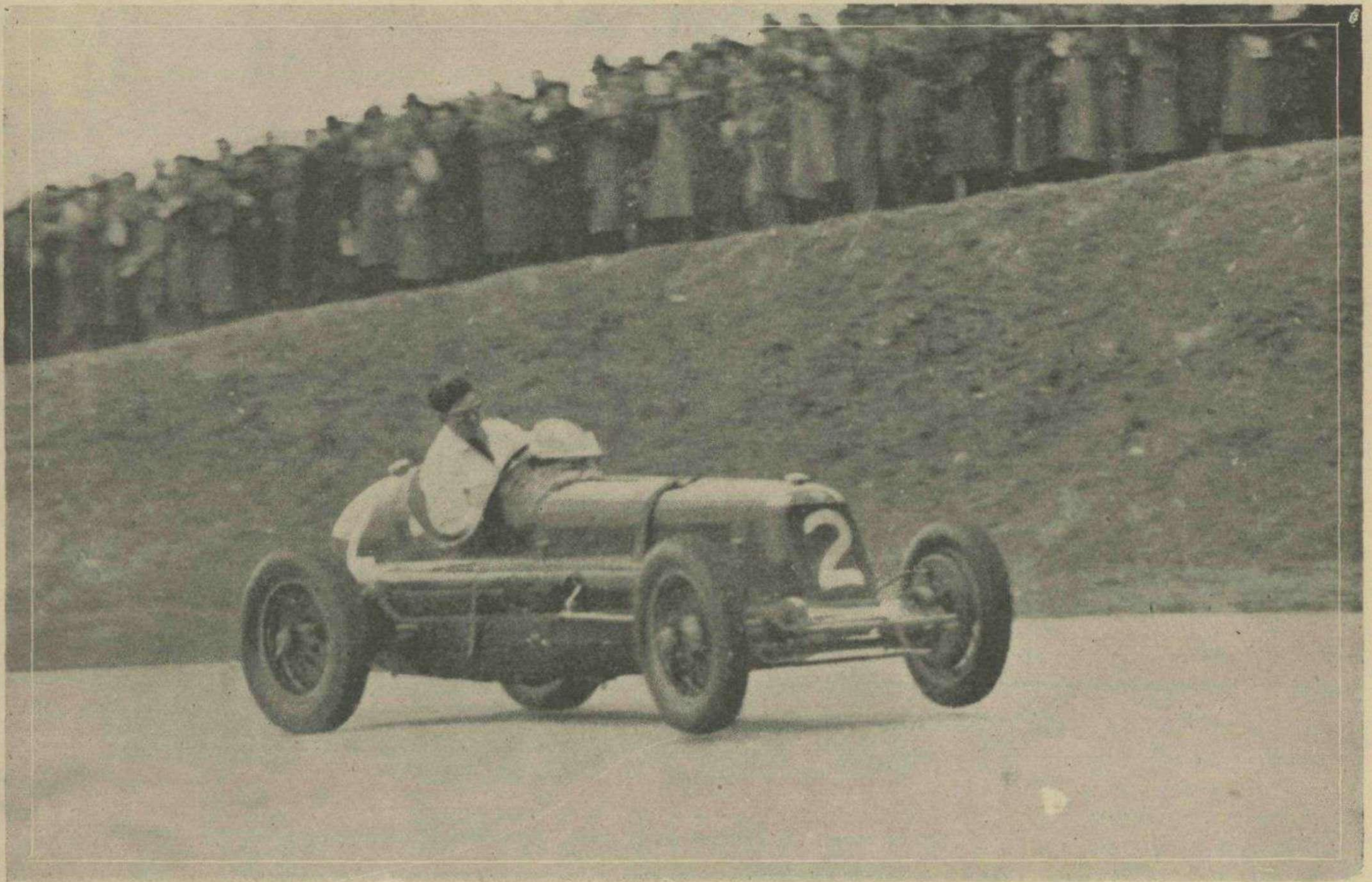


MOTOR SPORT

INCORPORATING
Speed

ONE SHILLING
MONTHLY

Norman Reddell



CONTENTS

Wartime Motoring Experiences	...	...	...	45	Real Racing for the Impecunious	...	...	...	57
Some Anzani "Gen."	...	...	...	51	The Outer Circuit "200s" (continued)	...	...	...	58
Cars I Have Owned	52	Rumblings...	59
On Some Post-War Prophecies...	55	Club News	61
Letters from Readers	63					



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MOTOR SPORT



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◀ THE WARTIME MOTORING EXPERIENCES ▶

of

Flight-Lieutenant T. A. D. CROOK

This refreshing article describes some unusual motoring undertaken during this war, in cars ranging from a Fiat "500" to a "38/250" Mercedes-Benz, and gives readers an insight into what it is like to own one of the fastest road cars—Crook's 2.9 litre twin-blower Alfa-Romeo.—Ed.



LET it first be stated that the only excuse I have for writing the notes which follow is my desire for **MOTOR SPORT** to continue publication for the duration and for evermore. I understand that the Editor requires as many reminiscences as possible, so here are mine.

My pre-war motoring in numerous sports cars was probably attended by the same trials and tribulations as those experienced by fellow enthusiasts who have written previously in **MOTOR SPORT**; thus, having been fortunate to cover quite a good war-time mileage in interesting cars (and other forms of transport!) the notes which follow will deal mainly with the period September, 1939, to December, 1943.

During the summer of 1939 most of us felt that war was somewhat inevitable, and so, I suppose, I was not alone in making the best of what must quite probably be the last sports-car holiday for some time to come. The month of August, 1939, saw me revving around at maximum boost, and inflicting on the good people of N. Wales the disgraceful shriek of my blown M.G. Magnette. A very few days before the declaration of

war the people of Llandudno were gratified to hear the last shriek of the Magnette, for, accompanied by my inseparable friend and fellow-enthusiast, Donald Cochrane (since killed flying in action in Malta) I rounded the Great Orme at a healthy 6,200 r.p.m. in second, in hot pursuit of a 3½-litre S.S. 100, the owner of which was staying at the same hotel. The shriek turned to a sullen rattle as we came to an abrupt halt. Hasty inspection revealed a large quantity of XL in the radiator and an equally large quantity of H₂O in the sump.

Nor was water and oil alone in the sump; it also contained two melted pistons, a crumpled con.-rod and some small pieces of metal purporting to be little-ends. Truly a sight for the squander bug, had he been hatched at that time! Readers will note that I quite unblushingly quote 6,200 r.p.m., and will be expecting to read of the grab rails, full-length tonneau cover, St. Christopher badge, and all the other conceivable extras which usually make such engine speeds possible! Let it be said immediately, therefore, that this was no ordinary Magnette, being, as a matter of

fact, Doreen Evans's ex-trials job (BLL492) (three only of which were constructed by Bellevue Garage for Miss Evans, Denis Evans and Kenneth Evans), and which car, since leaving its birth-place, had been adorned—for better or for worse—with a large Marshall supercharger delivering upwards of 10 lb. per square inch boost. I acquired this car in Lancashire earlier that year, following ownership of various M.G.s, including J.2, J.3, P, PB, L and Standard N types. This Evans Magnette proved the most reliable of all prior to the incident just described; incidentally, whilst at Bellevue it performed consistently well during the 1935 season, when the three cars (BLL491, BLL492 and BLL493) were driven as a team. The main idea had been to keep the weight down by means of a very light bodywork, sans doors, heavy seats, massive instrument boards and the like. The maximum speed when unblown, I am told by Bellevue, was in the neighbourhood of 85 m.p.h., and with the addition of the supercharger I timed the car at a little over 90 on one occasion. Considering the modifications to the engine done at one time or another, includ-

ing complete balancing, high-lift camshaft, Scintilla Vertex magneto and striking starkness of bodywork (which could be, and on many occasions was, dented by hand!), 90 m.p.h. is no great maximum. The reason was, of course, a back axle ratio lower than standard, fitted for trials' purposes. So that, to reach 90 m.p.h. the engine had to be whipped up to over the 6,000 r.p.m. mark. At this gait it emitted a delightfully purposeful whine, and left the mark like a Nazi to the air-raid shelter, but was not calculated to ensure the continued operation of the moving parts for ever.

The getaway of the Magnette was, truthfully, very impressive, and tests with a 2½-litre S.S.100, and a 4.3-litre Alvis proved that the Magnette was always first, up to 70 m.p.h. Usually such purposeful acceleration was accompanied by much wheelspin, the shrieks of terrified women, bolting horses, barking dogs, policemen with notebooks, and all the fun of the fair! But the acceleration was good, and the Magnette had been raced in the 100-mile race at Southport and other events. Incidentally, this car should be quite useful for speed trials, and I am considering modifying it further after the war, amongst other things lining the cylinders down to reduce the capacity to within 1,100 c.c., it being at present 1,287 c.c. (The engine is basically N-type.)

These are the thoughts which occur to me now, but craftily, and with the obvious approval of all Wales, did I then say, "Away to the scrap-heap, indeed to goodness!" The transfer to my home in Lancashire, on tow behind my sister's Austin Investment, just beat the Fuehrer, and the Magnette was safely laid up before war broke out. The announcement of hostilities on the wireless coincided with my announcement to the family that I intended purchasing a Bugatti. I don't think my mother knew exactly which was the more serious of the two blows, for experience with my first Bugatti (an elderly "2.3") was hardly one of reliable motoring. One long run, in fact, of "I am going to be towed," "On tow," or "I came here on tow, old boy," and the family cars, invariably Austins, had always been the towers!

The arrival of war postponed the arrival of the Bugatti, however, and although I went into residence at Cambridge for the Michaelmas term, 1939, I left to join the R.A.F. in October, 1939, enlisting at the time as a flight mechanic.

By the time I had finished my disciplinary training, I found I would be able to keep a car on my station, provided it was one with good fuel consumption and of reasonably sober appearance. My eyes met those of my sister and she knew her Austin was about to join me on my travels! Nothing could she do to prevent this, for I arrived suddenly on leave and requisitioned the Investment within a few minutes, travelling down to the neighbourhood of Bristol with a tremendous amount of luggage, amongst which was the Magnette's supercharger surreptitiously concealed for later use!

On arriving at the camp, I fitted the blower (run at reduced revolutions to curtail the boost) which certainly made things hum, albeit the braking and road-holding of the Austin were quite in-

adequate for the startling rest-to-50 figures, and many were the phenomenal avoidances. The acceleration, incidentally, startled one of our instructors, who searchingly inquired where the power came from, and to whom I replied that his instructing me on the tuning of "Kestrels" and "Merlins" had Dixonised me!

I did not know exactly how long the bearings and crankshaft of the Austin would stand up to the boost, but, having a shrewd idea, I removed the blower before I undertook two longish runs—one on leave to Lancashire, the second on posting to an O.T.U. Furthermore, I was running on the basic ration mainly then, and economy superseded enthusiasm.

The blower was never refitted to the Austin, for early in 1940 I discovered I was due to proceed overseas at short notice. I truly thought motoring of any description had disappeared, and so I applied for leave petrol—and got it—for seven days' embarkation leave. I decided I should spend half the leave in London and the rest at my home in Lancashire. The London idea seemed very popular with five other airmen also, who unhesitatingly loaded full overseas kit and themselves into the long-suffering Austin in spite of the protesting springs, which were always giving trouble anyway. Upon arrival in town I espied Don Cochrane motoring towards Marble Arch in his T-type M.G. I stopped him, and it was arranged that I should spend the first part of my leave with him, and that we should then go up to my home. It was decided to use the M.G. for that journey and to dump the Austin for later collection by my sister. The dumping of the Austin and the airmen happened outside the "Cumberland," and a sort of clothing parade took place, much to the amusement of onlookers, whilst all the kit, which had been thrown in regardless of ownership, was sorted out. A memory of this was brought back on board ship when it was discovered that scarcely any of us had our own khaki shirts and shorts, and when the order to put on tropical kit was issued, the sight was fit for publication in *Punch*! It was on my way out to the Middle East, too, that I suddenly discovered that I had left the Austin in a London garage, but had retained the ignition key and door key and garage ticket. I later learnt that my sister had entered and started the car with a little hairpin manipulation, only to be stopped at one of the invasion control stops, where a policeman discovered a pair of airman's pants and an R.A.F. greatcoat in the car, which took some explaining.

After a day in London, Cochrane and I set out for Lancashire in the M.G., but it was not until late evening that we had got going, and we were further delayed in Nottingham, *en route*, partly due to a choked carburettor, and partly due to the fact that the ale houses were still open. It was not until 11.30 p.m. that we got going again from Nottingham, and between there and Derby there was a sharp sizzling smell which brought us to an abrupt halt. This might have been one of two things, (a) an electrical fault, or (b) the fish and chips scattered all over the car might have touched something

hot. Armed with this fault-finding table we drew up, and discovered that the whole electrical system had packed up. Unfortunately it was pitch dark and we had no torch, so that the arrival of a light in the distance was considered something of a godsend. On drawing level with us, however, and being called to assist, there was one terrified shriek to the effect that the rider did not talk to strange men, and Eve passed on her way with her light. A second cyclist, however, was braver and, after informing us that it was "Mad Elizabeth" who had just passed, she loaned us her light, and a loose battery connection was discovered. Much time had been wasted, so it was decided to ring up home and herald my approach. But leaning against the side of the first 'phone box we reached was a lady's cycle, and inside the box was "Mad Elizabeth," doubtless 'phoning the police. On the arrival of the M.G. she gave another terrified shriek, seized her bicycle and motored away, displaying considerable acceleration on the getaway.

I learnt over the 'phone that a telegram awaited me at home, instructing me to return to unit by *reveille*, so we had to turn round and give up all idea of the Lancashire run, and concentrate on returning to camp. Fortunately the M.G. ran very well and I arrived with about 20 minutes to spare. I was able to use the M.G. for the journey to the dispatch centre, and Cochrane kindly let me drive the whole way.

After some while at a base in Egypt I was posted to the desert, and opportunity of further motoring seemed to rapidly disappear.

After several months had passed, however, I was returned to a base again and seized the opportunity of buying a car, as a drowning man seizes a straw (or dinghy!). In Egypt, in 1940 and 1941, cars were still cheap enough and petrol was approximately ten piastres (about two shillings) a gallon, and was unrationed! My first car in Egypt was a rather ancient (1927) Ballot, which had an enormous body on it, which, although possessed of but little urge (it would scarcely reach 50 m.p.h.), served me well for trips to Cairo and back. Inevitably this car was overloaded with leave-seekers, and hardly a mile was covered with less than six people aboard.

Such overloading, however, was nothing compared with the number of persons carried in the local inhabitants' cars, which usually had at least four further persons clinging to the running boards.

On arrival at Cairo one afternoon the Ballot was rammed by a taxi which came out of a side turning at peak revs. From the running boards of the taxi leapt seven angry Egyptians, and for the next few minutes a further six squeezed through the doors until we were on the one hand 13 Egyptians, and on the other hand six airmen, all talking at once and estimating repairs to our chariots. Immediately a large crowd developed, as always happened, and the occasion was converted into a general demand for "baksheesh" from a further dozen persons, who obviously had just arrived and had no connection with the affair whatever. Eventually I weeded out the actual driver and owner of the taxi—one Abdul—and tried to force an agreement before sun-

down! His estimate for repair to the wing of the taxi was £15 (Egyptian), but after a little persuasion this was reduced by £1 per step, until eventually he appeared delighted to accept 50 piastres (ten shillings) to tow the Ballot into a garage and forget about his dented wing. My car was towed away by Abdul amid loud cheers, but the general argument was still going strong when we left! Repairs to the Ballot were estimated at £10 by the garage, but mercifully this expenditure was never made, as I was posted back to the desert again very shortly after the incident, and sold the car as it stood.

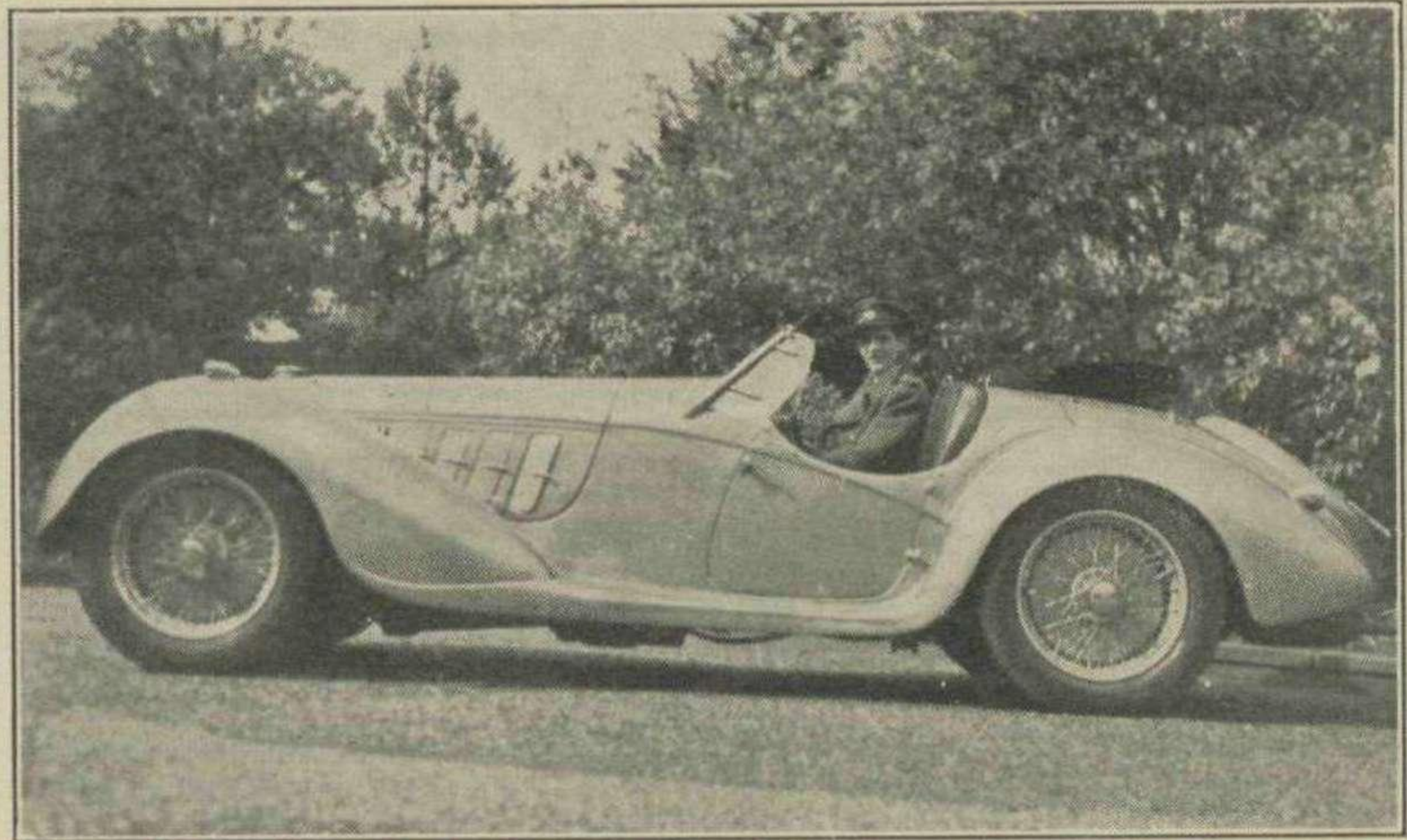
I often saw Abdul again when I returned to Cairo some months later. He was rather a good type, being always able to deal with ticklish transport considerations after our evening celebrations in Cairo. At Christmas I gave him a box of cigarettes, which pleased him greatly, and he showered the blessings of Allah upon me, telling me that I would soon be rewarded for my kindness. The next time I saw him I was commissioned, and Abdul immediately seized upon the opportunity of informing me that Allah had rewarded me.

