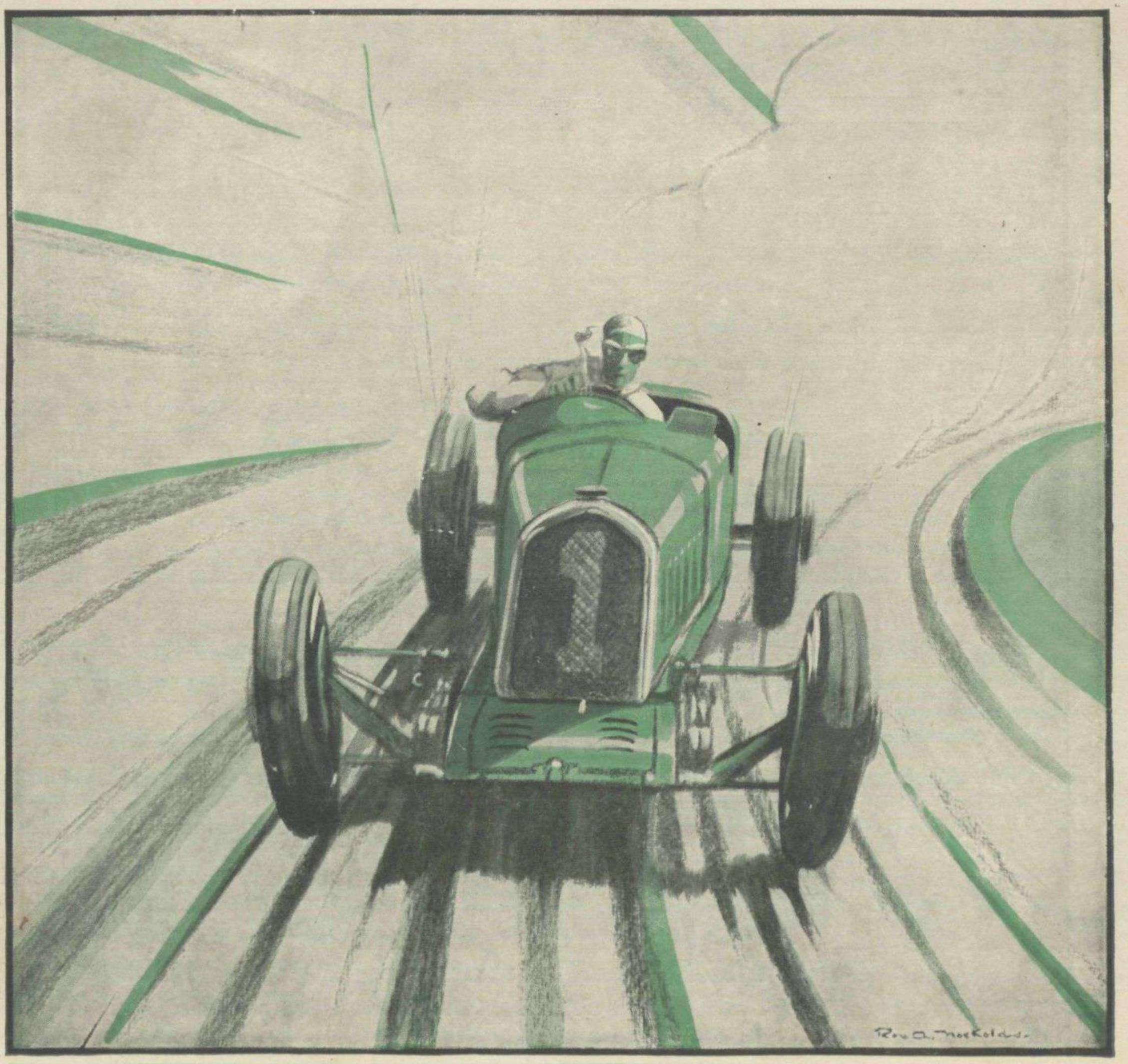
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MOTOR SPORT

INCORPORATING

Speed

ONE SHILLING
MONTHLY



A SELECTION OF MOTOR SPORT ROAD TESTS

THAT HAVE APPEARED IN PAST ISSUES

If you do not see the road test that you require write us a letter. We may have it in stock, but not published below.

Make of Car	Issue
A.B.C. 11 h.p. 2-cyl., 2-seater	Feb. 1926
A.C. 2-litre, short-chassis, 15.7 h.p. 2-seater	July 1936
A.C. 2-litre, 16.40 h.p., 3-seater	Oct. 1927
A.C. 2-litre, 16.66 h.p., 2-seater	March 1926
A.C. 2-litre, 16.66 h.p., 4-seater	June 1934
A.C. "Ace" 16/80 h.p.	July 1937
Alfa-Romeo, 1½-litre supercharged 6-cyl. Charles 2-seater (1929)	March 1934
Alfa-Romeo 1¾-litre supercharged 8-cyl. "Zagato" 2-seater (1932)	July 1934
Alfa-Romeo 2.3-litre supercharged 8-cyl. "Zagato" 2-seater (1933)	Aug. 1936
Alfa-Romeo 2.3-litre supercharged 8-cyl. 4-seater (1931)	Aug. 1932
Alvis 11.9 h.p., 4-cyl., "Firefly" saloon	Feb. 1933
Alvis 4-cyl., 12.60 h.p., 2-seater	July 1931
Alvis 6-cyl., "Silver Eagle" 4-seater coupe (1929)	Aug. 1931
Alvis 6-cyl., "Silver Eagle" 4-seater	June 1930
Alvis 3½-litre saloon	Feb. 1936
Alvis Speed Twenty Vanden Plas saloon	Feb. 1935
Alvis Speed Twenty Charlesworth saloon	Feb. 1934
Alvis Speed Twenty 4-seater	June 1932
Alvis 12/70 4-door saloon	July 1938
Ansaldo 2-litre, 4-cyl., o.h.c., 4-str.	Sept. 1924
Armstrong-Siddeley 20 h.p., 6-cyl. 4-seater	July 1933
Aston-Martin Mark II, 11.9 h.p., 2-4-seater	Jan. 1935
Aston-Martin Ulster 11.9 h.p., T.T. 2-seater	Oct. 1935
Aston-Martin Le Mans 11.9 h.p., 2-4-seater	June 1933
Aston-Martin International 11.9 h.p., 4-seater	Aug. 1932
Aston-Martin T.T., 11.9 h.p., racing 2-seater	Dec. 1931
Aston-Martin 11.9 h.p., 2-seater	Jan. 1930
Aston-Martin 2-litre Speed model	May 1938
Aston-Martin 1935 Ulster	Aug. 1937
Auburn 30 h.p., 8-cyl., supercharged 2-seater	June 1935
Austin Seven Boyd Carpenter 2-str.	Sept. 1930
Austin Seven "65" 2-seater	Jan. 1934
BENTLEY 3½-litre, 6-cyl., Vanden Plas, 4-seater	Nov. 1933
Bentley 4¼-litre, 6-cyl., Park Ward saloon	June 1936
Bentley 6½-litre, 6-cyl., long-chassis saloon (1928)	Dec. 1936
Bentley 4½-litre Vanden Plas coupe	Aug. 1938
Bentley 8-litre sports 2-seater	April 1938
Bugatti 3.3-litre 8-cyl., Type 57 saloon	May 1934
Bugatti 2.3-litre 8-cyl., Type 55, supercharged, 2-seater	July 1932
Bugatti 2.3-litre, 8-cyl., Type 43, supercharged 4-seater (1930)	Dec. 1932
Bugatti 2 3-litre 8-cyl., Type 43, supercharged 4-seater	May 1930
Bugatti 3-litre, 8-cyl., Type 44, saloon	July 1928
CITROEN, Twelve f.w.d. saloon	July 1938
Crossley 20/70 h.p., 4-cyl., s.v. 4-str.	Nov. 1925
Crossley Ten. 1¼-litre "Regis" saloon	Jan. 1936
Crossley Ten, 1,122 c.c. 4-seater	April 1932
Crouch Anzani 12.30 h.p., 2-seater	Aug. 1924
DARRACQ 12.32 h.p., Weymann saloon	Sept. 1924
Delage 14 h.p., 2-litre, 2-3-seater	June 1927
Delage 8-cyl., sports saloon	April 1930
Delage D.8 120, drophead coupe	May 1938
Delahaye 3.5-litre "Coupe des Alps" drophead coupe	Aug. 1936
Delahaye 3¼-litre drophead coupe	Dec. 1937
D.K.W. "Special" saloon	Feb. 1938
ESSEX Terraplane 8-cyl. 4-seater	Sept. 1935
Excelsior 5¼-litre, 6-cyl., super-sports test chassis	Sept. 1927
FIAT 20.70 h.p., 6-cyl., 2-4-seater	April 1933
Fiat "Balilla" saloon	May 1934
Fiat "Ardita" 17 h.p., 4-cyl., saloon	Feb. 1934
Fiat "Balilla" 10 h.p., 2-seater	Jan. 1935
Fiat 6 h.p., Type 500, coupe	March 1937
Frazer-Nash 6-cyl., 1½-litre (Blackburn) 2-seater	July 1933
Frazer-Nash 4-cyl., 1½-litre T.T. Replica push-rod o.h.v. 2-3-str.	Nov. 1931
INVICTA 4½-litre low chassis, 4-str.	March 1931
Invicta 4½-litre Weymann saloon	June 1929
Invicta 4½-litre saloon	Dec. 1929
Isotta-Fraschini 45 h.p., 4-seater	Oct. 1926
LAGONDA 2-litre, 4-cyl., twin o.h.c. 4-seater	Jan.-Feb. 1928
Lagonda 2-litre, 4-cyl., twin o.h.c. supercharged 4-seater	Oct. 1930
Lagonda 4½-litre, 4-seater	May 1936
Lagonda 4½-litre Rapide 4-seater	May 1935
Lagonda 4½-litre, 4-seater	Jan. 1934
Lagonda Rapier 10 h.p., 4-seater	Sept. 1934
Lagonda 16.80 h.p., 6-cyl., 4-seater	Jan. 1933
Lagonda 3-litre, 6-cyl., 4-seater	March 1932
Lagonda 2-litre, 4-cyl., twin o.h.c., 4-seater (1928)	March 1931
Lancia Aprilia, Type 238, saloon	June 1938
Lea-Francis 1½-litre supercharged T.T. 2-seater (1929)	June 1934
Lea-Francis 1½-litre supercharged special T.T. 2-seater	Sept. 1933
Lea-Francis 1½-litre supercharged "Hyper" 4-seater	Aug. 1930
Lea-Francis, 14 h.p., 6-light saloon	Dec. 1938
Leyland Eight (1929), 2-seater	Feb. 1938
MERCEDES-BENZ Type 540K, 5.4-litre, 8-cyl., supercharged, 2-str.	April 1937
Mercedes-Benz Type 500, 5-litre, 8-cyl., supercharged, 2-seater	Nov. 1934
Mercedes-Benz 12.40 h.p., supercharged 2-seater	June 1925
Mercedes-Benz 36.220 h.p. supercharged, 2-4-seater	April 1928
Mercedes-Benz 33.180 h.p., supercharged, 4-seater	Aug. 1927
Mercedes-Benz 2.3-litre, saloon	April 1938
M.G., 6-cyl., Mark I, 4-seater	May 1931
M.G. Magna, "L" 2-seater	Nov. 1933
M.G. Midget "P" 2-seater	Aug. 1934
M.G. Midget "J3" supercharged, 2-seater	May 1933
M.G. Six Mark I, saloon	Aug. 1930
M.G. Midget Double-Twelve racing 2-seater	June 1930 & Aug. 1930
M.G. Midget "J1" 850 c.c. 2-str.	Sept. 1932
M.G. Magnette "N" 4-seater	Feb. 1935
M.G. Midget "PB" 2-seater	April 1936
M.G. 14/40 4-cyl., 3-speed, 4-seater	Oct. 1925
M.G. Midget "T" 2-seater	Jan. 1937
M.G. 14/40 h.p., 4-cyl., super-sports, 2-seater	May 1927
O.M. 6-cyl., 2-litre, 4-seater	Oct.-Nov. 1928
PACKARD V12-cyl., 57 h.p. coupe	Feb. 1934
Peugeot "201" 4-cyl., 1,122 c.c. saloon	Sept. 1931
RAILTON Terraplane 4-seater	Oct. 1934
Railton Light Sports tourer	Dec. 1935
Railton Cobham 28.8 h.p. saloon	Sept. 1938
Riley Nine "Monaco-Special," two-carb. saloon	March 1931
Riley Nine, 4-seater	June 1931
Riley 16 h.p., Big-four Kestrel saloon	June 1938
SINGER 1½-litre, 6-cyl., Le Mans 2-seater	March 1935
Singer Nine, 4-seater	March 1933
Squire 1½-litre, 4-cyl., 2-seater	Aug. 1935
S.S. I special-bodied 2-seater (1933)	Feb. 1934
S.S. I coupe	June 1933
Steyr Type XII, 14.35 h.p., Weymann saloon	Aug.-Sept. 1928
Stutz "Black Hawk" supercharged 4-seater	Jan. 1930
Stutz 5-litre, 8-cyl., 4-seater	Dec. 1927
Sunbeam 3-litre 6-cyl., (twin o.h.c.) fabric saloon	Nov. 1927
Sunbeam 6-cyl., 21 h.p., (push-rod) Speed Six saloon	Dec. 1933
TALBOT "90" Brooklands-bodied 2-4-seater	April 1931
Talbot "105" sports saloon	April 1934
Talbot 3½-litre saloon	March 1936
Talbot Ten "Rally" 4-str.	Oct.-Nov. 1936
Talbot "105" Vanden Plas 4-str.	Nov. 1932
Talbot "90" 4-seater	Nov. 1930
Talbot Ten sports coupe	June 1938
Tatra 4-cyl., 1,154 c.c., coupe	Dec. 1932
Terraplane, 8-cyl. 29 h.p., 4-str.	July 1935
Triumph 2-litre "Vitesse Six" saloon	April 1935
Triumph 10 h.p. "Gloria Southern Cross" 2-seater	June 1935
Triumph 10 h.p. "Gloria" saloon	Jan. 1934
Triumph Nine "Southern Cross" 4-seater	June 1932
Triumph Eight "Gnat" 2-seater	Aug. 1931
Triumph Eight, supercharged 2-str.	Dec. 1929
Triumph Dolomite 14/60 saloon	June 1937
VALE-SPECIAL 832 c.c. 2-seater	Aug. 1933
Vauxhall 30/98 O.E. 4-seater (1925)	Jan. 1936
Vauxhall 30/98 O.E. 4-seater (1924)	Dec. 1930
Vauxhall 20/60 h.p. "Hurlingham" 2-seater	Feb. 1930
Vauxhall 17 h.p., 6-cyl., "Cadet" saloon	Sept. 1931
Vauxhall 14 h.p. "Stratford" 4-str.	Sept. 1933
WINDSOR 4-cyl., 11 h.p., "Special" 2-3-seater	Nov. 1926
Wolseley Hornet Swallow 2-seater (1933)	April 1934
Wolseley Hornet (12.08 h.p.) saloon	Sept. 1930

