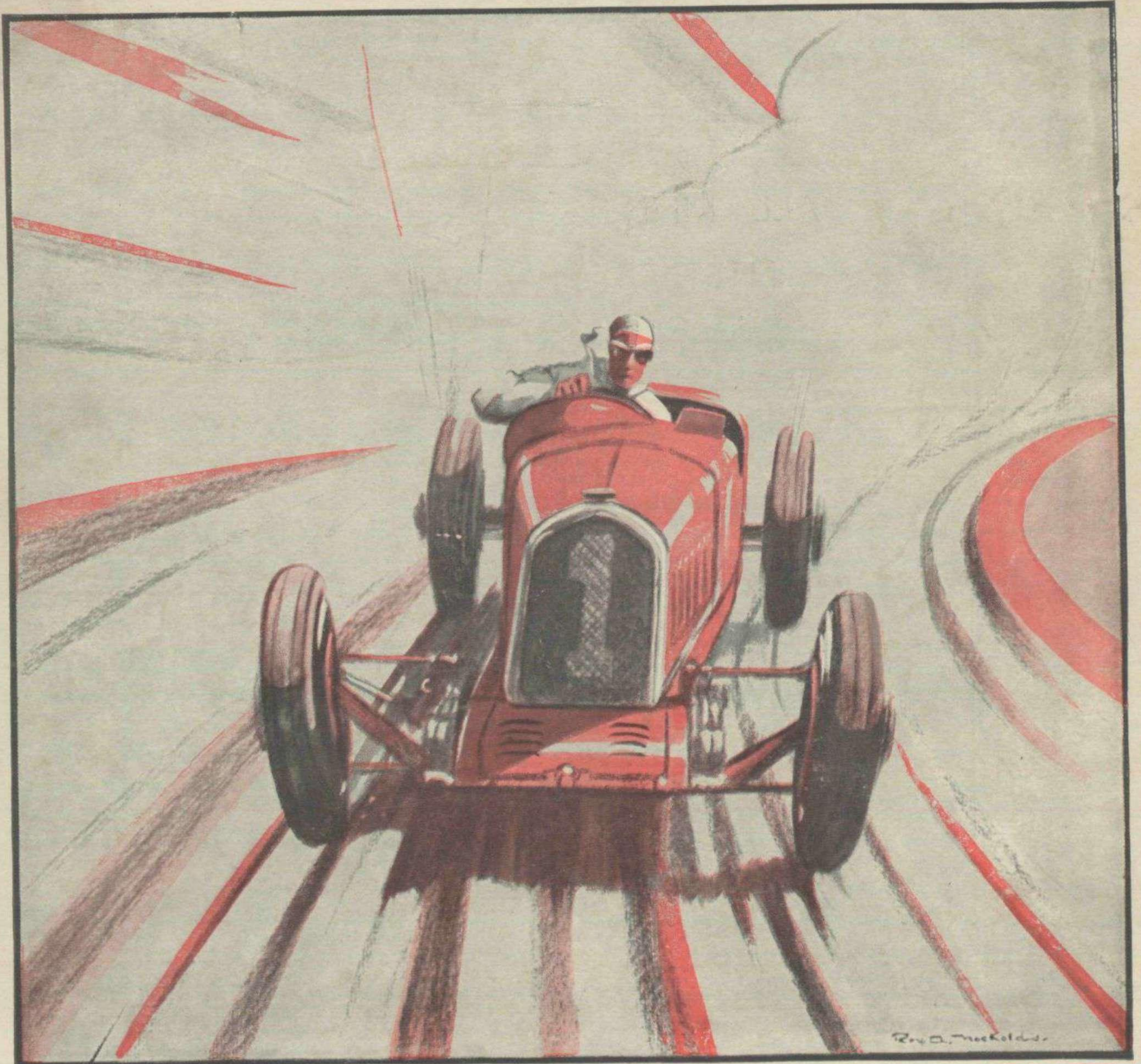


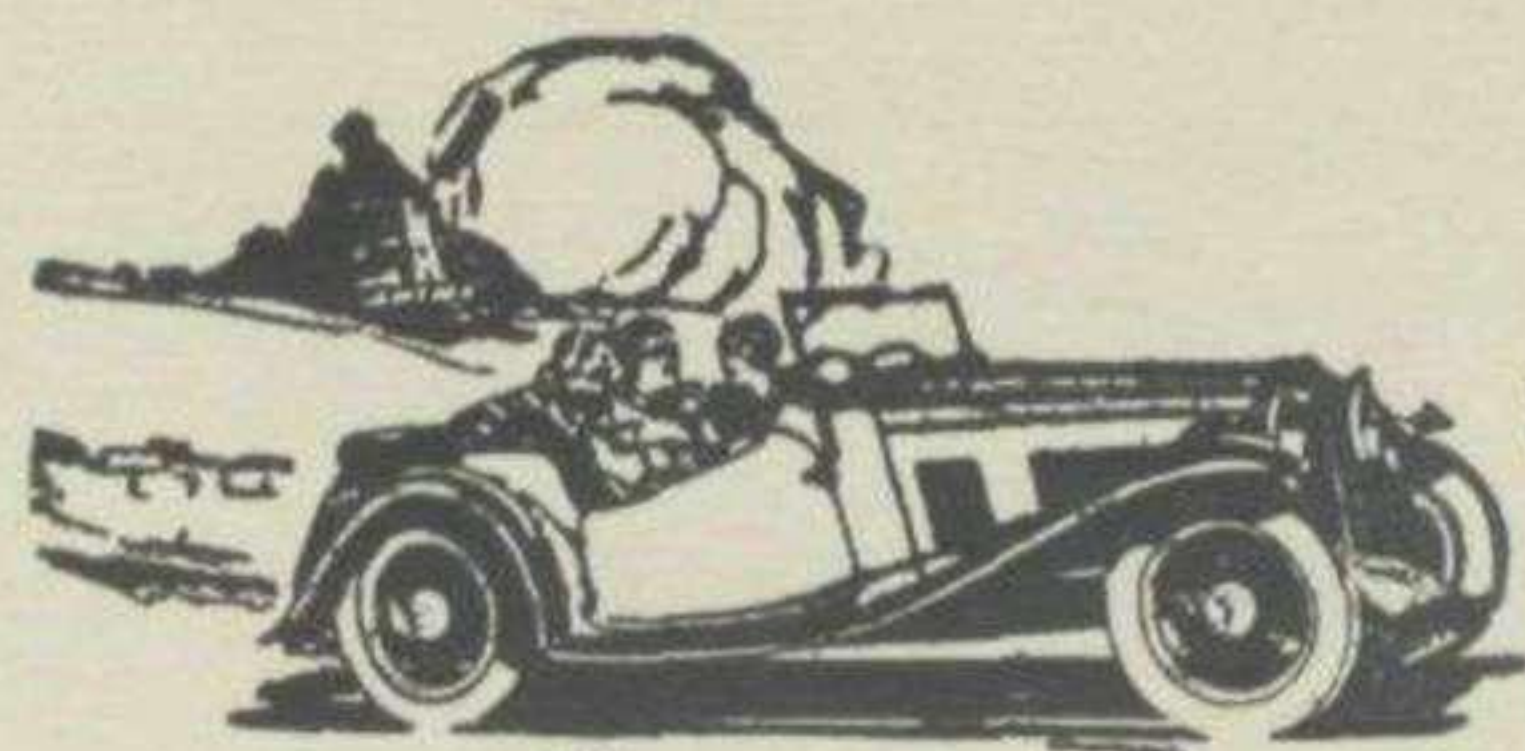
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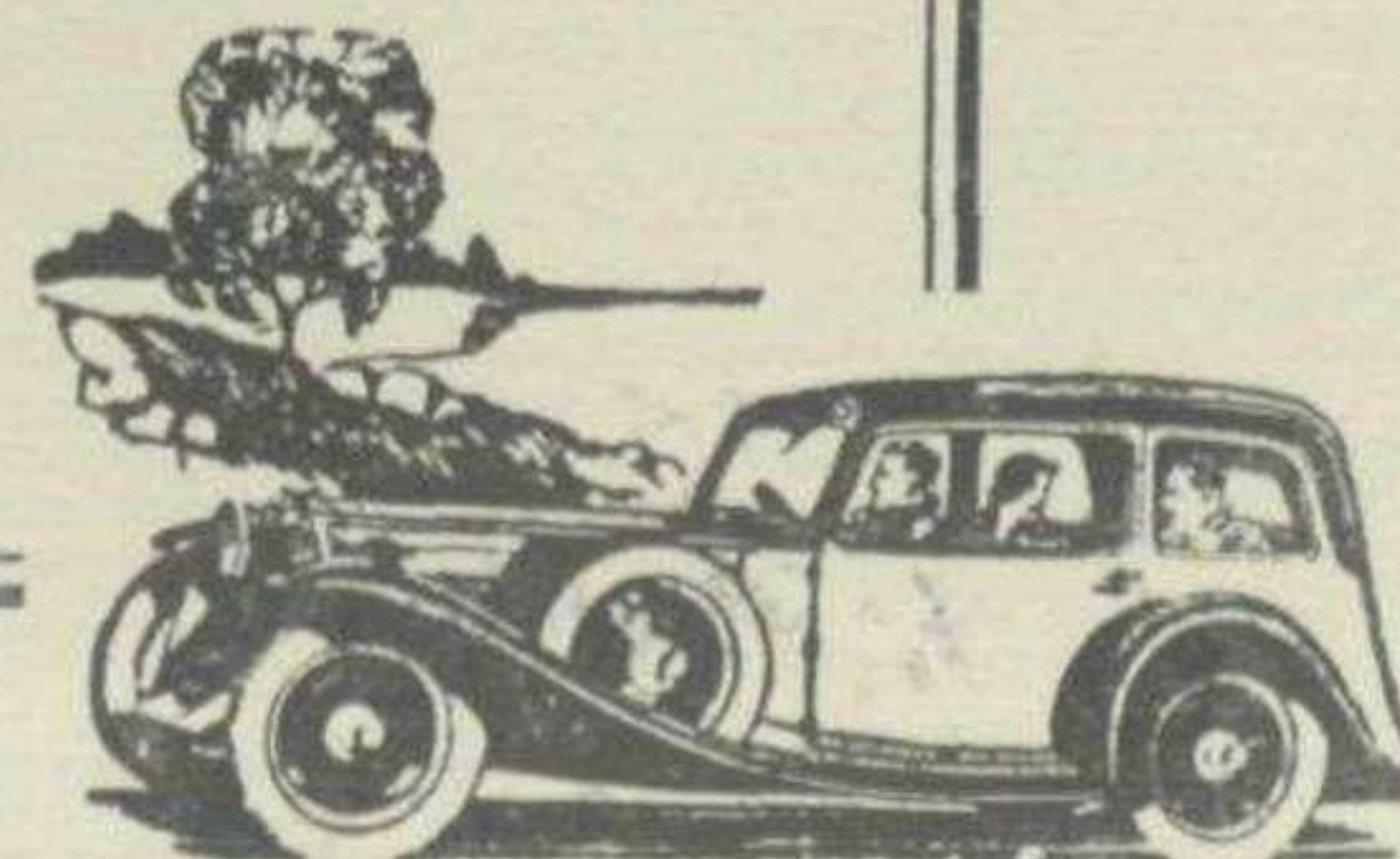
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A WAR-TIME RACE?

Your enthusiast cannot help feeling a trifle depressed, for his personal motoring is seriously curtailed by fuel rationing essential to the conduct of hostilities, and, since this strangest of wars commenced, the competitive side of motoring has been completely in abeyance in this country, save for two speed events and a few trials held over in Ireland. Consequently, that a group of enthusiasts in London is going very seriously into the prospects of holding a war-time motor race, is the best news we have had in our world in the past six months. At present these ambitious sportsmen prefer to remain anonymous, but optimism is lent to the venture because of the sensible approach which they have made to the problem, and because all three are well-known competition motorists who are closely associated with a club which not only has a most encouraging membership, but is one which has become famed for the excellent organisation of its events, for which these three gentlemen have been largely responsible. They sensibly ask that undue optimism should not be associated with what they are now attempting to bring about, because opposition from the dead-from-the-neck-up brigade is expected to be very heavy and may even prove overwhelming. Indeed, when the R.A.C. was first approached about the holding of a short war-time sports-car race, it argued that public opinion would be likely to be outraged and that rumours would probably get about that the competitors were unlawfully making use of extra business rations of "Pool" to enable them to compete at all.

In answer to this, the organisers remark that an afternoon's racing, properly conducted, need use no more, and would probably absorb less fuel, than would a two hours' potter for the purpose of airing Auntie, Ma-in-Law, the little dears, and the parrot, on a Sunday afternoon.

However, to place the proposed race on an un-assailable basis, the would-be organisers have, with good common sense, placed their scheme before the Department of Mines, in an endeavour to gain official approval of the race, which, of course, might involve some unsuspected matter of policy.

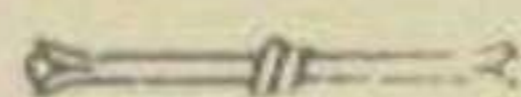
The Memorandum which has been forwarded to the Department of Mines is quoted in full in "Rumblings" in this month's issue, and we may say that we fully agree with all the arguments advanced therein, in favour of a race to enliven this strangest-of-wars, and we do sincerely hope that the event will come to pass.

More than that, we hope that it may become the forerunner of a series of such race meetings, staged until such time as the war may interfere too greatly with the everyday life of this country to make the holding of such meetings desirable—which, up to now, it has mercifully shown no sign of doing. Horse-racing dog-racing, football, boxing and other sports involving expert organisation and the mustering of crowds, have been resumed, so why not motor-racing? The running of true racing cars may savour of too

intricate organisation, and the owners and drivers of such cars may have other matters to attend on behalf of H.M. Government, but a sports-car race of short duration is all that is craved.

Everything depends on the official reply to the Memorandum submitted to the Department of Mines, and we hope to be able to quote this in "Rumblings" if it comes to hand before it is necessary to close this issue for Press. Whether the venture is approved or not, the warm thanks of every motoring sportsman will be extended to those who have had the initiative to attempt to hold this war-time motor race.

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NINE HUNDRED MILES WITHOUT PETROL COUPONS

"MOTOR SPORT" SAMPLES THE LONGEST REGULAR COACH SERVICE IN THE BRITISH ISLES—AND UNEXPECTEDLY ENCOUNTERS ADVENTURE IN SNOWBOUND SCOTLAND

THE joke was certainly on us—and on the S.M.T. Ever since war commenced, real long-distance motoring has been out of the question for private owners because of fuel rationing. So MOTOR SPORT decided that it would be instructive to investigate the longest motor coach service operating in this country, because readers having to travel to Scotland for business or pleasure would be likely to prefer road to rail, while it seems probable that not a few enthusiasts, with one and a half days and 50/- to spare, might welcome this means of re-experiencing the joys of long-distance motoring.

The service in question is the Scottish Motor Traction Co. Ltd., London-Edinburgh run; unless the Western S.M.T. London-Glasgow run is a few miles longer. In any case, since war exerted its influence on nearly every phase of ordinary existence, these two services have operated in close liaison, Edinburgh passengers travelling up to Abingdon on the Glasgow coach on week-days, where a special coach takes them on to Edinburgh, the old, direct Victoria-Edinburgh route up the East Coast functioning only at week-ends. Accordingly, we approached Mr. W. A. Woodward, whose firm of Travel, Press and Publicity, Ltd., looks after the publicity interests of these two concerns, and were very agreeably granted space for our representative and a photographer on this ambitious service. That we were marooned for nearly a week in Scotland, and finally dispatched with a most imposing chill, certainly was not the fault of the operators, as subsequent events will show.

This London-Scottish coach service has a remarkable record. It was commenced eleven years ago, and we believe that never once, until the fateful week-end when we chose to sample the run, had a service been abandoned on account of weather conditions—it might be icy, snowing, most of the road might be hung with fog; there might be floods ahead, but, though such hazards might delay S.M.T., they could never cancel the start. And in all these years, often with bookings necessitating two or more coaches per service, there has been only one fatal accident—it is, incidentally, a rule of the company that a driver is instantly dismissed after any serious accident without any inquiry into the case. In 1932 the first diesel-engined coach was put on experimentally by S.M.T. It was an A.E.C., for which a special fuel supply had to be arranged en route, and A.E.C. engineers did the entire servicing for six months, until the diesel was proved entirely reliable—naturally A.E.C.s welcomed an opportunity to obtain data under working conditions, on the longest passenger run in the country. When weather conditions

are not abnormal, the coaches have a fine reputation for keeping to a very accurate schedule, and many are the stories of locals who set watches and clocks by their passage. Of the drivers who work exclusively on these Scottish runs at least two have little need of the job, doing it largely as a matter of interest. The test which the company imposes before selecting them is both essentially practical and exceptionally stiff, and having had described to us what it entails, we can well imagine it might frequently catch-out even capable sports-car owners. All of which begins to endear this long-distance motor-coaching to your enthusiast. Drivers are given a very free hand in matters of route, stopping places and equipment, and the job is worth £5 15s. 0d. a week, excluding tips. They are all Scots, spending the major portion of their leave period at home and the smaller part at the London end. A spare driver is always carried; he usually contrives to sleep on the rear seat when not driving, but he is amongst the passengers as a useful steward in an emergency.