On commissioning and returning to the Western Desert I was, amongst my usual duties, also entrusted with the care of the squadron transport, and was able to drive everything from a Coles crane to a dispatch rider's motor-cycle. Full use was made of this opportunity, and I drove some very interesting vehicles indeed. One such machine was a Dodge fitted with alternative drive at will on either the front wheels, and back wheels, or all four wheels. This machine could do anything but cook! It was very handy for use in loose sand, and, if I remember rightly, had seven forward speeds and three reverse.

During movements of my unit I was later able to use a 10-h.p. Harley-Davidson motor-cycle, and this was most exciting. It is a heavy bike, of course, and was rather tricky on loose sand. Once one had mastered the foot clutch (press to engage) and the amount of throttle to give on the getaway, however, it was certainly a great thrill to drive. No speedometer was fitted, but on the main desert road I must have touched 80 m.p.h. on one occasion. The springing was most comfortable and I, personally, liked very much the upright riding position and cradle handlebars.

In 1941 I was in hospital for nearly two months. On admission I found that one of the orderlies, an Italian prisoner of war, was an ex-Ferrari mechanic, but he did not speak sufficiently good English to be conversed with. After leaving hospital and receiving three weeks' sick leave, I decided to purchase another car to take with me. This took the form of a very well-kept 1937 Chevrolet coupé, which I purchased in Ismailia, and which showed considerable urge, although I do not, in general, like the driving qualities of American cars.

I used this car for my leave, and travelled all the way to Palestine and back in it without a moment's trouble. Mostly I held 65-70 m.p.h. on the speedometer on all the straight stretches, and took the twisty mountainous roads and passes near Jerusalem with great *eclat*. I



Flight-Lt. T. A. D. Crook with his 2.9-litre straight-eight twin-blower Alfa-Romeo, one of the fastest modern sports cars. It was previously owned by Robert Arbuthnot.

visited Tel-a-Viv, Haifa, Jerusalem, the Dead Sea, and Jaffa, amongst other places, in this Chevrolet, and in the three weeks covered nearly 2,000 miles. The petrol consumption worked out at exactly 20 m.p.g.

Coming back from Cairo to Alexandria in the last day of my leave, I encountered a heavy sandstorm which reduced visibility to practically nil for about 25 miles. On inspecting the engine in Alexandria it resembled a sand pie, but a good air cleaner was fitted, and after cleaning this out and generally washing down the car, it seemed none the worse.

I left the Chevrolet with a charming Greek family in Alexandria, whom I was now very friendly with, and I used to allow friends going to Alexandria from the desert to use the car during their leave. Regrettably, one friend overdid a corner and turned over. That was a bad thing, especially as he had the rather beautiful daughter of the house with him at the time, which double tragedy left me quite irritated! I was unable to get down from the desert to view the damage, but, from his description of the accident, and remark that "it was quite bent, old boy!" I had a fair idea of what to expect.

About this time I had the opportunity of driving a few captured enemy vehicles, in addition to numerous Allied service trucks. One such enemy vehicle was the famous Volkswagen, which was fitted out as a sort of transport-cum-sleeping-berth (doubtless for some brass hat), but which had a very poor performance when I tried it.

I once set out at dusk to visit another squadron but a few miles off, in a Chevrolet 3-tonner. A sandstorm developed and it got very dark. I set off back to my own unit and got completely lost, so much so that after travelling round for about two hours the Chevrolet ran out of petrol and I had to spend the night in the cab. Nights in the desert can be pretty cold, too, and I had only a shirt and shorts on. I swore loudly, therefore, when, on waking up, I discovered I was within sight of my own tent!

Several opportunities arose during

quiet periods of driving trucks down to Alexandria for exchange. Perhaps the most pleasant of these was a run in a light Ford wireless van, with the radio playing some swing music and the thought of the first bath for some months rapidly becoming a reality!

Leave came round again at last, and I had one look at my Chevrolet coupé, and my worst fears were confirmed. The thing was so much scrap-iron, the engine being pushed back about half a foot, that I disposed of it immediately. The dealer in Alexandria to whom I sold it, however, had a very fine-looking specimen of short-chassis supercharged 2-seater Mercedes-Benz in his window. I therefore cheered up quite a lot. This car was for sale at £150 Egyptian (the Egyptian pound being a little below sterling then). I am ashamed to say that I do not know the actual type of that car, not being well versed in Mercedes numbers, but it was the 40-h.p. affair, with the blower engaging on full depression of the throttle. [Presumably a "38/250," rated at 37 h.p.—Ed.] I think it had been owned by a naval officer, or was subsequently purchased by one. Eventually I persuaded the dealer to hire me this car for the period of my leave. A goodly deposit and fantastic hire price had to be left, but the enormous amount of real driving I had with the Mercedes throughout my week's leave certainly made it worth while.

Intending to go up to Palestine again, I set off almost immediately, and once out on the Alexandria-to-Cairo desert road I immediately wound the speedometer up to the 100 m.p.h. mark. That Mercedes could go, and I made Cairo in no time. Shortly before reaching Cairo I picked up an army officer whom I had last seen at the 1938 Donington Grand Prix, thus demonstrating what a small world this is. I gave him a lift into Cairo, screaming past convoys to the obvious envy of the less fortunate types in the lorries, and he at once expressed his desire to spend his leave with the Mercedes and me. We decided to stay that night at Cairo, he having booked a room at the Mena House, and we suitably

discovered once more how expensive a night out in Cairo can be; at "Shepherds" or the "Metropolitan Dug Out," for instance! The Mercédès caused a considerable stir amongst the troops in the capital, and quite a crowd gathered when it was being garaged.

A very fine three days was spent in Palestine, the Mercédès performing wonderfully well. Including the drive from Alexandria to Palestine, and the running about in Palestine, and the return run, we topped a goodly mileage. I forget the actual mileage we did eat up, but vividly recall that the petrol consumption was about 8 m.p.g.! Not being bothered with rationing, it was merely a question of how long the piastres would last out which governed our mileage on that trip. The highest speed touched on the speedometer was between 105 and 110 m.p.h. This felt like a very genuine "century," although possibly, not having driven at that speed since some two years before, I might have over-rated the Mercédès. The car seemed in good condition, anyway, and emitted a delightful screech when the blower was cut in.

The journey to Palestine was uneventful enough, my friend and I driving 50-50 all the way, this being agreed upon on my suggesting that he should pay for half the petrol. The petrol gauge being graduated in Continental fashion, full-half-quarter-empty, we found it better to drive for a quarter of a tank each than to take any accurate mileages from the mileometer and when we got going properly the passenger could almost see the gauge going down!

On the return journey I had the same experience as I had had with the Chevrolet, for a simply outsize sandstorm rolled up, and things got most unpleasant. The Mercédès had no hood or sidescreens, and personal discomfort became acute. There being no sign of life for many miles along that route, we decided to go on in order not to be completely buried! A crate of beer bottles under the tonneau became speedily empty as we wetted our parched throats. At about 11 p.m. the storm got so much worse and the wind rose to gale force, that we were to a large extent comforted to find a broken-down stone-house, such as one often finds in the most out-of-the-way places. This was literally no more than four broken walls, *sans* roof, and into this shelter we drove the Mercédès on the leeward side, and prepared for the night, putting all the clothes on which we had with us, and tying socks round the air intakes of the car. The wind howled all night, and the protection of the wall was but little compared with the amount of sand blowing in. When morning came, a great heap of sand had almost completely blocked the narrow entrance, and the wind showed no sign of abating. It was impossible to get the car out, as we were not Monte Carlo-Rally equipped, and as quickly as we cleared the entrance so it piled up again. So we were forced to wait until the wind went down. Both of us were darned hungry, and the few remaining sandwiches we had were 50 per cent. sand anyway. A veritable story-book situation seemed to be imminent, and we were considering making a log of our trials and hardships, which would be found years later and published in MOTOR SPORT!—

when the storm went down as quickly as it had arisen. So that by approximately 2 p.m. the sun was shining and we set to work to clear the entrance. This took about two hours, and would probably have taken longer had not my army friend been due back at his unit that same night. A small bet was made as to whether the Mercédès would start or not. I said it would not, and winning the pint on this occasion was of but little comfort, for the car practically had to be decoked before it fired. The whole engine seemed to be literally clogged up with sand, as well as every nook and cranny of the bodywork.

By 6 p.m. we came out from our enforced "pit stop" hungry as hunters, sullen as storm troopers. "You could hear the grating of the sand against the pistons," said my army friend later that night (which statement was, I believe, entered in his unit's "Line Book.").

The Mercédès made grand time to El Kantara, where we stopped for refreshment and a much-needed bath, and from there on to Cairo the speedometer was seldom below 75 m.p.h. I dropped the Army in Cairo, and stayed there myself overnight, setting out for Alexandria at about three o'clock the following afternoon, having washed down the Mercédès and refilled the tank. Several times the speedometer passed the 100 mark, and I whined past convoys with great glee. The road from Cairo to Alexandria (which they call the desert road) is almost straight. Just after passing the half-way mark, where there is a hotel of sorts, and an army sign reading "*It's better to arrive late than in pieces,*" an offside tyre burst, with the speedometer reading just below 90 m.p.h. After a series of phenomenal avoidances between a Jeep and a medium-sized tank, I slithered off the road, coming to rest about 60 yards away in soft sand. The Mercédès was well and truly stuck, and the tank had to be requisitioned to pull it out. Fortunately no damage occurred, so a repetition of an argument similar to the one with Abdul was unlikely to arise. The army officer in the tank expressed his desire to drive the Mercédès, and drove away at speed in it, mastering the gear-change immediately, very expertly, whilst I had my first taste of driving a tank in exchange! This was quite thrilling after one got used to it, but it left me with a sort of aggravated St. Vitus dance for the next few days, a state of affairs the M.O. was quite unable to diagnose.

That run in the Mercédès was quite my most thrilling drive in the Middle East. It may have been equalled, however, when, just before being posted home, I met a Greek enthusiast who promised me a ride in a blown Alfa-Romeo which had been sent up from Eritrea. The car was not ready when I returned to the desert, but it so happened that I would be able to fly down to Alexandria at that time, and when I received my friend's letter to say the Alfa-Romeo was cracking, it neatly coincided with such an opportunity. On approaching to land at an aerodrome near Alexandria we noticed some form of parade in progress on the ground. As we taxied in, several officers ran towards us, for apparently an important personage was arriving by air, and the arrival of our Lysander was in

some mysterious way connected with the affair. On discovering who was aboard they ordered us to taxi well out of sight! The incident was most unfortunate, for in our eagerness to disappear we practically covered the parade with clouds of sand from our slip stream, which must have made us most unpopular!

I had only a short while to spend sampling the Alfa-Romeo, but on the Alexandria to Cairo road a truly remarkable velocity was reached.

There was a lamentable lack of fast sports machinery in Egypt, the majority of the sports cars there being well-worn and weary. In addition to that Mercédès and the Alfa-Romeo, I saw a 1½-litre Bugatti—possibly a Type 37A—at any rate a 4-cylinder blown job) which sounded very well. In Ismailia there were two ancient Lancias and a Lea-Francis. I also met several 1,100-c.c. Fiats, one of which was supposed to have been driven in the Tobruk-Tripoli race, but that I very much doubt.

An R.A.F. flight-lieutenant of my acquaintance had a fairly new green T-type M.G. which went well, and the Group Captain Station Commander at one of the base stations had a T-type M.G. coupé finished in light grey.

Another friend purchased an elderly Amilcar whilst on leave from the desert, and spent much time spraying it bright red, overlooking the fact that only the King of Egypt (and possibly other Royalty) are permitted to use a red car. His first drive through a local village was something of a silly symphony, for there was absolute pandemonium, the amazed locals being possibly unable to decide whether he was the King, or whether he should be arrested for his impertinence! I don't remember him clearly stating which was the most embarrassing, but the car was quickly re-sprayed opalescent blue.

Whilst in Egypt, on return from the Western Desert, and awaiting transfer to England, I had an opportunity of viewing a number of sand yachts constructed by various Air Force enthusiasts in peacetime. Most of them were very neatly made affairs, and showed much ingenuity. All were the same in principle, incorporating an old car chassis with crab track wheels. Most were 2-seaters, driver in front and passenger in rear holding the sail. This was a most interesting afternoon for me, for I used to do some sand-yachting myself whilst at my preparatory school in Parkgate, Cheshire, where a number of such yachts were constructed for the use of the boys.

Amongst the fastest in the world must be the Cairo-Heliopolis trams, which always appear to travel flat out and are invariably packed to capacity with hitchhikers clinging to the sides and jumping on and off whenever they please, with remarkable skill. It was quite a frequent occurrence, incidentally, for a small boy to jump on the tram, clean your shoes, and then jump off again, for the sum of half-piastre (about a penny). Another interesting feature is the Cairo to Helwan railway, which is a diesel train and goes very fast. For the sum of five piastres a friend and I drove one of these from Helwan to Cairo, with the complete approval of the railway authorities.

An amazing sight was to be seen during the blitz on Alexandria, for most of the workpeople used to leave Alexandria and sleep in nearby fields and villages when things got hot. The evening trains from Alexandria to the suburbs were, during that time, absolutely packed, and about 100 natives per carriage were sitting on the roof, complete with full kit.

On my way back to this country in 1942 I visited Durban and Capetown, and the hospitality shown to British troops of all ranks is marvellous. In 1942 petrol rationing in South Africa had just been brought in, but, even so, quite a fair basic allowance was given, and immediately the ship docked crowds of cars would assemble, and offers were made to take us wherever we wished. Whilst I was with my squadron in the Western Desert I had the pleasure of meeting a large number of South Africans whose squadron was operating nearby, and, having found them such extraordinarily nice chaps, it was no surprise to find their homes and families just as hospitable.

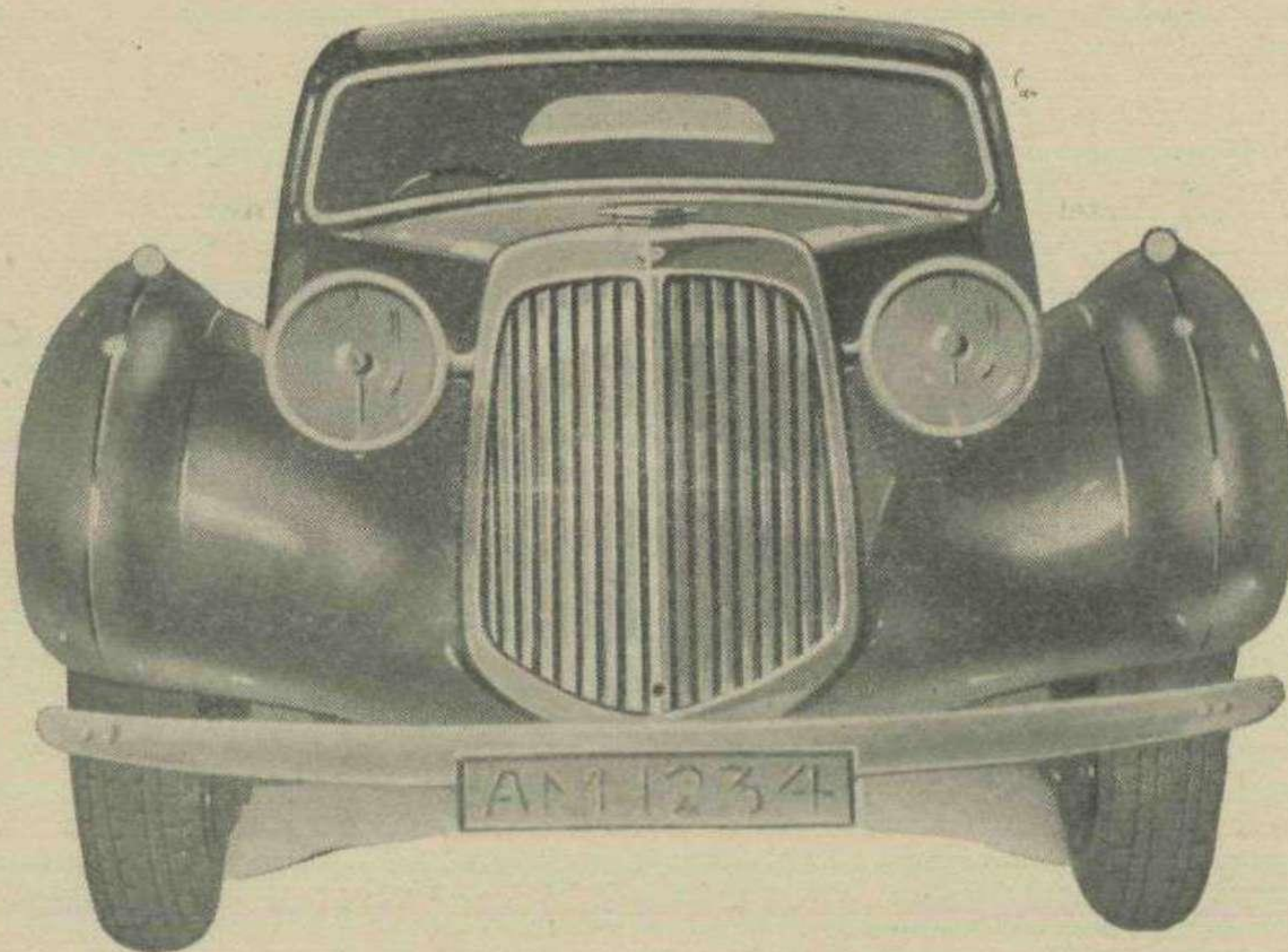
In Capetown I walked into a bookshop to get a motor paper, and an enthusiast immediately introduced me to the Grand Prix course, which I had never seen. He was running a 3-litre "Red Label" Bentley, and introduced me to his friends, owners of a "30/98" Vauxhall, a J.2 M.G. fitted with a blower, a Sunbeam, and a Frazer-Nash. This meeting was most pleasant. I was admirably entertained, and visited

the Table Mountain and other places of interest, and also saw one of their films taken at the last South African Grand Prix.

Arrived in England, I was pleasantly surprised to see that a car which I have long been interested in, and which must be one of the fastest and most potent road cars in the country, was now for sale. I refer to Robert Arbuthnot's 2.9-litre short-chassis Alfa-Romeo. As this car was written about, and briefly road-tested by Cecil Clutton, in *MOTOR SPORT* for January, 1942, it will be unnecessary for me to go into the full details of its design, a design which in any case is now well known, the engine being the same as that used in the *monoposto* Alfas of the 1935 season, one such *monoposto* (now the property of Kenneth Evans) having won the 1935 German Grand Prix with Nuvolari conducting.

