

# THE BULLETIN

OF



THE

## VINTAGE SPORTS CAR CLUB

No. 45

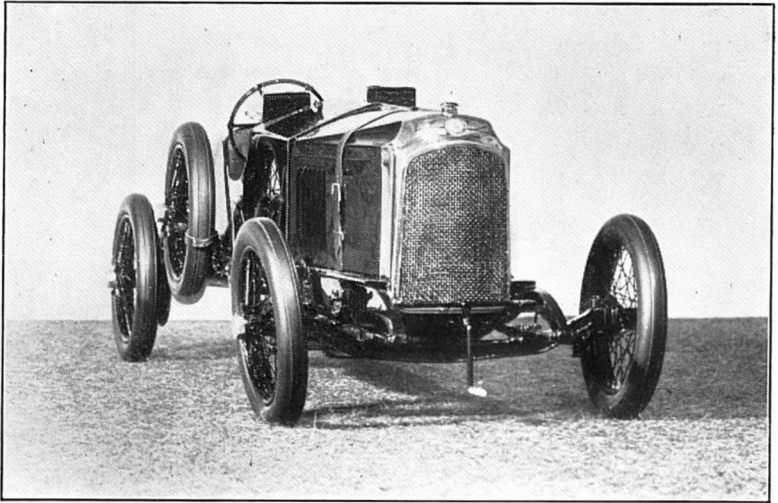
CHRISTMAS, 1954



*Tim Carson in the Carson Special*

FREE TO MEMBERS

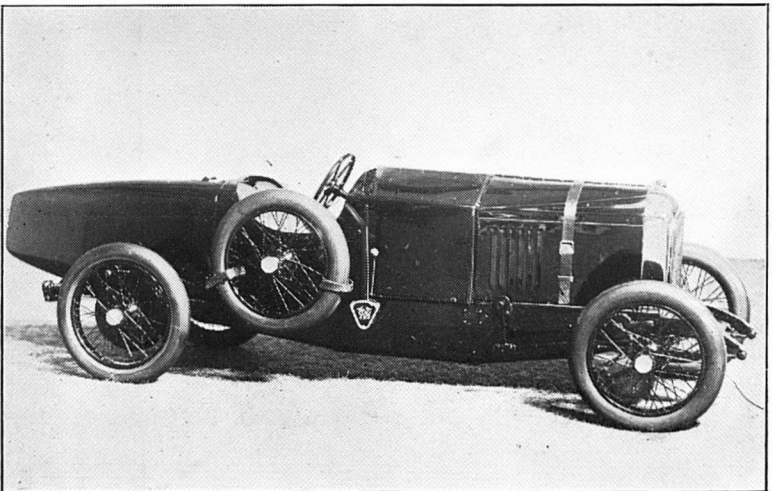
EXTRA COPIES ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE



*Photos by Clifford Pratley*

*“Rouge et Noir”*

*Two views of the model made by Harold Pratley which the club has presented to the V.M.C.C.A. (see page 8)*



# THE VINTAGE SPORTS CAR CLUB LIMITED

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No. 45

CHRISTMAS, 1954

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## EDITORIAL

Unless something terrible happens your Christmas *Bulletin* will reach you before Christmas. This is flying in the face of precedent and may be a Bad Thing. Half the charm of getting the *Bulletin* in the past has been the surprise of getting it after you had given it up as lost in the post.

Anyway, Happy Christmas and make it a New Year's resolution to support the club more than ever during 1955, because it is our 21st Birthday Year and some special events are being planned to celebrate this. Special events need special organization, so make a note in your diary that Marshalling is Fun and that if you can't compete it is more interesting to marshal than just to watch. And if you can marshal, do please let George Grigs know about a fortnight ahead if possible. He has a lot of planning to do to get an event properly marshalled. Another thing — do not make the mistake of thinking you need any experience of anything to marshal. You don't.

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## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

MEASHAM RALLY — 8th/9th January. This is a very well-run event and well worth entering, especially so now that there is a special category for people who get lost half-way round the road section and go straight to Measham.

SOUTHERN RALLY — 6th February.

FILM SHOW at the Hammersmith Town Hall — 15th February.

POMEROY TROPHY — tentative date — 26th/27th March.

## MR. SECRETARY CARSON

There are few members of the V.S.C.C. who cannot claim that they know Tim Carson. No other club of comparable size has such a well-known and well-liked Secretary, but how many know of his motoring past? That he once held a Class D record at Brooklands? That he has owned well over a hundred vintage cars? Or that he has belonged to the club longer than almost anyone else?

It is doubtful whether one per cent of our members know any of these things, because Tim Carson, to use the understatement of the decade, does not blow his own trumpet. The purpose of this article is to blow it a little for him, because his is a life many of us would have given anything to have lived.

Here, then, is Tim's story.

His first machine was a motor cycle, a new New Hudson two-stroke of 225 c.c. which had two speeds and no clutch. This he bought in 1921 at the age of 14 (the youngest age for obtaining a driving licence at that time).

Then, in 1922, a new 499 c.c. Rudge Multi. This had an expanding pulley device like the Zenith Gradua gear which gave an infinitely variable ratio (there were actually about 20 notches in the gear lever gate) over a limited range — in this case from approximately 6.5 : 1 to 3.5 : 1. With this high gear the get-away was not terrific, but the performance once it got going was excellent. The Rudge was used for local trials and also at club meetings at Brooklands in 1922 and 1923. The engine had an inlet-over-exhaust valve arrangement.

In 1923 he acquired a 1916 racing Harley Davidson and a new Martinsyde "Quixix", which was a sporting but not a racing machine. The Harley was a real he-man's bicycle with one gear only. This was of 3 : 1 ratio which with 28 x 3 tyres meant that you had to push it jolly quickly to start it. The engine was a 996 c.c. V twin and it had a clutch. It was road equipped and was not exactly docile in traffic. The Martinsyde, which was made in Woking, had a 6 h.p. 750 c.c. V twin with i.o.e. valves. It also had a three-speed gearbox which meant that it had a better get-away than the Harley and was therefore better at sprint events.

At this time Tim belonged to the Guildford & District M.C.C. and the Public Schools Motor Club, and competed in hill climbs and sprints at South Harting, Kop Hill near Princes Risborough, and Ranmore Common, which is where the V.C.C. hold their Dorking Speed Trials, to mention three of the best known venues. Speed events were allowed on the public roads "provided the 20 m.p.h. speed limit was observed" — in other words provided you selected a quiet road and a friendly policeman. And do not forget that though all these hills are now provided with smooth tarmac surfaces they were then loose gravel and stones. He also ran in a number of races at Brooklands, generally with the Harley, though he did lap the circuit on the Martinsyde at 75 odd. The fastest lap he did on the Harley Davidson was at 87 m.p.h.

In 1924 he bought his first car, a 1919 Chevrolet tourer, and in the same year he had a foretaste of his present job when he was made Secretary of the Guildford & District M.C.C. It was with the Chevrolet that he got the only gold medal he ever won, for a night trial through southern England. It is typical of Tim that this medal was dug up in the garden at the Phoenix quite recently.

In 1926 the cars started to come thick and fast. First a 1922 Maxwell (a firm which was subsequently bought up by Chrysler) which was a 4-seater with wire wheels (the "Sports" model) and a 22 h.p. motor. Then the first of many 30/98s, but one which stayed in his hands (except for a short break) for the next twelve years. This was a 1921 E type, No. E326. He sold it in 1928 to an Irish publican but bought it back the next year and it later became the basis of the Carson Special. Then, still in 1926, he got a most exciting Edwardian, a 1914 4½-litre G.P. NAGANT, a Belgian car which had competed in the famous 1914 French G.P. at Lyons. This car, which had twin o.h.c. and an overdrive top gear (direct third), tubular rods and typical racing bodywork with exposed bucket seats and a bolster tank, had a distressing tendency to catch fire, and as the engine was almost entirely made of aluminium the day came when it really burnt and the engine just melted away.

After that, and we are now somewhere between 1926 and 1928, with Tim still a minor, came two Bugattis, a Brescia, and a type 37, a Daytona Paige, an A.B.C twin, a couple of Surbaisse Amilcars, an oil-cooled 8 h.p. V twin Belsize Bradshaw, a 4-cylinder and two 6-cylinder Essexes, and then one of the famous 3-litre T.T. Vauxhalls — the number 3 team car from the 1922 Isle of Man T.T. Apart from the Vauxhall the only car of those listed above with which he did any competitive motoring was the Paige. This had a body not unlike the Pierce-Arrow which competed in the Anglo-American Rally, and even had a little seat on the near-side running board. In this car Tim won his first race, a Brooklands handicap organized by Henly's. The Paige was rated at 37 h.p. and was not noted for its economy.

The 3-litre Vauxhall had twin overhead camshafts driven by a train of gears at the front of the engine, ball or roller bearings throughout, and a flywheel in the centre of the crankshaft, between number two and number three cylinders. There were four valves per cylinder and no less than three sparking plug holes in each cylinder head, though in practice only one of these holes was normally used for ignition purposes. The compression ratio was 5.8 : 1, and the dimensions were 85 x 132. Coil ignition was employed and the cylinders had wet cast-iron liners and Ricardo slipper pistons. The chassis had servo brakes operated by compressed air supplied by a small pump driven from the timing gears. A most unusual feature of the design was a small lever on the steering column : this controlled the supply of air to the cylinder which applied all four brakes and could be set to leave the brakes on while the driver used his hands and feet to change down for a corner.

But you can read all about this very interesting design in "The Grand Prix Car" or "The High Speed Internal Combustion Engine",

those classic books by Laurence Pomeroy and Sir Harry Ricardo respectively. Tim's car was the one driven by M. C. Park in the 1922 I.O.M. T.T. and subsequently driven by Jack Barclay at Brooklands and Dan Higgins at Southport. The first race in which Tim drove it was the 1928 Easter Handicap. He very nearly stalled the engine at the start, because the gears were the opposite way round to the 30/98 and in the excitement he put it into third gear instead of first.

During the summer of 1928 he drove the car several times at Brooklands and also took it to one meeting at Skegness where they had kilometre sprints and 20 mile scratch races on the sand. In the sprint he came second to Raymond Mays in the No. 2 team car, which had been fitted with a supercharger and was then (as now) known as the Vauxhall Villiers. In the 20 mile race he came third to Mays and Clay (36/220 Mercédès). At Brooklands he was more successful. On August Bank Holiday the Vauxhall was entered for the "90 Long" race, and won by half a mile, at an average of 97.02 m.p.h., having put in a lap at 102.06. This was a ten-lap race of about 27 miles, held on the outer circuit (the finishing straight was no longer used at that time). In September the Vauxhall scored another success, winning the 100 m.p.h. Long Handicap at an average of 99.91 m.p.h., the fastest lap being at 105.29. Then came what proved to be the T.T. Vauxhall's swan song. The car had been used for successful attempts on Class D records in 1925, achieving them for the distances from one kilometre to 10 miles (in Barclay's hands); in 1926, when it took the 100 kilometre, 100 mile, and one hour records during the course of the August 100 mile handicap race; and, as far as I can make out, it broke these records again in 1927 in the hands of John Cobb. So in November 1928 Tim decided to attempt the 200 kilometre and 200 mile records for the 3-litre class. All went well for the 200 kilometres, but Tim's left foot had been rubbing on the oil pressure gauge pipe and cracked it, with the result that oil was pumped slowly but surely on to the track and before the oil pressure gauge showed a dangerously low reading the engine began to seize. So that was the end of that, and the 200 miles were never completed. However, he had the 200 kilometre record at 96.61, a record which stood until early in 1930 when it was broken by Brian Lewis in a Talbot.

After this misfortune the car was taken to pieces and was not ready to race again until the beginning of the 1930 season, when disaster struck in a big way. While practising before the Easter meeting the engine threw a rod, which had probably been strained in the seizure of 1928, and Tim sold the car hastily to Arthur Barron, who had the No. 1 car, which had been owned by David Brown. He did actually buy the car (and the No. 1 car) again in 1938, but by then both cars were in a bad way mechanically, and he never had either of them going before the war. At the beginning of the war he sold them both to Anthony Brooke, who already had the No. 2 car, the Vauxhall Villiers.

While the 3-litre was in bits during 1929 Tim had a 2-litre Lagonda, a Riley Redwing, and a 1916 Studebaker tourer, and then after the 3-litre blew up he started work on a 30/98 Special, using his old 1921

E type as the basis of it. This car was called the Carson Special and in its final form it had a very powerful engine using the overhead-valve OE type block, which was designed for a 140 mm. stroke, and the E type crankshaft, which gave a 150 mm. stroke. The engine also had the E type camshaft which was better than the OE. The chassis was originally a normal E type turned upside down, but it was cut in half later, and the front end turned the right way up. The whole car was tremendously lightened, especially the flywheel, which resulted in a 1200 r.p.m. tickover.

This very potent Vintage Special was completed in 1934 and had considerable success in club events. Tim cannot remember all the events in which it competed, but one event he remembers very clearly was a sprint at Hatherop which was *not* held with R.A.C. approval — it involved a wild dice down a narrow gravel drive at the end of which you had to turn round amongst a number of trees only just far enough apart to get a car between them, and then dice back to the starting line. The Carson Special got f.t.d. This car also won the unlimited racing class in a sprint event at Southall, which was one lap of the A.E.C. works. He ran it at Shelsley three years running, and several times at Donnington.

There was one event in Tim's life which occurred in 1934 and must be mentioned here. A letter had appeared in the "Motor" in the early autumn of that year suggesting the formation of a vintage car club, and Tim joined in September. This is not the moment to describe the early days of the club, because the Editor wants to make a proper story of it during 1955, when the club attains its majority, but it should be known that Tim joined as early as anyone who is still a member, and also that he was Captain of the club before he became Secretary.

The story of his competitive motoring is nearly at an end. He ran a much-lightened Surbaisse Amilcar at Shelsley and Prescott shortly before the war — he won the 1100 c.c. racing class with this car at Prescott with a time of 64 seconds. It must be remembered when comparing this time with present-day times that the course has been improved out of all recognition since the war.

After the war Tim did a little trials work with a 12/50-engined Riley Redwing Special, but generally speaking he has been too busy organizing V.S.C.C. events since the war to do any competitive motoring himself.

Up till 1929 this story has given a fairly complete record of all the cars he owned, but in the '30s he had so many different cars that it is impossible to fit them all in chronologically, and so a list of all the Vintage cars he owned is shown overleaf. This is a pretty comprehensive list (though Frazer-Nash and Lancia are conspicuous by their absence), and it is interesting that he particularly liked all the 12/50s and Delages. He also grew most fond of a 14/40 M.G. which proved to be very reliable and handled well. The Straight 8 Stutz, though very heavy on petrol, had good acceleration and good handling qualities. He had 6 or 7 30/98s, and he says that although the OE will give more

revs and more power at high revs than the E type, the latter has a much more flexible engine, is lighter, and has better initial acceleration.

Here, then, is a list of the Vintage cars Tim Carson has owned. Can anyone better it?

A.C. Six (1927)	Darracq (1925, 12-32)	Mathis (1925)
Amilcar (various, 1925-8)	Delage (DMS, DR, DISS, DI) (1926-9)	Nagant (1914 G.P.)
A.B.C. (1922)	Dodge (1928)	O.M. 6 cyl. (1927)
Alvis (12/50 & S.E.) (1923-30)	Essex (1922 4 cyl., 1926 6 cyl.)	Paige Daytona (1923)
Alfa-Romeo (1927, 22-90) (1928, 1500)	Erskine (1929 18 h.p.)	Riley Redwing (1927) and "9" (1928)
Aston-Martin (1928)	Fiat 509 (1927)	Rolls-Royce P.II (1930)
Austin (various, incl. Ulster)	Ford A (1929)	Studebaker (1916)
Bentley (3- and 4½-litre) (1922-5-8)	Humber (1930)	Stutz (1929)
Belsize-Bradshaw (1923)	Hillman (1928)	Senechal (1927)
Bugatti (2. Brescias, 37) (1924-7)	H.E. 14/50 (1927)	Sunbeam 16 (1928)
Buick (1926)	Hotchkiss (1929)	Talbot 14-45 (1927)
Citroën 7.5 (1924)	Jowett (1930)	Vauxhall E & OE (various, 1921-4), D (1920), 14-40 (1927), 20-60 (1929), T.T. (1922)
Chevrolet (1920)	Lagonda 2-litre (1928)	
Chrysler (1926)	Métallurgique (1912)	
Clyno (1928)	Maxwell (1922)	
	M.G. 14/40 (1927) and M	
	Morris (various)	

#### And motor cycles :

Ariel o.h.v. 500 (1930)	Martinsyde (1922)	Norton (1925)
New Hudson (1921)	Rex Acme (350 o.h.v. Blackburne) (1928)	Rudge Multi (1922)
Harley Davidson (1916)		Douglas o.h.v. T.T. (1922)

In addition there is a long list of cars which he had for some time but never actually owned, including a 1914 Benz, 1912 Rochet Schneider, and 1921 Charron, to name the most interesting ones.

N. A-F.

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### ANGLO-AMERICAN RALLY POSTSCRIPT

With the co-operation of Harold Pratley, the well-known model maker, we are sending to the Veteran Motor Car Club of America a model of an E type 30/98 (actually, a copy of Humphrey Cook's famous racing "Rouge et Noir") as a memento of the Rally, to be kept in their clubroom and museum. We felt this famous British car was the best sort of epitome of the British vintage tradition, and so the best means of conveying to the Americans some tangible and lasting token of our friendship.

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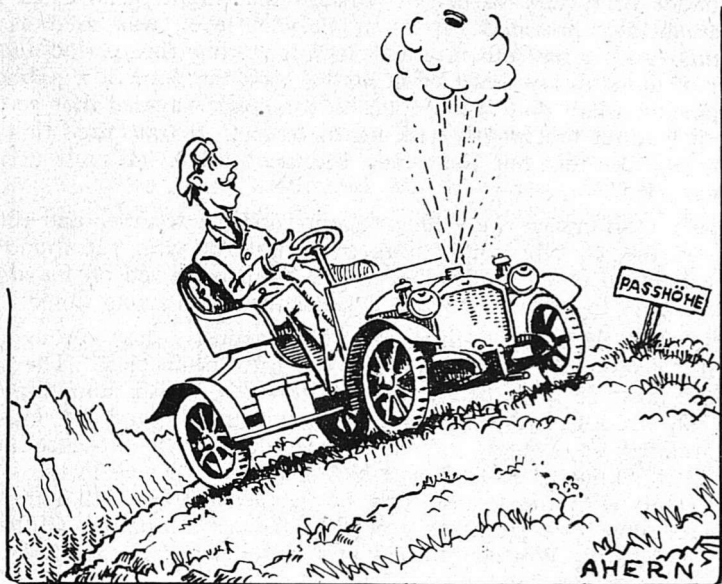
#### Editor's Postscript to the Anglo-American Rally

Your Editor feels that he has let everybody down rather badly because he has been unable to get anybody to write any more about this Great Event in the club's history. Letters have been sent off in all directions with no result, not even from America. The V.M.C.C.A. magazine, the "Bulb Horn", has not reached us at the time of going to press, but we may be able to reprint some of their report of the event in the next *Bulletin*. In the meantime, anyone who can add to what has already been written is urged to get in touch with the Editor.

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#### HOW STABLE CAN YOU GET?

The 50-ton tubular steel chassis ensures complete stability.  
(From a current sports car advertisement.)



