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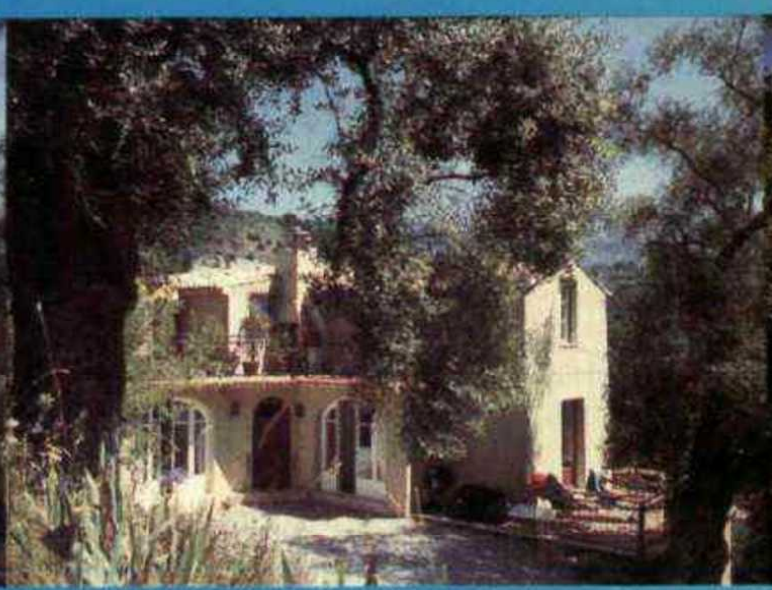

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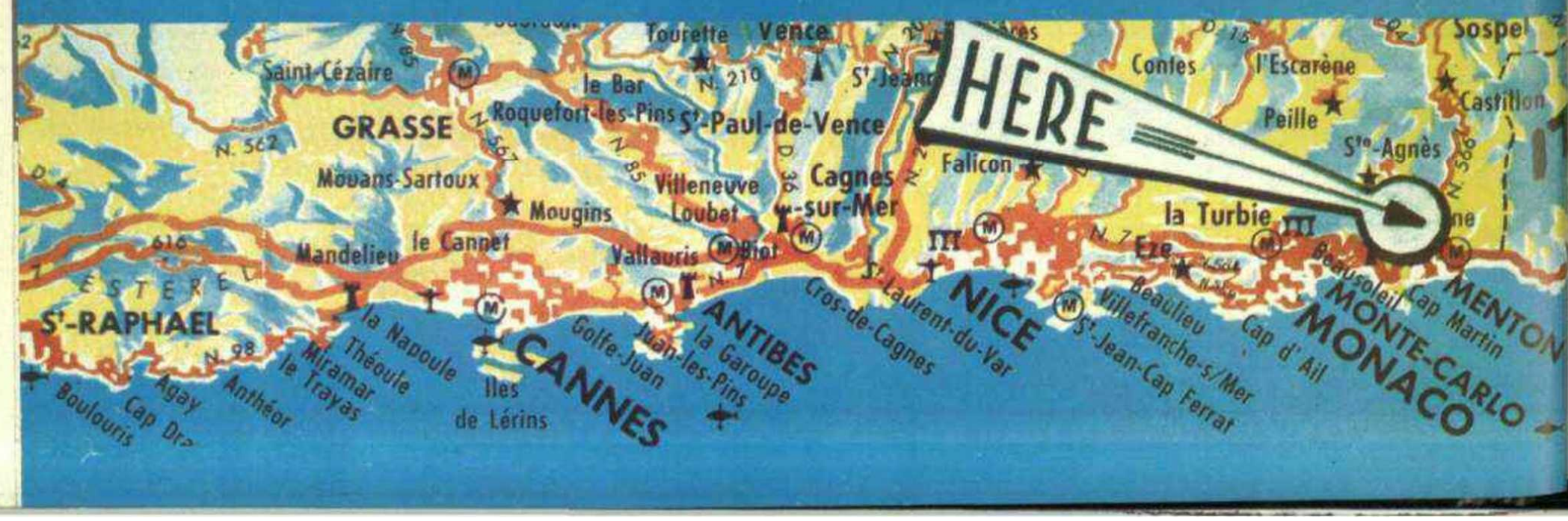

MOTOR SPORT

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MATTERS OF MOMENT

Banned? If the EEC de-smogs all cars, veterans would have to be trailered *to Brighton.*

Community Edicts

MOTOR SPORT was optimistic last month about 1988 being reasonably happy for those who mess about with cars. However, judging by the anniversaries to be celebrated and the continuing interest in older vehicles, from Veterans to Classics, many people prefer to look to the past rather than to the future!

The time appears to have come for them to heed more than a word of warning!

We have seen how the DVLC refused to permit vintage cars for which log-books were not produced before the end of 1983 to use their original number-plates. Cars which failed to keep their original numbers are issued with others thought "appropriate" by the DVLC, though not necessarily by the cars' owners.

The DVLC seems to have realised the error of its ways, because newly-discovered vehicles are now allowed to use original numbers if they are truly historic. Alas, former ownership by a "show-biz" personality seems to matter more to Swansea bureaucrats than being a "first", a "one-off", or the sole remaining example of a kind. This is in any case an unsatisfactorily discriminating guideline! Worse than all this, however, the European Economic Community does not take too kindly to older vehicles, either.

By 1999 the EEC might insist on emission-equipment for all cars which will foil the use of old engines. Other probable restrictions include regulation of lighting-sets (ask the VSCC of Australia!), compulsory membership of clubs dictated to by the EEC itself, and the banning of "fun" signwriting on privately-owned vintage vans.

We know the Historic Vehicle Clubs Committee, chaired by Derek Grossmark, will do its level-best to look after the interests of owners of old vehicles, whose appearance on the roads gives so much pleasure to so very many people. It is vital, however, that every individual club involved backs the HVCC to the hilt, if eleven years from now historic cars are not to be confined to museums, race-tracks and private roads.

The Things They Say

We wonder what BDC members thought when they saw a reader's photograph in *Country Life* which purported to show the prototype 3-litre Bentley chassis (bodyless, and with a test-driver's wooden seat) after it had done a long run to Yorkshire from Essex in the hands of a well-known motoring journalist of the early 1920s. What the picture actually showed was the back view of a vee-twin, air-cooled AV (or Carden) disc-wheeled cyclecar!

Show Success

Last year's Earls Court Motorfair broke all records, with sales up by 19% to a total of £38,000,000 and attendance up by 7% to 339,000, according to KBH Communications. The National Motor Museum, for example, thought it the best Show ever, and Trafalgar claimed a 500% advance in sales of its product against those at the previous Motorfair. There is every reason to suppose that the Racing Car Show at Olympia (see page 108) will have been at least as successful.

Club News

Launceston and North Cornwall Motor Club's Launceston Trial starts and finishes in that town on February 7. The secretary of the meeting, Les Connett, would be pleased to hear from anyone willing to marshal, and can be contacted at 3 Norman Close, Highweek, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ12 1PB.

Citroën Car Club's annual dinner/dance weekend will be held at the Hinton Firs Hotel, East Cliff, Bournemouth on February 19-21, and places may be booked through Mrs J M Turner, 54 West Bank, Dorking, Surrey RH4 3DH.

"Wheels 88", the second North of Scotland Motor Show, will be held at the Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre from April 30 to May 2, with the organisers hoping to build on the 27,000 visitors attracted in 1986. An information brochure for prospective exhibitors is available from Offshore Conferences & Exhibitions Ltd, Rowe House, 55-59 Fife Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 1TA.

Dates for this year's Inter-Register Trophy events include Fiat on May 22, Alvis on July 24, Humber on August 21, Crossley on September 18 and Austin TDC on October 16, with those of Riley and STD still to be confirmed. Last year's trophy was won by the Humber Register.

Jowett Car Club's newsletter *Jowetteer* reports that its Scottish section is active once more. Anyone interested should contact Drummond Black at 10 Newliston Road, Kirkliston EH29 9DY.

MOG 88, the annual gathering of the Morgan Sports Car Club this year being organised by its Oxfordshire Centre, will be based at the Cotswold Wild Life Park near Burford on the weekend of June 18-19. For information about this or other MSCC activities, send an sae to general secretary Barry Iles, Hollands Farm (PR2), Coombe Green, Birtsmorton, Malvern, Worcestershire WR13 6AB.

Features of the London Classic Car Show at Alexandra Palace on April 9-10 will include club and trade stands, autojumble, Bonhams auction, and restoration displays and seminars. The organisers are Greenwood Exhibitions, PO Box 230, Tring, Hertfordshire HP23 5PU.

Veldhoven in the Netherlands will host 1988's International 356 Weekend, on May 12-14. Porsche Club GB's *National Newsletter* notes that accommodation has been booked in a former convent with few double rooms, but sees abstinence as a small price to pay for such a popular social occasion!

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Fatalities Mar Paris-Dakar

Alarm over the worsening safety record of the gruelling Paris-Dakar desert endurance event has been fuelled by a series of accidents which, as we went to press, had claimed two lives and seriously injured several other competitors.

Dutchman Kees van Loevenzijn died and his co-drivers were badly injured when their twin-engined Daf truck overturned. Daf immediately withdrew all its entries.

The next day French co-driver Patrick Canado was killed when his Range Rover collided with a support vehicle for the Yamaha motorcycle team.

These accidents coincide with a huge expansion of interest in the 13,000km event over the last few years, with entries including massive factory-built trucks, and works rally teams which are able to use developments of the now-banned Group B cars because the rally is not run under FIA regulations.

Speeds have increased radically, making accidents more severe, and even air-cover cannot guarantee safety. Yet the publicity rewards are huge, and top rally and racing drivers are employed in ever-increasing numbers by wealthy teams.

Ari Vatanen's Peugeot 405 T16 was leading team-mate Juha Kankkunen (205 T16) at the half-way stage, while Formula One pilots entered included Patrick Tambay, Jacques Laffite, Jean-Pierre Jabouille, Henri Pescarolo, Jacky Ickx and Philippe Alliot — though only Tambay's Range Rover was in a competitive position.

Britain's Andrew Cowan was putting up good times in one of a host of Mitsubishi Pajeros which were vainly pursuing the leading Peugeots, but Ted Toleman and Barry Lee were forced to retire when their support truck fell too far behind their rapid stretched Metro 6R4.

But the importance of victory was anyway being questioned by many long before they arrived in Dakar. In a 22-day event which takes more than 1000 competitors in more than 400 vehicles across the daunting wilderness of the Sahara, it is clear that safety is impossible to guarantee . . .

Tambay — fast in the Sahara.

Safety Reward

Britain's premier award for road safety has been won by Daimler-Benz AG for its airbag protection system. Presented by Mintex Don Ltd, the prize is allocated by an independent judging panel, which felt that the combination of the airbag with a system which instantly tightens the seatbelt in a crash offers better protection than any other system currently available.

More than 350,000 customers have specified airbags on their Mercedes, and the device is available on every car in the company's range, at a price in Britain of £1,165. The system is now being extended to the front seat passenger (though this option is as yet only available on LHD S-class cars) using a larger airbag and an interlink so that it only operates when the seat is occupied.

Professor Guntram Huber, head of passenger car development at Daimler-Benz, received the trophy at a presentation in London in January.

Junior Formula

One-marque racing with a new slant kicks off in Germany with Walter Treser's mid-engined composite-chassied two-seater. Unusually, 30 racers are to be built before road-car production begins in April, and while the VW Golf 16V-powered car will cost some £22,000, a winner of all five races could recoup much of that in prize-money. But the series, administered by ADAC, will not be open to just anyone; it is the youngest 30 applicants (with driving licences) who will get cars, the intention being to promote junior talent. RHD road-cars may be around by the end of this year.

FEBRUARY FIXTURES

C — Closed. CI — Closed Invitational. R — Restricted. N — National. INT — International.

Date	*Organiser*	*Venue*	*Event*	*Type*
Jan 30-31	**IMSA**	**Daytona Speedway, Florida**	**Daytona 24 Hours**	**INT**
Feb 6-7	**International Swedish Rally**	**Karlstadt, Sweden**	**Swedish Rally (WRC)**	**INT**
Feb 6-7	Forest of Dean MC	Newport, Gwent	Wyedean Stages Rally	N
Feb 12-14	**Pena Motorista Diez Por Hora**	**Lloret de Mar, Spain**	**Costa Brava-20 Rally (ERC)**	**INT**
Feb 12-14	**Galway MC**	**Galway**	**Galway Rally**	**INT**
Feb 19-21	**De Lacy MC**	**Bradford, Yorkshire**	**Cartel International Rally**	**INT**
Feb 19-21	**Union Mecanisée Spa**	**Belgium**	**Boucles de Spa Rally (ERC)**	**INT**
Feb 26-28	**ADAC Niedersachsen eV Sportabteilung**	**Germany**	**Sachs Winter Rally (ERC)**	**INT**
Feb 26-28	**Helsingin Urheiluautoilijat**	**Finland**	**Hankiralli (ERC)**	**INT**
Mar 5-6	**Automobile Club du Portugal**	**Portugal**	**Portugal Rally (WRC)**	**INT**
Mar 6	Brands Hatch Leisure RC	Brands Hatch, Dartford, Kent	Race Meeting	R
Mar 6	BRSCC	Cadwell Park, Louth, Lincs	Race Meeting	R

British GP faces Legal Wrangle

The three-cornered fight for the right to host the British Grand Prix has reached crisis point after FISA finally announced the proposed 1988 venue.

It seems the race will take place at Silverstone, as dictated by the exclusive deal which the Northamptonshire circuit signed with the Formula One Constructors Association for 1987-1991, but there is a strong possibility of legal action on behalf of both Brands Hatch and Donington Park as a result.

Donington's owner Tom Wheatcroft is suing the RAC Motor Sports Association for breach of contract, breach of duty and negligence, claiming that Britain's national federation agreed as long ago as 1983 that his circuit should run the 1988 race.

Wheatcroft has already had a High Court writ served on the RAC claiming damages of more than £1.4-million in respect of work carried out on Donington's facilities to enable it to qualify for a Formula One track licence, and is seeking an injunction to prevent arrangements being made concerning future British Grands Prix without consideration being given to the Leicestershire circuit's case.

Having hosted this country's premier motor race in alternate years since 1964, Brands Hatch managing director John Webb is also taking legal advice on the possibility of appealing to the European Court in Strasbourg, on the grounds that FISA's apparent approval of the Silverstone/FOCA five-year contract represents a restriction on the Kent venue's trade.

When the 1988 Formula One calendar was discussed at a FISA conference in Paris in December, the RAC MSA supported Webb's claim, suggesting that it would be in the best interests of British motor racing that more than one circuit was able to retain facilities of the quality necessary for staging F1 races.

But the principle of alternation was "shot down in flames" by FISA, according to RAC MSA chief executive Peter Hammond, who feels that this disregard of Brands Hatch's claim renders Donington's action futile. Clearly one of the major implications of the controversy is that the world governing body does not recognise the right of national federations to nominate the venue for their own Grands Prix . . .

Donington Park has been requesting the opportunity to run its first post-war "Grand Prix" since it reopened in 1977. Motorcycle Grands Prix, European Touring Car and Formula 3000 rounds have been held there in recent years.

Although Brands Hatch is considering legal action, Webb says he will not try to prevent Silverstone's event taking place this year unless he is advised that this is necessary to prevent his case being jeopardised. Hopefully this means Britain will not fall into the same abyss as Canada, whose GP had to be cancelled in 1987 due to contractual litigation between rival sponsors and has only been listed as a reserve event for 1988.

Ghinzani — renewed hopes.

Ghinzani signs for Zakspeed

Piercarlo Ghinzani has left the Ligier Formula One team to replace Martin Brundle as number-one driver for the German Zakspeed team.

A European Formula Three Champion ten years ago, Ghinzani has since raced in Grands Prix for Osella and Toleman without success, and Ligier's 1987 season with ageing BMW engines proved a disaster.

Ghinzani's team-mate will be German F3 Champion Bernd Schneider, Christian Danner having failed to renew his contract.

Middlesbrough's New Racetrack

Plans are well advanced for a "Motorsports Park" to be built on the site of a disused British Steel plant near the Teeside town of Langbaurgh, near Middlesbrough.

The new facility, which it is hoped will be in use by 1990, will provide for karting, motocross and autocross events, within the confines of a 1½-mile racetrack which might later be extended to create a circuit of international length.

The initiative for the scheme was provided by the local borough council, acting upon a Sports Council recommendation that more racing facilities be made available in the north-east of England.

Andretti's Le Mans Porsche

The Andrettis finished third at Le Mans with Philippe Alliot in a Kremer Porsche 956 in 1983.

Alongside its probable attempt at a third consecutive Le Mans victory for the Derek Bell/Hans Stuck combination in the classic 24-Hour race in June, the factory Porsche team plans to run a car for the exclusive use of the Andretti dynasty!

In his third Le Mans attempt, Mario Andretti will be co-driven by his elder son Michael, who finished second in the 1986 and 1987 CART Indycar Championships, and possibly even by his younger son Jeff.

Should he win, Andretti Snr would become only the second man in history to win the World Drivers Championship in Formula One, the Indianapolis 500 *and* Le Mans. The first was Graham Hill.

INTERNATIONAL RACING CALENDAR 1988

For many years the world of Formula One has kept the prize monies for Grand Prix races a closley-guarded secret; now it seems to be doing the same with dates and venues.

Normally we get the full International Calendar by mid-December, so that it can be published in the January issue of MOTOR SPORT, but those happy days are long gone. New printing and distribution schedules have changed all that, with the January 1988 issue appearing in mid-December 1987, and now the FIA has pulled a master-stroke by sending us the complete 1988 calendar with all the proposed Formula One dates left blank, merely saying "Date Blocked".

The rest of the international sporting world has long since got its house in order, and the accepted calendar of events is as follows:

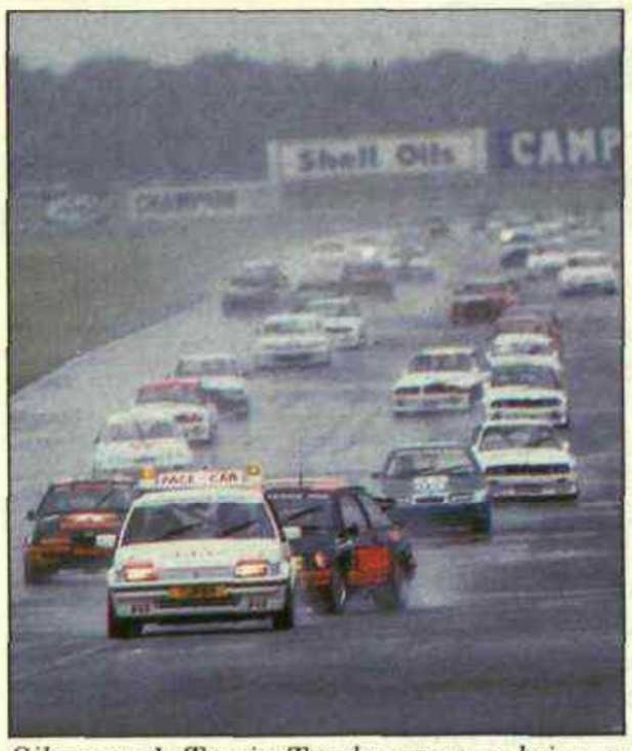
WORLD SPORTS-PROTOTYPE CHAMPIONSHIP

Mar 6	Spanish 1000km	Jerez
Mar 13	Spanish 360km	Jarama
Apr 10	Italian 1000km	Monza
May 8	British 1000km	Silverstone
Jun 11-12	24 Hours	Le Mans
Jul 10	Czechoslovakian 360km	Brno
Jul 24	British 1000km	Brands Hatch
Aug 28	Belgian 1000km	Spa-Francorchamps
Sep 4	German 1000km	New Nürburgring
Oct 9	Japanese 1000km	Mount Fuji
Nov 20	Australian 1000km	Sandown

INTERNATIONAL FORMULA 3000 CHAMPIONSHIP

Apr 17	Spain	no circuit nominated
May 8	Italy	Vallelunga
May 23	France	Pau
Jun 5	Great Britain	Silverstone
Jun 26	Great Britain	Donington Park
Jul 17	Italy	Enna-Pergusa
Aug 21	Great Britain	Brands Hatch
Aug 29	Great Britain	Birmingham
Sep 25	France	Le Mans (Bugatti)

The ultra-competitive International F3000 series returns to Donington Park in June.



Silverstone's Tourist Trophy reverts to being an ETC round now the World title is no more.

EUROPEAN TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

Mar 27	Monza	Italy
Apr 17	Donington Park	Britain
May 8	Estoril	Portugal
May 15	Jarama	Spain
May 29	Dijon-Prenois	France
Jun 5	Vallelunga	Italy
Jun 26	Brno	Czechoslovakia
Jul 10	New Nurburgring	Germany
Jul 24	Spa-Francorchamps	Belgium
Aug 7	Osterreichring	Austria
Aug 21	Zolder	Belgium
Sep 4	Silverstone	Britain
Sep 11	Nogaro	France

The World Touring Car Championship, dreamed up by FIA/FISA last winter, tottered through a shaky 1987 season and was then promptly dropped — surely this is the shortest-lived World Championship on record?

EUROPEAN MOUNTAIN HILL-CLIMB CHAMPIONSHIP

May 8	Montseny	Spain
May 15	Falperra	Portugal
May 29	Rechberg	Austria
Jun 5	Schauinsland	Germany
Jun 19	Ecco Homo	Czechoslovakia
Jul 3	Coppa Carotti	Italy
Jul 10	Potenza	Italy
Jul 24	Cosana-Sestriere	Italy
Aug 7	Mont Dore	France
Aug 21	St Ursanne-les-Rangiers	Switzerland
Sep 4	Turkheim-Trois Epis	France
Sep 18	Mecksek-Pannon	Hungary

EUROPEAN RALLYCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP

Apr 17	Sils	Spain
Apr 24	Nordring	Austria
May 15	Knutsdorp	Sweden
May 22	Hameenlinna	Finland
Jun 12	Kildare	Ireland
Jun 19	Loheac	France
Aug 14	Maasmechelen	Belgium
Aug 21	Valkenswaard	Netherlands
Sep 4	Lyngas Motorbane	Norway
Sep 18	Lydden Hill	Britain
Oct 2	Estering	Germany

EUROPEAN AUTOCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP

Mar 13	Sils	Spain
Mar 20	Palma de Mallorca	Spain
Apr 17	Schluechtern	Germany
Apr 24	Birkenring-Hoope	Germany
May 8	Vaccarino	Italy
May 29	Faleyras	France
Jun 12	Porici	Czechoslovakia
Jun 19	New Ruppersdorf	Austria
Jul 3	Nova Paka	Czechoslovakia
Jul 24	Ornedalsbanen	Denmark
Aug 21	Hollenburg	Austria
Sep 18	Maggiora	Italy

FIA HISTORIC CHAMPIONSHIP

May 1	Brands Hatch	Britain
May 15	Zandvoort	Netherlands
May 22	Monza	Italy
Jun 5	Brands Hatch	Britain
Jun 26	Montlhéry	France
Aug 7	Zolder	Belgium
Aug 14	New Nürburgring	Germany
Sep 18	Most	Czechoslovakia

FIA Historic Championship racing visits Brands Hatch twice in 1988, in May and June.

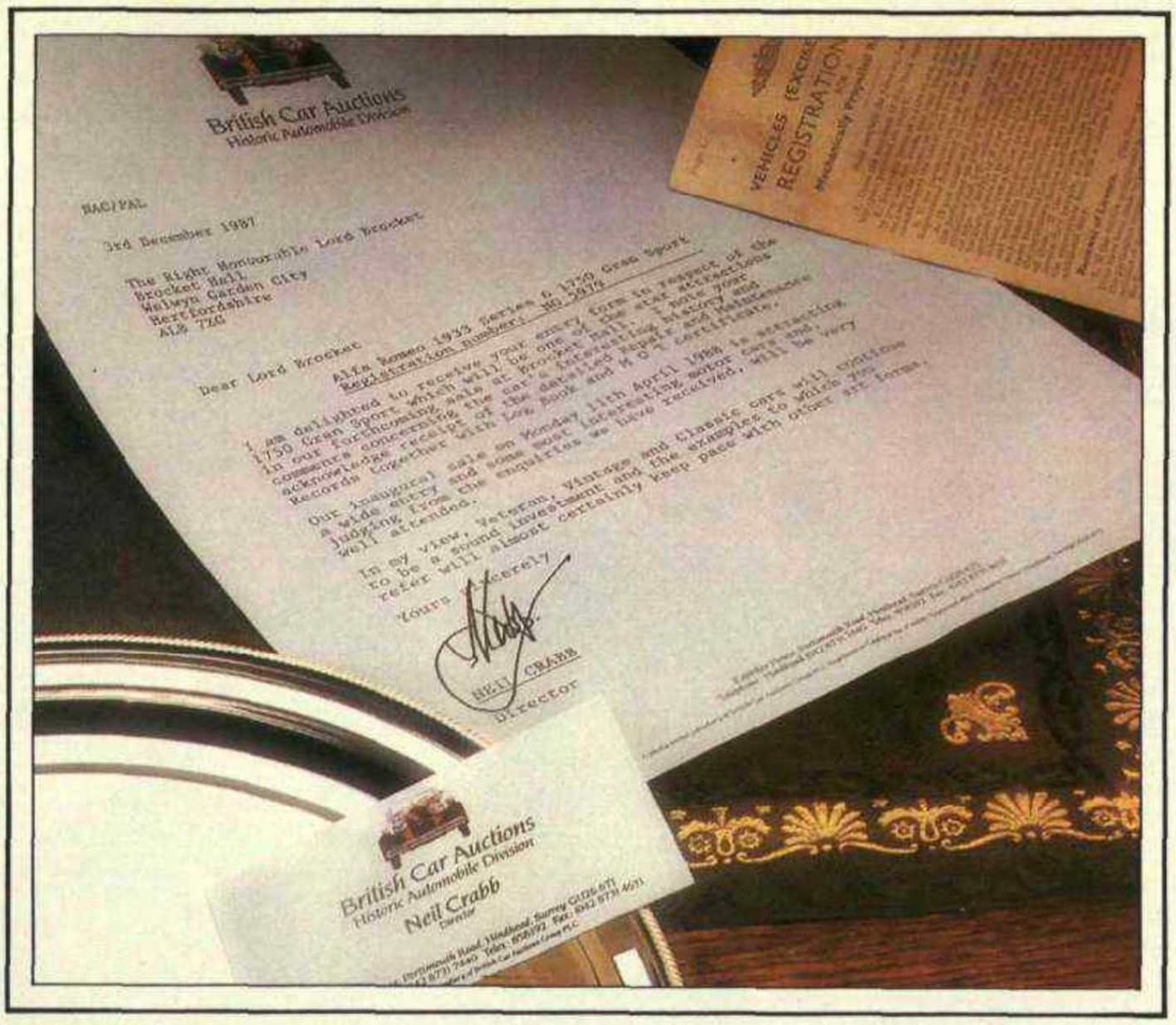
The list of dates blocked by the FIA for Formula One events is as follows, and the British Grand Prix has been confirmed for Silverstone.

If there is a Monaco Grand Prix it will surely be at Monte Carlo, and similarly an Hungarian Grand Prix will be at the Hungaroring at Budapest. A Detroit Grand Prix can hardly be held anywhere else, and for better or worse the German Grand Prix will be at Hockenheimring.

Thankfully the San Marino Grand Prix will be at Imola, and the Italian Grand Prix will be at Monza.

FORMULA ONE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Apr 3	Date Blocked	probably Brazil
May 1	Date Blocked	probably Imola
May 15	Date Blocked	probably Monaco
May 29	Date Blocked	possibly Mexico
Jun 12	Date Blocked	probably Canada
Jun 19	Date Blocked	probably Detroit
Jul 3	Date Blocked	probably Paul Ricard
Jul 10	Date Blocked	probably Silverstone
Jul 31	Date Blocked	probably Hockenheim
Aug 14	Date Blocked	
Aug 21	Date Blocked	
Sep 11	Date Blocked	probably Monza
Aug 25	Date Blocked	
Oct 2	Date Blocked	
Oct 30	Date Blocked	probably Japan



11TH APRIL 1988
AN HISTORIC OCCASION FOR CAR COLLECTORS

As anyone who's involved in historic vehicles and automobilia is only too well aware, it often takes many years before a car is acclaimed a classic, or an event recognised as being truly significant.

Rarely have collectors and investors been able to look ahead to, and prepare for, an occasion which is sure to earn a place in the history of classic auctions. But on the 11th April 1988, the stately home of Lord Brocket plays host to just such an event.

Over 40 years ago British Car Auctions, the largest vehicle auction organisation in the world, recognised the growing interest in veteran, vintage and classic cars, motor bikes and commercial vehicles. Over the years we have developed a unique expertise in this highly specialised field. Which is why we have now formed a separate division of BCA – The Historic Automobile Division.

The significance of Monday 11th April 1988 is that it marks the first specialised auction to be held by the BCA Historic Automobile Division. It will be the first of three to be held during this year.

Equally historic is the venue.

Lord Brocket is himself an ardent collector of classic cars. And Brocket Hall, just 22 miles from London and one of the finest private residences in the country, is home to an impressive collection of Ferraris.

Despite its obvious connections, this will be the very first occasion that Brocket Hall will have seen such an internationally important collection of historic vehicles and automobilia.

If you would like to enter a vehicle in this inaugural auction – and there is still time to do so – then contact Neil Crabb. Under his direction, and with his established international reputation in this field and involvement with many of the world's leading collections, we are confident that the BCA Historic Automobile Division's auctions will become an essential feature of every collector's year, but nothing quite compares with being the first of its kind.

Entry to the auction area itself will be by catalogue only, but they will be available on the day. However, they are sure to become collectors' items. So to reserve your copy, and have it posted to you, write to Neil Crabb at the address below, enclosing a £10 cheque payable to British Car Auctions.

In any case, whether you wish to buy, sell, collect, invest or just stand around and admire, be at Brocket Hall, Hertfordshire, on 11th April 1988.

You'll see history being made.

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FISA should try explaining special stage road closures to Masai herdsmen, matutu *drivers and families of giraffe on their leisurely foraging trips.*

Consequences of Conformity

It was entreated, implored, pressed, petitioned, pushed and even begged, but when the CSI of the FIA finally agreed to establish in 1970 what eventually became the World Rally Championship, it created something which, although universally wanted, was quite outside its ken, and which it administered by the crude means of groping in the dark.

Sadly, eighteen years later, the championship is still so badly and unpopularly managed that, rather than having progressed into the prestigious world series which it should have become, it remains stuck in the doldrums, beset by confusion and in its worst shape since its inception.

Indeed, the administration of the series has so alienated manufacturers' teams that only two of them entered cars in January's Monte Carlo Rally, the first World Championship qualifier of the year.

Strangely enough, the first trophy for drivers competing in a world series of rallies was not established by the FIA or any other international body, but by Britain's RAC. The CSI, as FISA was then called, seemed to consider rallying insufficiently "respectable" to deserve a world title, and it was Belgrave Square, not Place de la Concorde, which first decided that successes in a series spanning more than just Europe should be recognised internationally.

Sadly, official records seem to have gone astray, and our requests to the RAC MSA for the full past results of the contests for the RAC World Rally Trophy have drawn a blank.

The Trophy, based on events which included the East African Safari and Canada's Shell 4000, was not endorsed by the FIA, and until the end of the Sixties the premier rallying series of the world remained officially the European Championship. It was only after much persuasive effort by organisers, manufacturers, competitors and the press that the CSI agreed to create a rally championship which included events throughout the world and which did not have the geographical limit of Europe as part of its title.

In 1970, with a flourish which conveniently ignored both the example set by the RAC and the fact that it was no more than finally acceding to an overwhelming demand, the CSI officially established the International Rally Championship.

Note that the CSI used the word International in the title, not World, even though they were synonymous in such a context. "World" seemed to imply a ranking which

"International" lacked, and there was a distinct reluctance to confer upon rallying a status which, by its very uncouth, rough and ready nature, it did not merit. To the FIA, rallying was still very much a poor relation.

Three years later, the word International was replaced by the word World, but it remained just a series for manufacturers. Drivers received no recognition at all, and the subsequent trophy called the FIA Cup for Drivers was no more than a sop cast in their direction.

The pressure soon began all over again. It was all very well for a manufacturer to win the title of World Champion, but a car could not wave from a rostrum, sign autographs or be interviewed on television. The highest accolades of the sport should be given to a real, live person, not a collection of sophisticated mechanical and electronic components, no matter how worthy its team of designers.

For a sport as inherently international as rallying not to have a World Champion was a grave omission, and we at MOTOR SPORT went some way towards rectifying that situation by keeping our own score tallies for a few years and announcing the drivers who would have become champions had there been an official world series. We were flattered when other journals overseas followed our example.

Eventually FISA gave in to the pressure and in 1979 — again with a "look what we've done" rather than a "we've finally agreed" — a World Rally Championship for Drivers was established. At last the sport's major series would produce each year a World Champion to whom other competitors and aspirants, not to mention rallying's millions of followers, could look up.

Alas, rather than escalating in prestige and popularity, the World Rally Championship has gone rapidly downhill, and the blame for this must rest squarely with a muddled FISA administration which has done more harm than good. New rules have popped up as frequently as new officials, and the management of the sport has become grossly top-heavy both with unnecessary regulations and with those who create and attempt to enforce them — many of whom have none of the recent experience necessary for just supervision.

Sudden, drastic changes in the rules governing the construction of cars upset several manufacturers, some of whom had spent considerable sums on development only to have their investments eliminated by rule changes which rendered those cars obsolete. The abolition of Group B was said by FISA to be in the cause of safety, but had a little more expert thought gone into the establishment of the Group B rules in the first place, perhaps there would have been no need to cancel them so hastily.

Rally organisers, too, have become disenchanted by the dictatorial demands of FISA and its president, espeically when, for the doubtful convenience of standardisation, rallies have been deprived of their traditional characters.

The creation of limits on special stage and overall distances was said to be in the cause of safety, but this merely concentrated the risks. The insistence on special stages timed to the nearest second, flying finish lines and total road-closures in countries such as Kenya and Morocco is ludicrous and quite impractical. It places needless additional strain on organisational resources, and illustrates clearly that the FISA officials responsible for such rules have no appreciation of what makes a rally tick.

Ford is putting more emphasis on national series than on the World Championship this year.

1988 rule revisions have made the Renault 11 less competitive; no factory team went to Monte Carlo.

Peugeot forsook Championship events when Group B was abolished at the end of 1986. The new 405 T16 is for exclusive use on long distance "rally raids."

Another stupid and unpopular rule in the so-called quest for safety was the imposition of a 110 kph (68.35 mph) average speed on special stages, leading organisers to introduce all manner of deviations — even excursions through farmyards — just to keep their averages down. Such conditions actually increased the perils, for once the deviations were negotiated drivers reverted to maximum speed, having had their rhythm interrupted.

That average speed limit has fortunately now been lifted, but its introduction and withdrawal indicate that FISA has been dangerously and inexpertly experimenting with safety rules. Anyone having real knowledge of the sport could foresee the situation immediately the limit was introduced, but it still took FISA an inordinately long time to rescind the rule.

The World Rally Championship has suffered enough at FISA's bungling maladroit hands, and only when that aloof body climbs down from its ivory tower and takes note of what competitors, organisers and other real experts have to say will the series have any chance of regaining its significance, its prestige and its variety of international character.

Six or seven works teams used to be about the normal turnout for a World Championship qualifier, but the number has steadily diminished. To have only two entered in the Monte Carlo Rally is a sad reflection on the state of the sport.

Lancia and Mazda were the only factories to appear in the first round of 1988, the former beginning another determined assault on the series as a whole and the latter resuming its activities after a year troubled by homologation difficulties. Mazda's six-speed gearbox is now permitted after a rule-change allowing two alternative gearboxes (rather than just one as hitherto), neither of which has to be produced in homologated quantity. Peugeot and Renault were both absent, whilst Citroën's entry was for the winners of a national competition rather than for works drivers.

Michelin was out in strength, however, especially as it has replaced Pirelli as Lancia's supplier of rally tyres after Pirelli could no longer provide the quantity of types required by Lancia. To cope with the extra demand Michelin divided its Monte Carlo cavalcade of trucks into two parts, one to supply Lancia and the other to feed Mazda.

Peugeot has forsaken the World Championship in favour of long distance events such as Paris-Dakar, the Pharaohs (Egypt) and the Atlas (Morocco) and at the time of the Monte Carlo Rally the team was on its way to Dakar with two 205 T16s, two of its new 405 T16s and a fleet of support vehicles including Peugeot P4s, Mercedes trucks and aircraft, transporting 33 people on the ground and 27 in the air.

Renault has been just as dissatisfied as Peugeot with FISA's rule changes, and 1988

revisions to weight minima, wheel widths and the cylinder capacity coefficient for turbocharged cars (increased from ×1.4 to ×1.7) mean that the R11 Turbo has lost its biggest advantage — lightness.

Ford, aided by such outside teams as RED and Little, is tackling six national championships in 1988, while Boreham's World Championship programme is limited to five events, in Portugal, Corsica, Finland, Italy and Britain.

Both Volkswagen and Mitsubishi are waiting until they have 4WD cars available, the latter with the added innovation of four-wheel steering. However, FISA's President has said that both 4WD and turbochargers will be banned from 1991, and the quality of cars required to be built for homologation purposes reduced from 5000 to 20.

A Group B success-story, Peugeot's 205 T16 is now confined to events such as Paris-Dakar.

Is this really the way to go? Widening the gap even further between professionals and amateurs, opening the door to privately financed special builders with whom the FISA president will doubtless endeavour to negotiate as he does with Grand Prix teams, and nailing the coffin lid on that traditional but increasingly tenuous, near-erstwhile link between competing rally cars and their counterparts available for public sale?

Right now, dissatisfaction is rife — among manufacturers who cannot use the cars they would like to use, among drivers who have very few teams to whom they may offer their services, and among organisers who are furious that they cannot run their events as they know they would be most efficiently and popularly run. Individually, many of these people have expressed their feelings to us in no uncertain manner, but whether they stand up to FISA is another matter.

There have to be car construction regulations, of course, to achieve competition standards, but to insist that rally organisers follow a totally unnecessary pattern, even down to the number of entries per page in the roadbook, is dictatorship carried too far.

The sooner the world's rally organisers get together, cock a snook at FISA and run their events according to their own traditions and local circumstances, the better it will be for the whole of rallying. **GP**

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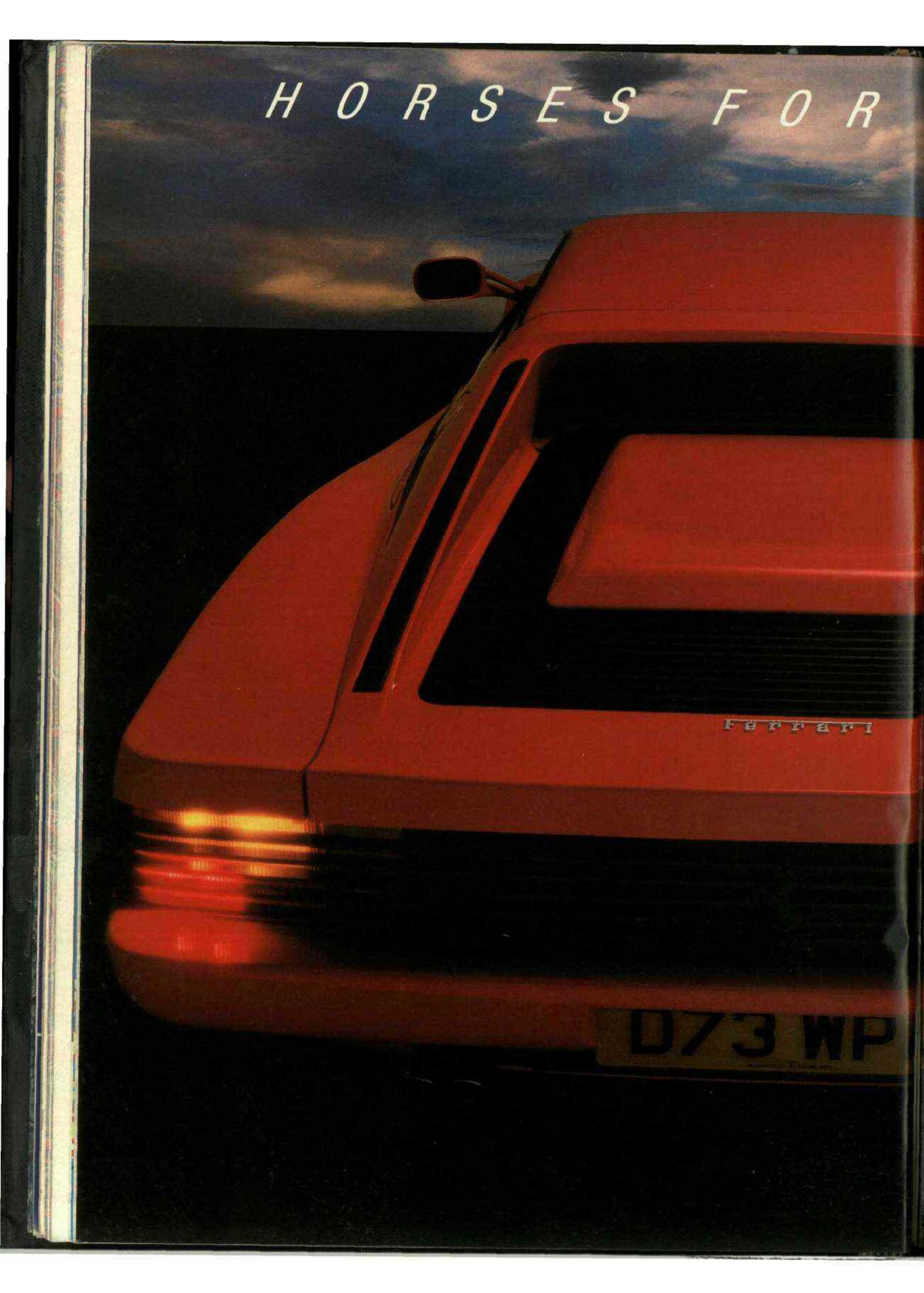

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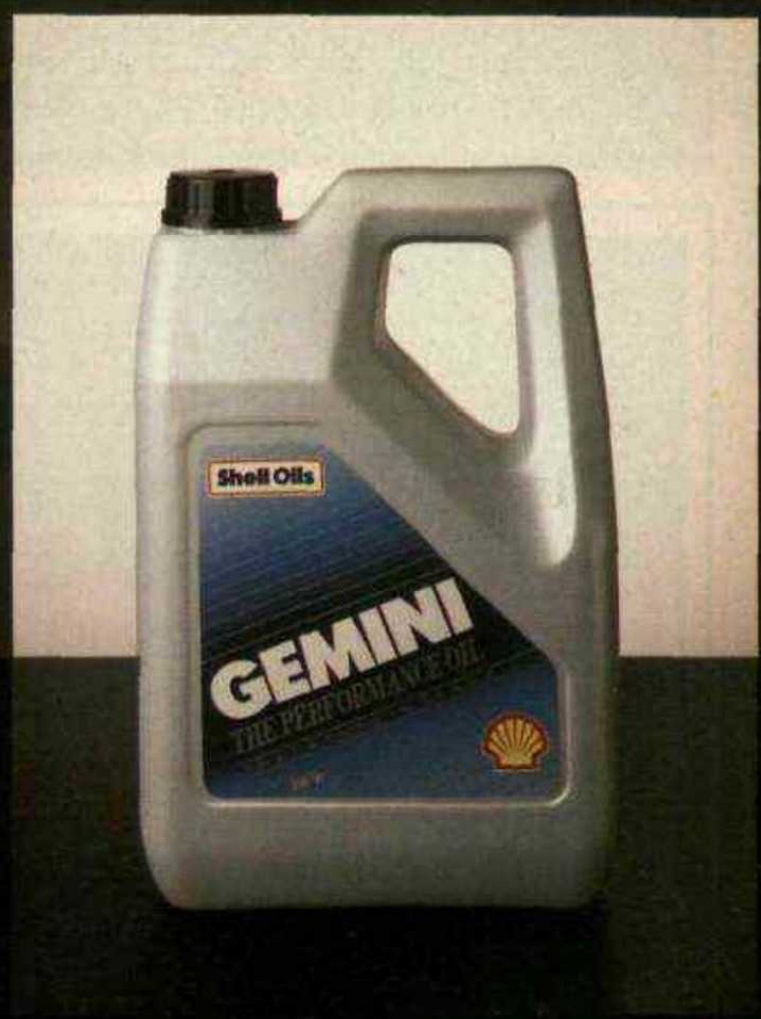

One of the great racing Ferraris of the fifties was christened La Testa Rossa (or 'Red Head,' as we say over here), after its bright red cam covers.