There are only two short-chassis 2-seaters of this actual type in this country, Robert Arbuthnot's, now my property, and Hugh Hunter's. As is very well known by now, Hunter's car won the 1938 Mille Miglia at record speed in the hands of Biondetti, that being the last Mille Miglia to be held in Italy. Robert Arbuthnot sold the car to Townley, of Barton Motors (Preston, Lancs.), and Townley only ran it for a few miles before selling it to me. I have been able to cover about 3,000 war-time miles in it, and it has come up to all expectations. Apart from the terrific acceleration and high maximum speed (Arbuthnot has

reached 130 in it) the roadholding and cornering qualities are other excellent features, it being fitted with independent suspension on all four wheels. For those who did not read Clutton's article or my notes in *The Autocar* (December 18th, 1942) the car is a straight-eight (two blocks of four separately, in line), with twin overhead camshafts driven from the centre, two Roots superchargers (one for each block of four cylinders), twin carburettors (Italian Webers), and a capacity of 2,904 c.c. (R.A.C. rating 23 h.p.). The gearbox is in unit with the back axle. The wheelbase (hub to hub) is 8 ft. 10 in., and that of Hunter's is 9 ft. 2 in. Hunter and I are rather perplexed about the 4 in. difference. Possibly mine has at some time hit a solid object and shrunk, alternatively Hunter's car, in winning the Mille Miglia and various speed trials, might have stretched in its hurry! Hunter's car is fitted with lighter bodywork than mine (although I have weighed mine and it weighs less than 1 cwt. more), with two spare wheels, etc.). When Arbuthnot had this Alfa it was tuned and maintained by Ramponi, and although entered for the 1939 Le Mans 24-hour race, was not actually raced, and has not yet been used in competition. On purchasing, I collected the Alfa in Preston one Saturday afternoon in May, 1942. It performed exceedingly well, even on Pool petrol, and made short work of the distance from Preston to my



The great aim of culture, the aim of setting ourselves to ascertain what perfection is, and to make it prevail"

Matthew Arnold

objective in Lincoln, although I kept the engine-speed well in hand, the car being new to me and the petrol obviously not ideal. On the way down to Lincoln I passed a truck full of Italian prisoners. They cheered like mad as I passed and almost fell off in their enthusiasm to have a good look. This was the first occasion on which I had passed any Italians in the car. I noticed the same procedure on every subsequent occasion, both whilst driving the Alfa and my 1,100-c.c. Fiat.

One Sunday afternoon, whilst whining down Ermine Street towards Lincoln at a reasonably good velocity, the twin Italian Weber petrol pumps decided to let it be known that they were of Axis manufacture and do a little sabotage. This resulted in considerable over-heating due to fuel starvation. I parked the car in Lincoln to investigate. This was the first time I had done so in a public garage, and I was quite surprised at the resultant stir. Practically 50 per cent. of the Forces in a cinema queue left the queue to look at the Alfa, for instance, and when I returned to the garage after making a 'phone call, the car was completely surrounded and two people were actually sitting in it and waggling the gear-lever to and fro. Others had the bonnet open examining the guts. The attendant who had been instructed to keep people off told me he was powerless to stop it. As the petrol pumps were very inaccessible, I had to leave the car overnight before working on it. The whole car looked like being very badly scratched if I left it as it was, however, so I covered it with a tonneau cover, wired down the bonnet, and hoped for the best. Even this did not deter the more adventurous enthusiasts, for on returning the following evening the camouflage had been disturbed, the bonnet unwired, and the ignition switch left "on." The latter did not matter, fortunately, as the ignition is by Scintilla magneto; had it been coil it would probably have long since burnt out, for wherever the car was left it was invariably tampered with. I attached a bomb pin to the key, later (with the usual warning notice!), but this only deterred the very young, and brought much derision from some A.T.C. cadets. I got the two petrol pumps off, after much difficulty, they being placed awkwardly just in front of the scuttle and low down on the near side, behind the superchargers. One pump required an expert overhaul, and as I could do nothing about that locally, and did not feel like leaving the Alfa in the garage much longer, I contacted Robert Arbuthnot, who collected the car a few days later. The Alfa was laid up for many months before it was on the road again, as High Speed Motors fitted new pistons and made further modifications at the same time. The two Weber pumps were dropped in favour of twin S.U.s, and I have had no further mixture troubles. This is perhaps as well, for this particular Alfa model must be run at the exactly correct mixture, for, if run too weak, it is liable to crack the blocks, the water flow being very narrow, and upwards of £200 damage can be done very quickly!

The brief runs I had been able to do in this car in 1942, coupled with a good mileage on a friend's "2.3" before the war, and my short run in Egypt, con-

verted me into a disciple of the marque, and I felt very lost without the car when it was taken away for overhaul. So much so that I visited High Speed Motors whenever possible to gaze on the car in various stages of overhaul, thus familiarising myself thoroughly with the various components.

Hugh Hunter (who has always been most useful in giving me all possible information about "2.9s") and I started a lengthy correspondence about our cars in 1942, which we still continue regularly, and which is most entertaining. I also correspond regularly with a Mr. Dale, a British Alfa enthusiast in Egypt, whom I hope to meet, as he is coming to England this year.

In June, 1942, Hugh was still running his Alfa on the remainder of the basic, and he invited me to spend the week-end with him and try it. Considering that the car was about to be laid up for the duration, this was most generous of him. During my drive in his car I was indeed glad to note that its performance felt approximately the same as my own, although, of course, whilst being used in competition, he was using a set of higher compression pistons than those fitted when I was driving. I had felt that his car, being specially constructed for the Mille Miglia, might have been quite different from mine. It was also most interesting to see his numerous cinema films and to recall thereby his 328 Frazer-Nash-B.M.W. and 2-litre Alta.

On leaving my own Alfa at High Speed Motors, I decided to purchase a motorcycle for getting about on. Following my experience with the Harley-Davidson abroad, I felt that such a machine, could one be found in good condition, would suit me very well. Tony Birch, now with Robert Arbuthnot, found one for me, but the tyres were in very poor shape, and as no new ones could be obtained, I purchased a New Imperial instead. Although slow compared with the Harley-Davidson, of course, this machine was quite nippy and had a comfortable spring frame, so was very nice to ride (whenever I could stay on the thing!).

I was staying with Hunter again at the time and rode the bike down to his home in Esher. On the following Monday morning I followed him in his "500" Fiat along the Kingston by-pass, when I got into a wobble, and instead of passing in true Stanley Woods style as expected, I very soon became airborne. The whole incident was viewed by Hugh in his driving mirror, and was apparently very spectacular. The net result was the loss of one R.A.F. uniform, and cuts and bruises. But I was able to get on again, as the bicycle was not damaged beyond a few dents, and proceeded to Bellevue garage, where Denis Evans (who only the previous day, at Hugh's, had prophesied my early downfall!) supervised some very fine first-aid work. I struggled back the 130-odd miles to Lincoln, courage returning gradually with every mile, but I felt very stiff and sorry the next morning. The bike was treated with great respect for the next few weeks and served me well for local runs. I used it throughout the winter, but regrettably had two further accidents, (a) avoiding a jaywalker among the Saturday night crowds in Lincoln, and (b) avoiding the squadron

dog on ice, and on both occasions more uniform was ruined, but I was O.K., as was the bike.

I used to feel the cold acutely after each run, it being my first winter back home, and as I was sleeping in a hut in camp, the coke fire of which was always attended by some technical hitch, I put two under-ump heaters in a trunk under my bed every night, with surprising results!

Life was by this time enlivened by the addition to the squadron of my sister, who had joined the W.A.A.F. as an M.T. driver, and could be seen dicing round the perimeter track with great verve and enthusiasm by day and night.

In early 1943 I became convinced that I was not a top-line motor-cyclist, and as coupons for uniforms were becoming short, and the Alfa was nearly ready, I put the bike aside, and waited for completion of the Alfa with increasing anticipation.

In May, 1943, the great moment arrived, and Hugh Hunter arranged to meet me at the R.A.C. after collecting the car. The increasing number of Americans in London showed great enthusiasm for the Alfa, and we opened the "hood" several times for them to inspect the engine. On setting out for Lincoln, however, we had gone but a few miles when the Scintilla Vertex magneto seized, possibly due to the car being laid up so long, and the journey had to be postponed. Robert Arbuthnot had this quickly fixed, and we got going two days later, and had a very good run to Lincoln, albeit engine speed had to be kept low, due to new pistons. Cruising along gently displayed once more how tractable the "2.9" is, it being unnecessary to change gear even whilst toddling through crowded streets, if the mood so directs. We stopped at Stevenage for one night on the way, spending an enjoyable evening with John Appleton, and I had the opportunity of viewing the Appleton Special before leaving. (How different it is to see this potent machine on blocks and the ear-splitting exhaust note absent for once!)

I used the Alfa throughout the summer of 1943 and it proved most reliable. It always starts straight away with two shots of Ki-gass, and seems to like the newer red tetra-lead-ethyl Pool petrol better than the former issue. I used one per cent. light engine oil in the petrol to assist the lubrication of the blowers, and a double dose of upper cylinder lubricant.

In August, 1943, I had a little trouble with the transmission, which necessitated fitting a new sleeve. This was sent to High Speed Motors, and was back again within a few days, which is good going considering their essential war-time work. The petrol consumption at touring speeds is quite amazingly small. Running from my lodgings to camp it was only necessary to wind the hand throttle in a couple of turns to make the Alfa travel the whole way at 2,000 r.p.m., when one could almost sit with hands in pockets.

I used to leave the car outside my flat in Lincoln sometimes, and through the open window, concealed behind curtains, my wife and I could hear the remarks of passers-by. All turned round to look at the Alfa, and statistics showed that one in four paused to examine it more closely.

Some onlookers could not understand the presence of one dial reading 240 (this being the speedometer calibrated in kilometres per hour), and another reading 60 (r.p.m. by 100), and there were many queries as to whether the car would do 60 m.p.h. or 240 m.p.h. I was always waylaid by dozens of airmen going on pass, and they used to book up and reserve a place weeks ahead.

During last summer I was in London and drove Arbuthnot's 1,100-c.c. Fiat, when accompanying him on an essential run. In October, 1943, it was beginning to get cold in Lincolnshire, and as the Alfa was being used on a number of short journeys and was unable to reach its correct running temperature quickly enough (it takes about ten miles to warm up thoroughly, having dry sump and five gallons of oil contained in a rear tank) I decided to put the car away. I then collected one of Arbuthnot's 1,100-c.c. Fiats. Mine is a 1940 saloon, and goes extremely well, starting and warming up instantaneously and being very lively on the getaway. Approximately 50 or more is available in third gear, and the acceleration is good, as is, of course, the petrol consumption. The speedometer goes right off the dial (which reads to 80 m.p.h.) in a very short time. My Fiat has a high-compression head, and as it has been carefully tuned, I imagine it can reach about 75 m.p.h. (I do not know the actual speedometer error). I recall that one of these cars was road-tested at 72 m.p.h. pre-war. The engine revs. like fury, and it has said good-bye to two local T-type M.G.s. I normally drive the car at very reduced speed, of course, and the petrol consumption, as I have said, is very creditable. Certainly I prefer my Fiat to any English car of similar capacity and first cost. The independent front-wheel

suspension and excellent fluid brakes are other features which I admire. The visibility is excellent, due to the sloping bonnet, although the fact that the wind-screen is permanently closed is a snag in foggy weather, as I have discovered in the last few weeks. I recently took my Fiat on leave to Lancashire and it performed very well. The only trouble so far was with the dynamo, the commutator of which went west. However, 48 hours after 'phoning High Speed Motors another was here and fitted. I intend to slightly increase the charge during the winter months.

In October, 1943, life was enlivened at the aerodrome by the arrival of one, Alan Skerman, together with John Hay. These two enthusiasts rolled up in a 4½-litre Bentley, which had been much modified, including the subtraction of roughly a foot from the wheelbase and the addition of twin rear wheels. They had discovered the Bentley in a field, and were transferring it to London for storage. My aerodrome was fortunately exactly on the route, so they were able to attend a squadron party, and view the Alfa, at the same time. Due to the fact that they were only granted petrol for moving the car, I was unable to drive it, but it looked very well as it left the camp and accelerated away.

Up to December, 1943, I had only on brief occasions sampled a 500-c.c. Fiat. I drove Hunter's little "mouse" when I was staying with him on several occasions, but until December had never undertaken a long journey on such a car. It was, therefore, pleasant to be able to drive a friend's car from London to Lincoln in December, this car being for use in Lincoln. It was a 1937 example, rather worn and weary, but I set off from London at lunch-time and, after getting

used to the various weird noises which apparently meant nothing, I had a good trouble-free run, arriving at the aerodrome by tea-time. The petrol consumption of these cars is well known to be excellent. The particular model I drove must have been extraordinary, for I went mile after mile and the fuel seemed to remain at exactly the same level. The narrow width of the "500" was most useful in overtaking convoys on the Great North Road and in traffic, and they certainly must be a valuable war-time possession with the current petrol rationing in force.

The Alfa is still in Lincoln, well laid up in a lock-up garage; I also have a Rudge motor-cycle which I intend to set about reconditioning if ever I have the time, and which was purchased quite reasonably. The New Imperial has now been sold and is still running well.

There are two cars which I am looking out for and wish to purchase. I refer, first, to a 328 Frazer-Nash-B.M.W., which marque I have driven some mileage but never actually owned. Should any of your readers know of one of these cars at a reasonable price, I should be interested to hear of it. Secondly, I would like to own one of the special super-streamlined 1,100-c.c. Fiat saloons, the 2-seater type with pointed back which was introduced just before the war, and road-tested in the *Motor*. I should be very pleased to hear of one of these for sale. Both are for post-war use.

Finally, as the Alfa is laid up in Lincoln, it occurs to me that enthusiasts stationed near Lincoln might like to view it. Provided I am stationed here still, I should be pleased to show it to anyone who rings me up at Lincoln 8365, and would entertain them as far as my limited time and war-time difficulties permit.

We have been loaned, by Gnr. B. W. Pollard, a catalogue issued by the British Anzani Engineering Co., Ltd., in about 1928. Some interesting data relating to the famous 1½-litre s.v. Anzani engine appears therein. This engine was made in touring, sports tourer, super sports, high-efficiency and racing versions. Although the light weight of this engine is emphasised, the estimate of 160 lb. made by Cecil Clutton and other writers of recent times would appear to be optimistic, as the makers claimed 166 lb. less carburetter, magneto, flywheel and exhaust manifold. The Super Sports engine differed in respect of a head specially finished internally and giving a higher compression ratio, cleaned-up ports, in-

SOME ANZANI "GEN."

creased valve overlap, stronger valve springs and special valves. It was claimed to give 47 b.h.p. at 4,000 r.p.m. The H.E. or High-Efficiency model had a special head, polished porting, high-overlap camshaft, balanced pistons lightened by the employment of three narrow rings, "Aero" valve springs and connecting rods of heat-treated 100-ton nickel-chrome steel with the gudgeon-pins running directly in the rods to further reduce weight. This engine gave 52 b.h.p. at 4,500 r.p.m. The Racing engine had a built-up, roller big-end crankshaft running

in massive journals, and used very large-diameter gudgeon-pins. Pump cooling was used, and blown with a Cozette supercharger the output was 110 b.h.p. at 5,500 r.p.m. This engine was, of course, used by R. G. J. Nash in his famous Frazer-Nash "The Terror." The foregoing indicates why merely taking an Anzani engine from an early A.C. or similar small car and putting it into a G.N. or Frazer-Nash doesn't instantly result in racing-car performance.

Other interesting engines described in this catalogue were the 1,100-c.c. aero-engine, giving 34 b.h.p. at 3,000 r.p.m., and the 57° Special 4-port 1,100-c.c. V-twin engine designed to propel a solo motorcycle at over 100 m.p.h.

ON SOME POST-WAR PROPHECIES

—continued from page 56
to task on one other matter. He states that "it may be news to many that the Mercedes concern had purchased from Kohlrausch the 750-c.c. M.G. with which he took records at 140 m.p.h. The engine in his car was, in design, very similar to, and the forerunner of, Gardner's record-breaker. From reliable information I was able to obtain, there is no doubt that the new 1,500-c.c. Mercedes Grand Prix racer was, in effect, two banks of the

750-c.c. M.G. engine in the form of a vee-eight. It's nice to know that we can teach Germany something about racing engines." Well, Germany probably said something like that last time, when we rushed one of the 1914 Mercedes G.P. cars to Rolls-Royce, Ltd., for a detailed examination. But the facts are as follows: the M.G. had a single o.h. camshaft operating vertical valves, the sparking plugs being in one side of the detachable iron cylinder head. The cast-iron block was in one with the crankcase and the

blower was of vane type, drawing from a variable-choke S.U. carburetter. The 1½-litre V8 Mercedes-Benz had twin o.h. camshafts per block, operating valves inclined at 60°, the sparking plugs being in the centre of the fixed head. The steel cylinders were separate from the crankcase and had a welded-on water jacket, and the Roots blower sucked from a fixed-choke Solex carburetter. The Mercedes was probably about 60 by 66 mm. bore and stroke; the M.G. was 57 by 73 mm.—W.B.

THE most interesting articles in MOTOR SPORT are certainly those that have appeared on the old-type racing cars, and on the various sports models, and I hope that either Mr. Clutton or Mr. Heal will give us some more articles in due course. May I suggest one class of car about which no one has written? The type to which I refer were those wonderful old "Prince Henry" jobs that appeared between 1909 and 1913.

Of the regular articles appearing in MOTOR SPORT, I think the experiences of those who have written under the title "Cars I Have Owned" are, perhaps, the most interesting, and I am wondering whether an account of cars owned by my family and myself from 1901 might be of some interest.

The first car my father ever purchased was a Vipen, which he bought in Hull. It was basically a Prunel with a 10-h.p. single-cylinder Aster engine fitted to it.

The next car was a 7/8-h.p. 2-cylinder Spyker, and a very good car it was. It had, I believe, been exhibited in the Paris Motor Show the year before and, of course, like the Vipen, had a back entrance body; this car was painted a dark red in front and a dark green for the rear seats. It was whilst owning this car that registration numbers came in, and we were allotted FA27. We kept this car for about two years and, in 1921, when calling at Burton-on-Trent, my father and I saw a body in the corner of one of the hotel yards, and to my intense interest, I discovered it was the body off our Spyker, the colours still discernible under their coat of dirt; conclusive proof was that the original number plate was still attached.

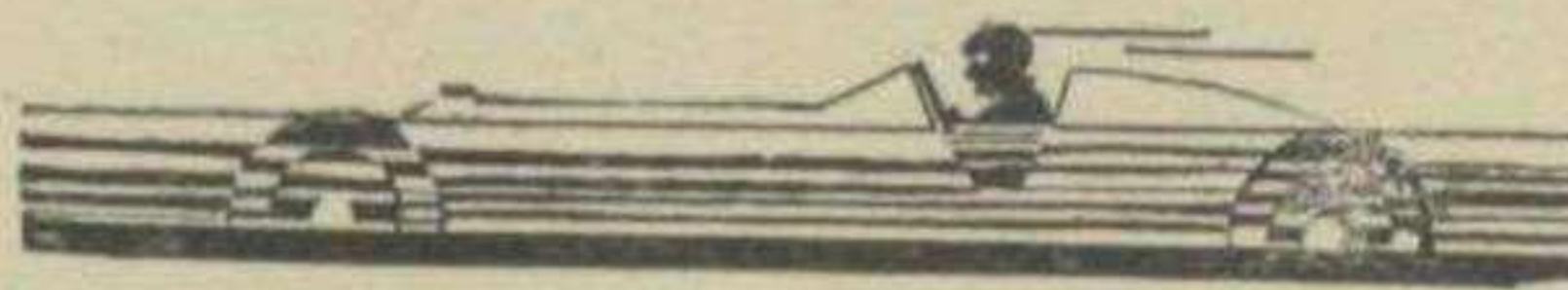
Our next car was a "16/18" 4-cylinder Daimler of about 1904 or 1905 vintage. The engine was very unsatisfactory as far as I remember, and I believe we had it changed for one of their later 14/20-h.p. engines. After this was done the car was very satisfactory and reliable and would do about 45 m.p.h. under favourable conditions. I well remember as a small boy, when the car was going "all out," being asked to hang on to a chain, which, if it was pulled, delivered extra oil to the engine.