The coaches used are A.E.C.-diesel on the Edinburgh run and Leyland-diesel on the Glasgow service. They are usually governed, the former to 38 m.p.h., or about 1,500 r.p.m. maximum, and the latter to 43 m.p.h. at 1,800 r.p.m. Both are thirty-five seaters, and the Leylands have toilet accommodation. There is no buffet, nor is such necessary, as on both runs two stops for refreshments are included in the schedule. The schedules are both interesting and remarkable. Only night services are run, presumably because a day service would need to start impossibly early in the a.m. from the viewpoint of travel facilities to the coach stations, if passengers were to be delivered at the terminus at a decent hour. So each service starts alternately from London and Scotland at 7.30 p.m. each evening, excepting the week-end south-bound coach from Edinburgh, which departs at 5.30 p.m. The week-end East route is via Hatfield, Stevenage, Biggleswade, Stamford, Grantham, Newark, Tuxford, Bawtry, Doncaster, Wetherby, Boroughbridge, Catterick, Scotch Corner, Darlington, Newcastle, Wooler, Greenlaw, Lauder and Edinburgh. It is scheduled at 15 hrs. 19 mins., including two 20 mins. stops—which is not at all bad motoring, with an overall speed limit of 30 m.p.h. imposed! The Glasgow service goes up to Boroughbridge, and then by the west road via Penrith, Carlisle and Gretna, Edinburgh passengers being met at Abingdon on week-days. We were extremely interested to learn that since war commenced, sufficient fuel for the double journey has been carried, to obviate supplies of rationed fuel at the London terminus. The main tank holds 40 gallons and this is now supplemented

by a 35-gallon tank in one of the luggage lockers. The average fuel consumption is approximately 12 m.p.g., or some 33 gallons of oil for the single run. Thus about 7 gallons remain in the main tank to supplement the surplus 2 gallons in the secondary tank, which is cutting things close, but is nevertheless quite adequate. This consumption figure is often bettered under good conditions, and the Leylands appear to be rather more economical than the A.E.C.s. In spite of the fact that the S.M.T. is an immense concern, responsible for Scotland's local services, so that we believe its weakly fuel ration to be around 48,000 gallons, nevertheless the Government has asked for the strictest economy on this long-distance run. In spite of the extra tankage there is ample interior luggage accommodation, as well as the space for heavy cases under tarpaulins on the roof. Each passenger is provided with two heavy rugs. War restrictions have necessitated blueing-over the windows to the detriment of full passenger visibility, though the forward windows are covered at night only, by blinds. The driver is now confined to a masked headlamp, where formerly two clear headlamps and low-set twin Bosch spotlights were used. Clayton heaters warm the interiors.

We took our places in the Glasgow coach on January 26th, arranging to travel on the West route to Abingdon and change, as, although this was a Friday evening, only one other passenger had booked for Edinburgh, after weeks when this service had run to full capacity, so in the circumstances, the combined Glasgow-Edinburgh service was retained. We drew out of Victoria Coach Station at 7.40 p.m., and were at Stanbridge Fork by 9.11, and at the tricky Buckden Fork by 10.23. Bad ice was encountered uphill near Saltry, one lorry was ditched, and we lost three minutes negotiating a stationary Scammell. Soon, however, the coach was going well, passengers mostly asleep, quite a duel occurring with a Riley saloon which had passed us earlier on. Ditched lorries alone indicated the slippery nature of the road. Stamford was made by 11.30 and at Grantham there was a 31 minutes pause for a refresher, from 12.20 to 12.51. It might be remarked that lots of people travel by road because of the appreciable saving in fare it shows over rail, and inexpensive cafés are purposely selected as stopping places, so fastidious travellers would do well to bring their own supplies, and remain in the coach. At Newark, reached by 1.19 a.m., lots of cars were seen departing from the scene of a big dance, and the farther North we went the greater seemed the number of private cars in use in the towns.

Changes of driver had been fairly frequent, and another change was made

NINE HUNDRED MILES WITHOUT PETROL COUPONS—continued

in Doncaster, when the screen was cleaned. Breakfast was taken rather inefficiently at Gretna, and a very pretty run over distinctly snow-filled roads brought us to Abingdon by 10.50 on the Saturday morning. The coach was scheduled at Glasgow by 11.23, but we transferred promptly to the waiting, self-change A.E.C. to go across to Edinburgh. So warm was the interior of this coach in mid-winter that we should have cast the windows down had our lady passenger, the sole paying traveller for Edinburgh, not appeared in full need of it. The Clayton heater was certainly on the job; we shall covet this equipment in private cars after this experience of it. A most interesting run now commenced, for these side roads were well snowed-up in places, and the empty coach took drifts like a battleship ploughing a wild sea. We actually passed one of the local Ford snow-ploughs, which is just a lorry with a wide board set at an angle out in front to push clear the snow. After we had been running about an hour we encountered a model-T Ford lorry with a truly immense radiator muff and chains on its rear wheels, and a 1926 12/50 Alvis two-seater. Edinburgh was made at 12.40. After lunch we caught a local S.M.T. single-decker to Queensferry—these A.E.C. petrol buses are driven very snappily and seem to handle well on slippery going. It was most disappointing that no air raid greeted us at the Firth of Forth, but we amused ourselves, and obtained an excellent close-up of the Forth Bridge, by taking return tickets on the abnormally ancient ferry "Dundee." On the return trip a very noisy Singer Nine sports occupied by two R.A.F. lads, an Alvis "Firefly" saloon driven by a girl, and an Albion R.A.F. ambulance, were amongst the vehicles on board. The Albion had interesting oil dampers with gaitered shackles at the front, India "competition" tyres all round, and the clock-type thermometer offset on the off side of the top face of the radiator. My friend was more impressed by framed pictures of a life-saving jacket apparently invented by a Mr. Finch in co-operation with my namesake

Drawn back to matters motoring he drily observed that you see countless Albion commercial vehicles in these parts because they are made near-by, and never manage to get far from their place of origin—a delightful libel, as Albions give yeoman service the world over. Wolseley cars seemed extra popular and we saw two Lancia Aprilias with the new cast-alloy wheels. Edinburgh was crowded with cars, but the number which come in from outlying country places makes comparison with London deceptive. We remade the acquaintance of the city's 20 h.p. Rolls-Royce taxis—some of the earliest Rolls-Royce Twenties, of which the brakes and gear-ratios were never too clever.

At 5.50 that afternoon we were once again en route for Abingdon to connect with the southbound coach. As the windows were blued-out reading was at a premium, except when the coach swayed and shuddered over snow-drifts

of which the genial driver had warned us. The first foretaste of trouble came with a prolonged wait at the Abingdon Hotel where we had once tried unsuccessfully to get breakfast in the early a.m. with the Bentley, the London coach being even then overdue. Personally, it was our second night out of bed and we welcomed the warmth and cheeriness of the lounge. At last the other coach did roll up and we all embarked. A few miles beyond Crawford, however, and we halted. A lorry loaded with live shells for delivery under Government contract had fouled an abandoned van also going south and had wedged immovably, blocking the road. Behind the coach arrived a lorry laden with live sheep for the Ministry of Food. So, in the early hours of the morning, we set out with Jimmy Hunter, our driver, to walk back to Crawford, a journey expedited by clinging to the frozen ballast in the back of a Ford snow-plough which early overtook us. Meanwhile, the crew of a much more imposing plough said the road must be kept open at any cost, by order of the Lanarkshire County Council. So we banged loud and long at the village police-station, to be met with a sleepy retort that the constable didn't know who to inform, anyhow. Then we repaired to the Merlindale Café, warming ourselves before the fire and making short work of a pie, in company with the hungry party of marooned lorry drivers, in the kitchen. Then, with one sandwich for each of the passengers, we set out to walk back. For the first few hundred yards it seemed we could never do it! Half a gale nearly swept us off our feet, sleet whipped round us, and icicles forming on hair and eyebrows made it difficult to pick a path. However, it was the massive Jimmy Hunter who eventually suggested a breather in a disused cottage, and at last we were back at the coach. We found the sheep lorry had got clear and returned, and after a

long wait the snow-plough made a way for us to do likewise. The coach was turned after a long reverse, but the plough was mis-firing, and now died altogether and we were once again stranded. The blasting wind as we stood waving the coach back will remain for ever in the writer's memory! There was nothing for it but to try to sleep, clothes steaming on one from the waist down When morning came the snow was building up between the stone walls bordering the road and there was seven feet of drift before the abandoned plough. Jimmy slept like a log on the rear seat; the second driver, just recovered from 'flu, was half-dead out in the cab. Still the engine ran, keeping the interior warm. It was a new unit and must have got beautifully run-in, for it eventually idled for about 24 hours. There was still two-thirds of a tank of oil left when she was switched off. Chafing at the inactivity, Lush and I decided to go in search of help. Across the fields it was heavy going, but the road appeared impassable. By the railway we got momentarily lost in a lane bounded by 6 foot banks and things looked grim. However, another try got us over on to the permanent way, and while a kind railwayman gave us breakfast in his cottage bordering the line, five other passengers, including a wizard blonde, caught up with us. Back at the café we persuaded them to fill half-a-dozen thermos flasks and cut a stack of sandwiches, and we fought our way back once again to the coach with this sustenance. That afternoon, with help, the whole of the occupants were got off and over the fields to the café. Here all was efficiency. Tea with a tot of whisky was doled out, casualties, including a stoker from Australia who collapsed in the extreme cold, were treated, and improvised dry clothing handed out. That evening we had a cosmopolitan meal, lorry-drivers serving, more lorry lads playing a very



"Monte Carlo" conditions visited Scotland and the North of England at the end of January.

NINE HUNDRED MILES WITHOUT PETROL COUPONS—continued

lively band. Everyone was reluctant to move on to the Crawford Hotel that night. If ever you motor through this Highland village, remember that here is a café where real service is understood. Next morning there was a great influx of stranded rail passengers, R.A.F. and R.A.S.C. included, as vivid reminder that weather conditions were indeed exceptional and the roads were not alone in disgrace. Amongst them was Jill Mannering, who soon sought privacy elsewhere. Of our party, a delightfully vague medical student, a veritable fog-horn of a little café proprietor from Fleet, a good-looking Londoner and his blonde wife, a miserable individual we nick-named "C.J." (we won't enlighten you, if you cannot guess!) a lady and her two daughters, one, aged ten, most amusingly dogmatic, the drivers, and our scruffy selves, got on well enough. Rumours of huge snow-ploughs were rife; a caterpillar plough was brought out and ran

a big-end in the first hundred yards! There was the party specially arranged one evening at the café by the lorry drivers, who could not unstick the Reo van in which they intended to convey the ladies through the village and who got so "oiled" that when we got to the café the proprietor had put it strictly out of bounds. There was the subsequent exclusive party in the hotel kitchen, and the stories recounted thereat. . . . Yes, the writer was very peeved when 'flu germs took him off to bed, isolated from all the fun. We were bade to dress hastily on the Wednesday morning and by midday a train had got us to Glasgow. Reporters from local papers took copious notes as we left the platform. In the coach station that evening, waiting for the 7.30 coach home, folk chortled as they came on their names in print—but the reports were actually very inaccurate, and, mercifully, made no mention of the over-rated part we had played.

This time, going via Edinburgh and the East route, we stuck only once, when Lush used a tree as a lever to get the axle clear, and the drivers did some immense dicing, getting us to London about 8.30 that night. We had sampled Britain's longest coach service at a most unfortunate week-end. Those who wish to try this interesting run need have no qualms of like delays. Seats are bookable, 30/- single or 50/- return, individually as for a theatre, from 14, Grand Buildings, Trafalgar Square, W.C.2; WHI 2701; or from 45, Princes Street, Edinburgh.

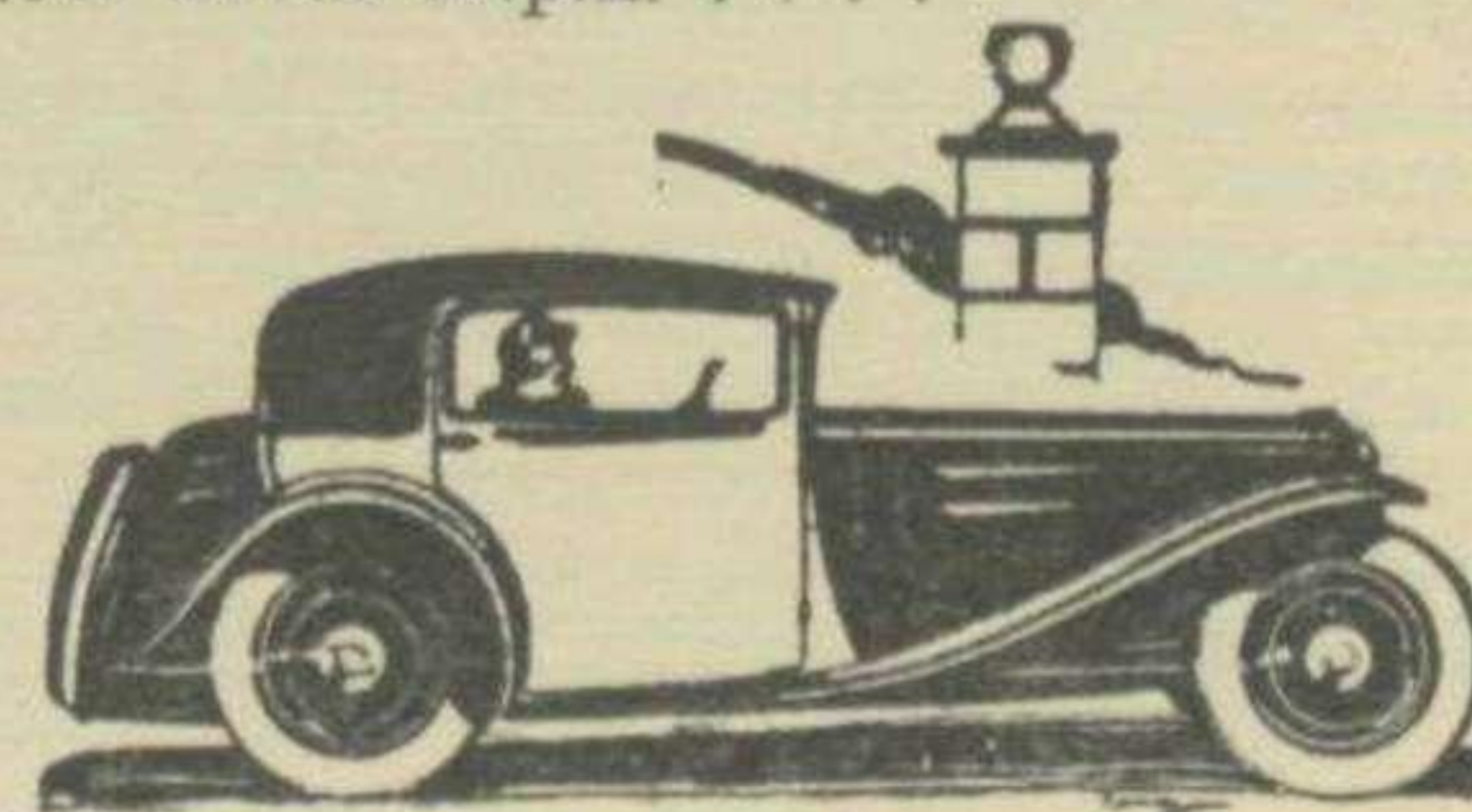
We believe that quite a number of enthusiasts will welcome this means of undertaking some long-distance motoring when the last petrol coupon has been used, and after they have travelled with S.M.T. they will often give more than a passing thought to the men who daily take these coaches out of Victoria Coach Station on the longest, and often by no means easy, run operating in the British Isles.

SENSATION FROM AMERICA

LOTS of sensational writings hail from America, and it seems that "Esquire" is not immune. In the issue for June, 1939, there is a long article by Kent Sagendorph, entitled "Hell on Wheels," to which our attention has just been drawn. This article sets out to prove that "race drivers are sissies" and that "the game is getting as innocent as croquet" because nobody gets killed any more. Bob Carey is quoted as the last big-named driver to be killed in the U.S.A. Kent Sagendorph notes that "once there were men who felt the clammy breath of Death in their very faces, but who thumbed their noses and roared on," but not to-day. He says that the 150,000 spectators at Indianapolis used to pay to see superlative daring on display, but daring is not the keynote now. Paul Gallico has observed that somebody's carburetter beats somebody else's valve system and the crowds eat picnic lunches during a parade of whizzing cars that make twice the speeds they appear to. Well, in Europe, of course, we rather like our racing on that plan, anxious that useful lessons shall result from it, and glad when no fatalities occur. This lurid article kicks off with an account of the 1911 Indianapolis race, or rather with the incident when Teddy Tetzlaff and Louis Disbrow locked wheels and crashed into the pits. It goes on to tell of how Joe Jaggersberger's Case broke a steering knuckle at about 90 m.p.h. and of how the mechanic, Gil Anderson, tried to kick the wheels straight and was flung out. Harry Knight is said to have braked to avoid Anderson and skidded his Westcott into the pits, hit a stationary Apperson, and rolled on two wheels through the infield gate. Apparently no one was hurt save the mechanic of a Blitzen Benz, who was cut by flying glass, but later Art Greiner's Amplex overturned in the 12th lap and

killed Sam Dixon, the mechanic. Later still the mechanic in Tower's Jackson got sunstroke and leapt out, sailing over a fence and landing unhurt. We confess we had no time to check these details, but students of American racing, such as our good friend Ralph Secretan, might care to do so, for some definite inaccuracies creep in later. Since 1911, thirteen Indianapolis drivers are said to have died, twelve killed in action. Ralph de Palma is said to have tamed the Fiat "Cyclone" which killed Emil Cedrino, after it had put him out for six weeks. Szisz is said to have taken the first mile-a-minute record at Montlhéry track in 1906. Actually, this track was not opened until 1925 and in 1906 the Land Speed Record stood at over 121 m.p.h. Road racing is alleged to have become so dangerous that America banned it by 1915 and California in 1916. In this 1916 Corona round-the-houses race Bob Burman driving a Peugeot (spelt "Peugot"; Yank spelling dares to take liberties with even classic marques!) described as "one of those imported French beauties that looked and ran like a watch," is said to have wrapped his car round a telephone post at 104 m.p.h. "Burman was shipped back to Imlay in a special casket packed with ice." After the road race, came the board track. Tribute is paid to the precision-built Peugeots, Ballots, Duesenbergs and Millers, which took a year or more to build, and cost 15,000 to 20,000 dollars for "merely a frame, and part of a transmission and a motor." Why, we wonder, does the author imagine that these cars, which obviously intrigue him, were delivered with incomplete transmission! And his estimate of maximum engine speed as 6,000 r.p.m. in 1920 seems on the high side. Towards the close of his article Sagendorph's imagination appears to run amok. Death

may have been in the box office, offering murder for money, but we are not certain that Ray Keech was killed in a Miller in a multi-fold crash at Altoona—in any case it didn't happen in the early 1920s for Keech held the Land Speed Record about 1928 with his unfaired, triple-engined Triplex, and he won at Indianapolis in 1929. And definitely Frank Lockhart was killed when his 3-litre Stutz ran into the sea at Daytona Beach about 1928 when attempting to break the Land Speed Record, and not while driving on a board track. He won at Indianapolis in 1926. Board track racing was said to have died out after Jimmy Murphy was killed by a length of flying fence rail which pierced the radiator and fireproof bulkhead of his car at the Syracuse track—can anyone check up on that? To-day, the author has it that the game has died—"a bit of irony as a requiem over the graves of men it killed"—because the only big-scale race left is Indianapolis, "where a driver cannot go too fast." It seems curious that this was printed after last year's Indianapolis 500, which Wilbur Shaw's Maserati won at just over 115 m.p.h.—hardly a sissie speed—and in which race Swanson, Roberts and Chet Miller were involved in a three-fold crash which killed Roberts and slightly injured two women spectators. And, if the article was perpetrated before this race, well, Indianapolis was won in 1938 at a cool 117.2 m.p.h. . . .