### EXCELSIOR !

Release your lever and throw on the gas. In the first few hundred yards, as the engine settles into the steady beat of a working motor, your doubts as to its ability will slowly change to confidence. You are making grade after grade ; you are swinging the broad turns easily and without effort. Up and up and up you climb — 1,000, 3,000, 5,000 feet — up over shelf and ridge until, with your engine gasping and the gurgle of boiling water in the radiator, you stop — and look about.

“Travel”, October 1912.

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### WELSH 'ILLS

By Vintage Hypochondriac.

This year your reporter went down to Presteigne on the Friday evening so as to absorb atmosphere. Next morning he had a headache and the competitors started arriving.

Now, 200 crow-flown miles in 8 hours are not all beer and skittles, as those who indulged in such things at lunchtime were very soon to discover. Webb pretended to have started late before arriving late but even then he dashed into the wrong hotel to report, and one or two competitors, having discovered at Presteigne that they hadn't gone far enough, had to rush off to Kington and back before finally clocking in.

The entry list was longer than ever but, alas, non-starters included Hutton-Stott and Alastair Pugh who were presumably still suffering from post-American Eurosis. Presteigne was packed out and many were

the sounds of revelry in nearby villages that night. The extra hour, so thoughtfully provided for us at Cabinet level, was used as only residents (and a few others) can. It was during this period that an officer of the club lay down upon his back on the floor of a public bar and, placing a half pint of ale upon his forehead, wagered that he could drink it without touching it with hands or feet. It transpired that your Editor can do this but that your President can't. (It's all done by mirrors.— Ed.)

Next morning we were lucky again with the weather and the sun shone as the 40 odd competitors (now how do you get round that one?) lined up in the station yard. The trialists moved off leaving the glamour boys to have their paint licked and their starting timed.

Hughes, perhaps a little over-courageously, had brought his beautiful veteran Clement Talbot for the Edwardian class. The roads, for sure, must be a lot better than in 1904 but Welsh mountain lanes make an arduous adventure for such machinery and he must be congratulated on keeping his time schedule. In the absence of the Lanchester, Skinner's Rolls-Royce had it all its own way in the beauty contest, and with the fastest time in the acceleration hill climb test won with some ease from the evergreen Belsize of Blamey (Ellis with him). Wood's big Wolseley turned in a better petrol consumption than either Skinner's or Bendall's Ghosts.

Edwardian tailpiece — surely removable reflectors are the answer for this class of car. Some, especially the Talbot, looked very self-conscious *a derrière*.

The Vintage class saw a very close struggle with only 25 marks out of 350 separating the entire field. Johnny Clarke won by dint of a good performance in every test but he was very nearly pipped at the post by Tony Ayers who caused his Jowett to average a vast mileage per gallon. Clarke's Alvis went faster up the hill than Humphrey's 3-litre Bentley. Sawers' 1926 Lea-Francis got up quicker than Poynter's 1929 ditto but the latter had its revenge when the tanks were refilled by showing that it used appreciably less petrol. The regularity test route was beautiful in the morning sun. It included a half-hour stop at a place where the trial could be watched. Some remained too long and the last three cars were all penalized for lateness at the next control.

The trials course was quite a new one based on the errant wanderings of an erring competitor in this year's Measham Rally. What a pity neither Day nor Rowley were present to see to what depths Measham competitors can sink.

The start was conventional with a timed hill climbing test up Stapleton. Best climb was by Bertie Brown in the Nash followed by Harry Bowler's newly acquired 4½ Bentley (how nice to see him competing again). Tying for third place were Spence with the Leaf and Eaton in his very rapid Lambda. Wheeler's low-g geared Brescia did not go up as quickly as Webb's high-g geared one but both were behind the incredible Winderborne Humber 9. The Trojans of Scroggs and Arnold-Forster just climbed the hill.

On the other side there was a brake test. This was particularly well laid out by Cunliffe and Fletcher with a flying start over line A timed to a dead stop astride line B. This cut out accelerative factors and truly measured brakes and judgement, a combination possessed in the highest degree by Beavis in his Riley. Also very good was Wheeler who made the most of this — the only test for which his Bugatti was not to some extent unsuitable. On to Garth, once an observed section but this year a stop and restart test. Here an early competitor complained that he was timed by a black sheep but it transpired that it was only Gostling who had arrived so early that he had dew on his moustache.

So to the first of the new hills, Bailey. Run by Wrigley, Southon, and the Vesseys, this hill gave credit to driver technique. A sticky start is followed by an increasing gradient with a right-hand bend at the steepest point followed by a bumpy, muddy finishing straight that several competitors did not realize was part of the observed section. In fact fewer competitors were fooled by Wrigley gradually sinking beside the "Observed section start" sign than by Southon not sinking directly in front of the "Observed section ends" sign. Early arrivals fared badly. Eaton did not seem to be trying very hard but Benbow successfully gave all that his Fiat had got. Noble's Alvis slipped its clutch as well as (or better than) its wheels but the champion slipper goes to John Hinchliffe's lady passenger who lost her shoes in the mud and pushed him out barefooted!

Perhaps inspired by the pretty footprints there followed a succession of clean climbs. Winder up with a bounce; Whitehouse smooth and quiet in the saloon Ballot; Roberts at speed in his Austin 7. Vessey's report then states that Harding next drove his Alvis successfully up with coolness, calm and collection. The scorebook, however, states that he failed and thereafter retired. Bowler applied brute Bentley force scientifically but Webb, after a determined start, found the overlong ratios of his Bugatti too much of a handicap at the finish. The Trojans of Scroggs and Arnold-Forster just climbed the hill. (Vessey states that on this occasion Arnold was forster than Scroggs.)

Knucklas Hill had been crossed out on the route card but it was nevertheless successfully climbed by the President who had Barker as navigator.

Then followed three hills close together, all on the land of Mr. Lloyd who most kindly encouraged this invasion of his valley. First, Erskine's Hill or Heyop (according to whether you were running it or running at it); a steep stone-based climb from the farmyard, surmounted by a short, grassy slope. This last section frightened many who arrived at it without enough momentum, but the chief hazards were in getting to it at all. For a start Miss Stocken had to be circumnavigated in a narrow lane. She had ignored all the lessons of mythology and filled her Trojan horse with thirsty leaks. Then at the ford one had to run the gauntlet of seeing Dennis Jenkinson at the other end of a rangefinder. We can only hope he has sent lots of splashy pictures to the *Bulletin* and not kept them all for *Water Sport*. (No such luck — Ed.)

Llan-Goch 1 ran through a level bog, up a steep stone track, to finish with a very steep, grassy swerve. Successful climbers only were invited to attempt Llan-Goch 2 which followed directly up a sheep track to an anti-bank. That is, a corner without banking facilities before a bank without any facilities. John Crowther was bank manager and allowed credit to those who climbed for it.

The bog at the bottom became progressively more so as each competitor churned it up. Little intelligence was shown in trying to avoid the quagmire except by Eaton, Winder, Brown, Spence, Bowler, and other experts, all of whom skirted it with rapidity, but the Bentley proved to be ungeared for the steep section despite the assistance of an intentionally slipped clutch. Whitehouse and Clutton both tried to take the hill in second gear but both failed early on. Whitehouse, repentant, re-engaged a noisy bottom and finished with aplomb (French for "as a shot"). Clutton, unrepentant, was unwilling to expose his bottom to such rigours and had to be pulled out backwards.

Assistant reporters' notes for the hill state that "Max Hill failed early . . . noise like an elderly sheep". They do not state whether this emanated from Max or his O.M.

On the second section Roberts in his Austin was outstanding, and by getting further than anyone else lost no marks. This section was intended for experts only and they really seemed to enjoy themselves. Winder, Spence, Brown, and Lovell all made good attempts, the latter accompanied by the landlord of the Radnor Arms who, trusting the digestion of his guests to his staff, subjected his own to as bouncy a bout as it is ever likely to receive. The bank avoided Scroggs but a tree didn't. However, neither of them seemed to mind.

Beacon was another hill in two sections. Starting with a water splash, it pulled up a sunken track containing some tricky ruts. Eaton climbed his Lancia successfully up the main track but took the wrong course at the top due to being misinformed by the Welsh marshals as to the start of the rutting season. Dear, dear! The section was reduced to the place where the Lancia staged its diversion but still caused a number of surprising failures. Most of them were due to competitors making inadequate efforts to get a wheel out of the deep tracks. Notable exception was poor Brown whose Nashy crabs were quite unmanageable in the conditions and stranded him unrewardingly on his undertray. Winder got up all right, but shed a front tyre in the process.

There is no knowing what will happen to you in Wales. Some fiend Fluellen put a national emblem into Noble's petrol tank and then, pointing to the drips, joyously exclaimed "Well now, a leak look you". Noble was saved from the fate of Ancient Pistol by a cake of soap.

It was here, too, that one of the invited marshals told your reporter that he would probably have trouble with the young man in number forty-two who had spoilt his first run for cause that he had turned his petrol off and did not look at all pleased when he made a second successful but markless attempt. On panting to the top it was to find the Club President nothing if not exceedingly angry with a chap called Clutton

but not with anybody else! A return track down the hill had a squidgy place in its middle but Spence's wide section tyres squodged a dry rut that allowed chief marshal Woolston to pass dry shod like the Israelites in the Red Sea.

The second section, much, much steeper than it looked, failed all but two of the entry. The Trojans of Scroggs and Arnold-Forster just climbed the hill.

The last hill before lunch was a new version of Forest Hill. Deceptively steep, it failed no one who really had a go at it. It was much easier for the later competitors as Brown and Spence removed all the above-stone topsoil and quite a chunk of the superstructure of the hill in the course of their two meteoric ascents. The Trojans of Scroggs and Arnold-Forster just climbed the hill.

The after-lunch session was ruined by a sudden downpour. Smatcher had to be washed out before it was washed away and Bradnor was almost a farce; no one except Noble, who went first before the rain, getting beyond the second section. Scroggs, alas, never got there at all, for whilst stopping at the cross roads in Presteigne his brakes had the unfortunate inspiration of deciding to prefer three-quarter elliptic to cantilever suspension. Two thin, black lines of rubber mark the spot where unhappiness bowed to self-wrappedness.

Tea to consume and bills to pay (it's not a cheap rally but it's fun). Then Tim had the results ready as follows:

**Special Awards:**

	Class I.	S. J. Skinner	Rolls-Royce.
	Class II.	H. Clarke	Alvis.
	Class III.	H. Spence	Lea-Francis.

**First Class:**

	Class I.	J. K. Blamey	Belsize.
	Class II.	E. K. Poynter	Lea-Francis.
		A. J. Ayers	Jowett.
	Class III	W. L. T. Winder	Humber.
		J. D. Roberts	Austin.
		B. E. Brown	Frazer-Nash.

**Second Class:**

	Class III.	N. Arnold-Forster	Trojan.
		P. J. E. Binns	O.M.
		H. P. Bowler	Bentley.

**Third Class:**

	Class III.	R. Noble	Alvis.
		E. S. Eaton	Lancia.

**Most Meritorious:**

A. F. Scroggs Trojan.

**Light Car:**

M. R. Lovell Austin.

It is a friendly club. David Mitchell had been lent a car by John Wrigley so that he could come down and marshal. John Crowther delayed his departure back to Yorkshire for an hour or so while he lent his hands and tools to Wrigley's car in order that it might once again be able to engage its gears individually instead of all together as here-to-very-suddenly-fore. And so to home. I cannot but believe that everybody will want to come again. Thank you, Presteigne!

A. J-F.

*Presteigne footnote :*

After a sound night of sleep by all other competitors, Max Coote arrived home with his Diatto next morning. Although two of his new tyres had blown out and one of his old con rods had caved in, he found that these diversionist activities were not mutually reconcilable. *En route* he repaired two and removed one, dotted three and carried one and won. "Don't make 'em like that these days, Guv."

A. J.-F.

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## CORRESPONDENCE

43 Abbey Road,  
St. John's Wood,  
London, N.W.8

The Editor,

Dear Sir,

Will you please permit me to correct one or two misleading statements which Bill Boddy makes in his letter in your autumn 1954 issue, page 20.

He says that when a steering damper breaks on the Morgan Plus-Four "you have to go on by public transport".

Well, fancy that! I shouldn't think there is any need for me to say that there is not one atom of truth in that statement. With a broken damper all that happens is that the steering becomes rather sensitive to bumps and potholes, although not to such an extent as to cause the driver any anxiety or inconvenience. The car does *not* develop shimmy with a damper out of action, at any rate not if the front wheels have been balanced as they should be. If this has not been done, yes, you are likely to get shimmy, probably over a short speed range in the fifties. The Morgan front suspension is sensitive to wheel balance as seems to be the case on all cars in which the stub-axles pivot on long, fixed, king-pins, i.e., the Lancia, not to mention the new Fords which have an arrangement in many respects similar.

I agree that the steering dampers are not the best feature of this excellent and very likeable car, but a broken one can be replaced in about ten minutes, without even taking the wheel off. I removed one of them for a hundred or so miles recently in order to study the effect thoroughly.

The early pattern damper certainly was not up to the job but I don't think the later pattern breaks. I have not had any trouble with them in more than 6,000 miles. It is essential, however, that they should be properly mounted on the chassis and the owner should make sure that this is the case—especially if he has had any work done on the car by someone else. The dampers must be free to slide under the clamp at the chassis end. The washers, or spacers, under the clamp bolts *must* be slightly thicker than the dampers and one must make sure that neither of them pinches the damper. For this reason the damper should always be mounted at the chassis end before it is bolted to the stub-axle.

I apologise for introducing a subject which has nothing to do with Vintage cars, but I didn't start it! I trust that you may feel able to indulge me in the interest of truth.

Yours truly,

JOHN AHERN.

(This correspondence is now definitely closed — let's have some letters about Vintage cars.—Ed.)

## IT'S AN ILL ZEPHYR . . .

I don't know whether anyone else has noticed it, but we seem to have an awful lot of renegades about. Even at Vintage meetings you hear conversations which start: "These grand old cars are jolly good fun, of course, but my 1954 B.60 Long Island (export only) speedster hardtop gets me from A to B more quickly, quietly, comfortably and cheaply, and you should see it leave those poor old Bentleys at the lights and on the corners." Well, this sort of thing is all to the good of course for ultimately it lowers the market value of vintage Bentleys, but I wonder if these chaps really believe what they say?

I am no violent partisan, veteran, vintage, or anything else; I just love old motor cars as I love old dance tunes, clothes and buildings, not for their intrinsic merits so much as for the patina that the years have given them. This is abject sentimentality and it won't do, so let us blow the dust off the old vintage arguments and see where we are.

To begin with, we ought to make all the concessions we can. For example, in this matter of longevity, I truly believe any modern car, given the devoted care and expenditure accorded to vintage specimens, and driven voluntarily as much below its potential output as the old car *must* be driven, would last just as long. It is because the owners of these devices use all the B.H.P. all the time in fruitless bursts of acceleration and work their funny suspensions overtime that they wear out, not because they are "tin-ware". With lighter weight and more horses and adhesion, of course the performance is better but, my modern friend, pray tell me where all this gets you? My poor old Bentley is invariably "left at the lights" by Zephyrs and the like, but I always come up with them at the next lot or stuck behind a convoy of lorries or up the escape road at a roundabout. The truth is that, under modern traffic conditions, one *cannot* get a move on without taking risks and to pilot a vehicle in which, through a relatively modest performance, those risks cannot be taken is a direct contribution both to road safety and one's own peace of mind. It is significant that, the few fast and empty roads apart, one rarely encounters an XK or DB being cruised at much above the 50-60 range, for it seems that such cars are often driven by chaps who know what they are doing, and thank heaven for it. There remains one argument — that of the "busy business man". Time is money and all the rest of it. There may be a few dozen top-rank executives to whom this applies but in the main isn't it just another prop for the poor old ego? The new car gets him to his destination an hour earlier than the old one. What does he do with that hour? Recover — propping up the bar or lying down in a darkened room — from all those phenomenal avoidances *en route*? He could always have got his extra hour by getting up that much earlier.

All this waffle has so far not produced any valid arguments in favour of the old vehicles on which we are supposed to dote and I am afraid I can think of only one. Apart from its shape and its beastly little wheels, its bounciness and its vast amount of useless, vulgar ornamentation, I have only one thing against the modern product:

you can't Do Anything To It. You can either drive it or shut it up and go indoors to your TV ; nothing in between. It is all-in-one-piece, a tool of transport, a Thing. Tell me, sir, how would you like to buy your house complete with all curtains, carpets and furniture, even down to the pictures on the walls chosen by a Styling Expert ? Or would you enjoy your new suit if it came to you with shirt, tie, socks and underwear attached ? That is the modern motor car, complete in cellophane wrapper with all mod. con., because the owner is thought to be too dim to have any taste or too busy to exercise what he has. Can one imagine quitting the fireside on a winter night and stumbling out to the garage to get all cosy with a Mk. VI ? The thing would probably misconstrue your intentions, drive itself back to Derby and apply for a legal separation. But with the old, seasoned barouche, how different. There is always that door that fell off yesterday or the well-intentioned re-wiring begun by the owner before the owner before the last. As you work, sniffing because your hands are too dirty to grab a handkerchief, fingers numbed and knuckles barked, all the past gathers round you. The shades of bygone owners come and sit on the running board, the designer quits his work in some engineering Valhalla to smile on your ham-fisted efforts, and all the hands that have worked on your motor car, in love and fury and frustration, are lifted down the years in silent salutation to you who carry on the torch.

But there, I get sentimental again, and some rude fellow in the back row has just called out that he saw the man Charnock driving three and a half quite modern litres only last week. Alas, it is true. We use the thing for shopping and it impresses the neighbours no end ; it has too much power and too little anchorage and scares the hide off me on any but deserted roads. But when I have to do 150 miles, including two crossings of London, I leave it in the garage and take the poor old Bentley. I am a nervy type and I find it more restful that way ; besides I wouldn't for worlds deprive the drivers of Zephyrs and things of their innocent fun at the traffic lights.

W. H. CHARNOCK.

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### TAMPLIN CYCLECAR

The true cyclecar is now very rare indeed. The reason for this may be found in this article which describes in detail the extraordinary crudity of design and construction of one of the most popular makes of cyclecar. Born in about 1912, the genus cyclecar had a considerable following before the first war when it served to bridge the gap between the motor cycle and the cheapest car then available. After the war there was a brief revival when anything on four wheels would sell, but they faded from the motoring scene inside four years from the end of the war. G.N.s, of course, are different.—Ed.

This car dates from 1921 and was run by a lady owner until 1924, when it was abandoned in a shed where it stayed until 1951. The owner of the shed then removed, taking the Tamplin with him and putting it in an open yard, where I bought it a few months later. Although generally decayed nothing had rusted unduly except the wire wheels.

Two hours' work sufficed to remove engine, gearbox, front suspension units, and steering gear, and all the bits were then stowed in and on a V8 utility and taken home.

Now a general description of this quaint vehicle. The chassis-cum-body consists of a box about 20 in. wide, 7 ft. 6 in. long, 2 ft. deep in the front and tapering rearwards, open-topped and built of ash framing with fibre-board panelling about  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. thick. In the front, behind the engine, and under the dash, three wooden cross-members pass across the top of the box and extend outwards to support the long, flat, wooden wings (about 9 in. x  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. ash) which help stiffen the body.

In the front bay is the engine, crankshaft across the car : a J.A.P. V-twin, 85.5 x 85 bore and stroke, 996 c.c., supported by long rods with distance tubes passing through the ash frame and the crankcase plates, aided by a channel cross-member underneath.