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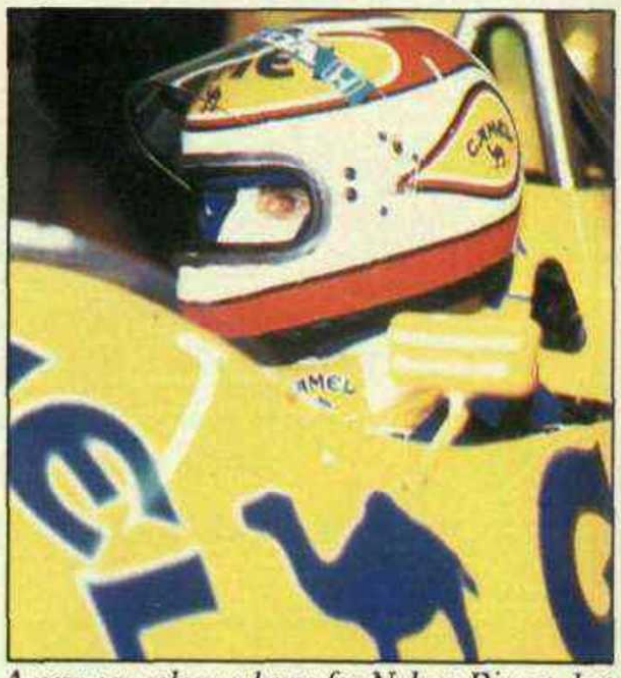
Rain spoiled the Estoril tyre-tests, but Gerhard Berger took the opportunity to try a new helmet.

Bad Week for Goodyear

Eddie Cheever waits patiently for a set of Goodyear's experimental tyres for his Arrows-BMW.



A new car colour scheme for Nelson Piquet, but not a fruitful test.

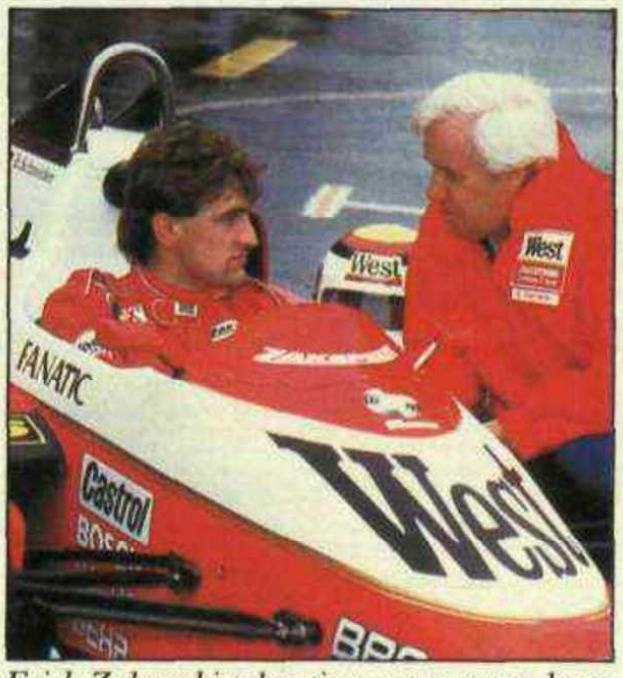
During December a large number of Grand Prix teams journeyed to Estoril in Portugal, for what was scheduled to be Goodyear's most important Formula One test session for two years. With more than 1500 tyres on hand, including many experimental covers, it was hoped that 1988 race-tyre specifications could be finalised as a result of the information obtained.

Unfortunately the weather worked against this objective, and there was only one really dry day on which decent lap times could be set.

Although the team has a brand new 65° 3.5-litre V12-engine car nearing completion, Ferrari's 1987-spec F187, running to the new 2.5-bar boost pressure regulations, emerged fastest of all in the hands of Japanese and Australian Grands Prix winner Gerhard Berger.

Second quickest was the prototype McLaren-Honda test car — based on a 1987 MP4/3 *sans* TAG V6 engine — while Thierry Boutsen's Benetton-Ford B187 wound up third ahead of Michele Alboreto in the other F187 Ferrari.

With turbocharged engines having their performance capped by the 2.5-bar rule (as



Erich Zakowski takes time out to get to know Zakspeed's raw recruit Bernd Schneider.

Smiles all round as Alain Prost and McLaren begin their liaison with Honda.

Nannini impressed in last year's Benetton-Ford, winding up faster than the World Champion.

opposed to 4-bar in 1987) and their fuel allowance slashed from 195 to 150 litres, there has been a great deal of speculation as to how the naturally-aspirated 3.5-litre engined cars will fare next season.

One of the teams hoping against hope that the performance differential will be minimal is Williams, which lost its supply of Honda engines to McLaren in a political re-shuffle at the end of 1987, and will now be relying for power on 3.5-litre V8 engines produced by Rugby-based specialist John Judd. So when Riccardo Patrese turned in fifth fastest time of the week at Estoril in the FW11C test "hack" — a chopped-about 1987 car which previously accommodated a Honda V6 turbo — there were plenty of raised eyebrows along the pit-lane.

Alessandro Nannini completed the top six, the new Benetton-Ford recruit performing smoothly and competently all week, while the newly-crowned World Champion Nelson Piquet had a troubled maiden outing in the Lotus 99T which appeared devoid of its computer-controlled active suspension system. A few weeks after the test, Lotus Cars announced that it would be ending its collaboration with Team Lotus on the further development of the system for F1 purposes, so the 1988 Lotus-Hondas will compete with conventional suspension systems. **AH**

Engine supplier John Judd (right) chats with Williams designer Patrick Head.

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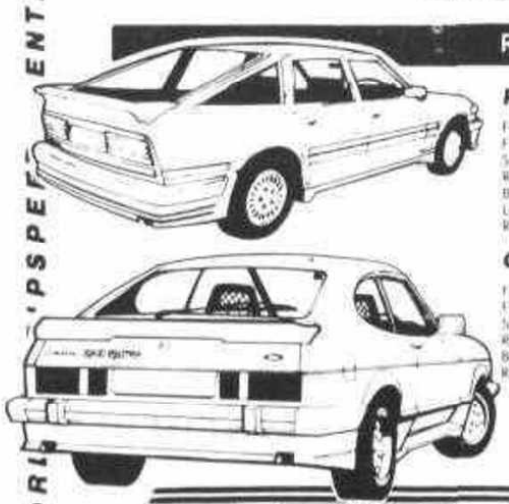

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A Williams and a Skoda side-by-side? Mike Kerr's winning hill-climber conceals a Tiga chassis.

There were rallycars too, like Mark Lovell's Ulster-winning Sierra Cosworth.

Brands Hatch announced a sports/GT series for '89 using XR3i-engined cars.

Quick Change

The British Racing and Sports Car Club has done it again!

Last year, despite overwhelming odds from one of the worst winters ever seen in this country, the club managed to put on a superb Racing Car Show in the annexe at Alexandra Palace. This year just when all was set for a sensational re-opening of "Ally Pally" itself, the unforeseen happened and the BRSCC was informed that there was little chance of staging the show there as work had still to be completed.

It was a last-minute thing, as BRSCC competitions director John Nicol agreed, but a swift change of venue to London's Olympia Exhibition Centre was implemented, and many regarded this as a very wise choice. In fact, this year's Racing Car Show was probably the best ever.

It is an event which, under the BRSCC's guidance, has grown from being a very small national exhibition to what many would regard as an international event. This year's Racing Car Show had attractions from the full spectrum of motor racing. Whether you wanted a nut and bolt for a chassis on your Formula Ford 1600, or a new helmet, or the opportunity simply to stand and stare at the sheer magnificence of the Le Mans Jaguar XJR-8, it was all there.

If anything this year's show had *too much* to see. To take it all in you needed more than one day's quick dash. Three or four would have been better, but the doors were only open to the public from Thursday until Sunday.

Highlighting the best aspect of the exhibition would be hard. For some it would undoubtedly have been the chance to examine at close quarters the 1987 F1 machinery which was on offer. If your passion lay with F3000 there was plenty on offer there too, and the "winners' enclosure" contained everything right down to Eddie Irvine's double Formula Ford championship-winning Van Diemen RF87.

Then again, rally buffs must have had a field day with a works Lancia Delta HF Turbo, Jimmy McRae's British Open Rally Championship-winning Ford Sierra Cosworth, and even David Gillanders' spectacular Metro 6R4. Porsche was well represented too, with the 3.0 twin-turbo 962C endurance car which won the Silverstone 1000km back in May last year.

Prospective competitors were also given the opportunity to see the all-new Honda CRX. From the start of this year, there will be a new one-make series for these cars with a

Steigenberger is increasing its sponsorship of the Super Sports Historic GT series to £50,000. British fans can see the huge sportscars, such as this McLaren, at Brands Hatch on June 5.

*The MOTOR SPORT/*Motoring News *stand displayed F3000 runners including Luis Sala's Lola.*

Accessory stands offered the fans lookalike overalls of their F1 heroes.

lucrative prize fund. The racing version of the car was unveiled at Olympia.

For British F3 fans there was the chance to see the new Reynard challenger for this year on the *Motoring News*/MOTOR SPORT stand, while karting had not been overlooked either; multi-champion Martin Hines' Zip outfit was on display along with the new RAC Cadet Class Kart.

In the big league, Lotus had the Honda 99T on view alongside the Ligier Megatron, Jonathan Palmer's Tyrrell/Cosworth and the all-conquering Williams FW11B. If that was not enough there were some spectacular cars from the drag strips of this country. Everything from the Clubmans car to a fully-fledged single-seater was on show for all to see—it was just a case of deciding where to start.

There was strong turnout from the worlds of stock cars, hot rods and truck racing, while Historic racing was also well represented with some marvellous examples of early Formula One cars and CanAm racers.

Although the show is geared very much towards the industry side of motor racing, there is a tremendous amount to catch the public's eye. In the long term, the BRSCC's Racing Car Show can only act as an ambassador for the sport. However, it was not just a case of the industry putting on a good show, as many of the top F1 drivers made an appearance to talk to people.

It is generally agreed that public awareness of motor racing is on the up, and with such ammunition as the Racing Car Show, the sport looks set to grow even bigger. It was not just the racing fans who seemed to derive pleasure out of this year's show; hundreds of children were also present, filling carrier bags with just about anything which had motor sport connections and was free. The fans of tomorrow need encouragement just as much as the fans of today.

There can be little doubt that the British motor racing industry is thriving. With the BRSCC and show organiser Focus Events behind it, the Racing Car Show came up trumps once more, providing the public with an event they clearly want.

If there has to be a criticism about the show, it is that it lasts no longer than four days. Admittedly the press get a sneak preview the day before the official opening by HRH Prince Michael of Kent, but a week-long event would not go amiss. There really is so much to see and do that, in order to take it all in and get your money's worth, you need to spend at least two days there. **TW**

Two-seater formula — Gertie, Britain's oldest racing truck, a Leyland Roadtrain.

Swift's FF1600 chassis with inboard springs.

Inside BMW Motorsport's new plant at Garching. M3 convertibles will be built here; note the bespoilered 7-series in assembly.

M Power

Peter Flohr, left, talks to Niki Lauda and Winni Vogt, current ETC champion.

Motorsport by name, mini-manufacturer by nature, BMW Motorsport GmbH is the expanding specialist arm of the Bayerische Motoren Werke; the BMW M3 saloon which GC tests alongside the Cosworth-Ford Sierra in this issue (see page 136), is an outstanding example of the work this company-within-a-company can now complete. From basic design to production and racing readiness the M3 project was energised by the limited liability company (thus the "GmbH") formally created in 1972.

If you think that implies BMW expects a lot more from a sports department than the turbo engine which won the 1983 World Championship, or a succession of European Touring Car winners, you are absolutely right. You do not employ 400 people and two substantial factory sites without seeking further profitable developments upon the basic sporting theme . . .

To the company press-release authors, BMW Motorsport existed "exclusively with the design and construction of racing cars in mind" when it was created in 1972. Nothing within a major car corporation is ever so simple.

However, BMW's competition department was never a formula car manufacturer. Motorsport's single-seater racing success in Formulas Two and One deployed the chassis of Lola, March, Chevron, Martini, Osella, Ralt, Brabham, Arrows and ATS.

The nearest BMW got to being a complete

monoposto car manufacturer was in 1969 with the Bavarian Dornier aircraft company constructing its Formula Two chassis, which led to the "BMW 269/270" series. These did win races, but it took the 1973 2-litre formula and red, STP-backed, March 732s with BMW's final 16-valve answer to the dominant Cosworth to finally conquer that coveted European Championship.

If BMW does decide to go ahead and build its own, complete, Grand Prix challenger — and it was suggested to me more than once that they would follow such a course in preference to World Championship "silhouette" racing — it will be a brave decision. Some would call it ignorant arrogance in the wake of Porsche's 1987 CART bellyflopper, the 2708.

It does seem that BMW has long-term ambitions to make a *complete* Formula One car — it apparently feels due recognition of its abilities has been overshadowed by those it supplied with winning engines (the main company line) or (the sports engineers' line) that any deal with outsiders leaves it at the mercy of the competitiveness, or otherwise, of the chassis employed. There are just too many factors outside BMW's engineering control, if it sticks to just engine supply.

In the spring of 1972 former Porsche works driver and Ford competition manager Jochen Neerpasch arrived to take on the responsibility of running a newly-created and separately-funded motorsport department. But BMW had regained post-war sporting impetus long before Neerpasch arrived. It is also technically wrong to say that BMW designed and built only racing cars before, or after, Neerpasch's arrival.

For the company's competition comeback included factory rally cars (2002-based) to world class level. It is also worth recalling that it quite often carried out other tasks to offset a budget ravaged by such things as the 1973-74 fuel crisis.

Even in the early Eighties, Munich's motorsport department earned money by re-engineering a large Ford saloon to run BMW's diesel motor, a deal annexed by the collapse of the US diesel market. This was in stark contrast to the flamboyant CSL racing coupés, the accident-rate per kilometre of BMW's original Junior Team and the 1100 qualifying bhp quote for its 1.5-litre GP engine at 4-bar boost. . .

The Procar M1 series which supported Grands Prix gave the Motorsport division top-level exposure.

Responsibility for BMW's sports activities was initially shouldered by engineering chief Alex von Falkenhausen (now a spry 80-year-old). Since his time fewer than half-a-dozen men have directed BMW's sporting intent, none of whom have had the commercial inclination of the General Manager since 1985, Wolfgang Peter Flohr.

Peter Flohr has ensured the department's vigorous expansion by boosting turnover sharply. In 1985 Motorsport reported "annual turnover of BMW Motorsport was roughly DM 70-million (£24.1 million today) . . . The realistic objective in 1988 is to increase turnover to about DM 325-million" £112 million). Such growth (profits were not mentioned) is the result of marketing the M badge with brilliant awareness of its potent effect upon profit margins.

From clothes to "rolling chassis" competition M3s, from general accessories to specialised products such as M Technic suspension options, BMW Motorsport is now in the sales game in a manner unequalled anywhere else.

I do not advocate this M Power marketing as necessarily a good thing for customers, or for the BMW engineers struggling to defeat a turbocharged Ford in the European and World Touring Car battles of 1987. I merely report that it is so, and that is one reason why an already rich car company could spend more than a Formula One budget on saloon car racing without upsetting shareholders.

In fact the latter should be delighted, for Flohr leaves no commercial route unexplored in his bid to make sure corporate identity is always maintained on the track, and paid for by the punter thereafter.

I revisited the Munich motorsport department again recently to find that the Preussenstrasse building still housed the hardcore engine men. As at Porsche a couple of weeks earlier, I found a department withdrawn from the business of F1 engine supply, but there was no doubt in my mind that Motorsport engines boss Paul Rosche would welcome a return to the category immediately.

Certainly there are BMW competition engine programmes to make a C2 World Sportscar racing unit, and exploring the potential of the latest M40 four-cylinder as a

160 mph potential? The smooth shape of the new 5-series will get M-power in late 1988.

A fuel-injected variant of the 24-valve engine powers the svelte M635CSi.

BMW's reward for the huge M3 budget has been widespread Group A success, despite the surprise disqualification of the winning phalanx here at Monza.

lighter and more compact alternative to the M3-based Formula Three prototype displayed at the 1987 Frankfurt show.

At the time Motorsport was charged with improving the M3 in detail, but not as a turbocharged version . . . yet. That must wait until new 3-series sheet metal justifies the economics of making thousands of motorsport specials.

Talking to Rosche one could see that none of the above was in the same league as front-running in Formula One. "It is hard in F1, sure, but when you can win you know you have beaten the best. But I think you know we have also seen the losing side with our engines. The four-cylinder was not competitive with the sixes when the pop-off valve regulation came in," he grinned self-deprecatingly.

"Always it was at the mechanical limit with more than 11,000 revs and bigger pistons and rods than a six. Power was boost times rpm in its basic form. In 1986 we had 900-950 race horsepower, in 1987 about 900-910 bhp; both figures are on 3.9-bar boost, but in 1987 we had the regulation pop-off valves and reduced fuel allowance.

"We could not go over 11,000 rpm without blowing up, so we had to run at the limit of boost all season; it was like an old steam engine on these joke pop-off valves."

There was more, much more on this and related F1 topics from a man whose competition four-cylinder turbo experience goes back to the 2002 racing machine of 1969 (and the 1973 road car), but it is literally book-length, so we will leave it at that for now . . .

Before and after the establishment of Motorsport GmbH, BMW was a winner in saloon car racing, and it was that expertise which indirectly took it into the specialist road car business. For years contracted aces such as Hans-Joachim Stuck would have the latest BMW cocktail to commute between events. Most of the time drivers' "road smokers" were larger-engined versions of the old 5-series, 3 to 3.5-litre versions of the four-door.

Those unofficial "530, 533" and "535" conversions provided a basis for the main company to later produce the M and 535i production models in 1979, but were overshadowed by the expensive construction of the first M-for-Motorsport model, the M1.

By the standards of most sports departments, the M1 was an expensive irrelevance, but BMW Motorsport overcame a false production start at Lamborghini in 1978 to eventually oversee the assembly of more than 450 by Baur and itself. The racing spin-off was the 1979-80 Procar Championship, the midships 470 bhp mastered by Niki Lauda and Nelson Piquet.

For a BMW collector, the M1 ranks in desirability with anything the company has ever made, particularly as it was such a sweet-handling supercar. For BMW Motorsport its real significance was the 3453cc

inline six, because it had started life as a four-valve-per-cylinder racing unit and yet had been made a reliable and flexible road unit.

Motorsport converted the saloon car racing six of more than 400 bhp into the 277 horsepower unit which propelled the M1 beyond 160 (autobahn) mph. Then the company saw there was further potential in the application of previous M Power motorsport units to a profitable public life.

Thus the 24-valve six received a wet sump, plus the later generation of Bosch engine and injection management to become implanted within BMW's 6-series coupé as the 286 bhp M635CSi. Production of that 155 mph "M-coupé" began in Spring 1984 and continues into 1988.

Unlike the similarly motivated but obsolete M5, it was not made by BMW Motorsport. Instead it was slotted amongst the general run of coupé production at Dingolfing. But harking back to the tradition of the Seventies, Motorsport did make at least one contracted driver a very special, and personal M635. Nelson Piquet took delivery of an example in black with 3.7 litres and 330 bhp to complement the champion's taste for 170 mph travel.

The M5 combination of the production 286 bhp/24V unit and the upright 5-series body formalised Motorsport's very limited production facilities at the Preussenstrasse site. Such innocuous-looking 150 mph BMW Motorsport saloons have been available since 1985. The company found that such customers also responded well to the individual finishes which could be applied when the cars were slowly assembled within a department of skilled hand-labour.

The 1986 M3 was a rather different concept, for neither the M5 or M6 had competition chores to complete. There was also a fascinating link between the M3's engine and the inline six, as Paul Rosche revealed with dismissive laughter: "You know how we make the first M3 engine in 1981? I tell you. We slice the end from an M635 24-valve — two cylinders removed. Yes, now we have a cylinder head to put on the iron-block four. That's what we needed to show us the M3 could work!"

What Paul Rosche does not tell you, but which is obvious talking to those who have to meet his standards and that of the parent company, is that the subsequent road version of the engine then had literally millions of DM and thousands of hours expended in durability and refinement running.

PR talk? No, I took a Brand X 16-valve down to Italy to meet the M3 upon its debut; Brand X split its exhaust manifold and had an obvious four-cylinder reverberation just above 4000 rpm, while the bigger BMW four made half the racket. An experienced middle-management motorsport engineer said quietly, "Ja, we had chust the same problem as your car. Took nearly another year, many more development kilometres, and much more money to fix it, but they made us do it!"

Marketing the M-badge is one of BMW's strengths: the Schnitzer WTC team shows the colours.

It is also worth recalling that the M3 had to be built at a minimum rate of 5000 in a twelve-month period to qualify for international Group A sport, so there was no initial question of building it at Preussenstrasse.

I write "initial" because Motorsport is to make some M3s in 1988, constructing a strictly controlled number of M3 convertibles. To pursue this, and other assembly projects, the sports department has been sub-divided and expanded to embrace a new (built in 1986) factory at Garching. Still within Munich's environs, Garching was purpose-built to make "approximately 1600 units a year" when working two shifts.

That production capacity will obviously not be absorbed by the M3 convertible alone. Possibly, the "end of 1988" alliance of the new 5-series and 24-valve M Power will occur at Garching too — 286 bhp ought to make that slippery new M5 exceed 160 mph. **JW**

An Enigma

Public perceptions of BMW and its products are probably more disparate than for any other manufacturer, German or otherwise. The Munich company is rightly renowned for very high-performing, luxurious family saloons and the new 7-series is highly acclaimed; yet the model that sells in highest volume is the 3-series and the four-cylinder versions, 316 and 318i, are the most popular.

Price and reputation, perhaps in that order, are the factors BMW's marketing people would study most carefully, ensuring that the 3-series remains high on the lists of professional people and middle managers moving up from the Sierra/Cavalier segment. The latest version of the 318i with the totally new 'M40' fuel-injected 1.8-litre engine is an extremely competent model which will win the marque a lot of new friends, even though a January increase moved the price up to £11,575.

A little analysis shows that the majority of BMW's customers are not especially interested in neck-bending acceleration, since two-thirds of the British importer's 36,000 sales are accounted for by the 3-series, and 55% of those are four-cylinder models. It is easy to run off a long list of rivals with greater performance at less cost, starting with the MG Montego, Rover Vitesse, Vauxhall Cavalier SRi 130 and the two French newcomers, the Citroën BX19 GTi and the Peugeot 405 SRi (all offer more rear legroom, the BMW being decidedly cramped for four adults).

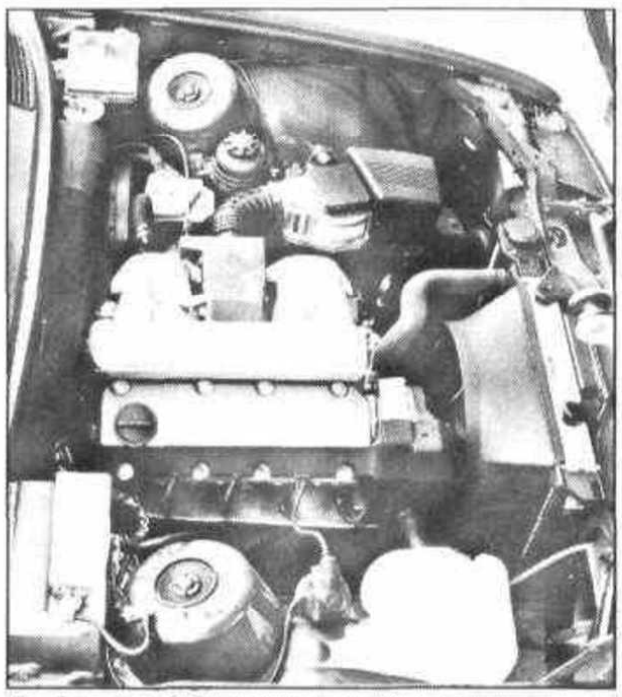
Acceleration from standstill to 60mph in a level 10 seconds, and a top speed of 118mph, is only average these days. Rather, the BMW excels in the effortless and unobstrusive way in which the new engine performs, and the manner in which it eats up the motorway miles without tiring the occupants.

At an indicated 85mph (a true 80mph, and legal in France) the tachometer rests lazily just below 4000rpm, the engine is so quiet as to suggest that it might be the "six", and fuel is being consumed at an average of 28mpg despite the car being fully laden. Certainly, this is a long-distance BMW *par excellence*.

The M40 engine is the most significant improvement for the 1988 model year, the old M10 unit having lasted a full 25 years. The M40 also has an iron block, but with closer bore centres, lighter pistons with combustion troughs in their crowns, and a new cylinder-head which has a lot in common with the new V12 engine.

The belt-driven single overhead camshaft has hydraulic tappets for the first time, and the 14° inclination of the valves and offset position of the spark plugs owes a lot to the new technology. So, too, does the Bosch Motronic DME engine management, the series III system which is extremely efficient, no doubt, but did not even return a 30 mpg fuel consumption on a long European journey.

Rarely in our experience has a four-cylinder engine ever been so sweet-running, all the way round to 6400rpm, but it inevitably lacks the six-cylinder's urgent "zing" which gives the discerning driver a particular pleasure. It does, though, excel in torque, with 119 lb ft at 4250 rpm in hard figures, and a surprising ability to pull smoothly from 1100rpm, even in fifth gear with a full load.



Reduced weight and better efficiency sum up the new Munich four.

Other facelift features include composite material 2.5mph-impact-absorbing bumpers, less chrome-plating, higher rear light clusters, a larger fuel tank at 64 litres instead of 55, a revised front air dam and rear apron, variable-ratio steering rack (power assistance is a desirable £510 option) and, on the 318i, larger section 195/65 section tyres (Pirelli P6 on the test car which also had the optional £559 alloy wheels).

Visually the new 3-series is much like the old, and dynamically some old foibles are evident. The semi-trailing-arm suspension is softly suspended, uncomfortably so really since back seat occupants feel they are at sea (and all that entails!), while adhesion is lost rather rapidly nearing the limits.

Ellipsoid headlamps, by Bosch, are another new feature, and on level ground the main and dipped beams are extremely effective; on dip it is as though a curtain comes down to below the eye-level of oncoming traffic, still projecting the beam a long way forward and inclining steeply to the verge.

Theoretically the system is excellent but in practice it is not, for several reasons: under acceleration the tail drops and the beam rises; when laden the dipped beam is constantly too high; when the car is moved to the right for overtaking the beam strikes the mirror of the car ahead; and when traffic approaches from the left (entering a left-hand bend for instance), the beam is again causing annoyance. You can almost hear people saying "bloody BMW drivers" when this one, at any rate, was being anything but arrogant.

There may be two solutions, both to be found in the options list. The average 318i purchaser would not bother, but the keener one would be well advised to specify the M-Technic sport rear suspension at £193, and the cockpit-operated headlamp beam adjustment at £61.

We find the 318i to be enigmatic simply because more money needs to be spent, in a number of ways, to make it the car we expected it to be.

It is BMW's policy, spelled out by chairman Eberhard von Kuenheim, to limit production to 500,000 cars annually, and the Munich company is not far off that mark now. The temptation must be there, in the design department, to develop the 318i properly with stiffer rear suspension, a 16-valve cylinder head, all-disc braking, a faster steering rack (the power system is rather low-geared and insensitive), and standardising the alloy wheels, the sunroof and electric windows.

The marketing department on the other hand will be resisting these developments firmly, fearing that the four-cylinder model would near the £15,000 mark and lose its market share. They might go further, and point out that a fully developed 318 would compete on price with the six-cylinder 325i. Even so there could be a case for a special edition, to compete perhaps with the Mercedes 190E 2.3-16.

It is not our job to tell BMW what sort of cars they ought to be making, but the 318i was tantalising, with many fine features just failing to make a fine package. The engine is worthy, the gearbox excellent, the interior handsome, the styling distinctively BMW; the boot is very generous, though the effect was spoiled by pools of water in the wells.

Yet the 318i can only represent the first step on BMW's ladder (as the 924 once did for Porsche), the first new BMW to which many people may aspire. It is classier than any higher-volume rival, yet a lot of the value is in the badge.

A discerning buyer would probably tot up the options mentioned in this article, see a bottom line figure of £14,856 and promptly decide to buy a 325i instead! **MLC**

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IN ASSOCIATION WITH LORD MONTAGU OF BEAULIEU

"Evante" Means Progress!

One thing George Robinson can be congratulated upon is the choice of name. "Evante" does not actually mean anything in French so it does not have to compete with "Elan", but it has an evocative Latinate sound, like "avanti" — go!

Another thing the Lincolnshire constructor deserves high praise for is the car itself, a wonderful reincarnation of Colin Chapman's best-loved product, full of all the Elan's virtues and lacking its readily-forgiven shortcomings.

Twenty years slipped away when I drove the Evante from Robinson's premises at Cradge Bank, just outside Spalding. As I eased my foot off the clutch I prepared, mentally and physically, for the doughnut "wind-up" . . . it was not there, of course, because Metalastik couplings have been consigned to history, replaced by modern Hardy Spicer-type Ford Sierra constant-velocity jointed shafts.

It took a couple of hours, and some fast driving on straight, but indifferently surfaced fenland roads, to be sure that Evante is the genuine, pedigree son of Elan. There were places where I could imagine the Elan wandering off the straight and narrow, as mine did on French *bis* routes between Le Touquet and Le Mans, or Pau. It always tended to follow the contours, but the Evante did not. Oh, and the softly-suspended rear end used to scrape the tarmac in the dips, but the Evante's did not.

The Elan used to make a dreadful hullabaloo at more than 80 mph, a mixture of wind noise, engine thrash and the peculiar dynamo whine, but the Evante — with the extra benefit of a Sierra five-speed gearbox — remains relaxed at 100 mph, although with the hood down I would not care to pass judgement so far as wind noise is concerned. Robinson, just back from a dealer trip to Germany, says it is far quieter than the Elan on *autobahnen*, and I would believe him.

I had been warned that Robinson might get twitchy if the "Elan" name was mentioned too often, but he was only too pleased to explain the Evante's background, in the course of which he paid high tribute to Chapman's design skills, reckoning that he has influenced modern car design more than anyone realises.

"Between 1962 and 1974 the Lotus Elan was a truly marvellous sports car," says Robinson. "Time moves on, though, and towards the end it needed updating. There weren't any motorways to speak of when it was designed, and it wasn't anticipated that it would be run at high speeds for very long, so it could be criticised on stability."

Robinson had a special relationship with Lotus, and more and more customers came to Spalding to have their Elans serviced, tuned, repaired and generally improved. In the reception area was a fixed-head Elan which he has just renovated, looking better perhaps than the day it was made.

It came as little surprise to learn that Robinson, before setting up the Vegantune company in 1965, used to build BRM Grand Prix cars in their heyday years of the early 1960s, because people who were entrusted with building Graham Hill's cars would be craftsmen whom a World Champion would trust implicitly, and those skills are never forgotten (later, in his Lotus years, Hill sometimes finished racing on three wheels, but knew better than to blame his mechanics!).

Between 1965 and 1974 Vegantune was a top name in tuning racing engines, particularly in Formula Three and Formula B. Lotus, Brabham, Chevron and March were all customers, and Alan Jones, James Hunt, Tom Pryce, Jacky Ickx, Jochen Mass,

Jean-Pierre Jarier, Frank Gardner and Vern Schuppan all laid the foundations to their careers with Vegantune engines prepared by George Robinson. Alan Mann was another customer, having Vegantune prepare his Escort race and rally engines.

The first oil crisis, in 1973-1974, was a hard time for many people but hit Vegantune's business particularly badly. There was the three-day week, electricity cuts, and Robinson's booming business was down to a trickle of customers.

When in doubt, diversify, is the motto. Robinson substantially expanded his Lotus repair work to keep the business ticking over, and a useful bonus came in 1975 when Lotus asked Robinson to produce the Ford-based twin-cam engine on its behalf. A good customer, from that day to this, is Graham Nearn's Caterham Car company.

"In 1979 Lotus wanted to stop twin-cam produced cars," Robinson recalls very clearly. Its own LV alloy engine (Vauxhall-originated) met all its own needs, and Robinson decided to follow the same route by developing the four-cylinder, Ford block twin-cam engine himself.

The blocks still come from Ford, as it happens, but since 1981 the engine has been so developed that it is called the VTA — Vegantune Type A. Until now the VTA engines have been 1620cc, rated at 140 bhp or at 160 bhp with larger ports, higher-lift camshafts and a higher compression ratio, but from now on the capacity will be standardised at 1699cc, and 10.5:1 compression. The power is the same, but the torque is improved.

It is a lusty engine, no question, smooth throughout its range and powerful in the 800kg Evante, but in a sophisticated age the level of induction noise, a throaty gargle which once we thought wonderful, might be considered high. Robinson has the answer for that already — more substantial air-boxes which will mate to the twin Dellortos more effectively than the glass-fibre boxes used until now.

The decision to construct cars, rather than merely renovate them, came with the preparation of the VTA engine, but it took a few more years for Robinson's plans to reach fruition. "I could see the areas in which the Elan needed improving, and despite similarities in appearance, which are deliberate, this is a completely new car."

The doors are similarly designed, of course, the pop-up headlamps look similar but are electrically, not vacuum-operated; the windscreen is identical, but no other item is carried over. The backbone chassis is now made of tubular steel, epoxy-coated like North Sea oil platforms; the suspensions are double wishbones instead of MacPherson struts. The gearbox and differential come from the Sierra; switchgear, locks and other items from the Escort.

A major improvement on the Elan is the construction of the bodywork, glass-fibre cloth being far stronger than the original mat, and now double-skinned in all the areas concerned with stress and safety (bulkheads, doors, windscreen surround) and foam-filled. "It's heavier than the Elan's body, of course," says Robinson, "but it's far safer. It meets all the safety standards and it's less damage prone, as well as being easier to repair."

There can be few markets in the world harder than the Japanese, so far as type-approval is concerned, but the Evante is compliant with Japanese and German standards and these are the best export markets. It is hardly likely that the original Elan would have met any of the Japanese criteria, but then the Japanese were of no consequence a quarter of a century ago.

Girling 10in disc brakes are used front and rear, with a mild servo that will be increased slightly in 1988. There is scope for four-wheel drive, should the market move that way markedly, and ABS braking could be installed, though not until the more compact Bosch K-Jetronic injection replaces the Dellortos.

Similarities between the Evante and the Elan are far too strong to be coincidental; had Robinson wanted to break with the past completely, he would have styled the car differently, and the coupé model which will appear at the British Motor Show in October will take a large, positive step in that direction.

George Robinson, Vegantune's originator.

Robinson does the styling himself, and the coupé is on the drawing board. "That way lots of people see it, and I hear their opinions. Apart from that, the longer I look at it, I find that I change my mind about some detail, and I can change it." I ask why Robinson had not managed to find a better location for the front number-plate, always a problem for Elan owners. . . and another elevation of the coupé is produced showing a flattened, number-plate area set into the front apron!

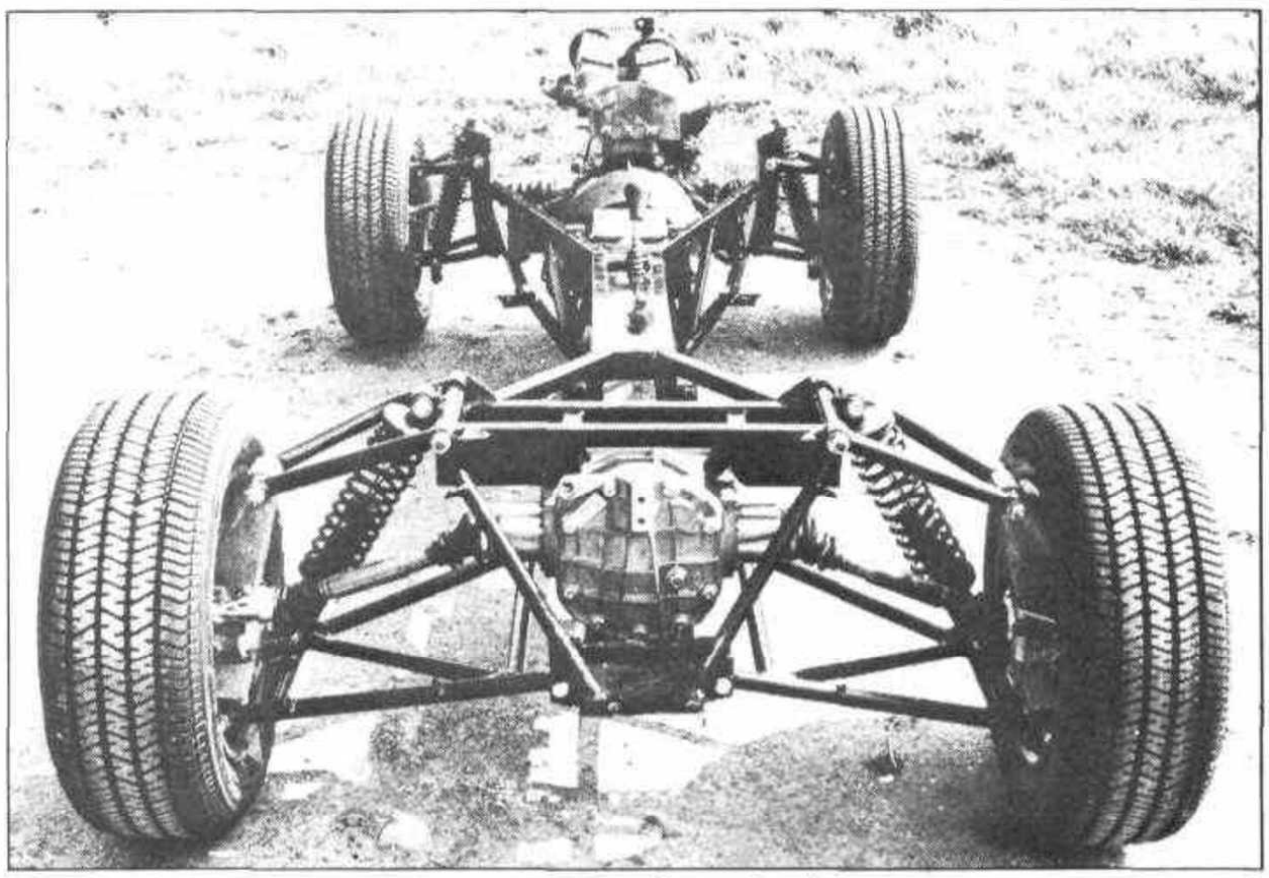
The air dam, markedly curved forwards, and the pronounced lip across the back of the bootlid, are clearly in areas Chapman did not explore pre-1962, but they, more than anything, help to stabilise the Evante at high speeds by moving the centre of air pressure backwards. The weight distribution is about the same, placing equal weight on the front and rear wheels with the driver aboard, and the foam-filled "explosafe" safety fuel tank, 64 litres in capacity, is mounted above the differential.

The polished wood dashboard (walnut, oak or teak to the customer's choice) is highly reminiscent of the Elan's, but the VDO instruments are not. Restall reclining sport seats, trimmed in Connolly leather, are another concession to luxury, and there are nice extra touches, such as an electric interior release for the boot lid, centrally located inertia reels for the seat belts, and a proper recess for the high quality soft-top when it is lowered.

The power-to-weight ratio of 200 bhp per tonne provided by the Evante 160 model falls neatly between the Porsche 944 Turbo and the Ferrari Testarossa, as publicist Graham Arnold (formerly Lotus Cars' sales manager) is keen to point out. In a snug-fitting open-top car the impression of speed is all the greater, and the acceleration seems quite breathtaking as the Evante uses the full span of the tachometer in each gear.

Along with the Caterham Super Seven, this is the closest thing to driving a racing car in

The pretty shape of the Elan has sprouted some new spoilers.



The tubular steel and wishbone suspension of the all-new chassis.

road trim; the ability to reach 60 mph from rest in 6.4 seconds, and a claimed top speed of 132 mph, is indicative of the Evante's exhilarating nature.

What is difficult, in a car so light, is to combine good roadholding with ride comfort. When Chapman designed the Elan he was up against sports models such as the TVR, the Marcos and the Morgan, all guaranteed to loosen a roadmender's fillings, and he established new parameters with long, soft spring travels and comparatively firm damping. Now Robinson has gone a full stage further with more sophisticated wheel locations, springing and damping that are possibly firmer than the Elan's in ride, but not markedly so, and providing infinitely better handling characteristics at the limit.

The Evante has much more rubber on the road — better for handling, inevitably worse for ride. Chapman made do with 4.5J steel wheels, a rim-width also found on the Austin A35 and quite adequate for a sportscar which initially weighed 700kg. Robinson is in the process of switching from an unlovely alloy star pattern wheel in the Alleycat range to smarter K&N wheels (6J rim-width and 14in diameter) equipped with Avon Turbospeed 195/60 VR 14 tyres. Ultimate handling is infinitely better, the Evante having superbly progressive, vice-free handling as far as it was possible to judge on public roads, while maintaining a thoroughly reasonable ride quality.

A local businessman, Tony Elmer, put up the capital to launch the Evante and became a partner in the company; Robinson's son Jeff is in charge of production, son-in-law Phil Gardner in charge of body and paint production.