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THE BROOKLANDS GAZETTE

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RECONSIDER YOUR VERDICT

ON March 20th, the Royal Automobile Club issued a statement which damns any hope of holding a war-time competition on a peace-time footing. Certain enthusiasts have been working very hard in an endeavour to organise a war-time sports-car race of short duration. Purely as a matter of policy, they put their proposal to the Department of Mines, and the matter is receiving official consideration. There is no law banning motor-racing in war-time, and as far as is known, there is no reason why martial legislation should frown on the proposed race. The Secretary for Mines was only approached to ensure that no public opposition should arise out of a false assumption that fuel other than that due to a competitor as his basic ration would be burned during the race. It was felt that if the Department of Mines did not raise its hands in horror at the thought of a brief contest between sports-cars taxed for road use (and thus entitled to approximately 200 miles worth of Pool spirit each for each month's tax-payment), then the R.A.C. would have no possible objection to issuing the necessary Permit for the event in question.

Now, before the Department of Mines has replied to what was virtually a private memorandum from the sponsors of this proposed race, the R.A.C. has issued a statement which removes any possible hope of getting a Permit for the event. This statement reads as follows :—

> The question of the holding of competitions for cars—races, hill climbs, speed events, reliability trials—during wartime, has received the earnest consideration of the Competitions Committee of the Royal Automobile Club, and it has now been decided that whilst existing conditions prevail the Club will not grant a Permit to hold any such competition.
>
> The reasons which animated the R.A.C. in coming to this decision are as follows :—
>
> The Secretary for Mines has stated that the basic petrol ration is granted to enable owners of private cars to make use of them to a limited extent for necessary domestic purposes. Whilst such purposes undoubtedly include a certain amount of essential recreation, participation in motor racing, speed events, or reliability trials, could not be regarded as coming under this head.
>
> Such competitions as could be held would not have at the present time any technical or military value, and could not therefore be justified on either of these grounds.
>
> The public is aware of the many reasons which necessitate the strictest economy in the use of petrol, and would view with disfavour its use in motoring competitions at the present time.
>
> A very large proportion of the motoring clubs in the country have already announced the suspension of their competition activities for the duration of the war. Such clubs would be opposed to any attempts by a few of the remaining clubs to carry out a programme of competitions.

We published the arguments in favour of holding the race last month, and you know how sensible and convincing they were. The race cannot now be held under R.A.C. Permit, and even if the sponsors, perhaps encouraged by a favourable reply from the Department of Mines, attempt to ignore the R.A.C., a reasonable entry is highly unlikely. In peacetime, certain parties wished to ignore the R.A.C., but we have always found the Competitions Committee extremely fair and generally helpful and have deplored any attempt to hold non-Permit contests. In any case, this would only be successful if a general break-away resulted, because any driver competing in a non-Permit event is prevented by the R.A.C. from competing in any Permit contest, not only in this country, but in every country where the A.I.A.C.R. ruling is in force. For this very reason, this R.A.C. statement bans the possibility of the war-time race—and destroys any hope of an occasional sprint or trial. Meanwhile, the A.C.U. permits motor-bicycle trials almost weekly. Frankly, we completely fail to understand the

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A DANGEROUS SUBJECT

OF late, it has been fashionable for certain daily, weekly and monthly papers, magazines, digests and whatnot, to publish distinctly risky articles and pictures, to the extreme delight of one section of readers, and the undisguised horror of others. As a respectable motor paper we cannot move with the times in this respect, so we will content ourselves with some observations on that most risky motoring topic—Average Speed. Once upon a time, when seventy m.p.h. was very fast indeed, and utility cars mostly had but two pots, letters used quite frequently to creep into the motoring Press to the effect that "Father of Ten" had got from A to B in his family vehicle in X hours and Y mins., and nobody seemed to mind. Usually, when the sum was worked out, you found that if the average speed was good, it was not startling in point of suggestive maximum velocities, or else no one really knew if it represented anything very much anyway; it all depended on the distance between A and B, luck, the condition of this especial route, and what sort of car "Father of Ten" did his dice in. Anyhow, the roads were pretty empty then, and sooner or later, the driver would probably be hauled up for exceeding the then prevailing 20 m.p.h. speed limit somewhere or other, as likely as not on a dead straight, particularly secure road. However, as cars became faster, certain, we won't actually say misguided, gentlemen, commenced to attempt to beat crack trains, and to establish records between the Metropolis and the University cities, and generally to indulge in orgies of speed, and our conservative motoring weeklies shut down on any and all references to average speeds set up along our rolling English (and Scotch and Welsh) roads. This was a disappointment to the writer, who, when not chasing his tail round Brooklands or climbing slimy hills or staying out on the road all night, to please the R.A.C. and various Seaside Town Committees, could obtain a lot of fun, just playing with a stopwatch and mileometer in co-operation. The fundamental of this vexed average speed question is that any figure recorded can have only a personal, and not a general significance.