Above the engine is the cylindrical petrol tank, nickel-plated nose protruding in front and bearing the legend, "TAMPLIN 1921", above which again is the one-piece bonnet top-cum-scuttle carrying two aero screens at its rear end. The engine drives through a universal joint a shaft which protrudes through a bearing housed in the side of the frame and has the primary drive sprocket on its outer end.

Behind the engine is a plywood bulkhead, then comes the driver, sitting to the right of the body leaving a narrow gap on his left for the legs of the passenger seated centrally behind him.

The gearbox, a Sturmey-Archer 3-speed (no reverse), is in the region of the driver's left knee ; its kick-starter is cranked backwards and can be operated from the driver's seat ; its pulley and clutch project through a hole on the left of the body, the whole transmission being external on the left-hand side.

The rear axle is "solid" and mounted on quarter-elliptic springs, final drive being by single belt to a rim on the near-side wheel : the hand-brake operates a block on this rim, the foot-brake working on the gearbox pulley. Front suspension consists of two vertical rods supported at the top in the front wooden crossbar and at the bottom in an angle-iron crossbar. On these rods, constrained by coil springs, slide bronze castings which carry the stub axles. Track rod and transverse drag link lie in front of the wheel centres. Steering is direct, the drag link being coupled to a crank on the bottom of the steering column.

Controls consist of motor cycle type throttle and air controls (no accelerator pedal), magneto control, exhaust valve lifter, clutch and brake pedals, handbrake, and small steering wheel with thick rim and cast aluminium spokes. Rebuilding consisted partly of restoration and partly in eliminating the more notable horrors in design with a view to giving the car a reasonable expectation of life. The "box" was reinforced by steel sideplates inside the engine bay, additional wood strips to "sandwich" the fibreboard to the existing frame, and light, steel angles along the bottom edges for the same purpose : it was then given a coat of black varnish as used for boats' bottoms. The engine only required new valves, springs and a magneto overhaul, the gearbox

only needed cleaning. Wheels were beyond repair, even two hubs being cracked. However, a 2.75 x 21 wheel and tyre is in current production for milkmen's handcarts and suchlike, and is almost identical in size and appearance to the original 700 x 80 mm. They come with very nice adjustable cup-and-cone ball bearings and were easily fitted at the front by turning up new stub axles. The rear axle was more of a problem.

The original consisted of a shaft on which two journal ball-bearings were pushed against shoulders: a 16-gauge tube was pushed over the outside of the ball-races and riveted down to keep them in place. The hubs fitted with taper and nut outside the bearings, and U-bolts clamped the tube to the springs. The new hubs, however, were too big in the bore to fit to any shaft which would pass through the bearings, but too small to admit a liner. So a redesign was necessary which, if not to original specification, is at any rate contemporary practice!

The hubs were bored through  $1\frac{1}{4}$  in. and welded to the ends of a shaft at the correct track, not forgetting to put the belt rim and four shaft collars between the wheels. This shaft runs in split bronze bearings, held to the springs by U-bolts and located by the aforesaid collars.

The engine extension shaft ball-bearing was originally held in a housing built up of layers of fibre-board which was of course quite inadequate to take the chain pull. A self-aligning ball-race was fitted in a cast aluminium housing bolted through the body side to the new reinforcing plate.

Track-rod and drag-link originally were  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. diameter rod bent to a right angle at each end and secured in the levers by split-pins: in the interests of safety these have been replaced by rods of larger diameter with ball-joints.

The gearbox bearer is a steel strip about 3 in. x  $\frac{1}{4}$  in., 18 in. long, bent to weird shapes. It whipped horribly, and was stiffened by welding flanges along the edges.

New bonnet top and chain guard were made to original pattern, new upholstery and an industrial link-type V-belt completed the job.

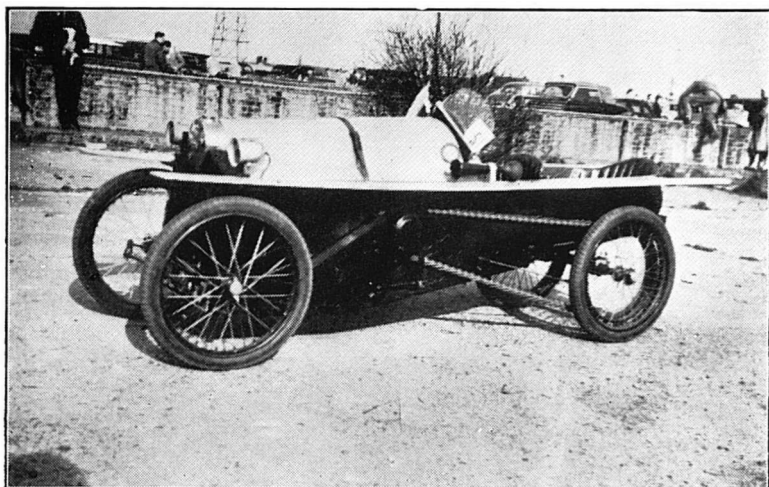
Leading dimensions are:

Wheelbase, 6 ft. 11 in.; Track — front 2 ft. 10 in., rear 2 ft. 7 in.; Length overall, 9 ft. 10 in., width overall, 3 ft. 3 in.

Its comfortable speed is about 33 m.p.h., maximum dependent on one's ability to absorb vibration! It is not a vehicle I drive for pleasure, but it has been to two Slough rallies (14 miles each way) with no more troubles than one oiled plug and a brake adjustment, so can now be classed as reliable!

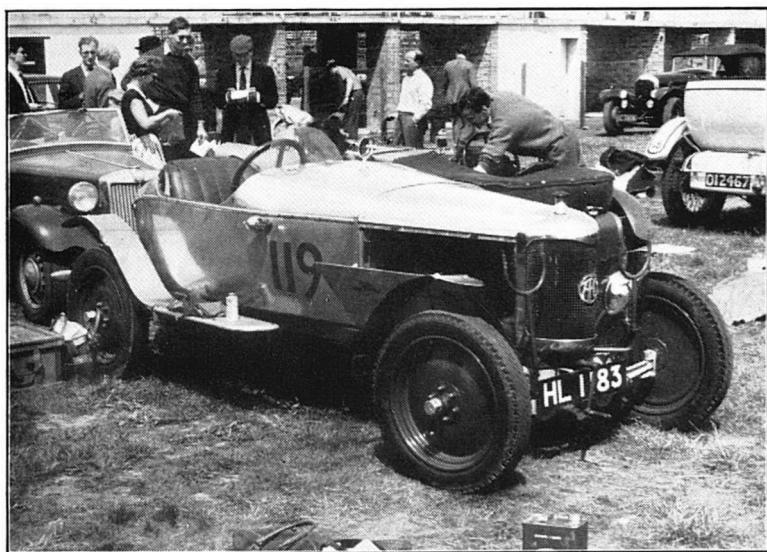
As turned out by the makers, its engineering standards were hardly up to 1911 practice, let alone 1921, and it is not surprising that manufacture soon ceased.

H. P. BOWLER.



*Photos by H. P. Bowler*

*The Tamplin described opposite*

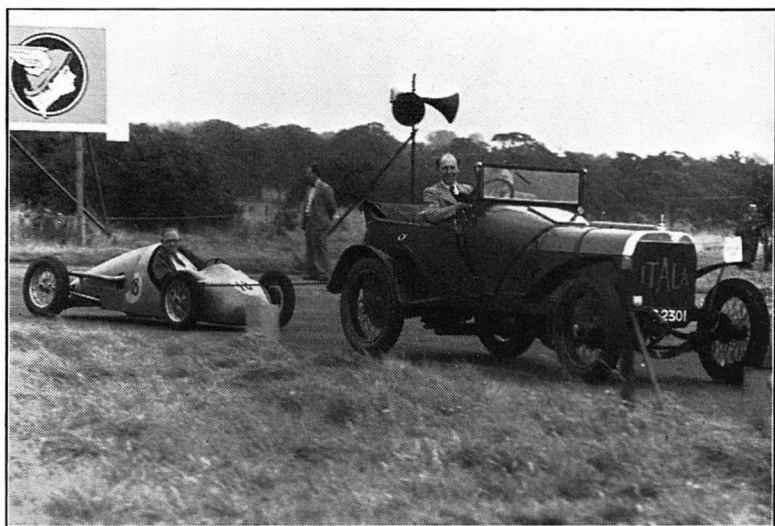


*Photo by G. A. Cull*

*Happy Days! A splendid picture that really captures the atmosphere of the Silverstone Paddock. The A.C. is McKusker's*



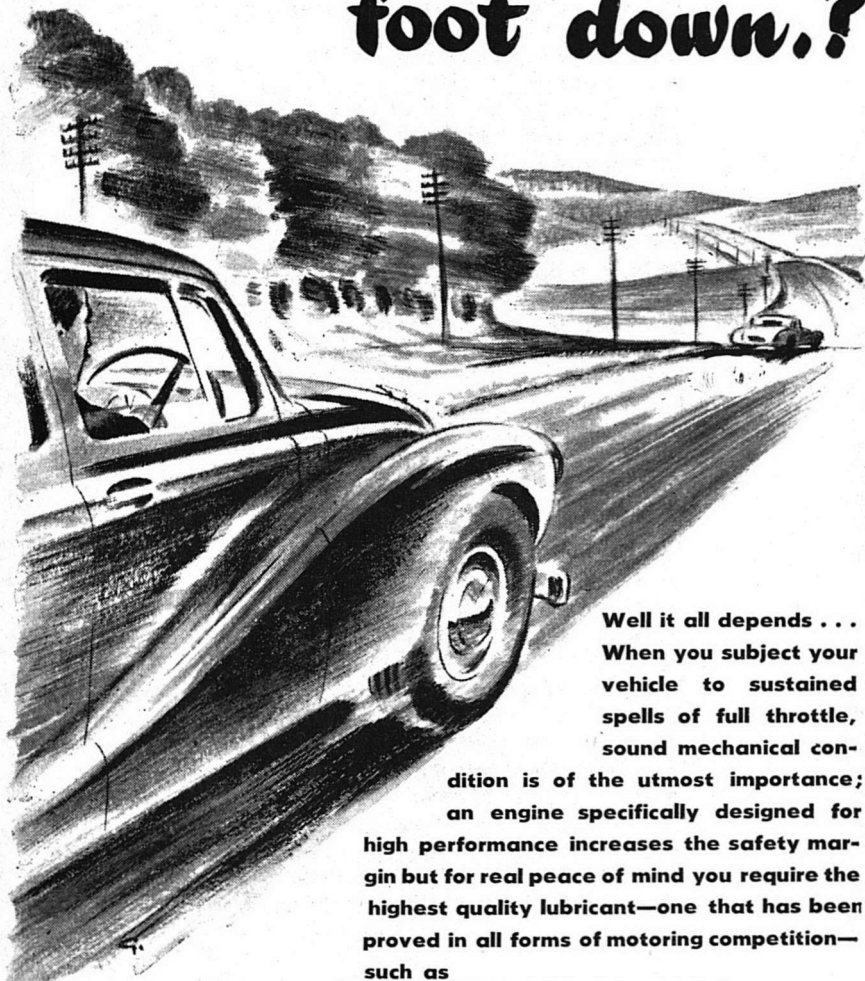
*Apparently the bloke in the middle had put his crown wheel in back to front*



*Photo by R. Pike*

*Jack Williamson gets a push-start in his new Itala. We can't think what that character in the corner is smirking about*

# Dare I keep my foot down.?



Well it all depends . . .  
When you subject your  
vehicle to sustained  
spells of full throttle,  
sound mechanical con-  
dition is of the utmost importance;  
an engine specifically designed for  
high performance increases the safety mar-  
gin but for real peace of mind you require the  
highest quality lubricant—one that has been  
proved in all forms of motoring competition—  
such as

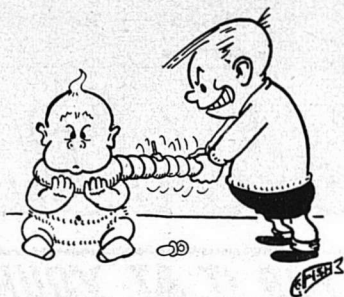
**NEWTON** *Oils*  
**ASK FOR IT AT YOUR GARAGE**

## PNEUMATIC FEVER

(The Alarming Tale of Augustus Thatch,  
Whose life went thro' a Sticky Patch.  
The odd thing is — tho' no more ill,  
The Sticky Patch is with him still !)

Augustus was, since very young,  
Quite notable for strength of lung,  
And at the tender age of four  
The very rare distinction bore  
Of winning at a fête in Brum  
The children's prize for Bubblegum,  
His bubbles being of a size  
To quite uproot the judge's eyes  
(Which, falling on the parquet floor  
Were fielded by a tabby's claw).  
But little later in the year  
An incident occurred, I fear,  
Which had a much more grave effect  
Upon his life ; in fact it wrecked  
What little chance he might have had  
Of living steady like his Dad,  
Who scraped a livelihood of sorts  
On flat violins in drab Palm Courts.

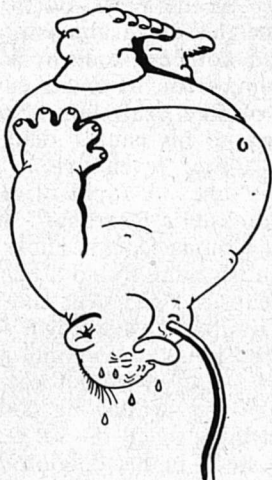
One sunny day Nurse Connie Clam  
Was pushing Gus out in his pram  
And parked him for a while outside  
A cycle shop. She slipped inside ;  
Perhaps to have a little flirt  
With the proprietor, one Bert —  
When Gus began to scream and cry,  
A young employee said " My ! My !  
'Ere, take this patched old inner-tube  
And shut your blinkin' gob, you boob !"  
Hence sprang the passion he displayed  
Which petrified his nurserymaid :  
Instead of dolls and coloured cubes,  
He played with cycle inner-tubes.



The passage of the years did not,  
Alas, reduce this craze one jot,  
And he had not been long at school  
When, playing with his chums, a cruel  
Backhand of fate dealt him a mighty  
Blow : Much to his chums' delight he  
Swallowed a four seven five  
By nineteen tube. A rapid drive  
In his headmaster's Rearguard Six  
To see the famous Doctor Hicks  
Ensued, but, swaying round a bend  
The heap capsized end over end,  
And Gus, trapped upside down within  
When offered swigs of soothing gin  
Got hiccups — seven to the beat,  
Which made the swallowing complete.  
The oddest thing of all the lot is,  
The valve stuck in his epiglottis.

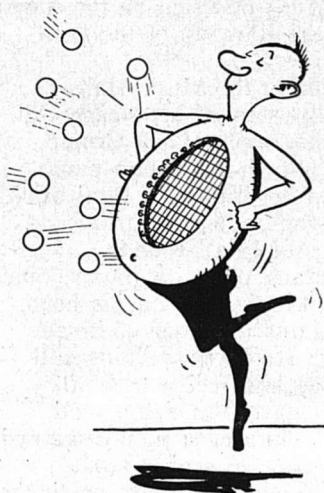
Augustus took it all in fun  
When told that nothing could be done  
For him : in fact, he broadly beamed —  
Things were much better than they seemed !  
On leaving school he made his way  
To London, where without delay  
He fixed a date to go and see  
A famed King of Variety.  
Said Gus, when called for interview  
For Samuel Goldberg's new Revue :—  
“ I'm no Picasso, crank or cubist —  
No ! rarer far — an Inner Tubist !”  
And from his first step on the stage  
Became the Blow-up of the Age.

Half naked at the Music Hall  
He proudly showed his Nearly All,  
And let his oppo, Harry Crump,  
Connect him to a pressure pump.  
One night he dropped a fatal brick  
When trying out a novel trick :  
Inflated equally all round  
At something close on thirty pound,  
Balloon-like, floating on his head,  
He ate a quartern loaf of bread.  
Alas ! the stuff was working still  
And made him feel a trifle ill.  
In fact it gave him extra wind  
And made him even tighter-skinned  
Until he grew to such a size  
His fingers were as thick as thighs !



And stretched and stretched to such extent,  
That with a screech his torso rent  
Right up the middle of the ab-  
Domen. But on the surgeon's slab  
They stitched him up as best they could  
And fed him special wind-proof food.  
Then after careful handling  
(His shape now like a doughnut ring),  
He worked out new and better stunts  
Whilst convalescing down in Hunts.

He made his name, and quite a packet  
As Gus, the Human Tennis Racquet,



And strung criss-cross with nylon gut  
Became the famed twice-nightly butt  
Of anyone who would engage  
Him in a set upon the stage.  
He played a splendid game indeed  
With airy grace and buoyant speed,  
Returning everything he got  
With navel, back, and belly shot.

There seemed to be no limit to  
The things a hollow man could do.

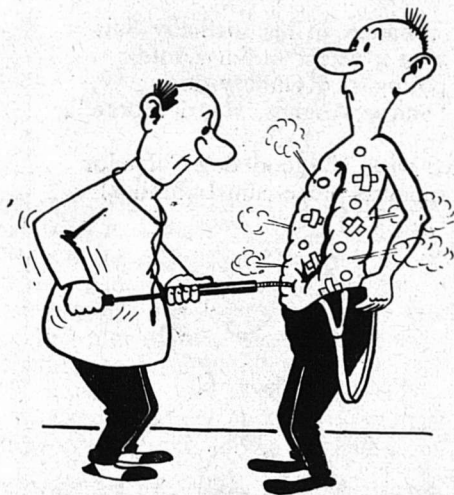
For instance, in his Birthday Suit  
He won a wager at La Zoute  
By posing at a Gallery door  
As "Statue Anglais, Henri Moore".

Next, with his good dog Salvador  
(A mongrel Peke-cum-Labrador)



Performing at a famous circus,  
The crowded tent went quite berserk as  
The canine shell took aim and jumped  
Right thro' the target stomach (pumped).  
The faintest whistle at this juncture  
Revealed the presence of a puncture  
And Gus was hurried out of sight  
Before the public guessed his plight.

The management called Doctor Cheek  
 To stop this surreptitious leak ;  
 But though he licked his finger-tips  
 (With pinguid, unhygienic lips)  
 And probed and pawed the patient's maw  
 To try to trace each leaky pore,  
 It did not take him long to give  
 His verdict : " Porous as a sieve !"



A bath was quickly filled and Gus  
 (With haste and sympathetic fuss)  
 Immersed therein, except his head,  
 While all his friends stood round and said :  
 " Poor chap, he had a splendid torso,  
 But now he's thin like us, or more so ".  
 The bubbles rose so thick and fast  
 That Doctor Cheek's Elastoplast  
 Was all used up to stem the flow  
 Of wind from front, behind, below.

Augustus, void of air (and graces),  
 As shapeless as a pair of braces,  
 Is now self-conscious, shy and modest  
 And has to feed upon the oddest  
 Things like strips of toast with peas on ;

And if you should demand the reason,  
He croaks (note each asthmatic pause)  
"Believe me — there is ample — cause  
Why I — must now stay — normal-sized :  
My patches can't be vulcanized !"

\* \* \*

The moral of this anecdote  
Which you are now advised to note  
Is that an ego, when inflated  
Until excessively dilated  
May one day stretch too far and yield  
And leave the victim undersealed.  
There is no ready sure solution  
To patch a life of self-extrusion.