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Club News

C.U.A.C.

The Cambridge University Automobile Club, which organizes, amongst other important events, the Syston Speed Trials, feels that it might well fade out altogether after the war, if none of the present members is then in residence. Consequently, members are being earnestly requested to subscribe 5/- a year while the war continues, to enable posters and other such matter to be prepared, whereby Freshmen and others may be reminded of the Club's existence. There will then also be a fund on which to draw when post-war activities are sought. Members are requested to get together about 8.15 p.m. on Friday evenings at the "Still," beside the Victoria Cinema, and there is to be another dinner for members and friends on Saturday, March 9th, at the Red Lion Hotel, Cambridge, at 7.45 p.m. Tickets will cost 8/6 each, or 10/- to non-members, and several well-known motoring personalities will be guests of the Club. Tickets should be applied for at once, and an attempt will be made to refund money on unused tickets if notice is given in advance. It is just possible that a competitive event will be held this term, or next. As no club-room is available, the secretary has all motoring periodicals open to inspection by members at his rooms at any time—a very generous gesture. We hope the C.U.A.C. obtains the support it deserves.

Hon. Secretary: C. N. S. Pringle, 10, Park Parade, Cambridge.

B.O.C.

At first, when war was declared, the Bugatti Owners' Club cancelled all social and sporting fixtures, seeking only to keep Prescott open for immediate use at the cessation of hostilities—hence our Editorial note to this effect in "Things in General" in the last issue. However, on February 23rd, it held a dinner, for a very modest fee, at the R.A.C., and afterwards there was the usual display of Club films. A war issue of "Bugantics," produced in the former quality style, reveals that one of the 1923 tank-bodied G.P. Bugattis is preserved at the Bugatti works, and that for the preservation of the said works a very fully equipped fire-engine is kept, mounted on a Type 44 Bugatti chassis. In view of the fact that the dinner has been held as in times of peace, could not the next fixture, the Opening Rally, be staged? The venue has been getting gradually nearer to London of recent years, and if held at a place about twenty miles out, we believe quite a successful gathering of enthusiasts would attend.

Hon. Secretary: E. L. Giles, 2, Queen Street, Mayfair, W.1.

SUNBAC

Some fifty people attended the Annual General Meeting in Birmingham on January 26th. Len Taylor and H. J. Manzoni take new places on the committee and F. S. Whitworth, donor of three successive

Colmore Cups, becomes an honorary life member. A social is spoken of before the winter is over and—extremely interesting—it is hoped to hold a car trial when the evenings draw out. A weekday is mentioned, but surely even a short distance event would be better held at a week-end?

PLYMOUTH M.C.

A supper dance, similar to the highly successful Boxing Day Party, was held on February 22nd.

SUNBEAM-TALBOT OWNERS' CLUB

A dinner and dance was held at the Bull Hotel, Gerrards Cross, on February 17th.

HARROW C.C.

A dinner and dance, at which plenty of "trials chat" was encouraged, was held at Ruislip, on February 9th.

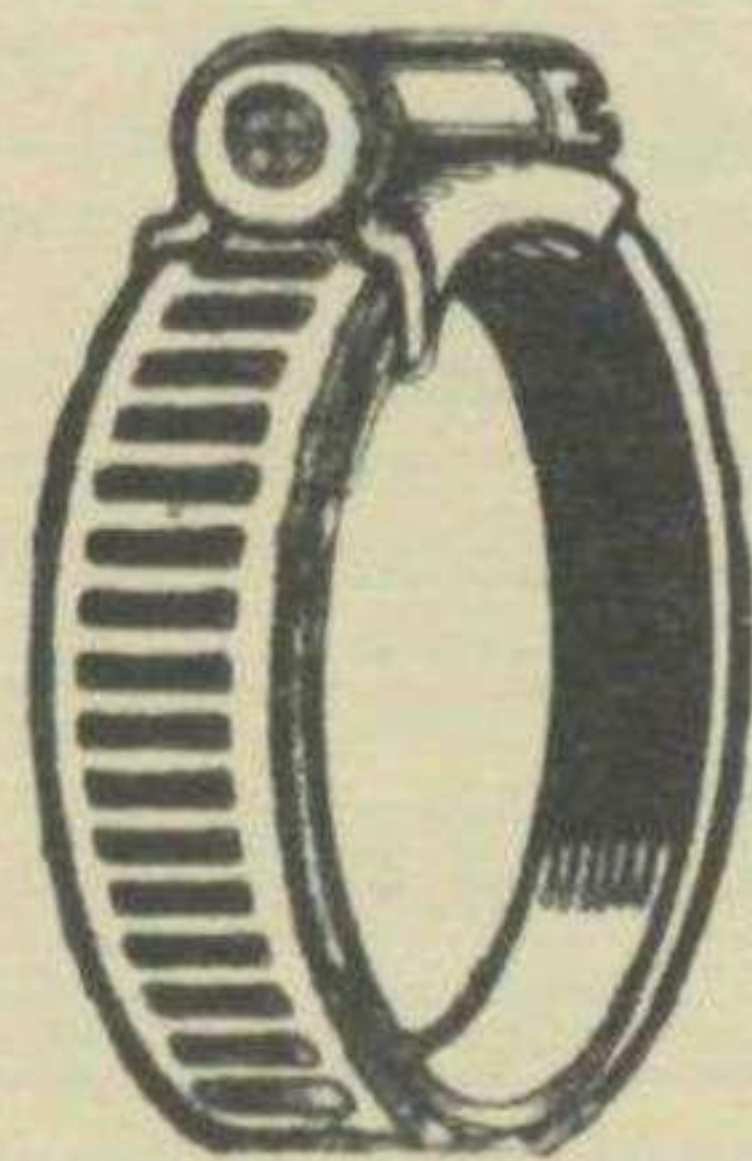
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The annual supper and prize distribution took place at headquarters on February 28th.

WEST MIDDLESEX AMATEUR M.C.C.

A supper dance was held at Perivale on February 23rd.

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INDIANAPOLIS NEWS

A PIONEER of the swaddling days of automobile racing has come back to the scene of his early sporting activities as an official of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

T. E. "Pop" Myers, executive vice-president and general manager of the famous 500 mile auto race, announced the appointment of Charles Merz, well-known Indianapolis engineer and former race driver, as assistant to the general manager.

Merz has acted as chief steward of the race since 1935, representing the Contest Board of the American Automobile Association, succeeding the late Eddie Edenburn.

His thorough knowledge of automobile racing, his engineering ability and his patient and thorough understanding of the human element in the daring but demanding sport has won for him universal acclaim from car owners, drivers, and spectators alike.

"I feel that Charlie Merz is well qualified to assist the Indianapolis Motor Speedway organisation in the conduct of this great international event," said Mr. Myers, in announcing the appointment. "Charlie was raised within the shadow of the Speedway and raced here in the inaugurating events.

"From 1905 to 1912 he was experimental engineer and race driver for the National Motor Co., an Indianapolis industry, and went with the Stutz Motor Car Company in a similar capacity in 1912, and remained there until 1914. In addition to being one of the leading automotive engineers of America, he has been closely associated with automobile racing since its inception in this country and his services will be extremely valuable not only to the Speedway but will be appreciated by the race lovers of America.

"Although he never won a 500 mile race, Merz's record as a race driver is impressive. He finished seventh in a National car in the first 500 mile race at Indianapolis in 1911, and was fourth in a Stutz in the 1912 race, the famous event which found Ralph de Palma robbed of the lead in the last few laps by motor trouble, and which Joe Dawson, hometown boy, drove to victory in a home-

town National racer. Merz was nearest to victory when he finished third in a Stutz car in 1913, but did not finish in his Peugeot car in 1916.

"From 1914 to 1917 Merz was engineer for the Rayfield Carburetter Company, and during the war years of 1917 to 1919 he entered service as a captain and was promoted to major in the U.S. Army Air Corps at Romoratin, France. He is now a lieutenant-colonel in the Reserve U.S. Army Air Corps, assigned to Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio.

"Merz was assistant to the president of the H.C.S. Motor Car Company from 1920 to 1925 and was receiver for the company from 1925 to 1927. In 1927 he organised the Merz Engineering Company and was its president until December 1st, 1939.

"He was the first American holder of the world's 24-Hour Record, made in November, 1905, at the Indianapolis Fair Grounds, and won the famous Elgin Road Race in August, 1912. He had previously won the Panama-Pacific Road Race in San Francisco in February, 1911.

"The Hoosier engineer has been a member of the Society of Automotive Engineers for ten years, and was president of the Indiana section S.A.E. from 1934 to 1935.

"A resident of Indianapolis, Merz is a member of the Indianapolis Rotary Club, and a former member of the governing board of the Indiana Fish and Game Commission.

"He assumed his duties as assistant to the general manager on January 2nd."

The one major European power not at war would like to do peaceful, competitive battle in America this year, and the sports-loving public of the United States have already put in their orders for ring-seats.

In the morning of the New Year, January 15th, tickets went on sale over the counter for the annual 500 Mile International Automobile Race, to be held at Indianapolis on Decoration Day, May 30th, with the mail order business showing a definite upward trend over last year, when the greatest mid-week crowd witnessed the event.

Two factors are said to contribute to this early interest. One, for the first time in twenty years, the race was won last year by a foreign-made car, an Italian Maserati, piloted by a local boy, Wilbur Shaw, who hung up his second big-time victory. Two, because of an intense interest among the Italians to send over a team of cars this year to challenge the best that American racing minds can devise to seek the ultimate in sustained speed on the ground.

Word from Italy indicates that the Italians are eager to participate in every major racing competition now that the Germans are out of the picture because of war conditions, and manufacturers of the Alfa-Romeos are honestly concerned about the showing of their Maserati rivals last year.

Last year's winner, a spanking new Maserati, owned by Mike Boyle, the Chicago racing enthusiast, will definitely return to defend its honours and there is a possibility that Boyle will have a newer Italian car in his usually effective team.

"Mail orders for tickets have been pouring in, and we officially opened the ticket sale on January 15th, with an encouraging gain over last year," said T. E. "Pop" Myers. "I have no doubt but that the foreign victory, accomplished in such a spectacular fashion, has brought considerable new interest in the automobile race classic at Indianapolis.

"There is another point of interest that many may have missed in the excitement of speed last year, and which again proves that the Indianapolis Motor Speedway continues to be the great outdoor laboratory of the automotive industry in America. For years, men have dreamed of a substitute for gasoline as a motor car fuel. It is significant that in last year's race both the winning car and the car to finish second were powered with pure and unadulterated alcohol. This does not particularly mean that alcohol, as a fuel, is challenging gasoline, but it does mean that the Indianapolis Motor Speedway was the medium of actual competition last year which demonstrated that this type of fuel would carry racing cars fast and far.

"We look for an increase over last year's mid-week record this year as we read the trend in the advance request for tickets."

ERSATZ HEROES?

Under this heading in the daily paper for which she writes, Mrs. Kay Petre had an article some time ago, which we consider to be in distinctly bad taste. She suggested that the German racing drivers might need all the "glitter and glamour" of the race-course to inspire them to death-defying deeds, and that they might find fighting for the Fatherland in the air, in U-boats, or awaiting zero hour behind the Siegfried Line, less to their liking. Less to everyone's liking, we should say, but the racing drivers of both countries should make good

soldiers. Quite why Mrs. Petre should take it on herself to suggest that the slow, methodical German temperament is not suited to motor-racing, and that the German drivers have "nerves of steel" only in a racing-car, we do not know. She conveniently forgets Lang, Caracciola and Stuck as drivers and quotes Nuvolari, Kautz, Baumer and Seaman as "foreign" drivers who were found essential to the German teams—whereas we all know that so specialised is the job of driving a modern G.P. car, that no one country can produce more than a few

first line drivers, and Germany has produced more than most. Mrs. Petre mentions that Caracciola has "fled to Switzerland for safety during the war," and so has Hans Stuck. Nevertheless, we believe other German drivers have been serving just as our drivers have, and substantiation is given by the recent announcement that racing personnel are to be excused military service now that Korpsfuhrer Huhnlein is contemplating racing in Germany and Italy this year.

THE APPEAL OF THE VINTAGE SPORTS-CAR

[IN THIS INFORMATIVE ARTICLE CECIL CLUTTON EXPLAINS THE APPEAL OF THE VINTAGE SPORTS-CAR AND GOES ON TO GIVE VALUABLE DATA RELATING TO SOME OF THE MORE FAMOUS SPORTS AND FAST TOURING CARS OF THE PERIOD 1920-1930. WE ARE OFTEN CHIDED FOR PUTTING IN SO MANY REFERENCES TO EDWARDIAN AND VINTAGE MOTORS, BUT THE VINTAGE S.C.C., FOR OWNERS OF PRE-1931 CARS, HAD A TREMENDOUS FOLLOWING WHEN WAR BROKE OUT—SOME 500 ENTHUSIASTS CANNOT BE WRONG.—ED.]

A SHORT time ago an effusion from this pen entitled "Driving the Edwardians," burst upon your startled vision through the medium of these pages. Now, the Editor has asked me to throw a few words together under the inscription you see above. Had he not waited till the paper was practically due to go to press I could have suggested several people capable of doing the job much better; but as there is no time for prevarication I must do my best.

Five years ago, a vintage sports-car was the normal mount for the not-so-rich enthusiast, but now, the youngest vintage car is ten years old, and any sports-car over ten years old, having led a normal life, is due for a major overhaul. And so it is that numbers of these machines are going off the road, and there must be a large number of younger enthusiasts who are hardly acquainted with the type.

Before talking about individual makes, it would perhaps be as well to define the appeal of vintage sports-cars as a whole.

Performance was arrived at by the combination of a relatively large, not-too-high efficiency engine with a good power-weight ratio. This gave that essential of comfortable touring—a high cruising speed at low revs. Modern sports-cars, despite their excessive weight, are frequently capable of an amazingly high maximum, but the low axle ratios now current make them so fearfully busy, that their cruising speed is seldom equal to that of similar vintage machines.

Controllability was studied by means of careful weight distribution, putting the engine well back in the chassis, and extremely positive, fairly high-g geared steering.

After 1930, the salesman took charge of the motor business and put the designer in the background. The salesman decreed that he must have larger bodies on a smaller wheel-base; a steering gear that could be worked with one finger at 10 m.p.h.; and suspension that smoothed out all shocks at the lowest speeds. All this killed the vintage car, though it is quite in keeping with the trend of all modern commerce; namely, that it isn't what you make—it's the way you sell it that counts.

It is, of course, true that this has finally produced the modern types of independent suspension which are at once soft and safe; but that is a thing that can hardly be accounted to the virtue of the sales department.

The real enthusiast does his own maintenance, if he has time, and in any case, he likes to know that he can get at anything that needs attention on the road without first having to remove most of

the coachwork. The vintage designer laid great stress on simplicity and accessibility; nothing unnecessary to achieve results was permitted to clutter up the machinery. The true connoisseur will always have a loathing of frills and shams; his pride of ownership rests in the fine workmanship and mechanical finish under the bonnet, rather than in bright cellulose, strips of chromium, imitation overhead valve covers, and a white swimming hat.

From the personal point of view, there is an endless fund of pleasure to be derived from that sense of being all in one piece with the machinery—everything depends upon the driver. He must understand the correct use of the spark, and, very likely, mixture control. The best performance will only be obtained by an intelligent use of the crash-type gearbox, manipulated through a stiff, reasonably short gear lever. All the time, too, the driver is listening to the engine note, which, when driving hard, frequently has something important to say, that would be quite drowned by Radio Luxembourg, braying forth the merits of the latest vegetable laxative. How different all this from the average cheap modern sports-car (so-called), with its wireless set, automatic clutch and spark control, foolproof gears, spongy steering and an engine smothered up (both visually and audibly) to the utmost possible extent. No driver is ever the worse for being able to change gear properly, and most of us can name the famous young racing driver who has never once raced on a crash-type box without breaking it.

At long last, we are again approaching an era of sensible design, and the designer has once more triumphed over the tyranny of the salesman by producing machines which at once conform to the requirements of his sales-patter and those of the connoisseur-enthusiast. It is not difficult to name the Vintage cars of to-morrow—all logical developments of vintage motoring, but having overcome the deficiencies that were then inherent and unavoidable. Such names as Bugatti, Rolls-Bentley, H.R.G., Lancia Aprilia, and Delage D.6.70 come at once to mind, and there are other worthy examples.