It is, by any standard of judgement, a family business, a cottage industry even, in an unprepossessing collection of buildings. Doors open, though, on a pair of engine dynomometer test cells and a gas-flow bench tended by engine specialist Rod Creasey, on a workshop which contains computer tape-controlled lathes and drills, and a modern paint-spray booth.

Fourteen people work there, and last year they produced 40 Evantes and a lot more engines. Robinson is emphatic that he does not want to expand, does not want the responsibilities of modern, smart premises which might bring everything under one roof. If his first name was Heath, visitors would understand better, but it is the quality of the product which really matters.

Having produced the first 40 cars, of which 26 were exported, Robinson stopped production in October to prepare for a new series which started up in January. Visible detail changes are very minor indeed — a tidying-up of things like door catches, 1.7-litre engines, standardising some optional equipment — but the real progress was in the production, jigging everything properly so that all the parts fitted first time.

"In 1988 we'll be able to make each Evante in less than half the time, our saving will be perhaps 60%, and we'll be able to produce 100 cars with the same number of people that made 40", says Robinson, indicating a labour saving that would even make Sir John Egan envious.

The most vital question of all, of course, is whether 100 customers can be enrolled each year at a tax-paid price of £14,887.70 per membership. Such a market is finite, and of course as each year passes there are more used cars offered for sale, perhaps competing for the same customers.

Clients, in Britain anyway, buy direct from Evante Cars, and it is best that they do not go up there starry-eyed, expecting to stand on red carpet and be lulled by soothing music. The coffee machine produces quite a good cup, and a Radio One diet issues from the workshop; the dream begins when you look carefully at the workmanship, and drive towards the A1 in a pretty, vivacious sports car.

"Our aim is to be another Aston Martin," says George Robinson surprisingly. "Let's face it, Lotus, Aston Martin and ourselves are the only specialist British manufacturers to produce our own engines, so that must say something about us.

"I admire Astons for their quality, but the DB4 was the best they ever made. I don't see why they had to become so big. People who wants sports cars don't want *big* cars, do they? All the people I meet want *small* sports cars, just enough for two people and their baggage."

A quarter of a century ago Colin Chapman would have said just that. I am not sure that he would have approved altogether of the air dam and the rear spoiler in the aesthetic sense (though he would have appreciated their usefulness), but I am certain that the maestro would have driven an Evante the length and breadth of East Anglia at Mach 1 speeds, enjoying every minute. **MLC**

Forty cars were built last year; the intention is to increase that to 100 per year.

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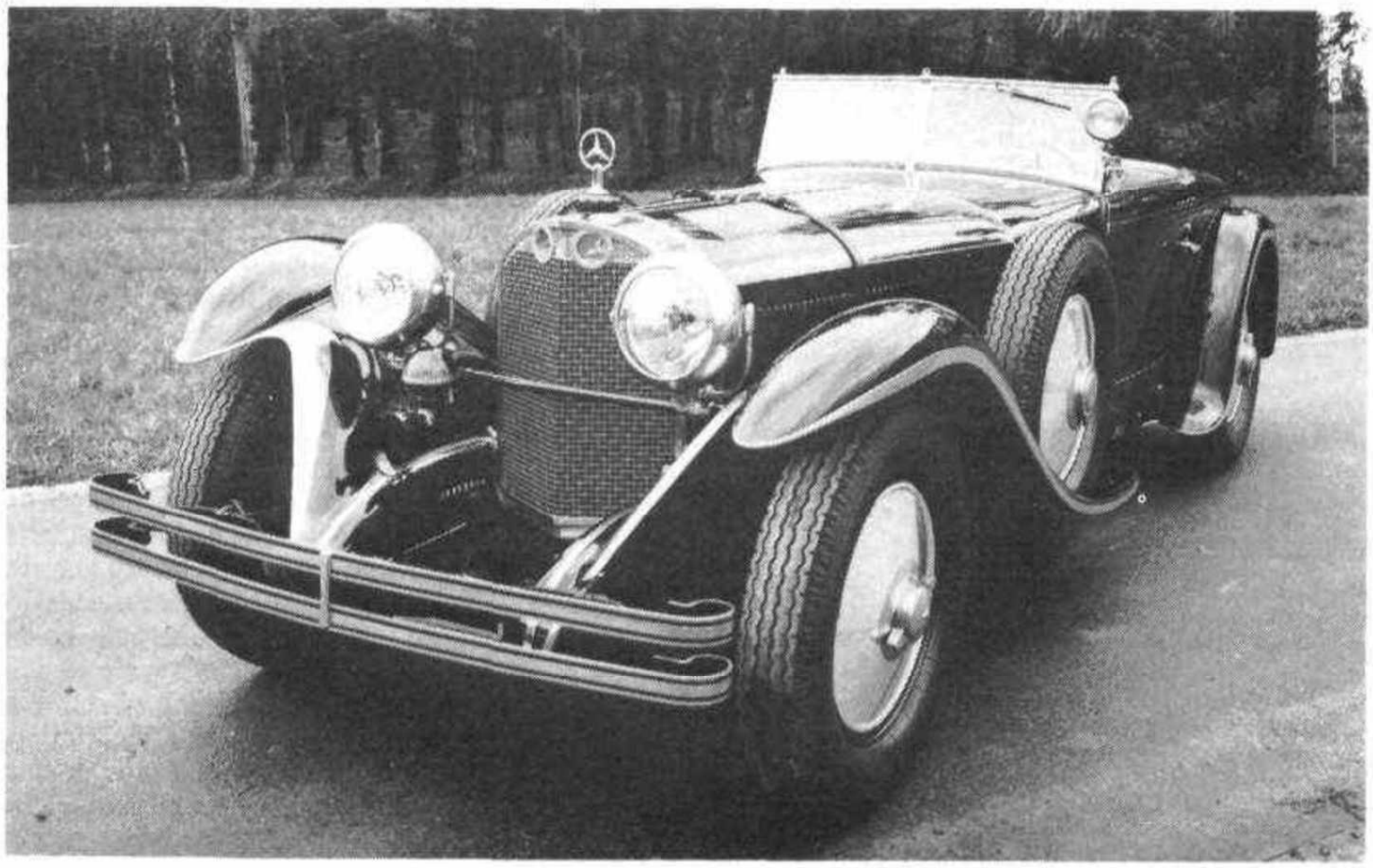

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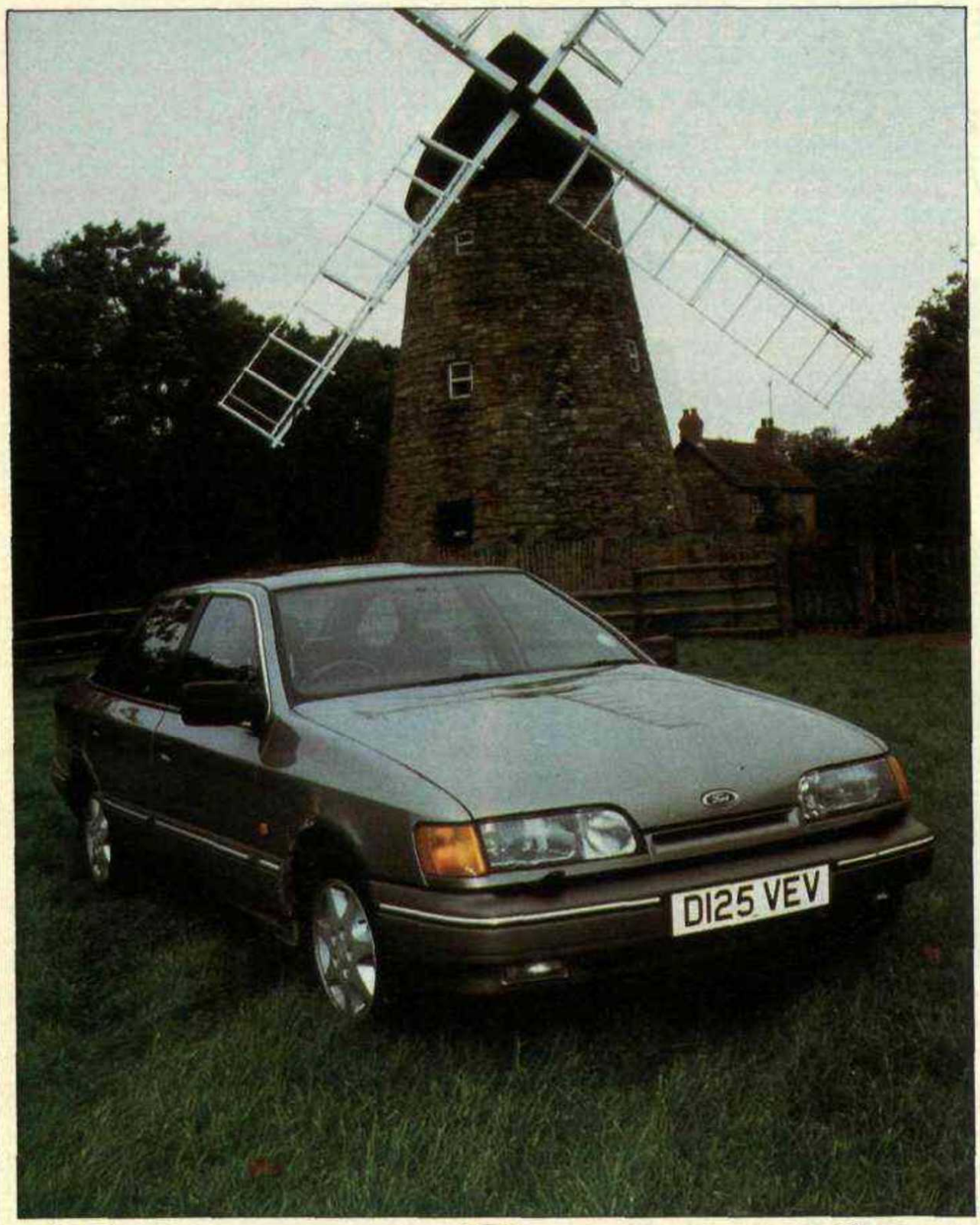


Power Struggle

Careful stratification of models has always been central to Ford's marketing policy. The man in the suburban street may not be able to place a Renault 25 in the snobbery stakes, but he knows that when his neighbour's Granada GL is replaced by a Granada Ghia, the neighbour is "getting on". And with such high sales into company car-parks, essentially tiny differences in spec and badging assume magnified significance.

But gone are the days when mere letters spelled out the driver's prestige: where the bootlid once proclaimed "GXL", the unfortunate designer must now squeeze in, at worst, "Ford Granada Scorpio Executive 4x4", the transport I sampled before Christmas.

Somehow I had managed to miss out on trying the latest embodiment of the V6 engine which tops Ford's range of production car engines (I exclude the Cosworth as having been developed independently outside the company), the 2.9 EFT.

Though improved, Ford's top-level 2.9 EFT is still a lacklustre performer.

An evolution of the Cologne pushrod 2.8, the revised V6 has the same bore with a longer stroke (aiming for smoother running than the agricultural 2.8), revised inlet and new separate exhaust ports, and a retimed cam, which with the Ford-Bosch electronic twin-plenum injection system gives leaner running. Other efficiency improvements include reduced engine friction from lighter valve springs and new piston rings, while the oil pump now absorbs less power and provides more oil.

All this extra efficiency, however, has gone into better fuel figures rather than more power: the new unit still puts out the same 150 bhp, with minor torque gains of up to 6%, although the torque curve is claimed to be flatter and fuller.

Should you choose 2WD, the 2.9 only comes with an auto box, but our 4x4 had the five-speed manual, which had a disappointingly heavy and notchy shift. Together with a rather stiff clutch-action this made an otherwise comfortable executive car with a gentle ride and light power-steering into something of a trial to drive in traffic.

Our car had full leather upholstery which looked and felt very luxurious, and included pneumatic lumbar pads inflated by rather medical-looking bulbs under the legs. Other seat adjustments are electric, and the wheel gives a choice of both tilt and stretch. Electric windows, sunroof, mirrors, and screen de-icing plus air-con are all standard, and the "Executive" extras include cruise control and a sophisticated alarm.

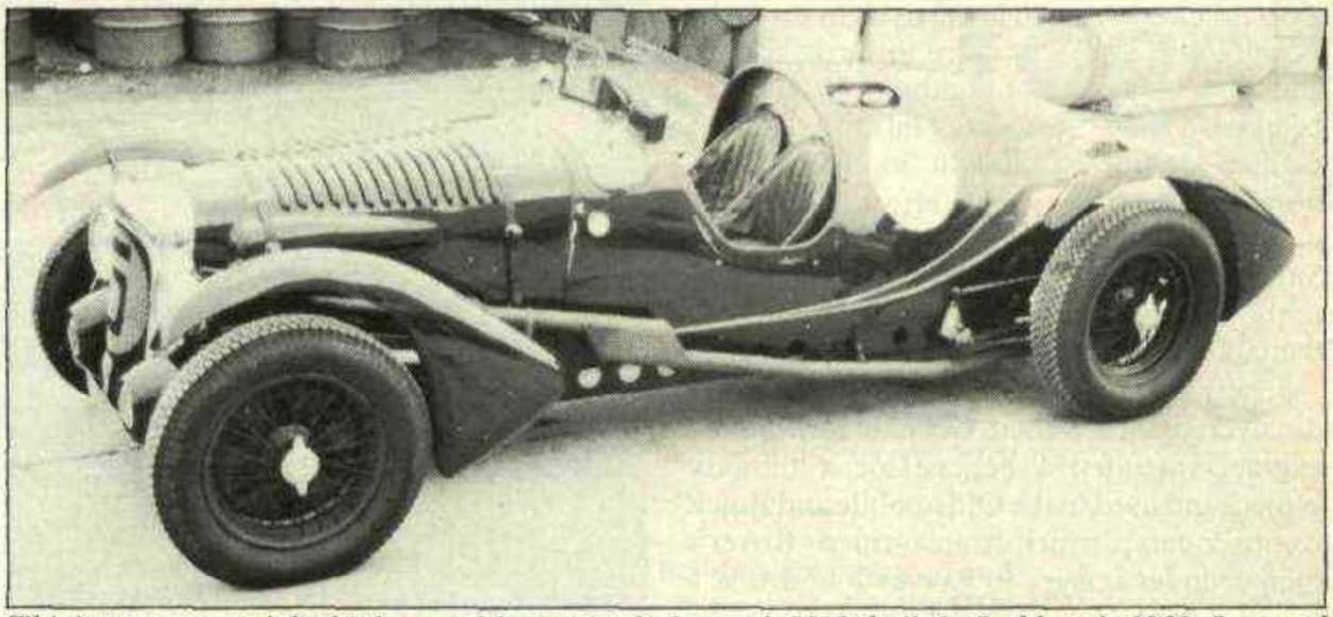
Although I find the Granada's exterior styling thoroughly unattractive, the cabin is pleasant and well laid-out, from the stubby little column stalks to the binnacle-mounted auxiliary switches, and in the top models a useful fuel-computer is added.

Ford's 4WD system with its ⅓:⅔ split is well-known by now, and with no controls for the driver to worry about, its presence is undetectable when driving in normal conditions. But while it is mechanically identical to that on the Sierra 4x4, there is a big difference in character between the two.

Where the Sierra feels light and manoeuvrable, the Granada is more ponderous, the same 150 horses having to work much harder. The old V6 made a terrific row at high revs, and the 2.9, though better insulated in the bigger car, seems only marginally smoother. Probably the biggest improvement has come from dropping the rev-limit by 300 or so rpm, but it remains one of the less refined engines in this class.

Perhaps the better torque curve has reduced the need to grab third or even second to get the car moving in a hurry, but it simply lacks the urge which ought to be there. Compared to its executive rivals such as five-cylinder Audis, V6 Renaults, turbo Saabs and six-in-line BMWs, the otherwise well-equipped and well-assembled Granada looks like a senior management car with junior management motive power. **GC**

LETTER TO READERS



This is not, as you might think, one of the two works Lagonda V12s built for Le Mans in 1939. It started life as a saloon V12 Lagonda, but changed its appearance in recent times.

The Trade

Dear Reader,

Over the years I have been writing letters to the Editor, the Assistant Editor and the Features Editor on this and that, encompassing everything from Formula One to one-make gatherings. For a change I have decided to write letters to the most important people of all — you, the readers.

The best magazine in the world would not last long if it did not have any readers, and one thing MOTOR SPORT has enjoyed for as long as I can remember is the solid support of regular readers.

Long before I started writing I was a regular reader of MOTOR SPORT, and counted myself as "one of the family" serving my apprenticeship by keeping the faith and believing in The Sport above all else. I felt I had matured when the Editor actually used a letter from me in the *Readers' Letters* columns. Little did either of us realise at the time that I was to become a resident writer for the magazine.

Fortunately we have always enjoyed a lively readership, people who do not necessarily agree with what I say, but are prepared to read and then put their point of view. Life would be very dull if everyone read these pages and quietly agreed. Controversy is always enjoyable and the continuous feedback from readers over the years, whether in opposition or agreement, is one thing which is always stimulating.

Occasionally I have been puzzled when I have written something and there has been no reaction whatsoever, and at other times I have made what I thought was a harmless statement, only to have abuse poured on me from all sides. Some letters from readers get published, some call for a personal reply, some need no reply, while there are those which are put to one side; but they are not ignored, for all are read and digested, even the unpalatable ones. Some readers' letters give me a strong sense of proportion.

One such came from South Africa recently, from a Mercedes-Benz enthusiast who reads about the Stuttgart firm and its cars, and in particular about its racing history. He ended his letter with a simple remark: "I don't suppose I shall ever see one of the fabulous Mercedes-Benz 300 SLR sports-cars, like you and Stirling Moss used to win the 1955 Mille Miglia."

That remark made me think. It is too easy to assume that everyone can get to see their favourite racing car either in action, on a demonstration, or in a museum. Anyone in Europe who holds the SLR high on his list of great cars, can hopefully look forward to visiting the Stuttgart Museum, a Racing Car Show, a race meeting or something. But our reader in South Africa is a long way from the centre of motoring history and can only look at photographs, having little or no hope of ever being able to leave South Africa.

The same can no doubt be said for readers in New Zealand, Australia, Hong Kong, the Americas and many other places — even Bournemouth or Bradford. For those of us involved in motor racing as a business and a way of life, nothing seems impossible, but I must say that I have always tried to report races and motoring events for those readers who I know can never get very close to the action.

A subject everyone is very conscious of is the escalation in prices asked for old cars. "The Trade" has created a lucrative market for itself in the euphoria of old cars. When I say "Trade" I am using the word collectively for anyone, myself included, who makes money out of old cars. This means people who buy and sell for profit, whether they are legitimate dealers or back-yard dealers, or private owners who cash in on a healthy market; journalists who make money writing articles about old cars; builders of old cars; specialists who make new parts; coach builders, paint-sprayers, wheel-builders, welders; auctioneers, the advertising world, the promotions world and so on.

If a law was suddenly passed to have all old cars scrapped, there would be an awful lot of people out of work. What used to be described as a "cottage industry" has grown into a major industry. To the west of London there is a thriving industrial estate which is living off the old-car world — making things, mending things, buying and selling, even publishing magazines about old cars. If you drive round this busy factory environment it is amazing how many people you meet who are engaged on work to do with old cars. Anything from machining hub-centres for Morris Cowleys to making parts for two-year-old Formula One cars which are now "historic".

And this is just one industrial estate. You could go into any similar estate in almost any part of the country and find the same busy activity going on.

I recently visited three farms in the Midlands and found them a hive of engineering activity. No animals or mud; the only smells were of cutting fluid or paint-spraying. All this provides a very healthy state of affairs for these small business concerns, and some of the skills and workmanship being exercised are incredible.

It is this "industry" which is keeping historic racing cars in full blood, or keeping old cars on the road, for most of the manufacturers have long since disappeared and spare parts are non-existent. Most one-make car clubs have a spares system operating, having new spares made to replace those things which wear out or break. Thankfully various tyre manufacturers, notably Dunlop, are still making certain obsolete tyres, otherwise all old cars would be in museums and the industry would grind to a halt.

All this is to the good, but unfortunately there is a bad side to everything. The bad side are those people who use these spares-schemes to build up brand-new cars, which they then surreptitiously feed into an unsuspecting market, proffering them as rebuilt original cars. I think we have gone over the top on this activity and many one-make car clubs are now making strenuous efforts to control these fake cars.

The scene is still very active, but the accent has changed. Whether by accident or design, the second-hand trade and the auction houses, aided and abetted by journalists and private advertisers, have pushed the prices of genuine cars to such a height that many owners are frightened to use their expensive investment. The result is that fakes are being proffered openly as being not only legitimate but actually desirable, at a fraction of the cost of the real thing.

People are paying more for a brand-new fake than for a real car such as a Porsche 944, a Sierra Cosworth or a Renault, Mazda or Toyota. We live in a mad world, or is it just affluence?

Yours, DSJ

V8 Classic

Classic cars seem to bring us right up to the present, so I lean more towards vintage and post-vintage thoroughbreds, the latter being how the VSCC, in its infinite wisdom, defines desirable 1931-40 models. I do, however, have a special affection for one memorable Classic, namely the Rootes Group Sunbeam Tiger. This Ford-powered version of the Sunbeam Alpine, with which I was by then fairly conversant, appeared in 1964.

Just as British Leyland engineers later discovered a discarded General Motors V8 engine, intended I believe for a military project and used in the Oldsmobile and Buick compact-cars, which transformed Rover's four-cylinder image, so Rootes found that a bog-standard Type 260 pushrod ohv Ford V8 powerpack could be shoe-horned into its Sunbeam Alpine sports-car. This endowed the Alpine with 164 bhp at 4400 rpm, and 258 lb ft torque at 2200 rpm, a net power increase of some 82 bhp in a car weighing 23½ cwt. The Ford engine was a 96.5mm × 73mm (4261cc) unit with a compression ratio of 8.8:1, which not surprisingly transformed the Alpine's performance.

Jensen Motors of West Bromwich did the necessary structural alterations to get the big Ford engine into the 7ft 2in-wheelbase Alpine chassis, where it was mated to an all-synchromesh Borg-Warner gearbox; a heavy-duty propshaft drove a 2.88:1 Salisbury back-axle.

A modified front cross-member took new rack-and-pinion steering gear, and higher-rate coil springs and revised damper settings were used in the Sunbeam Alpine independent front suspension, but the servo disc/drum brakes were unchanged. The engine retained its two-barrel Carter carburettor, and naturally there were twin exhaust tail-pipes — these and the "Tiger 260" badges being identifying features. The tyres were Dunlop RS 5.90 × 13s. A cross-flow radiator was fitted and electric fuel-feed devised from two fuel tanks feeding as one, with a capacity of 11¼ gallons.

The Tiger could do 0-60 mph in 9 seconds, and a maximum of 125 mph was claimed.

Our 1965 road-test car covered a hill-climb course using top gear alone!

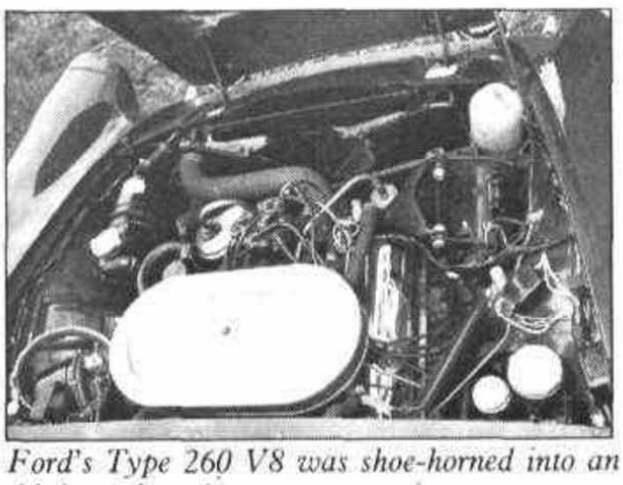
I remember letting DSJ try the first Sunbeam Tiger offered to us. After he had realised this was no Shelby-Cobra or Le Mans sports/racer, he was favourably impressed. Top speed did not match the claimed 125 mph, but peak engine speed equal to 105 mph was held along the Stevenage bypass (no speed-limit, then!). During a race practice session DSJ was able to get the Tiger hard-top timed electronically, and a standing-start quarter-mile was done in 16.34 seconds.

Later in 1965 I was able to do a full road-test of an openable Sunbeam Tiger, which I recall as being a very enjoyable car, able to ascend South Harting Hill (where the JCC once held speed hill-climbs) in the 2.88:1 top gear. It ran very quietly, getting from 0-60mph in nine seconds — and this was 23 years ago remember!

My standing start quarter-mile took 17 seconds, and this lively Tiger ran from 15-116 mph in the highest gear. As its speedometer was virtually accurate, credence was lent to the maxima in the lower gears of 42, 66 and 87 mph respectively, and I recorded 19.2 mpg on a fast journey, 22 mpg with more lenient driving.

The Tiger's snags included violent back-axle tramp under hard acceleration in bottom cog and maybe undersized tyres and brakes; against which was the modest 1965 price of £1445.50 including purchase-tax. For 1967 the Type 289 Ford engine was used, its bore opened out to the full 4in from 3.8in, 200 bhp gross being developed in this 4.7-litre form.

Just as Ford's skilled foundry techniques had made possible the first inexpensive V8 with integral blocks and crankcase in 1932, so Ford thinwall castings had made these later engines suitable for a car as small as the Sunbeam Alpine. They certainly endowed the impressive Tiger with the smooth pick-up, emphasised by the wuffling V8 exhaust-beat, which had been so impressive 33 years earlier from the original multi-pot Fords.



Ford's Type 260 V8 was shoe-horned into an Alpine to hone its sporty pretensions.

To round off these Tiger recollections, when first we went to live in Wales we used to see a little apple-cheeked lady driving a MkII Bertelli Aston Martin — its hood down no matter what the weather. We assumed she had had the car from new. Later we were to learn that, ever since she was a girl, taught to drive in a Clyno by the family coachman-turned-chauffeur, she had wanted a Bentley, and that when she could afford a sports-car she had bought the Aston Martin. Not to be outdone, her husband bought a Sunbeam Tiger. Eventually the AM was given to a neice (it was used last year for a Spanish rally) and after her husband's death the lady took over the Tiger, keeping it running with the help of the Sunbeam Tiger OC. Only recently I saw her loading it with Christmas fare, which suggests that longevity is another quality of the memorable Rootes Group sports-car.

The Tiger went out of production in 1967, only because Ford power became distasteful when Chrysler took over a large slice of the Rootes Group; there was no Chrysler engine small enough or light enough to act as a substitute. **WB**

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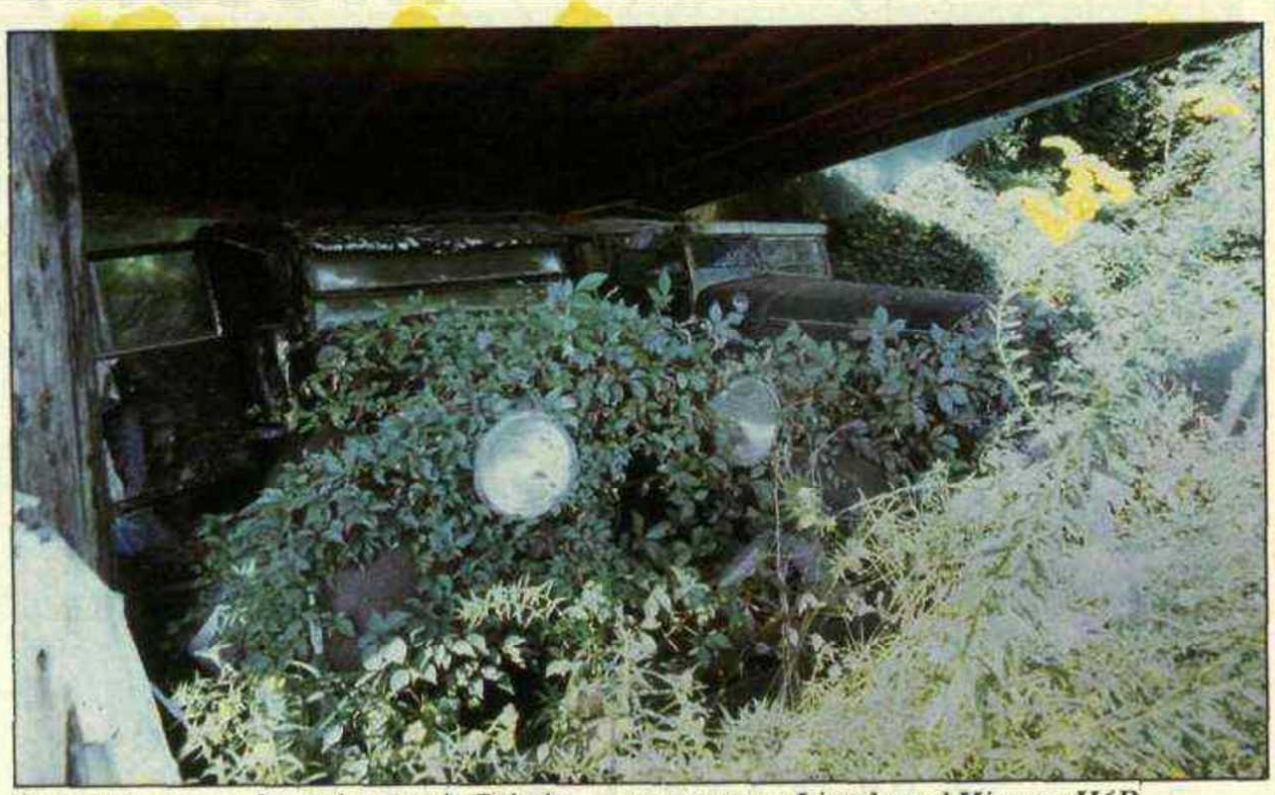


Sights like this are becoming rare in Britain — an overgrown Lincoln and Hispano H6B.

Reborn in the USA

It is easy to feel pleased, or even smug, about the old car scene in Britain: we have a huge number of ancient vehicles and run the best-known meeting for them every December between London and Brighton; many of our various enthusiastic clubs are venerable in their own right, and old car racing, from Edwardian monsters to ferocious Seventies Can-Am sportscars, is more prolific, intense and truly competitive than anywhere else.

This interest has been a thriving one right back to when old cars were so much obsolete metal to everyone except a restricted number of enthusiasts who rescued, nurtured and used them, mostly without any conception of the vast sums they might one day be worth.

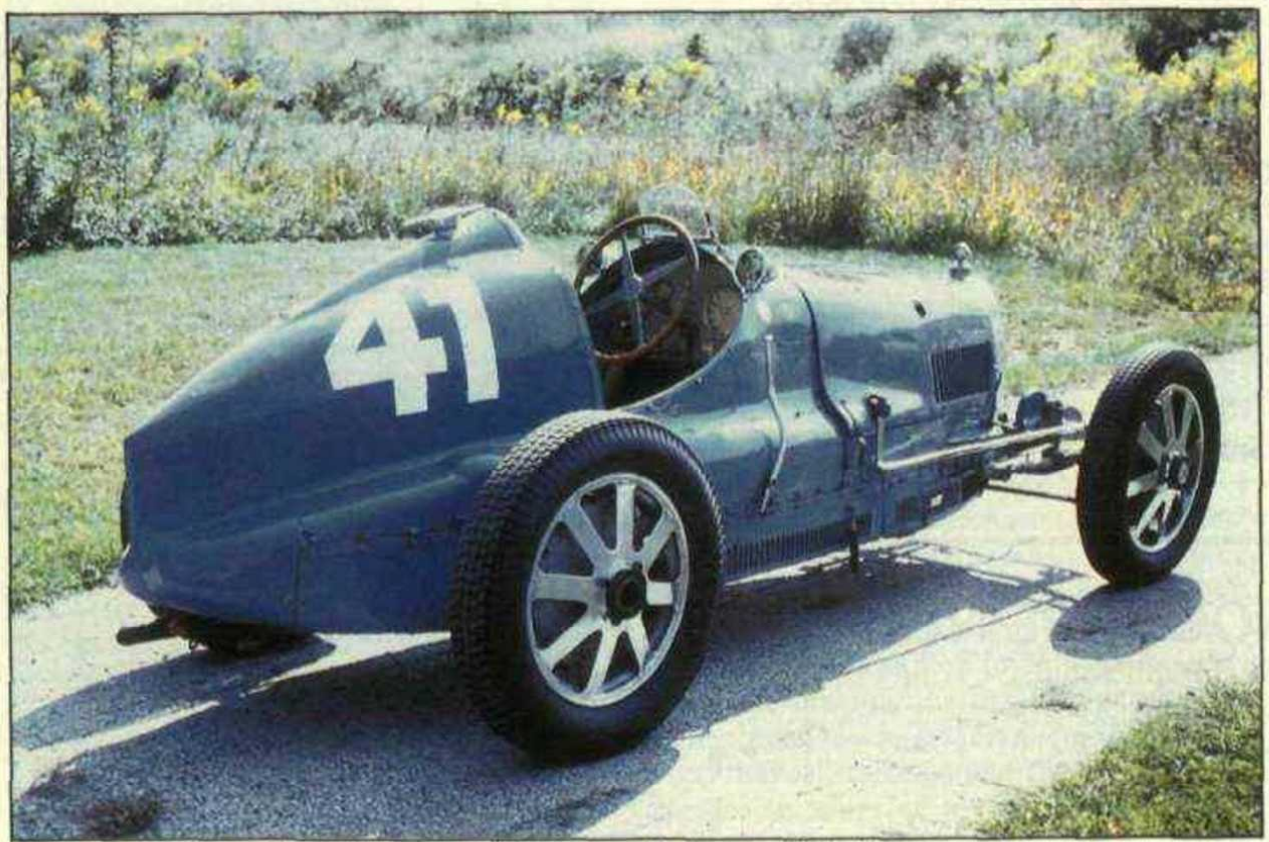
Today the historical value of prime old cars is well appreciated, and their financial value not only realised but arguably frequently exceeded as they become targets for wealthy collectors with more interest in their fine investment performance rather than any other sort of performance. This process is being accelerated by the sudden interest of the auction houses, who, having with laudable acumen identified an area of valuable exchange where they have so far been failing to make a commission, have interposed themselves between buyer and seller. Lavish theatrical productions, mere entry to which is more costly than a night at the theatre, have become media events in themselves, while glossy catalogues are filled with phraseology borrowed from estate agents' windows.

But the chief villain for many years, as perceived by those with less cash but the conviction of automotive enthusiasm, has been "the American collector". Although just as many valuable cars are nowadays crated up for the trip to Japan or Germany, this mythical archetype remains as a symbol of the excess of dollars over devotion, bringing over-restoration to a fine art by replacing any part which looks less than perfect and keeping its tyres off anything as dirty as a road.

A fair view? Not so. A recent visit to the east coast of the USA showed me that the Stateside old-car man, collector or restorer, is as genuine about his passion as anyone else. True, I have met an American who bemoaned the fact that the last restoration of his Model T Ford had been over 18 months ago, and that therefore he could not expect to win any more major *concours* awards until the next rebuild; but then I have also met his English counterpart. As it was, any lingering visions of the collector gloating over unsullied paintwork in an airtight garage were soon dispelled.

In a short trip crammed with visits to collections, repair shops, and tumbledown sheds, I met the owner of a staggering secret garage full of race-winning sportscars of all eras, all in excellent shape and most taxed for road use and regularly driven hard. I was taken to see a barn full of some of the most desirable American cars which had lain forgotten for 40 years; I was entertained by a lover of French machinery who collects Hispano Suiza aero-engines and cars, but in 40 years has not quite got around to fixing all of them. Several sit outside in open sheds with ivy growing over them, their owner preferring to drive his cut-down Bugatti 57 with home-made body, or race his Grand Prix Talbot-Lago.

Giving the lie to the accusation of "too much care and too little racing" I inspected a thoroughly used but well-kept single-seater Bugatti T35 (apparently converted before the war) which sees much action in mixed racing. And as we drove through the rolling and lush Pennsylvanian countryside in a Bentley Continental, my host for much of the time, restorer David George of Frazer in that state, smilingly pointed out a barn



Monoposto *Bugatti regularly raced by owner Dan van Schaick.*

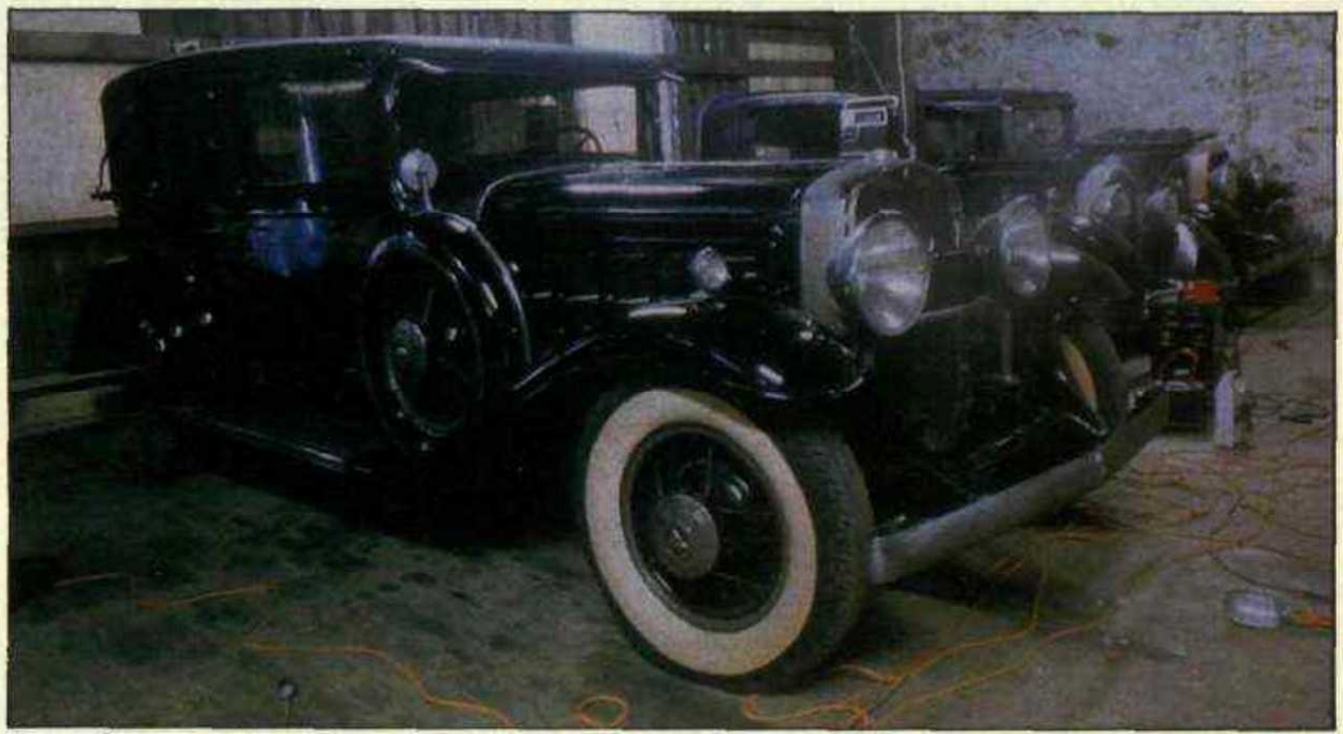
full of Phantom II Rolls-Royces owned by a farmer who still drives to the store in a PII pick-up.

It may be distressing to hear of great cars mouldering away, but I found it refreshing to talk to the Hispano man who bought his Bugatti years ago for a handful of dollars: his view is that the only purpose of a car is to please its owner, and he has had over 40 years of pleasure from this shortened, untrimmed, unpainted machine which he parks in the street.

In his cellar he showed me a 1923 Bedelia cyclecar he was repairing, whose rear axle slides fore and aft to adjust the gearing; alongside another Hispano awaited a part cannibalised from one of the outdoor cars. In a great barn an elegant but dust-covered two-seater BNC crouched in the shadow of a huge pre-war speedboat powered by a 3½-litre Hispano aero-engine, of which several others stood around adorned with straw and chicken droppings. Under a lean-to, ivy, moss and junk conspired to obscure a 1928 Lincoln and a Hotchkiss, while nearby, slowly collapsing hood-canvas concealed the rotting upholstery where once sat Countess Holstein when her Hispano H6B *Transformable* was new. There was something rather Gothic about the place, almost as if it would be a shame to disturb these relics.

It was in a private cemetery that the collection of American luxury cars has come to rest. The 15 or 16 we inspected were extracted from a huge shed packed with cars hoarded by an eccentric gentleman in Philadelphia who refused to do any work at all on them. Local children grew up with rumours of 80 or 100 old cars locked away, but it was only on the old man's death recently that the doors were opened and the cars quietly sold.

The best of them were picked out by Mr James D Houck Snr, owner of the cemetery, and had only just been moved to the big barn when David George and I went to see them in the company of a collector who thought he might buy the lot to swap for European cars. Still with the dust of decades clinging to them but essentially sound, there in the gloomy interior were phaetons and victorias, coupés and limousines, all built on an enormous scale, with dull chrome and cracking paint reflecting the strips of sunlight filtering through the wooden walls.



Recently rescued from years of neglect, the imposing Poindexter V16 Cadillac.

Bizzarini designed the gorgeous mid-engined V12 Lamborghini P538 sports-racer.

Everyday motoring, Bugatti-style; a cut-down Type 57 in regular use.

A brace of 1939 V12 Packards, a '38 Lincoln convertible, Cadillac and Packard V8 coupés of 1930, the latter with dickie seat, 1935 Ford Phaeton and a completely unused '51 Ford truck clustered round a massive Cadillac V16 limousine known with mysterious grandeur as the "Poindexter Madam X" car. Its cavernous interior was trimmed with silk tassels and faded brocade, and marquetry companions contained smoking accessories on one side and toilet requisites on the other.

Now that they have been "found", these cars will all in time be restored by US craftsmen with all the skills but perhaps more lavish premises than our equivalents. On a visit to a vintage restoration shop, white-fenced within neat lawns west of Philadelphia, I was shown into a comfortable office with leather armchairs and elaborate draughting equipment. On a light-table lay X-rays of deteriorating cylinder heads from a Monza Alfa, and the large workshop itself boasted elaborate machining tools and hoists.

Such facilities do not in themselves guarantee fine work, but good presentation no doubt helps to convince potential clients of their choice, though like several east coast restorers I met this one has so many owners clamouring for his skills that he operates a restricted-client scheme, selling blocks of his time for the year ahead.