R. B.

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*and a*

*Successful New Year*

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*Welsh Rally — Beacon Hill. Leslie Winder's Humber shed a tyre a few seconds after this photograph was taken*

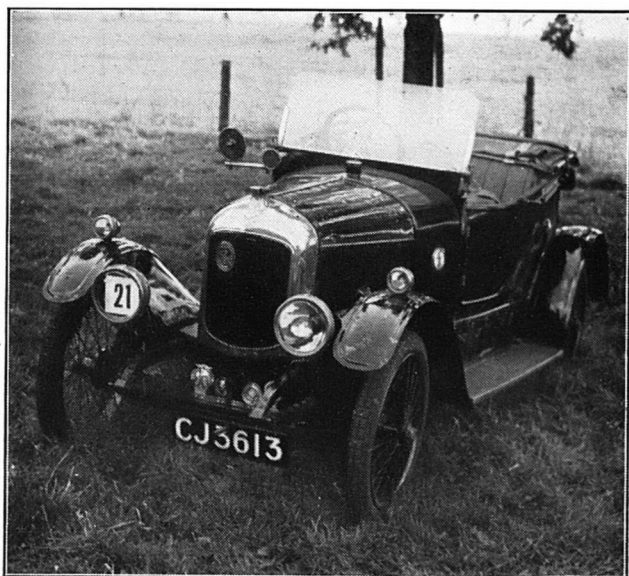


*Peter Binns' O.M. follows Winder up Beacon I, Forster's Trojan watching him from the return road*

*Both photos by J. D. Roberts*



*Mr. Buckle's Gladiator. His navigator, who is being given final instructions by the Control Marshal, is Air-Commodore Buckle*



*Photo by J. M. Hill*

*Hulme's charming le Zèbre at Madresfield*

## ALAS, MY GLADIATOR

(A story of long ago, by Mr. Frank Buckle, father of Air-Commodore N. R. Buckle. His son, who is President of the Lancia Motor Club and a well-known V.S.C.C. member, says that although well over eighty years of age he still drives a three-wheeler B.S.A. with considerably more verve than many of us think he should.)

I cannot claim to have had experience of any very early cars, except that in 1902 I got hold of an ancient Benz car from the local scrap collector, which I got to go and drove up and down the village street. It had large metal-spoked wheels with narrow, solid rubber tyres, and the engine was quite open at the rear so that one could see when the piston was working, and oil the cylinder and the big and little ends easily. This must have been many years older than the first car I bought new (the Gladiator).

I bought the Gladiator in 1901. It had a single-cylinder Aster engine and was made in France and sold in England by Napiers. The engine was water-cooled. The gearbox had three speeds, all indirect, and conveyed the power to the wheels via a countershaft with final drive by chains. The brakes were of the externally contracting variety. The tyres were small and unreliable, and were very difficult to get on or off because of the three security bolts. These were an absolute curse owing to the small space in the rims between the spokes. They were soon abolished and the holes plugged up! The lamps were paraffin. There was no windshield or hood and when driving in a limestone district clouds of dust rose so that passengers in the "tonneau" soon got their ears filled and packed behind level with their skulls, but no one seemed to mind much.

I bought the car in London and set out with my wife and my baby son for our home in Milnthorpe, Westmorland. All went well for the first fifteen miles until we reached Welwyn, when a terrific clucking noise arose. The cooling water was circulated by a centrifugal pump which was driven from the flywheel by a brass wheel carrying two leather discs. These discs were kept in contact with the flywheel by a strong spring; the discs had worn down and the brass part broken. A return was made to Napiers by train and a new pump wheel fitted, but the spring was cut in half and still provided sufficient pressure as well as a spare spring. Ever after I carried a spare pair of leather discs. The bearings of the pump were quite inadequate and as the water frequently boiled and the pump was lubricated by a screw-down greaser, of course there was practically no lubrication to the spindle.

When we got to Peterborough the weather became very wintery, and I took the precaution of sending my wife and son ahead by train. On the way to Melton Mowbray I had fifty miles of slush and then fifty miles of snow. Suddenly, in a particularly bleak spot on top of a hill a tyre punctured, the pump bearings gave trouble and the automatic inlet valve fell to pieces all at the same time, and miles from anywhere. There was plenty of snow about, but it was not actually snowing. In those days we soon learnt to be thankful for small mercies! I managed to retrieve the valve parts and replace them, patch the inner tube and get the pump going, stopping at Melton to get it repaired.

It was dark as I approached Macclesfield and on descending the steep hill I found the car turned sideways on each application of the brake; this called for considerable finesse but I reached the town intact and stayed the night there. Before I got to Wigan (which was the worst cobbled town in England) the battery began to fail and I was only able to crawl along accompanied by yelling hordes of children. I reached Milnthorpe the next day fairly late without any major troubles that I can recollect.

At Milnthorpe I found a genius of a local mechanic who knew nothing about motor cars but did, under direction, various things that kept the car going pretty well. Later, I moved to Berkswell, near Birmingham, and it was there that the engine main-shaft broke for the first time, a trouble that became somewhat frequent. I therefore carried a spare and on hearing the thump knew at once what had occurred. At that time we had two small boys and as my wife was always out with me on these occasions I used to stop the first vehicle that came along and say "Will you kindly take this lady to the nearest railway station"—and they always did. I generally managed to get a tow in to some village if it was not too far to shove, and find a blacksmith who would fit the spare shaft, returning home in a day or two. I got fed up with this in the end and bought an engine for £20 which was made in Coventry and never let me down.

I sold the Gladiator later when we moved into the Uppingham district and I believe it was subsequently used for towing in cars which had broken down. The blind leading the blind.

The chain drive on the Gladiator was very unsatisfactory. The chains went out of pitch and wore the small countershaft sprockets to sharp points — I had new sprockets fitted and Hans Renold chains and never had any more of this trouble. It is an interesting fact that all roller chains (except Hans Renold's) were so constructed that the outside of the rollers turned slightly while in contact with the sprocket teeth. When Hans Renold became President of the Association he presented to the trade the secret of his chains, which was that the outside of the rollers bedded firmly against the sprocket teeth and all movement took place on the inside of the rollers.

I still think that when chains and chain wheels had reached this point there was much in favour of their continued use with proper protection; there was and still is plenty of trouble with live axles and much unsprung weight and expense in production. The performance of the Stanley Steam Car at Prescott was a similar example of the failure of manufacturers to follow up a good system.

F. B.

(But what is this we hear about steam cars in an advanced stage of development by a well-known Midland manufacturer? — Ed).

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**"THE AUTOCAR", 12th NOVEMBER 1954**  
Used cars for sale and wanted — Spares and Service.

**VETERAN CARS**  
VAUXHALL Cadet, 1951, 10,000 miles from new.  
original tyres, spare unused; unique opportunity  
for enthusiast.

## THE MOTOR SHOW, 1954

After last year's difficult little scene at the Daimler stand Clutton and Wike agreed to meet this year at the Alvis stand which turned out to be a not very happy choice as it was right next to the Daimler stand, and anyway the plan rather fell down because Clutton had got his dates mixed up. So when he and Wike eventually did meet (still on the wrong day, which was Press Day) it was on the Frazer-Nash stand where one rather embarrassed-looking Frazer-Nash was cowering in a corner and the rest of the stand was a shining expanse of polished parquet. Clutton said were they having a dance and could he come, but it seemed they were only having the effects of a dock strike and by opening day they had eased their import models out of the ship and everything was all right.

Clutton and Wike then said to each other that they really must say something *different* this year but it is all very well because there is practically nothing different to write about, and even the Dockers have had to fall back on the year-before-last's stars, after last year's not-so-happy shamrock effort. Even Wike has had to censor what he feels about the Docker Daimler, but Clutton said that in these days of austerity he was all for someone who was prepared to go the whole hog like that and anyway, richness isn't necessarily the same thing as vulgarity, and the lines and finish of the D.D. are impeccable.

One of the things that are at any rate a bit new is the Hillman Husky which has four rubber people in it demonstrating

### *THE THINGS YOU CAN DO IN A HILLMAN HUSKY.*

There are two chaps, sitting in the front seat, and two girls sitting in the back seats (which you might think a peculiar arrangement unless you'd seen the girls in question). Then suddenly they all disappear to do

### *THE THINGS YOU CAN DO IN A HILLMAN HUSKY.*

In a surprisingly short time they are all bobbing up again, and the chaps have a look of smug satisfaction on their faces but the girls look pretty towelled and generally disillusioned and clearly they didn't much enjoy

### *THE THINGS YOU CAN DO IN A HILLMAN HUSKY.*

Next time the girls don't bob up at all and instead there comes up a packing case labelled "Fragile. Express". So you might think the chaps had got fed up with the girls and decided to send them back for replacement and you wait around impatiently for the next instalment.

But blow me down, when the next action takes place, it is those same disillusioned, dishevelled women again, and if they were looking like that on Press Day, what must they have been like at the end of the show?

After that Clutton and Wike tried to get serious and find out what they had come for. They are, as is well known, ideally suited to such a combined operation, as they disagree on almost every motoring subject,

being united only in a genuine belief in the better aspects of Vintage design, and while both normally go about their work in modern conveyances, these were not chosen without due consideration for the Vintage virtues.

What, then, are these virtues, for which they were to seek at Earls Court? Reliability, good steering, lack of senseless ornamentation, usable speed, accessibility? All true, and none too easily found in combination. But the great Vintage virtue, in a motor car, is likeability. To assess this is not the easiest of tasks.

Last year we pointed out that there were certain difficulties in the application of automatic transmission. This year, Earls Court was said to be going to be full of the most wonderful two-pedal cars, such as we have not driven since our extreme youth. The only new ones, however, were the Armstrong-Siddeley, which uses the same type as the Bentley, and charges £268 extra for the privilege, and the Lanchester, which is fitted with the Hayes transmission, which did appear one year at the Show on an Allard, and is in use in some numbers on a well-known Midland bus system.

In our opinion, there is some hope for this device. Admittedly, it still works in steps, but in each gear the drive is positive, and there is little loss of power in transmission. Also, the driver can overrule its workings at will, and he is protected from his own folly by the fact that, if he inserts bottom gear while proceeding at 60 m.p.h. the box will change down gear-by-gear, instead of bashing the cogs straight in, to the detriment of his passengers and back axle. The car weighs only 21 cwt., has a nice, neat engine, quite a roomy body, and as the whole of the front lifts up, accessibility is good. The makers have been wise enough to fit separate mudguards to the front wheels, so that the whole engine is not plastered with ordure. The dashboard has a rather foreign appearance.

Last year we were rather unkind to Lanchesters, and as usual when we are unkind to anybody, they disappear, and the Dauphin has done so. We wish the new Lanchester all the best, but we do hope they have fitted a nice, strong back axle.

We are not absolutely convinced that the automatic gearbox is the answer to a moron's prayer, however. The petrol engine is inherently unsuitable for use in motor cars, as it develops its maximum power at full speed, and develops a roughly constant torque. As the load increases (as when climbing a hill) more torque is required, and as this is not available, the speed will fall. The greatest acceleration is required from a low speed, and if an engine could be designed in which the torque rose as the speed fell, we could forget all about automatic or indeed any other gearboxes. It is interesting to note that with a steam engine, the maximum torque is available at just under zero r.p.m. ! Did you see Paul Tusek ? (And, indeed, just to show what *can* be done with a sufficiently large and inefficient petrol engine, did you see Elmer Bemis and the K model Ford?)

On a small scale, the German D.K.W. firm make a motor cycle of only 74 c.c. with an infinitely variable gear, which is fully automatic.

On this, an expanding pulley is controlled by an engine-driven governor, and this drives the back wheel by a V-belt. This is an attempt to overcome the inherent defects of a single-cylinder petrol engine, and with perhaps a more robust transmission, may we expect to see an adaptation of this on a small car?

Clutton wound up by pointing out that the systems which seem to attain some measure of success do so because the driver is provided with some means of jamming the works and while the Rolls-Royce enables him to make the thing stay in second or third, what it really needs as well is something to make it stay in top.

Anyway, he wanted nothing simpler or better than the Austin-Healey over-drive, which has a tumbler switch to bring it on and is only automatic to the extent that if you stupidly turn it on below about 40 m.p.h., it doesn't believe you.



*"EXCUSE ME, MADAME, IS SIR WILLIAM  
ON THE STAND?"*

The next thing we saw was an Allard Palm Beach, which we touched gingerly, but it was quite all right, as Mr. L—sh was watching. The new Palm DB2 Beach saloon was on view, but we thought it wiser not to attempt an entry. Also on view was a large saloon with accommodation for two adults and a legless child.

Near this were the Mercedes, and the cheaper ones still smelt just the same as in 1953, but more so. Last year we said that we should like to see the 300SL as a contrast to the over-ornamented and clumsy-looking 300 and there it was. A beautiful car in every way, and a much better and more practical body than we had expected. The curious "butterfly" doors are quite good, and the complaint that the seat would get wet when the doors were opened is not really valid, as one would only open the door when actually getting in and out.

On Press Day there was one of those Luscious Young Things which motor manufacturers seem to think they must have around when their cars are photographed — and most of them are certainly dead right in providing something to help take one's mind off the motor car, though you wouldn't think this was necessary in the case of the Mercédès. Anyway there she was, in the 300SL and a very tight skirt, and when she tried to get out there came the moment when she could neither get out nor back in and there was an ugly rush of photographers. But the trouble is that practically anyone who is rich enough to afford a 300SL is probably so old that he has lost most of his interest in such things — not to mention the ability to drive a motor car at 165 m.p.h. Wike then went up in the gallery and enquired the price of the fuel injection system, and was eventually, after some evasion, quoted about £500. Still, you can get jolly good plugs for 3s. 6d. today.

Seeing Clutton's disappointment at not finding anything much on the Frazer-Nash stand, H. J. Aldington said there, there, my man, come back after the show and you shall have a ride in some of them, and so he did that.

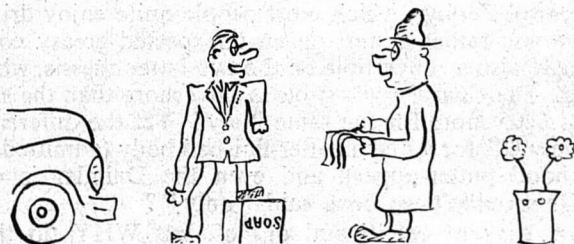
While buying a foreign car may be an expensive way of setting about one's motoring, it does seem to remain an unfortunate fact that to secure certain kinds of motoring it is necessary to look across the Channel. But be that as it may, Clutton completely fell for the D.K.W. Sonderklasse and this could hardly be because of its looks, since it is no great beauty. The side view is competent but undistinguished; the front positively banal. The three-cylinder, two-stroke engine contains less than 900 c.c. for which you pay, all-in, a little more than £1 each. It develops about 35 b.h.p. each of which has to pull about half a hundredweight of motor car — not, apparently, a very promising power-weight ratio. But two-stroke horses have notoriously hairy heels, especially at low revs, and the overall performance of this curious little car becomes quite hypnotizing, entirely out of relationship with its statistics. Three-cylinder, in-line engines are supposed to possess an unbalanced couple, but if so, one can only say that this couple seem to get on very well together, because a smoother engine it would be difficult to imagine, throughout its range of some 4,500 r.p.m. Being front-wheel-driven, the steering-column gear-shift has to go round less corners than most, but even so it is not entirely foolproof. Normal starts are made in second and surprisingly quickly, 60 m.p.h. shows up in third. In top, the needle swings round to 75 where it seems content to remain indefinitely. A free-wheel masks the peculiarities of a two-stroke on the over-run and removes the dangers of front-wheel drive should a corner be taken on a trailing throttle under unfavourable conditions (a thing which, however undesirable, must happen occasionally, even to the best of drivers). Cornering can only be described as dazzling and the steering itself is accurate, light and sensitive. Braking is tremendous and absolutely fade-free. The car invites you to flog it the whole time, and generally to make a beast of yourself, confident that it will never get tired or turn on you. The whole thing is obviously made to last for ever.

At nearly £3,000 it may be superficially difficult to see value for money in the new V8 B.M.W., but even so, it is all too easy to pay more and get less for it on the home market. B.M.W. have obviously gone all-out to make a perfect motor car, and in an imperfect world, they have come remarkably close to their goal. The 2.6 litre engine is deliberately restricted to 105 b.h.p. which suffices to give a maximum of as many m.p.h., coupled with really stupendous top-gear acceleration, such as Clutton has never experienced before, all in absolute smoothness and silence. Cornering, road-holding, and steering are in the B.M.W. tradition, which is saying enough. This must be a very, very difficult car to beat from A to B over English roads.

However, Wike remained a bit sniffy and said it seemed silly just for the sake of satisfying your motor-snobbishness, to pay :

- (a) Import Duty
- (b) Purchase Tax on Import Duty
- (c) More Purchase Tax on (a) plus (b).

RRIS



"OH, A MOST SUITABLE CAR, SIR"

So we went to the next British stand, and had another look at a car which, from the very beginning, we said would be a winner. This was the Triumph TR2. When a team of cars can win a prize in a modern T.T., and win it with a fuel consumption of 35 m.p.g., and with a two-litre engine at that, hats should be doffed. Our criticism of this car, that the doors would not open alongside a high kerb, has been met this year by making them shallower, and the hood is a great improvement on the Salmsonian tent-like affair originally offered to an admiring public.

Wike has extensive practical experience of the Triumph Renown, the dignified saloon on the stand, and it is a thoroughly sound car. The TR2 is also offered as a quasi-saloon, with a hard-top, and this is quite a good attempt at elegance on admittedly a somewhat uncompromising

basic shape. On the stand was a truly depressing pile of luggage, all of which, it was said, would go into a TR2, but where the driver would go we just don't know!

After modifying our insularity by looking at the Renault, which seems to be unchanged, we spent some time on the Jaguar stand. *Rotten cads!* Just as Mercédès announce the "fastest car at the Show", 165 m.p.h., Jaguars come in with a production car at half the price, speed 175 m.p.h. No luxury coupé this, however, but a very stark device indeed, revs, oil-pressure, water — that's all, and on a panel to the *side* of the driver; a simply lovely steering-wheel; and concessions to the sybarite in the form of a shelf for the victor's champagne glass, and a dark hole presumably for his Le Mans sandwiches. We are glad we aren't the passenger. The handling qualities are said to be so much better than an XK that you wouldn't credit it.

The coupés on the Jaguar now have some limited accommodation, rather like the Allard Monte Carlo saloon, i.e., two adults, and, this time, only a childless leg. We made this witty crack aloud, and were at once reprimanded by a Jaguar-fan from East of Cyprus, but in view of the exiguous dimensions of this gentleman, perhaps he had Been In. We didn't try.

Nothing new on Fords, but a glance round was indicated at the industry's best value-for-money cars. The Popular, a tough, grim, little car, with a quite unbreakable engine; the Anglia and the Prefect, with a refined version of the same engine; the sound and popular Consul, and the successful Zephyr, which most people quite enjoy driving, even if it does give you rather a start on an unexpected greasy corner!

Fords make also a convertible on the two latter chassis, which brings us to a Thing. The Consul convertible is £142 more than the saloon, but the Zephyr is £205 more for the same body! Yet the difference on the Sunbeam is only £71 for a much better-finished body (admittedly without the electric hood putter-upper), and even the Daimler is only £226 difference. Or shouldn't we have said "only"?

Fords are easy to get in and out of, but WHY do they put a window-winder just where it hits your right knee?

Rovers show little change, a larger rear window and different luggage-boot being the only signs. Here are cars with no apparent claim to distinction, not terribly fast on paper, and rather heavy for dazzling acceleration. They have, however, virtues which only become apparent on careful inspection (such as the fact that they are all painted underneath with That Stuff), and which grow upon the delighted owner as the miles mount steadily up.