Our next purchase was a 28-h.p. Decauville landaulet. The height of the body was an object of wonder. This car had an engine of 114-mm. bore, and, I believe, a stroke of somewhere about 128 mm., but as far as the latter dimension is concerned I am not quite sure. It was a smooth-running car and had a quadrant gear-change.

I well remember the excitement when my father announced he was part-exchanging the Decauville for one of the 1907 "35/40" Mercedes landaulets of 110 by 140 mm. bore and stroke. This car was fitted with 22-tooth sprockets, which gave it a very high top gear. We later exchanged these for 18s with another Mercedes owner who had an open tourer. At that time we had an extremely clever chauffeur-mechanic who converted the low-tension ignition to high-tension and removed the extra oil and water tanks, the latter being fitted for the purpose of water-cooling the two foot brakes, one of which operated on the end of the gear-box and the other on the countershaft to the driving sprockets. I believe the

CARS I HAVE OWNED

A. R. Linsley recalls the cars he and his family have owned since 1901, terminating in a Type 55 Bugatti.



idea was that when the brake pedals were depressed a jet of water sprayed on to the shoes and helped to keep them cool. When all these various gadgets had been removed the car was remarkably free from rattles, and functioned with great reliability until we sold it in 1921. The gear-change was interesting, inasmuch as the gate-change was so designed that first and top speeds were forward, and second and third were at the rear of the gate. It had a metal-to-metal clutch which required delicate handling. There was no speedometer on this car, so I cannot give any accurate information as to its maximum speed, but it was a really fast car for those days.

The first car I was allowed to drive with any regularity was an "18" Ariel of 95 by 115 mm. This car, I believe, was one of the 18 Enfields which were on the hands of the makers when they ceased to build any more cars, and an Ariel radiator was substituted for the former Enfield radiator when Ariels bought up the cars. This car had a big leather hood over the rear seats, which, whilst looking attractive, created a tremendous draught for the rear seat passengers. It would do mile after mile between 42 and 45 m.p.h. (timed), and I well remember in my earliest days driving this car between Lincoln and Brigg and doing the 24 miles in 40 minutes.

I was occasionally permitted to drive a 15-h.p. Mass which had two small bucket seats with a petrol tank fitted behind them, which to me looked like a real "racer." This model was illustrated in *The Autocar* in 1908 in their article on "How to Recognise Different Makes of Cars," and I well remember the thrill of driving it at about 49 m.p.h. It had an open exhaust and a quadrant gear-change, and it had to be driven with one's foot on the gear-lever when in top to ensure the gears remaining in engagement.

In 1913 my father next acquired an "18/24" Siddeley-Deasy. It was fitted with a Daimler 20-h.p. sleeve-valve engine, 90 by 130 mm., and had a most beautifully-built mahogany cabriolet body by Connaughts. I do not think I have ridden in any car more silent or more smooth running. Its maximum speed when delivered to us was guaranteed at about 49 m.p.h., but when we found the petrol consumption was somewhere about 10 m.p.g., alterations were made to its carburation which gave us a consumption of about 19 m.p.g., with a maximum of about 45 m.p.h. This car was purchased by us in Lincoln, and I well remember the trial run up the narrow twisting roads that lead to the top of the hill by the Cathedral. I can imagine that the low

third gear (about 24 m.p.h. maximum) was well suited to the twisty nature of the road, which showed the car off to its best advantage in hill climbing.

One of the cars which I remember with the most affection was a 16-h.p. Clegg model Darracq, which was acquired in 1913 after selling the Ariel. This car was fitted with what was then regarded as a "streamline" body, and was one of the fastest cars of its type in those days. Its maximum speed was somewhere in the neighbourhood of 54 m.p.h. on top and 37 m.p.h. on third. The gear-change was an extremely good one, but rather slow in operation, and I remember that it was in the days of driving this car I first really learned the art of double de-clutching. I remember when benzol fuel first came out, owing to my complete ignorance of the proper use of this spirit, I had the petrol tank filled with neat benzol and proceeded to have an extremely fast run between Nottingham and Hull, the result being a distorted exhaust valve. The use of Benzol, whilst vastly improving its hill-climbing propensities, somewhat reduced its maximum speed on the level owing to the rich mixture. Hills that the car would only climb on second gear were easily surmounted on top, but after the valve trouble my father insisted on a return to petrol.

On leaving school at the commencement of the last war, before I was old enough to join the Army, I worked in a London garage repairing Belgian cars from the Front. During this time I managed to get an exhaust cut-out for the Darracq which greatly thrilled me, and I had many runs on the car before I was sent to France. I remember the great sorrow I felt in 1917 when I received a letter from my father saying he had sold this car, but my enjoyment at riding the Army Triumphs and Douglases and driving the various makes of lorries at that time soon made me forget this.

In 1921 my father did a part-exchange with the old Mercedes for a 30-h.p. 6-cylinder Armstrong-Siddeley tourer which gave about 59 h.p. on the brake. This car, being one of the earliest models they made, naturally suffered from teething troubles, but Mr. Cyril Siddeley, whom I had met in France during the war, very soon had this car put right, and it gave us excellent results. Its maximum speed was about 63 m.p.h. and it had a petrol consumption of about 14 m.p.g.

The first purchase I made myself after the war was a 6-h.p. "Military Model" A.J.S. This was one of the models that were built for the Russian Government, and I learned subsequently from the Stevens Brothers, at Wolverhampton, that although this model had been turned out in a hurry by them for military purposes, it was one of the new models that had given the least trouble. I believe I rode this machine for nearly 100,000 miles, during which time I used it for competition work. I received very great help from the Stevens Brothers, and I was persuaded to try, in succession, steel pistons and aluminium ones in their early stages and, needless to say, I learned a very great deal about the advantages and effects of each type.

In 1922 I purchased my first Bugatti. It was a Type 23 with an 8 ft. 4 in. wheel-base, 11.4-h.p. plain-bearing engine of

1,452 c.c., 68 by 100 mm. It was fitted with a 3-seater clover-leaf body and its speeds were approximately 72 on top, 53 on third and 40 on second. This car was used by me for hill-climbs and speed-trials, and when being driven reasonably for touring, it would do about 40 m.p.g. on a mixture of aviation petrol and 25 per cent. pure benzol. It was a very delightful car and I remember when I first bought it I ran it about with two aeroplane bucket seats costing 5s. each, and a small strip of wood tied across the chassis with string, which one used as a foot rest, as I was unable to afford a body for the first 2,000 miles' running. Soon after acquiring the car I remember turning up at my father's house when he had some friends for lunch. They had been informed that I was arriving during the afternoon with a most marvellous car. I well remember their amazement and disgust when I turned up with my luggage piled on the top of the spare wheel which lay at the rear of the chassis; I must confess my luggage consisted of handbags, Sidcot flying suit, tins of Castrol R, raincoats, and an unfurled umbrella, all fastened on by a clothes line wound round the chassis. I should like to say, however, that their first disgust soon vanished when I showed them the engine, and they saw the car in action on the road. The opinion they

then formed was obviously a very different one!

In 1924 I purchased one of the first "Modified Brescia" Bugatti cars. This car would do about 77 on top, 63 on third and 53 on second. The petrol consumption was in the neighbourhood of 26 to 27 m.p.g. This car was also fitted with a clover-leaf body, but, as usual, I ran it in first of all as a chassis. The dynamo was driven by a flat belt from the back of the camshaft, and I had a certain amount of trouble with the belts because they would persist in wearing on one side and riding over the rim of the pulley. This car was used for competition work.

In 1922 my father purchased one of the 10-h.p. Wolseley coupés. I believe I am correct in saying that the body of this car cost nearly as much as the chassis. It was certainly one of the most beautiful cars of its type and I well remember the great excitement amongst the family when I brought this car to them at Scarborough. Its coupé body was fitted with a leather hood which was most perfectly balanced, and it could be opened and closed with the utmost ease. Its absolute maximum speed in favourable conditions was about 45 m.p.h., but I well remember that we were supposed to cruise at between 30 and 33 m.p.h., at which speed it was extremely silent and

economical. Its radiator was quite the nicest shape of any Wolseley I have ever seen, and was silver-plated. Needless to say, this car did many years' good service.

In 1926 I exchanged my "Modified Brescia" for a "Full Brescia" Bugatti. This car, on the Track, would do nearly 90 m.p.h., but under road conditions and as used in hill-climbs and speed-trials would do 53 on second, 72 on third and 80 m.p.h. in full touring trim. Its maximum engine speed, although one was asked not to exceed 3,200 r.p.m., was 3,800 on second, 3,600 on third, and 3,500 on top. I remember taking delivery of this car; after running it in I opened it out to test its maximum speed, and to my horror I found I could do no more than 63 m.p.h. The car went back to Bugattis, and they could find nothing wrong with the engine, although the car could not be made to give a greater speed after being looked at by them. The cause of the trouble was that a Ghost silencer had been fitted by the coach-builders, and after this was removed the car immediately gave its proper speeds when fitted with the 4-in. Brescia pipe.

In 1926 we exchanged the Armstrong-Siddeley for a "28/80" Panhard Sports. This car had a 4-cylinder sleeve-valve engine of 105 by 140 mm. bore and stroke and three carburettors, and was reputed

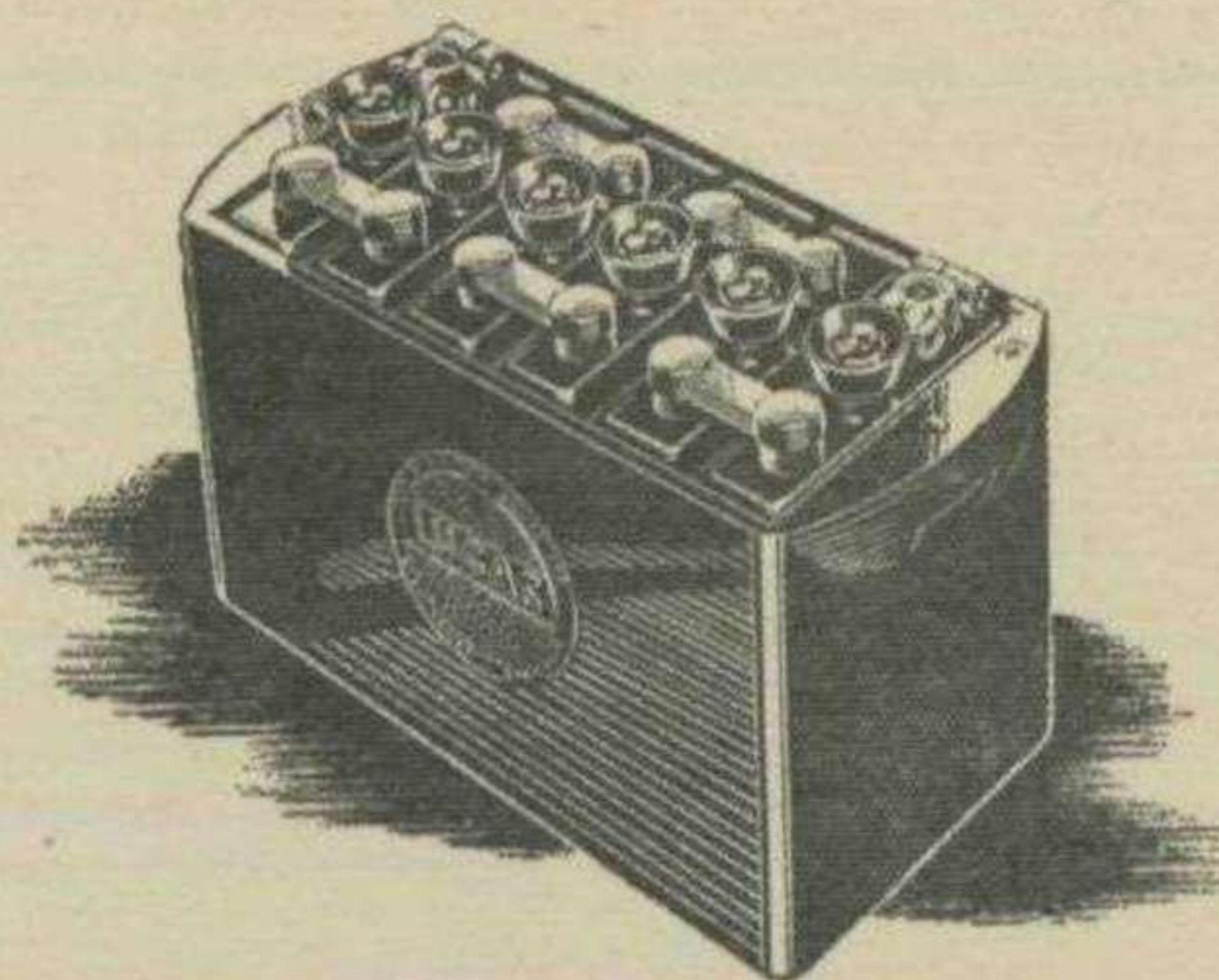
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to give off nearly 150 h.p. on the brake. One drove normally on one carburetter, but if one wished to use the full power of the engine, by pressing very hard on the accelerator pedal one could open up the other two carburetters, when the acceleration was extremely good. The three carburetters could not be used under 60 m.p.h., but the speeds according to the speedometer were, under favourable conditions, approximately 92 on top, 65 on third, and 40 in second. The petrol consumption varied between 15 and 17 m.p.g., but the less I say about the oil consumption the better. I remember travelling on this car on more than one occasion from Whitby to York in about an hour to an hour and five minutes. It was fitted with an extremely effective silencer and it also had, operated by a cut-out valve, a large 4-in. pipe which produced a very fine exhaust note. The open body was one of the most comfortable and most luxurious I have ever seen, and the rear seats were fitted with a screen. The car had a dynamo-starter fitted to the front of the crankshaft, and there was a special reduction gear for starting the engine by the handle, which made starting when cold extremely easy. I had an auxiliary coil for starting purposes fitted to the magneto, which was button-operated either from the dashboard or from a front mudguard. The latter switch could be operated when the starting handle was used, and it was a very easy way of getting the car to start, as the batteries were often somewhat reluctant to turn the big engine over. I am surprised that this model Panhard, or its later edition, the "30/150," has not been previously written-up in MOTOR SPORT. I may add, the car weighed nearly 2½ tons.

In 1927 my father purchased one of the "25/70" sleeve-valve Vauxhalls, and a very comfortable car this was. It did approximately 64 on top and 53 on third. It was fitted with a most luxurious body and was extremely trouble-free throughout its life.

In 1928 I exchanged the "Brescia" Bugatti for the 1924 "Targa Florio" Alfa-Romeo, already referred to in MOTOR SPORT in Mr. Biggs's article on Alfa-Romeo [June, 1940]. Originally it had engine dimensions of 80 by 120 mm., but when I purchased it it had one of 22/90-h.p. blocks fitted to it, of 77 mm. bore, but it differed from the sports model, inasmuch as it had a 7-bearing crankshaft. This car was registered XX5060 and had changed hands on several occasions before I purchased it, but according to its record, none of the previous purchasers had kept it for more than a week or ten days. [Driven by Coe at Shelsley, it is now owned by the Whincops. A sister car owned by Peter Clark, was illustrated last month.—Ed.] It had a right-hand gear-change and the hand-lever (outside) operated the four-wheel brakes. It had dry-sump lubrication and a 5-gallon oil tank fitted on the dashboard. The lowest speed in top was 40 m.p.h., and under 20 m.p.h. bottom gear had to be used. On one occasion a piston broke on the road, and after it had been overhauled and new pistons fitted, it was impossible to turn the engine over when cold, and always after this the crankshaft had to be turned over at night so that the pistons were half-way on their travel, as

otherwise neither the starter nor the handle could move the engine. The maximum speed of this car was approximately 98 m.p.h., although, I believe, when it was driven by Rosa it was supposed to have touched 115 on Brooklands. As far as I can remember, the maximum speeds were about 96-98 on top and 75 on third. Its petrol consumption was extremely good, and on long journeys I could get about 17 to 18 m.p.g. One of its weaknesses was that it would persist in shearing the pin in the water-pump drive. In the end I used to carry several spare pins with me, and it was not very much trouble to have one fitted even if it broke on a journey. The clutch was metal-to-metal, and, if the car was driven very far in traffic, it used to get red hot and refuse to disengage. This was rather trying. I kept this car for four years, and enjoyed many thousands of miles of delightful motoring.

In 1929 the Wolseley was exchanged for a 12-h.p. Singer saloon, which my sister still has. This car has one of the easiest and nicest gear-changes of its type that I have ever driven. The maximum speed was only about 45 to 48 m.p.h., and 28 on second, but it has been in service some 12 years.

In 1932 I exchanged the Alfa-Romeo for a Type 55 2.3-litre Bugatti, which car I still have, although I am sad to say it has been laid up since 1939. This is the most delightful car I have ever owned, and its performance is far too well known by readers of MOTOR SPORT for me to discuss in detail. I should like to say this, however, that this car has on two occasions done 67 miles in one hour and has actually averaged 74 m.p.h. for half an hour on the road. There has been so much said about Bugattis that I feel somewhat diffident in making any observations, but as an owner of these cars more or less continuously since 1922, I should like to say that if only owners would warm up their Bugattis slowly, and drive them steadily for the first four miles, and leave them in the condition that the makers intended, they would never experience any trouble at all.

In 1934 the Panhard was exchanged for a 30-h.p. Siddeley-Special. This car was fitted with a close-coupled, 4-seater saloon body and was painted black and red, and was certainly one of the prettiest examples of this model I have seen. The speeds were approximately 92 on top and 72 on third. The only criticism of this car I could find was that the self-change box, I think, made the interior of the car in hot weather rather uncomfortably hot, but as my experience of self-change boxes is not very great, perhaps I am somewhat mistaken in this.

I now return to more orthodox cars. In 1930 I purchased one of the "Blue Train" 16-h.p. Rovers with a three-speed box. This car, under favourable conditions, would touch about 72 m.p.h., but it was ridiculously slow in second gear, which would just about give a maximum of 28 to 30 m.p.h. This car had a fabric body and a folding head and was extremely reliable, but it needed very regular decarbonising every 7,000 miles.

At the end of 1933 I purchased my first Ford V8, the model which had a radiator similar to the early-type 8-h.p. Fords,

and was fitted with a single downdraught carburetter. Of all the Ford V8s I have owned I think this had the most silent engine, and it was certainly a very delightful car. Its only trouble was that the guides to the rear brake rods, which were attached to the radius rods of the rear axle, had a habit of falling off.