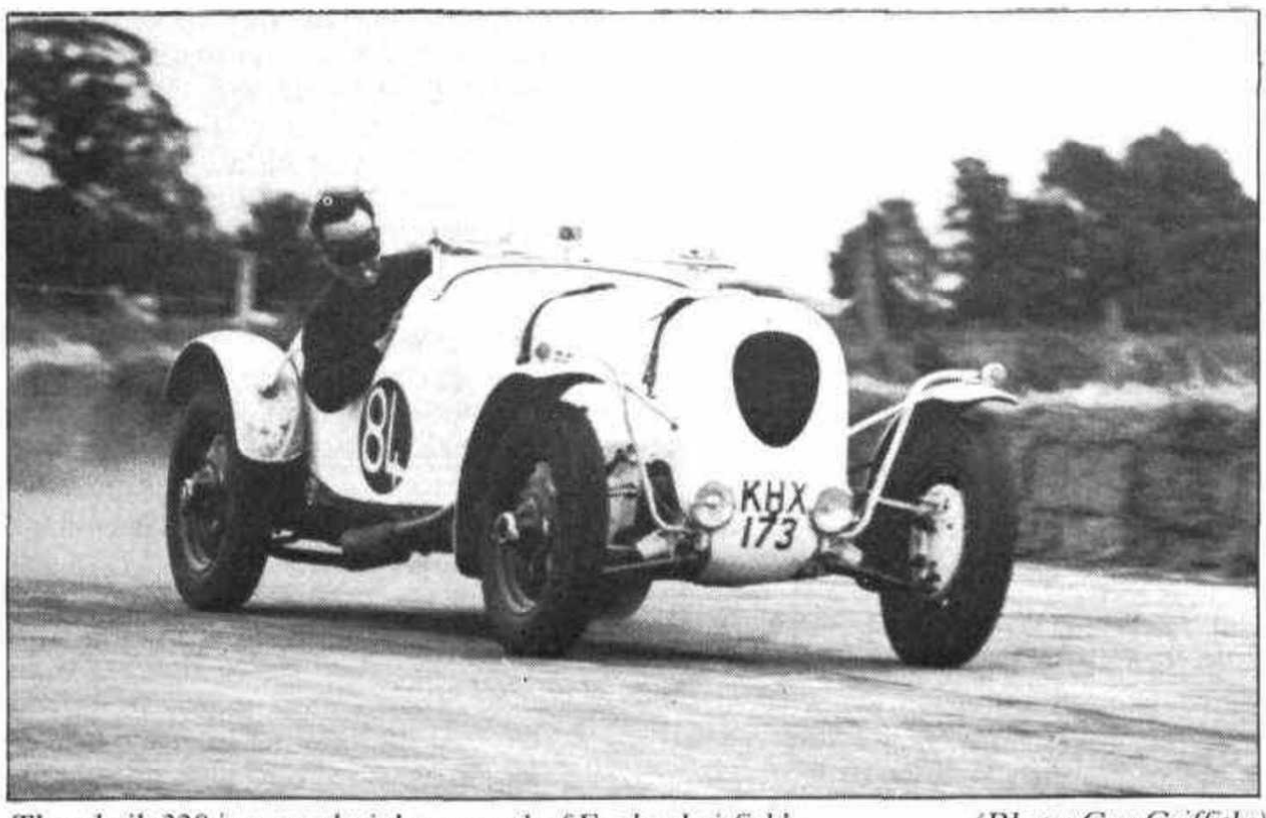
Most owners of interesting cars I came across were reluctant to be mentioned by name, citing business or security reasons, and displayed an almost English diffidence over their possessions. It was some time before David George modestly asked if I had ever heard of the Lamborghini P538? Since this fabulous machine is the only pure racing car to have been built by the Sant'Agata factory, I was bowled over to discover that it was sitting quietly in David's own garage a few miles away. The story of the car's career will have to wait for a future issue of MOTOR SPORT, but my being allowed the chance to clamber over it and fire up the ear-shattering lump seemed to me to sum up the friendly enthusiasm and knowledge of old car collectors on *both* sides of the Atlantic. **GC**

Raymond Way leaves the start of the 1946 West Court speed trials in the Frazer Nash-BMW 328, chassis number 85.297. *(Photo: Guy Griffiths)*

In Resurgam

In November 1938 Lieutenant Aldenhoven of Loughton in Essex took delivery of a brand new Type 328 Frazer Nash-BMW from AFN Limited of Isleworth, the importer of the German cars. Built at the Eisenach works of BMW, these very advanced 2-litre cars were imported into the UK in right-hand-steering form, and marketed under the name of Frazer Nash-BMW, in accordance with an agreement drawn up by BMW (Munich) AG and AFN Limited, in 1934.

Aldenhoven's car was a standard two-seater and sold under the English designation of 328 TT, in recognition of the works team success in the Ulster Tourist Trophy on the Ards circuit in 1936. It was painted black, and cost £695 in 1938, slightly more than the price of an average London semi-detached house!

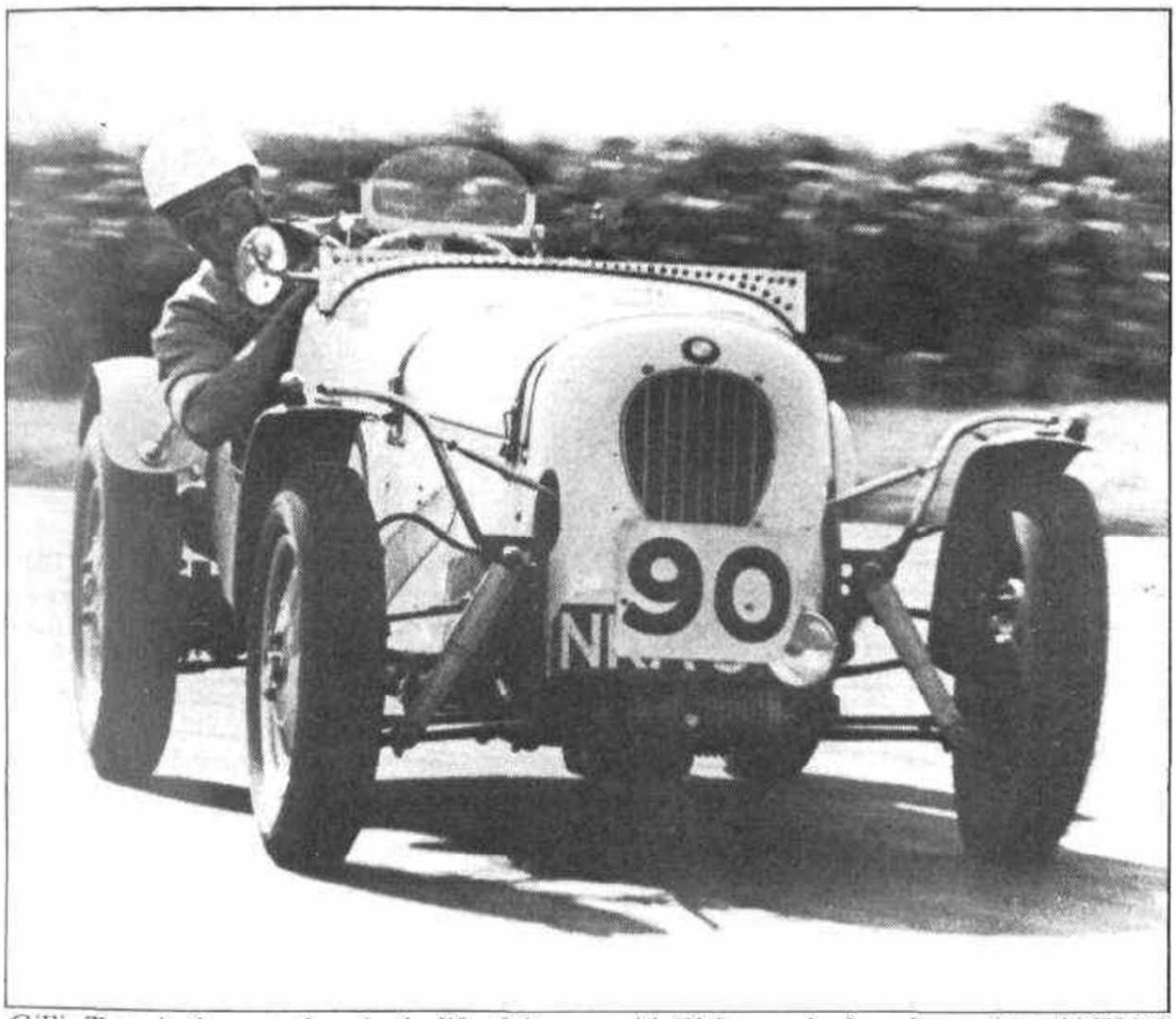


The rebuilt 328 in a speed trial on a south of England airfield. *(Photo: Guy Griffiths)*

The lieutenant used it as a normal road-going sports car, for the 328, even in competition form, was a well-equipped and very complete machine. It was equally at home going round Brooklands at 100 mph, competing in speed trials or hill-climbs, taking part in off-road reliability trials or merely giving immense pleasure on the open road or in town. The car in question may have been used for some mild club competition motoring, for most 328s were, but nothing has been recorded for the car up to the outbreak of war in September 1939.

After the war the Frazer Nash-BMWs were much sought-after as being about the best all-round sports car that could be used in the variety of competitions which saw the sport getting back on its feet. Naturally, there were no new ones coming from Germany, for not only did production cease in 1939, but the post-war division of Germany saw Eisenach in the East Zone and no longer part of the Munich firm.

Good 328s were fetching £1000 or more on the English market in 1946, and Aldenhoven's car had survived the war in excellent condition. It had been registered in Middlesex by AFN Limited in November 1938 with the number KHX 173 (its factory chassis number being 85.297) and appeared in one of the earliest post-war speed trials in the hands of a new owner.



Gillie Tyrer in the next phase in the life of the car, with Elektron wheels and re-registered NKA 9.

This was Raymond Way, the north-west London used-car dealer, and the event was the speed trial held at West Court, Finchamstead in Berkshire, organised by the newly-formed Hants & Berks Motor Club. The event was held on September 15, 1946, and KHX 173 performed well on the loose-surfaced drive of West Court.

Raymond Way competed regularly with the car in those immediate post-war days, taking in almost anything that was available — the versatility of the 328 being demonstrated adequately as it took part in mud-trials, speed hill-climbs, driving tests and aerodrome racing.

By 1948 the competition scene had become quite serious and new cars were appearing, but sadly none from the Munich car makers. In Germany many 328 BMWs had been given a new lease of competition life by small tuning establishments, such as AFM and Veritas, and in the same way some Frazer Nash-BMW 328s were being "breathed upon" in the search for more performance.

The post-war Frazer Nash appeared, clearly developed from the 328 model, with engine by Bristol from the original 328 BMW design, and while the 328 cars had been fully equipped, almost luxurious, sports cars, the post-war competition Frazer Nash was much more an out-and-out racer. Raymond Way attacked KHX 173 with lightening tools, removing the complete body and mudguards and substituting a lightweight two-seater with the bare minimum of road equipment, the resulting rebuild looking not unlike a Le Mans Replica Frazer Nash.

He reduced weight wherever possible and tuned the engine in line with Bristol development. So KHX 173 was endowed with a lot more performance, though it suffered a bit from lack of rear-wheel grip, due to its rigid axle mounted on half-elliptic leaf-springs and insufficent weight over the rear of the chassis.

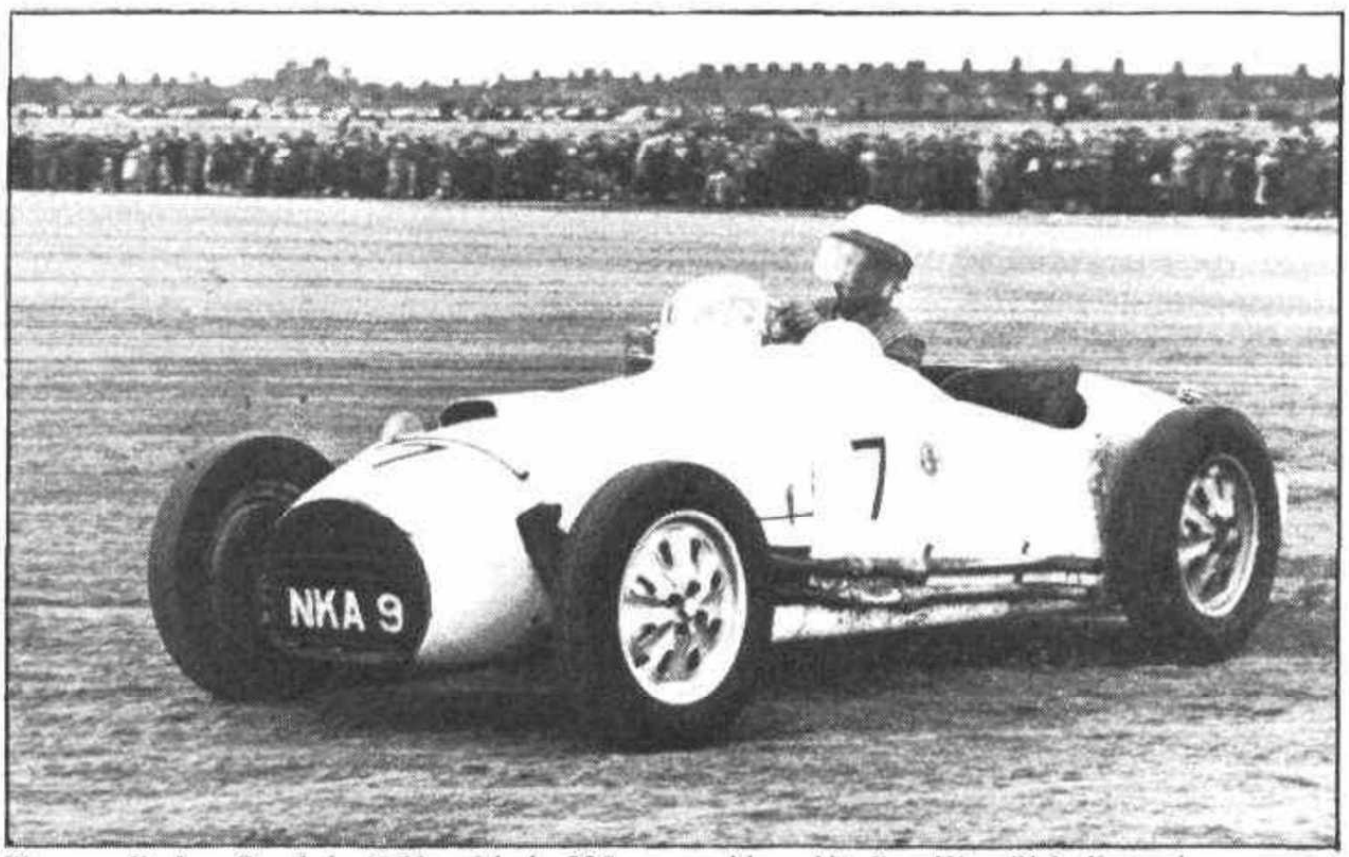
By 1950 it had passed into the hands of the northern 328 exponent Gillie Tyrer, who had competed successfully with two different 328s before acquiring the Raymond Way special. Tyrer had excellent workshop facilities at his garage in Liverpool, and got even more performance out of the car than Raymond Way had.

One of the things he did was to replace the heavy steel BMW wheels with Elektron wheels made by Ron Willis, who was specialising in BMW tuning at his garage in Essex. Apart from being much lighter, these Elektron wheels saved more unsprung weight over the standard wheels as they were retained by four small nuts on simple studs, whereas the standard arrangements had knock-off hubs and heavy steel hub centres.

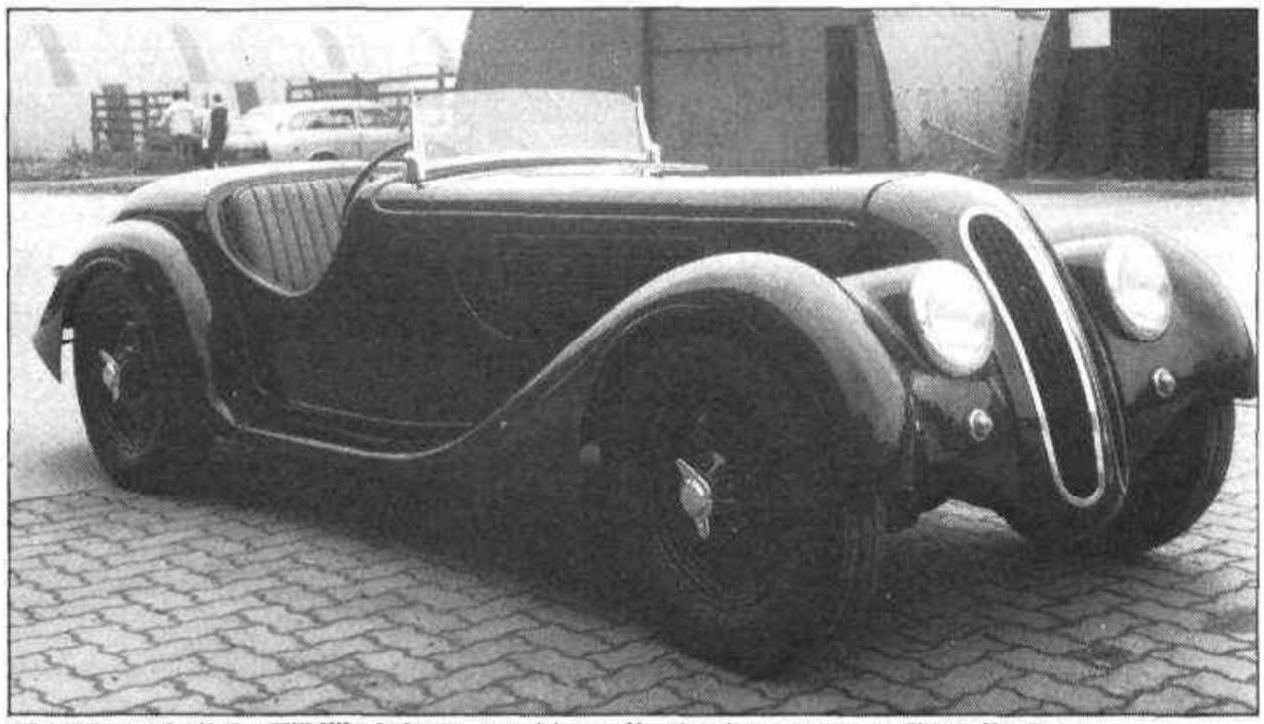
Having a fetish about registrations with the number 9, long before the business of "cherished" or "personalised numbers" was dreamed up, Tyrer re-registered the car with the number NKA 9, KA being a Liverpool registration. During the winter of 1952-53 Gillie Tyrer attacked 85.297 about as drastically as Raymond Way had done, until apart from the chassis frame tubes and the suspension, little of the original 328 remained.

The 6-cylinder BMW engine was removed and replaced by a 4-cylinder Fiat engine, as used by Cisitalia, and a supercharger was added. A new smaller, lower and lighter body was made of aluminium, but the Willis Elektron wheels were retained. In this form it was virtually a pure racing car, though it still retained its NKA 9 registration and could be used as a sports car.

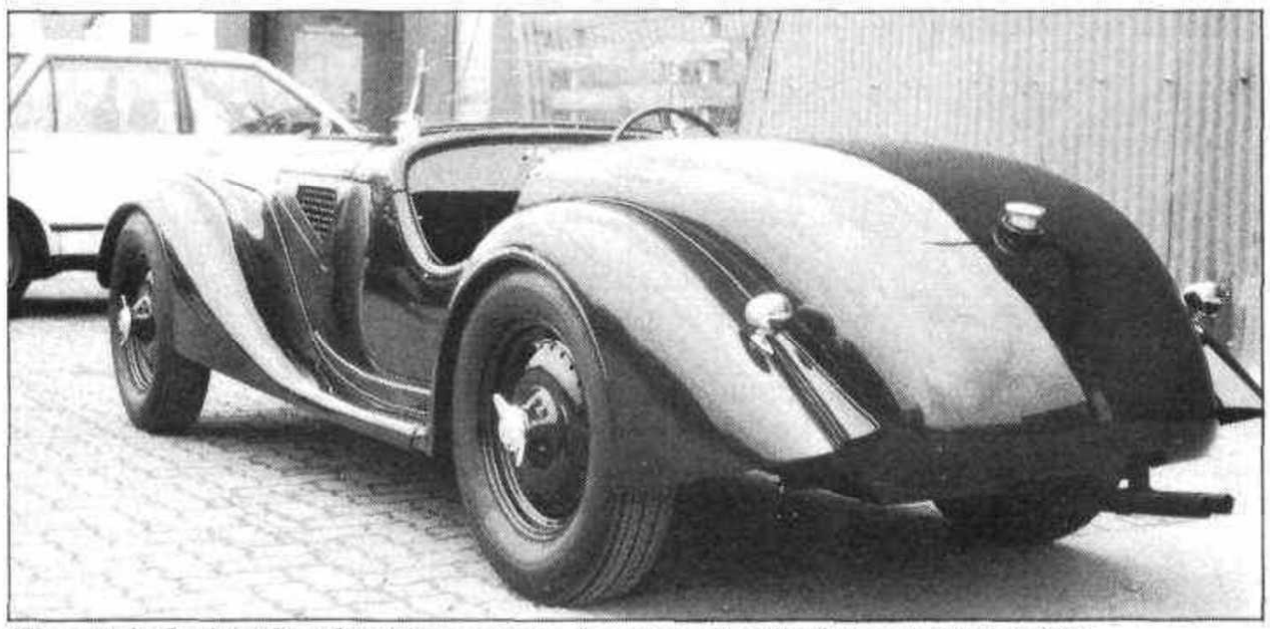
In this form Gillie Tyrer did a lot of competition with the car in northern events, from airfield sprints to sand-racing. After he pensioned it off it passed to Harry Sutcliffe, who did little with it; it began to deteriorate,



Tyrer on Redcar Sands in 1953, with the 328 powered by a 1½-litre Fiat-Cisitalia engine.



85.297 as rebuilt by TT Workshops, awaiting collection by new owner Peter Jackson.



The new body, based on the 1936 prototype, has a smooth tail with central petrol filler.

for a competition car that is not used somehow seems to fall apart at the seams much more quickly than a robust sports or touring car.

From the mid-1950s the car disappeared and was believed to have been broken up or destroyed. In fact it had merely been left in a shed to quietly rot away, its useful competition life being over.

In 1983 the derelict remains were acquired by a German BMW enthusiast, together with another Frazer Nash-BMW 328, and the two lots went to Germany. A year later the remains of 85.297 (alias KHX 173 and NKA 9) came back to England, having been acquired by a member of the Vintage Sports Car Club. The intention was to use the chassis frame and such bits as were salvageable to build up a 328 for VSCC racing, and to have the chassis put back to Fraser Nash-BMW specification. A BMW engine was built up from parts to replace the Fiat engine, and to clothe it was a new 328 body.

Naturally, there were no original 328 bodies available, so an entirely new one had to be created from scratch. As it was intended to be a pure "racer" with little or no idea of using it as a road-car, it was decided that all the body and the mudguards could be of thin-gauge aluminium, whereas a standard 328 had steel mudguards and aluminium body panels. No doors were to be fitted, in the interest of body stiffness; a single aero-screen would suffice for the driver; and the engine was to be set up with the highest compression-ratio possible, in order to run on methanol fuel. This last decision affected the body finish, for methanol is a great eater of cellulose paint, so the whole car was polished to a high degree, with no protective covering for the aluminium.

The mechancal work and bodybuilding was undertaken by John Giles and Tony Hutchings at their TT Workshops business at Westbury in Wiltshire, but before it was completed the London dentist who had commissioned the job was forced by domestic problems to pull out. As there was little likelihood of finding a buyer to carry on the "pure racer" project, it was decided to continue the rebuild and make the car much nearer a normal 328 — the way it had been when it was new.

There being no drawings of a standard 328 available, TT Workshops had rebuilt the body from its knowledge of other 328s, and from photographs of one of the original three prototype cars, built in 1936 by the BMW factory. These three cars differed from the production cars in not having doors, having a single-pane full-width windscreen rather than the production two-piece vee windscreens, and housing the spare wheel inside the tail — so the tail itself was competely smooth, with just a small central petrol filler low down at the rear just above the number plate. Production 328s on the other hand, had a deep recess with an aluminium cover in the tail, in which the spare wheel sat, while the fuel filler was a much larger affair and protruded from the tail to the right of the number plate.

The TT Workshops special followed the prototype cars in general shape and detail, with the spare wheel mounted internally, a single-pane windscreen and central filler. In deference to usability, a door was fitted to the passenger's side of the cockpit and the car was then painted dark green, very similar to the three works cars which ran in the 1936 Tourist Trophy.

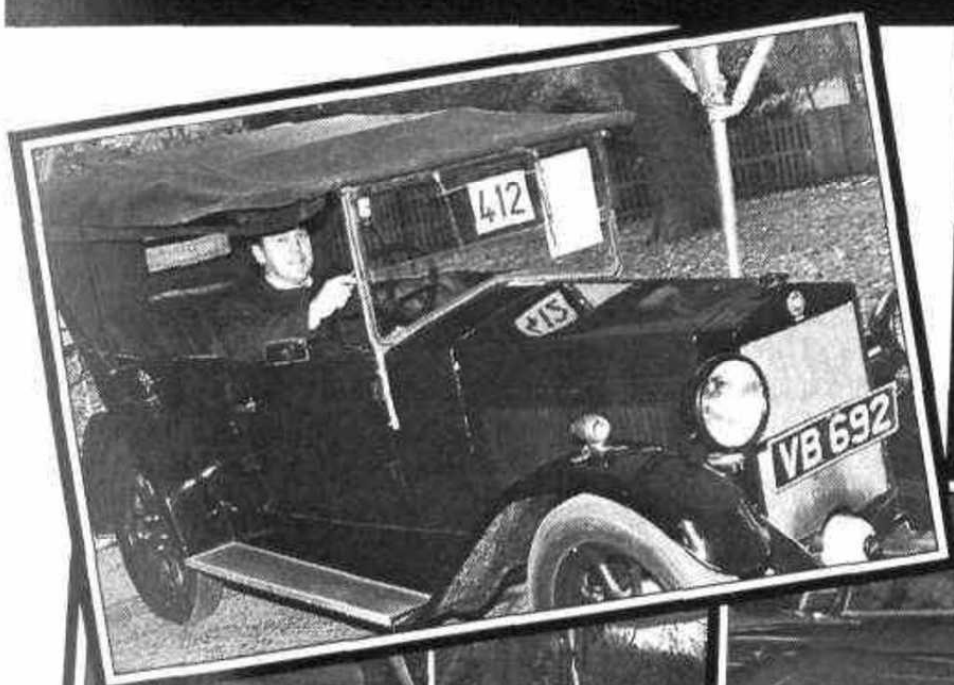
Such things as wheels and hubs were acquired from Germany, where the German BMW Club is getting parts made, and the engine was built up on a BMW cylinder-block, with Bristol internals and three down-draught Weber carburetters, together with a 12-volt electrical system replacing the original 6-volt, and a free-flowing six-branch exhaust system. A contemporary four-spoke spring steering wheel was used, rather than the rigid three-spoke wheel of the standard 328, and new seats were made.

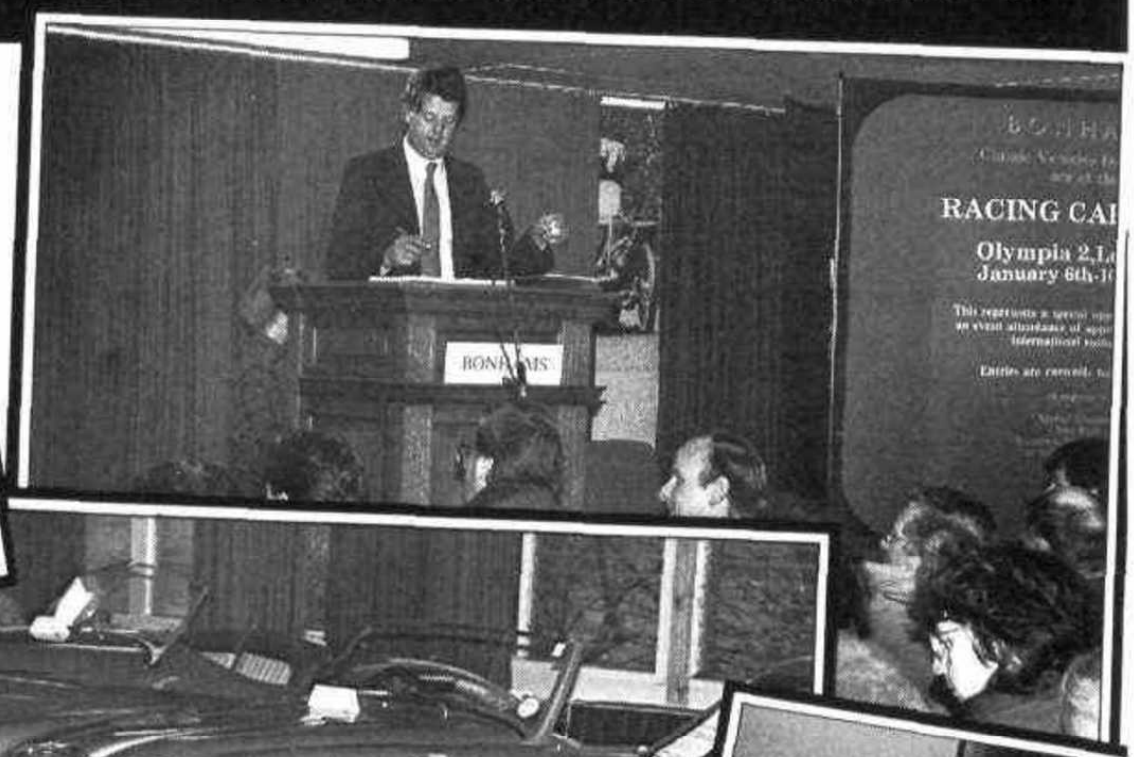
While the finished job is not KHX 173 as it was built, it does repesent an acceptable Frazer Nash-BMW 328, though of somewhat bizarre specification, being a mixture of 1936/1938/1985. As an "entity" it is still Frazer Nash-BMW chassis number 85.297, delivered in November 1938 and registered KHX 173, but it now retains its 1952 registration NKA 9, which had been part of its history.

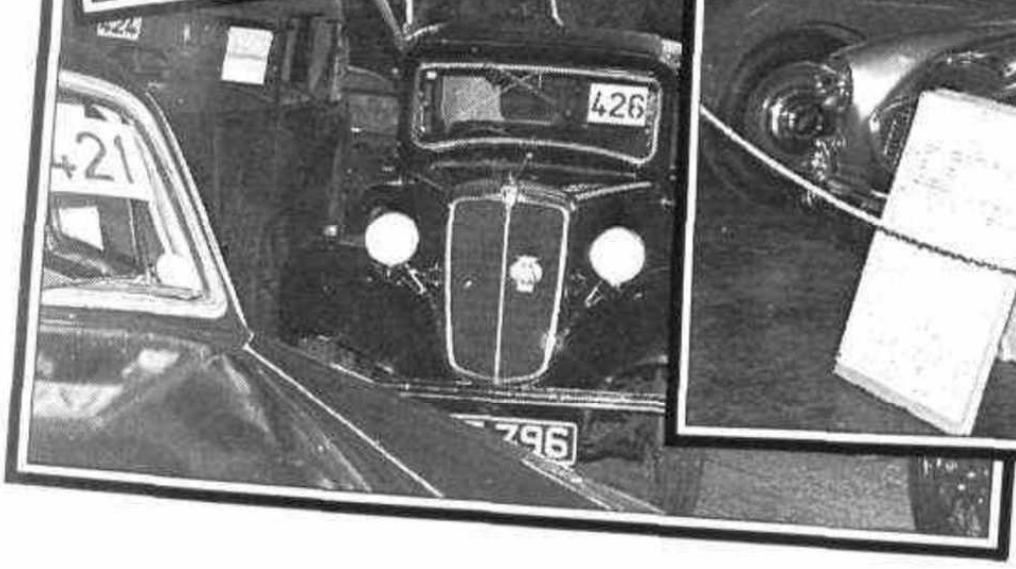
To the casual viewer, or to someone unversed in BMW 328 lore, it looks to be a rather nicely restored car, which in effect it is: but to the connoisseur of the 328 it is a question of "Here, hold on a bit. Why only one door? Where is the spare wheel? Why no two-piece vee-screen, and why is the petrol filler in the middle?"

Though some people might be excused for thinking it is one of the three 1936 prototype cars, the chassis number 85.297 tells the truth. It left the BMW factory in September 1938, a standard black two-seater sports Frazer Nash-BMW, and was sold by AFN Limited of Isleworth on November 8, 1938, with the registration number KHX 173. **DSJ**

THE MARKET: Classic Cars
THE DATE: April 10th
THE VENUE: Alexandra Palace







Sunday, April 10th is the date of the Bonhams Auction Sale at the London International Classic Car Show, sponsored by *Practical Classics & Car Restorer*, which will attract a large international audience of car enthusiasts to Alexandra Palace. Viewing is on the morning of the sale and also on the day before.

Bonhams, the well-known London auctioneers, are now assembling a wide range of automobiles for this special auction. It's an ideal opportunity to reach a choice market for a classic vehicle of special interest of any age or type. Automobile memorabilia will also be featured in this sale, including books, photographs, paintings, prints, mascots, badges, and other motoring ephemera.

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For information on entering vehicles or automobilia in this special sale at Alexandra Palace, call *Michael Chapman* at Bonhams Classic Vehicles Department now, on one of the three numbers listed below.

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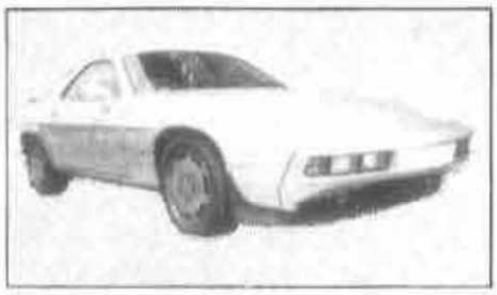

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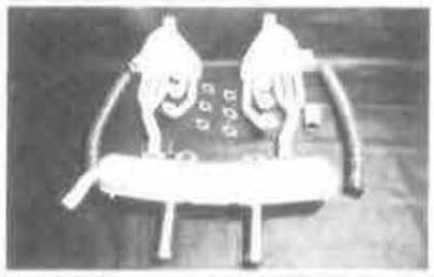

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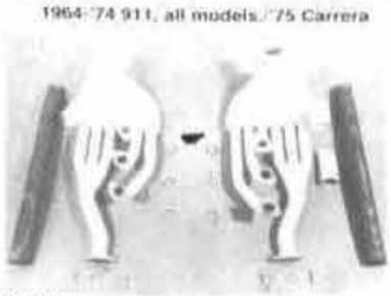

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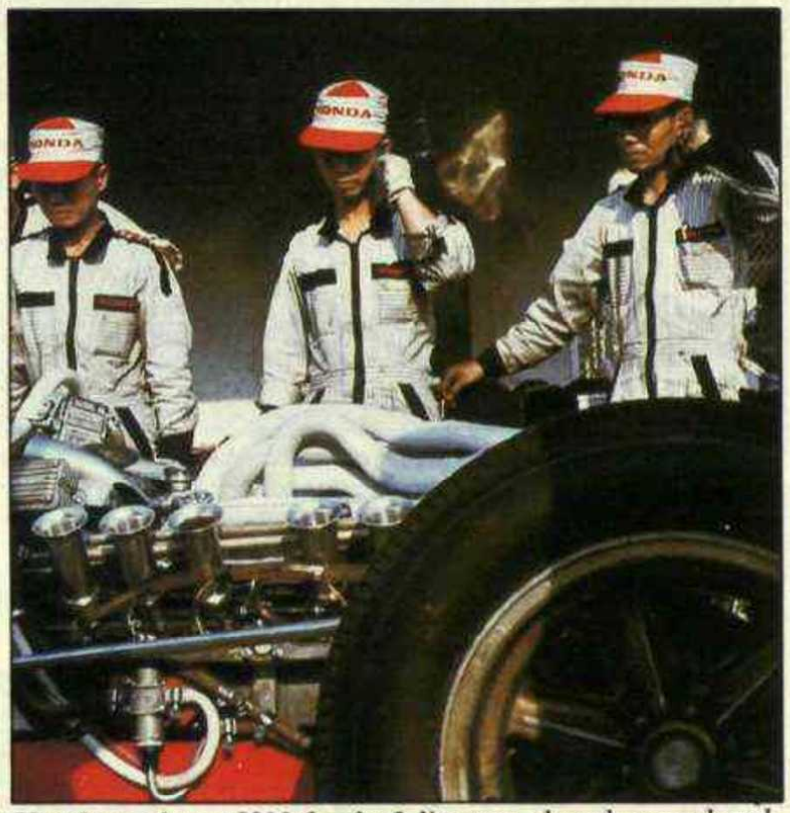
Honda's first Formula One race: Ronnie Bucknum with the transverse-engined 1½-litre V12 qualified last and crashed in the 1964 German GP.



Honda stuck to a V12 for the 3-litre era, though now placed longitudinally. Here, Monza's pits echo to its wail in 1967.

Second Time Around

The ultra-compact transverse V12 used in the 1½-litre years of 1964 and 1965 won only once—in its final race.

Nelson Piquet's points-victory in the 1987 World Drivers Championship was the first such title for a Japanese engine supplier. As such, it marked the culmination of a long-cherished dream for Honda, whose 1980s Grand Prix programme is its second attempt to overthrow the Formula One establishment.

Honda's first F1 car appeared in the 1964 German Grand Prix driven by inexperienced American sportscar driver Ronnie Bucknum, the Japanese firm apparently taking the view that its Grand Prix programme should start with a clean sheet of paper, including the driver. The distinctive white car, featuring a compact transverse-mounted twelve-cylinder engine, failed to finish its maiden outing.

The following season was the last for the 1½-litre engine regulations. Honda recruited former BRM number-two Richie Ginther to drive. He rounded off the season, and the formula, with a superb win in the 1965 Mexican Grand Prix in the rarefied atmosphere at Mexico City, beating Dan Gurney's Brabham-Coventry Climax in a straight fight.

Ginther remained with the team throughout 1966, being succeeded by John Surtees for 1967 and 1968. In conjunction with Lola boss Eric Broadley, Surtees revamped the truck-like Honda chassis; the resultant "Hondola" repaid that effort by carrying him to a split-second victory over Jack Brabham in the 1967 Italian Grand Prix at Monza.

But that was the sole GP success achieved by the team under the 3-litre technical regulations and Honda withdrew from F1 at the end of 1968.

It was not to be until 1983 that the first turbocharged Honda 1½-litre F1 engine made its debut with the tiny Spirit team, Stefan Johansson competing in several Grands Prix during the second half of the season. This was a pilot project which led to an ambitious programme with the Williams team, kicking off with the 1983 South African Grand Prix at Kyalami.

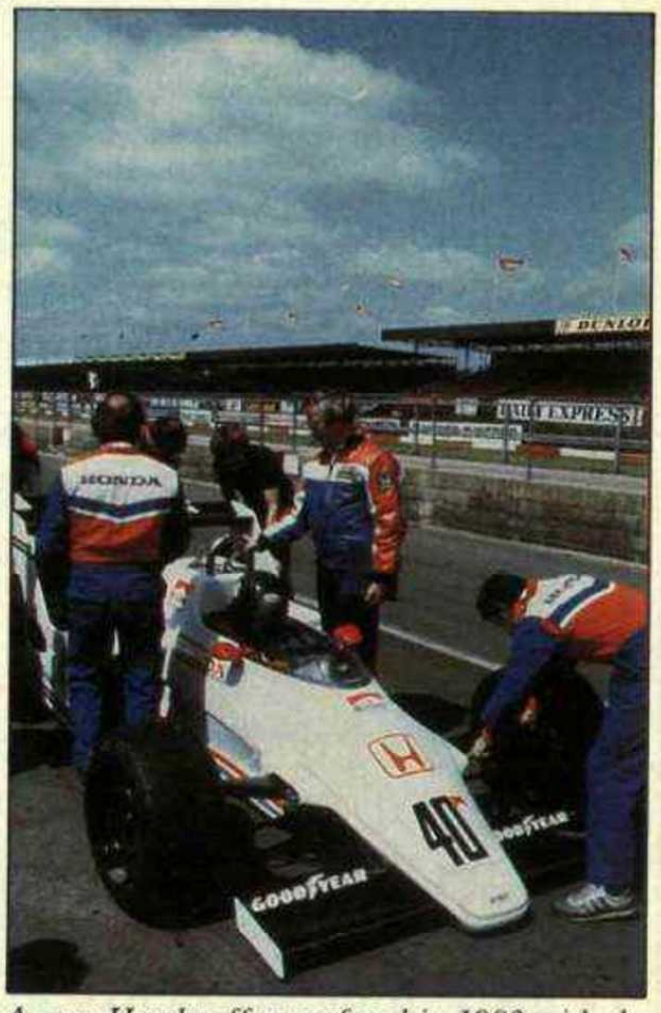
Keke Rosberg scored the first race win for this new alliance at Dallas in the summer of 1984, after which it accelerated on to win four races in 1985 and nine in both 1986 and 1987, winning the Constructors' Championships in both those seasons.

Honda expanded its involvement to supply engines to Lotus from 1987 and has split with Williams for 1988, instead favouring McLaren's two top runners, Alain Prost and Ayrton Senna, with its turbocharged power units. **AH**

Richie Ginther celebrated his first Honda season with the team's first victory, in the 1965 Mexican GP. Here he leaves behind Mike Spence (Lotus), Jackie Stewart (BRM) and Dan Gurney (Brabham).

Honda in Formula One

In 1967 John Surtees joined Honda as a driver (above at Monaco) and engineer, developing the car with Eric Broadley successfully enough to bring a second win, at Monza.

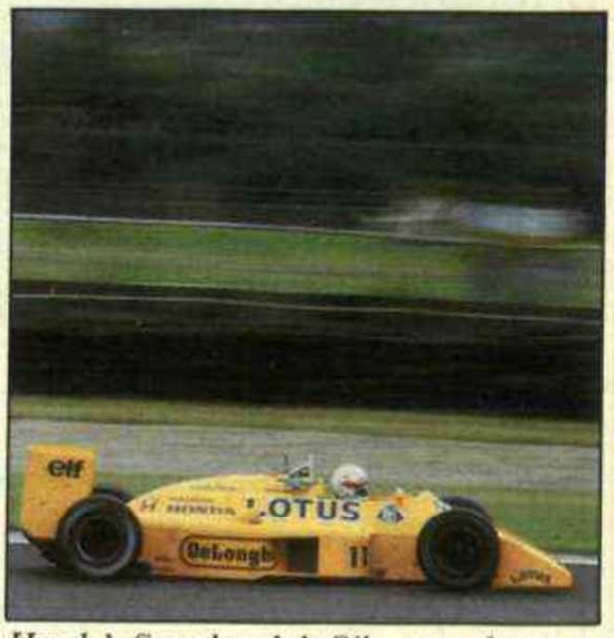


A new Honda effort surfaced in 1983 with the Spirit team, seen testing the turbo V6 at Silverstone before its British GP debut.

Now it supplies engines only, but Honda once built the entire car in its own workshops. Here a chassis is readied for the 1968 season.

The winning re-started here after a gap of seventeen years — Keke Rosberg brought the first laurels for the V6 at Dallas in 1984, in a Williams chassis.

After winning at Monza in 1967, Surtees took the Honda chassis' one and only pole position for the Italian GP in 1968. He retired early on, and the team disbanded three races later.



Honda's finest hour? At Silverstone last year, its engines scored a 1-2-3-4, and that 4th fell to a Japanese driver, Satoru Nakajima.