In short, the vintage enthusiast is not a queer person who takes no interest in a car till it is practically falling to pieces; he merely insists on fine workmanship, good performance and controllability as prime essentials, set before all other considerations; and as few of us can afford these things in a new car, we get them where we can. Most vintage cars can now be bought for less than £100, and for the expenditure of a further £100 on a comprehensive overhaul you

can go motoring with every confidence in reaching your destination without mechanical misadventure, and of passing most cars of similar capacity on the way.

There are four vintage cars that stick out a mile in my own mind. They are the side-valve (E-type) 30/98 Vauxhall, 3-litre short-chassis Bentley, Anzani-engined Frazer-Nash and "12-50" Alvis.

The 30/98 comes first on the scene; it was the first British car to hold its own with the great Continental makes and practically the only creditable English sports-car of the immediately post-1918 period. It is always said to have been designed to attack the Shelsley record in 1913, which it did in the hands of Higginson, to the powerful tune of 55 seconds—a wonderful achievement, remembering the state of the course at that time—a mass of dust and loose stones. As sold, it had a light four-seater aluminium body and domed aluminium wings which, with the well-known Vauxhall radiator, conspired to an appearance which was at once dignified and dashing. The price in 1921 was about £1,675.

The engine dimensions were 98×150, giving a capacity of 4,526 c.c. An unbalanced crankshaft ran in five bearings and was connected to the very light, Ricardo-designed aluminium "slipper" pistons by stout steel rods. The cylinder block and head was all in one casting and fitted with valve-caps. Despite its great size it could be carried by one person of normal strength.

The engine and gearbox were all carried in that excellent device, the sub-frame.

The clutch was a really superb example of the multi-plate variety (I forget the exact number of plates—thirty-five or thereabouts) and drove through the very silent gearbox to the straight cut (and, also, marvellously silent) crown wheel and pinion, giving a final ratio of 3 to 1. Torque reaction was taken through a torque arm. The overall gear ratios were about 3, 4½, 7 and 11, and these, with peak revs. of 3,000 and 32 inch wheels, gave maxima of 27, 40 and 60 on the indirect gears. Actually, owing to the excellent power offered at low revs. there was little advantage to be gained in exceeding 15, 30 and 45, and the big engine would pull away smoothly from 10 m.p.h. in top gear. Whether the engine ever developed the alleged 98 b.h.p. I don't know. There is, after all, no reason why it shouldn't, since it represents only a fraction over 7 b.h.p. per 1,000 r.p.m. per litre. [Or did the figure refer to the cylinder bore? The s.v. is sometimes credited with about 90 horses, the o.h.v. engine with 112 b.h.p. in early form.—Ed.] What is

THE APPEAL OF THE VINTAGE SPORTS-CAR—continued

certain is that its magnificent performance was greatly assisted by the splendid camshaft, designed by Mr. Pomeroy, Senior. It ran at the phenomenal clearance of about 48 thousandths, and most people kept a worn penny of the right thickness for adjusting the tappets.

The electrics (including a dynamo and starter) were, in the manner of their day, quite frankly afterthoughts, but the engine was not difficult to start by hand. As also was fashionable, the brakes (handle for the back wheels; pedal for the transmission) were quite negligible. The handle had an immense travel but little effect, and the foot brake either broke the transmission or locked everything up solid. 820 x 120 tyres offer little resistance to skidding, though things were not so bad on the waterbound macadam road surfaces of the early '20s.

Driving these cars provided a thrill, and demanded a technique all its own. To begin with, the car had a most outstanding personality, that indefinable quality that makes or mars a car for the enthusiast, and which frequently chains him for years to a machine of the most overwhelming unreliability. The big engine has a quite unmistakable exhaust note, and though it is far from unobtrusive, it runs entirely smoothly throughout its range of 3,000 r.p.m., in the sense that there is no trace of any "period." I imagine that something closely approaching full power is developed by 2,000 r.p.m., and the performance tails off badly higher up. This suggests that a light boost of, say, 3 lbs. would have interesting results. Still, power low down is the most useful for touring, and up to about 60, a 30/98 has few masters. The gearbox and clutch, too, help enormously. The clutch can be let in with a bang at about 1,500 r.p.m. or more, and almost at once a straight-through change to second can be effected with the throttle left fully open. The gate prevents a racing change from second to third, but using the clutch stop it can be effected quite smartly. Third to top is done in the same way as first to second.

Clearly, these methods are not for everyday use, as in the end they tend to wear out the machinery; but they are invaluable for the occasional "tear-up." Normal upward changes, without the clutch, demand a wait in neutral of around 5 seconds. There is no actual cruising speed, but the sluggish acceleration at over 65 makes that a customary figure and represents about 2,000 r.p.m. The weight distribution is splendid and the road-holding on reasonably smooth roads leaves little to be desired. Unfortunately, the cars were not supplied with shock-absorbers as standard, and if you fit them and button them up fairly tight they either break their brackets or tear holes in the chassis. This is one of the worst snags about the car, as damping is really necessary at the back, since otherwise one is apt to find violent wheelspin setting in at about 70 m.p.h.! In front, strangely enough, it doesn't matter so much, since the very light axle assembly follows the contours of the road much more easily than the heavy modern f.w.b. axle. The light axle also makes

the steering wonderfully accurate, aided by the high ratio of about 1½ turns from lock to lock. I doubt whether half-a-dozen serviceable side-valve 30/98's still exist, and I recently acquired a very sound example to ensure that at least one should be preserved as a memorial to their fame.

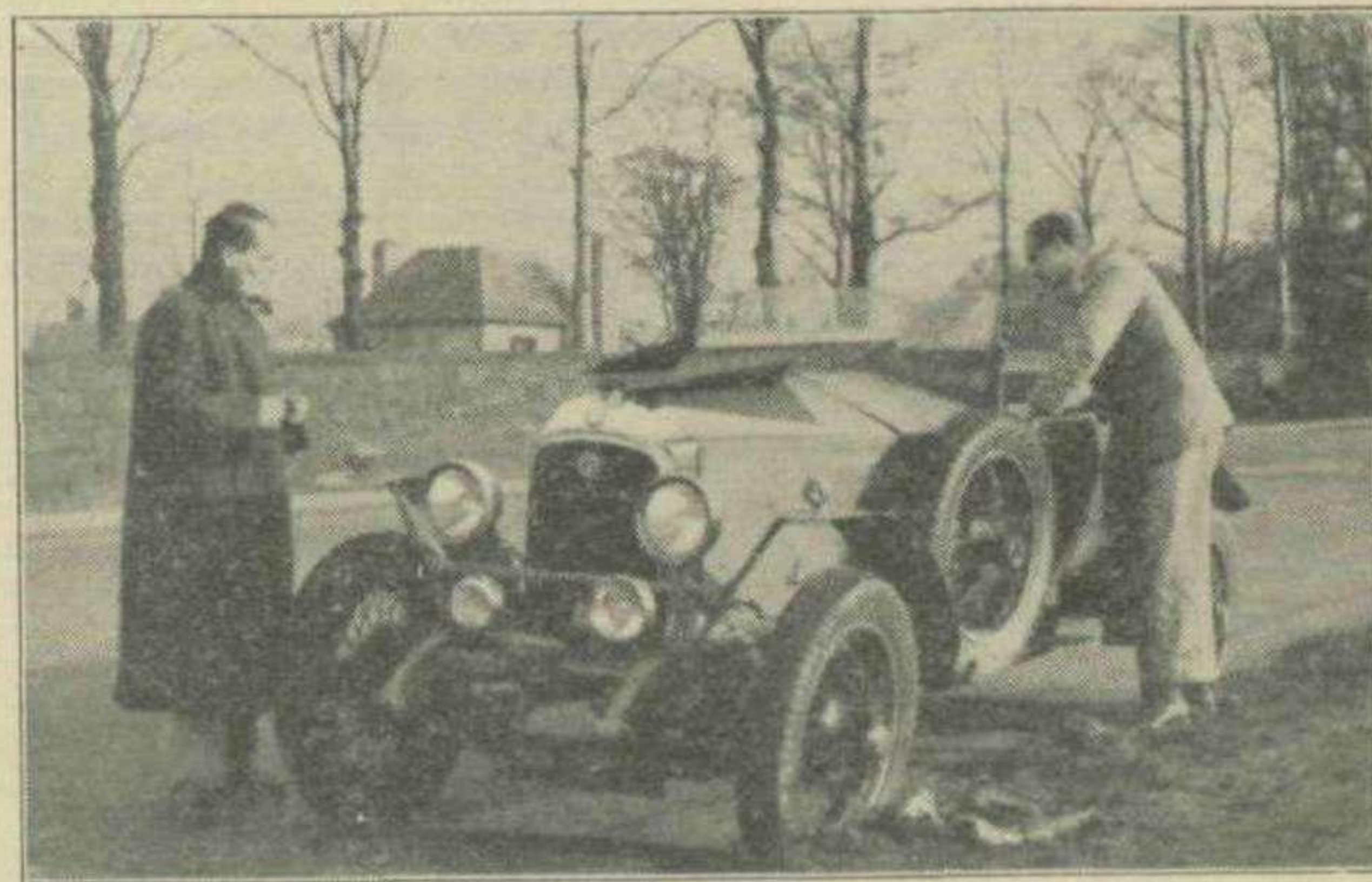
The useful maximum was around 75-80, but I have exceeded 90 on an E. type.

Some of the personality of the E-type was lost with the introduction of the O.E.-type in 1924, though the performance higher up was improved. These engines had a stroke of 140 only, duralumin rods which were not entirely satisfactory, and duralumin push-rods which would have made splendid stair-rods, had they been a little longer, but are quite unequal to their intended use—at least, when the compression had been raised. The crankshafts remained unbalanced till 1927, but the revs. were put up to 3,300, and the axle ratio down to 3.3. Front brakes operated by cable and the famous "Kidney box" in front of the radiator came in 1925, but a host of excellent reasons prevented them from working for any length of time, and most people later substituted D.M.S., Delage or Bentley front axles. It was then as well to strengthen the chassis in front. In standard form the O.E. is not a desperately exciting motor, but it is capable of being "dealt with" to a much greater extent than the E-type, and such cars as Anthony Heal's, Clive

One then picks up any metal objects on the tray between the thumb and forefinger of the right hand, throws them lightly over the left shoulder, replaces the tray, and continues motoring. On the other hand, if any piece is too large to be picked up between the thumb and forefinger it is as well to pull the engine apart and find where it came from. As against this, the 30/98 engine will continue to run perfectly satisfactorily even when in the last stages of decay.

In the opinion of John Bolster, who ran one for many years, the road-holding of the O.E. can be made practically second to none if the weight distribution is minutely studied, and any overhanging weight at the back entirely avoided.

It is frequently done to compare the 30/98 with the 4½-litre Bentley, but it must be remembered that the manufacture of 30/98s had almost entirely ceased by the time the first 4½s reached the market. Nor do I think the 4½-litre a very attractive car in standard form. The engine is very woolly and the gear ratios widely spaced in the normal C-type box. The relatively rare Le Mans type 4½ is quite a different vehicle. The whole feeling is much more taut and alive, both as to the engine, steering and general performance. The close ratio, D type box, too, is a joy for ever. In round figures (throughout this article I am writing almost entirely from memory,



The Author (left) on the road with an O.E. "30/98" Vauxhall.

Windsor-Richards's and Ronny Hughes's machines [also Alan May's.—Ed.] perform in a really big way. In 1927 came the last model, with a magnificent balanced crank, still in five bearings, and capable of turning over at 3,500 r.p.m. They also had stupendous brake drums with hydraulic operation of a highly complex nature; but an even greater host of reasons than before prevented these from working on practically any occasion whatever.

Not the least endearing feature of the 30/98 is a large tray of copper gauze, covering the whole area of the sump and lying immediately below the crankshaft. This is held in by four nuts at the front of the crankcase, and it is at intervals pulled out, just like an ordinary drawer.

and subject to detail correction) the ratios are 3.53, 4.8, 5.9 and 9.5 to 1, and with big wheels and over 3,500 r.p.m. available, very high maxima of about 40, 65 and 80 are available on the indirect gears. On the hotted-up cars a maximum of 95 was not unusual. Only yesterday I was driving a superior edition of this type—one of the ex-Birkin "Double-Twelve" machines. The slightly special engine will run up to 4,000 r.p.m. with miraculous smoothness and a more satisfying car for the open country could hardly be devised. When in good trim it will do 104 m.p.h., but at the moment nothing has been touched for 30,000 miles, which has included London pottering, flat out driving and standing in the open in all weathers. Yet the

THE APPEAL OF THE VINTAGE SPORTS-CAR—continued

performance seems hardly to have dropped by 5 per cent. and only a few rattles betray the life it has led.

These cars are in all ways a big edition of the short-chassis 3-litre Bentley which attained an almost overwhelming popularity in this country and is typical of the very best of English sports-car design of the '20s. Even to-day they are difficult to beat over a distance and make an absolutely reliable everyday hack.

The specification of course is well known. The engine dimensions are 80 x 149, giving the modest Treasury rating of 16 h.p. An overhead camshaft, shaft driven from the front end, prods four valves per cylinder, and two 45° S.U.s are bolted straight on to the block. Twin M.L. magnetos are provided, and, while one can manage on one if the other packs up, the engine will then pink like the bell on a fire-engine.

A cone clutch leads to the A-type gearbox, giving the same ratios as the D-type, and the axle ratio was variously 3.53 or 3.78 to 1. The back axle was the weakest part of the machine and to be treated with respect. The accessories were really designed with the car, and 100 per cent. reliable, as also were the brakes. The engine ran up to 3,500 r.p.m., and the earlier ones generally had two vibration periods; one belonging to the camshaft, at 2,000 r.p.m. and the other belonging to the crankshaft at about 2,800 r.p.m. The latter can be rather terrifying on some cars, though fortunately the engine is flexibly mounted. In 1926, an improved camshaft (running at 19 thou. clearance instead of 5 thou.) and a heavier crankshaft (all models have five bearings) made for much smoother running. The weight distribution is as good as may be, and it is difficult to think of any British car, in standard form, that has better road-holding.

Desperately slow off the mark, they wind themselves up in an astonishing way, and at over 35 they still take some passing, while, with industrious use of the gearbox, really creditable averages can be put up. Rapid upward changes are not good for the back axle,

and in any case, the clutch stop requires constant tinkering to be kept 100 per cent. Personally, I hardly ever use the clutch on a Bentley, as the gears go in like butter. Toe-and-heel changes are not practicable owing to the pedal layout, but by doing without the clutch, the right foot can be used solely for braking and the left foot moved over to the accelerator pedal, to make the necessary adjustment in the speed of the engine before engaging the lower gear. The standard steering ratio is very quick, and also kicks a good deal. If fat tyres are fitted it also becomes very heavy, and in several cases a 4½-litre type steering box has been fitted. This takes about 2½ turns from lock to lock, which I regard as ideal for normal touring, though I consider 2½ turns to be the maximum.

I must confess that, from about 1924 onwards, I think the 3-litre Bentley really had the 30/98 "taped." It was not as fast, but it was much more of a designed car, and more practicable for the everyday use of an ordinary motorist. With the possible exception of the universal joints (which it is as well to replace by Hardy Spicers) and the back axle, the whole machine is a marvel of reliability and can easily run for 30,000 miles and more without attention. Even by modern standards, too, it is a very handsome car.

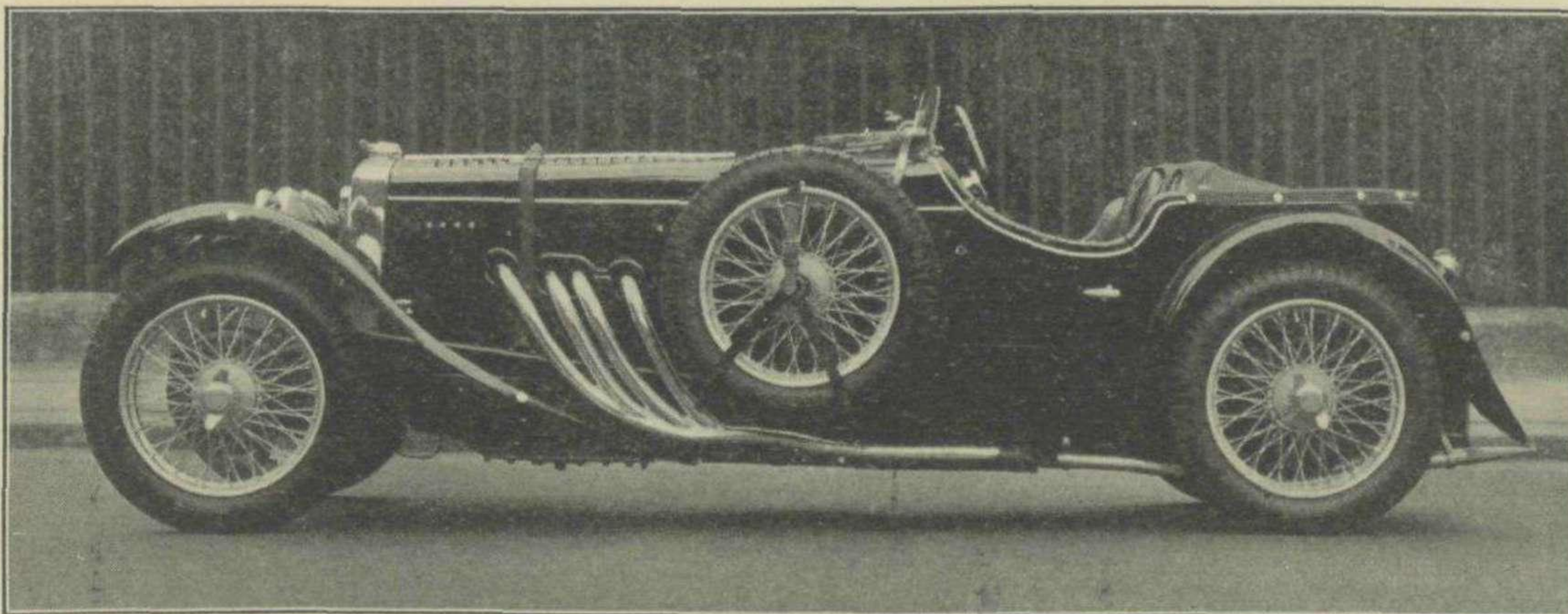
In the smaller capacity classes, the 2-litre Lagonda was, in performance and general character, a small edition of the Bentley, and enjoyed considerable popularity; it was not, however, a very exciting motor and did not, to my mind, compare with the 12/50 or Silver Eagle Alvis, both of which were immoderately reliable, and thoroughly practicable as everyday runabouts. In standard form they were not outrageously fast, but they performed in a perfectly charming way, and their capacity for staying in one piece, coupled with excellent road-holding, brings astonishing averages within their reach.