The length of time taken between two points depends on so many factors—time of day, type of car, amount of traffic encountered, luck in avoiding chance hold-ups, the kind of roads traversed, the skill and restraint of the driver, weather conditions and so on—not forgetting the factor of very considerable error that can result from placing a touching faith in speedometer mileage readings and the accuracy of a dashboard clock or worn wristwatch. Those with lots of time on their hands in unpalatable places, incidentally, may care to sort the above factors into some sort of order of importance—and the result will still be an entirely personal judgment. Which only goes to emphasise that other drivers' averages are just of interest and nothing more, in the vast majority of cases where average speed is quoted. Jack Cox may proudly tell us that he has averaged 45 m.p.h. from Puddle-by-the-Bridge to Greater Dishwater, on a day when the roads were slimy, and there was quite a lot of traffic about. The question is, how slimy and how much traffic? Maybe John Box doesn't know the road at all, and, from thinking that this is at least a good show, if not something worthy of Arthur Dobson, he may suddenly decide that Jack Cox is an idle boaster, because when he *does* come to do this run, in his family car, he manages 46 m.p.h.—forgetting that the road is mostly level and in the early morning you need hardly ease your foot the whole way . . . Alas, someone not knowing the full facts of either case, will then preach about dangerous driving, as people told of good averages usually do. I think it is most unfair to take this attitude. If a driver deliberately goes flat out over a blind cross road, carves up overtaken vehicles without a warning hoot, and narrowly misses unstable objects like pedestrians and animals by a hairsbreadth, he is dangerous and is a fool—but nearly always because he cannot drive, and not because he is going places with his mind warped by average speeds. But if a driver, not doing any of these criminal things, appears to leave a very small margin when passing vehicles aware of his presence, if he takes open bends extremely fast, approaches light-controlled crossings at high speeds, and uses dashing tactics in crowded places, no one in this world, no matter how fine a driver, can fairly pass judgment on whether such driving is, or is not, safe. Only the man at the wheel, having a conscience, really knows—a clean "accident record" serves to confirm his own faith in his abilities before sceptical eyes. Some people say that however safe a driver is when he is only casually noting the average speed of a journey, he is almost certain to overstep the bounds of safe and decent driving if he deliberately attempts to set up a personal "record" for a given run. Well, I can only say that often I have tried to see how fast I can persuade a particular car to go from one place to another, and I am certain I have caused no inconvenience to anyone, far less endangered human or animal life, and done nothing detrimental to our interests, unless some unknowledgeable pedestrian or fug-box motorist has observed my passage and imagined and exaggerated non-existent risks. There has never been any gain beyond the interest of noting the speed, and certainly nothing that could make me forget the horror of killing or maiming other road and pavement users, apart from the fact that existence would be much the poorer for even a temporary parting from the friends who usually accompany me on such occasions; and that it's usually someone else's motor. It is purely a matter of individual temperament how often, and on what excuse, a man will take definite risks, just as some racing drivers can drive faster and faster when being chased, or urged by their pit to chase, and stay on the course, while others, after lap upon lap at great speed without trouble, find such fresh excitement too much and spin at a corner, or go off the road. Unfortunately, folk such as those who support the Pedestrians' Association cannot be expected to consider these matters and would doubtless have had my licence suspended long ago, after observing the passing of some of the cars I have timed on road journeys. So the motor papers have until recently ignored average speed claims on the grounds, I suppose, that they cannot then be blamed for any "records" which may be discussed in indiscreet places. However, I feel that we are apt to forget that the high performance car only justifies itself by being able to complete a given journey faster than a utility vehicle, with equal or greater comfort, ease and security, much as we enjoy driving such cars fast for no given reason. It is only by carefully noting average speeds attained when handling a variety of cars that one truly appreciates the ability of the high-performance car in general, and of individual examples in particular. I have heard people aver that to attempt to put up a good time *must* induce dangerous risks. When I ask why, they point out that a driver is invariably found to be slower on a particular journey when the times are noted privately and the average worked out afterwards, than on an occasion when someone says "See how quickly you can get there!" as the car moves off. Surely the answer is simply that driving a fast car fast over public roads safely demands intense mental concentration and rapid physical action, and a driver skilful enough to bring such qualities into play when called upon, subconsciously drives more quietly unless expressly anxious about his journey time—always excepting those scatter-brains who see no risk in anything and are unsafe in charge of even a Lloyd cyclecar. So I take a great interest in my personal averages, when I remember to record them. It is possible to say very roughly what different types of cars should be capable of, over main road runs under normal conditions, over a reasonable distance. A baby saloon averages 25-30 m.p.h., a modern family saloon 35, a good medium size saloon or a sports-car 40, or 45 if conditions are really favourable; but anything over 45 takes some getting, and averages of 50 and upwards require extremely high qualities. Now, by basing the average attained by any given car on those figures, *and taking the divers factors that govern average speed into consideration as they presented themselves in the instance concerned*, you can form a very reasonable idea of how good or how bad is a car's "road-ability." It is just because these divers complex factors matter so much that, as I expressly emphasised at the beginning of this outpouring, other people's average speed data means little or nothing, whereas one's own findings can teach a lot. For example, I have averaged approximately 45 m.p.h., from Staines Bridge to Winterborne Abbas in a rather special 3-litre Bentley, and from Hanger Hill to Stanway Hill in an unstreamlined 1,100 c.c. Fiat

A DANGEROUS SUBJECT—continued

Balilla saloon. To the casual observer, it would seem that the Bentley put up a poor show, as the bigger machine, and a sports-car at that. This is where the governing factors come in. I know that the Bentley had the longer run, which helps, but that I wasn't used to a car which takes more getting used to than the Fiat, and that snow seriously hampered the latter part of the journey; while we took every limit at exactly 30; traffic encountered was about equal. So, without working to any formula or exact system, I know that while the Fiat put up an exceptional show, the old Bentley also did an excellent run. The findings are further enhanced because the same time-keeper and map-checker got out the figures on both occasions. That is but one example of how personal average speed figures can be a valuable guide in assessing a car's "*road-ability*" when outsider's figures can seriously mislead. I may make a certain journey in a small, quite unsensational saloon and average a very satisfactory speed on a clear night over dry roads. Later I may go over the same ground again in a similar sized car of reputed higher performance, but in daylight fully loaded, encountering much traffic and wet roads. It will not be necessarily essential for this car to even equal the former average to be pronounced the "faster" of the two, because I can assess all the factors involved as those not present on both occasions can never hope to do.

I have explained why my own averages interest me immensely and other people's only very superficially, but an exception can be made in the case of those quoted by reliable writers in the motoring Press, when the conditions are usually quoted in some detail and certainly time and mileage calculations can be taken as reliable. In spite of former avoidance of this dangerous topic, "The Autocar" has of recent times published some average speed figures for runs undertaken by Michael Brown and H. S. Linfield, which I find of the greatest interest.

In January of last year, they had a remarkably informative article showing how road conditions in this country penalise average speed, data being obtained by timing three vastly different type cars between Staines Bridge and Bridport, a distance of 120 miles, under reasonably identical conditions. That article was called "Penalising Performance," and every enthusiast should have read and digested it. A small saloon of medium performance, an Anglo-American saloon, and a 2-litre British sports-car were credited with potential averages of 56, 68 and 72 m.p.h. respectively, supposing that it would be reasonable to run them at 8/10ths maximum speed for 120 miles, if road conditions permitted. Michael Brown then goes to considerable pains to explain how British roads penalised these cars by 12, 19 and 24½ m.p.h. respectively, in point of running time speed. He gives his estimates for the individual penalisation to each type imposed by overtaking and meeting traffic, speed limits, corners, and gradients. He raises the interesting point that on a busy road a high-performance car gains very little over a family car because its advantage in accelerating out of limits is offset by slowing at other times, so as not to embarrass approaching drivers. In the matter of overtaking, the high-performance car's advantage either in point of good top-gear acceleration, or a high maximum on the indirect ratios is nicely emphasised. When it comes to cornering, the author shows that the true sports-car actually gains over its potential average on a bend of the 50 m.p.h. order, whereas the less stable cars lose. He makes the extremely interesting suggestion that our twisting roads may have been responsible for the very introduction of the real motor-car, and that modern cars in all categories owe a very great deal to the sports-cars of old. He also suggests that British main roads so penalise performance as to make the successful sale of high-performance cars very creditable, especially if of "sports" as distinct from "comfort" types. But I feel he is a bit conservative in stating that where a driver will slide open bends in a sports-car he will take *weeks if not months* before using the same tactics with a saloon designed mainly for comfort—I have slid bends in several quite comfortable saloons within a very short time of making their acquaintance; it all depends on the saloon. Leaving out the speed limit, the author put the penalty effects of the incalculable factors in this order:—junctions, gradients, overtaking, bends, and meeting traffic. The gain in time of the sports-car over the 10 h.p. saloon on this run, when conditions were very reasonably similar, was 17 mins. Remember, however, that 120 miles of very fast road was involved; over a run of double the distance, including, as is likely, more corners and deserted going, the difference would be likely to be much greater—even so, most of us can recall occasions when the day's pleasure or profit would have been greater if it had been possible to terminate a 120 mile journey a quarter of an hour sooner than we did. These three runs were made to collect data rather than test the cars used, but it is interesting to see what speeds they made. They were a Talbot Ten saloon, a straight-eight Jensen saloon, and a 2-litre open Aston-Martin. The Talbot averaged 43.9 m.p.h., the Jensen 47.37 m.p.h. and the Aston-Martin 48.98 m.p.h. When I tried the same route, equally observant of built-up areas, with Peter Clark's trials 3-litre Bentley, heavy snow made it necessary to stop the watch at Winterborne Abbas after snow-bound roads had slowed us appreciably. We clocked 44.9 m.p.h. Here is yet another instance where quoting the average without consideration of the factors involved can be misleading, because to improve on the Talbot's figure by only 1 m.p.h. sounds as if either the car or the driver was mediocre, yet the difference is better than it seems if you allow that really bad weather is as adverse a factor as any other of the incalculables. Usually, the longer the run, the higher the average, but on a really lengthy journey, varied road conditions and driver fatigue rather reverse this rule. Perhaps, therefore, I may be forgiven for mentioning, on behalf of a very fine car, that my own fastest drive of any distance was at 50.5 m.p.h. for 702 miles, with a closed 4¼-litre Bentley. Actually, it got from Westminster to John o'Groats at an average within 1½ m.p.h. of Michael Brown's 120 mile dash with the Jensen, including all our stops, which embraced three refuels and a leisurely breakfast. But I have yet to return a timed road average of 66.6 m.p.h. as did Brown for the 11.1 miles from Grim's Dyke Café to Tarrant Hinton, both with the Jensen and the Aston, where you are unhampered by villages, junctions or bends, but have to cope with long rises and drops in gradient. I have clocked 62 m.p.h. with the Bentley and 60 with Peter Clark's Le Mans H.R.G., but both were taken over 30 mile stretches—I cannot remember how much we were checked on the former, but should say the H.R.G. was penalised as much by junctions, roundabouts and occasional overtaken traffic (and by the driver being absolutely new to the car) as the other cars were by gradients. Yet again, you see how unfair it would be to call the Jensen and A.-M. "much faster over favourable going" and leave it at that, on account of these "flash" average readings. That is the very devil of average speed statements. After the John o'Groats run, one person practically suggested it could not be done in the time, another said it could be done just as quickly in an S.S. costing about one-third the price of the Bentley, and H. E. Symons claimed to have done the same run in an early 14/56 Wolseley saloon, checking and observing every 30 m.p.h. limit (92 miles of it), taking unhurried breakfast, lunch, tea, and fuel stops, and never exceeding 63 m.p.h., to get within 6 or 7 m.p.h. of our gross time average—and I should be the last person to doubt Humfrey's figures.