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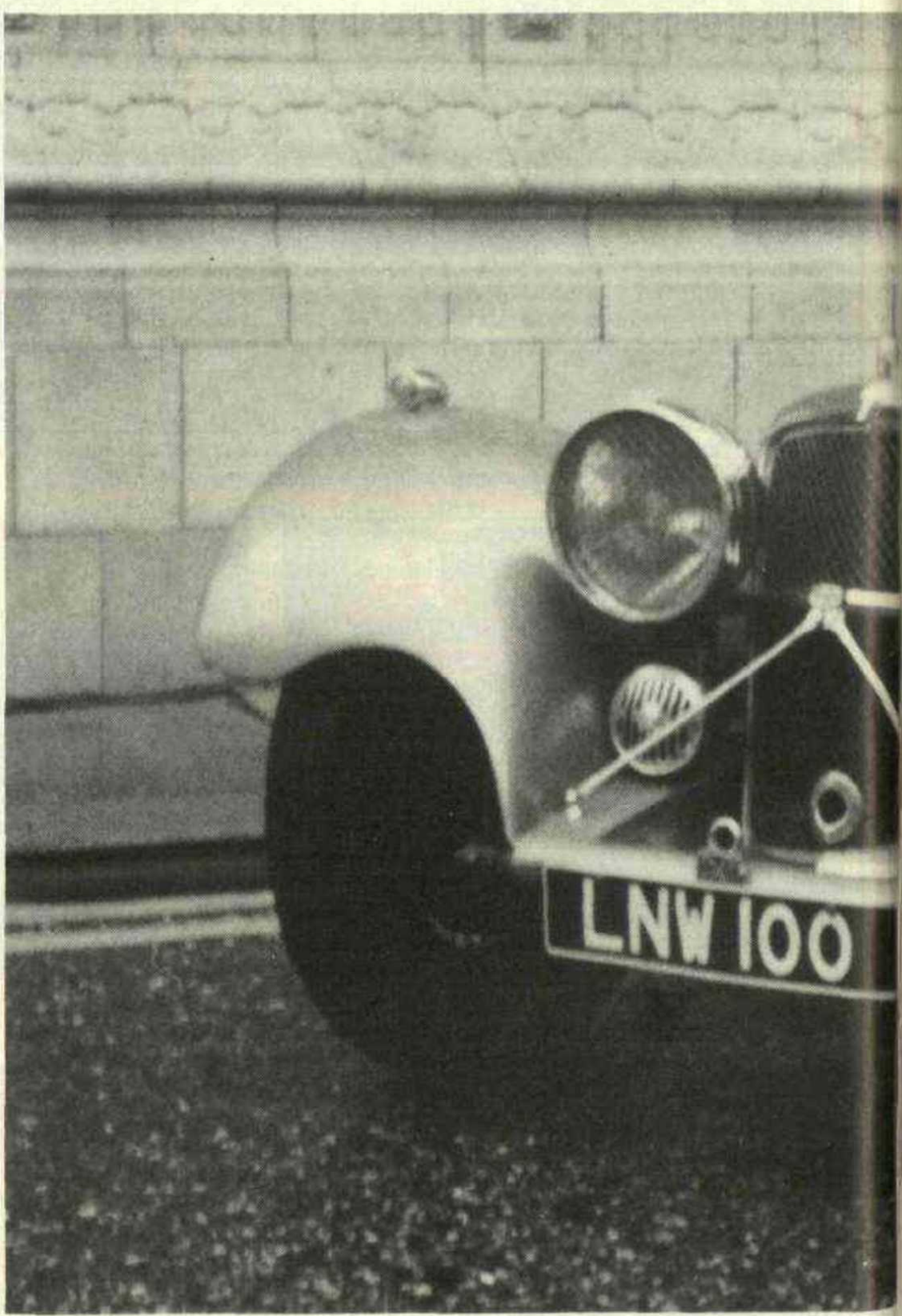

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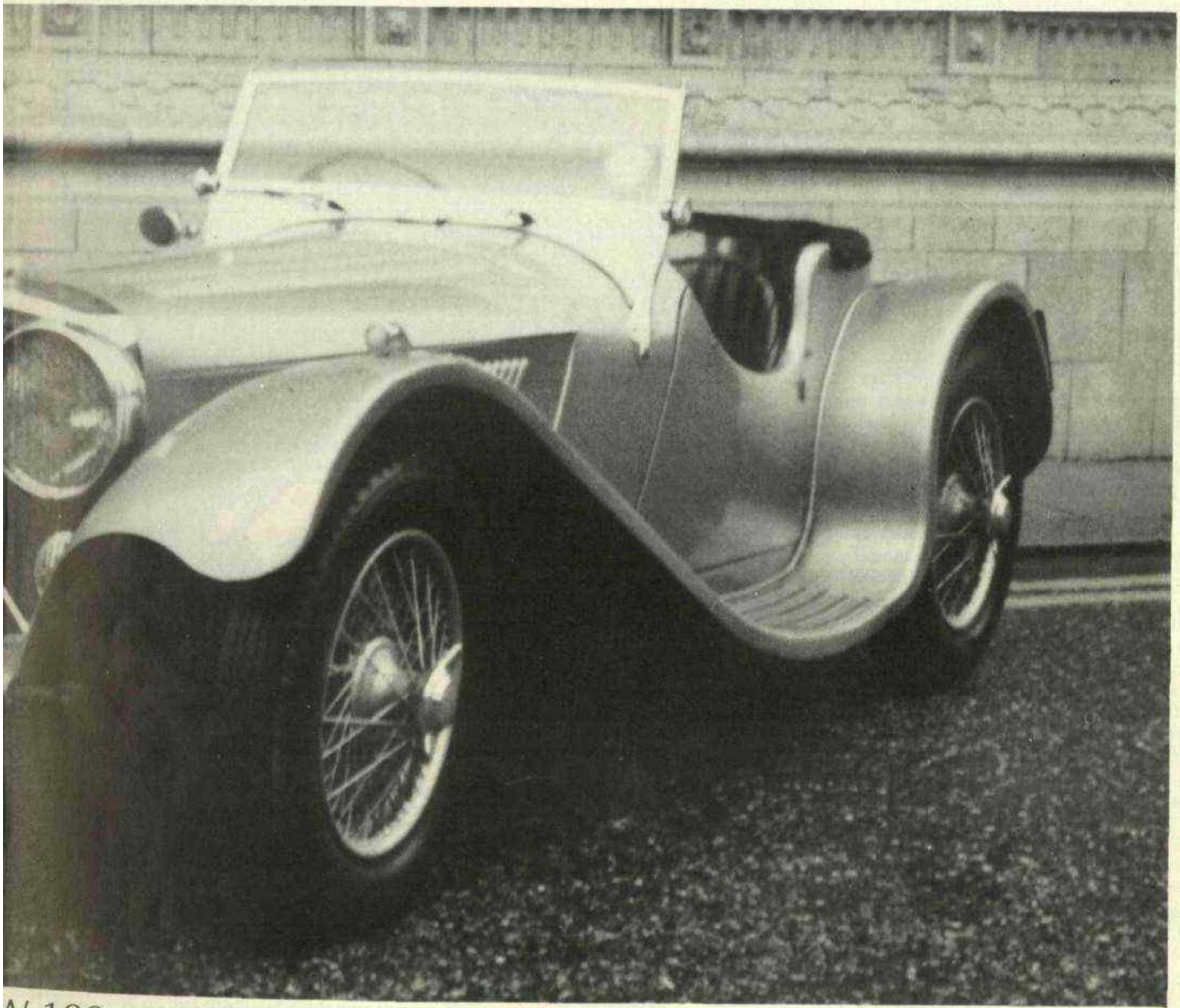

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Road-Race Rivals

Adopting Group A rules for rallying as well as racing was meant to close the gap between road and competition machines. That it has done, not by producing slow race and rally cars, but by bringing a new generation of affordable 150 mph road-rockets. While last year's Group A hatchbacks were virtually as quick over rally stages as the previous Group B monsters, ordinary customers have been able to buy a car capable of more than doubling the speed limit which cost less on introduction than £17,000.

We have been used to the idea of homologation specials in runs of 400 or 200, from Lancia Stratos to Metro 6R4, but, the FIA reasoned, surely a minimum production of 5000 would preclude out-and-out hot-rods being built?

Five years ago, perhaps, no manufacturer would have dared to propose such a car for sale, but with the apparently insatiable demand of the enthusiast for more and more performance, we now have two near-150 mph machines which fall easily within the executive car price bracket. And both are saloons with room for four or five people. Can a car such as this be a useable proposition?

Undoubtedly yes. Both the Ford Sierra Cosworth RS500 and BMW's M3 tested here offer blistering acceleration, outstanding grip, and razor-sharp responses in a packet which will stay cool and untroubled even in traffic queues. And at just under £20,000 for the Ford and £23,550 for the M3 they both offer performance value well above almost anything else.

To a lover of two-seater Italian exotics, it hardly seems right that these two should clothe the impulsion of a Ferrari in a family body, but it shows that the "sportscar" label gets more and more blurred year by year.

Ford's racer has become notorious for getting its owners into trouble, and has supplanted the Capri as the first choice for the light-fingered. Drivers have been caught out by its explosive performance, and more than one has caught fire, always a hazard with turbocharged cars. Yet this has only helped to give it a rather wicked image which does no harm at all to sales of such small-run devices. And having paved the way to the circuits with 5000 204-bhp cars, the next step was to take advantage of the FIA ruling which allows a further 10% of this number to be built with improvements — the evolution process.

Even 5000 is a tiny number to an international giant like Ford, so the evolution cars, developed by Ford's Special Vehicle Engineering department at Dunton, were assembled instead by Coventry-based Aston Martin Tickford.

Starting with fully-built Cosworths, Tickford's team removed the spoilers fore and aft, modifying the front airdam to gulp more cool air where spotlamps once sat, and then fitting a new boot-top spoiler to complement the extra lip on the tailplane.

The 204 bhp motors were removed and new 224 bhp units from Cosworth replaced them, boasting a larger turbo, revised inlet tracts and a new full-width intercooler which has to be mounted behind the radiator instead of above as before. Extra heat-shielding also appeared, and new location holes allowed for minor changes to the geometry of the rear trailing arms.

All 500 cars were ready for their homologation inspection by the end of July last year, and the Eggenberger team took the new car to a 1-2 victory immediately afterwards at Brno.

There is, however, one substantial difference between road car and racer which helps to explain where more than 400 bhp of works horsepower comes from: a secondary injection system is built into the RS500 engine. Inactive on road cars, the system is called into play in race-prepared cars through a different microchip, and allows the engine to swallow an even bigger fuel/air charge on each intake stroke.

With most of the private team cars converted up to RS500 spec, it has become difficult for anyone else to snatch overall victory from Ford, and indeed the world teams title eventually fell to the Sierras, after some wrangling over legality. But BMW's successes with the M3 have been if anything more consistent and wide-ranging: Roberto Ravaglia is WTC champion driver, the less prestigious ETC crown fell to an M3, and the car has dominated various national Group A and Group N series.

The ideal setting to exploit the M3's blend of poise and punch.

For BMW, too, there was a sensational dispute over the legality of its cars: at the WTC opener in Monza, M3s finished 1-2-3-4-5-6-8, only to be disqualified when the scrutineers questioned the plastic boot and roof panels. Once that drama was settled, the Munich evolution car had arrived: enlarged from 2302cc to 2332cc, 12:1cr, improved breathing and an extra cooling slot in the front spoiler, pushing the total over 300 bhp.

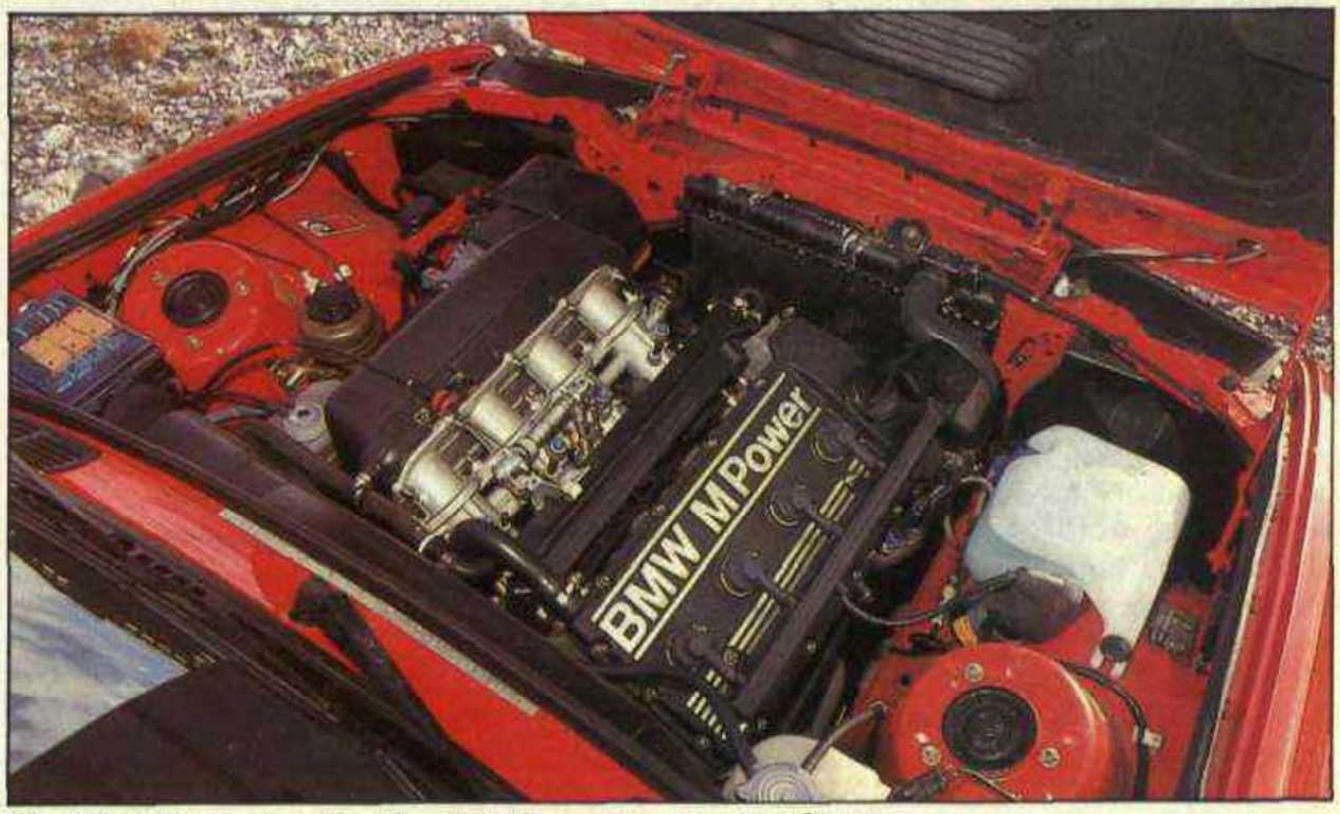
While Ford was still undecided whether to back its Cosworth or XR4×4 Sierra for rallying, its German rival had been developed from the beginning to do both jobs, and proved this with the victory in Corsica of a car privately prepared in Britain by Dave Richards' Prodrive team.

If there is a benefit from the elimination of the specialist Group B rallycars, it must be that cars such as the Sierra Cosworth and the BMW M3 have a chance to shine both on tarmac and on dirt roads — broadening their useful return to the factory which has invested in their development, while still imparting an air of glamour to the more mundane cars in the High Street which they resemble.

That resemblance can be stretched, of course, and while Ford has retained the two-door Sierra shell essentially unaltered under a layer of air-smoothing dressings, BMW has made some radical changes to the 3-series shape.

All-new wing panels incorporate smoothly flared arches which will swallow tyres of up to 10in width (the maximum allowed in this 2500cc class), but even more striking are the changes to the rear window area. To help fill in the low-pressure patch behind the relatively steep window of the standard saloon, the whole glass is lifted from the bottom edge, giving it a flatter rake. A new 1½in higher plastic bootlid carrying a tall spoiler fairs the new panels into the rest of the tail, and the result is less lift and better stability.

Careful use of GRP and impact-absorbing foam means that the bumper/airdam at each end fulfils all the various impact regulations,



Heavily canted, the 16-valve four is a compact powerhouse.

Clearly a Sierra, but obviously special, Ford's basic two-door shell is unaltered.

even those in the USA, and simple flared sills below the doors tidy up the airflow between the wheels, giving the M3 a drag-coefficient of 0.33 despite its extra width.

Powering this taut little saloon is not the six-cylinder one might expect but a slanted 2.3-litre four related to the Formula Two and Formula One engines. This choice was based on the greater strength of a shorter crankshaft, allowing higher sustained engine revs with all the advantages that implies for racing. Valvegear closely follows the pattern of the six-cylinder M1 engine which continues in the other two M-cars, the M635 and M5, the twin cams being driven by a duplex chain, and the spark plug sitting centrally between the four valves.

Although this four-cylinder block has been in production for many years, the M3's 2.3-litres capacity means that it now has the biggest bore possible. As a result the two centre cylinder-liners have to be cast as a pair like those on BMW's big six-cylinder engines, a principle which helps stiffen the whole unit in preparation for racing revs of 9000 and more. A complex sump and an oil cooler ensure that the oil can do its job under racetrack extremes.

BMW's Motronic injection system fuels the engine and is linked on the home market to the compulsory catalytic converter, which knocks 5 bhp off the unrestricted output: down to 195 bhp. Torque shows the same small drop from 177 lb ft in British specification to 170 at home. Yet the clean-breathing version still breaks the 7-second barrier for the 0-60 mph dash, and any loss in top speed is marginal — 143 as opposed to 146 mph. Should an environmentally-concerned UK buyer want to convert his car, the catalyst may

Evolution engine adds 20bhp to Ford, but at the expense of flexibility.

be added later with a simple adjustment of the electronics.

A close-ratio five-speed Getrag gearbox with first down to the left leaves the top four gears in a simple H, while the clutch has its lining bonded as well as riveted in place. For maximum grip a 25% limited-slip differential is standard equipment.

To give the M3 its arrow-like stability and instant response the chassis alterations have been extensive. Castor is three times the standard amount, while new stub axles allow larger 5-series bearings to be fitted. The power-assisted steering has a very quick ratio, and not only is the anti-roll bar substantially stiffer, but it now pivots on the outside of the spring strut, giving extra leverage. Wheel movement is controlled by new twin-tube gas-pressurised dampers, tuned to different response curves front and rear. Revised damping plus harder springing are the modifications on the rear axle, which retains the geometry of the semi-trailing arm swept back at 15°.

Both the front and rear brake discs are larger and thicker, the fronts being vented, and ABS is a standard fitment. There is plenty of rubber in touch with the road, as the 15in alloy wheels carry 205/55 VR 15 Michelin MXX tyres.

But climb inside the M3 and nearly all these changes are invisible; true, the speedometer now reads to 160 mph, and the top edge of the free standing rear spoiler intrudes slightly into the rear view, but the fascia looks perfectly standard 3-series, and the square-cut sports seats could be those fitted to many other fancy German cars. A steering wheel on the left looks out of place in a car with British plates, but as long as the car stands still it appears to be an ordinary small Munich saloon.

That feeling disappears within a few yards when the M3 sets off. There is a bark as the engine starts, and with the lever slotted down to the left for first, the quick positive clutch and hard responsive feel through the leather rimmed wheel indicate the character of the car even before the lever slips into fifth gear.

Everything feels tight and sharp: the gear ratios are close together, the steering is rapid, and there is an immediate answering surge when you depress the throttle. It does not seem to matter that the revs have nearly reached 5000 before the torque levels off; the engine pulls firmly even from a rather rumbly 2000 rpm, getting stronger and stronger as the 4000 mark is passed on the way to its 6750 power peak, accompanied all the while by an almost Italian raspberry from the exhaust.

Although the smoothness of the six is missing, the harsh edge obvious at low revs quickly fades out; and no matter what the revs a stab of the throttle flicks the tach needle round smartly for very rapid gearchanges.

Only the pronounced angling of the

steering wheel spoils the otherwise excellent driving position; the driver sits rather upright in the black leather Recaro seats with all instruments visible and all controls comfortably placed, but the axis of the wheel points strongly towards the centre of the car, stretching the left arm more than the right. Yes, one gets used to it, but it never feels quite right.

Amongst the instrumentation (lit at night by a pink glow) there is an oil-temperature gauge set into the tach but no pressure reading, surprisingly. BMW's neat computer is installed in the centre console, but without the handy column stalk button of the 7-series, and incorporates an ice-warning which saw a lot of action on a trip north. A chime sounds and the readout flashes if the temperature drops to 38°F, and again when it drops to 34°; if you get into the car in freezing conditions the alarm sounds when the ignition switch is turned.

Good heat and ventilation control is provided by rotary knobs, the horn buttons are set in the wheel spokes, and the door mirrors are electrically operated, although the windows are not, to save weight on the track. In all other respects, though, the M3 is equipped as a luxury saloon despite its uncompromising competition breeding; not surprising when you remember that, like Ford Cosworth, even if 300 of these cars are sold to private race or rally teams, that leaves 4700 to be sold to the general public.

For the driver the biggest contrast between Cosworth 500 and M3 is in power delivery. A racing car in road trim sounds a doubtful proposition to make available to the man in the showroom, even though the horsepower he gets is considerably less than what the big teams are playing with: 120 bhp down on a top M3, and at least 200 bhp less for the Ford than the Eggenberger Texaco Sierras which took the WTC teams title in 1987.

While turbocharging allows extra horsepower to be added relatively easily, by enlarging the blower and revising the settings in the engine control system, the result in the RS500 shows up all the disadvantages of turbos for road use. Low compression means slow reactions while the little boost needle wavers below atmospheric pressure, but as it flicks to positive boost the urge redoubles and the car bolts forward like a cycle racer breaking away from the pack. It is a Jekyll-into-Hyde switch; sudden but predictable if you keep an ear open to the engine and an eye on boost gauge and tach. Where the plain Cosworth had something to offer from 3000 but lost interest before 6000, the RS500 spins to seven thousand but waits until four to set off.

In a straight line it is exhilarating to keep the pedal hard down, listening to the squeal and puff of the blower in each gear while the arm-stretching thrust of second steps down to the calmer but no less exciting fifth-gear rush into the realm of three-figure speeds—for this is where a turbo excels. At 95 mph the boost needle is quivering with anticipation: a twitch of the right foot and the speed whistles without effort to 120 or more.

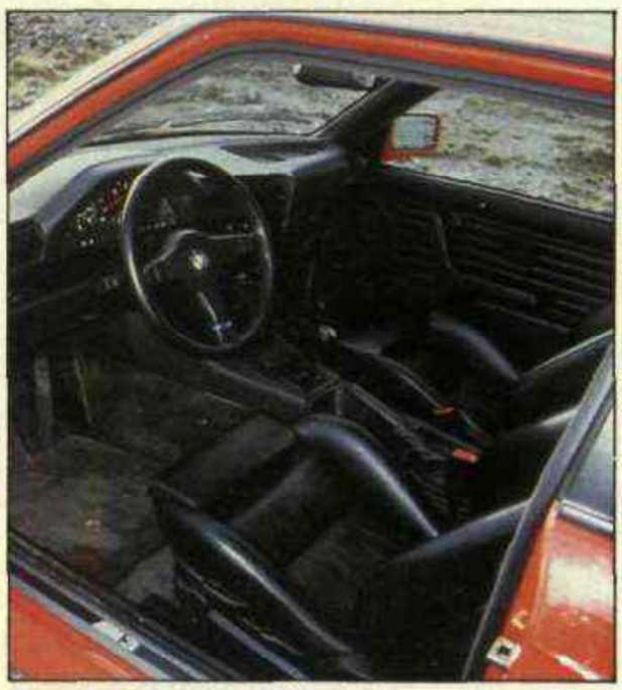
But while the upward transition is controllable, the reverse is more likely to catch you out, when the snarling Mr Hyde reverts to mild-mannered Dr Jekyll. Settled in a corner with all four tyres sharing the work and a steady throttle, the Sierra feels completely flat and stable, little clonks coming through the small wheel to make you imagine that this is Donington's Redgate corner; but when the real world intrudes with some mud on the road or a tighter kink than you allowed for, the risks of lifting off are magnified. If that boost gauge drops, a large chunk of horsepower will evaporate in an instant, and when pressing on hard that could spell disaster, promoting a spin so fast that even the Sierra's quick steering might not save you.

With normal aspiration, the penalty for such a mistake is less severe, and the BMW's 2in-shorter wheelbase means it is easy to catch should the rear wheels get out of line. Its top-gear performance, of course, cannot match the Cosworth, but both cars are exceptional anyway; from 70 mph the M3 will hit 90 in just over seven seconds using third and fourth gears, which is impressive enough.

The unit revs willingly past maximum power (6750 rpm) and on beyond the 7000 mark to a maximum of 8000. In fact it is so keen to rev even in top that I repeatedly wanted a sixth gear, although the car is by no means under-geared—at 70 mph the engine is turning at a comfortable 3000 rpm, and the ratios are nicely spaced.

Driving the Ford quickly around country roads demands much more concentration. It is certainly the more extreme, the more racer-like of the two Group A cars: spherical joints instead of rubber in the suspension means the occupants know all about potholes,

Much of the Cosworth's superb stability comes from the view-blocking double-deck wing.



Both Ford and BMW boast Recaro sport seats; M3's are black leather.

which reverberate through the interior. Spring rates are very stiff, too, and the trade-off for the ultra-flat cornering and tremendous roadholding is the rattle and shudder over broken surfaces and bumps.

This is where the difference between the base cars begins to show; BMW's fine standards of assembly carry through to its race-special, with solidly fitted panels and trim. Basic Sierras are aimed at a lesser market, and even the addition of all the luxuries such as velour Recaro seats and high-quality radio/cassette cannot disguise the tinnier sound of the doors shutting and the odd creaks from the fascia panels.

Yet it is a comfortable place to be, at the wheel of the Ford, cradled by the prominent bolsters of the firm seats. A smaller leather-covered wheel means less of a stretch, for like all the lesser Fords the wheel is not adjustable. Instead there is a crank to alter the height of the seat, though I should have been happier if the tilt angle were controllable separately. A leather gearknob tops the lever with its notchy action, less crisp than the M3 but fast enough when trying to shift from second to third without losing boost; the boost gauge itself is hidden by the wheelrim.

Other than this the dials are all in plain view, and the 90° quadrant tachometer, for many years standard pattern for racing bikes, is particularly easy to take in out of the corner of the eye as the next double-bend unravels ahead of the Sierra's blunt nose.

With its outrageous tail spoiler, strongly sculpted side-sills and bulky airdam, there is no fear of overlooking the Cosworth, and of course the choice of the three-door shell which the UK does not otherwise see distinguishes it from all other Sierras. Undoubtedly the spoiler's effect is significant, amplified on the RS500 by the rubber lip and additional XR4 × 4 spoiler below which is the quick way to tell a "normal" Cosworth from the evolution car. Where the unadorned Sierra sways about in side-winds (improved in the latest cars but still unacceptable in the estates), the RS500 runs like a torpedo for the horizon, and the faster it goes the more dogged its aim.

Many a joke has been cracked about Cosworth drivers blissfully unaware of a police car in the shadow of this tailplane, but the serious fact is that nothing at all is visible in the RS500's interior mirror. It may be the best anti-dazzle device ever, but it is frankly unsafe on the packed roads of southern England, and the tiny number of these cars which will be sold is not an excuse.

Away from the worst of the traffic, the RS500 simply leaves behind just about anything else available in power-per-pound terms. It is not surprising that, at less than £17,000, dealers and public alike were quick to absorb the original batch of 5000 cars, though not all of these left the dealers' forecourts in a hurry, and advertisements still appear from time to time offering delivery-mileage cars.

Theoretically, all 500 evolution cars, converted from plain Cosworths, have been sold too, though no doubt some will surface again having been stored by optimistic investors.

Though it is eclipsed by the Ford in sheer brute performance, it has to be said that BMW has produced the more useable car. On a dry, open piece of road, the Cosworth offers the closest feeling to a rose-jointed racer, tiny movements of the wheel translating into a precise dart left or right while its adhesion squeezes the driver against the seat bolsters. Gently straightening the car and feeding in more boost makes the stomach tense with excitement and concentration — a wonderful sensation.

But venture out on a soggy day, and a different tension grips you. The front wheels skitter from puddle to puddle, and finding it will spin its wheels in third keeps you well away from the outside of the performance envelope. Only the relentless action of the brakes with their four-pot front calipers and ABS seems well suited to these conditions.

Try the same weather in the M3, and confidence returns. You can tell exactly how close to the edge those fat Michelins are treading, the balance is unaffected, and that sparkling engine continues to churn out instantly-controllable torque. With adequate forethought on road-positioning, LHD is not a problem; it demonstrates that the view past a slow lorry is from hanging back rather than being near the centre-line and this is a car which will whistle past in the smallest gaps. Undoubtedly the more rounded of the two in its blend of abilities, the little M3 is a gem.

BMW has been proved right in its belief

M3 body modifications are major in scope but subtle in th

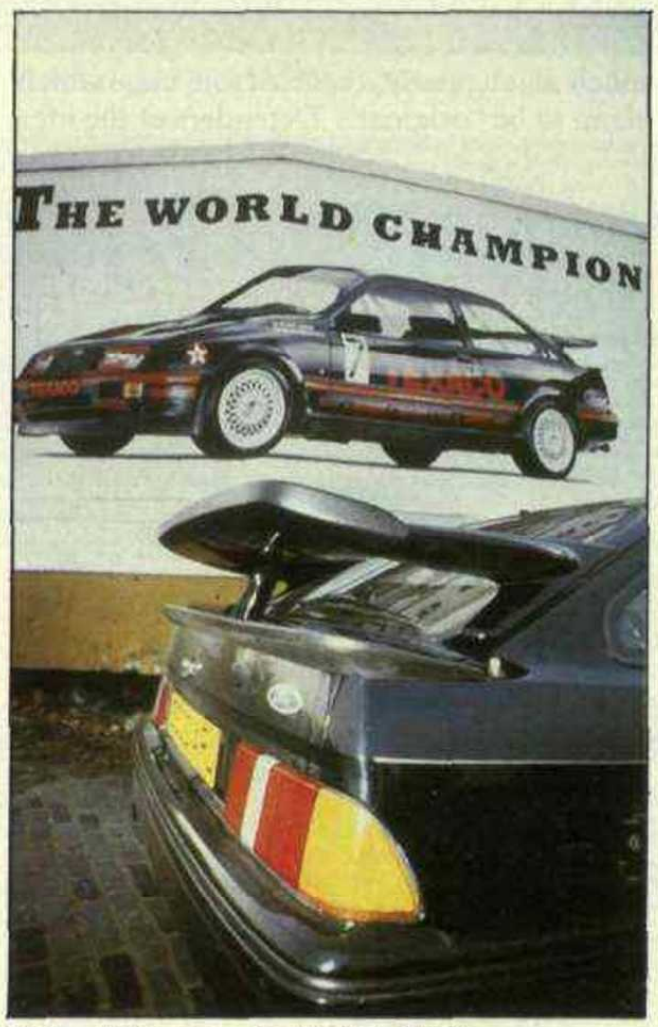
Model: BMW M3.
Maker: BMW AG, Munich.
Importer: BMW (GB) Ltd, Bracknell, Berkshire.
Type: 2-door, 4-seater saloon.
Engine: 2302cc (93.4 × 84mm) dohc 4 in line, 4 valves per cylinder. BMW Motronic injection and engine management system, 10.5:1cr. Power: (without coatalyser) 200 bhp at 6750 rpm. Torque: 177 lb ft at 4750 rpm.
Transmission: RWD, five-speed manual Getrag box, LSD.
Suspension: (Front): MacPherson strut, twin-tube dampers, antiroll bar. (Rear): Semi-trailing arms, twin-tube dampers, antiroll bar.
Steering: Power-assisted rack and pinion.
Brakes: Servo, ABS. (Front): Ventilated discs. (Rear): Solid discs, integral handbrake drum.
Wheels and tyres: 7.5J × 16 alloy rims, 225/45 VR16 Michelin MXX tyres.
Performance: 0-60mph: 6.9sec; 30-50 mph: 3.2sec; 50-70 mph: 3.9sec; 70-90 mph: 6.4sec. Max speed: 142 mph.
Economy: 25.7 mpg overall.
Price: £23,550, plus electric sunroof at £692.

eir visual effect; the plastic rear wing is the biggest clue to the car's racetrack intentions.

that it would continue to sell to performance-hungry enthusiasts; an extra 1500 have been built over and above the FIA's arbitrary figure of 5000 units, justifying its choice of a full-scale assembly line.

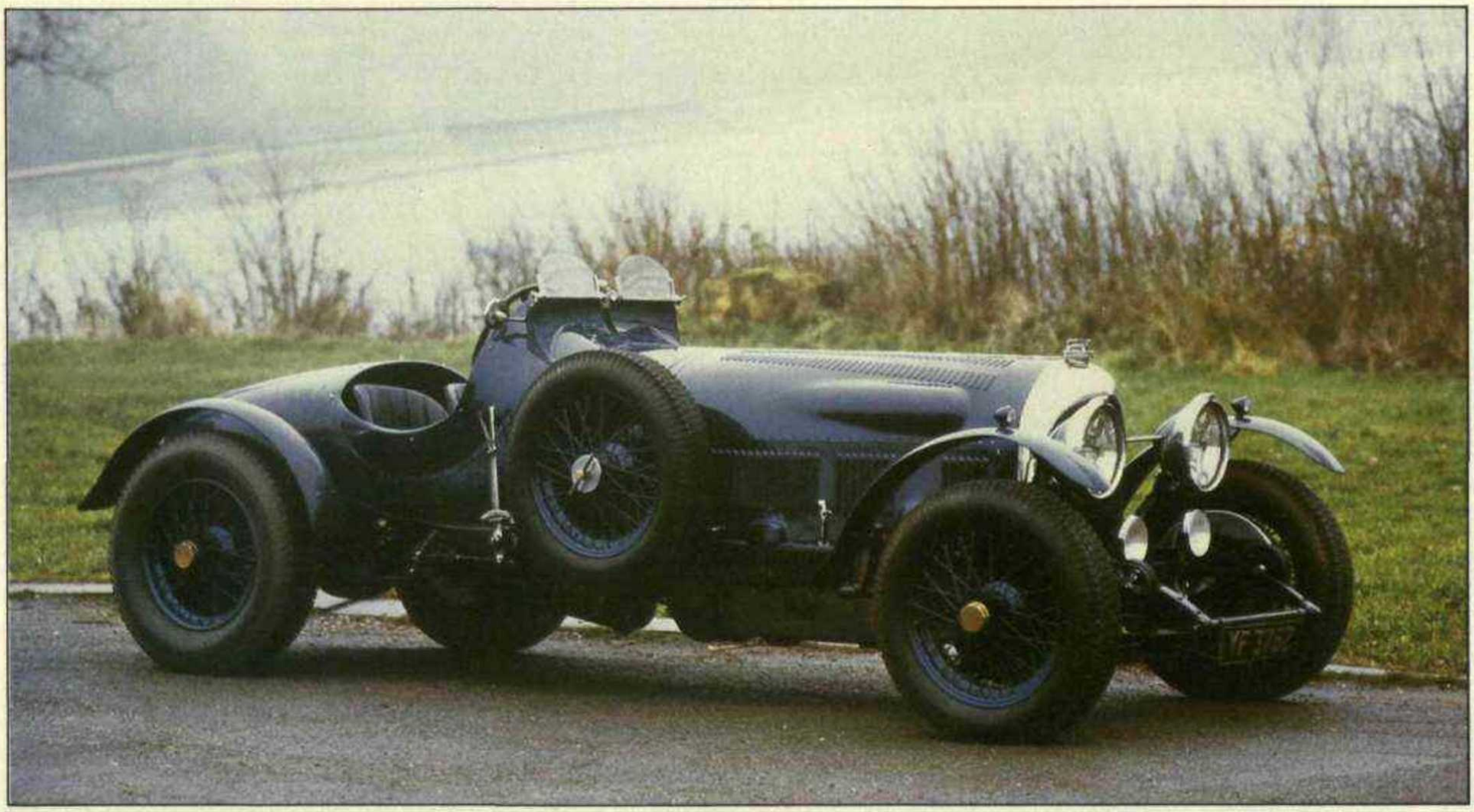
Ford, on the other hand, never intended to extend production of the homologated car beyond the minimum, being content that its relative cheapness and scarcity would ensure sufficient buyers, but instead planned a "new" model, a saloon version with more emphasis on comfort. That car, the Sapphire RS Cosworth, will be announced at the beginning of this month and we will report our impressions in the next issue. Its arrival will close the price gap between these two racetrack rivals, and make choosing between them a harder task.

As things are, there is a £4000 difference, so the man who can afford the BMW is possibly not going to see the RS500 as being in the same part of the market. But the Sierra Sapphire is an altogether more refined machine than the previous hatches, and with the right suspension compromise, ever better build quality, and the more responsive 204 bhp engine, a Sapphire Cosworth might tread on BMW's toes. **GC**



The advert says it all for Ford . . .

Model: Cosworth RS500.
Maker: Ford Motor Co Ltd.
Type: 5-seater hatchback.
Engine: 1993cc (90.8 × 76.9mm) dohc 4 in line. Garrett T4 turbocharger, intercooler, Weber/Marelli multipoint injection and engine managment system. Power: 224 bhp at 6000 rpm. Torque: 200 lb ft at 4500 rpm.
Transmission: RWD, manual five-speed box, viscous LSD.
Suspension: (Front): MacPherson struts, gas-filled dampers, antiroll bar. (Rear): Semi-trailing arms, uniball joints, gas-filled dampers, antiroll bar.
Steering: Power-assisted rack and pinion.
Brakes: Servo, ABS. (Front): Ventilated discs, 4-pot calipers, 11¼in diameter. (Rear): Solid discs, 10¾in diameter, integral handbrake drum.
Wheels and tyres: 7J × 15 alloy rims, 205/50 VR 15 tryes.
Performance: 0-60 mph: 6.6sec. Max speed: 149 mph.
Economy: 19.7 mpg overall.
Price: £19,950.



A Gentle Giant

No, a car like this never ran at Brooklands. It is not the final realisation of some pre-war visionary's plan; it is not inspired by a long-lost original, nor has it any racing history of its own — yet.

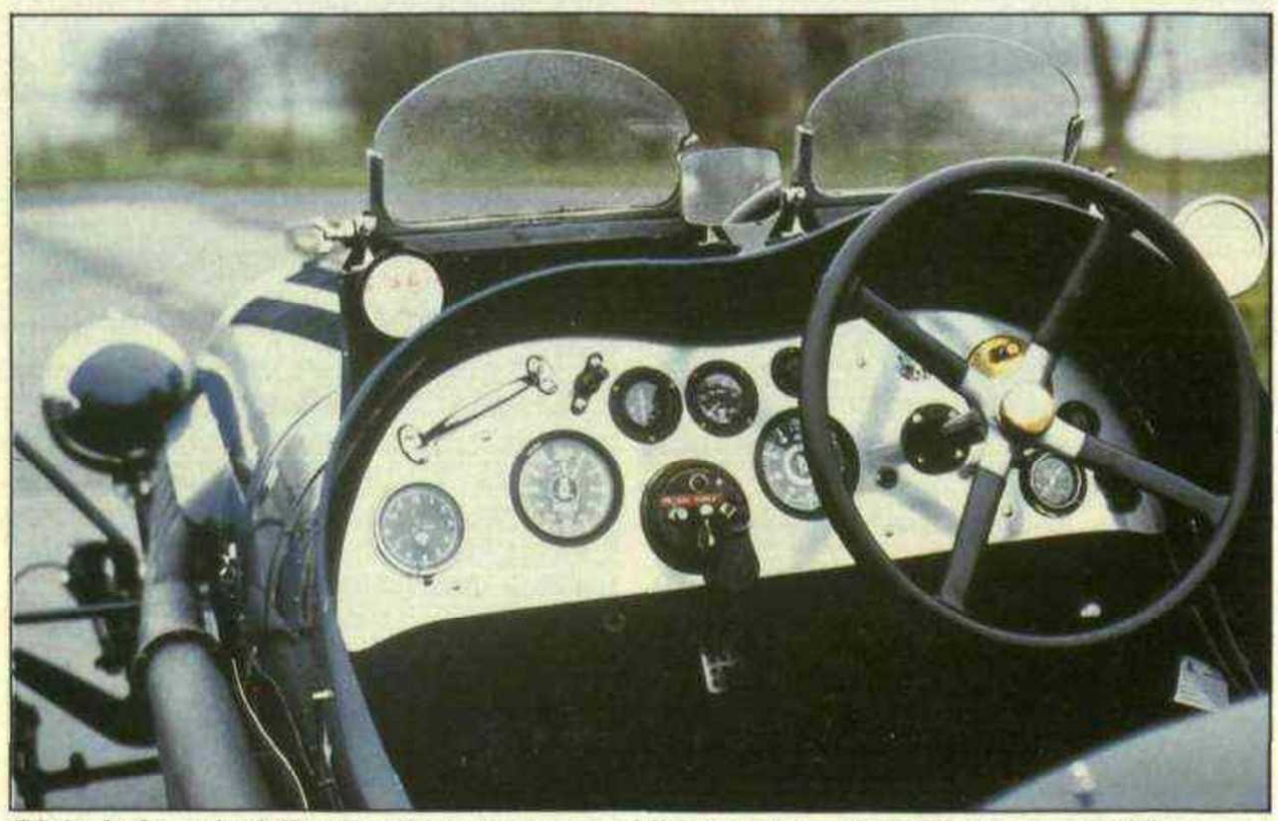
This 8-litre Bentley is that most contentious of beasts, the newly-built vintage special — an amalgam of components carefully chosen by specialists in the marque from the whole spectrum of W O Bentley parts as being the best of each, and assembled more than half a century later into something which would have had who-knows-what effect on W O himself.

Arguments against the fairness of allowing such specials to contest VSCC races lose a lot of weight in the face of the evidence of how much is regularly replaced on cars which claim to be "original". Defenders of the idea point out that specials were built in great numbers pre- and post-war, and as long as the parts are of appropriate age, why should they not be re-combined with the benefit of lessons learned over 50 years of racing?

Of course, there are many venerable specials racing within the VSCC today which were famous and successful in their own right before the war — think of the Avon-Bentley or the Bentley-Royce. But there is always a suspicion that a "new" home-brewed machine has less right to call itself vintage; that it perhaps uses a larger proportion of new components, or is not somehow in the spirit of the thing.

A continous history and record of originality will always give the truly original car extra attraction for collectors, though, as old cars become a fashionable purchase, buyers seem to become more willing to believe what they want to believe of a certain car's history and proof seems to become less important. Hence another argument against modern specials: that in future years a history will be imputed to the car which it does not deserve.