At the same time, both types were capable of very high tuning, as both Anthony Powys-Lybbe and Michael May have shown. In my very humble opinion

these two are among the finest British drivers of this decade, though they have never had mounts that brought big successes within their reach. Many people must have regretted the day when Powys-Lybbe gave up racing.

Of more definitely sporting calibre was the Frazer-Nash, first introduced on the market in 1924, with the famous side-valve Anzani engine. This astonishing 1½-litre power unit weighed, I believe, only 166 pounds and produced about 45 b.h.p. at only 3,600 r.p.m., which, if memory serves, was the limit of the ordinary engine, though special jobs ran to 4,000 and over. The engine was not very susceptible to tuning, and I believe none ever got more than 55 b.h.p. unblown. A few blown ones were produced, and beyond the fact that they almost invariably cracked the bottom flange of the cylinder block they were very successful, exceeding 100 m.p.h. in the Nash chassis. In ordinary touring form they produced a wonderful lot of power at low revs. and I once, for amusement, let my Nash climb the whole of the not inconsiderable gradient of St. James's Street in top gear at a tick-over of less than 400 r.p.m. Owing to this feature, and the very light weight of the complete car—about 13 cwt.—three speeds were quite adequate for all purposes. The ordinary ratios were 4.1, 6.2 and 10.1 to 1, giving maxima of about 30, 50 and 70, and a cruising speed of 60 at 3,000 r.p.m. Some were sent out with ratios as high as 3.5, 5.4 and 10.1 to 1, but the engine was not really equal to it.

The Frazer-Nash system of transmission is well known, and what a wonderful system it is, for a light car of moderate horsepower. There is nothing quite like the change on a 'Nash—that quick snick with a flick to the throttle and slight easing of the clutch. The steering, too, is immensely positive, and a ratio requiring ¾ turn from lock to lock was considered quite low. As the brakes were really good from 1925 onwards the early 'Nashes were very formidable cars and probably had no widely produced rival in the 1½-litre class. Their price, moreover, was exceedingly moderate by standards then prevailing. The acceleration was really



The inimitable Frazer-Nash—here seen in quite modern guise.

THE APPEAL OF THE VINTAGE SPORTS-CAR—continued

formidable, and a 1924 model which I owned in 1934 would do 0-50 in 12 seconds with two up; 0-30 took about 4 seconds:

Quarter elliptic springs and radius rods were fitted all round, and in front (as with the H.R.G.) the front radius rods were also the shock-absorbers, besides taking most of the braking torque. The shock-absorber arm was fixed to the axle with a stupid little wooden bush which at intervals disintegrated and fell on to the road. This produced very startling effects on the steering when next the brakes were applied. The chassis was very light and slightly braced, and when driving over trials country one could feel the whole bedstead weaving about under the seat in a most unsettling manner. Incidentally, I once got the 'Nash up Jenkins Chapel on the 10.1 bottom gear, carrying quite a heavy passenger; a feat of which I have always been rather proud.

The gear change was a little unusual, as bottom and second were both forward. Since reverse was opposite bottom, and there was no reverse catch, any mis-judgment was very wearing on the toothed wheels of reverse. On the other hand, the arrangement had a lot to commend it in tests of the come-and-go variety.

The Anzani engine was rough and dirty, and somewhat agricultural in appearance, but the cars themselves were as handsome as they were lovable. Considering their light weight, too, they were wonderfully reliable, and many of them covered over 100,000 miles before they began to want much attention.

Chain breakages were extremely rare unless the most brutal methods were consistently employed. Around 1930 came the Meadows-engined job, slightly heavier, and carrying four speeds. Customary ratios for touring were 3.8, 4.8, 7 and 11.75, giving maxima of about 35, 60, and 88 in third or top. For racing or hurrying, however, the admirable spacing of 4.1, 5.4, 7 and 10 was usual. Later on, more and more weight came to be added, and though this was to some extent counteracted by more power output, the performance in unblown form was never materially improved after 1930.

It is now rather the fashion to suggest that 'Nashes do not really hold the road; but in reply, I suggest that no one who used to watch Fane or Aldington and others on the Mountain Circuit, and Roy Cutler at the present day, can seriously maintain it. I do not say that they corner quite like a modern sports-car, but with an energetic driver, they can be fought round a corner at a speed which few are likely to surpass. The solid axle, too, makes their braking on wet roads second to none, though, on the other hand, it is apt to generate front wheel skids when cornering under power. These, however, can be corrected by a touch on the hand brake, which works on the rear brakes only.

The French made one or two light sports-cars such as Amilcar and Salmson,

but except for Bugatti, their small sports-cars have never greatly impressed me. Bugatti, however, provided almost the only serious challenge to Frazer-Nashes in the 1½-litre class, with the Brescia (type 23) and touring 1½-litre (type 40) models. These both had four cylinders and plain bearings, and the latter, especially, gave very stalwart service, having a maximum of about 70 m.p.h. The axle ratio was rather low (4.5 or 4.66 according to choice) as against 3.75 of the earlier Brescia, which was first produced in 1923. The type 40 appeared in 1926.

I am purposely not concerning myself here with semi-racing cars, or very large cars of over 25 h.p., but the other two really tourable Bugattis of the vintage era were the type 44, produced in 1927, and the type 49, which first appeared in 1930.

Both, of course, were straight eights. The type 44 was a 3-litre, single o.h.c., and was capable of 80 m.p.h. at 4,000 r.p.m., at which speed it could even be cruised for quite long periods. The earlier models were rather rough, subject to plug trouble, and had rather a crude system of jet lubrication. The later models, however, entirely overcame all these troubles, and had a sound system of pressure feed lubrication. They were exceptionally reliable, wonderful starters, and extremely flexible. They will pull away really well from about 10-12 m.p.h. in top, while if the excellent gearbox (ratios 4.17, 5.37, 7.51 and 11.6 to 1) be used, the performance is very pronounced indeed. Many of these cars carried quite large, and generally repellently hideous saloons, and are among the most comfortable cars I know.

The type 49 was really a sort of bridge between the type 44 and current, double cam, type 57, series.

Like the 44, it had a single camshaft, but ignition was by twin coils, firing 16

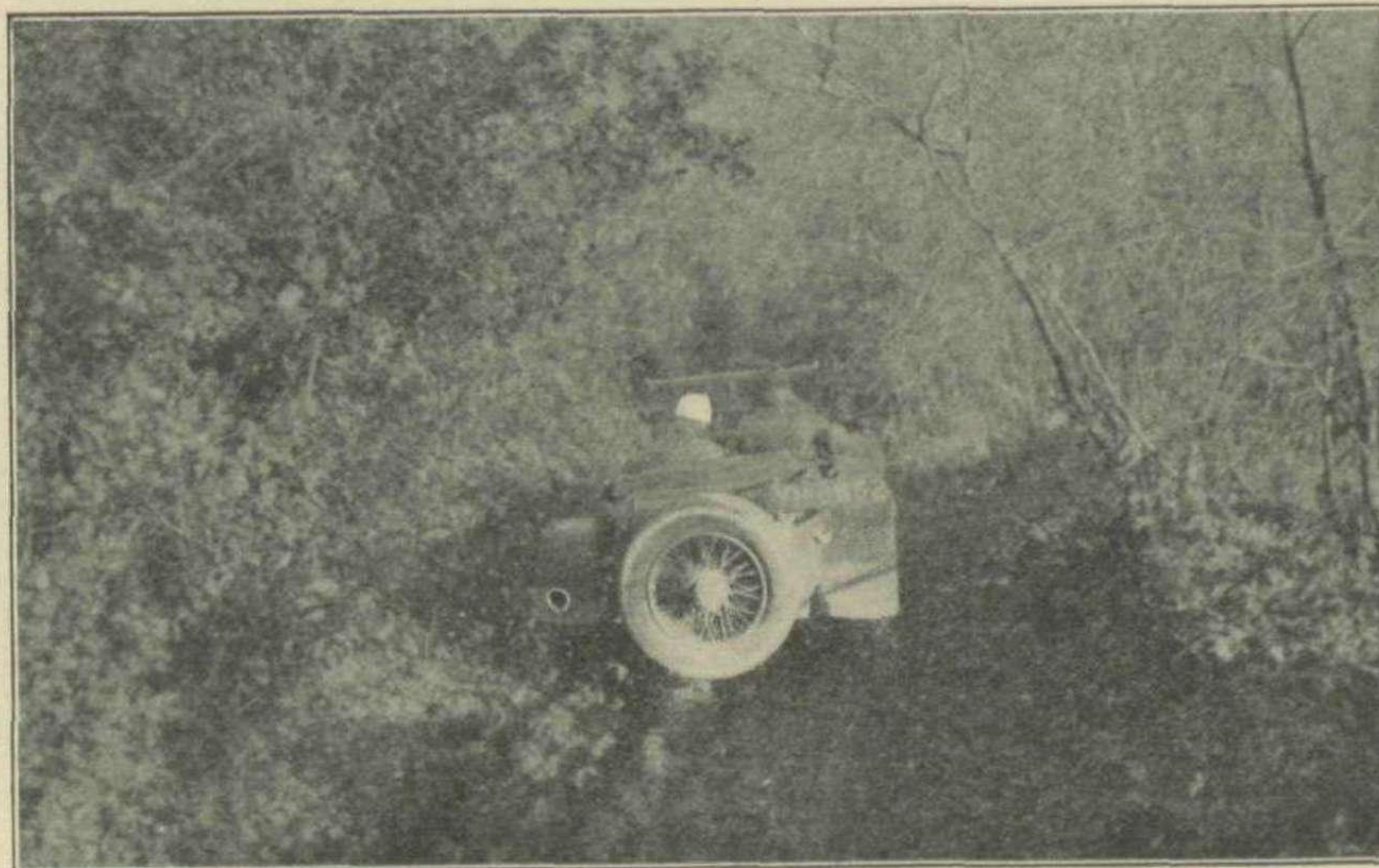
plugs all in a row, which look extremely peculiar. The gear ratios were the same as the 44, and the maximum was about 90 m.p.h. Extraordinary flexibility was again a feature of this model and both it and the 44 were exceptionally economical on petrol. The type 49 has outstandingly powerful brakes.

There is, of course, no need to dwell on Bugatti steering and road-holding. From Black Bess up to the 57SC there has never been anything on the market to touch it.

In the even smaller classes come the early 850 c.c. M.G.s, Austin Sevens and Riley Nines. They were, however, mere premonitions of things to come, and not truly characteristic of the vintage period. Thoroughly outstanding as they were, I do not therefore propose to touch upon them in this already overlong article.

Not strictly sports-cars, yet owned by many enthusiasts because of their pleasing personality and good all-round performance, come a series of fast touring cars—mainly of Continental parentage. An exception, however, was the range of Sunbeams available during the '20s; especially the 16 h.p. six-cylinder model, which has a performance, that is typically Sunbeam, combining all the essential characteristics of a sports-car with complete reliability and the very utmost refinement. To ride in a Sunbeam at once produces a feeling of well-being and general superiority; a car in which to go motoring in a beret or a top hat with equal propriety.

Genuinely sporting was the double camshaft, six-cylinder, 3-litre. This still possessed the typical Sunbeam balance and general refinement, but in good order it would approach 90 m.p.h. 4,000 r.p.m. was the engine limit and, as also seemed a Sunbeam characteristic, there was a fair gap between top and third, the lower three ratios being rather



A Lambda Lancia tries a trials hill.

THE APPEAL OF THE VINTAGE SPORTS-CAR—continued

close together. The revs. rose very quickly, and one had to be very careful not to outrun the constable.

A serious trouble to which these cars seem to have been subject was cracked cylinder blocks, and in the wet they also went in for front wheel skidding in a large way. In fact, Toby, brother of Michael May, and perhaps his equal in steersmanship, who at one time ran a 3-litre Sunbeam, used to put his smooth tyres on the front, and good ones on the back, on the principle that, on a wet road, one had more control over the direction of the car by skilful acceleration with the back wheels, than by anything you might do to the steering handle.

From abroad, the outstanding makers of fast tourers were Ballot, Delage and Lancia. The Lancia Lambda appeared in eight series, of which only the short chassis 5th can really be considered a sports-car. The rest mostly have a tremendous wheelbase and carry endless, box-like saloons. The narrow V engine (all in one block) is not, by nature, smooth, but it plugs along on its high ratio at an excellent cruising speed, and as the cornering and braking are second to none, a Lambda can cover the ground as well as most; it is, moreover, extremely comfortable. For sporting use, the wide gap between top and third is inconvenient, though third and second are very close. The normal rev. limit is about 3,000, but the engines are capable of a lot of hotting, when the revs. may be put as high as 5,000, and the gap between top and third no longer becomes such a menace. The system of front suspension is too well known to call for comment, and it continues to-day (together with the characteristic but not unpleasing kick of the steering wheel) in that triumphant machine, the Lancia Aprilia.

Incidentally, the Lancia instruction book contains some very eccentric reading. The following (quoting from memory) is a cheerful example: "Do not accost a naked flame to the inferior of the battery of accumulators or it will ignite with a loud noise." There is also a riotous passage about dismantling the "anterior suspension," but the *double entendre* is so painfully obvious and so excessively improper that I hesitate to reproduce it between the chaste covers of MOTOR SPORT!

An almost equally humorous instruction book is that of the Delage. Among other delightful passages is one in which the mysteries of gear changing are expounded. In changing upwards through the indirect gears the driver is advised

"to pause a moment at neutral position before to throw gears in." Between third and top, however, there is no such prudery, and he is incited to "pull frankly the lever towards driver."

The Delage is another splendid fast tourer of no very outstanding performance. The two best-known models are the D.I.S.S. 2-litre, four-cylinder, and the D.M.S. 3-litre, six-cylinder. Given time, the D.I.S.S. would wind itself up to 75 m.p.h. and a good D.M.S. might be good for 85, as well as accelerating quite a good deal. General excellence of design and workmanship, good brakes and road-holding again completed a very pleasant and serviceable vehicle. If these two models had a fault, it was a tendency on the part of the push-rods not to push the valves quite in the manner expected of them.

Even more outstanding of the "battleship class" to my mind was the 2-litre, type 2 LTS Ballot. There were, indeed, rather more sporting models, but the characteristic 2 LTS generally carried a monumental saloon Weymann body. The engine had four cylinders, measuring 70 x 130, giving a swept capacity of just under 2-litres and a Treasury rating of 14 h.p. It was a most massive unit with a single overhead camshaft which was subject to the only weakness in the whole design. In the middle of the camshaft was one cam with four bobbles on it, and a rocker was kept in contact with it by two massive coil springs in tension. The whole outfit operated as a camshaft damper, but the springs were subject to breakage, after which the vibration was nobody's business. The camshaft, incidentally, was driven by a shaft at the front end. In justice to the makers, however, it should be added that, once you got a pair of springs that would stay put at all, they probably ran for a very long time without further trouble.

The engine was very smooth and silent, and ran up to 4,000 r.p.m., when, I believe, it developed 60 b.h.p. The axle ratio was as low as about 4.7, but in conjunction with the standard 32-inch wheels, the cruising speed could be kept as high as 64 m.p.h., equal to 3,200 r.p.m. The effective maximum was 75 m.p.h. and about 50 m.p.h. in third, the ratios being widely spaced and the change extremely slow, especially between second and third. One could, in point of fact, do snap changes from third to top, but after a time the clutch plate would tend to buckle under such treatment.

The brakes were servo assisted, and with the possible exception of Hispano

Suiza I doubt whether they had any rival when first introduced. The servo mechanism was a terrific bag of tricks, but once satisfactorily adjusted, you could well forget all about the brakes for many thousands of miles. The electrics, too, were very reliable, and the charging equipment was of the permanent voltage variety, capable of fantastic amperage in moments of stress, for which reason, doubtless, no ammeter was fitted. Nor was there any oil pressure gauge.

The body was of majestic proportions, and the depth of upholstery and comfort of the seats is exceeded by few domestic chairs. The riding of the car, too, was very comfortable and the road-holding and cornering of a high order, despite the fact that shock-absorbers were not generally supplied as standard. The great width and rigidity of the chassis was doubtless responsible for this. The radiator must have been one of the first examples of chromium-plating, and the false shell. It is exceptionally handsome, even by modern standards, and was largely responsible for the distinguished appearance of the *tout ensemble*.

Where strength was needed, everything was of the most massive proportions, yet the chassis only weighed a ton, and the whole outfit with saloon scaled less than 30 cwt., though it looked every ounce of 2 tons.

Considering the date of design (around 1924-5) and the relative size of engine and car I do not think the performance and reliability of the 2-litre Ballot can be too highly praised, and provide yet another example of the far greater utility of good b.h.p. at moderate revs., rather than a tremendous output at such high crankshaft speeds that the engine is in imminent danger of disintegration.