Mr. Linfield also did some research on the average speed question with a Rolls-Royce "Phantom III," interesting as yet another distinct type from the other three cars used for such a purpose by the same driver. From Northumberland to London, including a detour, comparatively slow sections, and negotiation of the Metropolis, the running time average came out at 46 m.p.h., which, I believe, was quoted as about the fastest average speed possible in safety on this particular highway, in a high-performance car—and the "Phantom III" accelerated from rest to 60 m.p.h. in 18½ seconds and achieved over 92 m.p.h. If this limit to speed on our A.1 highway seems conservative, it must not be forgotten that built-up areas would be properly observed and that this can reduce the average quite a lot—in his later tests Mr. Linfield found that a mere 12.8 miles of built-up area in 120 miles dropped the average by approximately 3 m.p.h.

Two more instances of Press-reported average speed may be mentioned. In 1938—seemingly a good year for methodical fast drivers—W. G. McMinnies persuaded G. H. Stancer, secretary of the C.T.C., to come with him on a fast long-distance run, to see how cyclists and motorists react to each other.

Continued on page 61

THIS RALLY BUSINESS

THIS *NOM-DE-PLUME* HIDES THE IDENTITY OF A REGULAR RALLY COMPETITOR, WHO DRIVES A FRAZER-NASH-B.M.W. WE PRESENT HIS SUGGESTIONS IN THE HOPE THAT ORGANISERS OF THE FUTURE WILL DIGEST AND DISCUSS THEM DURING THE ENFORCED LEISURE NOW PREVAILING IN THE SPHERE OF COMPETITION MOTORING, BUT WE BEG LEAVE NOT TO ASSOCIATE OURSELVES EDITORIALLY WITH HIS VIEWS.—ED.

Some Suggestions and Comments for the improvement of our Rallies.

By "CAYENNE"

THERE is no doubt that the war has hit the Sport as hard as any other institution in this country, but I do think that it has one advantage—it has given us a breathing space, which, for the good of the sport, we ought to utilise by sitting back and thinking how we can improve matters, before dicing in all its forms starts again.

It seems to me that a good start could be made on what should be one of the most popular types of sport in this country—the Rally. Barring the M.C.C. classic trials, the R.A.C. Rally attracts the longest entry list of any British motoring event, but, with the possible exception of the Scottish Rally, it also produces at the finish (or should I say after the issue of the provisional results ?) the longest list of complaints. As a competitor who has only missed one important British rally in the last two years, and as one who did consistently badly in the four major rallies of 1939, I am completely out of sympathy with ninety per cent. of the grousers, but if rallies are to continue now that manufacturers' support has been officially withdrawn, it is obvious that some changes—drastic changes, too—must be made.

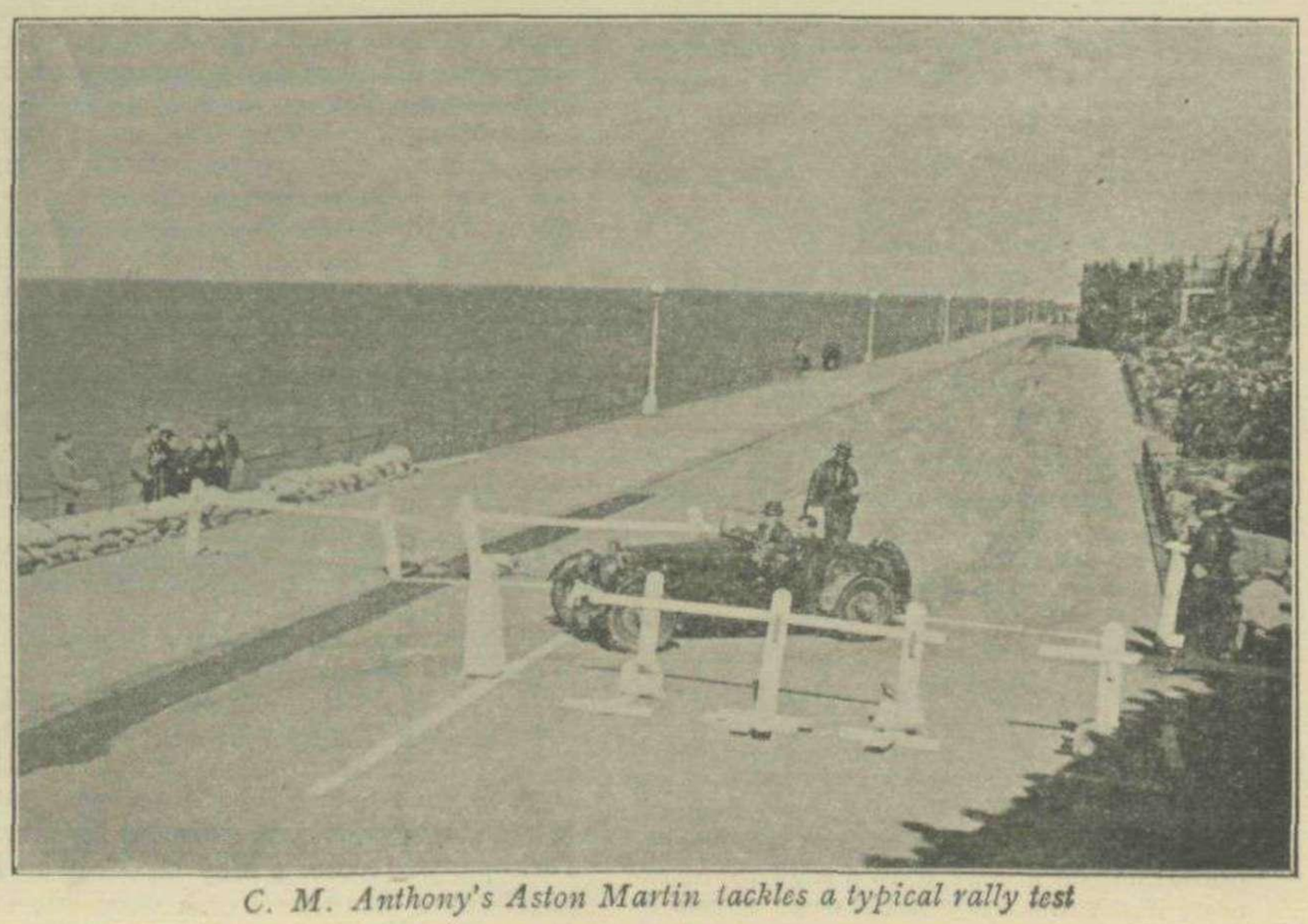
The greatest outcry after last year's R.A.C. Rally was against the entry of so-called "Works Cars"; complaints were made that the common or garden driver in his family saloon had no chance against the professional drivers in "thinly disguised racing-cars." Well, apart from the fact that the "racing cars" were so thickly disguised that I, for one, was unable to recognise them, it strikes me that the present system of dividing the entry into classes is perfectly fair, and even a cursory glance at the awards lists should show that certain drivers of ordinary cars are just as consistently at the top as some of those handling the "works racing cars." The fault, dear Mr. Smith, is not in your car, but in yourself; to name two successful rally drivers of recent years, neither Leslie Johnson nor Walter Norton has any connection with the motor trade, but by force of superior skill *and experience*, they will always beat the average motorist *in the same type of car*. After all, if a B.M.W. was first in the large open car class at Brighton, a B.M.W. was also last, and the names of the holders of at least the first six places in that class are none of them unknown in the competition world.

No, I am afraid that the elimination of works entries will not be the life-saver of the rally, if only due to the fact that no regulations in the world can prevent private owners driving cars specially prepared for the event by the works, whether at the owner's or the manufacturer's expense.

Now before I go any further, I should like to make one or two points quite clear. I am a genuine enthusiast: I have competed regularly in every kind of competition organised in this country (treasure hunts excluded): I have even sat on the committee of a prominent motor club; but—I have never taken part in the organisation of a motoring event; my viewpoint is essentially that of a competitor. Moreover, I fully appreciate that the stringent motoring (or possibly anti-motoring) laws of the land do not make matters easy for organisers; and finally, I am fully aware (although I deplore the fact) that there is *no solid connecting link* between the motor clubs of Britain. Affiliation to the R.A.C., I regret to say, means very little.