This car (said Wike) is for the mature and experienced motorist, rather than the neurotic adolescent — which are you, chum?

Clutton, after shuffling his feet in a rather embarrassed sort of way, said he thought he must be a neurotic adolescent, because although he could appreciate the manifest virtues of the Rover he couldn't somehow feel it was quite *him*, because, even in his business car, he liked to be able to play bears just occasionally, and that was why he sticks to his Citroën Six.

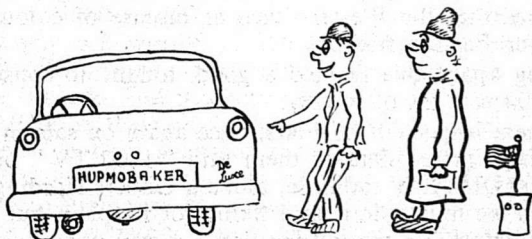
On the next stand was that most interesting car, the Jensen 541. A really handsome saloon car, with a body made entirely of fibre-glass (no, not stale cheese, as we unfortunately imagined last year), a 4-litre engine producing an effortless 135 b.h.p., and an overdrive-ratio of the heroic figure of 2.68 to 1. It is reasonably small, yet provides fair seating for four people and their luggage, and should be jolly cheap second-hand.

The little hand-out is full of praise for the way fibre-glass bends rather than breaks but is not very precise about what you do when you hit it so hard that it does finally break.

Also, we understand our apprehensions about the way something closely resembling Austin A.70 front suspension might behave at 100 m.p.h.-plus are not entirely without foundation.

Still, this is a brave attempt to provide a vintage ideal at reasonable cost which, with a little more development, it might easily achieve.

AKER



"HOW CAN THEY SEE WITH THOSE LITTLE HEADLAMPS?"

We always visit Daimlers, because they have from time to time produced an outstanding car. The Roadster which we criticized last year outstood too far, perhaps, and it and its corrugated glass wind-screen were not on view. Cause and effect? The Century seems to be an attempt to be simultaneously a Mark VI Bentley and a Ford Zephyr, and naturally fails to be either; it is instead a high-speed buzz-box worthy of the middle 'thirties. However, we must give one word of praise; it doesn't stick out at both ends, being, indeed, quite compact.

As usual there is a Very Big Car on this stand and this year it is a sort of giant taxi, called the "Regina". But if this was intended as a carefully-veiled hint for royal patronage, we doubt if it is likely to be entirely successful, since it is a car of stupendously repellent aspect.

Then we were sorry we had been so rude about foreign cars, and went to see the Americans. Full of Biddle, and with Mercers and

Stutzes well in mind, we visited the Oldsmobile, and were most surprised to see it bearing the word "Scarface", and fitted with green glass similar to the late Mr. Capone of that pseudonym. There was another American car with treacle running out of the windows, and on the Ford stand a rather good open roadster with a curious lever sticking out of the floor alongside the driver, and THREE pedals. What *will* our American friends invent next? The Hudson is usually the nicest-looking of the Americans, and this year had rather delightful bodies of Italian design.

Then we suddenly saw a Cadillac and after a short but inconclusive argument as to which way it was pointing we found that its revolting appearance was making us feel very poorly so we hurried off to the —

Yes, that's right, the Alpine Tavern.

This had such an effect that we really had to look for a Central European car, so, ducking under the Iron Curtain, we went to see the Skoda. The comrades on the stand let us sit in it and try unsuccessfully to move the gear lever. There was a very, *very* funny smell in this (vodka?) and some very *very* funny instruments on the dash. The fuel gauge naturally said "benzin" but at the two ends of the scale were "E" and "F". Can this be decadent capitalism creeping into our midst? Or are there two Czech words beginning with these letters? When "U.S.S.R." is spelt "C.C.C.P." anything is possible. We are sorry to see that the Western vice or disease of coloured-light-itis has affected our Eastern friends.

Joking apart, this seemed a good, tough, no-nonsense sort of car. Still, £1,000 is a lot of money.

We next inspected the Fiats, once again on sale in this country for a rather high price. One of them said "1100 TV" but there was not even an ORDINARY radio, let alone a Gilbert Harding device. We sat in this and we must admit to a liking for its plain but good finish, and natural, comfortable seating-position. A car one could quite come to like, we thought. Here again is coloured-light-itis in an advanced state, the only actual instruments being speedo and fuel gauge.

After seeing that the M.G. is All Done By Mirrors, but nothing new being done, we had a look at the new Austins offered in questionably successful competition with Fords, and at the plutocratic Bristols, which have now been fitted with proper round instruments. We saw too that somebody at Vauxhalls has seen a Bugatti, for there is now a fabric joint in the steering-column, and apart from this, the chromium-plated negress's lips have been replaced at the front of the car by a sort of chromium-plated tin weir. They aren't bad cars, all the same.

Wike, who has a Sunbeam Alpine, then went to Sunbeams to see if there was anything new, and they now have chromium-plated discs on the easy-clean wheels, and he was glad to see a picture of Stirling Moss winning a utensil on an Alpine, and all the chromium pan-lids, rim-bellishers and what-nots had fallen off and a JOLLY GOOD THING TOO.

Singers have mounted a horse's head on the front of what otherwise looks remarkably like an SM1500 and called it a "Hunter". If

it is, as we suspect, really an SM1500 all the time, it is a much better car than its stupidly inept mascot and general appearance would suggest.

It has fibreglass bonnet and valances, but steel wings where the actual bump comes, and in the extremely commodious boot is one of the best fitted tool-drawers we have seen for a long time, full of good tools, too. The engine appears from all accounts to be exceptionally long-lived, and the road-holding is almost ludicrously better than one expects from such a staid-looking conveyance.

It is really time Singers returned the Roadster to the Dodgem people from whom it has obviously been borrowed. The one with a detachable hard top surpasses even the wildest excesses of the early days of the cycle-car movement.

Among the family sort of car, we think the Morris Oxford is probably the best as it has a very sensible and commodious body, a reasonably brisk engine, and handles remarkably well. However, the dashboard is rather far away, and while this gives an air of spaciousness and makes it easy to get in and out, it means a long stretch down to the knobs, which are correspondingly difficult to locate in the dark. On the only one we know intimately the steering-column gear-shift wore out in the first ten miles and has been that way ever since, despite innumerable visits to the service station.

Not much new in the coachwork section but Park Ward have at last produced coachwork worthy of the Continental Bentley, both in closed and convertible forms. The boot of the open one was full of beautifully-made luggage, and it seems a pity to have to take the whole lot out and pile it up in the rain, to get at the spare wheel.

Tickfords seem to have squashed the Lagonda down so that it no longer looks like a mobile edition of St. Paul's Cathedral and by this and other minor subtleties they have managed to turn one of the ugliest, into one of the best looking British motor cars. Remembering his somewhat saddening experiences when he went in one of these cars to Geneva the year before last, Clutton hoped that the handling qualities had improved correspondingly, especially now that it has such a big, strong engine.

Lastly, what was the car of the show ?

Clutton and Wike were by no means alone in voting for the A.C. Ace which, at less than £1,500 all-in, is one of the cheapest 100 m.p.h. motor cars. The four-wheel-independently-suspended chassis looks right and has the overwhelming merit of simplicity. It is also beautifully finished and about the only car today where it is a pleasure to look under the bonnet and see this beautifully tidy engine which, of course, was designed in 1919. Particularly commendable is the exhaust manifolding which is said to be responsible for an extra 8 b.h.p. Dipstick and distributor not particularly accessible. There is a real, man-sized starting handle.

Clutton persuaded Kenneth Rudd to take him out in his personal Ace, which is admittedly a bit faster than most, though perfectly standard as to specification. The engine is fairly obtrusive, but no more so than is acceptable in a sports car, although the output has been

doubled during the 35 years of its production life, the crankshaft is obviously perfectly happy, and there is no trace of a period in the range of 5000 r.p.m. Although the torque is well-sustained all up the range, it is nevertheless really powerful from as little as 1500 r.p.m. The excellent close ratios send the speed soaring into the eighties at the least traffic opening, and on in top to the hundred, although probably the slightly higher standard axle ratio makes the last 10 m.p.h. harder to get. Cornering is of a very high order, with no sensible amount of over or under steer, the exact characteristic being determined by the amount of throttle applied. The steering is absolutely sensitive and positive, and there is virtually no sensation of rear-wheel steering from independent layout. The brakes, with Alfin drums, seem impossible to beat. With the now almost universal right-hand throttle pedal position toeing and heeling is almost impossible, and the Ace is no exception. This is a great deprivation in any fast car. As against last year there is now somewhere to park one's left foot.

In fact, this is a very grand car.

The two-seater, fixed-head coupé on the Ace chassis (all coachwork is made at the factory) is probably the prettiest coachwork ever fitted to any motor car. It should be a winner.

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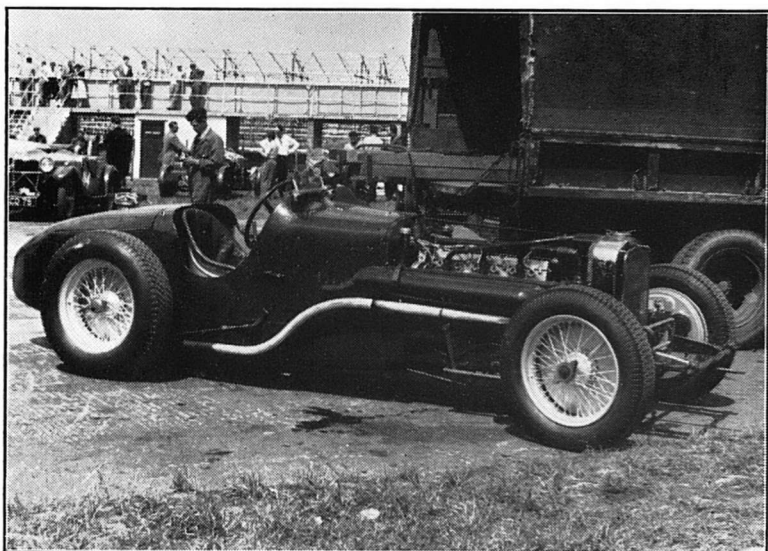


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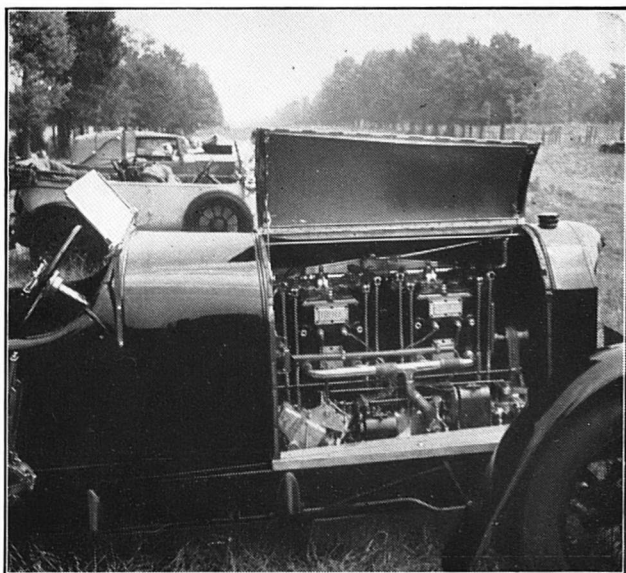
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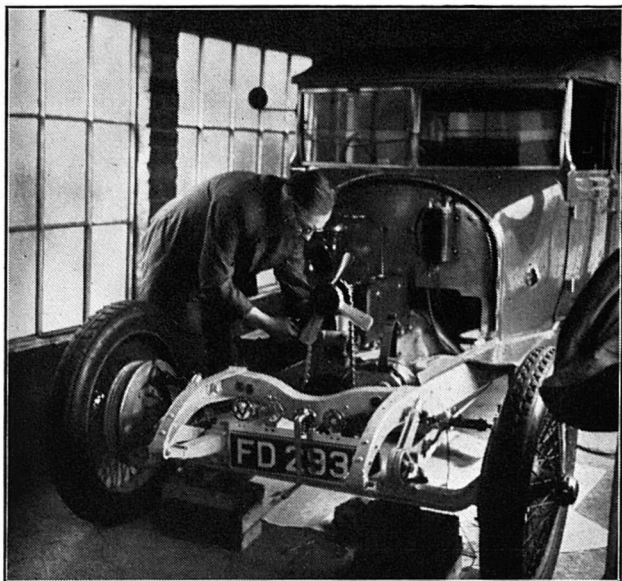
*Photo by G. A. Cull*

*The ex-Kaye Don V12 Sunbeam "Tiger" which lapped Brooklands at 137.58 m.p.h.*

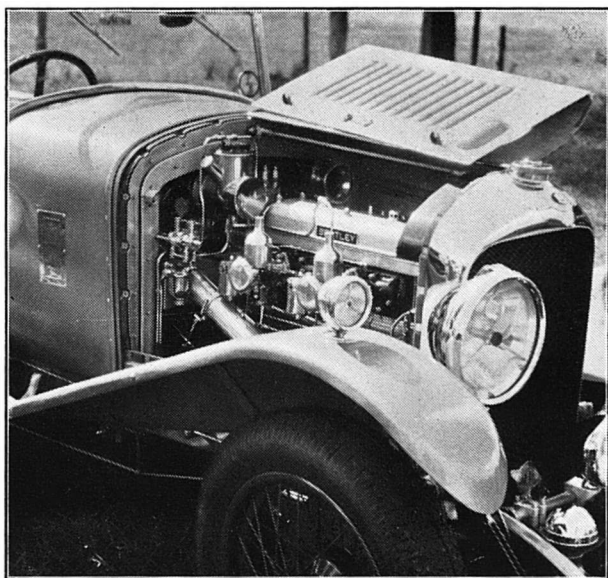


*Photo by J. M. Hill*

*C. E. Milner's 1913 21½-litre, 4-cylinder Benz at Madresfield this year. This car lapped Brooklands at 115.55 in 1930*



*Winter Overhaul  
(Ryland's 1924 Delaunay Belleville)*



*Photos by J. M. Hill*

*R. C. Wheatley's 4½ Bentley which, as explained opposite, won the overall Vintage award at Goodwood on 11th September*

## HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR ROLLS-ROYCE

“I have recently painted my 1927 Rolls-Royce with two coats of \_\_\_\_\_ and I also painted the radiator in pale blue \_\_\_\_\_ and later allowed the water to boil gently. This had no ill effects on the lacquer and I am extremely satisfied with the results obtained.”

(From a current paint advertisement.)

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### MISTAKES

The autumn *Bulletin* was rather a rush job, but people haven't told us about as many mistakes as we had expected to be told about.

The biggest mistake was not really ours — we can truthfully claim it as a printer's error (though Mr. Verstage can blame it on the telephone). This was in the Goodwood Concours results. All the professional motoring press said that J. G. Whale's 1930 4½ Bentley won both the V.S.C.C. and the overall Vintage awards. Your *Bulletin* gave both these awards to R. C. Wheatley's 1929 4½ Bentley. In fact Wheatley had entered as a B.D.C. member, and could not therefore win the V.S.C.C. Concours award. So on page 47 of your last *Bulletin* (if you still have it), under the heading “V.S.C.C. Concours at Goodwood” delete R. C. Wheatley and insert J. G. Whale.

Our apologies to both these gentlemen.

Then on page 15, after taking expert advice (run for it, Dudley!) we called Max Hill's type 49 Bugatti a type 44. Bet you couldn't have told from a photograph! Max tells us that his engine, with its 16 plugs, needs 19 yards of plug lead.

A nice letter from C. E. (Tich) Allen, Editor of the “V.M.C.C. Bulletin”, tells us that we were quite wrong in understanding that his blown Brough holds the Hutchinson 100 record. The fuel consumption of 6 m.p.g. on alcohol has always precluded long distance races, but it does hold, and alas always will hold, the Brooklands outer circuit lap record for solos at 124.5 m.p.h., and for sidecars at 106.6 m.p.h. You can read all about this machine (and other famous high-speed two-wheelers) in the November issue of “The Vintage and Thoroughbred Car”, price 1s. 3d. from your bookseller (Advert.—Ed. They sent me a jolly nice calendar!).

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### MEMBERSHIP

The club gets bigger and bigger. At the time of going to press there are 2,401 members, of which 1,287 are full Vintage members, the balance being made up as follows: 397 Driving, 446 Associate, 12 Honorary, 196 Overseas, 17 Junior (not enough!), and 46 Family.

## MONKEY-APPLE-NUTS-NUTS

Swindon.

Dear A. J-F.,

Thank you for your analysis of the Members' List. My proof-reader, John Woodcock, has corrected one or two spelling mistakes in the article, notably the spelling of "HORSTMAN", which for some reason you have written "HORSTMANN". Reference to any motoring magazine of the 1920s will show that there should be only one "N".

Yours sincerely,

THE EDITOR.

Kingston Blount.

Dear Edito,

Know I now that I have bitter pints than my spelling but you and your Mr. Woodcoc should keep your pens off my proper names. It's just as rood to call Mr. Firkins' Horstmann a Horstman as to call Mr. Firkins a Firkin.

Why do you do it? Eggsinafobia, I suppose?

Luv,

A. J-F.

Swindon.

Dear A. J-F.

I'm not a xenophobe. And in order to defend the good name of Woodcock, not to mention my own (because it takes up too much space) I telephoned Horstmann's (sic) in Bath and they said yes, the car was made, not by them but by Horstman's, phone Bath 61601 (if you want to check). So I phoned 61601 and they said yes they did make the HORSTMAN car!

Yours,

N. A-F.

Kingston Blount.

Dear Edit,

Your man in the bath wants ringing again. I quote from the "Light Car & Cyclecar" of 25th January 1919: "Amongst many well-known names in the motoring world, that of Mr. Sidney A. Horstmann appears in the New Year's Honours List. Mr. Horstmann, who is managing director of Horstmann Cars Ltd., Bath, is created M.B.E."

In the same number the owner of a Big Car is derogated under the heading "A Curious Mishap". In answer to a charge of dangerous driving the motorist is said to have explained that he experienced a front tyre burst, the car skidded and a piece of the lamp flew up and hit him in the eye so that he was temporarily blinded.

Had any trouble with your tyres lately?

A. J-F.

Swindon.

Dear A. J-F.

Let's keep the party clean and leave Mr. Horstmann to have his Bath in peace. A glance at the Company Records Office (price 2s.) in Bush House should satisfy you that the present Horstman Co. took over the assets of Horstman Cars Ltd. (then in voluntary liquidation) in July 1925.

And what's more if you look up the report of this in the Trade Column of the "Light Car & Cyclecar" you will find in the same issue that a correspondent says: "Readers like myself — I have been motoring for only two years — are left torn between conflicting emotions. On the one hand we agree with the Editor, whilst on the other we covet a door for the driver's seat." Surely this is the last word than can be said on the subject.

Yours,

N. A-F.

Kingston Blount.

Dear Edi,

The very shortest glance at the "Autocar" of 7th May 1921 will suffice to tell you that the Horstmann Car Co. had recently entered into an agreement with a firm of agricultural engineers called Lister & Co. for the manufacture of parts for the Horstmann car. Please do not read on!

A.

Swindon.

Dear A.,

I have. It says that as a result many more Horstmann cars will be built and that in future they will be called Horstman cars in order to dispel the erroneous idea that they were of Teutonic origin. So it all depends on the date. We'll call it quits.

NIGEL.

Dear Ed, Sux, A.J-F. (telegram)

(However John Woodcock really has the last word, because as he points out Firkins' Horstman is 1923 and Goodenough's is 1927. They are both therefore Horstmen, like he said.)

