VH to denote versions with alloy cylinders.

In **1954** all logic in model designations flies out of the window as the Huntmaster 650 twin is launched using *model group* F. However, a new 200cc model is introduced, which re-uses the *model group* letter and the name of the pre-war 250 Colts, which had not survived the war as a BSA parts bin special it hardly deserves the H suffix, Red Hunter it isn't!

Competition and alloy cylinder models

Although competition machines were listed in the 1930's; they were lightly modified standard models and never received their own codes. The post war competition models were taken a little more seriously as competition demanded ever more specialised bikes. The code for the 1948-53 competition models had a C for competition inserted into VH, thus VCH. When purpose designed separate trials and scrambles bikes were built, they were given the designations HT (Hunter Trials) and HS (Hunter Scrambler).

The names in the table below are those that were used by the factory in their publicity material. Where more than one name was used both are shown.

Prefix		Suffix	
F	650 ohv Twin	A	Sports? Side valve
H	350/500 Hunter competition	B	Touring or De-luxe side valve
K	500 ohv Twin	F	Standard
L	200/250 sv/ohv	G	De-luxe
M	350 sv/ohv Inclined	H	Hunter (Sports)
N	350 ohv Vertical	S	Scrambles
O	250 ohv Lightweight	T	Trials
S	500/557 sv/ohv Slopers	Others	
V	500/557/600 sv/ohv Vertical	A	Alloy engine
W	War department	C	Competition

Year	Code	Factory Name	Notes
1926-30	A	Sports/Standard	557 sv single, 'C' section mudguards
1926-30	B	Touring/De-luxe	557 sv single, valenced mudguards, Sturmey archer gearbox
1926-28	C	Super Sports/Sports	500 ohv single, 'C' section mudguards
1926-28	D	Touring	500 ohv single, valenced mudguards, Sturmey archer gearbox
1927-30	E	Super Sports/Standard	500 ohv single, tuned engine
1929-30	F	De-luxe	500 ohv single, more tuning

1930	G	Special	500 ohv single, 'racing' magneto and carburettor, polished flywheels, sports cam
1954-58	FH	Huntmaster Twin	650 ohv twin, based on BSA A10
1957-58	FHS	Export Sports	650 ohv twin with export cam etc. (FHS probably only used in the factory) despite its name, available in UK
1958	FH	Cyclone	650 ohv twin. Chrome mudguards, 'western' handlebars, at least 8:1 pistons and export cam, also available in the UK.
1954-58	HS MKI	Scrambler/ Scrambler Red Hunter	500 ohv single. Tuned light alloy engine in basically standard road frame, no lights, no silencer.
1954-55	HS MKII	Scrambler	500 ohv single, MKI with lights and silencer
1954-58	HS MKIII	Scrambler	500 ohv single, detuned, road legal MKI
1954-58	HT	Hunter Trials	500 ohv single, alloy engine with special frame (HT5 after 1957)
1957-58	HT3	Trials Red Hunter	350 ohv single, as HT5
1948-51	KG	De-luxe Twin	500 ohv twin
1948-57	KH	Red Hunter Twin	500 ohv twin
1953	KHA	Red Hunter Twin	500 ohv twin, alloy engine
1953	KHA MKII	Hunt Master	500 ohv twin, Earles fork prototype
1929-30	LB	De-luxe	250 sv single
1929-30	LF	De-luxe	250 ohv single
1930	LG	Special	250 ohv single
1931-32	LB		250 sv single, inclined
1931-32	LF		250 ohv single, inclined
1934-35	LF	Standard	250 ohv single
1936-38	LG	De-luxe	250 ohv single
1933-38	LH		250 ohv single
1954-58	LH	Colt	200 ohv single (BSA parts bin special)
1933	MA		350 sv, inclined. 76 made, all despatched to Stokvis & Zonen in Netherlands, believed to be clearance of MB models despatched Feb/Mar 1933 all 3 speed, listed as MA32
1932	MB		350 sv single, inclined
1931-32	MF		350 ohv single, inclined
1932	MH	Red Hunter	350 ohv single, inclined
1933-35	NF	Standard	350 ohv single
1936-50	NG	De-luxe	350 ohv single
1933-58	NH	Red Hunter	350 ohv single
1939-40	OG	De-luxe	250 ohv, lightweight
1939-40	OH	Red Hunter	250 ohv, lightweight
1931-32	SB		557 sv single, Sloper
1932	SF		500 ohv single, Sloper
1931-32	SG		500 ohv single, 4 valve Sloper
1933-35	VA	Standard	557 sv single
1939-40	VA	Standard	500 sv single
1931-58	VB	De-luxe	600 sv single (557cc 1931-35)
1931-35	VF	Standard	500 ohv single
1931-50	VG	De-luxe	500 ohv single
1932-58	VH	Red Hunter	500 ohv single
1948-53	VCH	Competition Hunter	Competition, magnesium c/cases 1948-50, alloy engine, high ground clearance frame
1952-53	VHA	Red Hunter	500 ohv single, alloy engine
1953	VHA MKII	Hunt Marshal	500 ohv single, Earles fork prototype

1940-45	W/NG		350 ohv single Military version
1940	W/OG		Fictional 250 ohv single Military version
1940	W/VA		500 sv single Military version
1931-33	4F5	Square Four	500 ohc four, "Cammy" (4F in 1931)
1932-36	4F6	Square Four	600 ohc four, "Cammy"
1937 1939-40	4F	Square Four	600 ohv four
1937-48	4G	Square Four De-luxe	1000 ohv four, all iron model
1939-40	4H	Square Four Standard	1000 ohv four 'Slightly less luxurious version'
1949-52	4G MKI	Square Four	1000 ohv four, alloy engine, 2 exhaust pipes
1953-58	4G MKII	Square Four	1000 ohv four, alloy engine, 4 exhaust pipes
1953	4G MKIII	Royal Hunter	1000 ohv four, Earles fork prototype
1958	4G MKIV		1000 ohv four Swing arm prototype
1958		Glida	Leader prototype
1958-65	TS1	Used in the factory only	Leader
1960-65	TS2		Arrow
1961-65	TS3		Sports Arrow
1964-65	TS4		200 Arrow
1972		Healey	4G MKII engine in Egli type frame, built by the Healey brothers