In 1935 I exchanged this Ford for one of the later models, Canadian-built, which was a very fine, trouble-free car, and gave a very steady petrol consumption of 19 m.p.g. The maximum speed of my first Ford was about 75 m.p.h., but this one would do about 80 m.p.h.

In 1936 I bought my first English Ford V8, which in its early days had certain teething troubles, such as a very wavy windscreen and an engine with a bad period at about 47 m.p.h. The Ford Company very kindly exchanged my engine for one with a larger diameter crankshaft, after which it ran perfectly. This car would do between 19 and 20 m.p.g. and had a maximum speed of 85 m.p.h.

In 1938 I exchanged this car for the new model, and even after 35,000 miles without the engine being touched in any way, it would do 20 m.p.g., with an oil consumption of about one pint for 300 miles.

In 1939 I exchanged the Siddeley-Special for a 33-h.p. 8-cylinder Mercury. This car has a maximum speed of about 94 m.p.h. and a petrol consumption of about 22 m.p.g., and on one occasion travelled 210 miles in 3 hours 48 mins. on 10 gallons of petrol.

At the outbreak of the war I acquired a 10-h.p. Ford, and I must say that although I have been spoiled by the various types of cars I have owned, I have nothing but praise for this little car. The longer it runs the more economical it appears to get, and 35-37 m.p.g. is by no means uncommon. I often wish it had a four-speed gearbox, but I suppose one must accept it in the form in which the makers intended. It has certainly opened my eyes to the excellent value that is obtainable in the cheap car market.

In conclusion, may I endeavour to clear up a point which has been much discussed, whether the "11.4" or the "11.9" Brescia-Bugatti should be described as Type 22 or 23. From an old leaflet issued in 1922 the "11.4" (1,453 c.c.) model was sold in two chassis lengths. The Type 22 had a 7 ft. 10 in. wheelbase, and the Type 23 an 8 ft. 4 in. wheelbase. The Brescia model with the ball-bearing engine was sold as "Sports," with a 6 ft. 5 in. wheelbase, but this model could also be supplied in the other two lengths of wheelbase to order. I think I am, therefore, correct in saying that the "11.4" model was either a Type 22 or Type 23, and the Brescia was always described as a "Brescia" or "Modified Brescia."

[The Type 22, according to the Bugatti Owners' Club handbook, was the 1914 16-valve car, of 68 by 100 mm., while the Type 23 was the 1923 "Brescia," of 69 by 100 mm., made in "Modified" and "Full" versions. An English catalogue in our possession gives wheelbases of 7 ft. 11½ in. and 8 ft. 4½ in. for the Type 22 and Type 23, of 68 by 100 mm., respectively, however.—Ed.]

On Some Post-War Prophecies

NATURALLY, everyone who is hastening victory, in the air, on or under the water, in the army, in the factory or in one of the numerous back-rooms, wants to know what the peace will be like. Recently three experts have tried to tell us that in respect of motor-racing. Journalist B. H. Davies and late sports-car-magnate Cecil Kimber, in the *Autocar*, and racing ace Raymond Mays in the *Morris Owner*, have daringly looked at our future. I am not nearly courageous enough to follow suit, but the importance of the subject suggests that we should ponder on these publicly-expressed views and opinions. For those who were not fortunate enough to commit these articles to memory, let us analyse the general trend.

Davies divided motor-racing into five broad categories, viz., world's records (Utah), Track events (Brooklands, Monza, Montlhéry, Indianapolis, Avus, etc.), International Grands Prix on road circuits, long-distance sports-car races and local "shorts" or "briefs." In passing, I would suggest that Brooklands and Indianapolis were the only venues where true "outer-circuit" style racing was held in the immediate pre-strife period, Avus having its two bends linking the straights, which appreciably slowed modern cars, Monza usually having chicanery to purposely reduce for a space the fiendish speed of modern road-racing cars, and Montlhéry Track itself, as distinct from its road circuit, being confined to record runs and testing for a number of years past. Also, I cannot understand why Davies lists Douglas and Monte Carlo with the "shorts," for the former venue gave us the International Light Car race and the Monaco G.P. is a classic of a duration more than sufficient for most of the participants.

However, let us not quibble over minor concerns. Crystal-gazing under his five headings, Davies dismisses world's records as of very limited appeal; he is clearly thinking of "Land Speed Record" attacks, and not of longer distance runs. Because Brooklands can accommodate large fields of obsolete cars and make an enormous appeal to the younger people in search of a good time, Davies expects it to attract large fields and enjoy vast popularity—certainly one devoutly hopes that the home of motor-racing in this country will thus revive and not, itself, remain just a big field. Quite why old cars and young irresponsibles should be expected to congregate at Weybridge, with its £3 3s. entry fees and £6 6s. club subscription instead of at the less exacting (on club days) venues of Leicester or London, is a little difficult to see. In pessimistic vein Davies foresees the first two post-war seasons given over to elderly and obsolescent cars, and thinks these things, handled by "green" drivers, likely to be safer let loose over Donington's broad and pleasant roads than at the Crystal Palace. Grand Prix racing, Davies thinks, cannot resume for many years, but he hopes one day to see Britain, America, Germany, Italy, Russia, France, Canada, Australia, India and S. Africa,

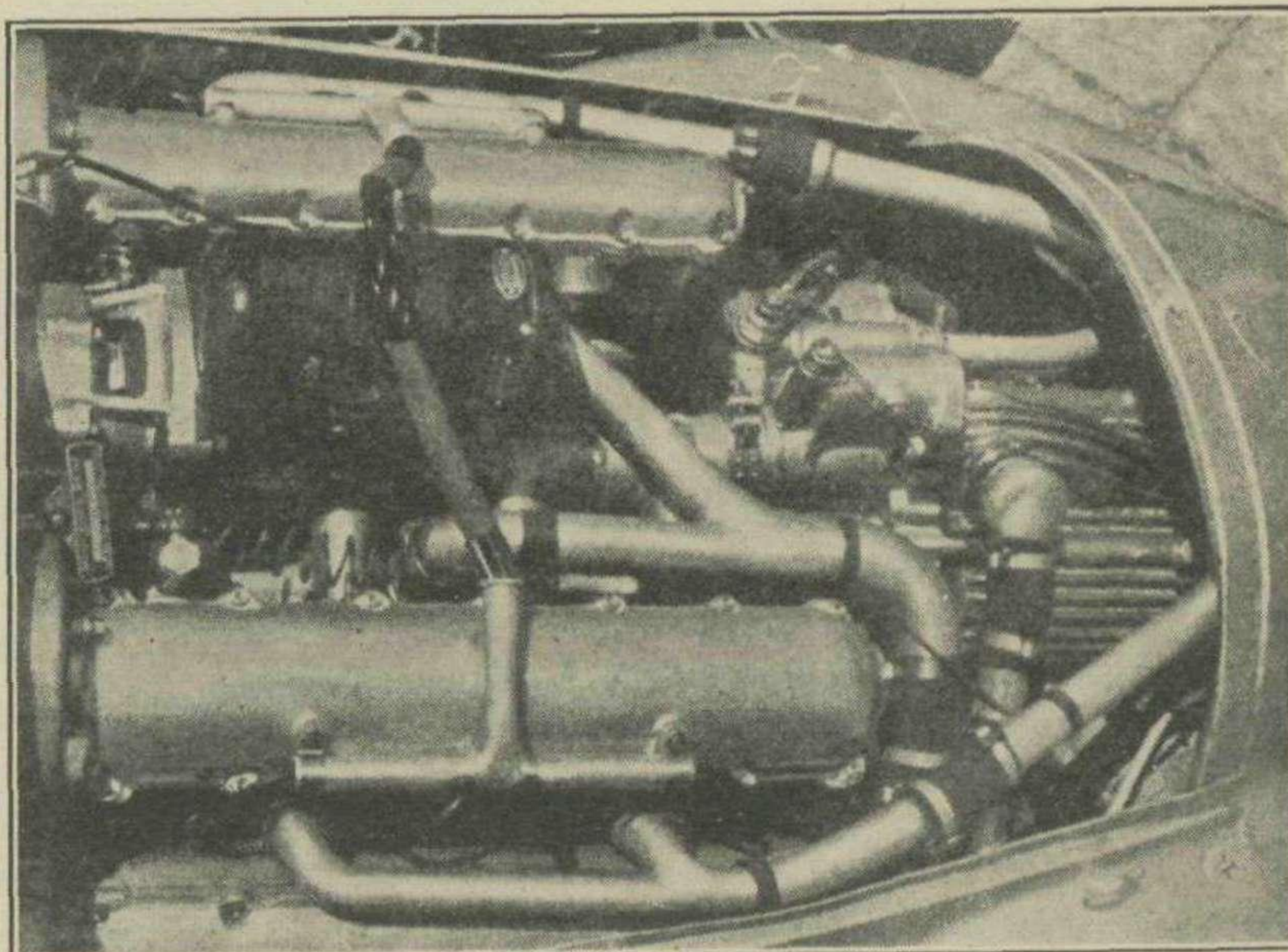
perhaps supplemented by Poland, Czechoslovakia and Austria, do battle in "a fresh International G.P. race." Presumably he implies but one race per season, and I cannot think where it would be held so as to be acceptable to all participants except that it isn't likely to be in Hyde Park. They will probably be too busy planning the next war, anyway. He thinks a possible formula would be engines of not more than 1,000 c.c., or a weight limit instead, but gives no reasons for these rather vague suppositions—anyway, that was before Joe Lowrey's brilliant air-rationing suggestion ("Boy, fit two 40-mm. baffles to the twin S.U.s of my sports car and advertise it as converted for G.P. racing").

Turning to sports-car racing, of Le Mans type, Davies paints a rosy future, hoping that within a year of the armistice such races will be happening, if not supported by the Trade, at all events supported by amateurs, "shamateurs" and wealthy sportsmen—actually, if 24-hour races are intended, all three categories will need to be excessively wealthy, as I am sure Peter Clark, for one, will confirm. The author fogs the issue by concluding: "We shall see 'specials' galore—all the more of them if the trade element wavers." I rather hope our future sports-car races, both long and not-so-long, will be confined to reasonably standard sports models, and if the Trade entries do not materialise (which, alas, would not surprise me at all) there will be less reason than ever to allow those loopholes for purposes of research which, before the war, enabled Italians to win

sports-car races in P3 Alfas and British speed kings to use cylinder blocks with huge ports, double the number of holding-down studs, and extra water passages, providing they corresponded in material to those used by you and me, or light-alloy, high-ratio rear-axles, providing the width was the same as that of the hopelessly heavy, undergeared axle on the catalogue models—and suchlike tommy rot.

I am sure it was merely John Bolster's good taste that prevented him from adorning his four-engined "Mary" with a hood and screen and winning the Tourist Trophy! Davies concludes his survey by anticipating a reasonably rapid resumption of short races at Donington and the Crystal Palace, and of sand races and sprints. But he ends on a note of warning, reminding us that, although latent enthusiasm is higher now than ever before, of the four sources of racing finance—the monies of wealthy amateurs, gate money, Trade subsidy and municipal subsidy—only gate money and municipal subsidy will be likely to exist at pre-1939 values. Wealthy amateurs, he believes, will be much less evident than before, and Trade subsidies had all but ceased, anyway. So much for Mr. Davies.

He was followed by Cecil Kimber, M.I.A.E., S.A.E., whose generally very sane article was published in the *Autocar* of January 21st. Briefly, Kimber expressed the following views: That class records are of far more value than the land speed record attempts. That, speed not being essential to good sport and the requisite public interest, corners are



The engine of the 1½-litre V8 Mercedes-Benz. It has twin o.h. camshafts, valves inclined at 60°, steel cylinders separate from the crankcase with welded-on steel water-jacket, fixed heads, and a Roots' supercharger drawing from a fixed choke Solex carburetter. How Cecil Kimber has been misled into believing it to comprise, in effect, two banks of the racing 750-c.c. M.G. engine used in Germany by Kohlrusch, we cannot understand.

essential, and track-racing ruled out in consequence. He felt the early rejuvenation of Brooklands doubtful (but hoped he would be wrong), described the Crystal Palace as "quite a nice little sporting course," but gave the plums to Donington. G.P. racing would have to await the day of universal peace, as Mr. Davies visualised. Kimber quotes the 1½-litre Mercedes-Benz as a pointer that the G.P. formula would have come down to 1,500 c.c., which is probably true, although Mercedes-Benz, of course, built these cars for existing separate 1½-litre races and only ran them in such.

That Le Mans and the T.T. must be revived. Kimber very rightly devotes considerable space to a criticism of the existing handicapping methods, in which the victory of one class of car automatically penalised that category the following year, or, as he sees it, the handicap was juggled to entice likely entries. He wants to see less possibility of racing-type cars entering, and handicapping on a class basis with an equal chance on paper of victory for all. It is most significant that he is dubious of manufacturers supporting racing for some years after the war; and he reminds us that Trade subsidies were defunct before 1937. That "shorts," of clubman's day type, will revive, with emphasis on Donington, and Shelsley Walsh to be regarded as a more professional, but very desirable, fixture. Kimber concludes by placing emphasis on the extent to which racing is dependent on gate-money, and thinks that municipal subsidy can help substantially.

Raymond Mays, in his future forecast, takes a look first at track racing. He considers that Brooklands Outer Circuit has "decisively passed the heyday it enjoyed when the great 500-Mile Race was on the crest of the wave." Personally, I should put the period 1920-1924 as the heyday of the Outer Circuit. He feels that the proprietors must realise this and "it seems doubtful, even if the authorities are able and willing to put the main circuit back into commission (as they may well be, if only for the subscription revenue its existence guarantees), whether many of the fastest Brooklands cars will be brought out of retirement when the Axis has taken the count."

I must here remind Mays and others that the existence of Brooklands is extremely desirable for the purpose of pre-race testing. I am sure Reid Railton and Peter Berthon will confirm that they were happier conducting early experiments that led to the present perfection of the E.R.A. engine and chassis, in the wide open spaces of Brooklands than they would have been if confined to the narrow ways of road-circuits. There are many tests which cannot be safely or conveniently carried out over a road-course during the practising period, whereas Brooklands accommodates all comers without fear or favour. As to the subscription value of the Outer Circuit, after the unkind things the late Sir Henry Birkin and others have said about it, I do not think many B.A.R.C. members drove over it very much unless in races—they joined for free entry as spectators and for the social amenities of Brooklands, and with the Mountain and Campbell

Circuits in use, they will do so again. But we *must* have the Outer Circuit restored, for the use of racing men, engineers and journalists with testing to do—and because a few queer mortals like myself enjoy driving round it pretending to be racing drivers, whereas at Donington or the Palace we shall wear out our brakes, or even go to hospital, if we so indulge. Mays, having disposed of our dear old concrete saucer, then expresses the view that great success should attend the building, in this country, of a brand new Hoosier Bowl, on the lines of Indianapolis, Montlhéry, or Avus. Well, neither Indianapolis nor Avus are true examples of Hoosier Bowl, and, indeed, Mays stipulates that steep bankings, enabling spectacular overtaking at 180 or even 200 m.p.h., would be advisable. I can only remark that I cannot see either the track, or the special cars called for, materialising.

Mays sees new popularity records for Donington, Brooklands Campbell Circuit and the Crystal Palace being set as soon as the promoting clubs get their machinery in action after the war. He thinks the location of the Palace circuit gives it the greatest possibilities as a box-office attraction, but, as holder of the lap record with his 2-litre E.R.A., would like to see the course speeded up by elimination of some of the twistier sections. Mays pays his tribute to Donington Park, and goes on to say that, although the international element will be absent for a period after the war, he thinks there was a tendency in this country greatly to exaggerate the significance of the foreign element in British races—the fact remains that the greatest gates ever seen at motor-racing in this country coincided with the appearance of the German teams in the Donington Grands Prix races of 1937 and 1938.

Mays touches on the training of "new blood" as drivers and mentions, for the first time in print in any motoring paper, a report that a "well-known showman not previously associated with motor-racing, has a scheme afoot for the acquisition or leasing of redundant Service aerodromes after the war, with the object of adapting them for road-racing. I do not know how much headway this excellent plan has made, but gather that the idea would be to purchase as many cars as possible of a particular make and type and to stage one-make events for aspiring [and, I expect, perspiring—Ed.] beginners, who would hire their mounts from the promoter."

Is it such an excellent plan? So many people want to compete in club events with their own cars that the numbers competing in these one-make orgies would never be large, so this form of training would presumably be very costly—ask Eric Giles why the B.O.C. sold the club car. If gate-money is sought to bring in revenue, I think the promoters would find they would be backing the wrong horse, for not many people want to see unknown raw amateurs competing in all-of-a-sameness sports cars. Not, that is, unless the thing is mightily spectacular, and that could only be achieved by introducing dangerous bends and corners or unnatural hazards, which would only lead to accidents, and bring racing as a whole into disrepute, so that the R.A.C.

and MOTOR SPORT would oppose the scheme for all they are worth. I can only advise the unknown showman to drop the idea before he loses all his money.

Raymond Mays rightly sees the need for really large attendances at British motor racing, to help provide the necessary funds; he considers, unfortunately, that a *big* crowd cannot necessarily be the *right* crowd. He deplores the absence of a Barnum or a Cochran on the promoting side of British racing—but let us not forget that Barnum staged great circuses and Cochran spectacular shows. Mays concludes by suggesting that the public likes speed at close quarters better than anything else, in direct contrast to Cecil Kimber, who considers that corner-negotiation makes the greatest appeal. I cannot resist reminding Mays that most people, if asked where they got their greatest impression of speed, the Mercedes-Benz and Auto-Unions at Donington excepted, would say, "Oh, on the Members' or Byfleet bridges at Brooklands, of course." Incidentally, I think my most vivid impression was of the late Richard Shuttleworth's Bugatti finishing the timed half-mile at Brighton.

There, then, you have the crystal-gazing conclusions of three experts and, as I said before, I would not dare to expand this subject. I will say, however, that the findings of Davies, Kimber and Mays are much as one would expect, and are certainly not too dismal.

Before we leave these matters, I feel obliged to correct Mr. Kimber on one or two points. He states that "land speed records" bear no relation to real racing or car development, but that "news value" is created for them for the benefit of the general public. That is, I agree, nearly true, but has not always been so—witness the 4-litre Sunbeam and Lockhart's wonderful 3-litre 200-m.p.h. Stutz (in which car, of course, Lockhart was killed, and not in the 1½-litre Miller, as a contemporary said recently). Then, surely, Fort Dunlop, if it claims to learn useful lessons making tyres for ordinary racing cars, must learn other useful lessons planning tyres to withstand speeds of 300 m.p.h. plus. And surely Reid Railton gleaned just a little worthwhile knowledge from designing Cobb's wonderful twin-Napier-engined Railton. Next, I have the greatest admiration for Lt.-Col. Gardner and his 200 m.p.h. records in the International 1,100 c.c. and 1,500 c.c. classes, but Mr. Kimber is wrong in believing that "the much-vaunted German Mercedes-Benz and Auto-Union cars hold class records in some of the higher categories at speeds lower than Gardner's." The facts are that when the M.G. clocked 203.5 m.p.h. for the kilometre at Dessau, the 3-litre record belonged to Mercedes-Benz at 247.4 m.p.h., the 5-litre record to Auto-Union at 218.7 m.p.h., and the up-to-8-litres record to Mercedes, at 268.9 m.p.h. Incidentally, it has been calculated that to break these records the M.G. would need at least 242, 350 and 450 b.h.p., respectively, assuming its frontal area and weight to be unchanged.