Returning to our muttons, if you will excuse the idiom, the first rally to tackle is obviously that organised by the aforementioned body, the R.A.C. This is a fixture which must never disappear from the calendar, but it seems to be anxious to cut its own throat. It has always been Britain's nearest approach to the incomparable Monte Carlo Rally, but now its conditions are yearly becoming easier. Surely the social runs can be left to the small clubs? In 1937, we had two nights' run with a full day in between: in '38, two days and one night; in '39, an afternoon, a night, another day, and then—heaven protect me!—*a night's rest*. Now I always think of the R.A.C. Rally as something of an adventure, but if it had not been for the fact that I arrived at the start without a passenger, and only obtained one less than a minute before I was due to check out, the rally of 1939 would have been, for me, one of the dullest long-distance trips in living memory. However, a most sporting marshal, to whom I shall ever be grateful, volunteered at a moment's notice to come as my co-driver, and by the time we had rejoined the route after driving to Birmingham to straighten out his affairs for the ensuing week, we were over three hours behind schedule, and only fifty miles in the desired direction from the start. Nevertheless, we made the breakfast check at Scarborough with a quarter of an hour to spare. Believe me, I still pity my fellow competitors who had been in bed for the best part of five hours when we arrived, dead beat, in falling snow. The R.A.C. Rally should be tough—1,000 miles virtually non-stop, with plenty of night driving, and an exacting time schedule. The much-vaunted "Colonial Section" of the last one did the event more harm than good by its not altogether unexpected withdrawal.

May I leave the R.A.C. Rally with just one more criticism? Were not the eliminating tests of last year's event too dependent upon brakes and acceleration? "Circus Tests" are often a thing to be deplored, but there is a lot more in driving than mere starting and stopping. In conjunction with this, the system of marking these tests left quite a lot to be desired. In Test Two, for example, one accelerated for half a mile, and then had to stop before a line sixty yards farther on. The penalty for failure was the deduction of twenty marks; all well and good, but after another twenty yards was a second line, the crossing of which



C. M. Anthony's Aston Martin tackles a typical rally test

THIS RALLY BUSINESS—continued

entailed the forfeiture of a further fifty marks. Now surely it must be obvious that anyone who has lost twenty marks at the first line is, as far as the awards list is concerned, "out of the rally." Why go to the trouble of deducting additional marks from a car that has already no chance of winning? Surely a better plan would be to move the first penalty line say twenty yards nearer the finish, subtract five marks for passing this, and an additional mark for each yard in excess of it. These penalty lines would then live up to their name, and not be "disqualification lines."

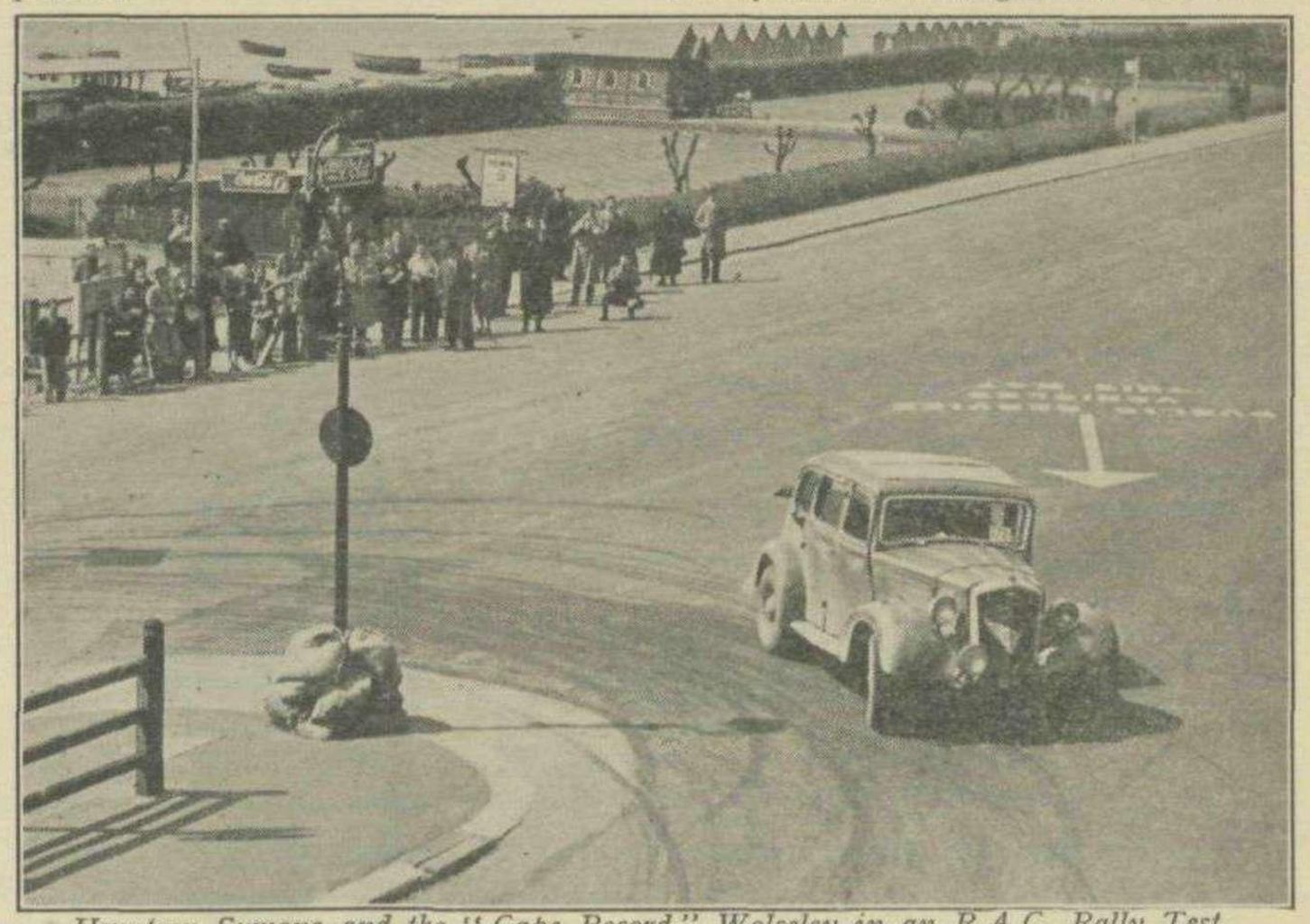
The Scottish Rally is in the main wholly delightful, although, of course, it is no endurance test. To employ a phrase used more than once by the motoring Press, "the inclusion of one test each day maintains lively interest throughout the rally," giving the competitor something to look forward to—often with mixed feelings—on each day's run. In my opinion, this is one of the best points of what is, perhaps, the most enjoyable *motoring fixture on the British Calendar.* Another excellent feature is the fact that the route lies very largely off the beaten track, giving the dual advantage that "non-rally" traffic is rarely encountered, and the surface of the roads themselves is of such a nature that a certain amount of real "dicing" is required to be on time at the checks. (I do appreciate, however, that it is due to road conditions, and not the fault of the committees concerned, that this is not practicable in the other big rallies.)

Finally, the R.S.A.C. do seem to go out of their way to consider the comfort of competitors once the road section has been completed. Not only at the Clubhouse at Glasgow, but at the night controls too, they make sure that the competitor and his crew enjoy themselves. The system whereby the three intermediate nights are spent in the same place is wholeheartedly welcomed, especially by that not inconsiderable portion of the entry list who come North as competitors in the M.C.C. Edinburgh Trial.

It is indeed hard to find fault with the organisation of the Scottish Rally, particularly as I wish first to praise the inclusion of a parking test, which, as the J.C.C. have proved in their Brooklands rallies, is a real test of driving skill. But—now for the criticism. You have probably guessed it—the braking test. I am the first to agree that a braking test is a fair, nay, an essential, part of a rally. And yet what happened in 1938? The enormous differences in marking on this single test had such an influence on the final placings, that over half the entry signed a petition asking that the whole question should be reviewed. In 1939, something even worse (in my opinion) occurred. The revised test eliminated at least six of the finest drivers in the rally. It may be that I have a bee in my bonnet over the question of experienced drivers, but when so many first-class men (and women) are put out of the running, I must confess that I begin to wonder whether the test itself is all that it should be. To crown the tragedy, all this occurred on the first day of the rally, and so considerably lessened the day-to-day interest by reducing the number of potential winners.

The Welsh Rally, a comparative newcomer to our ranks, has several good points in common with the Scottish Rally. The first of these was introduced for the first time last year, namely to have both intermediate nights' rest at the same control, obviating that hectic packing which every rally crew detests.

The second, equally appreciated by the writer, is the system whereby a separate test is held each day, although the question whether two hill tests per rally is not one too many is a moot point. What is certainly an excellent scheme, and I think I am right in crediting the S.W.A.C. with it, is the reversal of the starting order on alternate days, ensuring each crew at least one late morning during the rally, a favour much appreciated, especially by regular competitors.



Humfrey Symons and the "Cape Record" Wolseley in an R.A.C. Rally Test

On the debit side comes the final tests, which, for the purpose of this article, I intend to couple with those of the L.A.C.'s Blackpool Rally. There's too much of this "forwards-backwards-forwards" business. Yes, I know: you've got to have a certain amount of spectacle and quite a lot of driving skill in your tests, but after all, you've also got to consider the man who really pays for your rally—the competitor. There was never a gearbox made to stand up to the sudden to-and-fro movements demanded by some of last year's tests in these two rallies, and if gearbox or back axle did not protest in practice, or during the event, it is either a testimonial to the manufacture of the car, or a warning of things to come. Such tests are excellent *per se*, but the havoc they are liable to wreak with quite expensive parts of a motor car makes even the most enthusiastic competitor think twice before entering a rally again. This applies particularly to the regular competitor, who appears quite prominently on the promoter's entry list, and, consequently, on the credit side of that promoter's bank balance.

Another fault shared by these two rallies, and one which will always arouse considerable controversy, is the institution of that luckless individual, the Judge of Fact. Both rallies included tests which demanded that the car should stop astride a line, and, upon a signal from the J. of F., proceed forwards. The weak link here is the human element: no judge, however willing, can possibly give the same signal one hundred and fifty times without making several errors of judgment. Sometimes he will motion the car forward immediately, and at others there will be a lapse of anything up to half a second after it has come to rest. And half a second is half a point, and more than one class award has been lost by a smaller margin than that . . .