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### ATTENTION ALL MOTORISTS!

1. Automobiles travelling on country roads at night must send up a rocket every mile, then wait 10 minutes for the road to clear. The driver may then proceed, with caution, blowing his horn and shooting off Roman candles as before.
2. If the driver of an automobile sees a team of horses approaching he is to stop, pulling over to one side of the road, and cover his machine with a blanket or dust cover which is painted or coloured to blend with the scenery and thus render the machine less noticeable.
3. In case a horse is unwilling to pass an automobile on the road the driver of the car must take the machine apart as rapidly as possible and conceal the parts in the bushes.

These rules for motorists were drawn up a half century ago, by the Farmers' Anti-Automobile Society of Pennsylvania.



*Silent Knight*

## JUNIOR MEMBERS

The results of last month's Junior Section competition exceeded our wildest expectations. Out of the words "VINTAGE SPORTS CAR CLUB" the winner of the competition, M. Bowler, found *three hundred and ten* different makes of car! Second was K. M. Hill with a score of 109 makes (he never got "Bugatti"!), and C. J. Bird was third with 46.

M. Bowler also won the prize for the "Best Competition Idea", which we use this month.

This month's competition is for the best poem of not more than thirty lines.

- RULES:
1. No parent is to help.
  2. Parents are to sign that you have completed it yourself.

Send your entries to the Junior Secretary, Christopher A. Winder, 12 Leadhall Crescent, Harrogate, Yorks, within two weeks of the date the *Bulletin* was sent to you, and *please* try to send in an idea for a future competition. Prizes will be given for competitions which are used, and there will, of course, be a prize for the winner of each competition.

The competition is for paid-up Junior Members only. If you are eligible for Junior Membership (i.e., under 17 years old) and have not yet joined, a proposal form may be obtained from T. W. Carson, Secretary of the V.S.C.C.

### The Winning Entry for the Junior Competition

It may interest members to see just how many car makes can be made from the words "Vintage Sports Car Club". Here they are:

A.B.C.	Berg	Earl	Lorraine	Ratier	S.S.
Able	Berna	Eclair	Lotis	Ravel	Stag
Ace	B.N.C.	Ego	Lotus	Regal	Staiger
A.E.G.	Bolte	Elco	Lovet	Regas	Star
A.E.R.	Brasie	Elgin	Lucar	Regina	Starling
Aerocar	Brasier	Elcar	N.A.G.	Renault	Start
Aga	Braun	E.N.V.	Napier	R.E.O.	States
Alan	Briscoe	Eos	N.E.C.	Republic	Staver
Alba	Brit	Eme	Nelson	Reval	Sterling
Albatros	Briton	Ernot	N.P.	Rip	Steoric
Albert	Broc	E.R.A.	N.S.U.	Roger	Stigler
Alberic	Brule	Eric	N.U.G.	Rogers	Stringer
Albion	B.S.A.	Gabriel	Ogren	Rosa	Sultan
Aleron	Buat	G.A.R.	O.P.	Ross	Sun
A.L.P.	Buc	Gartin	Opel	Rossel	Sunset
Alta	Bugatti	Gaub	Orel	Rover	S.U.P.
Alter	Burt	G.B.	Orient	R.T.C.	Super
Alva	Bristol	G.E.C.	O.S.C.A.	R.V.B.	Sutton
Alvis	Cail	Genis	Ost	S.A.B.A.	Saraceni
Arena	Calcott	Gilbert	Page	Sage	Talbot
Argo	Capel	Gleason	Paige	St. Louis	Tatra
Ariel	Carlton	Globe	Pan	Salut	T.B.
Aries	Case	Glover	Paragon	Salvator	Terror
Arros	Castle	G.N.	Parr	Sanguisto	T.G.E.
A.S.	Causan	Godiva	Pascal	S.A.R.A.	Tic-Tac
Ascot	Ceirano	G.R.	Pass	Sarolea	Tissot
Asta	Celtic	Grant	Paterson	Sauer	Touraine
Aster	Central	Gros	Patri	S.A.V.A.	Tourist
Astra	Cito	G.R.P.	Patria	S.B.	Tracta
Astral	Bates	Legui	Paulet	Scania	Train
Atlas	Brossel	La Buire	Perl	S.C.A.P.	Tribune
A.V.	Bliss	Laconia	Pierron	S.C.A.R.	Tuar
Avis	Burg	Iota	Pilot	S.C.A.T.	Turbo
Autocar	Citroën	Itala	Pinart	Scirea	Tulip
Aurea	C.L.C.	Ivel	Pitt	Scout	Tulsa
Aurore	Claveau	L'Acree	Pivot	S.G.V.	Turner
Austin	Club	Laros	Planet	Sidea	Unit
Austral	Colda	Lancia	Pluto	Scarab	Universal
Autocrat	Cole	Lane	Pontiac	Scotte	Unton
A.G.R.	Corre	Latil	Postal	Sebring	Unic
Alpena	Coirie	Laver	Praga	Singer	Utile
Angus	Côte	Laurent	Pratt	Sinpar	Vaccari
Arab	Cotta	Lea	Prescott	Sirron	V.A.L.
Aurora	Courier	L.E.C.	Presto	Signet	Velie
B.A.C.	Covert	Le Cabri	Princess	Sisu	Victor
Baer	Cruiser	Legros	Progress	Solignac	Vinot
Barcar	Cubitt	Lenoir	Prunal	S.P.A.	Vipon
Barnes	C.P.C.	Linett	Princeton	Sporta	Vogt
Barre	Crane	Lion	Railton	Springer	Vogue
Beacon	Corbitt	Logan	Ranger	Springuel	Vulcan
Bean	Colburn	Lonestar	Rapier	S.R.C.	Vulpes
Benovia	Coates				

### MORE FURIOUS DRIVING: EXTRAORDINARY IGNORANCE OF POLICE AND COURT OFFICIALS

Mr. Edmund Gibbs was summoned on the 8th inst. for riding a motor tricycle to the common danger. Constable Watts stated that the prisoner went on the wrong side of the refuge in Oxford Circus. He took the name and address of the defendant.

Mr. Hannay: "How did you catch the defendant?"

The Constable: "I ran after him and hung on to his coat tails." (Laughter).

Mr. Lyell (the Chief Clerk): "What is a motor tricycle?"

The Constable: "It is a new invention. There is an electric battery to propel it, but one can work it with the feet."

In defence, Mr. Gibbs said that the motor power of his machine was petroleum, and not electricity. At the time in question he was only going at two miles an hour, and was propelling the machine entirely by the aid of his feet. He could not move it at a more rapid pace when he only used his feet.

(from the Automotor and Horseless Vehicle Journal, October 1897.)

## EASTERN SECTION RALLY AND DRIVING TESTS

November 21st 1954

The prospect of a cold but dry run faced the drivers and crews of the 32 starters assembled at the Bell, Eaton Socon, nr. Huntingdon. The problem before them was to motor over a 40-50 mile route, to be plotted from map references, taking in nine time controls and four driving tests on the way at an average speed of 26 m.p.h.

The Lancia Theta with A. Jeddere-Fisher and family aboard was first away (without safety belts for the younger members, it was reported). The first two controls, at Upper Staploe and Wood End, caused no bother, so on to control number three, where there was a nice, broad runway and Test No. 1. A simple acceleration test this, from A to astride B. With a most impressive run G. MacDonald's Bentley gained F.T.D. in 16 secs. dead. A very neat performance by H. Spence in his Lea-Francis recorded only one second slower. Some vehicles revealed quite alarming habits when called upon to stop in a hurry, but the prize for the slimmest and most delicate evidence of hard braking must surely go to F. Lockhart's Rover 8. It became quite obvious during this test that safety belts were *not* being used in the J-F. Lancia.

Test 2 was a timed hill-climb of Belton's Hill. Here F. Q. C. Sandy's huge Cottin et Desgouttes roared up the 1 in  $5\frac{1}{2}$  slope in fine style, disappearing over the crest of the hill to record the best time of 11 seconds. MacDonald managed 12 secs., and Dr. Harris and H. Spence tied with 14 secs. The deceptive gradient seemed to catch a few in the wrong gear but the little Austins thoroughly enjoyed the exercise.

There was much discussion afterwards as to which way the control to Hamerton should have been approached. A very small Austin was seen here hovering at the brink of a ford but wisely changed its mind, the general water level locally was very high! But some did go paddling quite unnecessarily.

Everyone has their own ideas on how to do a reversing test, and P. Binns' method with his O.M. gave him fastest time in Test 3 — 18 seconds for the tricky Y-shaped manoeuvre. Here, power and good brakes coupled with nice judgement scored.

By now crews in the open cars were looking very cold indeed but Test 4 provided enough exercise to revive them. With car parked and doors shut drivers and navigators were led to a line B about 15 yards ahead for a Le Mans start. Whether it is quicker to go through or over the door of an open car is hard to say but an interesting variation in actual starting technique was demonstrated by Jeddere-Fisher who carried a portable starter button in the form of a small screwdriver. When applied to the right spot somewhere near his feet the Lancia sprang into life. P. M. Adovian with his delectable Berliet took the precaution of removing the protruding thin end of a very fine, but vulnerable brass bulb horn before effecting his entrance.

Dr. Harris and Spence tied for fastest time in this test with 11.5 secs., closely followed by Erskine-Hill's Bugatti in 11.8 secs.

A special test just before the finish to decide any ties produced some interesting studies in mental agony. The stiff and cold crews were required to list as many cars as possible with the initial letters V, S, or C in 30 seconds. Arthur Fisher managed 11 with L. Winder (Humber) runner-up.

And so to the finish and food at the Ferry Boat Inn, where remains of recent flooding ruled out all thoughts of a quick and clean get-away. While Tim sold Christmas cards in one corner of the bar, J. R. L. Barrett (Secretary of the Meeting), and V. E. Beck went into a huddle in another, and eventually emerged with the news that the hard-trying Dr. Harris appeared to have done it at last. Competitors then got down to earnest discussions on even quicker methods of making a Le Mans start and the obvious merits of Frazer Nash transmission. Only J. Hicks' Alvis fell by the wayside during the afternoon.

Light Car owners would have been delighted to have seen J. Kiddy's Belsize Bradshaw working its way methodically round in company with Lockhart's Rover 8.

R. I. M. Scott celebrated his good run by working hard and late to free a jammed gearbox on his 18/80 M.G. while ducks laughed rather unkindly out on the mud in a dark and sodden countryside.

M. W. R. H.

#### Provisional Results.

- |                         |                    |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Dr. Harris.          | Frazer-Nash.       |
| 2. {Dr. L. J. Stretton. | Alvis.             |
| {G. MacDonald.          | Bentley.           |
| 4. R. I. M. Scott.      | M.G. 18/80 Mk. II. |
| 5. J. M. Hill.          | Bugatti.           |
| 6. A. R. Nix.           | Riley 9.           |
| 7. E. Eaton.            | Lancia Lambda.     |

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### THE SAUNDERS PETROL SAVER

Why burn money?

Burn air instead of petrol.

Our customers report 100% saving.

(The "Motor" manual, *circa* 1919.)

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### EXHAUSTING BEHAVIOUR

Thomas Nugent was summoned for driving a motor-cab without a light on the night of the 12th ult. P.c. 400 W said that when the cab stopped the electric light flew into the lamps, but the moment the vehicle moved the light went out. The cab was going at a very slow rate. The defendant said he had been sent to Kingston to fetch a cab that had broken down, and the road was so bad that the electricity in his cab became exhausted.

(From the Automotor & Horseless Vehicle Journal, December 1897.)

## CHAIN LETTER

By the time this reaches you the Frazer-Nash Section will have had its annual party at the Swan Hotel, Tewkesbury. It will be ages before you get another *Bulletin*, so here is a provisional list of the Section's awards for 1954, which may not be 100% accurate.

**Derek Parker Memorial Trophy** (best overall performance): Dr. D. P. Harris.

**Hugh Cundey Trophy** (best performance at Vintage Prescott): R. Truscott.

**Harris Trials and Rallies Cup**: Dr. D. P. Harris

**Best Frazer-Nash at Madresfield**: W. Bradley.

**Awful Warning Trophy**: P. Major.

**Special Award for the Anglo-American Rally**: A. T. Pugh.

If you have a 'Nash and haven't joined the Section, do join it soon. The Christmas party alone is well worth the 5s. membership fee.

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In the design of an internal-combustion engine, as in all creative work of this nature, the aesthetic side must not be overlooked. In the first place, beauty of form and of proportions is in itself an admirable guide to mechanical correctness; for mankind has come to regard as beautiful that which is mechanically correct, whether it be in nature, in architecture, or in engineering.

In general, beauty and efficiency — in the widest sense of the term — are synonymous, and the appeal of any design to the aesthetic sense is often as reliable a guide as is a mathematical analysis of its mechanical features. Again, the aesthetic side makes a powerful though an unconscious appeal to the user, whose artistic sense, mute and inarticulate though it may be, will always be roused.

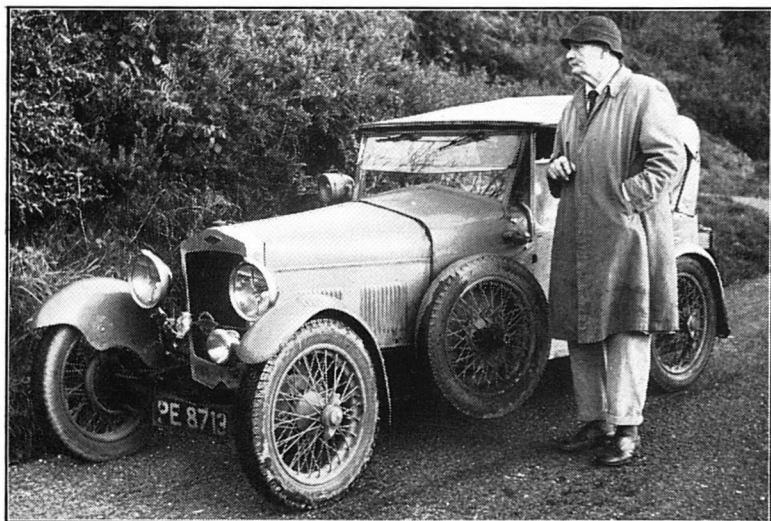
The designer's first aim should be to ensure that the products of his work will receive the care and even affection which he hopes will be bestowed upon them by their users. To this end he should make an appeal to them through their artistic sense rather than to fads or fashion, for the former is innate in all mankind, while the latter may vary widely.

From "The Internal Combustion Engine" by Sir H. R. Ricardo, F.R.S.

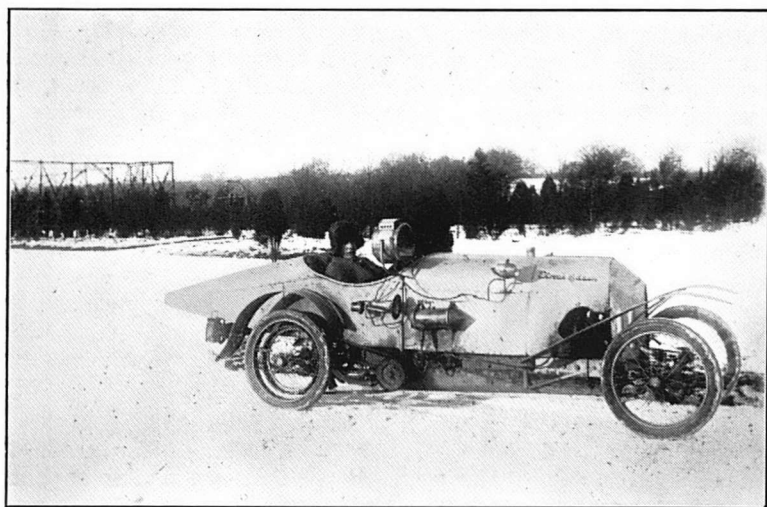
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## VINTAGE ROADHOLDING

A friend of ours was motoring along a country road recently in his Lancia Lambda. He had just overtaken a modern V\*u\*h\*1\* which he saw in his driving mirror was hard on his tail. Then suddenly he saw the modern car dive off the road at a corner and try climbing a tree. He went back to see if the chap was all right to be met with a string of nasty words from the tree-climber for leading him round the corner too quickly!



*Photo courtesy of "Montgomeryshire Express"*  
*Col. O. L. Ruck, who is over 80 years of age, has been driving this Frazer-Nash regularly since 1927. He lives on a Welsh mountainside and currently averages 900 miles a month in this car, which he brought to the Frazer-Nash party*



### **Christmas Puzzle Picture**

*If you think you know what it is, and can also answer the subsidiary quiz, "What is the radiator in the middle of the bottom row on the Club Christmas Card?" write and tell the Editor*



### THE DUCHESS D'UZES : THE FIRST "CHAUFFEUSE" IN FRANCE

The Duchesse d'Uzès, interviewed in 1897 by an editor of *Gil Blas* on the subject of Automobile Locomotion, is reported to have said :

"What are my impressions, you ask me? They are delicious. At first it was the pace that pleased me, to pass quickly, quickly all other carriages sufficiently adroitly so as not to touch, then also the pleasure of being able to run along beautiful provincial roads, between avenues of trees of different perfumes which accord sensations calculated to give pleasure to artistic souls who adore nature. In conclusion I tell you that my example will be followed, I am convinced, by the greater number of the aristocratic Parisian ladies."

The editor adds this footnote :

"We regret to add that this estimable lady has lately been fined for furious driving in Paris."

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### BOOK REVIEWS

#### THE VINTAGE MOTOR CAR

by Cecil Clutton and John Stanford

(B. T. Batsford Ltd. 25s.)

This is a very remarkable book. If you look at the table of contents or even if you glance through the book, you will be tempted to class it with those excellent reference books, *British Sports Cars* and *Continental Sports Cars*. But you will be wrong if you do this. You will say to yourself that you can see it is bigger than either of those books, and that it has a very handsome cover. But you are still on the wrong tack.

Do not compare it with any book you have read before. It is unique.

Never before have motor cars been so objectively criticized. Never before have they been placed so accurately in the perspective of the motoring scene. To quote the authors, this is no exhaustive analysis of all Vintage cars, but only of those which achieved greatness, or notably influenced the course of history. The cars which are analysed, however, are analysed ruthlessly and, in the opinion of this reviewer, fairly. They are analysed from the driver's point of view, both individually and collectively, and they are analysed (to a lesser extent) from the design purist's point of view. They are analysed with reference to each other, and they are analysed with reference to the cars of other periods.

The book starts with a pleasantly short and concise chapter on the Veteran and Edwardian designs which led up to the Vintage period. A critical survey of the Vintage Car follows this, covering each aspect of design in turn — the engine, brakes, gearbox, steering, roadholding, and finally that controversial subject, over-steer and under-steer. The authors explain here why it is a matter of some importance whether a modern car over- or under-steers, whereas in the Vintage era nothing was heard about this subject.

The next chapters deal in turn with Sports Cars, Racing Cars, Economy and Utility Cars, Touring Cars, and Luxury Cars, with a final chapter on Motoring Competitions in the Twenties. The Luxury Car category covers all cars of more than five litres capacity, which is why you will find Mercédès here, and not under Sports Cars. The Mercédès, incidentally, is given pretty rough treatment on the score of performance. "Whatever the 38/250 may have achieved in its day, with factory tuning, it certainly fails lamentably to reproduce it in modern competition, when there is not one now in use which cannot be routed convincingly by a well-tuned 4½-litre Bentley." It is, however, credited with outstandingly good roadholding and cornering for so large and heavy a car, and with commendably light, sensitive and accurate steering if properly looked after.