As a conscientious motoring writer, even at the risk of being thought pro-German, I must also take Cecil Kimber

Continued on page 51

Another Opinion on

REAL RACING FOR THE IMPECUNIOUS

IN the January issue of MOTOR SPORT was published an article which, under the above heading, outlined and discussed proposals from the 750 Club and the Midland Motoring Enthusiasts' Club for giving less affluent zealots a chance to race. As author of one of the Class I articles published some months ago I have, naturally, thought quite a bit about this aspect of the matter and, without thrusting Class I into the limelight again, offer some relevant comments. I can claim to do so in a spirit of genuine altruism because until 1939 I ran a "30/98" Vauxhall, and now I have a decidedly vintage Austin Seven, and just as soon as possible after the war, D. (and the Chancellor of the Exchequer) V., I shall revert to 4½ litres again.

There will be few who will deny that the more people who are able to race the better for the Sport generally, but as with everything else, perhaps even more than in any other sport, there must be a limit to the cutting of costs. The fact must be faced that motor-racing is expensive, and because one's financial position enables one to run an Austin Seven, it quite emphatically does not enable one, as a regular thing, to race that Austin, even against other Austins. The 750 Club's proposal is that there shall be road races for side-valve unsupercharged road-equipped 750-c.c. cars. This, in other words, says: "Let there be a race for Austin Sevens as used by their owners on the road." Such a race would provide little excitement for any but those taking part; there are few unblown used-on-the-road Austins which could achieve their 70 m.p.h. on any circuit except Brooklands, and the spectacle of them trying would be decidedly dreary and, in addition, would take a disproportionately long time out of any club's programme. Anyone who saw the Fiat "500" race at Brooklands will agree that after the first rather comic sight of a mass of multi-coloured crawling creatures the interest was just nil, and even the bunch of enthusiasts with whom I was watching had ceased to take any notice after the race had gone half way. At a club event the result would be much the same with unblown sports Austins.

Now club events need a very great deal of organisation, from arranging the venue and obtaining an R.A.C. permit, to finding scrutineers, timekeepers and marshals, not to mention the secretarial work, and I cannot see a club welcoming a scratch race for unsupercharged Sports Austins which would be of strictly limited appeal. However, assume for a moment that this could be overcome, could the 750 Club guarantee a "field" for their race? Enthusiasm now is high, but experience shows that in practice many would inevitably default; as Wharton points out, the number of Austins now available which are in race-worthy condition is small indeed, and then finance, mechanical derangement and the nasty necessity of earning one's daily bread would still further impoverish the number of entrants.

The competitions secretary of the

Kenneth Neve utters some words of advice

Vintage Sports Car Club, Harry Bowler, wrote to MOTOR SPORT (November, 1941) on the subject of Class I contests, pointing out that the V.S.C.C. provided racing for the impecunious amateur before the war and, as his remarks are so very apposite, I can do no better than quote the relevant paragraphs. He said: "The V.S.C.C., by its careful definitions of 'Sports,' 'Super Sports' and 'Racing' cars did its best to encourage the 'impecunious amateur' and, I think, attracted a considerable number of them. Yet it was seldom that a 750-c.c. class in a speed event had sufficient entries to be run as a class on its own. (These events were open to both vintage and modern cars.)

"Most of the impecunious ran cars of 1½ litres or more for the very good reason that for a given expenditure more fun can be had with the larger car. A 750-c.c. car cannot be made to go sufficiently fast to be exciting without becoming unreliable unless a lot of money is spent upon it. . ."

The V.S.C.C.'s racing was cheap, and it is unlikely that the 750 Club will be able to get it cheaper by running things themselves. If by a miracle they did, and one of their number, call him "A," had a generous uncle and tuned his motor a little more highly than "B," then they are back where they started.

Any Austin Seven owner could have entered the V.S.C.C.'s events and had a good run, and perhaps a class win at low cost before the war. Can the 750 Club's scheme offer more?

The M.M.E. Club ideas are different, and although they received in the January article an Editorial frown, they seem to me to go nearer to the root of the matter and to be much more practical. They recognise that racing is not the pastime of he who can just afford to run an Austin Seven, however much he wishes to assess his prowess at the wheel under racing conditions. They recognise that standard cars (of an obsolete type at that) cannot form a sound basis of a racing class. In the very nature of things the enthusiast is one who wants an "individual" car as opposed to a standard product, and by giving due acknowledgment to this fact, Wharton's scheme holds a greater chance of practical success. The M.M.E.C. recognise the fact that by widening the classification to include all "unblown 750 c.c.s," it places itself in a far stronger position when it comes to persuading an organising club that a 750-c.c. class is worth while.

But I would caution all enthusiastic 750-c.c. owners, before making ambitious plans for sub-divisions of accepted racing classes, to re-read Harry Bowler. 750-c.c. racing was available before the war at frequent, well-organised meetings and as cheap as racing could be. The response was negligible; will it be greater after the war?

I am conscious of having been largely destructive so far in these notes, so let

me accept Wharton's invitation constructively to criticise his plans. First, do not ask organisers to split the unsupercharged 750s into further sub-divisions (a) cars built of one make components, and (b) "Specials." If a rejuvenated "Ulster" Austin Seven cannot beat a "Special," then let the "Special" win, and if the "Special" cannot beat the rejuvenated "Ulster," then let its designer go home and think again. Secondly, do not insist on a reverse gear: for a vehicle under 8 cwt. the law does not do so, and by thus virtually eliminating the motor-cycle gearbox, you make the special-builder's job much harder and do not improve the engineering quality of his work.

With so much latent enthusiasm for unsupercharged 750-c.c. racing the first thing for the two clubs most concerned—the 750 and the M.M.E.C.—to do is to find common ground; that should not be difficult, as both aim to assist those to whom low-cost racing is a *sine qua non*. Having done so they will be in a position to get into touch with those clubs who have members' days at the Crystal Palace and Donington, and discuss some reciprocal arrangement as suggested by MOTOR SPORT. Divided into "Austins only," "Specials only" and "one-make component cars," the groups are too small to make themselves interesting to others, and too powerless to get a hearing from larger clubs. United into an "All-comers unblown 750 c.c." class they could ensure reasonable racing at reasonable cost. Everybody cannot win, and the car used on the road may not stand so great a chance as the special racing vehicle, but its owner will have had his race against others of his own size.

As for myself, I shall enter my Class I machine!

[Well, those are Neve's views, and they are well worth digesting before anyone takes any concrete steps to try to give owners of unblown 750-c.c. motor-cars their inexpensive post-war racing. But Neve's closing comments seem rather to contradict his opening remarks, inasmuch as if handicapped club races offer better prospects than scratch contests for one-class cars, owners of 750-c.c. machinery have no need to get together and appeal for special races—they will merely need to join the Vintage S.C.C. or similar clubs and concentrate individually on wiping up the bigger cars. However, it must be remembered that the 750 Club, quite naturally, wished to organise races in which its members could compete against one another directly, without a background of other cars (probably overshadowing "Ulsters" and "Nippys" in everyday use) and without the complexities of the individual handicapping system. I am guilty of suggesting the use of other club's fixtures, because I cannot see the 750 Club being endowed with such great good fortune as to find its own circuit—actually Birkett would much prefer the racing to be entirely a 750 Club affair. Anyway, it is all most interesting, and I hope something definite may some day result from all this painstaking thought and discussion.—ED.]

THE OUTER CIRCUIT "200s"

AS the flag fell the following left the line: 1½-litre class—H. O. D. Segrave, K. Lee Guinness and Malcolm Campbell (Talbot-Darracqs); P. de Vizcaya and Moses Maury (Bugattis); Hawkes, Temple and Edwards (Horstmans); Bedford (Hillman); Stead, Brownsort, Munday, Davis and Davy (A.C.); Marshall, Victor Bruce, Zborowski and Kensington-Moir (Aston-Martins); Hammond and Oates (Lagondas); Gordon-England (A.B.C.); Harris and Martin (Marlboroughs); Bertelli (Enfield-Allday); Harvey and Joceland (Alvis); Milward and Pradier (Charron-Laycocks). 1,100-c.c. class—Frazer-Nash (G.N.); Lombard (Salmson); Phillips (Deemster); Dixon (Coventry-Premier); Empson (A.V.); Bicknell (Singer); Topping (Baby Peugeot); Wood (Temperino); Ware (Morgan), and Marchant (Bleriot-Whippet)—a curious single-makes entry. As the thickly-bunched ranks of racing light cars spaced out, it was seen that Segrave led from Campbell and Lee-Guinness, with Ware's Morgan way out ahead of the Salmson, G.N. and Deemster. A.C. and Aston-Martin early dispelled their supporters' hopes, but the Horstmans and Lagondas were going very rapidly, and a pronounced misfire did not seem to seriously slow a Charron-Laycock.

Bedford's Hillman, Vizcaya's Brescia Bugatti and Guinness's Talbot fought a duel in which the placings frequently changed. At 18 laps Segrave led the 1½-litre cars, and Ware the "1,100s", the G.N. now second and Deemster third in that class. Already Edwards's Horstman, with engine trouble, was out of the race for good, to be followed by the Bleriot-Whippet cycle-car, and Temple's Horstman, which paid for fast lappery with a broken con.-rod. Before Marchant retired he wrestled desperately with plugs and carburation, while Davis changed plugs on his A.C., only to find that a piston had collapsed, Sammy insisting on driving 61 laps on three cylinders, to finish the race. Then Ware's 3-wheeler Morgan broke its clutch support while leading its class, and the Salmson led the Deemster and G.N. Pradier's Charron-Laycock had retired with the fuel tank unable to hold fuel, and then Davy's A.C. seized its camshaft and was pushed to the dead-car bay.

After 37 laps Segrave still led, but Guinness was now ahead of Campbell, and the G.N. was second, behind the Salmson. Segrave and Lombard gained gold cups by leading at the half-way distance. Campbell's place-loss was due to his off rear tyre bursting as he went over the Fork on his 36th lap, the stop costing him nearly 4 mins., suggesting lax pit work. Segrave continued to lap steadily at 4,000 r.p.m. on three-quarter throttle, although he admitted afterwards that he was worried on the opening lap at being unable to exceed 3,600 r.p.m., probably because the oil was cold.

The A.C.'s trouble got worse, Brownsort needing a new radiator which took 14 mins. to fit, while Munday changed plugs, with no improvement in his speed. Considerable excitement occurred when Lombard, braking before his pit in order to

(Continued from February issue.)

THE 1921 RACE

refuel, skidded into the concrete kerb, both near-side wire wheels promptly collapsing—which gives some idea of the flimsy wheels used in those days. He fitted two new wheels in 15 mins., and the Salmson folk used this incident for an advertisement, proclaiming the general strength of axles and chassis! But the stop allowed Frazer-Nash to lead and probably cost Lombard the race. Empson's rear-engined A.V. refuelled after 35 laps, and the Temperino came in for a like purpose. Harvey's Alvis developed a leaking petrol tank after 46 laps, probably due to Brooklands' fearful post-war surface, but the car carried two, although a stop was necessary to change over. After 30 laps the little Temperino broke a valve; after 43 gallant laps the



Since the war commenced a contemporary has devoted considerable space to Outer-Circle racing at Brooklands Track, a subject taboo with many people, but deservedly having a fascination all its own. However, these articles have, in the main, concerned the larger cars which raced at Brooklands in the early days, and less emphasis has been placed on the rather remarkable achievements of the small cars of the early nineteen-twenties. They were doing outstanding things in B.A.R.C. short handicaps and in the field of record-breaking, but perhaps they achieved their greatest allure in the J.C.C. 200-Mile Races, run over the Outer Circuit in 1921-4; the original race of this famous series being the first long-distance race in England.—Ed.



Baby Peugeot broke a con.-rod, and then, with 60 laps to its credit, the Singer suffered that most annoying cause of retirement, a duff magneto.

So the afternoon—and an historic afternoon at that—wore on. The two Bugattis screamed round, Vizcaya a little above Maury on the bankings, Milward's Charron-Laycock swayed a little at the end of the Railway Straight, the Salmson swerved about quite a bit, its rear wheels bouncing badly over the bumps, while the G.N. weaved skilfully up and down the bankings in passing slower cars. The Talbots, lapping at 90 or so, were remarkably steady, likewise the Lagondas. Suddenly fuel was seen to stream from Moir's Aston-Martin, the axle having fouled the tank, so that the car had to be retired after 47 laps. Davis finally gave best to his broken piston at 60 laps, and the Hon. Victor Bruce, in a most primitive-looking s.v. Aston-Martin, experienced tyre trouble, as did Zborowski, the latter lifting the car himself when no suitable jack was forthcoming; Bruce finally stopped after 61 laps with a run big-end. The only accident of the day

overtook Munday when his A.C. burst a tyre on the Byfleet banking on its 68th lap. It ended up inverted in the ditch, Munday breaking a thigh and his mechanic escaping with a few cuts.

The closing stages of the race were enlivened by a duel between the Bugattis, Hawkes's Horstman and the Hillman and, also, after the winners were in, by a careless official opening the gates at the Fork, thus precipitating a cross-stream of spectators' cars in the path of Joceland's Alvis, which was fortunately flagged down, to be credited with a time allowance as compensation. So Segrave crossed the line in Talbot-Darracq No. 33, winner of England's first long-distance race. He speeded up four laps from the end, and, indeed, continued for some laps after being flagged, until a suitably enticing bottle, waved from the pits, caused him to conclude his great drive. He covered the distance in 2 h. 16 m. 26 s., an average of 88.82 m.p.h. A few laps from the end an oil-pipe broke and his mechanic, Moriceau, got a castor-oil bath, and after he had been flagged, a tyre punctured and Segrave actually drove two laps on a "flat." He suffered acute deafness and his face bore the brunt of concrete grit, for during a short shower of rain he had driven with his goggles up—and there was no screen of any sort. His fastest lap has been given as 97.65 m.p.h. and, again, as 93.09 m.p.h., tying with "K.L.G.," but the former figure was probably clocked after official distance. Clearly, fine as Segrave's victory was, it was rather a close thing. Guinness and Campbell also speeded up at the end, the former coming in 5½ s. behind the winner and 3 m. 56½ s. ahead of Campbell—Talbots 1, 2, 3. Vizcaya's Bugatti came home 4th, 5 m. 57 s. later, and the following places down to 20th went to Hawkes, Maury, Bedford, Stead, Marshall, Zborowski, Hammond, Brownsort, Oates, England, Harris, Bertelli, Harvey, Milward, Martin and, at 56.17 m.p.h., Joceland. Four of these averaged under 65 and seven over 80, Guinness and Campbell averaging 88.76 and 86.27 m.p.h. respectively.

In the 1,100-c.c. class Capt. Archie Frazer-Nash's G.N., consuming 6 gallons of fuel and 2½ gallons of oil, won at 71.54 m.p.h., after 2 h. 49 m. 24½ s. The car did not misfire once, a richer position of the Zenith triple diffuser carburetter being used while the rain was on. The closing lap was clocked at 77.45 m.p.h. to show retention of tune. 8 m. 58½ s. later the Salmson came home in second place, followed 2 m. 16½ s. later by the Deemster, which had been running 40 s. over the 3 hours. The Coventry-Premier was fourth, and the A.V. fifth, the place averages being 67.93, 67.07, 55.57 and 55.56 m.p.h., respectively. Thus the 1921 200 Mile Race of the Junior Car Club. Rumour says that Brooklands was littered with curious bits and pieces for weeks afterwards; but certainly the world was made to realise that 100 m.p.h. with long-duration reliability was within the province of 1½-litre light cars.

(To be continued.)

RUMBLINGS

With the possibilities of peace growing every day it is natural that the boys and girls should start thinking in terms of the racing machinery in which they will one day disport themselves. Flight-Lt.

Preparation T. A. D. Crook tells me he has jointly acquired with Hugh Hunter the 2.9-litre *monoposto* Alfa-Romeo which is said to have been raced by Varzi, and which was used over here by Fontes. It may be raced, but on the other hand, it will always be available as spares for the owners' 2.9-litre road-equipped Alfa-Romeo, so its acquisition seems sensible to me. Over in Australia, Kenneth N. Brooks has acquired Johnnie Wakefield's Tipo 6C Maserati. Late in 1939 R. P. Tilbrook shipped the car to Australia less engine, gearbox and steering box, just as it was stripped down following Wakefield's crash at Cork in 1938, so Brooks is seeking another engine and information regarding correct steering camber, king-pin inclination, etc. Two drop arms are also needed, if anyone can assist. Finally, Lt. John Norris, R.N., tells me he has the ex-Thomas Fotheringham "2.3" G.P. Bugatti awaiting the day. It was owned for a time by R. C. Vickers, and has since been rebuilt. Although racing isn't specifically mentioned, I imagine the plot embraces competitive movement.