Present these views to Stanley Mann and he will simply shrug. He did not build this special, but having put much skill and effort into sorting it out he is certainly going to race it. As one of the better-known dealers in the vintage Bentley, he is used to collating the life-stories of the many cars which pass through his hands in a year. When I visited his premises to inspect the 8-litre special, there were something like 24 cars packed into the



Plain dash carries 3-litre Bentley instruments, with rpm and water temperature nearest driver.

building — almost all Bentleys, some ready for their new owners, some being restored, and there were one or two rather special vehicles being built up for clients.

A very early 3-litre all-weather tourer, nearer to a folding-head saloon really, was having its eight-day clock repaired, while stacks of shelves bore lamps and radiator shells; if it were not for the large hydraulic car-hoist, this could be a pre-war workship. Outsiders included the V12 Lagonda Le Mans replica, and the very rare sight of a Squire, with the more unusual four-seater tourer body.

Stanley Mann has been selling, maintaining and racing Bentleys for long enough to appreciate something really special amongst specials, and the long low blue two-seater which sat in wait near the entrance doors of the workship promises to give VSCC spectators this year something spectacular to focus their lenses on.

This is one of three cars in this crowded building which are not for sale: Stanley Mann also has a Speed Six and a Le Mans-spec 4½-litre, not a team car but one converted to identical spec by the factory and unaltered since then, and in which WB once enjoyed a lap of Brooklands. It gleams with well-kept wear and tear; a pleasure to see instead of the better-than-factory condition of many a restored car, and according to its owner has been described as "the best 4½ in the Club".

But amongst the sheen of old brass and oil which pervaded the room, even an 8-litre saloon with block removed, revealing the massive pistons and triple eccentric camgear poking up, could not distract the eye from the car I had come to drive. I had fallen for it the moment I saw its photograph a week or two before, and in the harsh fluorescent light of the shop it was even sleeker and more aggressive.

With its bonnet barely clearing the cambox and slender flanks tapering to a point behind the cockpit, this bare two-seater ought to have been a Grand Prix car; the tail displays the fineness of a Tipo B Alfa Romeo, but there is just room for driver and mechanic, with the latter's arm resting on the dark blue panelling behind the pilot. Cutaway sides swoop up and round to make a subtly asymmetrical swelling behind the wide, thin steering wheel, and the cycle-guards are as slim as they could possibly be.

Drawing all these elements together is a tall 3-litre radiator, its arched top the perfect curve to flow back to the dash. The GP comparison is not exact; this bonnet is much higher than any Bugatti or Alfa Romeo, but the scalloped cockpit makes a successful junction between nose and tail; one of those shapes which are so lovely that you know that the car has to be a fine machine to drive.

That, at least, was my optimistic thought as Stanley Mann described the abilities of his mount. "She'll spin her wheels in top on a day like this." Nervously I glanced out at the grey sky. It was one of those dirty December days, not quite raining, when the roads are covered in slime, and traction is a summer memory. The 2.8 Capri I had driven up to Hertfordshire had rarely been pointing straight, and the idea of a tuned 8-litre engine and narrow tyres was beginning to alarm me. "If," he said, fixing me firmly with his eye, "If you bend it, you've bought it". Then he grinned, adding "No, I don't really mean that"; but I wondered . . .

Racing is the prime purpose of this special, but it is road equipped and registered, and Mann intends to drive it to meetings and carry

Newly assembled, but the patina of age shows in the badge polished smooth over many years.

If an exhaust pipe can be imposing, this is it. Note clearance of bonnet over camchest.

Final instructions.

There is just room for driver and passenger in the slim cockpit.

essential spares aboard. "Service car? No, no, we're going to do this properly. We won't even take the mudguards off." And why bother when the motor is putting out something like 350bhp, along with torque which would melt most dynamometers.

Assembled rather slowly over the last 20 years by John Koenig and completed this last winter by Mann's team, the car draws on many models. To begin with, the huge six-cylinder 8-litre block with its integral four valves per cylinder head sits on a modified Speed 6 crankcase which contains a Laystall crank, one of three made at the same time (Gordon Russell and Tim Llewlelyn have the others). Tubular rods mount high-compression 8-litre pistons and the flywheel is substantially lightened; the water-pump is no longer mounted on the front of the camshaft, but several inches lower, where the radiator fan would normally be, and is driven by a chain from the original position.

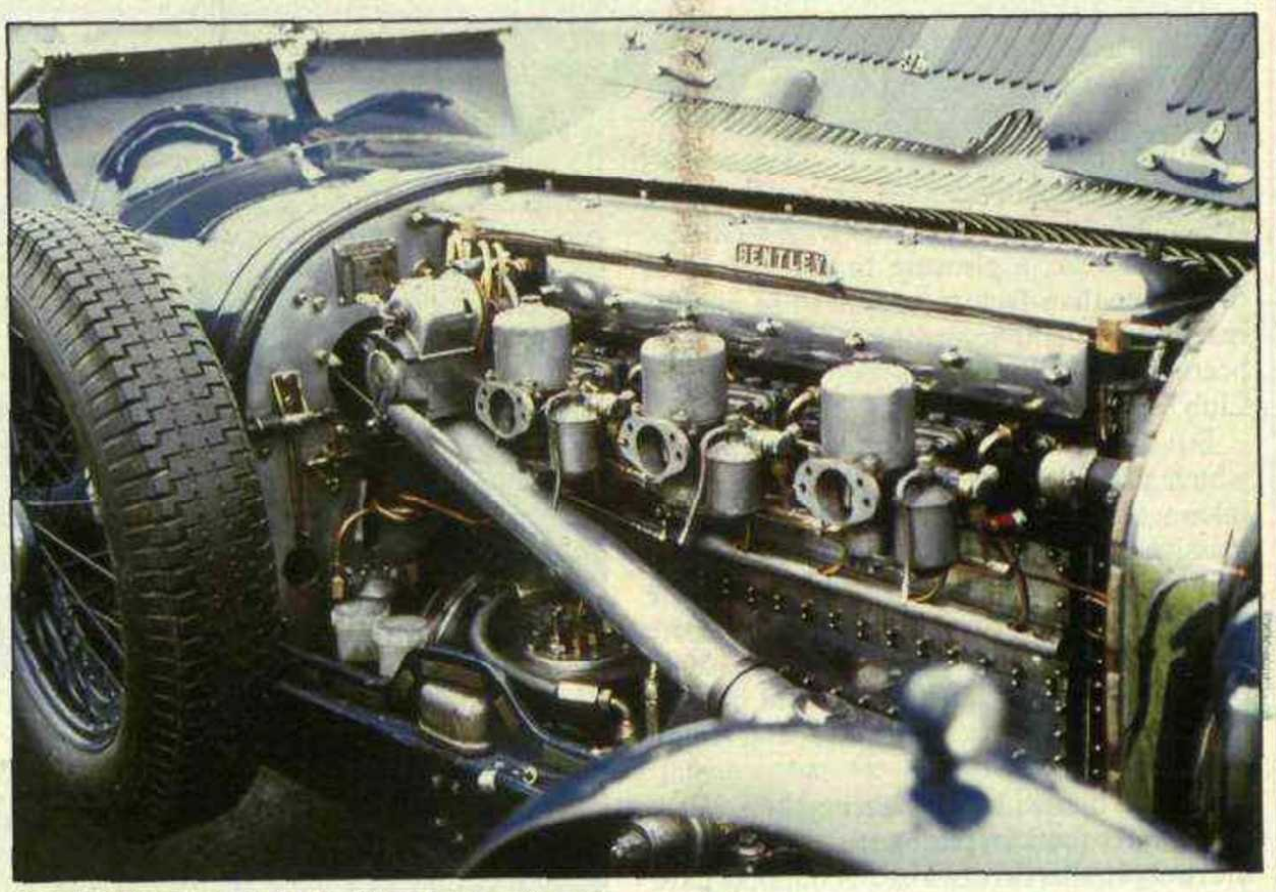
Three huge SUs sit splendidly side by side high on the off-side of the block, while the nose of the crank now turns an alternator instead of a dynamo, so that the load of running two Kenlowe electric radiator fans is not a problem.

This huge device, whose massive castings look as if borrowed from some maritime application, especially at the rear where the tunnel for the cam-rods rises vertically out of the crankcase, is squeezed into a 3-litre Speed Model 9ft 9½in-wheelbase chassis with a 4½-litre steering box, together with a C-type gearbox and a Speed Six rear axle. At 3:1, this axle gives an easy 130mph, which is rather hard on the 100mph speedometer which comes, like the other dials, from a 3-litre. In fact, the needle bends against the stop when the car is about to top out.

To stop this hungry-looking greyhound of a car, the 19in wheels have had their brake drums converted to two-cylinder hydraulic operation, though I was warned that some adjustment was still required to make the car stop square, a gloomy thought on a slippery day like this.

Before I took over, Stanley sprinted out with me alongside to fill the fuel tank. The engine, still cold, heaved and popped with

Its wide, low stance reflects the Bentley's racing ambitions.



Triple SUs feed the 8-litre 24-valve power unit.

Profile has much of the delicacy of a pre-war Grand Prix car.

thunderous report and the rear wheels, as he had predicted, clawed for grip. "By the way", he shouted as we slithered to a muddy 'Give Way', "don't use the handbrake on the move, it only works on one wheel!" I vowed to keep my hands within the cockpit and ignore the tall plated handbrake lever outside.

Still wide-eyed at just how quick the car had been in Stanley's hands, I listened to his final instructions. "If the temperature goes above 190°, flick the Kenlowes on". That was simple; not so the gearchange: "C-Type box," Stanley had grinned; "Master that and you can manage anything. Oh, and don't slip the clutch, or you'll burn it out." I groaned, remembering the turbocharged racing truck I once struggled with for several circuit laps. The change couldn't be worse than that, could it?

It wasn't. Actually it slipped from first through the intermediates to fourth rather nicely. With all that torque in such a light frame, the car rolled away from a standstill with no effort, and the weighty clutch felt good. A hefty kick to disengage it, small precise movement of the right-hand lever, and the pedal seemed to bounce back on its own as soon as the gear was in. And what throttle response! Could this really be an 8000cc engine blipping so eagerly on the down-changes?

My trepidation faded as the car's responsiveness showed through. Even the steering, the thing which alarms me more than the brakes on most vintage cars, had bite and answered instantly. With the exhaust reverberating crisply from the steep banks on either side (punctuated by the occasional stagger — the advance lever had a tendency to retard itself steadily) I began to enjoy myself.

So long-legged is the car that third and top are enough to cope with anything except a standing start, and in either it bounds forward with a twitch of throttle, sweeping past other cars impatiently. 60, 70, 80 mph comes up and the wheel is light and accurate, the tall tyres visibly obeying the driver. Though I am wearing glasses rather than goggles, the high scuttles and aeroscreens seem to keep all the wind off, and the swish of damp roads swirls around the cockpit.

Only the smallest movements are needed to drive this car fast on open roads: the controls are well placed and even the little mirror on the scuttle does not shake too much. As we weave around mundane traffic and surge through roundabouts, I find myself musing that with its lovely balance and ferocious acceleration this could surely out-run many a sportscar of today — with the single reservation of the brakes, or rather the tyres.

There are indicators, but, unsure if they are working, I try to remember the left-turn hand-signal as our side turning approaches. At these speeds the brakes feel just right, powerful and even; they would easily lock the wheels in today's damp, so I add a fixed 50% to my braking distances as we turn into some narrow muddy lanes. Real effort is needed to turn the wheel at low speed; the answer is not to slow down too much but to allow the chassis to do the work. Be confident, turn the wheel on a light throttle and the chassis turns promptly with a trace of stabilising understeer, but none of the dreadful pause and lurch of many a beam-axle car. Only one vintage car I have driven has steering as pleasant, though different in feel — a Type 57 Bugatti.

Mann's car is built in the spirit of the Barnato-Hassan and Forrest Lycett 8-litres.

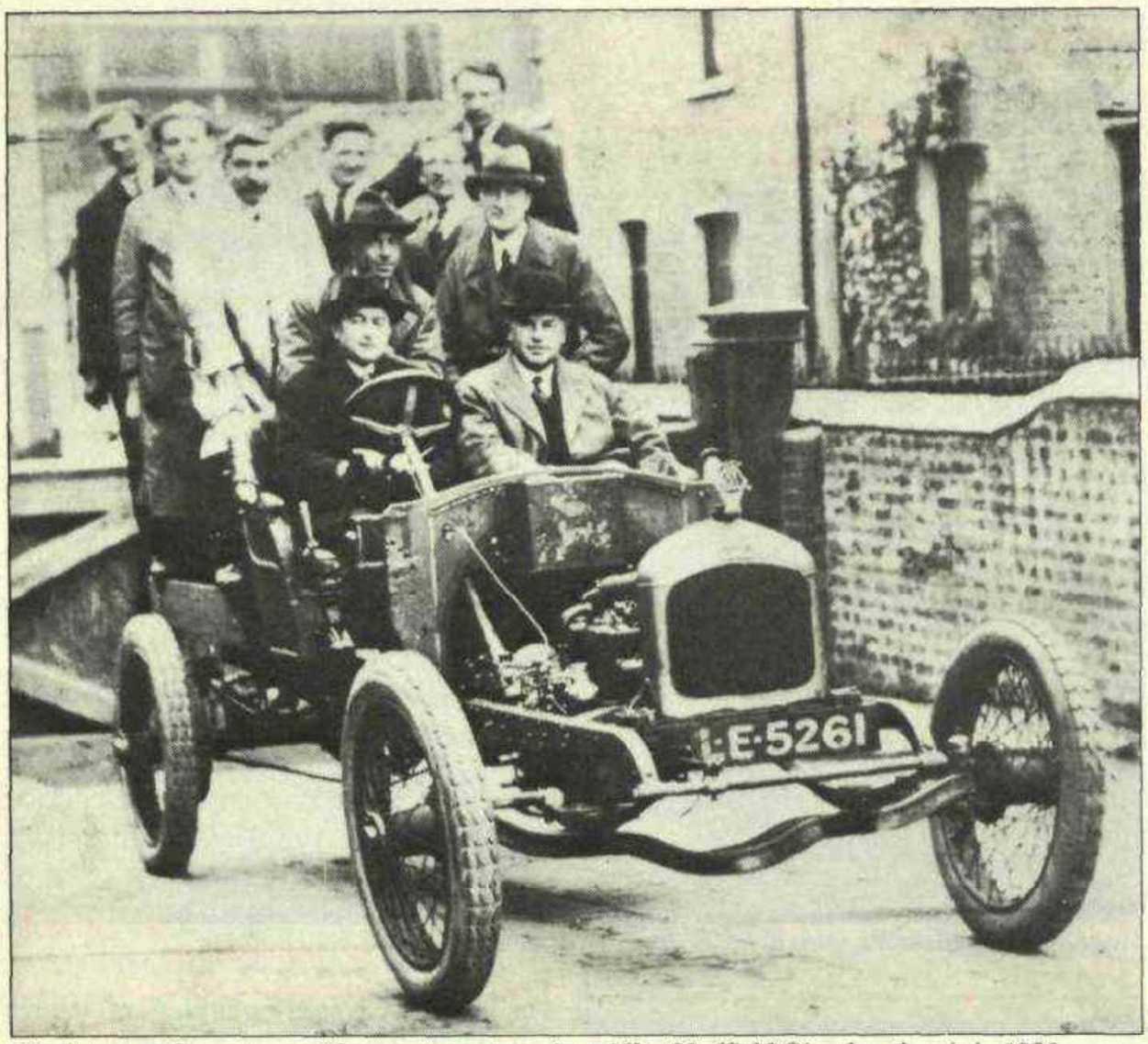
Aeroscreens are surprisingly effective, but 'ware handbrake!

In all the slow manoeuvring for pictures the car showed no temperament (apart from the self-retarding lever needing repeated tweaks), restarting without fuss on a prod of the self-starter and idling quietly and smoothly. It is the same as the revs rise; though the exhaust thunders and the frame shakes with suppressed urge, the torque pours out silkily in every gear. Changing gear can be snappy if gauged exactly, though it is easy to miss the slot and have to start again.

No doubt the ride is stiff, but perched on a leather cushion on the floorboards I was not aware of that, marvelling instead at how secure the car felt. It feels utterly flat through corners, and if a sudden rise in revs betrays the start of the dreaded side-slip, the merest feathering of the accelerator tames it. I did wind on some opposite lock in the safety of an empty country park; even then the feeling through the narrow rim of the wheel was silky-smooth and predictable.

That really was the over-riding surprise about this machine: expecting a raw and unruly monster, I found instead a responsive and quite predictable sports-racing car, of magnificent performance and refined manners. Its high rev-range, up to 4200rpm (four-five *in extremis*), and light flywheel do not detract from the unruffled pulling power at the lower end, while the instant response to the right-hand pedal is going to light up a few tyres next season.

My first reaction was right — any car which looks as beautiful as this has to be a pleasure to drive. **GC**



The inventor demonstrates his torque-converter in a 45hp Sheffield-Simplex chassis in 1923.

A Romanian in London

George Constantinesco, the son of a professsor of mathematics, was born in Romania in 1881 and emigrated to England in 1910. He became a naturalised British subject and is probably best remembered for his hydraulic synchronising gear, which enabled a gun to be fired between the blades of a rotating aeroplane propeller and greatly increased the effectiveness of our fighters during World War One. His wartime inventions should have brought in £99,000 but, as with W O Bentley, tax problems intervened.

He developed the Constantinesco light-car partly to demonstrate the efficiency of his torque converter (which worked on the principle that liquids can be compressed and release energy on their expansion) but also as an effective car in its own right, giving 100mpg at the 35-40mph speeds common at the time of its introduction.

The transmission was but one of many ingenious and successful Constantinesco inventions. It worked on the pendulum principle, and gave an infinitely-variable, clutchless drive at a time when gearchanging and smooth engagement of the clutch were a nightmare to many beginner motorists.

The working of this torque-converter was the subject, as I well remember, of a Meccano model which could replace the sliding-gears on the 1920s Meccano chassis. It was demonstrated in May 1923 in a Sheffield-Simplex chassis whose original 45hp engine had been replaced by a 10hp Singer unit and its radiator — ten adults standing on a platform on this chassis being driven about London by George Constantinesco. The set-up was capable of riding smoothly over 6in wood blocks placed before its wheels, and of towing a lorry up a steep hill.

The Editor of *The Automobile Engineer* became interested and, to silence any disbelief that his torque-converter would not work, Constantinesco offered £100 to the first person to prove his mathematics wrong or his formulae not in strict accordance with logic. There were no takers . . . It is interesting that his first model of the converter emerged from a purely mathematical analysis of the problem, translated into a working drawing. The model performed as predicted, without trial-and-error or modification.

I do not intend to explain fully how the converter worked, because that will be described and illustrated in a book which George Constantinesco's son Ian is writing about his father's life. Suffice it to say that, having proved his torque-converter to be astonishingly effective in the Singer-powered SS, the inventor set about his small-car project. A single-cylinder air-cooled two-stroke engine was coupled to the converter and installed in a chassis which was exhibited at the Empire Exhibition at Wembley in 1924 — where Constantinesco had a stand on which were displayed other products stemming from his ingenuity and engineering prowess.

This chassis had previously been shown at the 1924 Paris Salon, but it was realised that there were cooling and engine-balance problems with a single-cylinder engine, so a new design was prepared for the production car. This used a two-stroke engine with two vertical cylinders, well spaced out so that the torque-converter could be placed between them.

The engine was water-cooled, with a bore and stroke of 67mm×70mm giving a capacity of 494cc, using a carburettor of Constantinesco's patented design. It was a professionally-made power-unit, whose pot-like water jackets were coupled by a large-bore water pipe extending forward to a shapely radiator. The carburettor was on the offside, two separate exhaust pipes running fore-and-aft on the nearside of the engine and converging just ahead of a large silencer.

Construction of the car was undertaken at Constantinesco's works at 130 Wilton Road, Victoria, London (he also had offices at 7 Grosvenor Gardens), with some work also being done at 27 Rue La Boetie in Paris. The power-units were installed in an equally professional-looking chassis whose side-members were swept high over a back-axle which had two sliding bevel pinions, to provide a reverse gear via dog-clutches (a system used on very early Panhard and Daimler cars, involving slight offsetting of the universally-jointed propshaft in reverse, engaged by a separate lever). No differential was used, the drive going only to one back wheel; it was claimed that as the propshaft rotated anti-clockwise it gave the driven wheel ample grip, especially as the converter produced five times more torque than normal . . .

Centre-lock wire wheels were fitted, as were four-wheel brakes. The engine, which had lubrication additional to the "petroil" mix of the usual two-stroke, inclined spark-plugs and no gears (a dynamotor starter was fitted), moved the car off from about 1200 rpm, after which driving was fully automatic. Running back on hills was obviated by

sprags, and even against a wall with the throttle open it was claimed that the engine could not stall.

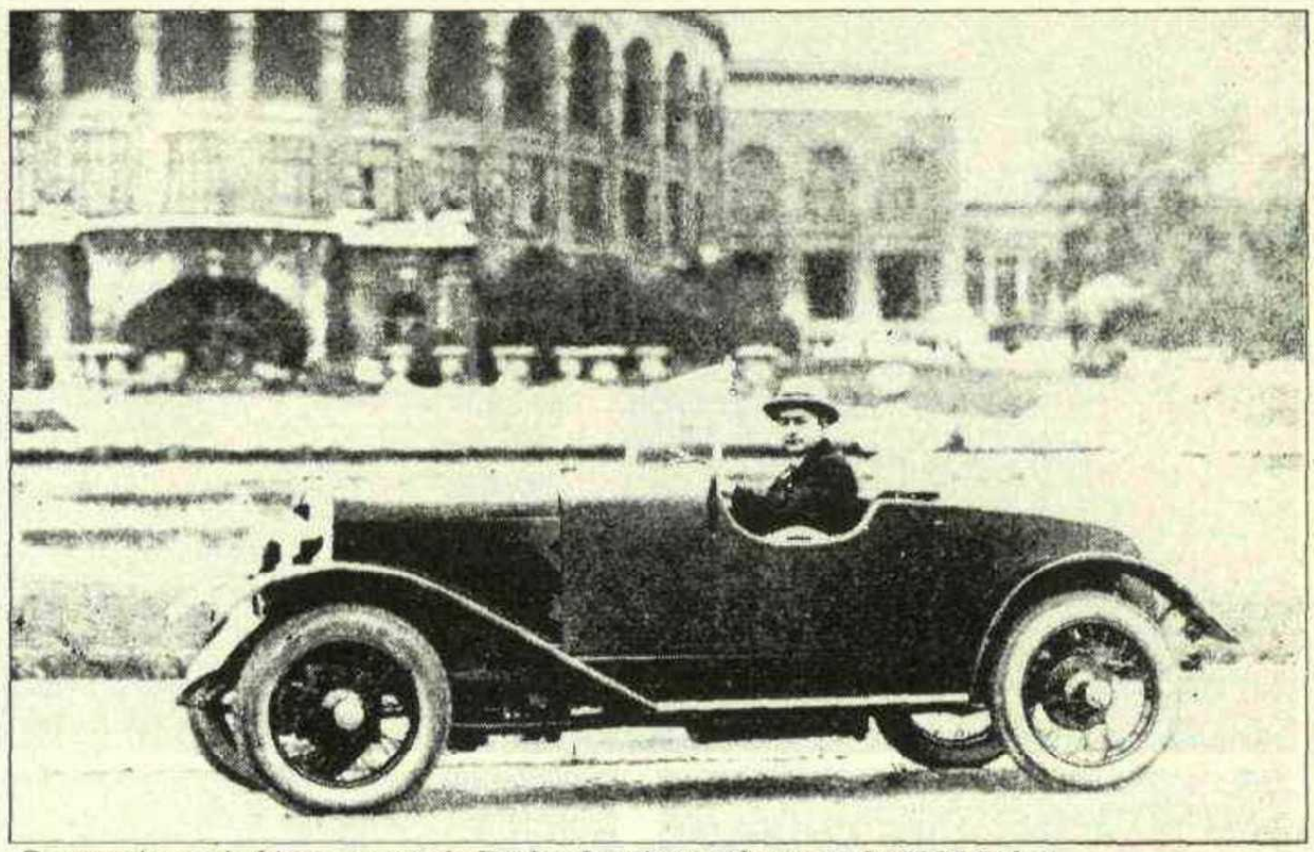
This two-cylinder Constantinesco was shown at the 1926 Paris Salon as a chassis; there were two saloons also on the stand, each weighing less than 10cwt and priced at £315. The inventor demonstrated the car in neat two-seater form priced at £215, the original aim of selling it at 100 Guineas having proved too optimistic. In England, where it was hoped to produce the car, HP-rating was 5.58, making the tax only £6 a year.

Constantinesco publicised the project by demonstrating that his eight-year-old son Ian could drive the car, and that the famous sculptor Antoine Bourdelle, who had never driven a car before, was after a few minutes tuition able to drive the Constantinesco about the streets of Paris. The inventor also got his wife Sandra to lead the car by a string attached to the throttle lever! When tried in this country by *The Autocar*, smooth running at 25mph was reported, with a top speed of about 35mph from this 16cwt, 500cc car.

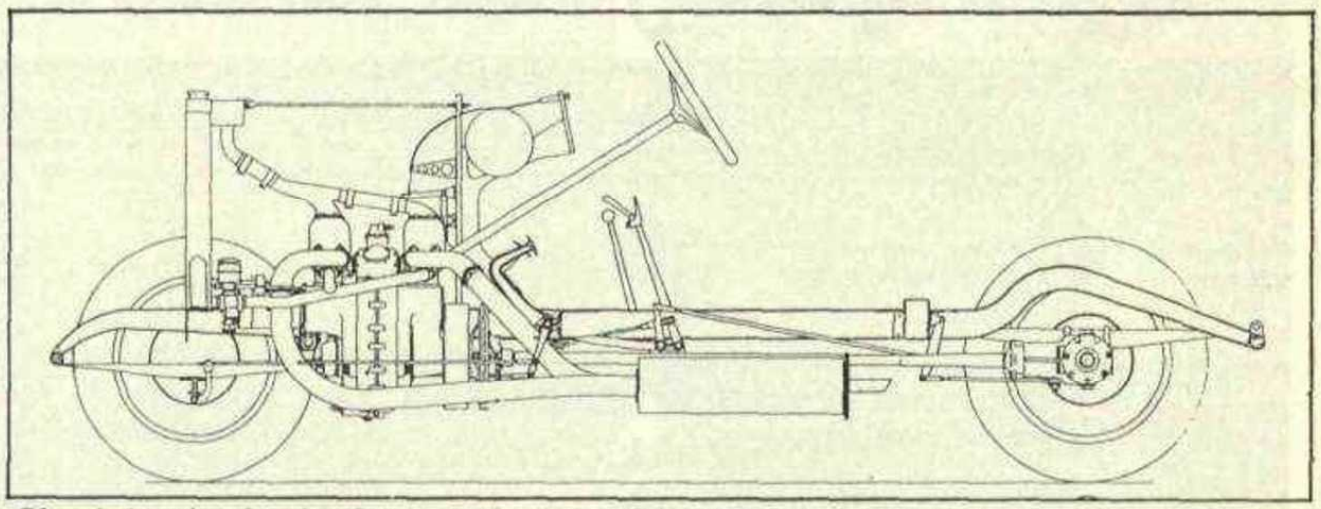
In its final form in 1926, the Constantinesco had a wheelbase of 8ft 6in, half-elliptic springs front and back, and 715×115 tyres. The four-seater cost £250.

Unfortunately finances ran out, and only six were built. Of these, four have disappeared (probably going to Romania between the wars, when George Constantinesco went there to promote his torque-converter for railcar purposes) but a complete car is in London's Science Museum awaiting funds for restoration, along with a power-unit which probably came from a demonstration chassis.

The Constantinesco was a remarkable little car, foreshadowing today's two-pedal automatic-gearbox cars and Ford/Fiat's infinitely-variable CTX transmission. I am indebted to Ian Constantinesco for his help and wish him well with his book. He would be interested to hear from any reader who has owned one of his father's cars. **WB**



Constantinesco in his two-seater in Paris where it was shown at the 1926 Salon.



Chassis drawing showing the two-stroke engine with torque-converter sitting between the two cylinders.

Pride of Prescott

Bugatti Owners Club celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of Prescott on May 21-22, when pride of place will be given to those who competed at this famous venue before the war. Each will be asked to make a timed or demonstration run, if possible in the same type of car he drove in the Opening Rally or first formal hill-climb in 1938; at the latter Arthur Baron made FTD in a Type 51 Bugatti before (according to MOTOR SPORT's report) some 2000-3000 spectators. At least 18 pre-war Prescott drivers remain, and commemorative run invitations may be extended to competitors up to 1950, so nostalgia should be released with a vengeance during that weekend. **WB**

VSCC New Year

Mark Garfitt's January 1 meet at the Verzons near Ledbury was once again well supported, in spite of blustery weather. Mark himself was driving Sally Marsh's T35T Bugatti, although his own Frazer Nash-BMW was also in attendance.

The assembly included Barker's Renault 45; a Lancia Lambda tourer; the Crouch-Helix which Keith Hill is gradually returning to its former appearance; the President's Mercedes 60; a Morgan tricar contingent which included a Matchless vee-twin and a very nice early Family model; the Talbot AMB 19; the Lombard with racing numbers; an Invicta coupé; an 11/22 Wolseley tourer; the Welsh A7 trio of Chummy, Opal and Ulster Replica; other A7s including a smart open Pearl cabriolet; and a fine assortment of vintage a 4½ Bentley, Derby Bentleys and Rolls-Royces. There were also several larger Austins, a lone 30/98, a two-seater Humber light-car, an Edwardian Buick, a 2-litre Lagonda, a Salmson, and many more.

Chris Clarke had parked his 1923 Lanchester 21 beside a Rolls; the big Wolseley saloon present was *not* a police car; and a kilted piper from one of the several Riley Nines was greeting arriving cars with a skirl of bagpipes. Hamish Moffatt treated the assembly to a skilful one-man fly-past in his Curry-Wot biplane in difficult conditions. After flying home, he returned in *his* GP Bugatti.

Snippets of conversations revealed that a rare Westwood light-car will soon be on the road again, that the ex-John Eason-Gibson Type 319/45 FN-BMW saloon (CGP 18) is also being restored, and that Barker's three-cylinder friction-drive Lafitte may be ready for April's Light Car Trial.

Gwyn Stephens' 4½-litre Lagonda, three times a winner of the Verzons' proprietor's bottle for the car coming the greatest distance, was turned back on this occasion by torrential rain — so the winner was Mike Evans' Singer Nine Le Mans, a running restoration which covered 92 miles from Swansea. A close runner-up was a blue 12/40 side-valve 2WB Alvis tourer from Shropshire. **WB**

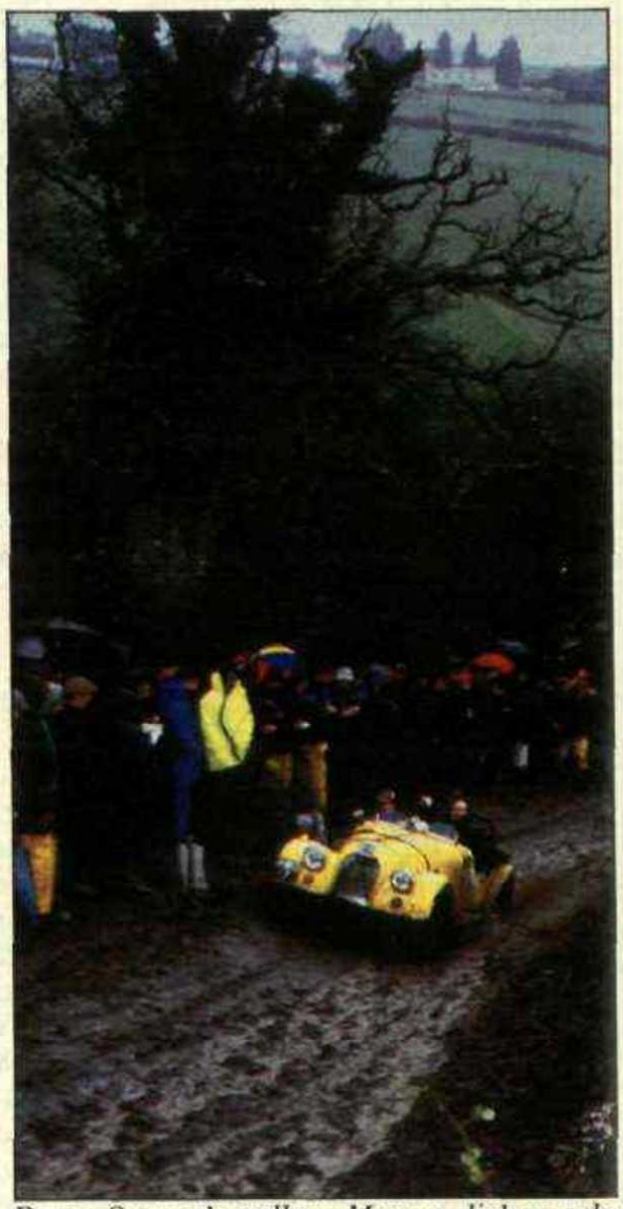
Jim Templeton (Dellow) disposes of some rubber at the start of Fingle.

Torquay or Bust

The 1988 MCC Trial had an entry of 325 cars, three-wheelers and motorcycles, starting from reading, Cirencester and Exeter. They ran through the night and tackled such traditional observed sections as Meerhay, Waterloo, Fingle, Simms and Slippery Sam, before finishing in Torquay. All power to the MCC — its Land's End Trial, organised to a similar well-proven formula, will take place on April 1-2. **WB**

There were 121 bike entries, too; here, Ian Hingley's BSA avoids the worst of the mud.

Twin spare wheels are a favourite traction aid, though this Dellow needs two different sizes.



Barry Sumner's yellow Morgan lightens the early morning gloom.

The Abingdon make is always popular as an Exeter competitor — Terry Martin's Midget.

Disc wheels and plain bonnets marked the two Trojans; this is Adrian Carlisle's on Fingle.

Doing what Dellows were made for — Reg Taylor's 1600 replica nearing the restart.

Duncan Welch ploughs a furrow in his Lotus.

Saloons are well able to compete with sportscars in classic trials: this is Dave Parry's Escort Mexico.

The Three Mulliners

Great coachbuilders are just as much a part of motoring history as the manufacturers of the chassis to which their craftwork was fitted, but less is known about most of them than about the motor companies.

Indeed, there is often confusion between the three Mulliners, all of whom made bodywork for the better-class chassis in the days before integral construction, when car owners could choose the kind of coachwork they required and have it made specially for them. The three Mulliners were H J Mulliner & Co Ltd, Arthur Mulliner, and Mulliners Ltd.

The first named was the best known and the most prolific. In fact there were links between the companies, because in 1900 H J Mulliner had purchased from his cousins A G Mulliner of Liverpool and Arthur Mulliner of Northampton the motor-car body-building firm of Mulliner (London) Ltd. To the premises in Brooke Street, off Bond Street in Mayfair, were added those in Bedford Park, Bath Road, Chiswick, with new showrooms in Grafton Street. Just prior to WW1, H J Mulliner retired, having sold his company to the long-established coach-builders of John Croall of Edinburgh — but the former name was retained, and the company was managed by HJ's brother-in-law Frank Piesse.

Right from the start H J Mulliner had attracted much favourable comment, especially after it had constructed a fine body on a 40/50 Rolls-Royce chassis for the Hon C S Rolls. The company, managed in those times by a Mr Johnstone and his son, introduced several bodywork innovations and the late David Scott-Moncrieff said that its coachwork had all the elegance and dash of James Young and Gurney Nutting bodies, coupled with quality almost up to Hooper standards. Indeed he wrote that, had he been able to afford it, his second choice after Hooper would have been for bodywork by H J Mulliner.

The concern continued to prosper after the 1930s, when the demand for individual coachwork had diminished drastically. In 1959 Rolls-Royce Ltd took it over, and by 1961 had merged its two body-building companies into the one concern of H J Mulliner, Park Ward Ltd (after the war and before the merger, H J Mulliner had made 1127 Bentley bodies).

This company must not be confused with Arthur Mulliner Ltd, a more provincial concern based in Northampton whose origins dated from very early times. In the 1870s it was a firm of carriers which later built wagons and coaches. By 1900 it was one of the leading body-makers in England, but ceased activity when war broke out again in 1939, becoming a subsidiary of Henly's Ltd distributing Rootes Group cars.

The third Mulliner was Mulliners Ltd of Birmingham, a much smaller firm than the other two. Its works were adjacent to the Calthorpe factory, of which it became a subsidiary, making those striking polished-aluminium bodies on the 10hp Calthorpe chassis; the body-plate on my 1924 12/20 Calthorpe reads "Mulliner-Birmingham".

The comparative outputs of the three Mulliners in the inter-war years can be assessed to some extent by the bodies they made for Bentley chassis, as listed in Stanley Sedgwick's erudite book *All The Pre-War Bentleys*. For the WO 3-litre to the 4-litre chassis, H J Mulliner made 243 bodies (compared with 669 by Vanden Plas), Arthur Mulliner only 18, and Mulliners 11. If we extend this to cover the Rolls-Royce Bentleys from the 3½-litre to the MkV (for which Park Ward made 1066 bodies), the Mulliner's totals increase to 410, 58 and 13 respectively.

At the 1910 Olympia Show, where the band of His Majesty's Coldstream Guards played and visitors could dine in the hall for 5/- (25p) in typical Edwardian splendour, H J Mulliner showed its coachwork on Rolls-Royce, Napier, De Dion and a small Lorraine-Dietrich, chassis prices only being quoted; Mulliner of Long Acre and Northampton chose to exhibit its wares on Napier, Vauxhall, Lancia and a 14/20 Sheffield-Simplex — the 30hp Vauxhall with patent fully-collapsible head costing £900, and the bodies on the 30hp Napier and the Lancia being of very light construction.

H J Mulliner did the coachwork for this Rolls-Royce touring saloon.

In 1919, when the motor industry was optimistically trying to recover from the war and meet the expected boom in car sales (although it was a year or two before this materialised), H J Mulliner exhibited at the London Motor Show two Crossleys (one with a limousine body made for the High Commissioner of Canada, the other a landaulette, also with seven seats), as well as a 36hp Straker-Squire with a four-seater interior cabriolet body upholstered in Bedford cord, openable vee-windscreen and sliding front seats, (the latter now commonplace, but worthy of comment then). It also hedged its bets with some models of its smaller bodies.

Not to be outdone, Arthur Mulliner showed a sporting saloon-coupé on a Buick chassis, with vee screen and dashboard, sliding seats which had spring-loaded adjustable back-rests to give access to the back compartment, yellow finish and a black top. It also had a three-quarter-cabriolet (chassis unnamed) with completely folding-away occasional seats and a new-type hood with concealed extending mechanism. Mulliners did not take a stand.

I am not conversant with the motor trade, so do not know whether car makers offered their chassis free to these coach-builders for Show publicity, or whether they had to be purchased — perhaps there was some financial arrangement should a purchaser be found?

By 1924 there was still a healthy demand for specialist bodies. At Olympia, H J Mulliner had a two-seater three-quarter-cabriolet on a long-chassis 3-litre Bentley (in a "ciel" colour, with upholstery in antique brown leather), a dark blue 18/30 Panhard Pullman limousine (with a garish red panel of inlaid walnut, hardwood and ebony), and an 18hp Voisin with special "automatic back scuttle torpedo" body (in Mulliner blue with grey leather upholstery).

Arthur Mulliner chose to show saloon-limousines on Rolls-Royce, 30hp Armstrong Siddeley and Vauxhall chassis. The Rolls was in dark red with an aluminium bonnet-top, plated fittings and calf-skin upholstery. The other cars were dark blue and primrose-and-black respectively.

One might have thought the demand for coachbuilt bodywork would be diminishing by 1930, but all three Mulliners had stands at that year's Olympia Show. Having been one of the first to introduce the type, H J showed a semi-panelled Weymann body on a 40/50 Rolls-Royce chassis — this one done in special grey with black relief, and with a Pytchley sun-roof. Arthur Mulliner had a 40/50 Rolls-Royce enclosed limousine, a four-door saloon on a 20/30 Daimler chassis, and a sports-saloon on a 21hp Lanchester. The Midlands' Mulliner also exhibited much-improved semi-panelled Weymann saloons on 16hp, 12hp and 7hp Austin chassis.

It all smacks very much of a time when all cars were truly individualistic. **WB**

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1986 NISSAN SILVIA TURBO. Copper met, tan trim, radio/cass, alloys, s/roof, 1 owner, 10,000 miles **£8,295**
1985 (C) AUDI 1.8 COUPE. Silver, matching trim, alloy wheels, radio/cassette, 1 owner, 26,000 miles **£7,995**
1985 VW GOLF GTi CONV. Black, r/cass, 24,000 miles, 1 owner **£7,995**
1986 VAUXHALL ASTRA GTE. *Silver, r/cass, 1 owner, 20,000 miles* **£6,895**
1985 RELIANT SCIMITAR SSI 1600. Red, e/windows/mirrors, hard top and soft top, 1 owner, 21,000 miles **£5,495**
1985 PORSCHE 924 LUX. Guards Red, Porsche trim, wash/wipe, s/roof, PDM, 16,000 miles, fsh **£11,295**
1986 BL METRO CITY. In red, tan trim, 1 owner, 9,000 miles **£3,495**
1985 (C) SUZUKI SJ410Q. Soft top, yellow, free wheeling hubs, lots of extras, 1 owner, 6,000 miles **£4,995**
1984 SUZUKI AUTO FX. Red, tan trim, 1 owner, 25,000 miles **£2,195**
1985 SUZUKI SWIFT GA. Silver, 15,000 miles, 1 owner **£3,195**
1985 SUZUKI SWIFT GA. White, 32,000 miles, 1 owner **£2,895**
1984 SUZUKI (B) SWIFT GA. White, 48,000 miles **£2,595**

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Should sleepy villages be signposted for the benefit of passing MG two-seaters? OJ thought not.

The Roads of the 1920s

After his 1926-27 winter tour of France and Spain in the 18hp Armstrong Siddeley, Owen John, on whose diaries our continuing story is based, wrote that at Christmas there is no place like home, and that he had only gone abroad because he had promised a boy that if he could not get home he would spend Christmas with him. I share OJ's sentiments, but family invitations led me to foreign parts (Hampshire) over part of the 1987 holiday; at least I was secure in the knowledge that, should snow and ice attempt to cut us off from Wales longer than intended, I had 4WD at my command.

That winter, when Riley Nines had artillery wheels, when the Lafitte (an example of which Ronald Barker is now rebuilding) was advertised new at £100, and when a supercharged Amilcar won the Monte Carlo Rally, OJ was expressing his dislike of a proposal to label English villages with particulars of their historic features.

He made the point that his own Berkshire village could boast "clustering cottages about an elm-shadowed, lingering by-way, affording fascinating glimpses of the exquisite river embowered amid its shady willows, and with a vista of the beech-crowned Chilterns on one hand and the far green Berkshire downs on the other" — that is how some motoring writers expressed themselves in those days! So what, wondered OJ, would they put on this village's label? Should the inn be mentioned, or (a topical note here) would some motorists object to mention of the liquor trade?