This is typical of the whole book. Each car is dealt with objectively, and there are few owners who will not agree that the criticisms of their particular car are valid. The authors do not deny their fondness for the 30/98 Vauxhall, and yet Bentley owners will find a completely fair and objective analysis of each size of Bentley (the only type to get a severe treatment is the post-Vintage 4-litre six-cylinder model which combined "great weight with negligible performance and a low-g geared, rough and fussy engine").

No make of car is faultless, and while the Bugatti comes in for a good deal of praise it is sometimes given a few fairly blunt words, e.g., the Type 30, which is described as rough, noisy, and not very fast.

The photographs deserve an honourable mention. Many of them are distinctly unusual, for example the picture of Rudolph Valentino at the wheel of a sleeve-valve Voisin, or of a bearded Frenchman in a G.N. A fine action study is the picture of the 1908 G.P. Mercédès sliding a dusty corner, and there is a delightful picture of Raymond

Mays, as a young man, dashing along in a Type 13 Brescia Bugatti with a large grin on his face.

It is customary, when reviewing a book about motor cars, for the reviewer to air his knowledge by pointing out minor technical inaccuracies. Doubtless these exist in this book, and doubtless other reviewers will air their knowledge by pointing them out, but it must be emphasized that this is not a technical reference book but a most valuable book of criticism and appreciation by one who has developed his critical facilities to a remarkable extent and is undoubtedly better qualified to write this book than anyone else — Cecil Clutton. He has been most ably assisted by the motoring historian, John Stanford, who is responsible for the fact that there are very few technical inaccuracies in the book, and who has provided a great deal of interesting background to Mr. Clutton's appreciation of each car.

"The Vintage Motor Car" will be discussed at length for years to come, and will probably be strongly criticized by people with a particular bias or a narrow outlook, but one thing is certain — it will be read.

N. A-F.

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### THE MOVING SPIRIT

(5s. nett. Motor Racing Publications, 13 Conway Street,  
Fitzroy Square, W.1.)

This book, based on the cartoon film of the same name, is excellent value at five shillings and makes an ideal Christmas gift to nephews or other young friends.

In fact it also has an appeal to those of all ages, being very well drawn and most amusing, but in particular it shows the growth of the motor car in easily understood pictures which any child can follow with enjoyment. It is well coloured and bound in strong board.

T. W. C.

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### BEST WHEEL FORWARD

By J. A. Gregoire. Translated by Charles Meisl.  
(Thames & Hudson, 15s.)

M. Gregoire is a talented designer who has been closely associated with the development of nearly every front wheel drive car on the Continent, from the not very successful Tracta of the late 'twenties to the brilliant Dyna Panhard today. He has now written a book of quite exceptional interest which is basically his life story but breaks off into absorbing diversions on every imaginable subject, from the Quantum Theory to the problem of part-exchange allowances in the motor trade. The account of the early days of the Tracta firm makes an interesting comparison with Hillstead's Bentley book, and there are fascinating descriptions of his experiences with the strange French sports cars of the middle 'twenties, such as the Majola and Scap. There are also valuable hints on how to run a garage; a condensed account of the development of competition cars in the first decade of the century; and much philosophic discussion of the growth of the motor car, the author

sadly concluding that we have now reached the Age of Indifference. The book is full of good sense and most of M. Gregoire's conclusions are backed by sound arguments, though it is quite impossible to agree that "the Germans were the leaders in automobile technique from 1918 to the arrival of Hitler".

There is a great deal of quite new information about the financial structure of the great French factories and their inner organization. Who, for instance, knew that the attempt to market a f.w.d. car broke successively Donnet-Zedel, Chenard-Walcker, Rosengart, and Citroën in the early 'thirties? The author was also closely associated with their leaders and there are vignettes of Renault and Bugatti as people as well as some very unorthodox views of Bugatti as a designer. We also find some very curious glimpses of the great, such as Goering "lightly made-up, like an old tart running to fat" and the ruined Louis Delage making the pilgrimage to Lourdes on a bicycle at the age of seventy.

This book is well translated and very readable indeed. (It could do with an index.) It is certainly one of the real curiosities of motoring history and deserves a wide public.

J. S.

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#### **Company Meetings.**

DUNLOP RUBBER COMPANY.  
YEAR OF SOLID ACHIEVEMENT.

(Headline in the *Observer*, 20th June 1954).

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#### **THE RIBBLESDALE ROAD RALLY, 1954**

On Saturday 6th November, dawn broke, rain fell, and Vintage competitors assembled in the yard of Hellifield station ready for the above event. Out of 27 entries there was only one non-starter, which is most creditable.

Hellifield is quite a civilized railway station, and its warm and inviting (even in unlicensed hours) refreshment room soon filled with entrants busily working out their 20 m.p.h. time-schedules from the route-cards just issued by our genial Secretary. It was soon found by the keener types that there had been an unfortunate transposition of mileage figures, rendering these unreliable, but the aforesaid keener types were eventually pacified by the Clerk of the Course, and as it turned out, very good time was kept by almost everybody. The distances had been calculated from the odometers of two separate cars, but even this is not always a satisfactory method, and it would quite possibly be better not to enter mileages in future. The event was divided into five timed sections, marked separately, in which were a number of tests for which no time allowance was made.

Only one Edwardian appeared, and this, advertised as a 1910 Silver Ghost, appeared in the capable hands of C. J. Bendall, with four cylinders and the name "Sunbeam" on the radiator: the Rolls had blown up (very temperamental jobs, these Rollses) and the "12/16"

had been substituted, most successfully as it turned out. There were five Post-Byzantine Gingerbreads, the other entries being true blue Vintage.

The first test, some miles from Hellifield up in them thar hills, was a coasting test. Last year we had a similar test, which in our opinion is a good one, testing the free running and good chassis-condition of the car, the concentration of the driver, and giving the slower and heavier cars some advantage; but last year Palmer turned his Riley over, luckily without serious damage or any injury. This year, however, Sutton, on a rather handsome 2-seater 30/98 Vauxhall, coasted smartly away, got into a slide, hit the kerb, and turned over in rather a big way; he and his passenger were considerably shaken, and had to receive medical attention, while the car, entirely inverted, was definitely *hors de concurrence*. This caused so much delay that the marking for this test was not recorded, and subsequent competitors were given a time-allowance of 30 minutes.

The rain now began to abate, and after a long climb into the Pennines, competitors reached Ribbleshead, a bleak spot consisting of a railway station, a large viaduct, and a public house selling liquorice bootlaces, where the first time-check was held. Allowing for the delay at Scaleber (the previous test), the following were exactly on time, and lost no marks: Blackburn (Austin 12), Winder (Humber, with most efficient junior navigator), Webb (Brescia Bugatti), Crowther (Alfa-Romeo), and Coates (4½ Lagonda).

Three miles further on, after turning off the main road on to a parallel route noted for its generous provision of gates (to be shut after use . . .) was another time-check, presided over by Henry Porter-Hargreaves, famous to an older generation of sporting motorists for his racing prowess at Donnington and elsewhere seated over the chains of Frazer-Nashes. Accurate timekeeping was here displayed with no marks lost by Jack Humphreys (3-litre Bentley), Peter Binns (O.M.), Brice (Riley Nine), bank manager Fowler (1½-litre Aston-Martin), and Halliwell (Alvis Silver Eagle).

And so down into the yard of Ingleton gas works, from which competitors began to climb the shoulder of snow-covered Ingleborough. Up and over the summit, after opening and shutting three gates, and then down to the next test, at Gastack. This consisted of a forward and reverse round a U bend, with a high wall on the inside; there had originally been another gate at the apex of the "U" but this was perhaps wisely removed! Binns, Spence, and Winder were much the fastest in this test.

In a further two miles came the next test — at Coventree. In this, competitors had to go once round the signpost in the middle of a T junction, and was really an intelligence test although conducted against the watch. It was most easily done by means of two reverses, as when turning round in a gateway, but this was not obvious to some of our members. Harry Spence took his well-known Lea-Francis round with effortless ease, to record best time, and Binns and Ingham (Aston-Martin) were very good, but there were a few actual failures; Jones

got his Alvis firmly wedged with the dumb-irons against a stone wall and his back wheels in the mud, and had to be lifted out bodily. Winder tried to drive his small Humber straight round, and was only just unsuccessful, but this cost him some time and marks.

In seven more miles came a time-check at Newby Head, where nobody was exactly on time, the best being Sandys (Cottin-Stutz-Desgouttes) and Attock (Alvis). From here the section to the lunch check at the Rose & Crown at Bainbridge was not timed.

After an excellent lunch, the afternoon section began with a short run to a stop-and-restart on the hairpin bend at Countersett. There were no less than ten failures here, some through failing to obey instructions to stop on the final line. Attock did not appear here, having suffered an unspecified mechanical derangement. Best time was Sam Clutton on his beautiful 30/98, quite one of the nicest we have ever seen, and very well driven. Beecroft (Frazer-Nash) was next best, on a very suitable car, and Ingham was also very good.

Now began the long, steady climb known locally as the Dodd. At the summit of this, nearly two thousand feet above sea level, lurked Henry Porter-Hargreaves again, with a card instructing competitors to remove one plug, show it to him, put it back, and re-start — all against the clock. One, who shall be nameless, removed his plug without stopping his engine. The side-valve users were naturally at an advantage here, and best time was Winder for the o.h.v. camp, and Binns for the s.v., Bendall also being very quick on the s.v. Sunbeam. Slowest time was also by a Humber, Paterson taking 153 seconds for the job as against Winder's 38 seconds. The Bentleys, perhaps naturally, did not shine at this test.

Leaving the poor marshals to freeze, competitors then proceeded to Arncliffe, where they were required to make a circuit of the village green in reverse — not strictly legal, perhaps, but the local policeman was an interested spectator, and did not object! Failure was incurred by excursions on to the grass, and some cars steer very funnily backwards, as Sandys found to his cost. Binns and Spence both did good times, but to our surprise they were beaten by both Ingham and Fowler on Aston-Martins, and they in turn were beaten by Hinchliffe on his Austin Seven, which recorded a good time by not having to go to-and-fro when negotiating the sharp corner at the end of the green. Bendall was loudly clapped by the inhabitants for a very bold circuit in a vehicle from which rearward vision is not improved by an Edwardian hood and side-curtains.

Another time-check followed between Kilnsey and Conistone, in which only Bendall and Heath (3-litre Bentley) were exactly on time.

It had been intended to have a Special Test at a certain place known to the Yorkshire section as Grimwith, but owing to the morning delay it was decided to eliminate this, and not disclose the sadistic nature of the intended test at present! Competitors therefore returned to Ilkley and were timed in there, only Sandys and Kemsley (Rolls-Royce) being exactly on time, but it was admittedly getting dark by now.

Results were worked out as quickly as possible, and the following awards are provisionally announced :

1st Class.	Binns	O.M.
	Spence	Lea-Francis
2nd Class.	Heath	Bentley
	Webb	Bugatti
3rd Class.	Winder	Humber
	Kemsley	Rolls-Royce
<b>Post-Vintage Thoroughbreds :</b>		
1st Class.	Ingham	Aston-Martin
2nd Class.	Coates	Lagonda
<b>Most Meritorious Award :</b>		
	Bendall	1912 Sunbeam

### BALLADE FOR A POST-VINTAGE HEAP

The Ballade, a complex verse form, is designed to create the maximum difficulty for anyone working on it. Like the Bugatti, it hails from France.

For years no one's lifted my block  
All those scores in my bores to dispel,  
When bicyclists pass me they mock  
And when infants behold me they yell ;  
Though at heart I am sound as a bell,  
After twenty-two summers indeed,  
As my owner's too ready to tell,  
I'm too young to belong to the Breed.

Once he gave the Committee a shock  
With a placard announcing he'd sell  
Me in bits or stock, barrel and lock  
(In the Silverstone car park as well) ;  
Him and me they will shortly expel  
From the club for this dreadful misdeed  
But I cannot complain or rebel,  
I'm too young to belong to the Breed.

I groan on my gears and I knock,  
My exhaust has a horrible smell,  
But my rockers still manage to rock  
And my mileage continues to swell ;  
Though my water-pump does not impel,  
Though my impotence limits my speed,  
What's the use of it all, what the hell ?  
I'm too young to belong to the Breed.

#### ENVOI

Prince, every new model you stock  
Of improvements is sorely in need ;  
Please avoid that misnomer " Old Crock ",  
I'm too old to belong to that breed.

W. H. CHARNOCK.

## NORTH WITH AUSTIN

October 20th. Receive Ribblesdale regs. and discover start at 9.30 a.m. on Saturday morning from Hellifield. Reference to map shows this to be short distance south of Arctic Circle. Assume this to be all part of Northern plot to intimidate Southerners so decide to enter, travelling home to Selby Friday night and on to Hellifield Saturday morning. Write navigator in Leeds and arrange to meet at Crescent, Ilkley at 8.30 a.m.

October 30th. Cousin says as passenger seat otherwise empty between London and Selby, can she come up for week-end as never been to Yorkshire before. Point out that Austin not ideal vehicle for long distance travel but fail to put her off.

November 5th. 6.15 p.m. Arrive back from work. Fill Austin with grease, oil, water, luggage, sandwiches, cousin and self, and hit trail. 6.50 p.m. Stop on way out of London to fill up with petrol. Glamorous female attendant wipes screen and gives us copy of evening newspaper. Headline says "Law Courts Clock Kills Winder". Regret rivalry between Humber and Austin brought to such a sad end. 9.30 p.m. Starting to rain. Stop to don waterproof suit and stretch cramped muscles. 9.45 p.m. Pouring down. Cousin says what about hood as hair getting wet. Stop under next railway bridge to erect hood. Discover that peep-hole between hood and top of windscreen now non-existent as new windscreen  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch higher than old one. Progress reduced to crawl through lack of visibility so decide to try and resuscitate disconnected and believed long-defunct wiper motor. Not wishing to get out of car to get at tools, request nail file from cousin who replies she has left handbag behind. After tremendous struggle reach jacket pocket beneath raincoat and waterproof suit and get own. Connect leads to motor, switch on, and reach outside to wiggle wipers, getting shower of rain up sleeve. Wipers give spasmodic jerk and relapse into inactivity. Reach out and wiggle some more. Wipers start wiping. After one minute wipers stop wiping. Wiggling produces no result. Discover cousin has knocked switch off. Switch on and wipers obediently start work again and continue without further incident. Cousin removes squab cushion and superimposes on seat cushion; claims comfort greatly enhanced. Reports left arm getting wet. 11 p.m. Cousin reports left arm and shoulder, also feet getting wet, latter through leaks in scuttle and bulkhead.

November 6th. 12.30 a.m. Cousin reports left arm and shoulder, both legs, feet, seat and stomach wet. Turns over to present fresh surfaces to elements. 1.20 a.m. Arrive home. 6.10 a.m. Awakened. Horrified to discover not yet dawn. 7.15 a.m. Depart for Ilkley. Still raining. 8.10 a.m. Leaving Otley notice says "Road flooded". Decide this intended for lesser mortals than V.S.C.C. rallyists and press on. A mile further on am stopped by man in cloth cap who says his lorry marooned in two feet of water short distance ahead. As lorry will almost certainly have more ground clearance than Austin magneto, return to Otley to try alternative route via Askwith. 8.40 a.m. Arrive Crescent. No navigator. 8.55 a.m. Decide cannot wait any longer and hope that navigator has either (a) not waited for me but gone on to Hellifield, or

(b) will follow to Hellifield, arriving before Austin's starting time of 10.17 a.m. While re-dressing in layers of waterproof clothing, maroon Jowett passes; think probably Grice who is not competing and can therefore be pressed into service as navigator if necessary. 9.10 a.m. Catch up Jowett but not Grice. (All right, John, I know I wouldn't have caught it up if it had been.) 9.15 a.m. arrive Skipton and press on along Settle road, hoping this correct, as in too great a hurry to stop and make sure. Ominous lack of mention of Hellifield on signposts but reassured by sight of important-looking railway, recalling that Hellifield is on L.M.S. main line. 9.35 a.m. Arrive Hellifield and lose five marks for being late. Obtain route card and attempt to plot route, most of which appears to be off map. 10.15 a.m. Still no navigator. Resign myself to pottering around alone, attempting to keep out of the way of people endeavouring to keep to schedule. 10.17 a.m. Austin shows dislike of conditions by refusing to start. 10.19 a.m. Austin beaten into submission with starting handle and we set off. 12 noon. Belief that two thick pullovers, windproof jacket, and raincoat adequate for northern rallies disproved. Find piece of chocolate in cubby hole, very wet and with traces of oil adhering. Drop from nerveless fingers on to floor where it gets wetter and oilier, but provides welcome sustenance nevertheless. 12.30 p.m. Snow on high ground (as B.B.C. says) all around. Kick myself for thinking no time for photography and not bringing camera.

1.30 p.m. Arrive at end of morning run followed by Tim, who ignores repeated signals to overtake. Proceed at leisurely pace to Bainbridge for lunch, still followed by Tim who is presumably making study of Austin rear suspension. 1.50 p.m. Arrive Bainbridge. Discover Tim is official bringer-up of rear and not supposed to overtake competitors. No doubt furious at enforced pedestrian progress but expect Margery pleased. 2 p.m. Man enters bar to report green Aston-Martin outside has offside front shock absorber falling to pieces. Point out this is nothing to boast about; green Austin Seven outside has all three falling to pieces. 2.35 p.m. Competitors observed leaving in three different directions as nobody seems to know which is the right road. 3.10 p.m. Climbing towards snow belt am overtaken by Webb's Bugatti which comes to a halt on steep section ahead. Wish *Le Patron* was here so could remind him about making cars to go, not stop. Webb restarts with manual assistance from crew of spectating M.G. Reaching peak, find special test in progress involving plug change. Judging from remarks, this is not altogether popular with competitors. As have spent most of preceding week changing oiled plugs in London traffic, have all tools ready to hand, but find operation more difficult than in London as cold appears to have caused contraction of spanner below size of hexagon on plug. 4 p.m. Leaving Kettlewell, am overtaken by Fowler's Aston-Martin. As Fowler has navigator, decide to let him lead the way and sit on his tail. This rendered possible as Fowler is baulked by Land Rover. Arriving Kilnsey Crag, conclude have overshot turning to Arncliffe. Directed by three policemen who show great interest in Austin, but have to rudely tear myself away as very late.

No Land Rover, so Fowler out of sight immediately. 4.30 p.m. Arrive Arncliffe to find special test comprises one lap of triangular village green in reverse. While waiting turn, once again caught up by course-closing Carson Citroën. Find that not even Austin will negotiate first bend without reversing (i.e., forwarding), but make up for this by approximately 15,000 r.p.m. down straights, shower of sparks from exhaust compensating juvenile spectators for forsaking fireworks to watch old crocks. Progress of Austin observed with interest by gentleman in dark blue suit with silver buttons, upon sight of whom Carsons and Hinchliffe beat hasty retreat, leaving Wike to cope with situation. Wike apparently copes admirably, gentleman proving to be enthusiast and interest strictly non-professional. 4.40 p.m. Proceeding down gloomy lane come face to face with Winder's ghost driving spectral Humber, but proves to be Leslie in person, reports of decease being without foundation. Very pleased about this, especially as Leslie is obviously going wrong way, and therefore making even bigger hash of event than self. 5 p.m. Pass last check before finish. Now too dark to read route card but recall having seen Hebden, Burnsall, and Bolton Abbey mentioned thereon, so go through Hebden, Burnsall, and Bolton Abbey. Later informed this incorrect. 5.40 p.m. Arrive Crescent to find navigator who thought rally was on Sunday.