By all means have a Judge of Fact to decide whether the car stops, and whether it stops in the right place, but let the driver use his own judgment as to whether he is conforming to the regulations. If he fails to do this, he has only himself to thank, although, human nature being what it is, he will in all probability blame his navigator.

To complete this very sketchy criticism of British rallies, I should like to mention one or two of the Blackpool Rally's good points, and with an experienced enthusiast like Maurice Toulmin at the head of things, the difficulty is not in finding them, but in selecting them.

First, the road section. I don't know how they did it, but the committee saw to it that you had to work quite hard to keep up to schedule, even though the average speed required by the regulations was not excessive. Even some of the most hardened competitors will bear me out in this! May I commend also the provision of tests *en route*,

THIS RALLY BUSINESS—continued

although in fairness I must deplore their similarity? Another excellent innovation was the introduction of secret checks in a given area, wherein competitors had to cover a limited but unknown distance at a given average speed, and I for one would welcome the retention of this kind of test over greater distances (with correspondingly greater margins in the required average), in all long-distance rallies. Yet another feature worth copying is one that is possible only in a closed invitation event, organised by a private club. I refer, of course, to the offering (either by the organisers or the clubs concerned) of awards for the best performance by a member of each invited club.

Without a doubt, this increases the interest of any event, for, pot-hunting or no, one does enter a competition with a faint hope of winning something, and the knowledge that one has, at any rate, a slight chance of an award in spite of the experts makes a lot of difference to a large percentage of amateur motorists.

Briefly, then, my Rally Aims are these :—

First: a five-day Rally with a control reached at the end of the first day, from half a dozen starting points, which remains as a centre throughout the rally; no night sections; a route with really beautiful scenery (the passengers at least will appreciate this); an average speed fast enough to keep drivers up to the mark; a different test each day, and—a good party to come back to each evening.

Second: a two-day event, with less importance attached to the road section, the result depending more or less entirely on the eliminating tests, which would be frequent and searching. With this rally, a full-blown *concours d'elegance* might well be arranged, the marking of which might be included in the results of the rally proper.

Third: a Round-Britain Rally, or at least a genuine Forty-Eight Hour Non-Stop event, with frequent tests *en route* including (dare I suggest it?) several trials hills, of which one, for example, could be Bluehills Mine. These hills, even if not observed in the strict sense of the word, should at least be climbed without outside assistance to enable a competitor to qualify as a finisher. Controls should not be more than two hundred miles apart, and the time limits should be very much stricter than those generally imposed to-day. Naturally, Class Awards would be allocated, but there would also be an outright winner, who might well be the envy of every competition driver of the day, driving a car that every right-minded manufacturer should intend to improve upon before the next year's event. Am I asking too much?

After all, it shouldn't be too hard—I have known much wilder dreams come true. Might I then ask for one thing more—definitely my last territorial demand? Couldn't some benefactor offer a really worthwhile prize, in cash or in silverware, for the best combined performance put up by one competitor in the four principal rallies of the year? It would certainly give great impetus to an excellent branch of the Sport.

You've plenty of time ahead, so—think it over, Authority—think it over.

HIGH VOLTAGE SPORTS COIL

The use of wide sparking plug gaps has been shown to effect an improvement in both performance and economy, especially if most of the car's running is done with comparatively small throttle openings. This is because the wide plug gaps enable a lower and more even idling speed to be used. The use of such gaps imposes a greater strain on the ignition system which the Sports Coil will compensate, being specially designed to withstand higher voltages.

It must be realised that, with small throttle openings, the gas is not a homogeneous mixture in all cylinders, but contains a considerable proportion of burnt gases. The greater volume of spark from the wider plug gap results in the increased probability of an ignitable portion of the gas being in the path of the spark and so giving more uniform firing at low speeds. Most ignition distributors incorporate a centrifugal automatic timing control built into the body, and these are designed to enable the engine to give maximum power at full throttle, whereas with a smaller throttle opening some extra advance is desirable in order to give maximum power at that particular throttle opening. With wide plug gaps, the amount of extra advance needed is reduced by several degrees and consequently the existing ignition timing (without alteration) is more nearly correct, again resulting in a slight increase in economy. Do not forget that, in order to obtain the best results, the carburetter should be adjusted to give a weaker mixture.



LUCAS SPORTS COIL

No doubt you will desire to have a high voltage sports coil, and you cannot do better than to fit the one marketed by Lucas. It retails at 21/-, is finished in polychromatic brown, and has the advantage of being easily obtainable from any Lucas agent.

A TWO-STROKE HOME-BREWED CYCLE-CAR

Details have reached us from Fenn-Wiggan of his very intriguing special, which is of especial interest now that really small-engined cars have come into their own. The chassis consists of twelve cross-members of 6″ × ¾″ ash, bolted with 6½″ × ¼″ bolts to side members composed of 7′ × 5″ × ¼″ lengths of ash. These side members were cut from a 14′ length of ash in the hall of the constructor's house, because it was otherwise impossible to convey the raw materials to the spare bedroom in which assembly took place! The front axle assembly embodies an Austin Seven axle cut in half and twin cantilever transverse springs on each side. M.G. steering was adapted to this layout. The engine is a 596 c.c. two-stroke, two-cylinder Scott, which weighs only 50 lbs. complete with magneto. This is mounted on 3″ × 3″ angle iron bearers bolted to the ash "floor," the magneto being remounted on a steel platform half on the engine and half on the frame. The honeycomb of an Austin Seven radiator is the cooling element, and a water pump from a Talbot looks after circulation. the pump living opposite the magneto, driven by a slotted stirrup rivetted to the magneto sprocket. The gearbox is from a 500 c.c. A.J.S. motorcycle and the clutch has special inserts to cope with greater loading. Drive is by chains to a solid rear axle machined from a Morgan prop. shaft, carrying large flanges at each end to accommodate Riley wheels, and with another flange 12″ from the near side to take a brake drum and the final drive sprocket. A single Austin seat was bolted on and the steering wheel had to be detachable to enable the driver to get into the snug cockpit, a neat racing body being fitted. On completion, the car was with considerable difficulty got out of the bedroom on to the stairs, lifted over the banisters and so into the hall and off to the cricket field for test. After a conflagration a rear fuel tank and pressure feed were installed. A stronger clutch spring and more inserts were found necessary, and a stronger magneto drive was fitted. Eventually the little car ran quite well, lapping the field at 40 m.p.h.

THE REMINISCENCES OF H. L. BIGGS

No. I.—The Taking of the 1,100 c.c. Hour Record by Widengren's Amilcar

[H. L. Biggs served his apprenticeship with John Wallace, the designer of the Duzmo motor-cycle, and in the early nineteen twenties he rode their competition machine in speed trials and speed hill-climbs. He also rode at Brooklands for Sun Vitesse. He had decided that the best way of following the game with a minimum of expenditure was to combine business with pleasure, and get right down to the root of things by working as a mechanic in racing shops. Biggs commenced his career in the tuning department of G. H. Tucker, the Norton expert at Bristol. He then joined D. E. Calder in a private venture at Capel, racing Zeniths in sprint events, and at Southport, and attempting long-distance sidecar records at Montlhery with a 500 c.c. O.E.C.-Temple. On that occasion he was C. F. Temple's chair-ballast during an attack on the 10 kilo and 10 mile records, and had an extremely rough ride. After some general garage work, he joined Alfa-Romeo British Sales and went from there to J.A.P. Motors at Tottenham, engaging in engine assembly. Followed two years with Frazer-Nash, and Biggs then joined Francis at Automobile Supertuners, where he worked on a variety of well-known racing cars. He then went to Marshall Drew and Co., where he was associated with much supercharger research and installation, and some time later he took a partnership in the Bell Garage, at Putney. His personal vehicles have included a 1913 2¾ Douglas, two special Duzmos, a two-stroke rotary valve Sun Vitesse, 2¾ A.J.S., 2¾ single-pot Indian, 7-9 road-racing Indian, an eight-valve ex-Le Vack Indian, a 2¾ o.h.c. Blackburn raced on grass, cinders and in sprint events, a 2¾ F.N., 175 c.c. Francis-Barnett and a Coventry Eagle midget. His first car was a racing Douglas cyclecar with s.v. water cooled flat-twin engine with two Zenith carburetters, four-speed gearbox, rear suspension by bell cranks and transverse coil springs, and bolster fuel tank. This car was sold to "Prince Paraffin," a coloured Cambridge student, who blew the engine up in a water-splash. Incidentally, we used to see one of these cars every day on the way to school a dozen or so years ago, and the remains of one could be seen at Brooklands Aerodrome a few years back. A Gwynne Eight hip-bath followed, which, fitted with two Solex carburetters and a special exhaust system, frequently ran an end and came home on three cylinders. Next Biggs ran a 1,100 c.c. Ruby-engined Frazer-Nash, sans f.w.b. and rear universal. Then came a 1926 Chummy Austin Seven, which broke its crankshaft on Porlock, whereupon Biggs fitted a new one, using only the tools in the tool kit, and a 1929 Riley Monaco, which covered hundreds of thousands of miles attending racing fixtures. Biggs now runs a Fiat 500, having stored his special trials Austin Seven, which he described in a previous issue of MOTOR SPORT. *Now engaged on Air Ministry engineering, he has been recalling his past associations with the greatest game of all by turning up his scrap-book and other carefully-kept records of twenty years on the inside of motor-racing. These reminiscences, the first of which we present herewith, are the outcome.—Ed.]*

SATURDAY, April 15th, 1933. "Wal," said the Great Man, in that intriguing Cornish-American accent of his, "if it goes over the mile at 120, we'll have a crack at the class hour record." "It" was the beautifully streamlined offset six-cylinder Amilcar, finished in cream, blue and black, the national colours of its owner-driver, Henken Widengren, recently returned from that devastating dice, the Swedish Winter Grand Prix, in which he drove a low chassis 4½-litre Invicta. The Great Man, none other than R. F. Oats, that doyen of veteran race drivers.