* * *

The Editor's researches over the 1908 T.T. Metallurgique have concluded, a letter

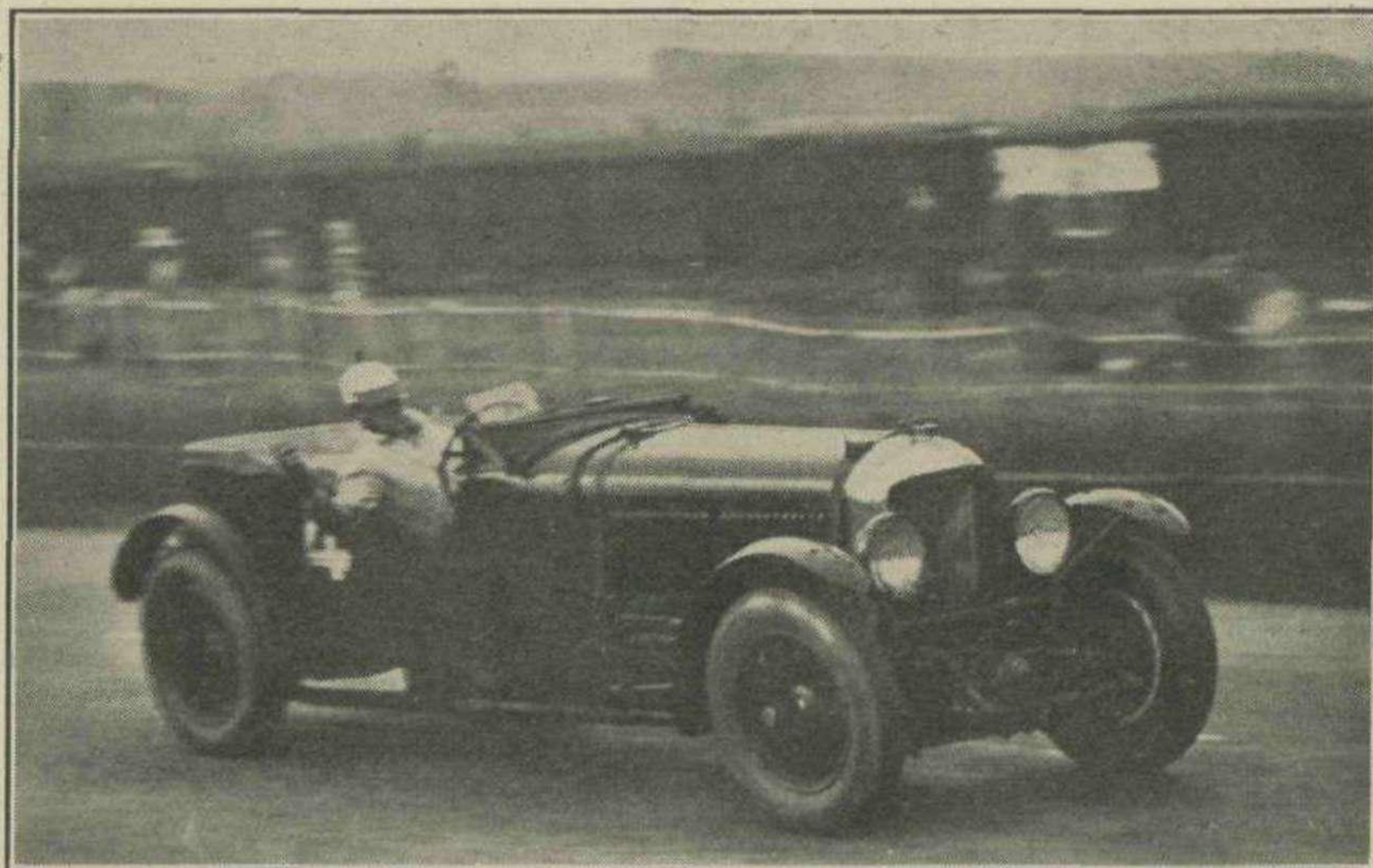
Edwardians from L.A.C. Bull, R.A.F., explaining that this venerable car

was sent for scrap just before the Vintage S.C.C. started pre-1914 classes at sprint events, when it didn't seem to be of much interest to anyone. However, one thing does definitely lead to another at times, and Bull put us on the scent of another, though less exciting veteran, which now bears a van body and delivers seven to eight tons of groceries each week, which it has done since 1933, before which it was a private car. It turns out to be a 1913 23-h.p. 4-cylinder King, with central ball-gate gear-change, 3-speed gearbox, fully floating back axle, and cantilever rear springing. It has a somewhat primitive electric commender, and a dynamo, but a magneto has been substituted for the original Atwater coil ignition. The King is, of course, a product of Detroit. Then, following the remarks by Alan Smith on an ex-Conan Doyle Nazzaro published last month, comes more information about the same car by Brian Finglass, whose firm bought the car from the Conan Doyles and rebuilt it in 1931. The Nazzaro was made by the Fabbrica

Automobili Nazzaro, of Foro Boario, Turin, and is such a rare marque that it is worth publishing Finglass's remarks—but I wish we could find the 1914 G.P. car which ran at Brooklands long after the last war. Incidentally, in 1922 the Nazzaro model offered in this country was of rather similar specification and rather beautifully made, but was of 3½-litre capacity, rated at 20.1 h.p. It had one inlet and two exhaust valves per cylinder, one exhaust valve opening considerably in advance of its fellow, and it would seem that Finglass has confused this unusual valve arrangement somewhat in his description, which is as follows:

We purchased a Nazzaro car, engine No. 3, in 1931, and as it was in a pretty poor state when it came to us, we rebuilt the car throughout.

The engine was a 4-cylinder, 32-h.p. 6-in. stroke unit, with a peculiar offset crankshaft giving a straight thrust on the power stroke. The crankshaft ran in five main bearings. An overhead



"The Glory that was England"—The Big Six Bentley at Le Mans in 1930, which race it won at an average speed of 75.87 m.p.h. for 1,821 miles. The drivers were Capt. Woolf Barnato and the late Lt. Glen Kidston, R.N. Photograph from the Rivers-Fletcher album.

camshaft operated two valves per cylinder, a third dummy valve operating in each cylinder as a camshaft damper, four eccentrics being fitted on the camshaft to operate these dampers. I remember there was a most complicated pressure oil-feed system feeding oil to all engine moving parts. Magneto and water pump were driven from skew gearing off the bottom end of the vertical camshaft drive. Cooling was by pump and fan, and an interesting part of the engine was the massive bearings and shell-like connecting rods. The gudgeon pins had fully-floating small-end bearings.

Measurements from top to bottom of the engine were approximately 4 ft. 6 in. The clutch was an ordinary multi-plate and always struck me as being very light for the size of engine. There were four forward speeds and reverse. Ratios were close, top being very high. On test, I had the following speeds on the gears: 1st, 25 m.p.h.; 2nd, 40 m.p.h.; 3rd, 60 m.p.h.; top, 110 m.p.h.

The back axle was very peculiar, as there was an eccentric adjustment at the end of the torque tube to set the alignment of the rear wheels for circular track running. This adjustment could throw the rear wheels out of alignment so that on a circular

track it was almost unnecessary to steer the car. (It took us a long time to discover this, and we could not understand why the car always proceeded in a crab-wise fashion.) Suspension was $\frac{1}{2}$ -elliptics, with very long rear springs and Hartford shockers back and front. Braking was fully compensated with cast-iron-lined aluminium shoes on the front and Ferodo-lined on the rear. These brakes, strangely enough, were always most effective. The long-tailed 4-seater body had a span of 5 ft. 8 in.; the chassis was fairly short. The seats were staggered and a large cover screwed over the passengers' seats converting the car into a single-seater. Colour was white, and I remember there was a black skull and crossbones painted on the side. Petrol feed was hand-pressure, assisted by mechanical pump off camshaft. Carburation was by two R.A.G. carburetters, giving about 10 m.p.g. The engine, when tuned, ticked over at 500 r.p.m., and maximum speed appeared to be about 3,500 r.p.m. Lighting was by Bosch, and incorporated a very fine dashboard switch-box, fitted with *all* fuses, and locking in any desired position. The dynamo had 8-point voltage control, giving full charge at low revs., and low charge at any revs. when battery was fully charged.

* * *

At a gathering of enthusiasts the topic of discussion turned to that involved matter, the personal motor-car —the reasons which prompt certain

Values

individuals to select one car and others something quite different, and considerations of the more desirable types for post-war use. This is too big a subject to be enlarged on here and now, but a rather unusual sub-division of sporting types which arose from this discussion is worth recording, if only to provide food for further thought and discussion amongst those now exiled far from their own cars. Briefly, the assembled company found agreement in the following suggestion: that cars sought after by enthusiasts can be broadly divided into three divisions: (a) those which appeal on account of their excellent design and, more particularly, the high qualities of their construction, while possessing no very spectacular performance; they only achieve their full appeal if restored to original good order and maintained in first-class condition; (b) those cars which are of agricultural outward aspect, but which possess considerable performance or handling qualities; and (c) those cars which belong jointly to (a) and (b). This

method of sub-division applies mainly, of course, to vintage machinery, and typical examples would be: (a) Bamford and Martin Aston, Type 40 Bugatti; (b) Frazer-Nash, "12/50" Alvis, "30/98" Vauxhall; and (c) G.P. Bugatti, Bentley, Alfa-Romeo, etc. The categories, it must be agreed, overlap appreciably, and before they can be seen in proper perspective it is necessary to dwell for a while on the basic examples just quoted. Thus, the side-valve Aston-Martin *has* been developed to go very rapidly, and it will presumably serve faithfully even if grossly neglected. But anyone earnestly seeking to acquire one to-day presumably hopes to restore it to pristine order and to derive enjoyment from having one of these particular cars in first-class order, rather than to try to make it the fastest of its type, or to merely claim to own "a typical sports car." On the other hand, a Frazer-Nash, "12/50" Alvis, or "30/98" Vauxhall need not be in showroom condition to merit the respect of fellow sports-car owners; naturally, *any* car should be clean and well serviced, but, these cars, being less rare than our category (a) examples, and having engines and chassis less deserving of painstaking spit and polish, they make their major appeal on account of the available performance and/or their manner of going. As the real aim of the enthusiast should be to have a car both well turned out *and* of outstanding performance, the justification for category (c) may, at first sight, be hard to understand. But it must be admitted that a G.P. Bugatti or a blown 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ - or 2.3-litre Alfa-Romeo or the better examples of old-school Bentley appeal almost equally whether you are experiencing their exceptional performance or inspecting them in their garages, so that the meaning of the thing should by now be reasonably clear. Lots of sports cars that come quickly to mind may seem very border-line cases, usually to be put midway between (a) and (b), but you may derive some pleasure and instruction from making a representative list of sports cars and trying to decide in which of three these categories they usually fall.

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(Ian Metcalfe)



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where the "Lambda's" speedometer needle would flirt with "70"; and the hurried drive back at lower speed in the small hours, a task at which the "12/50" never faltered. Of driving pen over paper for hour after hour in the hovel which passed for official billets, a de-restriction sign standing, like a symbol, outside the window, the road running straight beside the railway for a couple of miles or more. Of the chill of autumnal nights, noticed while sleepily bidding London-bound friends good-night at the same spot, after a day spent consuming their "basic." Of the boredom of Sunday evenings, accentuated by the youths hanging about on the green and the villagers strolling home from church and in no way dispelled by the riotous exit from the pubs of Canadian soldiers, promptly at 10 p.m. Of the contrastingly great excitement when some long-distance motoring was discussed and a seat successfully "booked" for such a rare occurrence. Of evenings of blazing heat, when such drives were relived in every detail, lying on the sun-scorched heather at a spot where neither buildings nor one's fellow mortals could intrude. Of other evenings, when the north wind blew at gale force, bringing a suspicion of snow with it, and only the vanishing rear lamp of a west-bound train on the embankment far above the road seemed to wish to defy the elements.

Now one is back, amid all the amenities of a city. Strap-hanging in a tube train is a poor substitute for a three-mile country walk in the clean air of early morning. After dark London's streets, empty save for street-corner loafers and the inevitable

and innumerable cats, are scarcely to be compared with country lanes, alive even at night for those who will listen. Londoners' morale is severely taxed by infrequent bus services after the rush hours and by vehicles the windows of which are blanked out by fine mesh, even if such vehicles, crawling along at walking pace or standing still with engines ticking-over, certainly offer a reassuring reminder that motor fuel is, apparently, *not* in short supply. Nor is it to the credit of the greatest city in the world that its tube stations have become shelters, of the homeless and the thrifty as much as of the bomb-shy. The white-sleeved motor-cycle "mobile," intent on stopping a fire-worthy N.F.S. fire-truck for doing over 20 m.p.h. in the black-out or of arresting some unfortunate medico who has truculently rushed through the city at quite 33 m.p.h. in battle against the influenza epidemic, seems a less likeable guardian of the law than he who stands beneath the porch of the village store, ready to bid good-night to anyone he recognises and (his greatest shortcoming, this, in our eyes) turning many a blind eye to lightless cyclists hurrying home in the rain. The "Good-night, chum," of the somewhat inebriated soldier seeking his barrack (in a veritable maze of barracks) is more musical by far than the cockney cry of "Put that—torch out." The fact that existing conditions permitted one to motor the Lancia, or to be motored in the H.R.G., straight out of a barn on to open, deserted roads, free of traffic lamps, trams, and trailing police cars, was, perhaps, best of all. In fact, the writer *likes* the country.—W.B.

VETERAN CAR CLUB

The Veteran Car Club held a pre-view of its newly-acquired historic films which it has had prepared by Mayfield Productions, Ltd., at the Crown Theatre, Wardour Street, on January 24th. These films include a sound film of the 1905 Gordon-Bennett race, a short news-reel of the Boulogne speed trials of 1910, and a film of the 1906 French G.P. which is being prepared as a sound version. Lt. E. M. Inman-Hunter is responsible for these films in conjunction with Christopher Brunel, A.R.P.S., and we look forward greatly to seeing them at the Club's forthcoming social.



M.M.E.C.

The Midland Motoring Enthusiasts' Club will hold its next meeting on March 1st, when a film show will be held at the "Windsor," Cannon Street, Birmingham, at 7.30 p.m. Forces enthusiasts will be especially welcome.



GOOD SHOW!

Rivers-Fletcher informs us that £20 was handed to the Royal Armoured Corps Comforts Fund as a result of the last "Rembrandt" meeting.

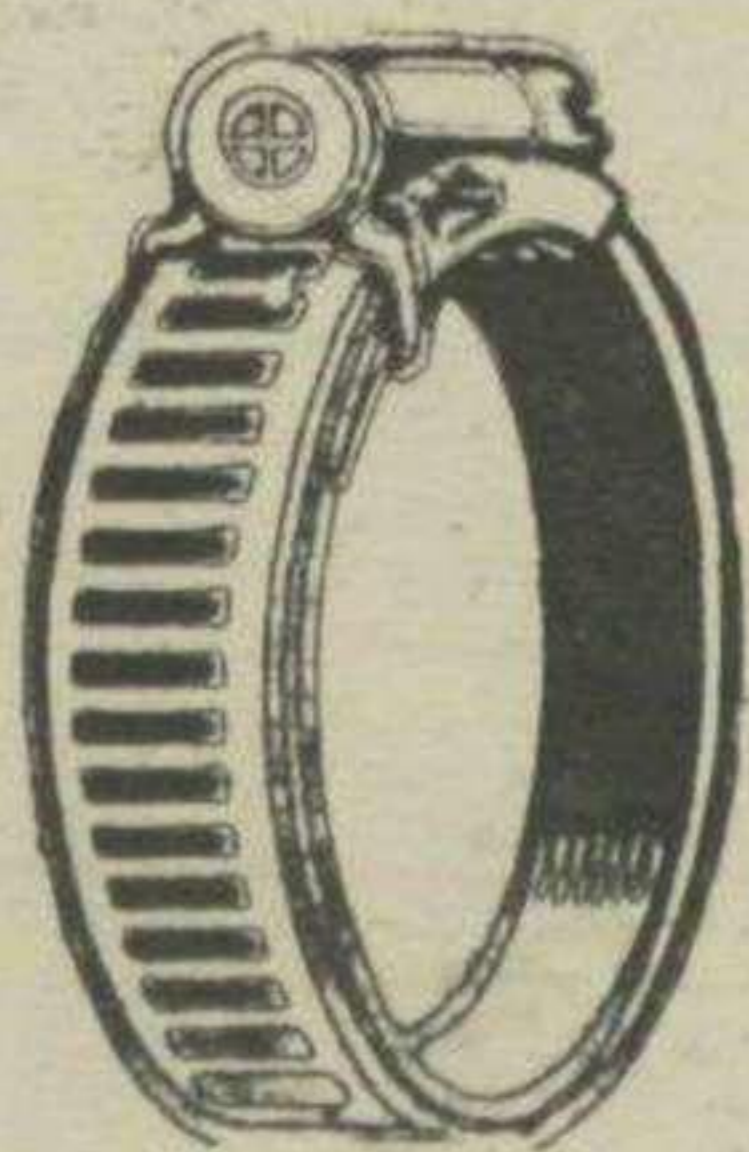


COVER PICTURE

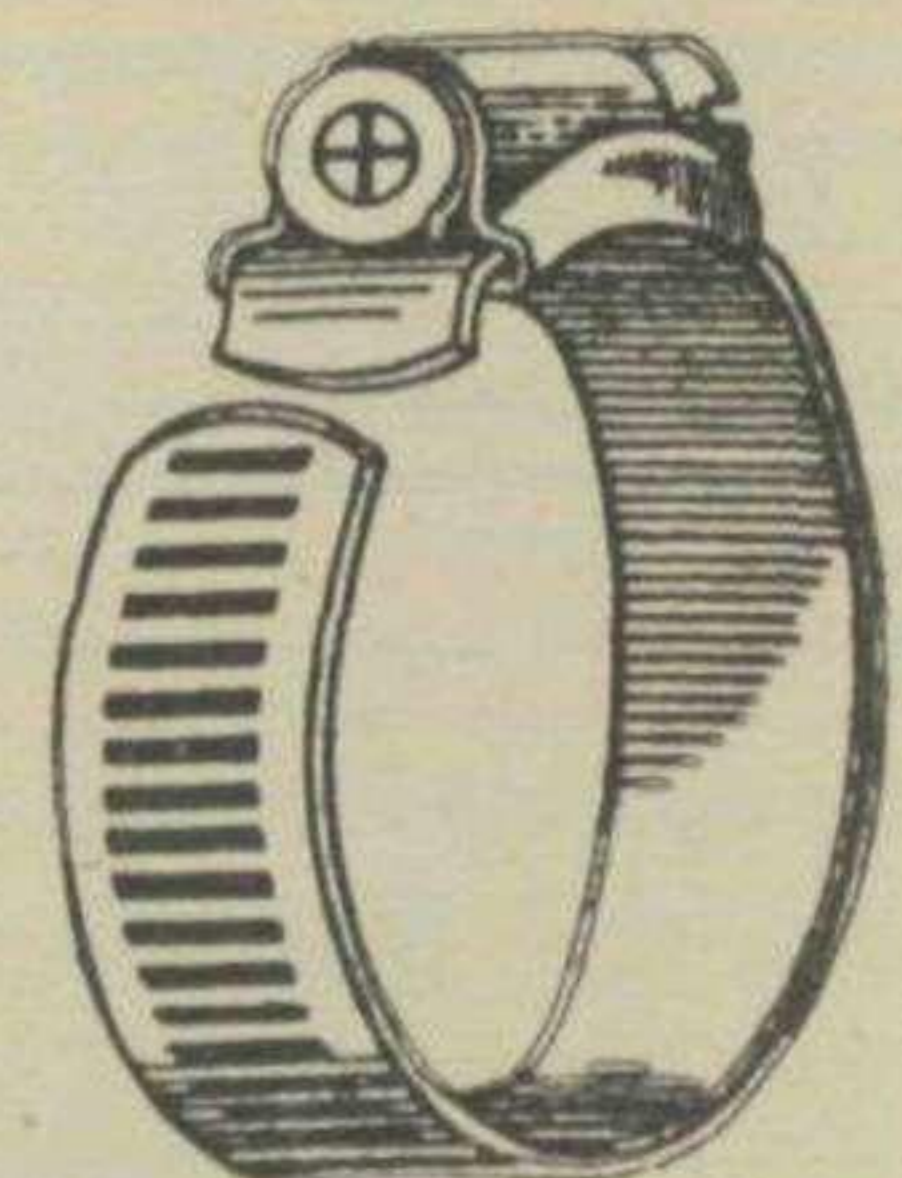
Much interest is rife just now in relation to post-war prospects, and everyone hopes to see the Brooklands Campbell Circuit in use again. This month's cover picture shows A. B. Hyde's 3-litre Maserati taking the Test Hill corner on this circuit.

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LETTERS from READERS

Sir,

During the war various enthusiasts' clubs have been formed all over the country, and having approximately the same aims. As an example of their success, the Midland Motoring Enthusiasts' Club has gathered over 80 fully-paid members in the 12 months of its existence.

It has been proved that there is a very real need for clubs of this nature. While offering entertainment, they have kept alive the true motoring spirit and assisted the pioneers whose endeavour has been to bring about a motoring renaissance.

Throughout the war the technical Press has been fully alive to these facts and has allotted a most generous amount of space to criticisms and grievances against pre-war conditions. By extensive publication these views have largely reached unanimity; but by contrast, the constructive thought in regard to future planning has been confined to the various groups throughout the country, so that we are in the position of having unity of purpose but no consolidated plan of action.

As a result of the improvement in the military situation, and the prospect of a settlement in the not too distant future, the time has come for the adoption of a post-war policy. It is generally agreed that if any heed is to be paid to the desires of the motorists themselves, they must make their desires known, and these must be united as far as possible.