J. M. H.

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## CARSONS ON THE CONTINENT

*By Margery Carson*

**Wednesday 19th May.** Everything pretty well set for departure tomorrow. Major Woolston, who is the only friend who can come with us this year, has arrived, and we plan to leave tomorrow afternoon, spend night at Folkestone and sail Friday morning. Tim mows lawns and covers strawberry plants with incredibly complicated netting arrangement which he swears will hardly admit a fly. Is much annoyed an hour or so later to find larger and fatter cat asleep *inside* netting on straw. We shall never know how he gets in or out as never present at vital moment. We also persuade bird, which has started to build nest on kitchen shelf amongst polishes, etc., that this is not safest place for project, eject it firmly, and close window. Just relaxing after supper when John Bland rings up to wish us good crossing tomorrow. T. returns from phone laughing and says good job John not coming as wrong day. Decides to check just as matter of form, and to our horror, finds sailing tomorrow at 10 a.m. Frightful flap — all pack at high speed. Write long letter to cat minder, who isn't due until tomorrow tea-time, and retire to bed at 1 a.m., knowing that we must be up at 4 a.m.

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**May 20th.** Stagger up at 4 a.m., eat some sort of breakfast (shall never know what) and leave at 5 a.m. Good run — no traffic for first two hours — but very sleepy. Arrive Dover in good time and watch car loaded on deck but under cover. This turns out to be Good Thing, as boat gets more and more crowded, and we are able to sit in car on way over in comfort. Have lunch on board — extremely expensive for what we get (Belgian boat) and decide must starve until arrival in Holland. Amusing watching cars on deck. Citroën sandwiched between two American bathtubs whose bodies move up and down alarmingly with movement of boat. Arrive Ostende which we have never seen before. Our first sight two red London double-decked buses parked on quay. Obviously very old, but never discover why they are there. Landing of cars very slow, but eventually get away. Leave on coast road via Le Coq and Blankenberghe. All new houses — most extraordinary collection of architecture ever seen, varying from ye olde thatched cottage to Spanish and Russian, and sometimes a mixture of all. Domes and turrets particularly popular. Passing near Zeebrugge, see large heap of second-hand cars in dump, and sitting on top, quite decent Brescia Bugatti. Held up at Belgian frontier where six or seven coaches full of women who have obviously been on outing, are being checked by customs officials. Too busy to bother with us, and we are waved on without even having passports stamped. Cross into Holland at St. Anna Ter Muiden, nr. Sluis. Whole appearance of countryside changes immediately, canals and windmills come into view, and even

people in sabots. At Breskens, get on enormous ferry to Flushing. Trip takes about 25 minutes (all for 1s. 6d., including car and three people). Very quiet, fine boat. Drive on to Middleburg. Everything here so clean and attractive — boxes of flowers in every window, many women in national costume. Find pleasant, quiet hotel here. No one can speak word of English except chef who is dug out of kitchen and with whom we fix meals and rooms. Cannot find out price, but too tired to argue. Totter off thankfully to large bedroom, beautifully clean, with *two* washbasins. Have magnificent dinner and retire early to bed.

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**May 21st.** Feel much refreshed and go down to enormous breakfast consisting of boiled egg, beef, ham, salami, and four kinds of bread, including a sort of gingerbread. Also lashings of butter. Extremely good. Afterwards walk round town, visit bank (only five minutes instead of usual hour in France). This is obviously rather a tourist centre. Shops are filled with novelties and there are many people in national costume. Charming town, though. After shopping and coffee, drive on, alongside canals all the way. Everything here very flat, and every possible inch cultivated. The fields are being weeded on hands and knees. On through areas of Walcheren, devastated by floods, where great reclamation scheme going on. Many ruined houses, sandbags in use, and sand — masses of it everywhere. Flood must have been terrible for inhabitants, but all are working on it very hard. Run back on to mainland at Bergen-op-Zoom and soon run into some very beautiful country — beeches and oaks, and by wayside, wild lilies of the valley. Had no idea there was this sort of country in Holland. On through 's Hertogenbosch, Breda, Nijmegen (over famous bridge) and so to Arnhem where stop. Large and pleasant town showing no sign whatever that particularly vicious battle took place there in World War II. After shopping, set off to see the open-air museum (model villages, farms, etc.). Arrive at 5.40 p.m. to be told that it closes at six, and as it comprises 80 acres, not worth taking our money. Very sorry to have missed this and will go back one day. Car now develops curious singing noise as if bird in engine. Tim eventually locates dryness and oils — now O.K. Take detour back to Arnhem and find ourselves in loveliest beech groves, but find we are coming into Arnhem on road on which we want to leave. Go round large roundabout, get in wrong lane of traffic and have to go round again. Eventually see side turning and dart through (my eyes firmly closed). Get back into country where notice all cows are milked in field. Book at Oranje Hotel, Dieren, where sole word of English is "English" proudly produced many times by proprietor's young son. Dinner quite good except rather greasy soup which surreptitiously feed to sad-looking plant in window — wonder if it survived? Very quiet here (no night life in Holland?) Prop. and wife sit and watch television, and we go to bed early again.

**May 22nd.** After another enormous breakfast, pay bill which is remarkably cheap (£1 each for bed, breakfast and dinner, drinks and coffee). Start off for Apeldoorn alongside canal. Many barges, mostly carrying bricks. Tim stops to take photograph of one, and man so intrigued watching us he nearly hits bank and has to straighten up hastily. Soon after Apeldoorn, get on to new Arnhem-Utrecht autobahn. Lovely road, no side turnings — all done by fly-over bridges in best American style. Quite unable to restrain Tim who bats along at top speed despite pouring rain. Am relieved when he decides to make detour off autobahn to look at Gouda, home of Gouda cheese for which he has a passion. Quite an attractive town. We find what seems low dive — café with juke box going full blast, and men drinking while eating fish and chips from newspaper. However, the coffee and cakes are very good. Still pouring when we leave and rain begins to drip through windscreen on to Wool's lap. He makes some bitter remarks about my kind offer to let him sit in front for a change, but manage to distract his attention by pointing out extraordinary house looking exactly like Kremlin only thatched — towers, turrets and all. We are now making for Voorburg, near the Hague, where have promised to visit member Vink who owns a 1925 Aston-Martin G.P. replica, a 1904 Peugeot and a 1919 Rover 8 which his wife uses for shopping. Unfortunately, find he is away in Switzerland recuperating after an illness, so cannot inspect cars. Drive on to Haarlem, but tulips are over, and I am so frightened by behaviour of hordes of cyclists that I am left with little impression of town. Tim for my sake, takes to side roads — much pleasanter. See large boat sitting apparently in middle of field, but find sunken canal which we cross on free ferry. Drive on through typical Dutch countryside — canals, causeways and windmills, and arrive for night at Hoorn ("Pearl of the Zuider Zee" as the guide book says). Book at Hotel 't Wapen van West Friesland which seems very pleasant. Walk round Hoorn before eating. This is a most attractive place. The houses lean in all directions, some towards street, some away from it, and some just sideways — a very odd effect. There are narrow, little, old streets, full of old houses, and a pretty little harbour full of fishing boats. Return to hotel for dinner and sit for quiet drink afterwards. Are suddenly aroused by screaming siren which stops right outside. Doors burst open and uniformed men pour in. Think either hotel on fire or police raid, but turns out to be batch of coastguards coming off duty who have called in for a nightly coffee. We are much intrigued by large man, exact double of Gibbo, the club's chief timekeeper, who sits in his overcoat, drinking Hollands gin solidly, playing cards and smoking large cigars. Peace reigns for a time until at 10 o'clock three coach loads of people arrive complete with accordions and are shown into dance hall next door. Waiters tear to and fro with enormous trays of drink, and after a time the party starts singing and stamping. Various members of it dash out into the café, don funny clothes and return to do a turn. Party gets noisier and noisier, and towards end of evening, general impression is of smoky bar and occasional figures darting through in fancy dress. All the time, café radio is going in opposition

to accordions. After 3 hours, Gibbo decides that he likes the place after all and takes off his overcoat. Useless to go to bed as our room is right over the dance hall, but from what we have heard of Holland, feel sure revelry will cease at midnight as it's Saturday. About 11.55 p.m. music stops and we retire to bed.

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**May 23rd.** Completely wrong about Dutch Sabbath. Just as we started undressing last night, music burst out afresh, and party continued until just after 3 a.m., when coach drivers blew horns loudly outside our window to summon party. Sun shining brightly this morning and at breakfast we sit and watch everyone going to church, prayerbooks in hand. Start off across Afsluitdijk, vast project 30 kilometres long which has turned Zuider Zee into an enclosed sea. Extraordinary feeling driving along road high up with sea on either side. Drive on through villages of Friesland — all pasture land with black and white Friesian cattle and many small calves. Everyone out walking in best clothes, small girls wearing large bows in their hair. Stop at Giethoorn to see village like Venice — all canals and no streets, but are very disappointed as very touristy. Have noticed many cows wearing coats like horses' and am anxious to get a photograph of one. Tim complains bitterly of having to drive slowly along a very fine autobahn looking for a cow in a coat suitably posed for a camera, but at last get one in right position and light, and after this he can get cracking. Stop for night at Wageningen where prop. tries to persuade us to have more expensive room with telephone. Our Dutch not equal to explaining that most unlikely we shall need this, but get cheaper room without telephone. This is very good hotel, with reasonable charges (Hotel Wentholt). Only snag is that prop. insists on putting small standing Union Jack on our table (obviously thinks we shall be pleased), and although we purposely leave it behind when we go to eat, he trots round with it and puts it back on our table in the dining room.

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**May 24th.** Shopping in Wageningen (mainly dozens of cigars which men say are good and cheap) and Tim and Wool look for street here called Nudestraat, but find nothing unusual. Start off via Tiel where cross Waal on small chain ferry. Stop for lunch at lovely spot near 's Hertogenbosch. Sun shining, cuckoo and lovely cream cakes. Quiet afternoon alongside canal nearly all way. Barges from Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Bergen-op-Zoom — all many miles from home. Stop to watch tiniest tug ever seen tow enormous barge through lock. End up at Maastricht where we get thoroughly lost and are afraid to ask way as even if they understand us, we don't understand their replies . . . Eventually book at Hotel de la Meuse which seems clean and comfortable. Cause much alarm and despondency by asking for eggs instead of steak for dinner (obviously letting down the English side badly). Prop. here speaks more English than most, and we are able at last,

just as we are leaving Holland, to discover meaning of road sign which is not in international list and has puzzled us greatly throughout Holland.

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**May 25th.** After comfortable night, start off through Belgium for Luxembourg. Soon enter this and turns out to be most beautiful little country, full of valleys and clear small rivers bordered by lovely trees. We drive along road running alongside river which is frontier between Luxembourg and Germany and even see Horrid Huns on other side (most Tim and I will ever see of them, I suppose, since we refuse to set foot in Germany since the war). Reach Vianden and book for night at Hotel des Etrangers. This is a beautiful little town in a valley with thickly wooded hills rising all round, and as we look out from our muslin-curtained windows we look straight on to these hills and see the ancient chateau on top of the highest of them. Wool insists we climb up to inspect this before dinner, and we start off in considerable heat. Buy guide book (in English) from which we gather that these "might ruins" are remains of a castle mainly built in twelfth century. It has passed through hands of many kings and princes, including Louis Bonaparte, Napoleon, and Kings of Holland. At one period it was sold by auction for about £400 and the vandal who bought it destroyed the zinc roof, but it is still in sufficiently good form to get the general idea. The guide book is very good, but the English is a little odd, and we are particularly pleased by the Countess Yolanda who was "emprisoned" in a room in the castle because she "preferred convent-life to marriage". However, there is a happy ending. We are told that she "made a wape-out of her bedsheets and fled during the night". There is a tremendous well of unknown depth, but water is 47 feet down, and treasures reputed to be at bottom are guarded by "a fiery dog". We see the balcony from which the count, when wishing to speak to his subjects, had a horn blown to summon them, and rather fine chapel which, according to the book, "is of a very nice romanesque performance". Passing through the garden, where there was originally a "brouwery and distillerie", we totter back to hotel by slightly easier way. I feel I am living in a world partly Dornford Yates, and almost wholly Ruritanian. Having worked up a large appetite, we thoroughly enjoy our dinner — the cooking here is French in style.

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**May 26th.** Wake up to find sun shining on the hills around and swallows darting past our windows. Very good breakfast — not as large as Dutch but more satisfying than French, with delicious, hot rolls. Pack, pay bill, walk out to car. Tim pulls starter and nothing happens. Battery is completely flat as cut-out has stuck. While battery is being charged by local garage, sit in garden in sun and enjoy sight of both Wool and Tim drinking non-alcoholic spa water (sight I am never likely to see again!). Wool is chased by large wasp which finally stings him on

neck, leaving his temper somewhat impaired. After lunch, get car going and proceed through villages of Luxembourg, all of them, as guide book says, dominated by castles. Larochette even boasts two facing each other, one eleventh and the other thirteenth century. Sixteenth century manor houses are referred to as "modern". We also see Hollenfels — a magnificent castle now used as a Youth Hostel. Stop at roadside café at 4 p.m. and watch local drunk stagger home. Strange to see modern Vauxhall flash by in these rural surroundings. Finally leave Luxembourg via Rodange, an industrial area. Again our passports are not stamped, and we are disappointed that we have nothing to show that we have ever been in Luxembourg at all. Enter France at Longwy and book rooms at Longuyon. Can now drink without pangs of conscience (and T's nagging) at price.

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**May 27th.** First sight on leaving Longuyon is Panhard which has obviously been turned over several times. Not a very interesting run this morning. Car engine being very difficult, but Tim finds loose screw on condenser and this improves it for a while. A few miles on, dynamo packs up — obviously *not* one of our better days. T. cannot find cause and decides to visit Citroën agents, but everywhere closed up (later find it is Ascension Day). Fortunately, battery is well up, and we decide to make for Les Andelys where we stayed with bicycles last year. Owing to Tim's little error in dates, we have a day in hand and can afford to wait while work is done on the car. Arrive to find Les Andelys absolutely packed — a combination of fine weather, a national holiday, and the river, but Madame, who now knows us well, finds us room. We have a good meal and walk down to see our old friends at the Café du Pont. We are very jealous to find that Wool has a reading lamp by his bed — a luxury denied to us — but it turns out to be purely ornamental, and Wool bitterly regrets that he has never learnt Braille.

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**May 28th.** Take car to local Citroën agents where new brushes are fitted to dynamo, a new cut-out is fixed and the car greased, etc. While this is going on, visit bank where we are kept for the usual hour or so. Take our lunch to Lyons-la-Forêt — a lovely spot we have visited before — but a thunderstorm rather spoils the effect, although the beech trees are looking superb as always. After a suitable rest, chivvy Wool into seeing Chateau Gaillard. Road to this 1 in 3, and after that, according to the notice erected "gets steep, and cars are forbidden". It is very windy up at the top, but we force a little culture into Wool, and return (very slowly) just in time to eat. Afterwards, passengers from a British yacht tour arrive in the bar, and after they have gone, the crew comes in to drink. Not realizing that we are English, they discuss the passengers in no uncertain terms (ourselves as others see us!) and we keep quiet and enjoy their conversation very much.

Madame tells us that since we saw her last summer, she has toured Scotland and the North of England. This in the middle of winter, too!

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**May 29th.** Leave early making for Lillers to see our friend M. L'Herbier and arrive about 5 o'clock. Start to drink Dubonnet, and are barely seated when we are all firmly shunted off to have baths. (M. L'Herbier thinks the English spend practically all their lives in a bath). After dinner, L'Herbier and Madame tell us all about their recent tour of Southern France which seems to have been purely gastronomic judging by their remarks. "Did you like the walled city at Carcassone?" "Yes, very fine, but that is where we had the dreadful soup like water." "And the Landes, didn't you think it was lovely country?" "Yes, but the hotel we picked was dreadful—the chicken was very tough." Scenic beauty apparently meant nothing if the food was not up to standard. At this stage, one of the women in the café goes out, leaving expensive-looking lipstick on table. L'Herbier picks it up and puts it in safe place until she returns. This is followed by long discussion in café about our car. Why right hand drive if made in France? L'Herbier, who has broken bone in his foot, and is tied to a chair gives, with a wealth of dramatic gesture, the answer to this and describes how terrified he was when Tim drove him about England on wrong side of road. While customers are listening, enjoying it tremendously, woman returns and finding no signs of lipstick, looks accusingly at Wool. Unable to attract attention of L'H. who is well away with his terrifying account, Wool struggles to explain to obviously very suspicious woman that he has not got her lipstick.

Later L'Herbier explains that biggest fête of the year will be held tomorrow at Lillers, and that we must have car out in front of hotel by 7 a.m., otherwise shall never get away at all. Anticipating rather a heavy day tomorrow, he surprisingly suggests bed at 12.30 a.m. (usually wants to stay up all night), and after firmly refusing yet another bath, Tim pushes us all upstairs.

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**May 30th.** Breakfast in café 8 a.m. Already constant stream of customers from fair, all drinking coffee cognacs. Fortunately T. got car out early — still cannot see how we are ever going to get it out as street is already full of stalls. Friend of L'Herbier's comes in and turns out to be "shock car" driver (stock car racer). After some talk on cars, L. produces copy of last *Bulletin*. Shock car man finds this most interesting, and photographs of "old cars" produce loud chorus of Ooh la las. He is particularly taken with the Itala, and asks if it would be any good for shock car racing. It is now our turn to cry

Ooh la la at the mere thought of Sam Clutton performing thus. Eventually, full of white wine, we prepare to leave. One stall is practically dismantled and amid cries of *au revoir* from entire street (already pretty happy) we drive away. On to Ostende via Bruges where we stop to see sights. A lovely city, but rather touristy, and as we have to push on for Ostende, we do not see as much as we should have liked. At Ostende book for night and do tour of town. Strongly reminiscent of Blackpool — on all sides British north country people on day trips, shops full of “presents from Ostende” and masses of coach parties who are played back to coach park by brass bands. Have excellent meal, and on congratulating the manageress of the restaurant, are told that the chef is English! Return to hotel, passing with averted eyes T.D. M.G. parked in street which has chequered radiator in black and white. Very odd hotel — large, but no one ever about — we can never find receptionist or waiters. Still, pretty comfortable.

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**May 31st.** Receptionist does turn up when time comes to pay bill (bad luck!) and we leave and sail for home. It has been grand fun, and we determine to return some time, particularly to Luxembourg, to spend more time there.

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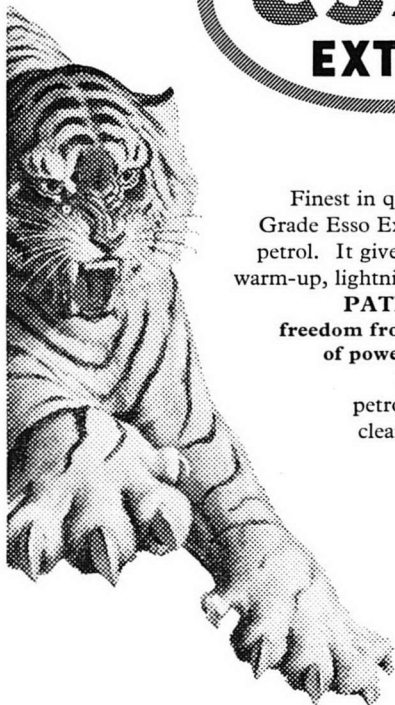
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