Many excellent cars remain unsung—such names as Austro-Daimler and Mercedes instantly come to mind; nor has anything been said of the vast horde of terribly bad cars that were fobbed off on the public during the '20s; but I hope that enough has been said to cover every important aspect of the vintage sports-car, considered in the light of development during the last ten years.

During those ten years, much has been gained and much has been lost, so far as the enthusiast is concerned; but even allowing for a comprehensive overhaul, the better vintage cars are still capable of giving unrivalled value for money in the shape of fast motoring, reliability, and discriminating pride of possession.

A NEW ASPECT OF A.R.P.

Up to now, the driving of A.R.P. vehicles has not called for any particular degree of skill, nor have conditions prevailing at many depots been such as to encourage the keen sports-car owner and other experienced fast-car drivers to volunteer for part or whole-time service. However, some interest attaches to the announcement that in a case of emergency inter-town exercises may be put into operation, demolition and first-aid squads, etc., being rushed to heavily-

bombed areas. On January 21st a rally of some 300 A.R.P. vehicles was held at Chatham, and many cars came from as far afield as the London area. Drivers and personnel have been issued with kit-bags containing blankets and cutlery, apparently with the need for transference of headquarters in mind. While we doubt whether this news will induce enthusiasts to enrol for service, it does make paid A.R.P. duties of rather more interest to expert drivers whose jobs in the

motor trade may have been sacrificed by war conditions. And certainly for real efficiency in long-distance A.R.P. transportation such drivers are the folk who should have the jobs—in preference to the present largely untested, frequently family-car style of drivers we find at London's biggest depots—not forgetting the ingenious persons who, in the beginning, got themselves enrolled as drivers although they did not hold a driver's licence!

Letters from Readers

Sir,

So many people have written to you thanking you for carrying on the good work in these troubled times that I feel I ought to add my own thanks. I am only one of your more recent readers but would not dream of missing my MOTOR SPORT—even at a bob a copy! Although the bags of gold are hard to come by these days and the possibility of purchasing a real motor remote, it is good to read road tests of such cars as the 1½-litre H.R.G. My own car is a "P" type M.G. Midget, a very ordinary sports-car by your very exacting standards, but looked after, and still able to show 6,000 r.p.m. on the rev-counter when the occasion demands it. Like a good many people I began on an aged Austin Seven and soon developed a thirst for something possessing a trifle more urge. After scraping, borrowing, and begging cash from a long-suffering parent I managed to buy my present car which had seen good service, but looked as though it would continue to do its stuff for a long while. A rebore to 939 c.c. and a new set of mains and big-ends and polished steel valves helped matters considerably and in addition the crankshaft was reground to remove ovality and one-sixteenth in. was machined off the cylinder-head to raise the compression ratio to 7 to 1. The rear springs were bound with tape, most of the rubber mouldings at chassis lubrication points were renewed and worn interior panelling was replaced with leather-covered panels manufactured at home from 3-ply stripped down to 2-ply. The car was already fitted with racing screens, bonnet straps, etc., and the bodywork had also been recellulosed. After the engine had been carefully run-in the urge was most satisfying for the capacity but trouble was experienced with oil-throwing at the front oil-drain housing in the head. A letter to M.G.s and almost by return of post I received a printed Service Information sheet complete with the necessary machine drawings from which I was able to effect a complete cure. Unfortunately, I recently removed the dynamo for overhaul and had it replaced by a mechanic who put back the vertical camshaft drive incorrectly with the result that she has commenced to throw oil again. This I shall, however, soon put right. No excessive claims for performance are made because I realise fully the limitations of an unblown 939 c.c. motor in a standard chassis. It really is amazing, however, how much stuff I manage to pass and the car will cruise endlessly at 55 m.p.h. to 60 m.p.h. I have clocked 75/80 under favourable conditions, and am thoroughly satisfied with the way she sticks to the road; one can put her round the most awkward bends without the feeling that the off side ditch looks ominously near. The gear-

TO OUR READERS.

Owing to pressure of space we have been compelled to reduce this section to a minimum in recent issues, but we have had so many requests to continue it that we will endeavour to find room for some interesting letters each month.—Ed.

change is first-class—crash all the way through, with constant mesh in third. Bottom gear is a bit low—22.48 to 1—for normal work but would doubtless prove ideal for sticky hills such as one might meet in trials. The latter are not indulged in as finances would not stand up to the usual breakages, but a good deal of pleasure is gained from fast cross-country runs and extensive touring during those all too brief periods of summer leave. I fear, however, that she does not take too kindly to cess-pool petrol, and in fact refused to fire on more than one cylinder with Champion L.A.-11s. She is better with softer plugs but pinking is very much in evidence, and like Mr. Peter Clark, I have suffered from that waxy deposit in my S.U. pistons. The exhaust note has to be heard to be believed.

My next hope is to get hold of a good 1½-litre Aston-Martin when the good Adolf has been sentenced to wood-chopping. This soon I hope.

I am, Yours etc.,

J. THOMAS.

Hillingdon,
Middlesex.

* * *

Sir,

Would it not be possible to publish some details of special cars which have not hitherto appeared in the Press? Two cars, from the same stable, spring to my mind. One, the cut-down, blown and I believe, pre-selected, Singer "Bantam" of Mr. F. R. G. Spikin, which, if my memory serves me, made a habit in 1936 of collecting the 1,100 c.c. class at nearly all sprint events, several times F.T.D., its epic run, I consider, being at those very damp Madresfield Speed trials, in July '36. No technical description ever appeared of this interesting motor, and where it disappeared to I don't know! The other was the twin Centric-blown Hudson Special, built by Hudson Motors, on the Great West Road, for the same Mr. Spikin, and now owned by Mr. G. G. Fitt. These two machines might be covered at the same source, i.e., the original owner. Just a

suggestion to relieve the spate of articles on Vintage cars. Incidentally, what was there special about that rather unusual looking "30-98" T. H. Plowman used to drive, and which went very quickly at the J.C.C. High Speed Trial in '37 and at Donington?

I am, Yours etc.,

H. L. BIGGS.

Enfield,
Middlesex.

[Can any reader give details of these cars?—Ed.]

* * *

Sir,

I was interested to read your remarks about Model Cars, having spent much time and trouble in collecting data, photographs, etc., of various well-known racing and record cars, with a view to building scale-models.

Should any other reader wish to build a model, I am willing to supply copies of drawings (in three views) of such cars as I have "in stock."

You may care, therefore, to publish a note to the effect in your next copy, arranging any letters c/o MOTOR SPORT.

Cars include 2-litre E.R.A., G.P. (1939) Mercedes, F.W.D. Derby-Special, 200 m.p.h. M.G., "Blue-Bird," Monza eight-cylinder Alfa, etc., etc.

Thanking you for keeping MOTOR SPORT going!

I am, Yours etc.,

HAROLD PRATLEY.

South Woodford,
E.18.

* * *

Sir,

Having just received the first "shilling" copy of MOTOR SPORT, may I be permitted to offer my congratulations on a remarkable twelve pennyworth. Especially on the articles by John Bolster and "Hutch" (I'm sure he won't mind me calling him that), and as for "General Notes," well you've turned me "green with envy." So vivid was the account of the adventures with the Ballot that, with a very little imagination, I was soon out on the Oxford By-Pass, watching three real motors, doing some real motoring, a thing all too rare these days, alas!

Also I must not forget "Auslander," the article "Has Racing Helped?" and the very interesting notes on the 12/50 and 12/60 Alvis.

I should like to assure you that I will remain a reader, whatever the price (even if it means missing a lunch now and again), so all the best for 1940.

I am, Yours etc.,

DENIS S. JENKINSON.

London, S.E.23.

LETTERS FROM READERS—continued.

Sir,

Your correspondent of December, 1939, Mr. H. F. Hart, tells of his experiences with a 1½-litre Singer on "Pool" petrol.

It may possibly be of interest to some of your readers to hear how a Type 37 unblown four-cylinder Bugatti reacted to this doubtful concoction.

At first, I was fortunate enough to be able to buy 6 gallons of pure benzole, and this mixed—6 pool to one benzole—made excellent fuel. There was no pinking at all above about 1,800 r.p.m., and acceleration was excellent up to 4,000 r.p.m.

I have now run out of benzole and the Bugatti has some Pool in the tank. I do not know whether I have been peculiarly lucky in getting decent stuff or what, but the car really responds very creditably. Admittedly very careful use of accelerator and ignition are necessary under 2,000 r.p.m., but with reasonable use of the gears, pinking is non-existent. Thirty mile limits have to be negotiated in third, i.e., about 2,000 r.p.m., if there are any ups and downs or much traffic, but if the road is clear and level, there is no pinking in top at 30 m.p.h. (1,500 r.p.m.).

Thus, unless the quality of Pool in my district sinks I am going to continue using the Bugatti whenever possible.

To stray wildly from the subject and crib the idea of another reader who suggests a "History of Bentleys"—would it be possible to have a "History of Bugattis"? I feel "Le Patron" himself would be a wonderful subject for a biography.

I am, Yours etc.,

C. W. L.

Eton College,
Windsor.

* * *

Sir,

I was very interested to read in recent issues of MOTOR SPORT of the enquiries you have been making with a view to establishing the authenticity or otherwise of the report of the death of the Mercedes-Benz driver, Hermann Lang.

I saw in the *East Anglian Daily Times* recently, the report of the death of another famous racing driver, E. G. Burggaller. He died, at the age of forty-four, while leading his squadron over the East Coast in a recent air attack, and was apparently shot down by a British fighter. At the time of his death he held the rank of colonel in the German Air Force.

Burggaller was a Bugatti ace in the early nineteen-thirties, and was also, I believe, a member of the original Auto-Union team. He is more widely remembered, however, as joint author of "Das Autobuch," with Hans Stuck. This excellent book sold to the extent of 40,000 copies in Germany, and was published in England under the title "Motoring Sport," with a foreword by Sir Malcolm Campbell.

I also remember Burggaller as co-driver with Caracciola in the Monte Carlo Rally of 1928, starting from Poland.

I am, Yours etc.,

MARTIN WELLS.

Chelmsford.

* * *

Sir,

I read your article "On the Post-War Trade Boom" with interest. There was a surprising omission, though, when you mentioned the "healthy competition in this luxury car market in the early nineteen-twenties" and that was the 40 h.p. Lanchester. Though its sales were always small it was the only car which really was bracketed with the Rolls-Royce by the cognoscenti.

Apropos a remark in your October number that the war started bringing out some unusual motor cars, I saw a Gwynne for the first time for many years recently. It had about a 15-year-old number-plate.

I am, Yours etc.,

W. STUART BEST.

Godmanston,
Dorchester.

[Yes, we knew we had forgotten one of the early luxury cars. The "Forty" Lanchester, with its o.h. camshaft engine, epicyclic gearbox, and worm-driven rear axle was certainly a famous car. It was developed from the earlier Lanchesters in which the front seat occupants sat one on either side of the engine, and from which breed Tommy Hann evolved his "Softly Catch Monkey." And the post-1918 40 h.p. Lanchester had racing associations, for Parry Thomas lapped Brooklands at over 109 m.p.h. with the Rapson single-seater. We apologise to the Lanchester brothers for this omission.—Ed.]

* * *

Sir,

May I join with other readers of MOTOR SPORT in congratulating you on continuing your publication in spite of the fact that there is no motor sport in the form of racing or trials taking place at the moment.

The sections of your wartime numbers that interest me most are the reminiscences of racing and sports-cars of the 1928-32 era, when the "Wearing of the Green," really meant something in European racing circles.

They appeal to me more especially because I happen to own the 2-litre Lagonda that went to Le Mans in 1929 and also took part in other races at Brooklands. As far as I can gather it was one of a team of four built for racing in that year, but what actually happened to it or who drove it I have never been able to find out, much to my disappointment, and so if anyone can enlighten me as to the past history of these cars, I should be glad.

Might I add that an article on this marque by one who knows might not be out of place, for they were always essentially an enthusiast's car, and after all, if they didn't rake in the pots round about 1929 they have delivered the goods at Le Mans and elsewhere in later years with the 4½-litres and V.12s. As a matter of fact I think we all agree that if the Berlin Battler had remained subdued for another year or so, W. O. Bentley would have shown the Continentals once again that the "Wearing of the Green" really meant something.

I am, Yours etc.,

D. R. HAGEN.

Holt,
Norfolk.

* * *

Sir,

After five months grumbling we seem just as far away as ever from future motor events. Clubs are closing down and doing nothing to help, yet from time to time readers of the various motoring journals burst into print and "wish" that something would be done. Well, wishing won't help. Let's do something.

It seems to me what is needed most is a special club formed for the duration. For want of a better title let's call it "The Duration Motor Sports Club."

We could start off by running one or two small trials, and most important, a rally to Brooklands, where the day could be rounded off by a few speed events. If Brooklands is too much in the grip of the powers that "B," there is always Crystal Palace, or I am certain some place could be found for a little dicing.

One of the features of this club would be to give those who are no longer able to run cars some motoring for fun, on an expense-sharing basis; later, if the club were sufficiently wealthy, to help tax some of the sports-cars which are at the moment laid up, but the bulk of the petrol coupons to be used on club runs.

I doubt if the petrol rations would give us more than one competition event per month, but we could hold a meeting in addition once a month, which means motoring enthusiasts could gather together at least twice per month. Later, as the club grows in strength, we might be able to hold some pukka Brooklands meetings.

Membership fee I suggest should be 5/-, payable every six months, this would encourage a big membership, which would give us strength.

The club would have to be confined to events around London, for the time being, at any rate; but there are plenty of good venues in this area that could provide good fun for everyone.

I feel strongly that a new club is needed to take care of motoring for the duration, and I would be prepared to give a good deal of my spare time to help develop such a club if others would be interested.

I am, Yours etc.,

F. J. AMES.

Welling,
Kent.

THE "MOTOR SPORT" CENSUS

THE response to our suggestion for a Census was most healthy, when you take the normal proportion of letter-sending readers to total circulation, which is a very sober ratio indeed, as all real Editors know. As we expected, enthusiasm amongst real drivers is by no means quenched by the war, and indeed, it is not only extremely pleasant to experience the enthusiasm expressed in this correspondence, but it came as a surprise to find how people have taxed cars for the whole of 1940 and to find how many really hot motors are quoted as still very much in action.

First consider the cars noted as taxed for the whole year; may Sir John blush! H. S. Perkins is running his Meadows-H.R.G. and J. M. Perkins his Lancia Aprilia. Dunn uses a 1½-litre Frazer-Nash-B.M.W. saloon, having laid up his L-type M.G. Magna. D. McCormick uses a 1929 Austin Seven Special. L. M. Ward-Walters, R.E., informs us he is still motoring in his 1.6-litre Blackburn Frazer-Nash T.T. Replica, while W. G. S. Wike, that Northern Vintagent, gets 70 m.p.h. and 40 m.p.g. from his 1,100 c.c. H.R.G., which he describes as "an admirable commercial traveller's hack." R. G. V. Venables has his Le Mans Aston-Martin still in action. These folk have all paid the full year's tax, in some cases, it seems, with only "basic" rations to burn, but especial credit goes to E. P. Harvey and J. Lowrey, who have also taxed to the end of 1940, definitely with no supplementary rations. Respectively, they are running a 1938 2-litre "15/98" short-chassis Aston-Martin and a 1,100 c.c. H.R.G. two-seater.

Next, we come to those who are putting in quite a decent mileage this quarter using supplementary fuel. Martin Wells has laid up his Fiat 500 but is using his Type 55 Frazer-Nash-B.M.W., and C. C. Hanson has put away his 230 Mercedes-Benz in favour of a Fiat 500. J. E. Neal runs his 1934 short-chassis Mark I Le Mans Aston-Martin, James Brymer his well-known Riley Gamecock, now with a single carburetter and Lucas sports coil, and H. D. M. Seymour his 1931 "International" two/three-seater Aston-Martin. R. W. D. Hardy is keeping his "12/50" 1926 boat-bodied Alvis on the road and hopes to do so for all the year, and J. A. Cooper says the same of his

1928 big-port "12/50" Alvis, which has twin carburetters and radio.