Those words terminated a month of intensive work on the Amilcar, after a sheared camshaft key had caused valves to make intimate acquaintance with pistons, and the opportunity had been taken to completely rebuild the engine, embodying various modifications conceived by Alec Francis, the technician of the concern of Automobile Supertuners, with whom I was working at the time.

That sunny April evening, the Amilcar turned several laps at 111 m.p.h., and actually did go over the mile at 121 m.p.h.

On Monday, at the Easter B.A.R.C. meeting, it finished second, off 21 seconds to Turner's blown 4½-litre Bentley, off 9 seconds, lapping at 110 in the teeth of a strong wind blowing up the straight, which finally clinched the idea of "having a crack at the Hour."

Montlhèry was to be the scene of activities, owing to the advantages of perfect surface and lack of silencer restrictions; and back at the Mews on Tuesday, we got down to the necessary detail work, such as extra stays to the bonnet cowl, and the replacing of the Brooklands silencer assembly by a long open pipe; also in addition a rigid tow bar had to be made up as we were to tow behind Widengren's Speed Twenty Alvis saloon. On the morning of the 19th, the car was ready, kit and spares packed in the Alvis, and myself packed into the extremely narrow seat, specially shaped to grip the hips of the driver. An omen of success appeared at the last minute, in the shape of the black Mews kitten, which jumped inside the car with me.

The run to Newhaven was as uneventful as the shipping of the car, the crossing only marked by the periodic vibration of the ship's propeller shaft, which was faulty.

Dieppe was reached at the grisly hour of 2 a.m., but we did not land the car until the dawn broke, disclosing a very heavy frost, which became more apparent as we travelled south at a steady 60. Never in my life have I been so cold, and owing to the restricted space in the cockpit, very soon cramp set in, and ultimately I had to be lifted from the car, and liberally dosed with hot brandy and coffee. Francis then inserted himself in the Amilcar and we carried on, a very few miles seeing him in the same condition; but by then, having thawed out beside Widengren, who was driving the Alvis, I was able to take the wheel for the remainder of the run to Montlhèry.

Only two incidents stand out during this part of the run, one, the piloting of the team across Paris by a Renault taxi, with a newspaper sticking from its sunshine roof to distinguish it from its multitudinous brethren; the other, the breaking of the tow bar lug just outside the city. Fortunately, the bar bounced, and gave me time to brake hard before the end of it spragged into the ground.

After passing vaguely familiar landmarks, we forked right from the main road, up the hill to the Track, arriving at 10 a.m. I was immediately recognised by Montlhèry's "Mr. Cann," as one of the O.E.C. Temple *equipe* of 1926.

The English colony just laughed us to scorn! "Why," said they, "you'll take at least three weeks to get your carburation right, and in any case you'll never get timekeepers; they're all down at Monte Carlo, or else on the Citroen record attempt, which has been running for weeks."

This did not sound so good. However, I rushed to the 'phone to find out why our special B.P. 4 had not arrived, which it did shortly after, in a gigantic *camion*. Having filled up, we soon had the car lapping very comfortably at 115, which was satisfactory, as the record then stood in the neighbourhood of 110. Hiring one of the sheds built under the Track, we put the car away, and dashed back to Paris, arriving late in the evening, Widengren to go to his hotel, Francis and I to the Mont Fleuri.

The following morning, off to the A.C.F., where we found to our dismay that what had been told us was indeed true, the timekeepers were not available!

Widengren was desolated, and suggested throwing up the whole attempt as he had a business appointment in Stockholm on the following Monday. This spurred me to action, and away we went to see M. Letory, the *chef de piste*, a charming man, who opined that in all probability Citroen's would loan us a timekeeper, if we could run the Amilcar concurrently with their car.

Having made arrangements about Track fees, we dashed back to the A.C.F. where I fortunately found a girl clerk who could speak a spot of English. This was a great help, and by phoning Citroen's the whole thing was fixed. We could have the Track at 7 a.m. the following morning for one hour, so off to Dunlops to see the *chef de Services Course*, M. Lallemont, to arrange for a fitter to be at the Track with the tyres for the attempt that evening.

With lighter hearts, we descended on Le Chevaux Pie for a marvellous lunch with innumerable *hors d'œuvres*, and immediately after shot back to the Track, booking a room for that night for Francis and myself at L'Escargot, the inn at

REMINISCENCES OF H. L. BIGGS—continued

the foot of the hill. (In 1926, this was more appropriately named Auberge de la Butte Rouge.)

Up at the Track we were pleased to hear that M. Morel, the famous Amilcar driver, had observed the car through the keyhole of our shed door, and commented on its beautiful aero-dynamic profile. At once we set about draining and flushing the oil tank, removing the small aero screen and mirror, and generally getting everything *au point*, and at 6 p.m. the Dunlop fitter arrived and in a desultory fashion commenced to fit the tyres, but as at 8 o'clock only one had been done, we returned to l'Escargot for a meal, after locking the fitter's trousers, which he had discarded before donning his boiler suit, in our shed so as to be sure of seeing him before he went. At 10 p.m. he called for these garments, so up to the Track again. We found to our annoyance that no balancing had been done and decided to do this in the morning, but further incidental work saw us in bed at 3 a.m.

Very fortunately, the charming wife of an Hungarian Bugatti driver had loaned me their alarm clock, which I set for 4.30 a.m. But I fear that I slept little, and was shortly up at the Track again, balancing the wheels with lead tape in the chilly darkness of that sandy-floored shed.

At 6 a.m. Widengren arrived from Paris, and we arranged a somewhat primitive system of signals. Three lap scoring boards were obtained bearing large figures—Nos. 4, 5, and 6. We agreed to display 4 if the lap speed was too low, 5 if O.K., and 6 if unnecessarily high. Shortly after 7 o'clock, the car was on the line, and in my extremely ungrammatical French, I explained to the timekeeper that Widengren would do one warming up lap, hard plugs would then be fitted, and the record attempt would commence.

The warming up lap completed, and with K.L.G. 356s in, the Amilcar was away with that penetrating crackle which caused the Brooklands authorities to order the fitting of an additional silencer, in conjunction with the regulation pattern.

The following hour was one of the longest I have ever known, and nerves were so tensioned that any person interrupting concentration on that small object speeding round the 2½ kilo circuit would undoubtedly have been assaulted. Francis had instructed Widengren to lift his foot once per lap to ease the motor, and on one occasion he cut for a split second longer than usual, and my heart stood still!

As each record fell, a chit would be brought out from the timekeeper's office; 50 kilos, 50 miles, 100 kilos, 100 miles were ours in turn, and the strain eased, but the hour was our aim, and the car now seemed to be taking a peculiar course, on no two consecutive laps did it run on to the banking in the same line, due, we heard afterwards, to oil mist on the driver's goggles practically blinding him.

At last, the clock on the chronometrage showed that the hour was up, and after the 200 miles had been added to the bag, the car coasted into the bay, and the Track seemed suddenly full of the most pleasant people, all congratulating everyone concerned, M. Lallemont being especially concerned with shaking hands with the "*Bon mechanicien.*" We blushed and hurried off to the *patiniere* for an enormous breakfast of ham and eggs, before removing the cylinder head for the authorities to measure bore and stroke. This done, checked and double-checked, the head was replaced, a few head nuts tightened down, and the car hitched behind the Alvis once again.

Widengren was dropped in Paris as he was flying to Sweden. We carried on to Dieppe, learning on the way that racing Hartford settings in conjunction with French *pave* do not suit the digestion, and also that French drivers will assert their rights to the extent of causing the Speed Twenty and the Amilcar to finish up side by side with the rigid tow bar not so rigid!

Both cars were left at Dieppe for shipment on the morrow, whilst Francis and I returned that night with the comforting thought that this tremendous rush had not been in vain, as the 1,100 c.c. Hour Record had been raised by some 5 m.p.h. and the Amilcar now held all the class records up to 200 miles, with the solitary exception of the standing mile.

But no real rest for the mechanic as the Avus race would be on the following week-end . . . Ah well!

DUNLOP

as BRITISH as the FLAG



40H/106

Club News

B.O.C.

The Bugatti Owners' Club held a very pleasant dinner and film-show at the R.A.C. at the end of February. We were unable to attend, but how successful this function was is evident from the following report submitted by "J.D.A.," who came down from Cheshire to be present :—

Some people who are never happier than when they are sunk in gloom doubted whether a club meeting could be successful while there is a war on ; they might have gained some courage if they could have been present at the little informal dinner held by the Bugatti Owners' Club at the R.A.C. at the end of February. Of course they weren't present, that sort of fellow wouldn't be, but by now they have heard just what they missed. Perhaps it is just my Bohemian character which makes me think that the attire of state usual in normal times for a club dinner stiffens things up as much as it does the wearer ; everybody says they've enjoyed it no end, but there is a faraway look in their eyes which suggests that they are praising the Lord because there won't be another one for a whole twelve months.

There's no question, however, that a good time was had by one and all, for the R.A.C., which you may have noticed has been rising quietly to the occasion for some time past, rose to an Occasion which Bugatti Owners naturally spell with a big "O," put on a gorgeous little dinner in just the right surroundings, and made the party so very welcome, that it is to be feared the final departure of some members was delayed until the welcome might have worn a bit thin. The hon. secretary told me that, when the idea was first mooted, it was thought that possibly a dozen or so of the elect might brave the black-out to be present ; in fact, over eighty keen members put in an appearance. It was delightful to recognise and be recognised by all the old friends, a bit unfamiliar perhaps, because they lacked racing overalls, or some sporting article of attire—such as a check cap—to which they show themselves addicted, but wearing the same old smile, and showing the same old *joie de vivre* which they usually exhibit at Prescott, or elsewhere when there isn't any war on. Vaughan, Lemon-Burton, Shakespeare, Monro, Clutton, Heal, and Peter Clark were amongst those present. Also Raymond Mays, debonnair as usual, and just the same—though a little older—as in the now far-off Kop Hill days. Some of the old brigade turned up in military or naval rig, some admitted they were doing war-work, which they were glad to forget during one evening, some groused because an unappreciative Government has not yet made use of the services they have been holding at its disposal, but everyone was very cheerful. When the main business of the day was done, and the coffee mingled its aromatic scent with that of good tobacco, there was a film show, all the more delightful because we hadn't got to move from where we sat.