His personal view was that "SMQC" on such a label would suffice, standing for *si monumentum quaeris circumspice*, to which he would add the words "but drive slowly"

Alas, he said, the village had already become "an open sewer for all the world's motor-lorries" by 1927, and I expect those elms have since become diseased and died.

Today we have name-plates for most villages a road passes through. But the days are long gone when these consisted of those round, yellow-and-black AA plaques, which are now rare collectors' items, but which *The Autocar* once bravely campaigned against (under the heading "The Yellow Peril") using many photogravure-plates to illustrate their spread.

OJ, in fact, went further, saying he could put up a plaque at his own front gate, telling drivers of a clump of trees, on a road running parallel to his, called Kingstanding Wood, which was said to mark the place from which King Alfred watched the defeat of the Danes by the Saxons more than 1000 years before. This, he thought, would lighten the traffic past his own front gate; but since drivers would have to go there to see the instruction, I am not quite sure I understand!

Incidentally, I expect the officers of the VSCC, whose headquarters are in Newbury, will know of that knoll OJ was thinking of, even if the trees themselves have gone.

In modern times naming villages and towns at their approaches is a safety move, because, unless one has a navigator alongside, it is difficult to keep to one's correct route or know where to divert from it without glancing at a map — and a driver in doubt, and consulting his maps while on the move, can be a hazard. With these labels and motorway-size direction-signs at ordinary junctions as well as on motorways themselves, safety has taken precedence over environmental concerns. But more than sixty years ago OJ was able to remind those in favour of labelling our villages of "Bill Stumps, his mark" and Pickwick!

Returning to wintry England early in 1927 after his Continental tour, OJ was soon on again about the benefits of closed bodywork. He said that even on the Continent it was rare to meet anything other than closed bodies, except for super-sports-type cars.

This remains true today — one thinks of the remaining MGs, Triumph TRs and the like, which are still so often encountered, even on fine days, with their hoods up. This is rather surprising, because if sensible clothing is worn it is possible to enjoy open-car motoring even in the winter, especially as Classic sports cars presumably have effective heaters.

This notwithstanding, I confess there can be a strong desire to make use of such weather-protection as is provided. I was once flown up to the Lotus works to one of the late Colin Chapman's well-attended Open Days, departing therefrom in a stark open Lotus Seven. I resisted the offer to have hood, or at least sidescreens, put up before I left, but it was not far on my long run back to Wales that I pulled in and erected the side bits — the wind was especially biting across the Norfolk plains that day, and I did have a considerable distance to go . . .

Instant snugness must have sold cars in the past, when two-seater convertibles were available; I recall how easy it was to reach back and haul up the top of the Jowett Jupiter, without even having to stop the car, when a spot of warmth and comfort seemed in order. You have to have a close-coupled *two*-seater for this to be possible; I wonder which of the convertibles still on the market has the most easily-erected hood?

Reverting to the threat of village signs, it was the RAC which was behind the idea in 1927 and had already erected one of the first in Monmouthshire — on the road from Chepstow to Newport, about 12 miles from Caerleon (which amuses me, for I know this road well). This proclaimed the Roman Venta Silurum at Clerwent, its town walls and gateways, forum and temple-arena, memorial to a famous Roman General, Altar of Mars and mosaic floor, as well as the parish church.

Tourism by motor was very much the "in thing" in 1927 (although hardly described as such then), and Wookey Hole near Ched-

dar, which today we see advertised on television, had just been made the subject of a promotional book. I imagine the RAC village signs were blue-and-white, in competition with the yellow-and-black AA plaques; since there were fewer of them, they should now be that much rarer museum items.

I have mentioned quite recently my partiality as a boy for walking the road between Waddesdon and Aylesbury, or Waddesdon and Bicester, taking a census of cars which passed by. From memory, I would place this between the years 1926 and 1930, so I was a little surprised to discover that in early 1927 OJ wrote that "once upon a time it was interesting to sit by the roadside and count the cars; today it is far more improving to mark the diversities of heavy traffic, and to note how many old lorries still exist that one can see both smashing up the surfaces with their flat, broken, solid tyres, and assisting their own decay in the process".

Perhaps traffic *was* greatly increasing nearer to London, but I recollect the footpath-bordered Aylesbury road as being comparatively deserted, at least until the end of the vintage years. I would have warmed to those aged commercial vehicles detested by OJ. Certainly I remember a great many Ford 7-cwt delivery vans and Ford one-tonners (some of the latter with solid back tyres, some with Baico and other wheelbase extensions), all invariably dripping water from their radiators as if suffering permanent colds . . .

Buses had become as comfortable as a good car, and now OJ was anxious to see their stopping-places controlled by some authority; sour grapes, maybe, because his Crossley had run into a villager's garden after encountering the local milk cart parked in its accustomed spot and a lorry passing it.

OJ's love of the closed car was answered by a doctor who wrote to him to say he had commenced motoring in 1908 with a Turner Miesse steam-car, and that his present car was a 12/30hp six-cylinder Talbot two-seater, which had run 10,000 miles without ever being fully closed up — although it was out 365 days (and many nights) a year.

The good doctor said his wife was even more keen on keeping the car open, and told OJ to take a walk down Harley Street; he would find it full of saloons which belonged to patients, but if he entered the Mews behind he would discover that the doctors used open and sporty cars — Dr J D Benjafield's Le Mans Bentley among them, one imagines.

CJ's Easter wanderings in 1927 took him to Manchester, where he tried the latest Crossley and was duly impressed. He also paid a visit to Rippon Bros in Huddersfield, where they were putting a new body on a 1915 Rolls-Royce for a local client. What a compliment, said OJ, to the lasting powers of Rolls-Royce's famous cars. **WB**

Country Buses

Pre-1914 buses such as this Austin could still be seen in the 1920s.

Anyone who remembers, or studies, the vintage road scene must include the country bus. There will be memories of one's own local bus service of those times for example — in my case of a Model T Ford and Lancia plying the Waddesdon/Aylesbury route over what is now the busy A41.

I have a friend who has been in a Monte Carlo Rally-winning car, but who likes buses so much that he has twice travelled round the coast of Britain as quickly as possible by regular bus services, for the sheer fun of it. It was he who was with me when, during the early days of World War Two, I sampled for MOTOR SPORT the Scottish Motor Traction run from London to Scotland (then the longest regular service in this country) in AEC and Leyland diesels, and got snowed-in for my pains . . .

Joe Lowrey BSc, another astute bus observer, helped to fill the pages of those wartime MOTOR SPORTs by writing, not an article in the contemporary *Cars I Have Owned* series, but one entitled *Buses I Have Caught* — in which he recalls AECs boiling furiously on the gentlest climbs through Epping Forest and "Ribble" Leylands maintaining a surprising turn of speed over the Cross Fell ascent, before turning to the various buses used in different parts of the country in wartime.

In this connection, I remember being in a café at Blackwater on the Hampshire/Surrey border during the war, when the driver of an AJS coach came in to ask for help, saying he had a number of old ladies on board and a con-rod had come through the crankcase on the run down from the Hartford Bridge Flats. No mechanical remedy was forthcoming but some Canadian Army chaps, hearing his plight, soon returned with an army truck, in which they conveyed the ladies to their destination. They had no apparent trouble at a time when for British troops and civilians fuel was strictly rationed . . .

All this came to mind after reading *The Hereford Bus* (see page 156), in which there is a very detailed appendix listing buses used in this area from the earliest times to WW2. I was intrigued by the wide variety running in the Hereford area between 1919 and 1930, that is, in the vintage years; these comprised AEC, AJS, Albion, Bean, Beardmore, Belsize, Chevrolet, Crossley, Commer, Dennis, Daimler, Ensign, Fiat, Federal, Guy, Garford, Gilford, GMC, Garner, Hallford, Hupmobile, Karrier, Lancia, Morris, Maudslay, Maxwell (I went on an Historic Commercial Vehicle Run to Brighton in this one in 1964, in the company of the girls from television's *Black And White Minstrel Show;* it is now in the NMM at Beaulieu), Overland, Oldsmobile, Palladium, Reo, Star and Talbot.

What a time to be young, with all those different makes to ride in! It was similar with London taxis — as a boy I used to persuade my mother to hang about the cab-ranks, so I could try a "new" make.

As the aforementioned appendix gives registration numbers, it would be possible to work out how many of each make of bus were used by pre-war operators, who included such well-remembered names as Hereford Transport, Pettifer's, Primrose Motor Services, Sargeant of Kington, Wye Valley Motors, Yeoman's and Bengry (whom rally drivers will know). Certainly Model T Fords predominated in the vintage years; I counted 38 (against 17 Chevrolets, the next most popular make) before I gave up. **WB**

Cars In Books

With the revival of James Bond on television, it was interesting to find out which cars were favoured by the author of the Bond books, the late Ian Fleming.

When he was at Sandhurst, he had a khaki-coloured Standard tourer, garaged in Windsor and used for illicit trips to London. For instance, Fleming drove it to the newly-opened Wembley Exhibition; as it was even then described as an old car, it must have dated from the early 1920s at least. It was written-off in the mid-1920s in an accident at a level-crossing on the light railway line from Munich to Kufstein.

In America in 1946 Fleming used a hired Austin, which seems an unusual car to have picked up in New York. After he started writing the Bond thrillers he relied on Aubrey Forshaw, the head of Pan Books (whom I remember well with his Sunbeam when we were running the STD Register) for technical information about the cars in Bond's life.

The Riley RM Register will be interested to know that after his marriage in 1952 Fleming bought a 2½-litre Riley, in which he would rush off to St Margaret's Bay to entertain other famous authors, or tour the south of France, as far as the Pyrenees. He later owned a Bentley Continental, a Lugano Blue one with grey upholstery and much of the chrome painted black; the badges he removed, because he did not see why he should pay a large sum for the Bentley and then give Rolls-Royce a free advertisement as well!

Later Fleming had a 190hp Ford Thunderbird which used to be driven daily in London, and was parked under the windows of Kemsley House while Fleming was working there. It had the downdraught four-barrel carburettor, Fordomatic transmission, and cost £3000, but its brakes were not up to fast driving.

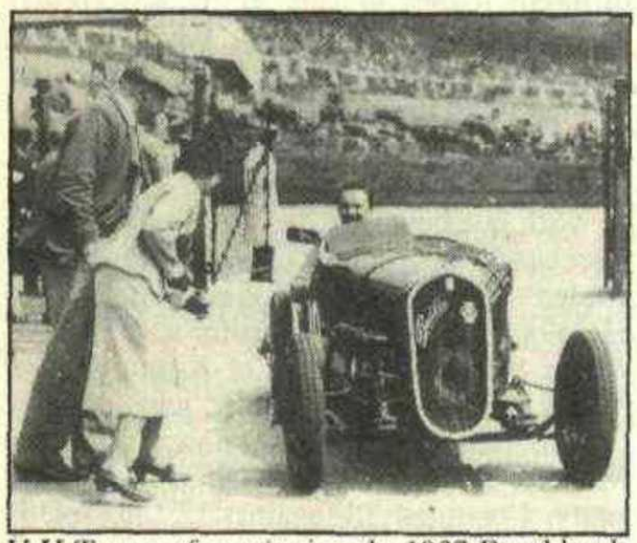
When he craved a cross between the Thunderbird and a Bentley for Bond, Fleming consulted Whitney Straight, who was then the Chairman of Rolls-Royce. Fleming is said to have known Count Zborowski when both were at Eton, hence the name *Chitty-Chitty-Bang-Bang* for the fictitious car in his children's books and films (though in fact he did not go to Eton until 1921, long after the Count had left); and Amherst Villiers was also a friend, so of course it was a blown 4½-litre Bentley which James Bond drove in the one of the books.

Fleming's interest in cars and the prestige surrounding them was demonstrated by his disappointment, on a visit to New York, that his friends sent their Lincoln instead of their Rolls-Royce to meet him and his wife. But once there he enjoyed borrowing a Studillac, that mongrel Studebaker with a Cadillac engine which had touched 110 mph up the Tacoma Parkway. The last car he owned, indeed, was a supercharged Studebaker Avanti.

I have gleaned much of this information from that excellent book *The Life Of Ian Fleming* (Cape, 1966) by John Pearson, the author who gave us *Bluebird and the Dead Lake*, about Campbell's attack on the Land Speed Record. **WB**

Obituary: V H Tuson

We are saddened to hear that V H (Jack) Tuson has died. Although he began by driving GNs, a KRC, an Amilcar and a Newton Ceirano in trials, he will be best be remembered for his racing and competition work from 1933-1939 with Fiat Balillas which he sometimes shared with C H Masters. He had a special 1090cc Fiat with which he attained his successes at Brooklands in 1938, and which was also sometimes driven by A P Hamilton. Tuson, a keen sailor in his spare time who owned his own yacht, *Keira*, was closely associated with the Mid-Surrey AC for most of his life, remaining its active President to the end. **WB**



V H Tuson after winning the 1937 Brooklands Whitsun Short Handicap in his Fiat Balilla.

V to C Miscellany

Regulations for the Yeovil Car Club's 95-mile Esso Bristol-Bournemouth Run on June 12, an event which is open to any pre-war car, motorcycle or commercial vehicle weighing not more than four tonnes and which is expected to attract some 350 entries, are now available from K McGee, 38 Kenmore Drive, Yeovil, Somerset BA21 4BQ.

Those who have enjoyed driving the circular route of the scenic Elan Valley in Mid-Wales, past the impressive dams which supply Birmingham with its water, may like to know that in 1939 it was possible to take joy-rides over the area. These cost 18/- for two passengers in an Avro 504K or £1.10s for one passenger in a 275hp R-R Falcon-engined Bristol Fighter, the flights starting and landing at a now-disused aerodrome below the Rock Park Hotel in Llandrindod Wells, Powys.

A recent acquisition at the Museum of British Road Transport at Coventry is a 1923 10hp Climax-engined Albatross light-car, made at Croft Road and Bedford Street in Coventry and believed to be one of only two survivors.

Harry Edwards has got out another attractive *Journal* for the Morris Register. As well as news of events it contains articles on a Home Guard armoured car based on a 1929 Morris-Cowley, Lady Nuffield's 1948 Wolseley 8, engine interchangeability, and Morris Chummies and Occasional Fours — the latter illustrated with contemporary photographs. This year's Morris International Rally will be held at Stanford Hall on August 13-14.

The 51st Pioneer Run for veteran motorcycles takes place on March 20, starting from Epsom Downs and finishing on the Madeira Drive at Brighton. Entries have closed. **WB**

VSCC Events

VSCC fixtures for 1988 follow the pattern of last year, with the Pomeroy Trophy event on March 5 and the main race meetings at Silverstone on April 23 and June 25, Oulton Park on July 16-17, Cadwell Park on August 28 and Donington Park on September 17. The Curborough, Colerne and Weston-super-Mare speed trials will be repeated, as will the speed hill-climbs at Shelsley Walsh, Prescott and Wiscombe Park, while those who prefer trials or driving tests will be equally well catered for.

To round off last month's report of December's Enstone Driving Tests, the full results have since been issued by the VSCC; for the record, they are as follows:

RESULTS
Enstone Driving Tests

Touring Car Award: R. Edmunds (1923 Morgan)
Saloon Car Award: M. Raahauge (1915 Buick) (hood and sidescreens up)
Light Car Award: M. Kipping (1926 9/20 Humber)
First Class Awards: E. Peppercorn (A7), M. Parkin (A7), D. Marsh (Bugatti), R. Harcourt-Smith (A7), P. Binns (HRG)
Second Class Awards: D. Tayler (Wolseley Hornet), D. Hescroff (AC), R. Nice (A7)
Third Class Awards: A. Moore (FN-BMW), C. Hancock (Fiat), H. G. Conway (Bugatti)

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BOOK REVIEWS

Formula One — FIA World Championship Yearbook 1988
edited by Bob Constanduros. 240pp. 12¼" × 9¼". (Grid Publishing, Hampstead Road, London NW1 7QQ. £18.95)

Large-format annuals of the *Autocourse* genre become more numerous every winter, and the competition between them can only force standards upwards while giving the consumer greater choice. This second edition of a venture which carries an FIA stamp of approval is one for the devotee, for it is turned over entirely to the worship of Formula One racing, even (horror of horrors) to the exclusion of the great god advertising!

Editor Bob Constanduros has recruited Derrick Allsop and Mike Doodson to precede reflective race-by-race reports with features on the 1987 season, and Jackie Stewart to appraise the dethroned champion Alain Prost. Bernie Ecclestone even puts in an appearance to contribute a foreword. But the aforementioned devotee should not expect to be told much which he does not already know.

True, a double-page spread of tabulated results follows the story of each Grand Prix; and Constanduros' end of term reports for all the participating teams fill in much nitty-gritty detail omitted elsewhere. But of the twelve pages allotted to each race, only three carry any text of note.

But herein lies the strength of this well-planned publication. For what the reader is not told he is *shown* in no uncertain terms, in a selection of colour photographs which is unlikely to be bettered by any competing tome.

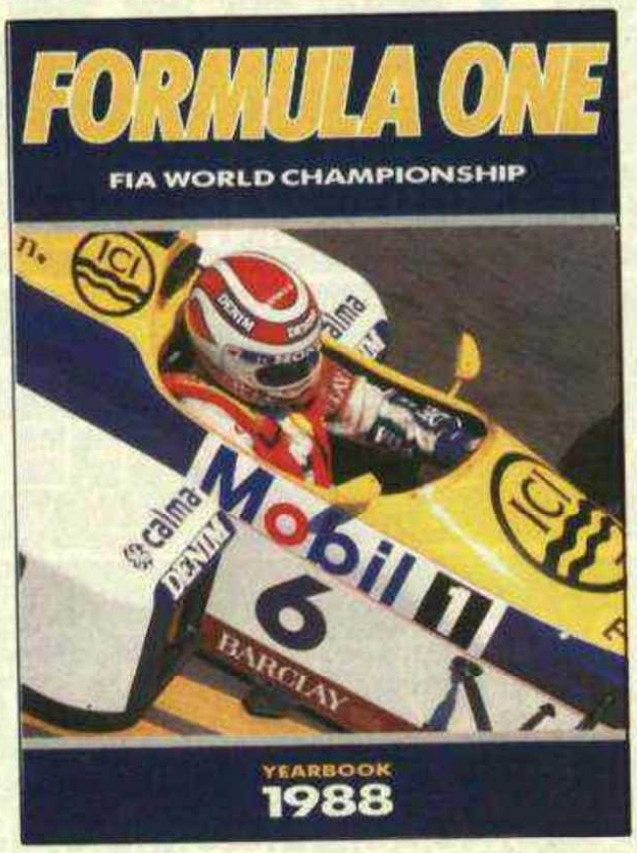
It seems the work of all of the world's most respected F1 lensmen (including MOTOR SPORT's) has been attracted into these pages, with exhilarating effect. Whether taken on the track, off the track(!) or in the pits, the pictures exude action and atmosphere. Not only are they technically sound and artistically conceived, but also skilfully employed to document the necessary evidence. The print quality is such that a large proportion of them have no qualms about commandeering a whole page each to themselves.

If you have read it all before but want to see some life breathed back into it, then this is the book you need. The hard information is there, but it takes a back seat. **GT**

Stirling Moss — My Cars, My Career
by Stirling Moss, with Doug Nye. 304pp. 9½" × 5". (Patrick Stephens Ltd, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire. £19.95).

Having to review a book from unbound page-proofs, *sans* covers or pictures, is not an enviable task, and that is how this book came to me! But I feel the attempt has to be made, for this is undoubtedly one of the best motor racing books of 1987.

From the pages of Stirling Moss' own



diaries, distilled by Doug Nye, it imparts this great driver's impressions of all the 81 cars he raced — their characteristics, their peculiarities, and how the events in which he drove them worked out. When it is realised that, in a career lasting from 1947 (with a 328 BMW) to 1962 (when he crashed the Lotus-Climax at Goodwood), Moss drove in 501 events, the scope of the book becomes apparent! Yet not only are all the cars (except for those used more recently in Historic fun events) detailed, but there are additional chapters covering his young days as an enthusiast, the development of his driving technique (in three stages; first learning, then following the master — Fangio, then maturity), and Moss' racewear.

The cars covered, in the most fascinating detail along with brief accounts of their races, run from the Cooper 500s to the Aston Martin DB3S, Maserati 250F, 300S and 350S, and Cooper T39 Mk II which came at the end of Moss' remarkable career. I should really give you the full list, to show you what you could let yourselves in for, but space forbids! Suffice it to say that alongside BRM V16 you get Sunbeam-Talbot 90; beside Mercedes-Benz W196 and 300SLR, you find Humber Super Snipe . . .

A comprehensive results list helps make this is a fascinating and valuable record of the racing life of a man who, with 173 victories and 382 finishes from 501 races (one win per 2.9 events contested, or one per 2.2 races finished), *must* be, as Nye says, the all-time "Mr Motor Racing." In fact, Moss' accounts say it all, very much as Stirling would speak it, and one feels there is little need for Nye's long introduction eulogising his subject. Indeed, an American writer's description therein of Moss' attitude as "either victory or mechanical destruction" conflicts curiously with Nye's own view that Stirling was *not* a car-breaker . . .

Judge for yourselves from this remarkable book, in which even Moss' great drive with DSJ in the 1955 Mille Miglia gets a fresh slant, and for which the only racing driver who may have been faster than Moss, Juan Manuel Fangio, contributes a generous foreword.

I understand that the publication also contains 166 photographs, although I have yet to see them! **WB**

Automobile Year No 35, 1987-88
Edited by Jean Rodolphe Piccard. 256pp. 12½" x 9¼". (Motor Racing Publications Ltd, Unit 6, Pilton Estate, 46 Pitlake, Croydon CR0 3YR. £22.95.)

The original high-class annual covering the previous season's motor racing and competition events and the state of the world's motor industry, **Automobile Year** has had many imitators but has never been surpassed. Even the inclusion of high-grade advertising does nothing to detract from its quality; early editions are now expensive collector's items, and a complete run very covetable indeed.

The current edition has, amongst other experts, *The Times'* correspondent John Blunsden on Formula One, alongside the expected colour illustrations and plenty of erudite writing about the world's car producers, country by country.

Long-distance racing, rallying, Formula 3000 and hill-climbing each have their place, with results and championship statistics included. Even the advertisements are fun — we note that in this age of multi-valve engines Toyota says "More Valves, More Fun". **WB**

Video:
FIA Formula One World Championship — A Review of the 1987 Season
produced by FOCA. 120 minutes. (distributed by Duke Marketing Ltd, PO Box 46, Douglas, Isle of Man. £32.50.)

For its longest seasonal review video yet, the Formula One Constructors Association's television unit has adopted a two-tone approach, with unenthusiastic compère Peter Ustinov interrupting scriptwriter Simon Taylor's familiar radio voice whenever anything other than race action arrives on screen. It is an approach which works well enough, although for entertainment value this annual production again fails to rival Clive James' classic 1982 commentary.

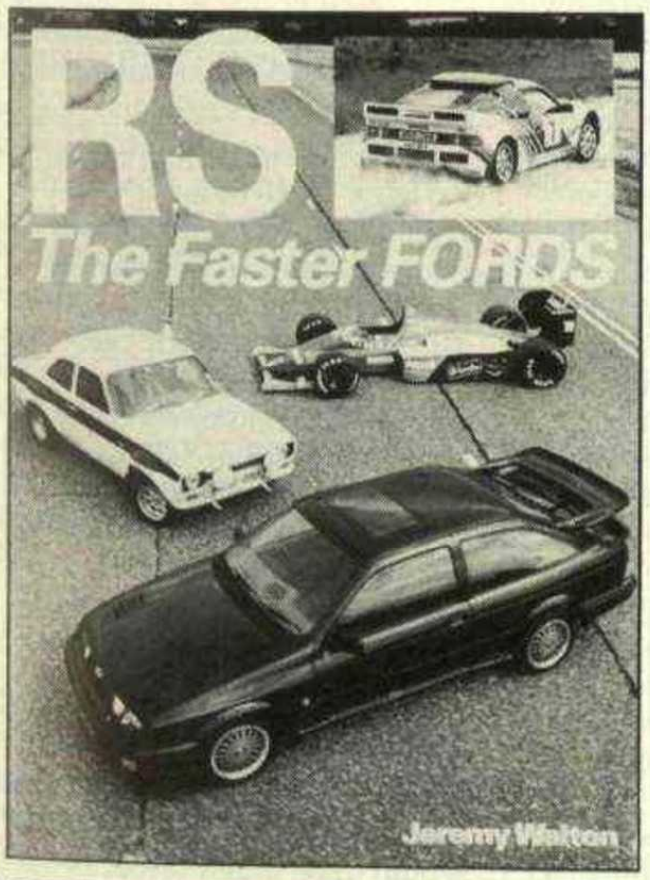
Many of the jokes were stillborn, especially those in Ustinov's introductory and concluding pieces filmed (for reasons which are quite beyond me) against the ugly backdrop of the Berlin Wall. For all that, Ustinov's poetic pronunciation of Italian names is a delight to the ear and the remainder of this chronological treatment of the racing year gelled comfortably.

Unavoidably, most of the dramatic moments are extracted from the entertainment provided for us throughout the year by the BBC, but welcome interlopers include foot-

age of Piquet's exploding brake-disc in Adelaide, Johansson's deerhunting wreckage in Austria and Alboreto's fiery Monaco collision with Danner. On-car camerawork which the television missed out on includes a frontal view of Nakajima ramming Warwick and a rearward view of de Cesaris' BMW engine expiring . . .

Important to one's intimacy with the F1 circus are snippets of interviews with drivers from both ends of the grid, Nelson Piquet stealing the show with his typically mischievous suggestion that Williams should sign Ayrton Senna to replace him as Nigel Mansell's 1988 team-mate!

Semi-witticisms such as the subtitle "A Painless Half-Nelson" notwithstanding, this is a fair and accurate record of how the World Drivers Championship was won, and by its very nature it holds an enormous advantage over the various documentary attempts which are dependent on the printed word. It is not cheap, of course, but nevertheless it represents better value for money than most other motor racing videos. **GT**



RS — The Faster Fords
by Jeremy Walton, 245pp. 10" x 7¼". (Motor Racing Publications, Unit 6, Pilton Estate, 46 Pitlake, Croydon CR0 3RY. £14.95.)

When you want information about Ford cars Jeremy Walton is the author to read, for he has raced and rallied Fords, has worked for the company and still keeps his eyes very much on the best-selling make. His latest study concerns the RS models in production and rally sport forms, commencing with the Escort RS1600 and Mexico, and ending with the Sierra RS Cosworth, RS200 and the BDA story.

Appendices cover specifications, performance figures (for roadgoing, competition and turbo competition cars), sales statistics and clubs. Jeremy has selected a grand total of more than 280 pictures to illustrate his personal experiences of the cars, and he describes each fully and critically in a book which can be said to embrace collectable Fords as well as exciting current models. Essential for all true Fordwatchers. **WB**

MG enthusiasts must derive great enjoyment from the arrival of the **Triple-M Yearbook**. The 1986-87 version, edited by Roger Thomas, has just been published by the Triple-M Register of the MG CC, costing £4.00 (inclusive of postage) to non-members, or £5.00 if you live overseas.

Since last year coincided with the Register's 25th anniversary, the Yearbook has been enlarged to include a detailed, illustrated account of the successful onslaught on 16 International Class records at MIRA last July by members driving various MGs. Apart from this, it contains all manner of fascinating articles and pictures appertaining to M-model MGs, including Mike Hawke's sorting-out of the R-type Midgets (ten of which all-independently-sprung single-seaters were built); the story of MG Magnette K3012; articles on the MG-ND, on the legendary Don Moore and on how to time the valves of an M-type or F-type; and Rivers Fletcher on bolt-on "goodies" of the vintage days.

One illustration here is of an advertisement issued by Frank Ashby & Sons of Birmingham for its flexible-spoked steering-wheels, in which none of the cars pictured had such wheels and at least two are going round Brooklands in the wrong direction, because the photograph was printed back-to-front. And is the "flat-iron" shown that of Purdy in a Thomas Special or Ashby in his Riley of that configuration?

Colour plates are included, and the book is available from its editor at 3 Kenmore Close, Kew, Surrey TW9 3JG. **WB**

William Kimberley Ltd of 4 Church Street, Whetstone, London N20 0JU, which has been publishing informative booklets on well-known racing drivers, and books about various aspects of the modern racing scene, also produces **Kimberley's Grand Prix Team Guides**, the latest of which are No 14 about McLaren by John Redding, and No 15 on Lotus in the Renault years (1983-86) by Ken Wells. With durable soft-covers, fine colour shots, driver biographies and tabulated results, they are good value at £6.95 each. **WB**

Anyone involved in timber-haulage or interested in heavy commercial vehicles should see **Men, Mud And Machines** by Maurice H Sanders. It is very nicely presented, with over 240 nostalgic photographs dating back to steam days, by Cortney Publications, Bainson House, Alton Road, Luton, Bedfordshire LU1 3NS, costing £10.95.

In 134 pages it opens out a specialised profession for the reader unacquainted with the problems of timber haulage, each chapter describing how one individual or company tackled such problems. It is astonishing how the author, by sometimes interviewing 70- and 80-year-old hauliers who once worked 80 hours a week, has found ample material for a second book on the subject.

The lavish pictorial support is mostly of heavy vehicles, although Sanders' grandfather and uncle began with Model T Fords, and one of his accounts covers a T Ford-powered three-wheeler with wooden gearbox casing! Recommended. **WB**

Foulis/Haynes' **Monster Mobiles** by Barry Brazier covers America's monster trucks, pullers, mudders and ground-pounding tractors (many of them pictured in colour) in 159 pages, at £12.95. **WB**

A "Museum" book with a difference is **Confederate Air Force**, covering that amazing ready-for-action American WW2 aircraft collection at Rebel Field, Texas, with a magnificent assembly of Nigel Moll colour photographs. A feast for anyone interested in vintage aeroplanes, this 128-page offering is published by Motorbooks International, and sold here by MRP. **WB**

The Hereford Bus
by J E Dunabin. 125pp, 9¾" x 6". (HJ Publications, 6 Ardentinny, Grosvenor Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 3BZ. ££)

Books about buses and the companies operating them may seem inappropriate to the review columns of MOTOR SPORT, or would do if we were not aware of the wide-ranging transport interests of many of our readers. But those who crave more on the pre-war transport scene should enjoy this publication.

Although it is devoted in detail to one area of bus operation, from the first Hereford bus in about 1908 to the post-WW2 rise in the number and complexity of the services there, it also contains much about the regulations (and later restrictions) which were common to services all over the country. And it goes even further back, describing one of the first cars to run on a Herefordshire licence — a two-cylinder Wolseley, rather surprisingly with two carburettors.

Accounts of how bus companies rose and waned, and of the problems confronting them from those times onwards, make fascinating reading; and descriptions of the vehicles used are accompanied by many good pictures. There are maps of the local routes, many of which were much in demand by Services personnel during the war years, and a rather remarkable appendix which not only lists all the local operators and their vehicles and body types, but also gives *chassis numbers* of these converted commercial vehicles, buses and coaches, where known. **WB**

LETTERS

Connaught's Folly

Sir,

With reference to the letter of Mr C F Johnson (MOTOR SPORT, January 1988) in connection with the five-speed preselector gearbox/final-drive unit destined for the J5-Type 2.5-litre GP Connaught, the complete gearbox and parts for six other boxes ended up with Paul Emery of Aspenlea Road, Fulham in the early Sixties.

In about 1966 he passed the entire package over to me, and I put it all in my workshop loft for safe keeping. In the early Seventies Rodney Clarke had built himself a museum of Connaught Cars and sundry items in the basement of his Mercedes Dealership, Puttocks of Guildford, and he contacted me to ask me if he could have it all.

Before I handed the entire package over I went through all the parts and removed anything that was common with the Armstrong Siddeley preselector used in my ERA, which wasn't a great deal. Rodney Clarke sent a man up to collect it all, and we loaded it all onto a trailer — it must have weighed two tons with all the pattern equipment as well, and he had not gone two miles when the trailer collapsed in a great heap just outside Witney!

After Rodney Clarke's death, the collection was broken up and sold, but the one thing that didn't find a buyer anywhere was this whole package of gearbox plus parts. Ultimately, Puttock's management scrapped the whole lot except for the complete gearbox, and this I managed to purchase from Clarke's son about three years ago.

Mr Johnson does have one thing wrong, in that the gearbox has provision for manual and electrical selection of gears and not hydraulic as he suggests, but otherwise he is correct in what he says.

However, I do take the view that the whole idea was a folly from the first. For a start it was most enormously heavy and unfortunately most of that weight ended up behind the rear axle line. Secondly, it was extremely complex and took me about eight hours to strip, compared with about two-and-a-half hours for a normal preselector. Third, it would have been prohibitively expensive to make and overhaul in those days before sponsorship arrived. Fourth, there was no provision for changing gear-ratios — only the final drive ratio. There was no limited-slip differential fitted.

Finally, when I stripped this box out to examine it, it had obviously been on test and fourth-speed gear-train had seized up — probably a bad omen for the future, and it was probably fortunate that it was never used.

This engineering masterpiece/nightmare/white elephant, call it what you will, now sits on a stand in the corner of my workshop to remind me to keep things on racing cars simple. Anybody have a use for it?

BILL MORRIS
Leafield, Oxford

Agreed Value?

Sir,

Hopefully you will share my view concerning my experiences with "classic car agreed-value motor insurance" and will pass on via your letters page the quite outrageous situation I find myself in.

In the early Sixties I purchased, from a well-known racing driver, a HWM fitted with a Jaguar Type 'C' engine. In 1983 this car was comprehensively rebuilt over a ten-month period by a professional racing engineer. A fully detailed receipt for all the works carried out was produced by him and clearly, upon examination of the car, all that was listed had been done.

Shortly afterwards, the car was insured on an "agreed-value" policy with a "reputable" insurance company. This value was established thus: I read through all the magazines in which similar cars had been sold, and established an average sale price. I then proposed this average figure to the insurers, who had the car examined and then agreed it.

Five months later, whilst in transit to a show, the car and its transporter were stolen. Months of enquiry followed, including investigations by three police forces, loss adjusters and even the Department of Health and Social Security. Without my knowledge, even my private bank accounts were examined, and extensive enquiries made regarding me. My claim was rejected by the insurers.

Solicitors were therefore instructed to pursue my claim through the High Court. It transpired that the insurers are not prepared to honour the contract for two reasons:

1. That the car was not worth its agreed value.
2. That I had failed in my duty to supply all material facts known to me.

During the car's rebuild, its engine had been totally rebuilt using the serviceable parts from its old engine, together with some from another Jaguar engine of the same vintage and some brand new parts. All this was listed on the receipt from the builder, but the insurers claim this rebuilt engine is now *non-original*, and the car has a lower value because of it.

They also claim the receipt did not reach them. An inter-office memo discovered by the police in one of their files, however, clearly indicates that the insurers *had* recieved from me, together with the proposal form and the required photographs of the car, *a bill from a restoration company*. The insurers cannot now, for some reason, produce this, but only a photocopy which they claim is fraudulent.

Over the past two years this matter had been listed for a hearing in the High Court on four occasions. On the first the papers submitted by my counsel were "lost" by the court. On the last three listings the hearing has been cancelled "by the courts" days before the matter was due to be heard.

The costs involved are huge, and furthermore there is always the considerable possibility in civil law that even the strongest case can fail on a mere technicality — should a judge, for example, consider that my rebuilt engine is not original. Sadly then a precedent would be set, and every old car I know of would become uninsured overnight.

If on the other hand my explanation were accepted by the courts, the insurers would still only have to pay the agreed value plus the interest on same. Since my car was stolen, car values have escalated, one similar to mine recently being offered at two-and-a-half times the insured value. Should I have won my claim today, then what the insurers would have to pay to me would only be a deposit on a replacement.

I believe we have a duty to inform all owners of this dreadful business, just to let them know what they could be up against in the sad event of them damaging or losing their car.

T WRIGHT
Great Moulton, Norfolk

Hysteria and Fury

Sir,

I was most interested to read the letter "A Genuine Hysteric?" (MOTOR SPORT, January 1988) referring to DSJ's "Lotus Blossoms" article and Mr Paul Bevis' hysteric car.

I believe the builder of the said hysteric is known very well to my wife. He once allowed her to drive it at Prescott Hill Climb, but he was furious when she turned it over on the first corner, thereby displaying the somewhat amateur welding on the underside of the chassis. This, of course, was before the days of CAD/CAM.

Nevertheless, the "impeccable history" referred to is built upon minor setbacks like the above.

My dictionary defines the word "hysteric" as meaning "to be affected by irregular spasms", and my wife thought that a very apt description of the car.

However, if Mr Bevis manages to persuade a suitable auction-house to get someone to part with a bag of gold for his car, my wife also thinks the builder deserves a pint for building a car which has lasted 27 years in the hands of a driver of such proven ability to extract maximum performance.

REG PHILLIPS
Salcombe, Devon

Opinions expressed are those of correspondents, and are not necessarily those of MOTOR SPORT.

Historic F3s

Sir,

I have recently taken an interest again in the 500cc Formula Three racing cars of the 1950s. Last season I had the opportunity to drive a 1954 Triumph-engined Martin Special in several historic events. I have now acquired a 1951 Triumph-engined JBS which needs a total rebuild.

From my initial researches I find that there were 13 cars built for the 1951 season (including Alf Bottoms' works car) and one or two in 1952. So far I have traced two in the UK (including mine) and five in Australia and New Zealand. I would like to account for the rest and would be very pleased to hear from any of your readers who have information as to their current whereabouts, details of past owners, history and photographs, etc. I am very keen to establish a permanent record of this interesting make.

This season should see quite a number of 500s racing with the Formula Junior cars in the Formula Junior Championship organised by the Monoposto Racing Club. Anyone wanting further information should contact me or the secretary, Suzy Livingstone.

RICHARD UTLEY
Rugby, Warwickshire

Mystery Mercedes

Sir,

I refer to your photograph captioned "Mercedes Reception" on page 51 of January 1988's MOTOR SPORT.

"A Mr F T Jane" is *the* Mr Jane, who started the *Janes Fighting Ships* series. He was also very involved in Conservative and Unionist politics in Portsmouth, appealing to the workmen in the dockyard to support his party in the name of patriotism, especially in the building of more Dreadnoughts. This of course also appealed to their self-interest.

How these campaigns built on anti-German feeling ("we want eight and we won't wait") square with driving a Mercedes I just don't know.

Jane must be pictured on one of his campaign tours, perhaps the January 1910 General Election, in which Lord Charles Beresford won a massive victory for the Conservatives.

STEPHEN SADLER
Sidlesham Common, Sussex

Ford Pilots

Sir,

Your informant's memory is playing tricks if he can only recall black and blue Ford Pilots (*A Family's Cars*, MOTOR SPORT, December 1987). The relevant owners' club can, no doubt, provide the definitive list of colour options, but there was certainly a light green — a friend of my father owned just such an example for many years.

Car nicknames ("What's yours called?" asks Renault) are nothing new. Mr Jackson's green Pilot was "Ferdinand" (after Ferdinand the bull), while my father's contemporary Austin 16 was known as "Winston", because Dad reckoned it had obvious similarities to a Churchill tank! Both cars gave excellent service over a long period but, sadly, both succumbed to the cutting torch during 1963. Ferdinand had been given insufficient anti-freeze that winter and cracked its block, so Winston decided to burn a valve in sympathy.

Although (unlike today's well-rotted scrappers) the two old campaigners were still remarkably solid and even looked quite smart and rust-free, they simply weren't worth the cost of repairs. So off they went, at a fiver apiece, to be replaced by "modern" cars: a brand-new Cortina and a nearly-new Minx. Boring bits of tinware, neither of which, significantly, ever seemed to merit the accolade of a nickname.

DAVID LANDERS
Morpeth, Northumberland

Meredith Bodies

Sir,

I rather think Meredith Coachcraft, about which a reader seeks information (MOTOR SPORT, January 1988), owned — or were the same firm as — Trinity Coachcraft or Coachworks, who operated around 1933 from buildings on the old British Industries Fair site at Castle Bromwich.

I had a Hornet Special — a 21st birthday present. One went to Wolseleys to choose a completed chassis from several and had it delivered (soapbox & goggles) to Castle Bromwich. Their body was clever but heavy — as an open two-seater the rear seat squab folded forward and up to lock over the space behind the front seats, being metal-panelled on the side then exposed. In what appeared as a sloping tail, with spare wheel thereon, lurked a semi-rigid coupé-type top — more than a mere hood. So the car was either an open two-seater, an open four-seater, or a drophead coupé, hence the appellation Trinity. Clever linkages were devised to allow all this folding.

Bellevue Garage had the engine "Wilkied" for me, offsetting the extra weight of the body compared with the "Abbot" and "Daytona" bodies. My car was registered JJ2107.

The firm was still there (in 1935, I think) to put it together after I carelessly inverted it with the lid up!

GAD SMITH
Burford, Oxfordshire

Riley and Dorman

Sir,

WB's recollection of having seen in the Science Museum a 1795cc 11.9hp Dorman engine (69mm x 120mm) is correct. It was there before 1937 until about 1960, and its positioin in the exhibits was then taken by a Riley 9 engine!

Another example of this engine was an exhibit in the engineering laboratories of the University of Oxford (Nexham Gardens). This was there in 1943 and may well still be there today.

However an example is still on the road in the blue Laere road-sweeper which took part in the Historic Commercial Vehicle Brighton Run in May last year. Incidentally, the later Laere sweeper (which was also present at Brighton) had a Meadows engine (compare Frazer Nash and Lea-Francis engines)!

One light-car which employed this Dorman engine was the 1923 12hp Vulcan. From 1926 to 1934 I serviced and in later years drove one of these cars. During this time the only thing that ever went wrong with the engine or indeed the car was that the magneto required remagnetising once. The engine was remarkably smooth and quiet (far quieter than the average Riley 9 engine) and the fuel consumption was over 30 mpg.

ROGER HARGREAVES
Reigate, Surrey

Invicta Fairing

Sir,

Your kind remarks about the 1½-litre Invicta (MOTOR SPORT, October 1987) were much appreciated, but I do feel I owe it to posterity to put the record straight.

As you are no doubt aware the 1½-litre caused so much excitement on its introduction in 1930 that the works started to take its performance most seriously. Not only must it have the lowest bottom gear, but the ability to cheat the wind at the top end of its speed range.