One enthusiast is riding a 500 c.c. Cotton motor-cycle, because his Diatto two-seater, Th. Schneider four-seater, and D.M.S. Delage four-seater are now in the A.F.S. He also uses a borrowed Series M Morris Ten. Peter Hull is amongst those who have only basic fuel and still motor cheerfully. He runs a 1925 four-push-rod Salmson, hoodless and screenless, and with no lighting equipment as yet, so it is used only in daylight when he is on leave—it is true, for we saw it only to-day. His father's "12/50" Alvis saloon is laid up, but his brother motors in a Lancia Augusta, while his 4½-litre Lagonda, Le Mans winner in 1935, is being repaired, following a black-out smash. J. W. Halbert hopes never to lay up his 1936 1½-litre Riley "Falcon," and Rivers-Fletcher, chairman of the E.R.A. club, goes on driving his 1931 Riley Nine tourer, which sometimes tows an A.F.S. trailer-pump and has had the compression-ratio lowered to suit "Pool," by the cunning expedient of fitting plug adaptors. John MacLagen is defying the war, in which he drives 3-ton Commer trucks in the Royal Corps of Signals, by running an N-type M.G. Magnette and rebuilding a J2 M.G. Midget, which will be taxed next quarter, and by working on a sprint Austin Special. His father has taxed his 28 h.p. Chrysler for the whole year. This enthusiast says he will run his M.G. in the war-time race, if it materialises. Peter Hennessy drives a 1935 Singer Nine Le Mans for pleasure only, and L. Chinneck has no intention of laying up his 1933 Austin Twelve saloon. R. Allen Bygrave has laid up his 1938 Chrysler Royal two/three-seater coupé, but is continuing motoring in a 1935 Austin Ten—missing doing his former 30,000 miles a year, however. Norman H. Fowler has laid up his Lanchester Ten and Austin Seven saloons, but contrives to motor occasionally in an Austin Seven tourer when on leave, reckoning to do 1,500 miles this year against his usual 22,000 or 23,000 miles per annum. C. J. L. Mertens goes on running his 1928 4½-litre Bentley Van den Plas tourer and hopes to always run a Bentley of some kind, war or no war—another 4½-litre is being built up for him at Weybridge and may replace this car next quarter. He has recently

seen a 3-litre Sunbeam in use. Donald Monro has his Invicta still on the road. W. E. Butler is hastening to get on the road again with a sports Austin Seven, after doing 5,000 miles in a 1929 Austin Seven *minus one half-shaft!* A. J. D. Brown admits to having laid up his M.G. Magna four-seater and the Perkins brothers aforementioned have laid up the ex-Kopenhagen "Jabberwock" V8 Ford they owned jointly—and there you have it. Very few reports of laid up or substituted cars, and news of lots of real sports-cars and other thoroughbreds still in use. Over a scattered area—for these owners reside in places as far apart as Rugby, Cambridge, Worksop, Preston, Loughton, Weston-super-Mare, Tilford, Braintree, Ogmores-by-Sea, Bridgnorth, Leicester, Whetstone, Forest Hill, Bristol, Rotherham, Dulwich, Newton Abbot, Eastbourne, Nottingham, Brondesbury Park, Slough, Orpington, Chelmsford, etc. Apart from these cars, definitely noted in the Census, other sports jobs have been mentioned in MOTOR SPORT as still in use, and, personally, we have observed several big Americans, including two fine Packards, lots of M.G.s, a Ballot, a Morgan 4/4, Rolls-Royce, Talbot and Bentleys still going about our South London locality. We are glad to be able to give this proof to the garage and service station proprietors, and to the Trade in general, of the continued use of cars which will be decently maintained and carefully looked after in spite of the war—and not beneath dust-sheets in the storage basement. We always believed in the enthusiasm of the motoring sportsman, and our faith is certainly honourably upheld. Frazer-Nash-B.M.W., Fiat, H.R.G., Lancia, Frazer-Nash, Austin, Aston-Martin, Riley, Alvis, Salmson, Invicta, M.G., Singer, Chrysler, Bentley—it's a brave list, and one which should go a long way towards stimulating the outlook of the Trade, while it should lighten the black-out for any enthusiast who has become oppressed by this leisurely war. We shall always be glad to hear from others who have contrived to go on motoring in spite of the limitations which hostilities must impose, and we would congratulate all the users mentioned above and wish them right royal motoring. Theirs is the spirit which makes the Game so very much worth while.

STANDARD ANNOUNCE A NEW FOUR-DOOR "EIGHT"

The Standard Motor Company, who in the last eight or nine years have staged a meteoric rise to the forefront of British motor manufacturers, have again shown their accurate gauging of topical public demand by the production of a new "wartime model" four-door "Eight" saloon. This new car, which costs £159 (de luxe model, £169), has the remarkable petrol consumption figure of 45/48 m.p.g., which allied with the—for nowadays—low annual tax of £10, provides as economical a motoring vehicle as it is possible to find. Yet, for all this necessary and wise concentration on economy, the Flying

Standard Four-Door "Eight" lacks nothing in finish, accommodation and equipment. The all-steel body, for example, seats four people without the slightest suggestion of crowding—with plenty of space for head and knees. A substantial enclosed luggage locker takes care of a really practical amount of luggage. An excellent system of independent front wheel suspension provides riding qualities superior to those of many much larger vehicles. And this car looks good—partly owing to the low height of its body, which, planned to eliminate foot-wells or running boards,

gives a grace which belies the roominess within. The Standard Motor Company, who announce this model as the car which provides "peacetime motoring for the wartime purse," have done a good job in producing a new model with the comfort, roominess and efficiency to which most motorists had become accustomed in the days of peace, yet at a price and with tax and running costs to fit the wartime car owner's restricted budget. The Flying Standard Four-Door "Eight," by the way, has a top speed of over 60 m.p.h., synchromesh gearbox, and flush-fitting sliding roof.

TRANSATLANTIC VINTAGERY

THE VETERAN CAR CLUB OF AMERICA'S MEETING AT FRAMINGHAM CENTER

IT may not be generally known that interest in veteran and vintage cars is not by any means confined to this country. In France there are at least two clubs which cater for early motor cars. In Germany and Italy there are several museums with extremely interesting collections of early vehicles. It may, however, come as a surprise to some to learn that there are in the U.S.A. a large number of enthusiasts who own and run old motor cars.

The president of The Veteran Car Club of America, Professor Dean A. Fales, recently sent to Tim Carson, the secretary of the Vintage Sports-Car Club, a number of extremely interesting photographs taken at a meeting which the American club held recently at a "buggy track" at Framingham Center. A cutting from the "Boston Herald" gives an account of the meeting in rather entertaining American journalese. "2,000 See 75 Wheezy Horseless Buggies Stunt"—"High seated heirlooms wheezed out of family garages to prove they were as good as in grandfather's day." Not all the competing vehicles had led sheltered lives in family garages, however. There were some "four-wheeled antiques rescued from junk piles" which had had to be carefully reconditioned by their enthusiastic owners.

The atmosphere of the meeting seems to have been very different from that of the annual R.A.C. Run to Brighton. The bleakness of Hyde Park at 8 a.m. on a November morning contrasts strangely with the garden-party-cum-musical-comedy spirit at Framingham Center. Bright sunshine, costumes of Victorian and Edwardian days, "veils, goggles, flounces and plumes," and the president, as master of ceremonies, "wearing the tigerskin vest of the Kennebunk Beach Chowder and Marching Club."

In addition to the "75 Wheezy Horseless Buggies," there were quite a number of veteran motorists as well. F. O. Stanley was there to watch Fred Marriott (who covered a mile at over 127 m.p.h. in a Stanley steam car as long ago as 1906), driving one of the former's early productions in some of the events. Ralph de Palma, who, it is claimed, has won 2,000 motor races in thirty-five years, handled a huge 1907 F.I.A.T. racing-car and Mrs. Phoebe L. Helliwell, one of America's earliest women motorists, drove a 1903 Stanley steam car.

One of the best "period pieces" was Major A. Erland Goyette's 1904 Cadillac four-seater with crew all dressed in the then contemporary fashion. The only thing which betrays the fact that the photograph of this turnout was not taken thirty-five years ago, is part of a modern American saloon car which intrudes itself into the background. Major Goyette has a collection of twenty-five early motor cars. Miss Eleonora Sears also wore appropriate costume to go with her grey, chain-driven 1912 Simplex touring-car. Early bicycles with riders in top hats and "cutaways" paraded. There were penny farthings and "A Bicycle Made for Two" on which the riders sat sociably side by side.

Two interesting early American cars had a thrilling neck and neck match, which the elder machine, G. Waterman's 1899 Winton, won. This was the earliest American car at the meeting. Its opponent was K. H. Gibson's 1900 Knox Three-wheeler, the chassis of which is rigidly mounted on the axles, the body being suspended on three full elliptic springs. Steering is by means of a tiller attached to a kind of bicycle front fork. Waterman and Gibson between them have a collection of 125 vehicles, it is said.

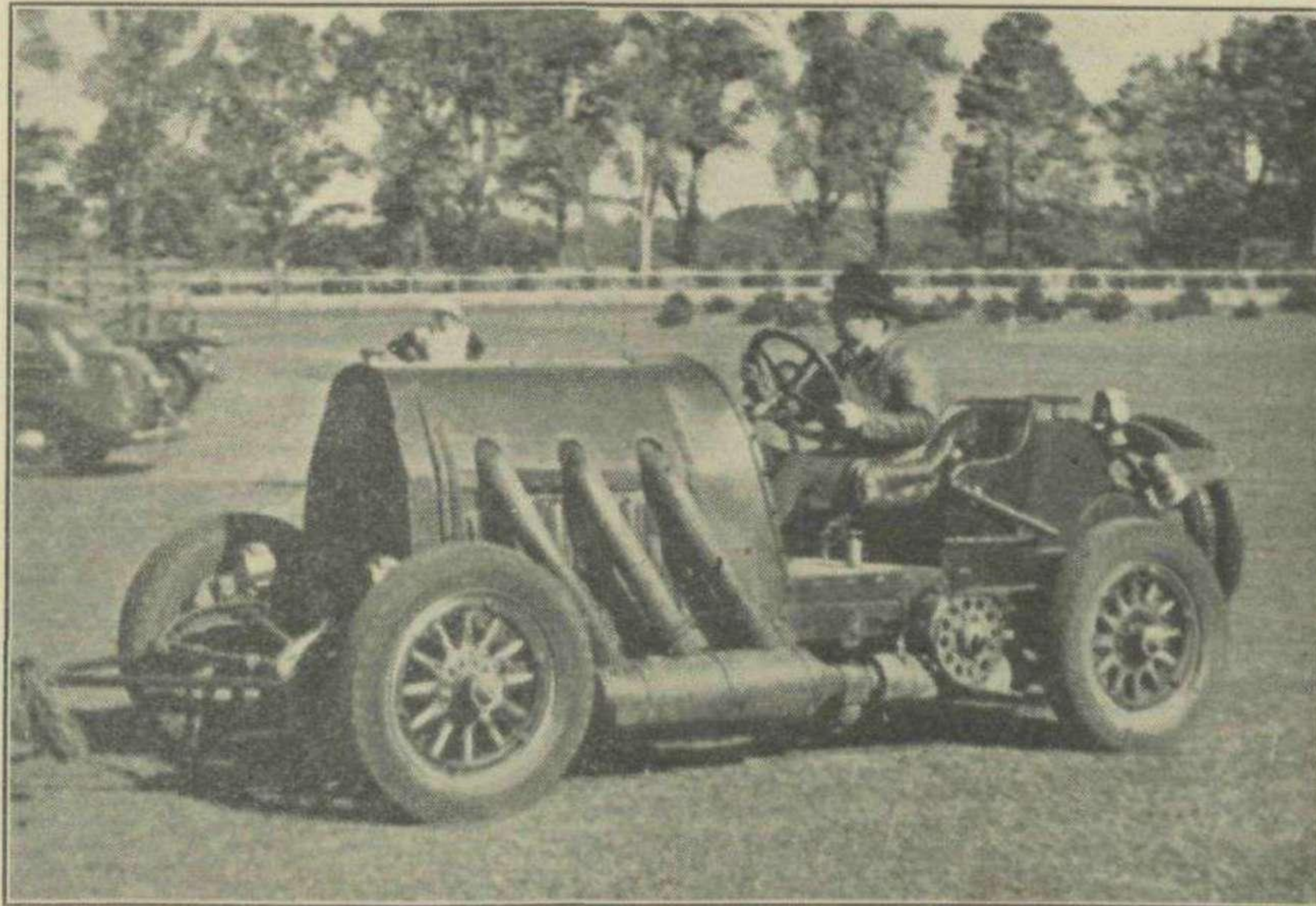
The high spot of the afternoon to most English enthusiasts would undoubtedly have been the five-lap Grand Prix event. The entry included some very fine cars: a 1907 Mercer, a 1907 Renault, apparently a sister car to Anthony Mills's "Agatha," which ran at the Crystal Palace and at Shelsley Walsh last season; a 1908 Mercédès, which closely resembles the big white car on which Lautenschlager won the 1908 Grand Prix; and a huge red 1907 F.I.A.T. racing car which, with its towering engine, would make Heal's little 10-litre machine look like a doodle bug. Ralph de Palma, clad in white overalls, drove this monster. Having gained an initial lead, he held the car to the inside of the track, and won the race. Apparently the course limited the speed to about 55 m.p.h. A 1914 Stutz Bearcat, which its owner had driven down from New York that morning, finished second, and the Renault was third. The F.I.A.T. was thought to be the car on which de Palma won the Savannah Race in 1907.

There were a number of gymkhana events which entailed negotiating obstacles and carrying glasses of water without spilling. George Crittenden, who started racing in 1900, won one such obstacle race in his 1907 Buick runabout.

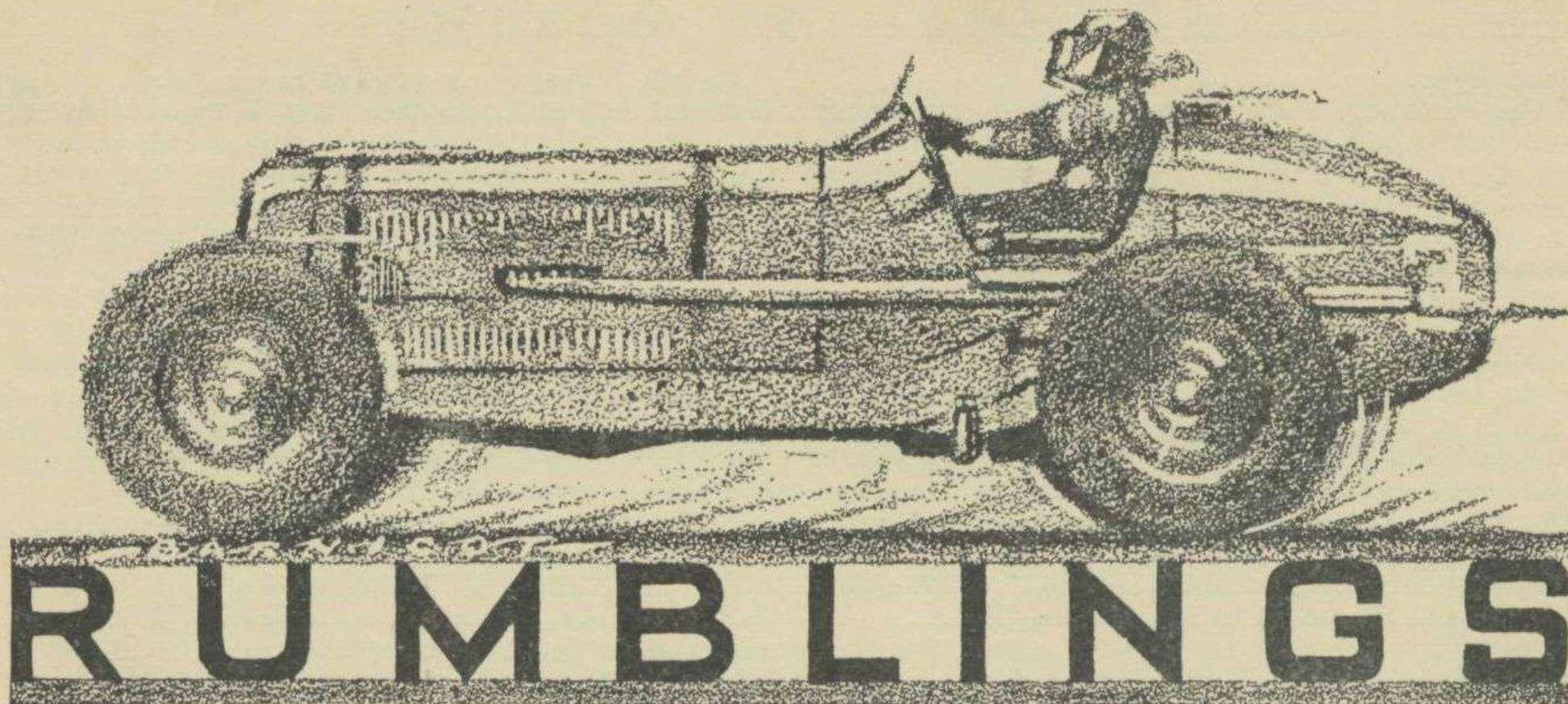
The secretary of the club drove around in an elegant 1910 Packard saloon and A. E. Ullmann, who is described as the "Club's European Agent," was showing off his latest acquisition, a 1903 Peugeot "roadster" with which he had just come back safely across the U-boat infested Atlantic.

The "Boston Herald" also records that there were two Panhards (1901 and 1903), a 1904 Jewell and "a red and black Unic taxicab—bought off a London street—which had an authentic Piccadilly accent." From Professor Fales' photographs it seems that there were several other noteworthy cars present which are not mentioned by the "Boston Herald." An 1899 Benz with a beautiful Cape hood and large candle lamps. A slender chain-driven Isotta with large bolster tank. A curious looking air-cooled Knox with a large luggage trunk in front where most cars have a radiator. A two-cylinder Ford with small wheels, forward mounted radiator and full-elliptic front springs. A sedate little two-cylinder Renault which still proudly displays the badge of the Touring Club de France. A more sportive four-cylinder Renault with two bucket seats and the characteristic five-spoked steering wheel. A frail-looking Oldsmobile, an even more spidery Orient Buckboard, and a couple of single-cylinder de Dions.

With so many veteran and vintage cars in this country hibernating for the duration under protective coatings of oil and grease, it is refreshing to hear of our more fortunate American cousins being able to exercise their precious machines and enjoying (to quote the "Boston Herald" again) "a four hour program in an atmosphere of dust, sunlight and pre-historically carbureted gasoline."



1907 F.I.A.T. which was driven by Ralph de Palma at the meeting of the Veteran Car Club of America at Framingham Center, near Boston, Massachusetts. de Palma won the "Grand Prix" event. It is thought that this is the same F.I.A.T. car on which he won the Savannah race in 1907.



Racing May Resume

A SPOT of racing would go a long way towards cheering us all up during the black period of war. As announced in the Editorial in this issue, a group of enthusiasts is attempting to bring about a war-time meeting. In case Authority raises unassailable objections, although it is difficult to see how they can, these enthusiasts had intended to remain anonymous until an answer from a reliable source indicated just what the prospects are, but as another motoring writer has prematurely spilled the beans, I can state that these workers on our behalf are none other than Peter Clark, Cecil Clutton and Anthony Heal, acting for that ambitious body, the Vintage Sports-Car Club. I am glad to be able to give their names, for this, more than anything else, emphasises the determination behind the scheme and brings what seemed a fairly remote hope into a quite reasonable and possible project.