To bring this about, the M.M.E.C. proposes that a joint committee be set up to examine the situation and to make recommendations to the members of the constituent clubs. As a preliminary step, this club has offered to arrange a meeting in Birmingham of nominated representatives on April 1st and 2nd. A number of clubs have been notified, but if others are desirous of giving their co-operation, early application is requested to the Hon. Secretary, The Glebe, South Road, Birmingham, 31.

It is to be regretted that some clubs which have gone into war-time hibernation may not be in a position to contribute, but they may rest assured that their spheres would be adequately safeguarded. It must be understood, however, that to delay unification of policy until after the war would be a grave error, because, having regard to the speed at which events are moving to-day, the Government realise that post-war policies must be settled now. So far as motorists are concerned, the matter is one of extreme urgency.

The M.M.E.C. commends its proposal to the present and earnest consideration of all motoring clubs and groups. If something on the lines suggested can be put into operation, this club is prepared to give it all the support in its power. At this time the promotion of motoring interests is more nearly within our grasp than ever before, and the opportunity may not arise again. Let it not be said of us who are left that we betrayed our trust.

I am, Yours, etc.,
Birmingham, 14. GRAHAM C. DIX.

Sir,

"Two-Point-Six" is off on a new tack, reviving the momentarily quiescent fable of Mr. Thursby-Pelham's high-speed M.G. Here he has the advantage over me, as he probably possesses more information about the excellent little T-type than I do.

Setting aside the somewhat doubtful verification of Mr. Thursby-Pelham's claims, I will ask "Two-Point-Six" to join with me in considering the elementary mathematics of the case; he will probably be able to help by giving me accurate data.

To begin with, I do not know the frontal area of a T-type, so until more exact information is forthcoming, let us assume that it is the commendably low figure of 14 sq. ft.

Now, most people believe (as opposed to "Two-Point-Six" and Mr. Thursby-Pelham) that the T-type is capable of an honest 75 m.p.h., which is a very decent speed for a small, unsupercharged, unstreamlined motor-car.

To propel an unstreamlined motor-car at 75 m.p.h. calls (I believe) for some 3 b.h.p. per square foot of frontal area. The T-type engine must therefore develop some 42 b.h.p. at 75 m.p.h. This is equal to 35 b.h.p. per litre, which is a good output for the type of engine, and roughly what one would expect.

But to rush along at Mr. Thursby-Pelham's 95 m.p.h. (modestly reduced by "Two-Point-Six" to only 92—but why this reticence?) calls for exactly double this power, namely, 84 b.h.p., or 70 per litre. When one recalls that neither the 2.9 Alfa-Romeo, nor the 57SC Bugatti—the most highly efficient supercharged production sports car in existence—attain this remarkable output, one is placed in a quandary in trying to reconcile the facts as put forward by Mr. Thursby-Pelham and supported by "Two-Point-Six."

Perhaps "Two-Point-Six" can bring his powers of reasoning to bear in demonstrating the fallacy of these figures.

I am, Yours, etc.,

R.A.F. * * * CECIL CLUTTON.

Sir,

Ever since my article supporting moderns appeared in the October, 1943, issue of MOTOR SPORT, many letters have been written by vintage people condemning my sarcastic remarks on vintage machinery.

Yet these people chortle with glee when some fanatical vintagent condemns modern cars as "mechanised corn-beef tins," etc.

If vintagents do not want their pets to be slandered, they must not slander other people's. Otherwise . . .!

Re "Cavalry Officer's" remarks, the *Autocar* road test of the 3½-litre S.S. Jaguar saloon gives a maximum of 90 m.p.h.; the *Sports Car* tested the "2.6" M.G. to do 93 m.p.h.; these figures being nearer to my own than to the 80 m.p.h. given by your correspondent!

With regard to the Editor's footnote to my last letter, even if the Humber's speedometer was magical, it does not in

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To meet the repeated demands for something on the lines of the old Spare Parts Announcements, we have instituted a system of inexpensive advertisements. Each announcement must be limited to twelve words, plus the advertiser's sufficient postal address, and the charge will be 1s. 6d. per announcement, payable at time of posting.

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M.G. Saloon body, as new, suit Midget or similar, £7. Clayton, "Cheapside," Gilberdyke, Yorks.

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2-LITRE Lagonda, blown/unblown, or Brooklands Riley, cheap, 50 miles Manchester. Powell, Meadowfield, Rochdale Road, Middleton, Lancs.

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SPORTS car up to 16 h.p. Small 2-seater preferred. Condition immaterial. Low price. A. L. Bacchus, 8, Ashley Court, London, S.W.1.

1½-LITRE Aston-Martin required for rebuilding. Condition immaterial, but must be cheap. Wilson, 47, Lyndhurst Avenue, Sunbury-on-Thames, Middlesex.

1½-LITRE Riley, open 4-seater, manual gear-box, for rebuilding. Condition immaterial. Moderate price essential. Sunderland, c/o "Tudor Cottage," Beta Road, Chobham, Surrey.

TWO Rudge wheels, 19 by 400, good condition, suitable J2 M.G., and tonneau cover. Lieut. D. Hewett, 12, All Saints Avenue, Maidenhead.

AERO Screens, single or pair, suitable Wolseley Hornet Special, good condition. Distributor, condition immaterial, with drive for rev. counter for Ford Eight. Wallace, Riverside, Cramond, Midlothian.

WANTED. Cylinder block, Sunbeam twin-o.h.c., 6-cyl., 3-litre. 27, Burgoyne Road, South Norwood, S.E.25.

Spares Section, MOTOR SPORT,
21, City Road, London, E.C.1

the least alter the fact that a Humber Super Snipe will do almost 90—88 being the figure quoted by Humbers.

With regard to the "race" between British and foreign cars *apres la guerre*, would not a 1½-litre M.G. saloon be a fairer rival to the Lancia "Aprilia" than a T.B. Midget would? The reason I suggest this is because I support the British cars in this trial, and do not want to start off with an advantage over our pro-foreign competitors.

I am confident, in any case, that a 1½-litre M.G. saloon, with four up, would "wipe the floor" with a standard Lancia "Aprilia" similarly loaded, which I suggest they should be during the event in question, since both are claimed to be fast saloons rather than out-and-out sports cars, and must, therefore, be able to carry at least four people.

Good luck, Lieut. Whalley, and may you once and for all time prove to the sceptics that, in the motor world at any rate, "British is Best!"

I am, Yours, etc.,
"TWO-POINT-SIX."

* * *

Sir,

I have just received a parcel of motoring papers, including your September issue, and after reading the very interesting proposals of Capt. Moon, I feel the urge to put my own ideas on paper and also ask your advice. First, I must explain that my proposed design is to be actually built "apres," and so certain ideals have had to be subordinated to considerations of likely availability and, I fear, cost; and, secondly, an engine has been found and stored away out here which will dictate the type of car to be produced. The engine already earmarked is a Type 57 Bugatti, no mean motor and a very satisfying possession. I have already spent many happy hours polishing and admiring the perfect finish in the usual Bugatti tradition; however, to our muttons. First, what's wanted: a fast 2/3-seater for road use, and possibly small time sports-car racing. Secondly, cost of construction must be studied, and, thirdly, it must be reasonably reliable over mixed roads and for competition motoring. Generally the layout is to be: low, rigid chassis to give 6-in. clearance, i.f.s. Lancia-type suspension, semi-elliptic

at rear, in view of "cost and availability." Body to be of modern enveloping type, open. A very likely style is the Lancia "Aprilia" shown on page 120 of the *Motor*, October 15th, 1943, but less the horrible semi-Yank bumpers and grilles, and internal headlights; the result may look rather gaunt, but "so what?" I don't, personally, value a door very highly, so the ease of construction and strength of a doorless body will win the day.

Now to the details. Chassis: possibly one of the more modern and larger Lancias would be a suitable basis. Any suggestions, please? I'm far from any data, but I seem to remember a 24 or so h.p. model of about 1936/7 which had a normal chassis. The chassis would be modified to bring it down to 6-in. clearance, underslung at the rear and under-shielded partly for streamline but mainly for cleanliness. The springing to be as soft as found practicable, as the low build should prevent rolling. Engine to be rigidly mounted; it's too valuable as an aid to stiffness to be allowed to float about on rubber, and, being an eight, should be smooth enough. Transmission to back-axle normal, to be enclosed in a deep tunnel between the seats. Brakes to be modified if necessary to hydraulic, and possibly to two-leading-shoe. Wheels, as Capt. Moon very sensibly suggests, to be of a size suitable to their different roles. Centre-lock types, while preferable, are not essential nowadays. Steering, if a Lancia chassis is used, should need no alterations except to rake and, possibly, re-position of the box to fit in with engine mounting. Final drive ratio is rather an unknown quantity at the moment, but the 130 b.h.p. available, and possibly more if a blower is to be found, seems to indicate around 3.5 to 1 as a suitable starting point, to be altered as available crown wheels and pinions and also wheel sizes permit. There are, of course, many other details to plan, but enough has been said already to give the general chassis picture—so next, the body. A scuttle assembly to carry instrument-panel, toe-board and electrical necessities is built solid to the chassis, the seats are carried direct on the chassis also, and thus the body is purely a shell which can be made as light and rigid as modern light alloys permit. From the scuttle-

back the body is panelled over a light framework which would be attached at six points only and would lift off easily. The seats are divided by the prop.-shaft tunnel, the driver's being an armchair-type and the passengers a wide semi-bench type capable of taking two "small 'uns" reasonably easily. This should be possible with the very wide body. Gear and brake levers would thus fall normally along the top of the tunnel. From the nose to the top of the header-tank and backwards in a wide V to the back of the front-wheel arches is another panelled framework similarly attached to the chassis, the gap between the scuttle and this wide V being filled with a 3-piece bonnet, the top hinged in the centre and the sides held by quick-release screws. Comparison between a "Frash" and a Yank from a maintenance viewpoint is the reason. Batteries in the lower corners of the scuttle, outside the frame, would be very accessible, with fuel tank, tools and luggage behind the seats, spare wheel recessed in the tail, hood—maybe, screens to taste. Now for the critics, I suppose. Any helpful suggestions will be very welcome.

Can you help with suggestions for a chassis, and also as to what is necessary to convert the Type 57 to C or SC? It seems to be simply a question of a blower of one size or another, judging by specification differences, but I'm sure there's more to it than that. Congratulations on the continued excellence of *MOTOR SPORT*; it's much appreciated, as you no doubt are told by the many correspondents. A successful previous hybrid, a "Frash" with a Riley 14/6 engine (*MOTOR SPORT*, November or December, 1940) has inspired this rather more ambitious scheme and, of course, the luck to find a twin-cam Bugatti. An ill wind?

I am, Yours, etc.,

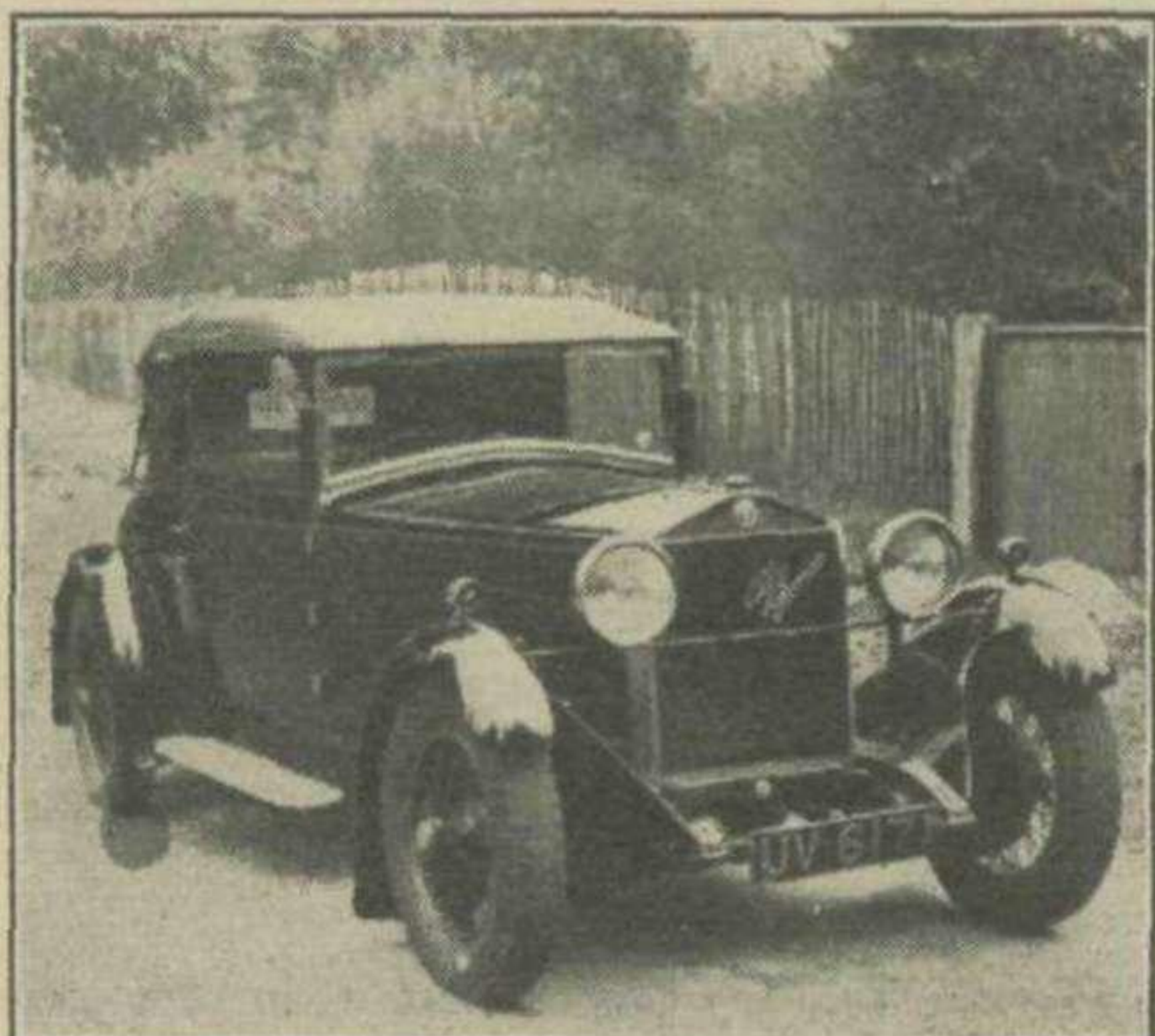
JOHN S. GORDON (Capt.).

By Air Mail,
B.N.A.F.

[The Type 57C and 57SC Bugattis were supercharged versions of the touring Type 57 and sports Type 57S, respectively.—ED.]

* * *

Owing to pressure on space many letters are unavoidably held over



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Continued in next column

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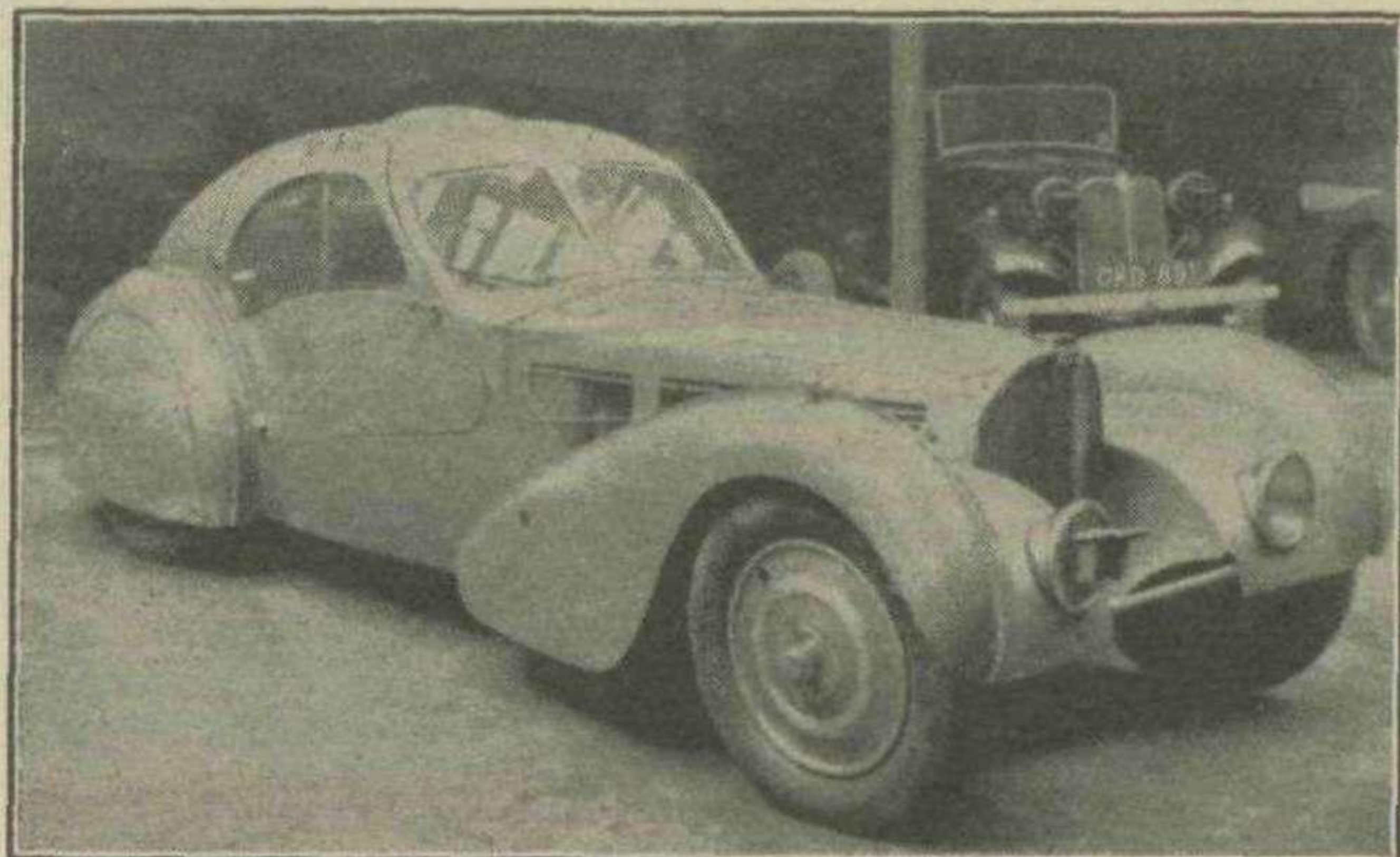
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BUGATTI CLASSICS—No. 5

Photograph from the Jack Lawrence Collection

Type 57S. Produced in 1935 The 8-cylinder, 3,255-c.c. twin-cam engine yielded 112 m.p.h. The late Jean Bugatti designed this example of Bugatti coachwork, and the car offered high speed with superb comfort. Special constructional features include monobloc engine of flexible mounting, single unit engine and gearbox assembly, silent 2nd, 3rd and top speeds, "Dry Disc" type clutch, dropped chassis frame. 25.7-h.p.

★ Cars illustrated in this series are not necessarily for sale, but shown for the interest of Bugatti enthusiasts by Jack Lawrence, of 166, Clarendon Road, Holland Park, W.11. Phone : Park 5705



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