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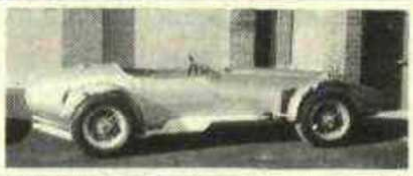

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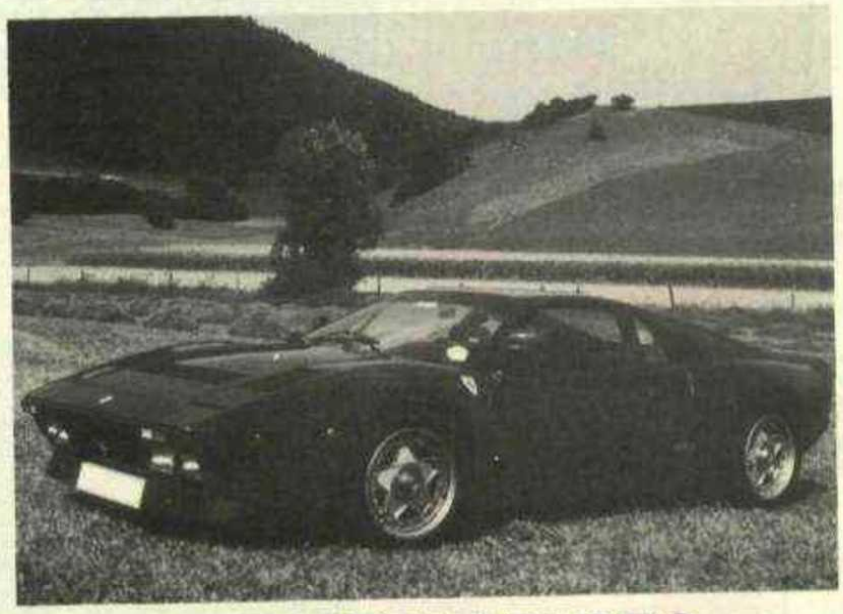

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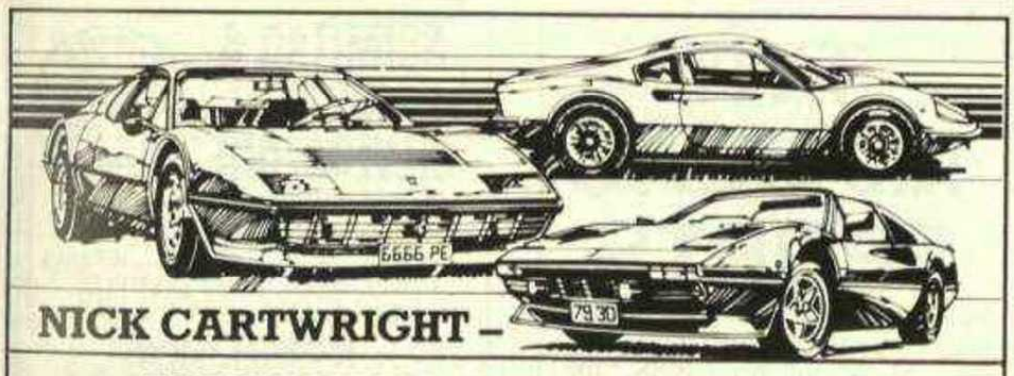

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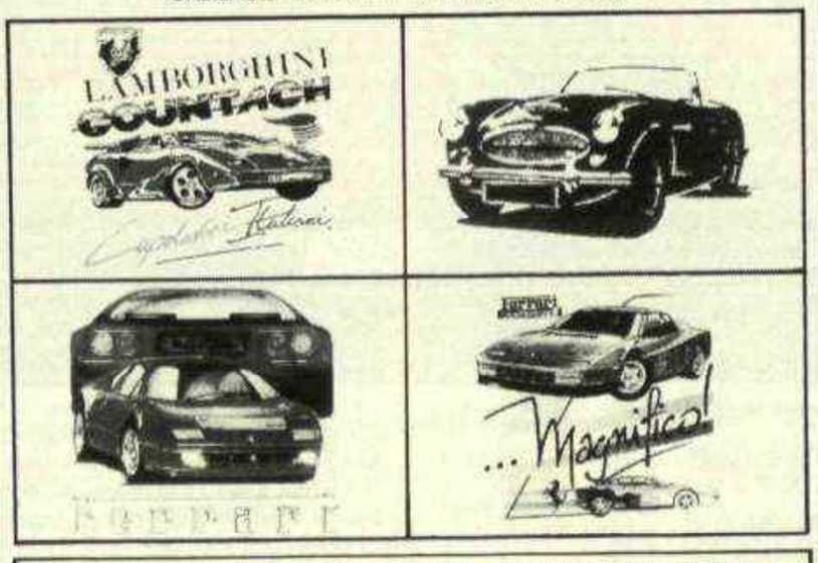

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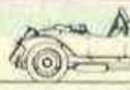

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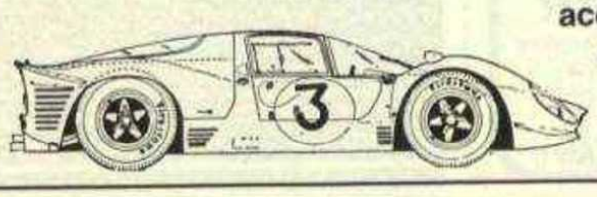

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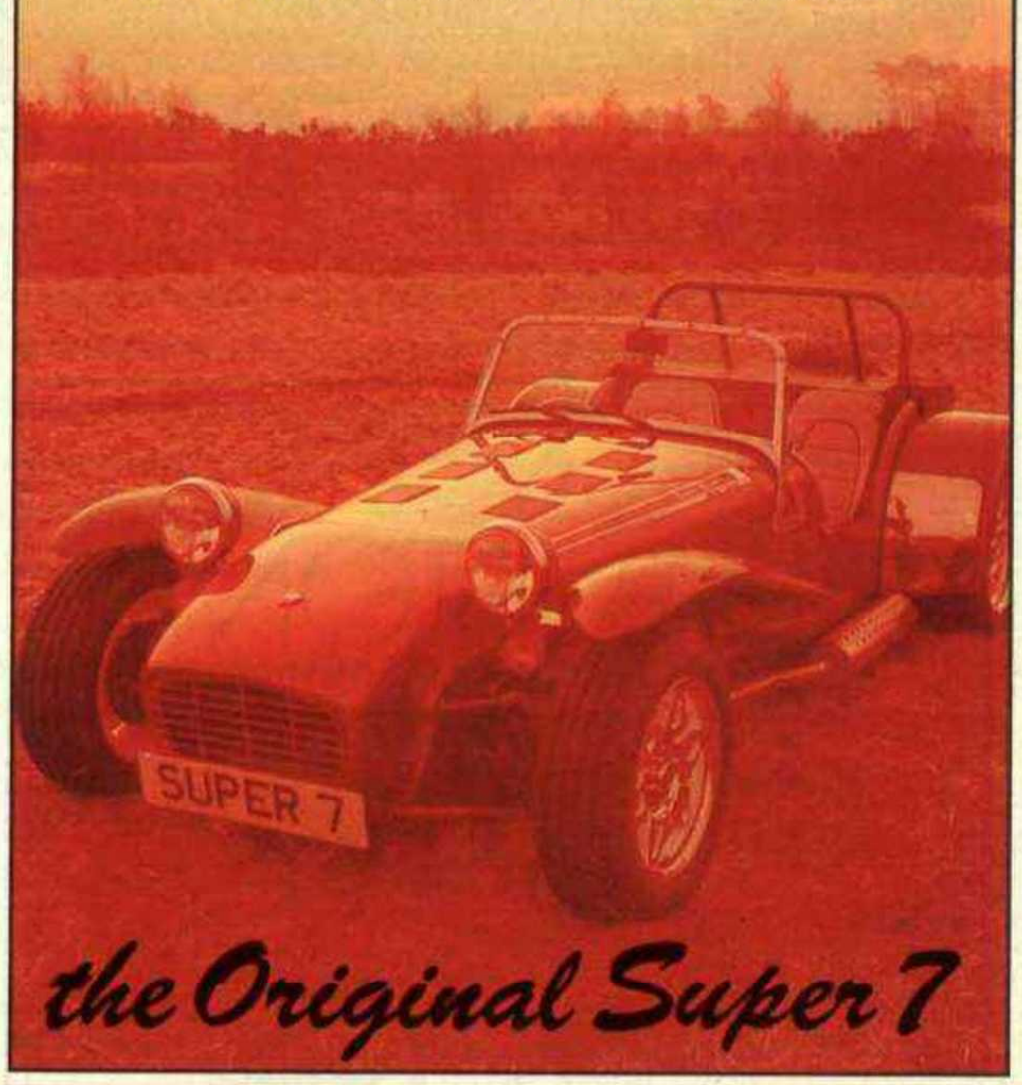

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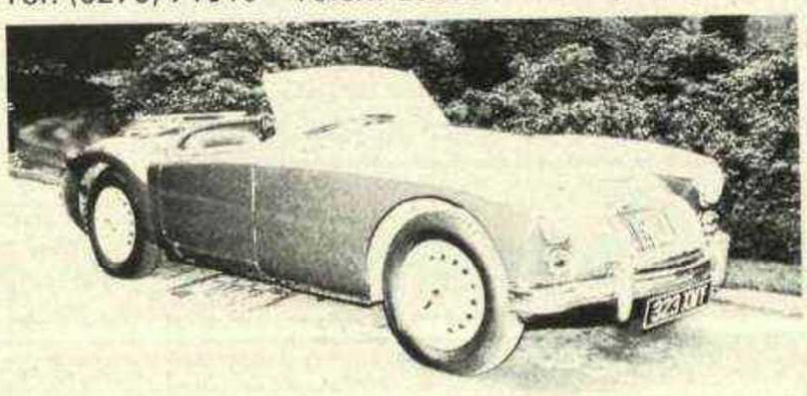

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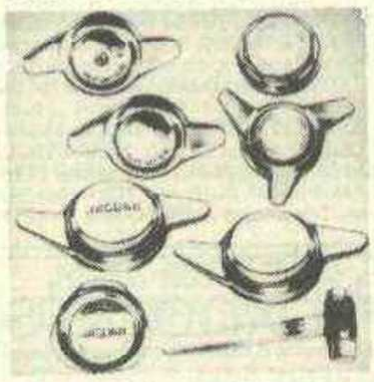

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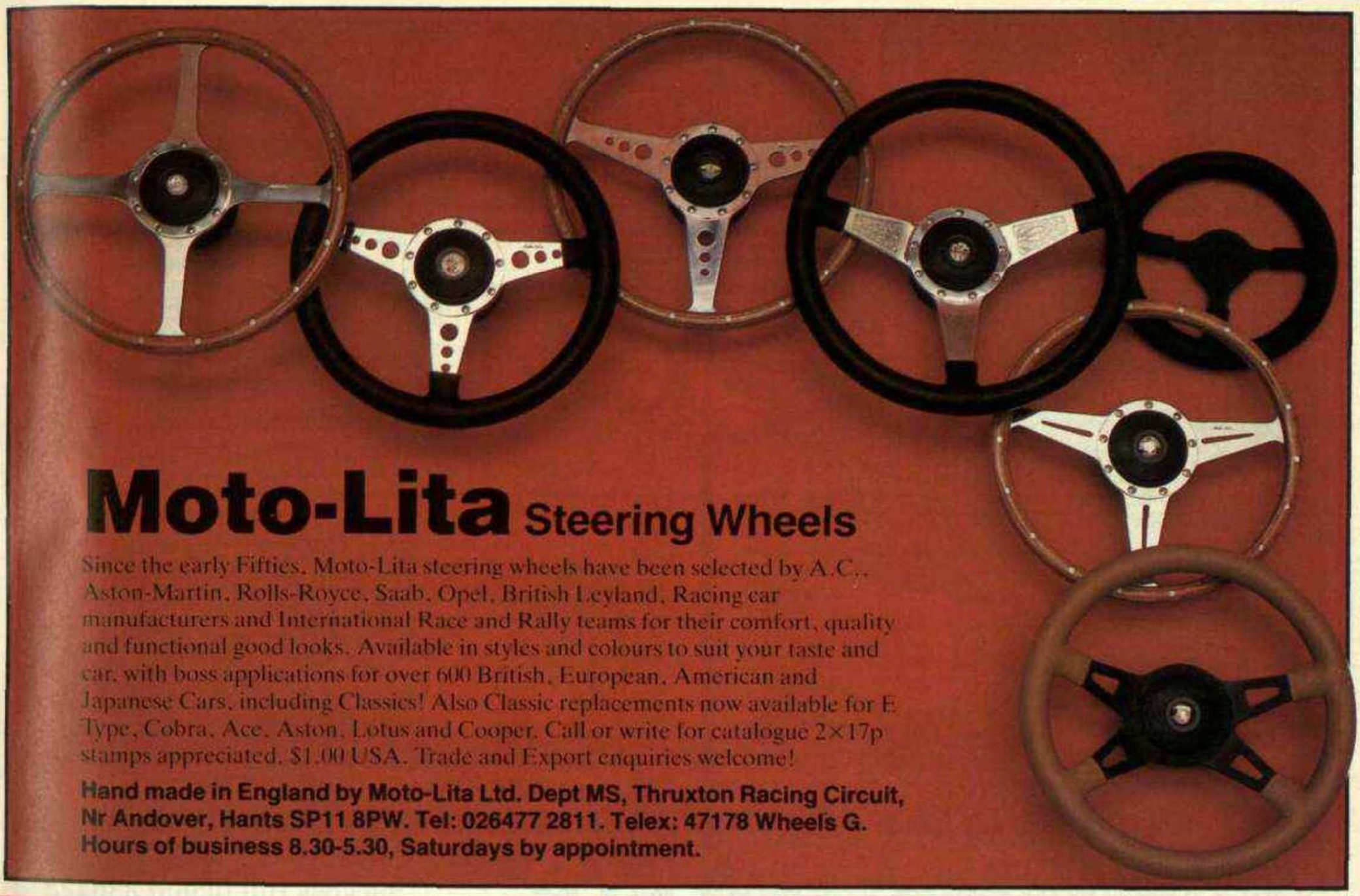

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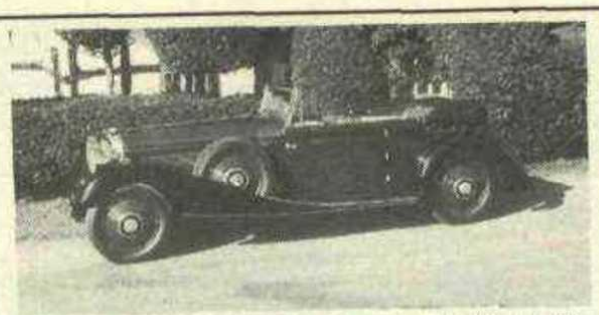

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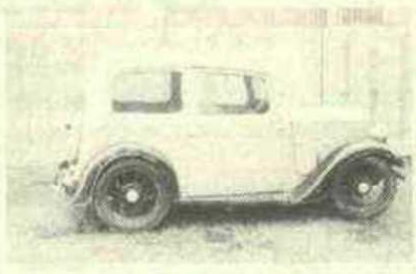

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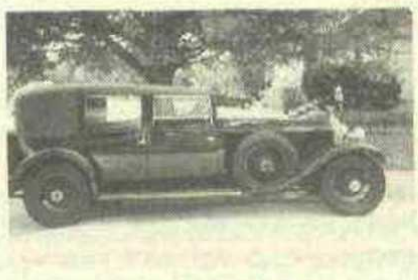

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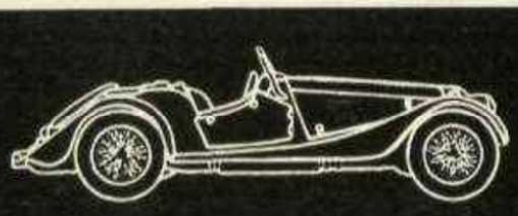

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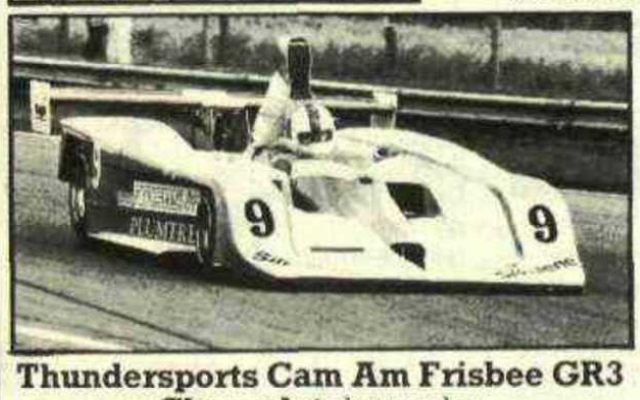

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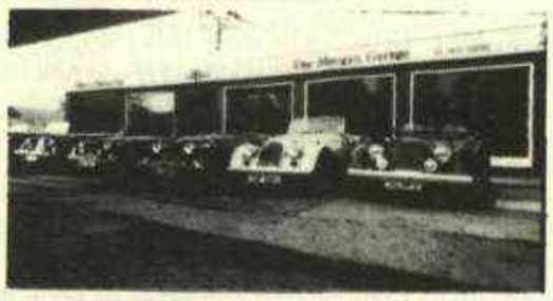

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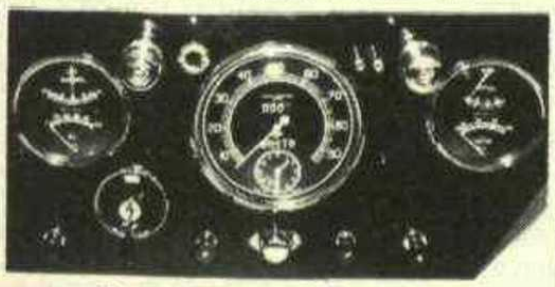

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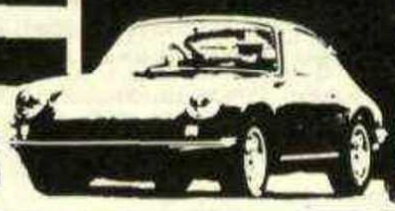

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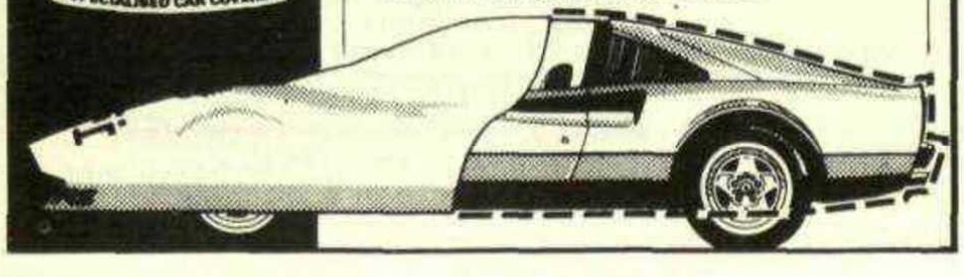

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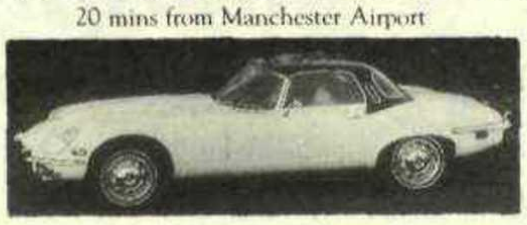

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PORSCHE 911 SC CABRIOLET 1983 (Y). GP White with black and white leather trim, rear spoiler, alloys, e/tints, PDM, radio/cassette, 3/o, 32,000m, s/history £23,295
PORSCHE 911 TURBO 1984 (A). Black, black lthr., fact s/roof, e/tints, r/cass, wide alloys, P7's, 3/o, 43,000 miles, s/history £32,995
PORSCHE 924 LUX 1985. Met/black, black pinstripe trim, P.D.M., e/f/sun rroof, e/tints, r/cass, alloys, 2/o, 31,000, s/history £11,695
PORSCHE 924 LUX 84 (A). G.P. White, black, Porsche logo, cloth trim, e/f/s/roof, e/tints, alloys, P.D.M., r/cass, turbo spats, 3 owners, 35,000m £10,695
PORSCHE 944 LUX 1982 (Y). Met blue, fact s/r, *r/valence, wide alloys, e/tints, PDM, r/cass, 60,000* miles, s/history £11,995
PORSCHE 924S 1986 Guards red, 5sp, e/f/s/roof, r/cass, PAS, PDM, cass/holder, 2/o, 21,000, s/history £15,495
PORSCHE 944 LUX 1986. Dolomite/met bur*gundy trim, e/f/sunroof, alloy wheels, c/locking,* r/cass, e/tints, e/d/seat height, rear turbo valance, 1/o, 28,000, s/history £18,995
RELIANT, SCIMITAR SS1-1600 Del mileage, Istrian blue, alloys, r/cass, d/mirrors £7,495
TOYOTA MR2 1986 (C). Black with black cloth, f/s/ *roof, alloys, e/tints, e/door mirrors,* radio/cassette, 1/o, 11,000 miles, s/history £9,695
TOYOTA MR2 1987 (D). Red with black cloth, f/s/ roof, alloys, e/tints, e/door mirrors, c/locking, radio/cassette, manufacturers warranty, 800 miles, s/history £11,295
TOYOTA CELICA 2.0 GT 1986 (C). Black with *grey cloth trim, air conditioning, PAS, e/f/s/roof,* alloys, e/tints, radio/cassette, 2/o, 26,000 m, s/history £11,295
TOYOTA COROLLA GT COUPE, 87 (D). Met burgundy, grey cloth trim, f/s/roof, alloys, t/windows, LSD, r/cass, 1 owner, 2800m, FSH £8,495
TVR 350i CONVERTIBLE 'A' FRAME 1986 (D). Met/silver, blue hide trim, 225 bhp uprated engine, adjustable suspension, 420 boot spoiler, c/c alloys, 390SE mirrors, walnut dash, e/tints, radio/cassette, 2/o, 13,000 miles, s/history £16,295
TVR 350i CONV. A FRAME 1986 (D). DK met blue, gull grey hide, colour coded alloys, 390 SE door mirrors, e/tints, walnut dash, r/cass, 3/o, 16,000m, s/hist £15,995
TVR 350i S2 CONV. 1986 (C). Arabian blue, champagne hide, with blue piping, 390 SE door mirrors, pas, e/tints, colour coded alloys, walnut dash, r/cass, s&s by us, 1/o, 8,000m, s/hist £15,295
TVR 350i S2 CONV. 1986 (C). Nimbus grey, grey hide trim, 390 SE door mirrors, e/tints, colour coded alloys, walnut dash, r/cass, 2/o, 13,000m, s/hist £14,995
TVR 350i CONV. 1985 (C). Met black with biscuit hide trim, walnut dash, e/tints, r/cass, alloys, 2 owners, *21,000m, history* £14,195
TVR 350i CONVERTIBLE 1985 Red, black leather trim with red piping, alloy wheels, e/tints, 2/o, 18,000, s/history £12,695
TVR 350i S1 CONV. 1984 (B). Bright red, grey hide, e/tints, e/door mirrors, colour coded alloys, *walnut dash, r/cass, 2/o, 25,000m, s/hist* £11,495
TVR 280i CONV. 1985 (B). White, red velour trim, 5sp., colour coded alloys, e/tints, walnut dash, e/door mirrors, r/cass, 2/o, 16,000m, s/hist £11,295
TVR 280i CONV. 84 (A). Rosso Red with beige *trim, r/cass, e/tints, alloys,* walnut dash, 1 owner, 15,000m, history £10,495
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VW GOLF Convertible Campaign 1986 All white alloys, r/cass, r/reflector, 1/o, s/history, 7,000 ..... £9,995
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VW GOLF CONVERTIBLE CAMPAIGN BLACK 1985 5sp, alloys, black hood, r/cass, tints, 3/0, 27,000, s/history £8,495
VW GOLF GTi CAMPAIGN CONVERTIBLE 84 (A). All white, colour coded, alloys, t/windows, r/cass, 4 owners, 44,000m, FSH £7,295
VW GOLF CAMPAIGN CONVERTIBLE 1984B. White with white hood and hood bag, c/c, alloys, r/cass, tints, 1/o, 20,000, s/history £8,395
VW GOLF CAMPAIGN CONVERTIBLE White, 1984, white hood, c/c, alloys, r/cass, tints, 1/o, 38,000, s/history £7,695
VW GOLF GTi CONVERTIBLE 1984 (A). Mars *Red with beige hood, beige Berber trim, Hartge* engine conversion, alloys, electric tinted windows, radio/cassette, 2/o, 28,000 m, s/history £7,995
VW GOLF GTI 3 Door 1986 Met/Silver, f/s/roof, tints, r/cass, 1/o, 16,000, s/history £8,295
VW GOLF GTi 3DR 1982. Mars red, 5 sp., f/s/roof, four headlamp conversion, alloys, r/cass, tints, 2/o, 42,000, s/history £4,695
VW GOLF GTi CONVERTIBLE CAMPAIGN 1984 MODEL. White with white hood and hood bag, c.c. Zender body kit, Zender c.c. alloys with L.P., 2/o, 49,000 ..... £7,995

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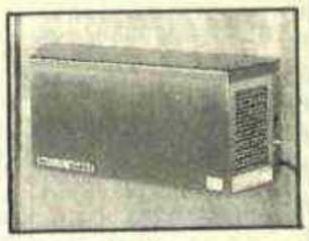

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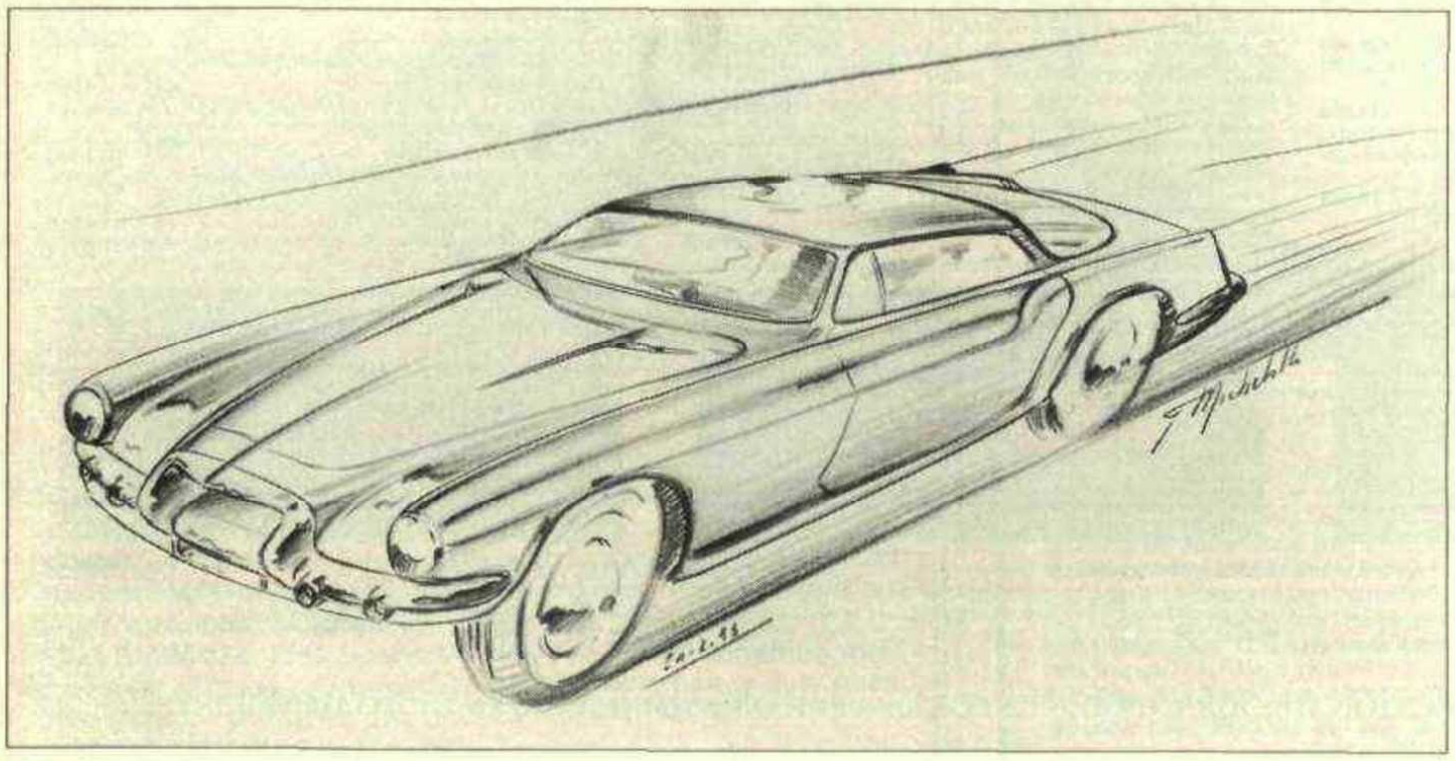

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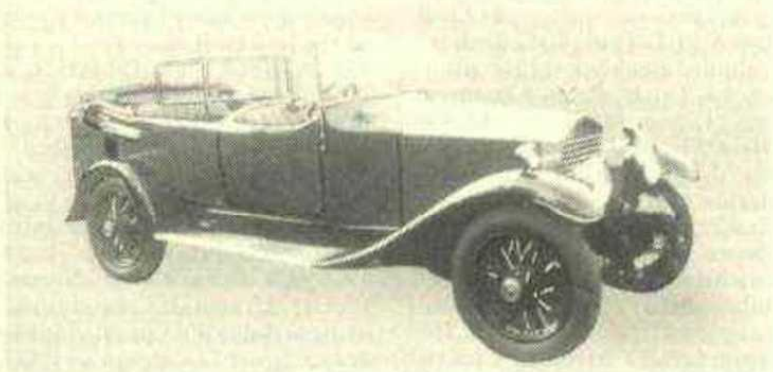
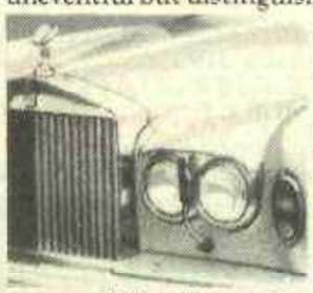
Driving out of the ordinary

While this 1927 Twenty Open Tourer (top picture) is unlikely to become its next owner's first Rolls-Royce, it displays qualities that take drivers out of the ordinary.



One of only 2,940 ever made, this royal blue model is now nicely run in – and recently proved it by completing an uneventful but distinguished 1,200-mile Beaujolais Rally, its passengers well protected by the rear windscreen.



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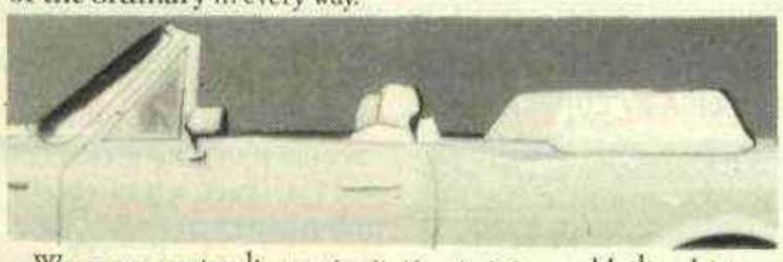

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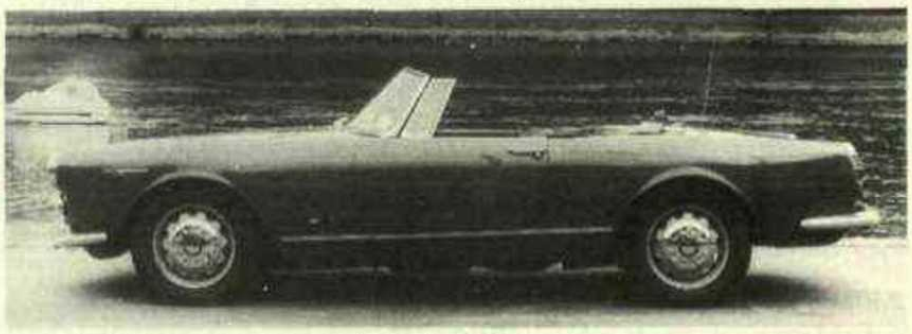

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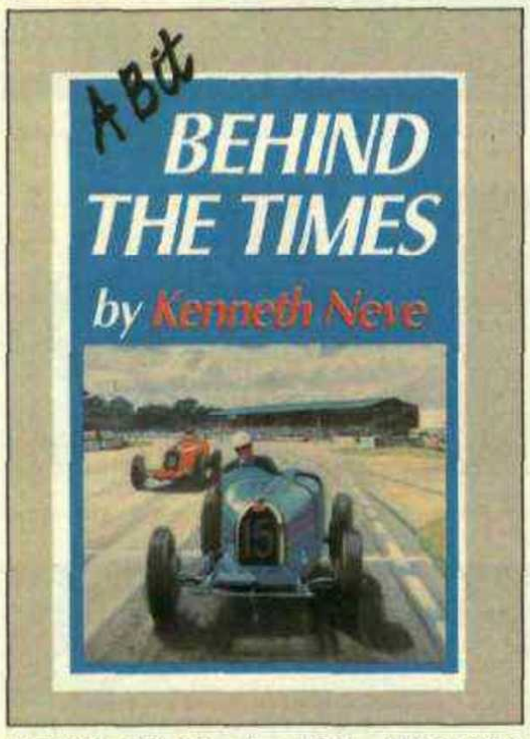

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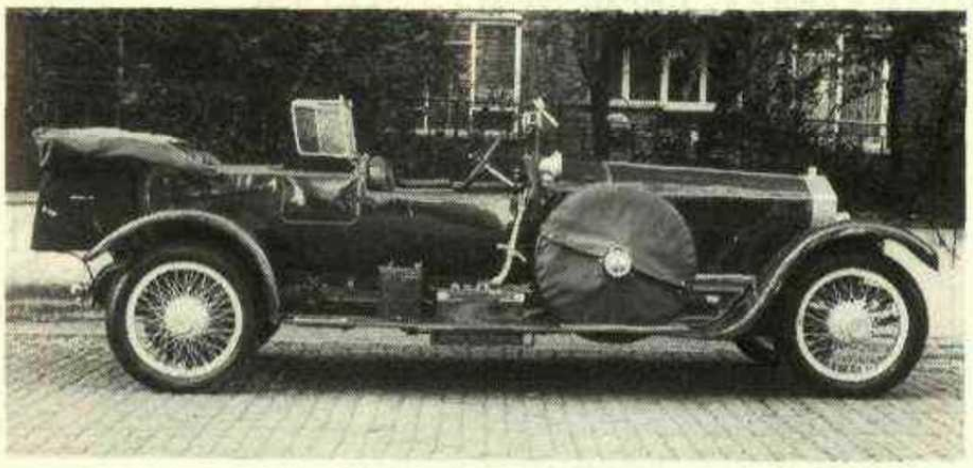

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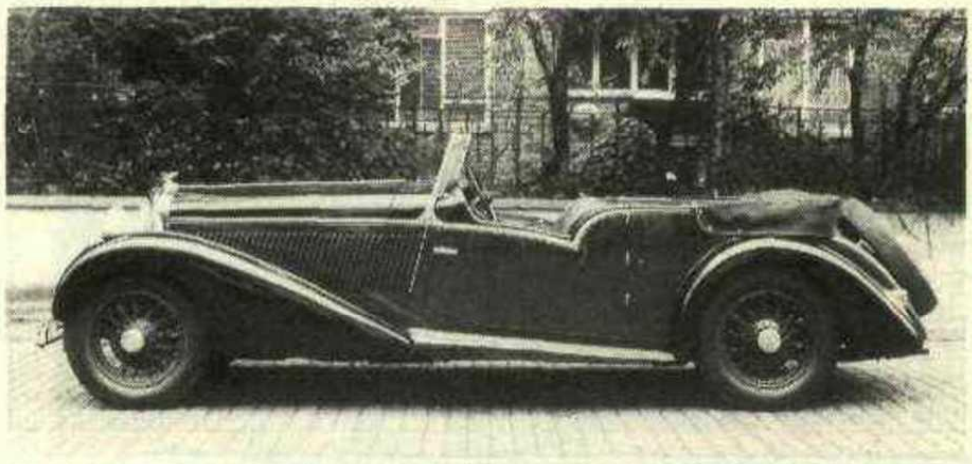

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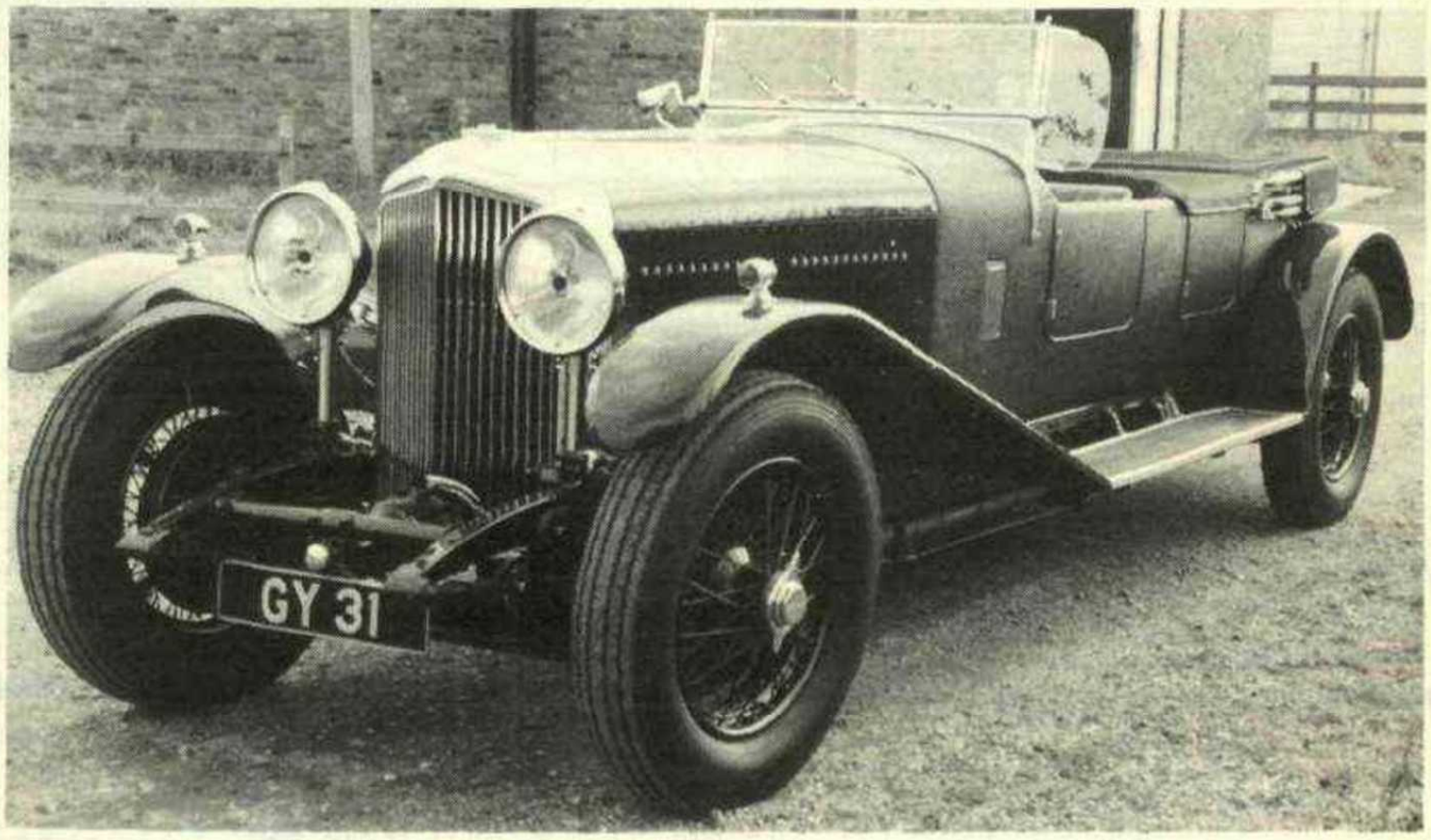

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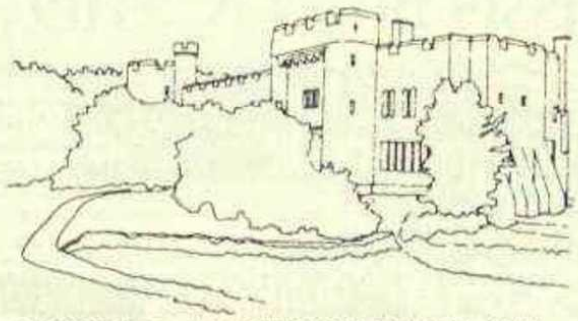

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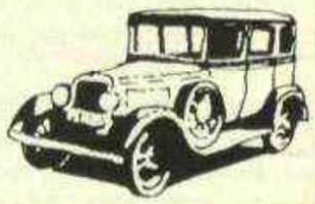

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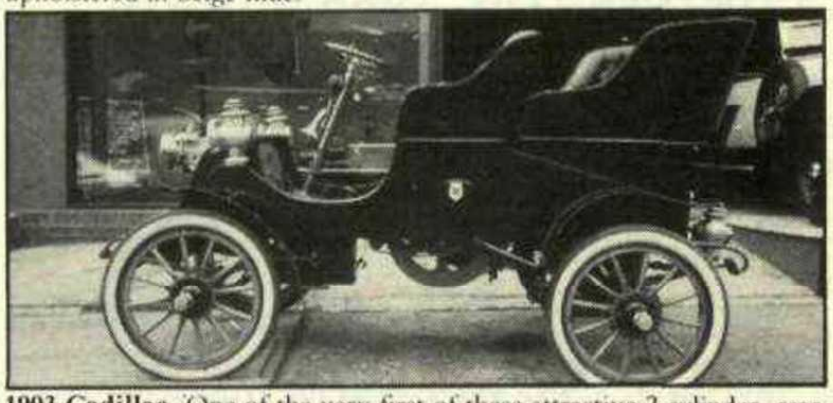

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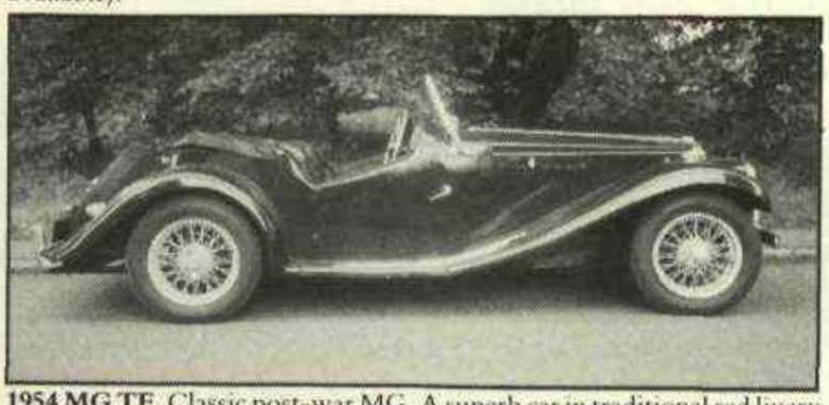

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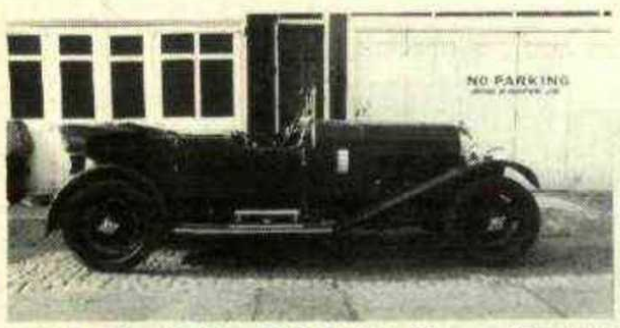

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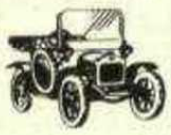

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