The rough outline of how such a meeting would be run, together with arguments in favour of holding a race in war-time and a justification for so doing, are revealed in the Memorandum which the would-be organisers very wisely sent to the Secretary for Mines, Mr. Geoffrey Lloyd, before proceeding with their plans. This Memorandum reads as follows:—

Having repeatedly seen it stated in the Press that the public are quite entitled to use their basic Petrol Rations for any purpose they choose, motoring enthusiasts have begun actively to wish for a limited resumption of competitive motor sport. Discussions have taken place as to devising means whereby the proposed competitions could be so arranged as not merely to avoid criticism on the score of "wanton petrol extravagance," but actually to serve some object of definite National value.

It is suggested that a Sports-Car Race could be run (on Pool petrol) on a "Petrol Consumption formula." Sports-cars may be defined as machines which, as opposed to actual racing-cars, are taxed for ordinary road use, and are therefore entitled to basic petrol rations. At the start, each car would be permitted to start with, say, one gallon of Pool petrol. The race might be nominally of 25 miles, but drivers would continue after that distance until they ran dry. The winner would then be worked out on a combined "speed and distance in excess of 25 miles" basis. The above is only a bare outline, but in considering it the following points spring to mind:—

1. The fuel consumptions achieved would call attention to the fact that there is still scope for research in this direction. The public would see production sports-cars, not very dissimilar from their own touring models, doing more miles per gallon under arduous racing conditions than their own cars do on leisurely touring. It is in the National interest to encourage research towards better fuel consumption.
2. The public would realise that, as fast sports-cars can be made to run well on Pool petrol, much of the nonsense talked about its poor quality *IS* nonsense.

In advancing these arguments, we are not trying to conceal the fact that our main interest as a Club is in the recreational value of such a meeting, both to the competitors and the public. That, too, has a National value, both socially and for propaganda—especially when, as they have just done, the German authorities have announced that their motor-racing teams will take part in a full season both at home and abroad.

That the value of sport is recognised is shown by horse racing, which, in spite of the shortage of feeding stuffs (surely far more serious than that of petrol) would, one feels, be carried on "to the last oat"—and rightly, for what effect on the total available supply can the minute amounts used in a racing stable have? We feel that the same may well be said of our proposed meeting, when it is realised that each competitor would be using less than a quarter of his own basic monthly ration.

We can only say that we agree wholeheartedly with the contents and would have advanced just such arguments on behalf of war-time motor-racing as the Vintage S.C.C. has so neatly done in this Memorandum. If such a meeting comes about, as it almost certainly will if a favourable reply comes back from the Department of Mines, a very reasonable support should be assured, as all the suitable sports-cars have not been laid-up and many others, stored away in good order, could be re-taxed (and so "refuelled") easily enough. As Brooklands and Donington are out of bounds "for the duration" the venue would appear to be the Crystal Palace circuit, easily the most suitable for combating fuel restrictions in the matter of drawing a decent crowd of spectators to the event. We sincerely hope London's road circuit will be placed at the disposal of the organisers without any trouble, as it would seem that to be fully successful the proposed event should be staged on a proper circuit.

RUMBLINGS—continued

Stop Press

Unfortunately, nothing beyond a formal reply from the Department of Mines had been received by the Vintage S.C.C. up to the time when it became essential to close this page for Press. So we can only hope that a favourable reply will come through, when we shall be able to deal more fully with this matter next month.

Spring Overhaul

A very well-written book, particularly useful in connection with the spring overhaul, is "Car Care." Almost every aspect of the job is dealt with clearly and concisely and the illustrations are excellent. The foreword is written by Capt. George Eyston. Copies may be had free of charge, on mention of MOTOR SPORT, if a postcard is sent to C. C. Wakefield & Co., Ltd., Wakefield House, London, E.C.2.

Odd Spots

Lawton-Goodman, one time Whitlock agents, have built an A.R.P. ambulance on a Big Six Bentley chassis.

* * *

Raymond Mays's war-time car is a Rover Fourteen saloon.

* * *

Mr. T. P. Breen, the well-known Whetstone dealer, is not related to, nor associated with, Max Breen, who wrote recently for the *Evening News*.

Nowell Edwards, in his poster on behalf of the National Savings Committee, pays us the compliment of labelling his motor-racing picture, which shows a quite passable Alfa-Romeo followed by what is presumably a Bugatti, "Sound Judgment." But he has gorily optimistic views on the proximity to which the spectators are allowed to approach the course!

* * *

Mercifully we usually avoid bringing home a "thriller" from the library. Recently we slipped up, but must pay Woosman Mills the compliment of saying he certainly gets his motoring technicalities right, in "Grim Chancery," even where Bentleys and Lagondas are concerned.

* * *

It seems that Burggaller, the German Bugatti driver, died after his aeroplane was shot down by British fighters—providing an answer to Mrs. Petre, who thinks German racing men may be afraid to fight.

* * *

In recent films, an open, straight-eight Jensen, a 2-litre open Aston-Martin, University Motors' demonstrator V12 open Lagonda, a Wolseley, old and new Bentleys, a sports Singer Nine and an f.w.d. B.S.A. have been noted, as well as the usual Yanks.

* * *

New car registrations for December were down by 25,586, but, even so, ninety-three cars of 20 h.p. and over were taxed, an increase over the previous month.

Drive in Safety

under all road conditions

FIT

DUNLOP



THINGS IN GENERAL

IF we Englishmen do pride ourselves on anything it is upon our reputation as sportsmen. We take pains to register approval whenever we see a citizen armed with a tennis racket or a bag of golf clubs, and we get positively delirious when a man appears carrying a cricket bag. Look at the sudden hush which falls upon Victoria Station when people are seen returning from the winter sports, staggering under skins and other weird apparatus! Every rule has its exception; you mustn't let your sporting fancy turn towards motor cars.

Our great and good governments, which are supposed to voice the sentiments of The People, make no secret of their view that people who drive cars are a dangerous gang of homicidal maniacs; they can't quite be immured in dungeons, but they can be loaded with abuse instead of chains, taxed in the manner the late King John taxed the Jews of his time, and generally dragooned in the interests of some quite mythical body called The Public. This is the more strange, as every Englishman, and *ipso facto* sportsman, known to us drives or is driven in some kind of I.C. vehicle, and takes the greatest interest in the subject whenever it is discussed.

Musing over these things, some light seemed to be shed on the problem by a report of a meeting apparently convened by the Minister of Transport, at which he respectfully heard a suggestion by a representative of the Pedestrians Association to the effect that drivers involved in accidents should be hung, whether in fault or not. Is it possible that, forgetful of the precedent of the Ten Tailors of Tooley Street, the Powers-that-be have been hypnotised by the incessant claim that the Pedestrians Association is the People of England? That would account for conduct towards motorists which, if only it took place in another country, would be denounced quite roundly as Hitlerism. The latest effort has been the imposition of a twenty-mile speed limit, though how it is going to be enforced in these days of black-outs Government only knoweth.

Talking about those Tailors of Tooley Street—I beg your pardon, I mean the Pedestrians Association—it seems to me that it is quite time they came, or were dragged, into the open so that we might know just what they stand for, and decide for ourselves how far the general Press and the Government are justified in their subservient attitude towards them. Will the Association tell us—I'm sure the Editor will give them space for their replies—how many members it has, and what its membership income might be? Will it say just who the people are who are its chief supporters, who dictates its policy, and whether they own cars or not? Will it tell us whether it encourages forms of pedestrianism, such as rambling and the Stock Exchange walk to Brighton, and whether it discourages cycling, roller skates and scooters, and other forms of transport?

It will certainly hear with regret that there is more than a suspicion that it is only an anti-motoring society masquerading under a misleading title, and

this is a heaven-sent opportunity for it to clear itself of the stigma, if stigma it is.

* * *

The lamented little Audrey used to laugh, and laugh and laugh in a cynical manner for one of tender years, and we can imagine the Clerk of the Weather copying her not too courteous example, for he must have laughed when he heard our discussions about laying the car up at the end of last year, knowing exactly what he had in store for us in January and February. So far, at any rate, the few licences which have been taken out—and supplied with the maximum delay, they say—might just as well have been left alone, whether the money saved was invested in War Loan or in Football Pools.

It is difficult nowadays to get an idea of circumstances all over the country, but in my own district they were quite nasty, reducing my motoring to an occasional trip through the snow to the garage, to see if the car was still there. A man using a car for business purposes told me that setting out to visit customers in the North Midlands, he drove for some distance through veritable trenches dug through snowdrifts, until at last he decided to turn tail, lest he should have to quarter himself upon said customer for the duration . . . of the winter. Certain tradesmen in my village had to leave their vans in their garages, resorting to home-made sledges dragged by rebellious and disgruntled boys.

* * *

Since I paid my humble tribute to drivers of public service vehicles last month, I have received some correspondence which represents that nerve and eye strain suffered by these good fellows in the black-out has had quite serious effects, and that the companies are concerned at the number of absentees through this trouble. It does not surprise me at all, but how can it be remedied? We might, of course, pass a self-denying ordinance and not go out at all after sunset, though this would be hard on some members of the community, such as burglars, for instance.

It must be admitted that I was always one of those who regarded this black-out business as slightly ridiculous, but we have got used to it, and ought not to swap horses while crossing streams. Though it would pass the ability of a logician to say why, if the lights in railway goods yards and on docks can be extinguished at once if there is an air raid warning, it is impossible for the driver of a bus to do the same thing. Quaint, isn't it?

* * *

It appears that the authorities, having done their best to destroy the garage business, built up since the last war, have now repented to the extent that they intend to employ garages in repairing Army and Air Force vehicles. This is quite a good idea, particularly as it will certainly prove a less costly and more efficient way of getting the work done, but the record of said authorities leads one to fear that all the work will go to the big concerns, and very little, if any, to the innumerable small ones. One case I know locally is quite a good medium-

sized undertaking, which, at the end of last August, employed five competent men and eight or nine apprentices; it now employs one man and one boy. Whether it will get any Government work, and whether that work will be placed with it soon enough to save the situation, is quite on the lap of the gods. But the garages I know—and I know a few—deserve better things than those that have been meted out to them.

* * *

Garages, however, do not get all the sympathy from some motorists which is their due. Charges are thought high, and the garage man is blamed, though in the case of some of the large undertakings he has only himself to blame, because of the ridiculous mystery with which he surrounds his operations. A customer incarcerated in a waiting room furnished with an aspidistra and an ancient copy of MOTOR SPORT does not learn very much, whereas he would soon get to know why a job costs what it does if he could see the work in progress. The question of accessibility looms large; the more time it takes to get down to the seat of the trouble, the larger the bill is going to be. Factories, which rarely see a car after it leaves the assembly line, might take serious thought about this as well as about the performance question, and their representatives might join the owner of the car in watching some unhappy engineer stretched painfully over a huge front wing which he is afraid of scratching, fishing with the aid of a bit of looking glass for an invisible nut which, when found, won't allow any known spanner to get near it.

* * *

While we are considering garage men, there is one reform I should like to introduce among them, and that is, a good deal more reticence in their bills. The conscientious man spends painful hours at night, when he ought to be filling up coupons or going to the movies, detailing with meticulous care every movement he has made over a repair job. He will not credit his customer with common sense, so he begins with some such opening as:—"To removing carpets, withdrawing eight coach screws, taking out floor boards, and exposing clutch withdrawal device . . ." ending up by the same story in reverse order. I treasure one bill which covers three closely written sheets; on receiving it I hurriedly turned to the end to see whether bankruptcy or imprisonment was to be my fate, only to find a very moderate charge for a very good piece of work.

* * *

One curious thing in connection with garage bills is the quite inordinate cost of spare parts. This is not the fault of the garage man, far from it! But on one occasion, having laid unlawful hands on the spare parts list of a famous mass production concern, I amused myself by building an imaginary car on paper, putting down the price of each spare part as I thought of it. The total came to more than twice the cost of the finished article, and I had allowed nothing for labour and the requisite small oddments!

AUTOMOBILES— THEIR SHORTCOMINGS

IT is inevitable that in every walk of life we at times become too complaisant, take success and convenience too much for granted, forgetful of the shortcomings of the past and the price which has had to be paid before comparative perfection has become possible. This is very true of motoring, for the modern car gives remarkably good service. Involuntary stops on the road are almost unknown and these days we are surrounded by service stations which relieve us of unpleasant maintenance jobs and keep our cars continually up to scratch. Consequently, any mention of unreliability is apt to suggest an age so long ago as before the last European war. Now, just to shake you out of this complaisant state of mind, we are going to recount a few shortcomings relating, not to early and forgotten cars, but to automobiles which were popular and even held in high esteem not much more than ten years ago, and which are in some instances with us still. Except where an unusual service happening is recounted because it is believed of interest, these shortcomings, as outlined to us by a service engineer well acquainted with the marques concerned, represent definite design peculiarities which were confirmed by cropping up, not once, not twice, but time and again in the particular make and model concerned. Something fiendish within us almost prompts us to quote the makes concerned, but prudence suggests otherwise; no doubt many enthusiasts will be able to lay responsibility on the correct shoulders in nearly every instance.

Well, there was the delightful case of a certain well-known French eight-cylinder, which always arrived in this country with the clutch inoperative. The London concessionaires tried everything without avail, until they found the perfect solution. This consisted of removing three out of the nine clutch springs, to do which they calmly cut away a body cross-member to get the gearbox down, owners subsequently finding the life of the imposing fabric bodywork of much briefer span than they had hoped when purchasing the car. It was this car, too, which had sixteen grease nipples grouped carefully round the brake servo gear, of which, alas, only one protruded through the floorboards in decent accessibility. We say "alas," for application of the grease gun to this one amenable nipple promptly jammed the valve of the Dewandre servo, leaving only direct brake actuation, which was anything but good . . . ! As if this was not enough, it was impossible to fit new piston rings unless the complete engine was removed, because the cylinder bores extended into the deep crankcase, in which the pistons came flush with the top face at t.d.c., so that it was impossible to get one's hand in to compress the rings. Cylinder wear was promoted by the consequent high temperature of the bores, oil mist being quickly burnt off the walls. Mechanics putting on the bearing caps

soon found that they cut their hands on the crankshaft webs, which were conveniently machined to a knife-edge, and bearing fitting was not uncommon, as the engine was prone to sling rods—always one of the last four, and invariably it smashed the crankcase. Yet another comic of this "eight" was its frequent discarding of the entire water-pump, which was held by an easily corroded 10 inch bolt taking the thrust of the drive. Incidentally, as if to get its own back on irate fitters, this car had its front axle U-bolts so close to the beam that no spanner would engage the nuts, yet they were fitted in some unexplained way at the factory.

It might not come entirely as a surprise to learn that the four-cylinder of the same marque also had some peculiarities. To remove the exhaust manifold it was necessary to detach a heavy tray beneath the gearbox, entailing removal of floorboards, seat, etc. This was a pity, because flexing of the chassis on this tray pulled on the exhaust pipe which ran through the tray and blew the joint with considerable frequency. Then, the dynamo drive was quite devoid of proper lubrication, apart from any water which seeped in, and consequently the dynamo sprocket ball race used to chew-up, and the entire engine then had to be removed from the chassis to expose the timing case. The camshaft damper spring frequently broke and the noise was such that an unscrupulous garage could always charge the owner for re-metalling the big ends! The clutch back-plate slid in splines in the flywheel rim and as there was no means of lubrication and no outlet for the gathering accumulation of fabric dust, the withdrawal action became very stiff and finally seized-up. The front water joint often had to be broken before the valve cover would come clear for routine tappet adjustment, and the rev.-counter drive was most tricky to re-fit after the valve cover was replaced. Yet this was otherwise an excellent car!

Dismantling can have its terrors, if a designer has not made provision for the errors of mechanics unacquainted with the peculiarities of their product. One British small car had its oil pump so set that when it was removed the long driving shaft fell out and the ignition timing was irretrievably lost. Even worse was a French sleeve-valve engine in which the camshaft operating the double-sleeves had six splines and detachable eccentrics actuating the sleeves. In all innocence a fitter would withdraw the camshaft endways from the crankcase, whereupon all the eccentrics and distance pieces would fall into the sump, and as everything was quite unmarked, retiming the sleeves was then a matter entirely for theory. Another Continental engine of repute had cylinder head holding-down studs which also served to retain the main bearing caps, and over-exuberance in the matter of tightening down would result as likely as not in

breakage and the consequent need to dismantle the entire unit. It was this engine, too, which had an alloy head gasket with copper-ring inserts, which used to shrink, prompting water leaks which seriously distorted the head. Incidentally, on this engine it was usual to set the valve tappets with no clearance at all. One special chassis of the marque had a tubular backbone, and if the frame was jacked up for any reason, the rear wheels, suspended by a transverse spring, used to settle 45° out of the vertical and it took quite half-an-hour's drive before they resumed normal position. The sad story is told of the apprentice who, in dismantling the transmission of this chassis, let the fabric coupling enter the chassis-tube. It became jammed in the centre bearing and, do what they might, the fitters could not release it and there was just no way of getting the propeller shaft in.

There was an early British "Nine" which literally bent its con-rods if at all excessive r.p.m. was indulged in, as you could easily observe as soon as the block was lifted, and the expensive 3-litre which invariably cracked its chassis by the hand-brake bracket and a "decoke" for which involved lifting the block and cost some £50.

A certain French car was devised with front brakes only, when there was a positive craze for f.w.b., these being operated by a mechanical servo, which, if it got really soaked, entirely ceased to operate the sole means of anchorage. An early commercial diesel had a habit of seizing its piston rings, which happening, if not observed, allowed such pressure to build up in the crankcase that the entire contents of the sump would blow-out within 15 miles. And there was the first "six" of a famous British sports marque which had such a small clearance between head and pistons, that if the head was tightened down without the valve timing being accurately set, the edges of the valves used to chew-up on the piston crowns. In any case, this engine was continually blowing gaskets, until the head was entirely redesigned, and the first one, used in a director's personal car, was in a short while hurriedly replaced by one of the well-tried "fours." Now, readers, you tell some!

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