Mays lent what he calls his "personal" film, which seemed to me to introduce others more often than its alleged protagonist ; then we had what is known as the "club film," a pictorial record, which, alas ! closed at what ought to have been the middle, with the International event at Prescott, while a surprise was the interposition of a film showing the obsequies of the late "Graf Spee."

750 CLUB

The 750 Club is not dead. On Saturday, April 6th, at 6.30 p.m., a meeting will be held to "talk cars," and to make suggestions anent a possible trial in the near future. The rendevous is on the second floor of the "Sunderland" at the junction of Vigo Street and Sackville Street, in the West End. All who can attend will be very welcome. This original club will certainly make history if it can contrive to hold the first war-time car trial. Secretary Hunter has now re-taxed his Austin Arrow four-seater, and is preparing a special.

C.U.A.C.

About sixty members and friends attended the dinner of March 9th. Raymond Mays was in the chair, and Robin Hanson, Reggie Tongue, Michael May, A. B. Hyde, Brian Twist, George Monkhouse—who showed his films—and Yarborough Bateson (whose A.C. is laid up, so he came on his bicycle), contrived to be present. Twenty new members have recently been enlisted.

PLYMOUTH M.C.

The third war-time social, a supper-dance, was held on Easter Monday, at the "Royal." This club seems to lead in successful war-time motoring social gatherings.

CORD OWNERS' CLUB

A Cord Owners' Club has been formed in the U.S.A., following a meeting at the Lake Shore Athletic Club. The president is D. Cameron Peck, the vice-president C. E. Emmer, both of Chicago, and the secretary-treasurer is Glenn-Thompson, of Glencoe. The Club's aims are : spare parts maintenance, possible future production of the now defunct Cord, and "the fellowship of those whose common interests in a fine piece of personal transportation, with many unique qualities of handling and performance, have led them to continue to own and drive Cord automobiles." The annual subscription is $5.00. An interesting ruling is that, if a member sells his Cord, and does not mean to buy another, he must resign within thirty days of the sale. Only last month we heard Peter Clark praise the Cord, with especial reference to its excellent front-wheel drive, use of a normal Lycoming marine motor, and its unique facia.

M.C.C.

In spite of some energetic endeavours, the committee could not be persuaded to think beyond future socials, at the A.G.M. last month. The Club definitely says "No !" to car-trials at present.

DON'T FORGET

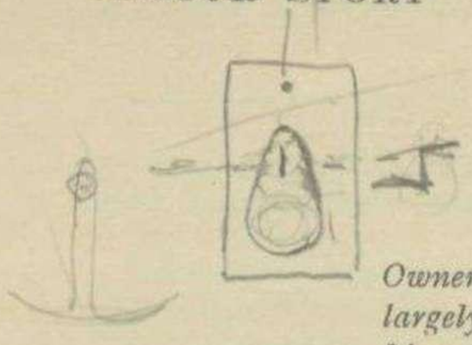
If you are shortly to be called up, don't forget to notify the secretaries of any club to which you subscribe of your Service address. There may be a social or other function happening during a leave-period, of which it will be useful to have prior notice.

A DANGEROUS SUBJECT

Continued from page 55

Using a 4¼-litre Bentley, McMinnies put up an overall average of 38 m.p.h. for 1,000 miles, going from London to Kingussie and back via Lancaster, Preston, Warrington, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Banbury. The total distance was 1,040 miles, and the running time average about 40 m.p.h. The other trip was recounted last autumn and came about, so the author, Michael Brown, tells us, because an American friend remembered that he wanted to get some Scotch heather for his grandmother, but only three days before he sailed for home. A 1½-litre M.G. saloon was borrowed, and it averaged 44 m.p.h. for 500 miles, *overall time*. The running time average cannot be quite accurately quoted, as the period of one coffee stop is not logged, but it must have been better than 46 m.p.h. The best hour's mileage was 51, and 50 miles were put into an hour on two occasions—one would expect a 4¼-litre Bentley to be faster, and on the present writer's Scottish run, the best hour's mileage (on the return section, which was the only time we kept such a careful check) was 56. It is notable that some mist is nearly always experienced on long-distance runs in this country, even in mid-summer.

In conclusion, average speed is well worth logging, but it has an almost purely personal value, regarded either as simulating information or as an indication of relative suitability of different cars for fast travel. The clearer roads now prevailing give every opportunity to log excellent averages, but more than ever before are care and restraint essential and their relaxation more than criminal.



CARS I HAVE OWNED

[Donald Monro, whose extremely cheery countenance is a prominent feature of Bugatti Owners' Club meetings, has made motoring one of his chief relaxations, an interest which Mrs. Monro largely shares. Knowing that he keeps very careful records of the performance and behaviour of his cars, we asked him to let us have an account of all those that he has adopted, or, as Monro himself would have it, has "owned and ill-treated." This account follows, and it will be seen that, apart from his Invictas, Monro has had a varied experience of other interesting, and in some cases little-known, makes.—Ed.]

IN 1920 my parents gave me a Rover Eight, and I suspect that it was selected owing to its moderate speed. The maximum speed of this particular one was 35 m.p.h., which was well beyond my "safe" capabilities—I had had one driving lesson of half-an-hour, apart from steering my father's Lancia round Regents Park. The magneto was in a rather exposed position, and picked up any water that was about, so the car was not very easy to start. On one occasion I left it by the kitchen stove to dry and forgot to replace it, when starting was even more difficult.

Finally, I followed my father's car on a holiday to Bournemouth, and as his Talbot 25 saloon had a maximum of 65 and my touring speed was something less than my maximum (but not much), I dropped well and frequently behind. On the return trip I was regarded as "less nuisance if I went first," and I took the alternative route at Farnham and lost them. It was on this occasion that a copper remarked that "He had seen a car with a body like a box, but the young chap looked as if he would not get very far." He was quite wrong—I got back to North London.

So in 1922 I was given a new Talbot Eight open two-seater, with the solid back axle. Average tyre mileage was 3,500. The car cost £375, which is a guide to ruling prices that year. She was an excellent job, having a maximum speed of 53, and a propensity for maintaining her maximum with reliability, which was very necessary in my case. Once I was unwise enough to drive an uncle to a golf club at Radlett, and it was then that my family really found out that I took blind corners on the right side of the road, and allowed petrol to leak into the cockpit from a defective petrol tap while my uncle was smoking. I sold this car in June 1923, and after that she was twice turned over, once on a Welsh Pass, but nevertheless she ran for many years.

I then bought a 12/28 o.h.v. Vinot, with a most elaborate body in aluminium, with a bulbous tail. It had a maximum of sometimes 56 and sometimes 62, and did not very much like maintaining 50 for long spells. I took her on the Track once, and drove her back to Golders Green. There we opened the bonnet to see where the oil was leaking from, and found two large holes in the base chamber.

She had a starter that rang like a gong, and footbrake on the transmission, and a consulting engineer once remarked after a run that she was a nice motor-car, and tried to buck you over her head whenever you put on the brakes.

On another occasion the clutch seized up when going North, and my "audible warning device" was, as usual, out of action. I was towed, and ran over the tow-rope, finishing up with my near side wheels three or four feet higher than the others, being well up a bank at an angle of 45°.

My next item might be more relevant in an article on zoology. Polished aluminium bodies have their disadvantages, as I found when I met a herd of cows in a narrow Welsh lane: one saw its own reflection, took fright, and charged straight at my radiator, causing minor damage.

My next item is about a car I did *not* own: it may be of interest. I took a great fancy "on sight" to a clover-leaf Bignan 2-litre sports in Great Portland Street, but thought the salesman, who was asking £375, seemed unduly eager to make a sale at a lower figure, so I waited a week, when it was offered to me at £225. After some difficulty I traced the distributor and made an appointment. I climbed a rickety wooden staircase and entered a small upper room lighted by two candles over a diminutive mantel-piece. There the distributor, a Frenchman, was decent enough to inform me that the car was a Desmodromique model (it was Greek to me, but I believed valveless, and he told me that the slightest piece of grit "*fait tout-a-fait arreter le machine.*" The alleged French is my own). [The author is not quite accurate here. The Desmodromique Bignan was not valveless, but had positive-closing of the valves. We believe a hydraulic actuation may have been used, but are not certain. This car was shown at Olympia in 1923, but it is doubtful if any were sold here, as an o.h.c. 2-litre sports was also listed. This gave 35 b.h.p. per litre against the 40 b.h.p. per litre of the Desmodromique 2-litre.—Ed.]. I then tried a standard chassis, which had a most attractive lay-out, excellent brakes, and fine acceleration, but I could not afford the price, which was, I think, about £600. I also tried a 2-litre sports Ansaldo (driven by a young man who had one speed of 38-40 in traffic irrespective of cross-roads) with a speedometer maximum of seventy—which I reckoned to be just over sixty—and a short, light and rather "skiddy" chassis. I also tried an 18-70 Itala and a Panhard 18, all these being second-hand, the Panhard oiling profusely.

Finally, I bought a really excellent 12.8 side-valve D.E. Delage, with an exceptionally well-finished Kelsch four-seater boat body, which cost new £650, and fell to me after fifteen months' use, in December, 1924, for £285. Acceleration was rather woolly, and the maximum 65 (a reasonable speedometer said 68), the lap speed being 59 odd. This car was most reliable and well-found, and the only snag was that one sat high over the steering wheel, and felt as if one was piloting a yacht. I used her for eighteen months, sold her to my brother-in-law for £115, and after a further eighteen months he sold out for £65. She had one good engine repair after some Brooklands laps, when con-rods lay in the sump at queer angles, but otherwise she was trouble-free. On one occasion we left London at sixish, and got to Carlisle for a late lunch, having averaged 39, which I thought a great improvement on my previous cars. She had one small carburetter and a "North East" magneto.

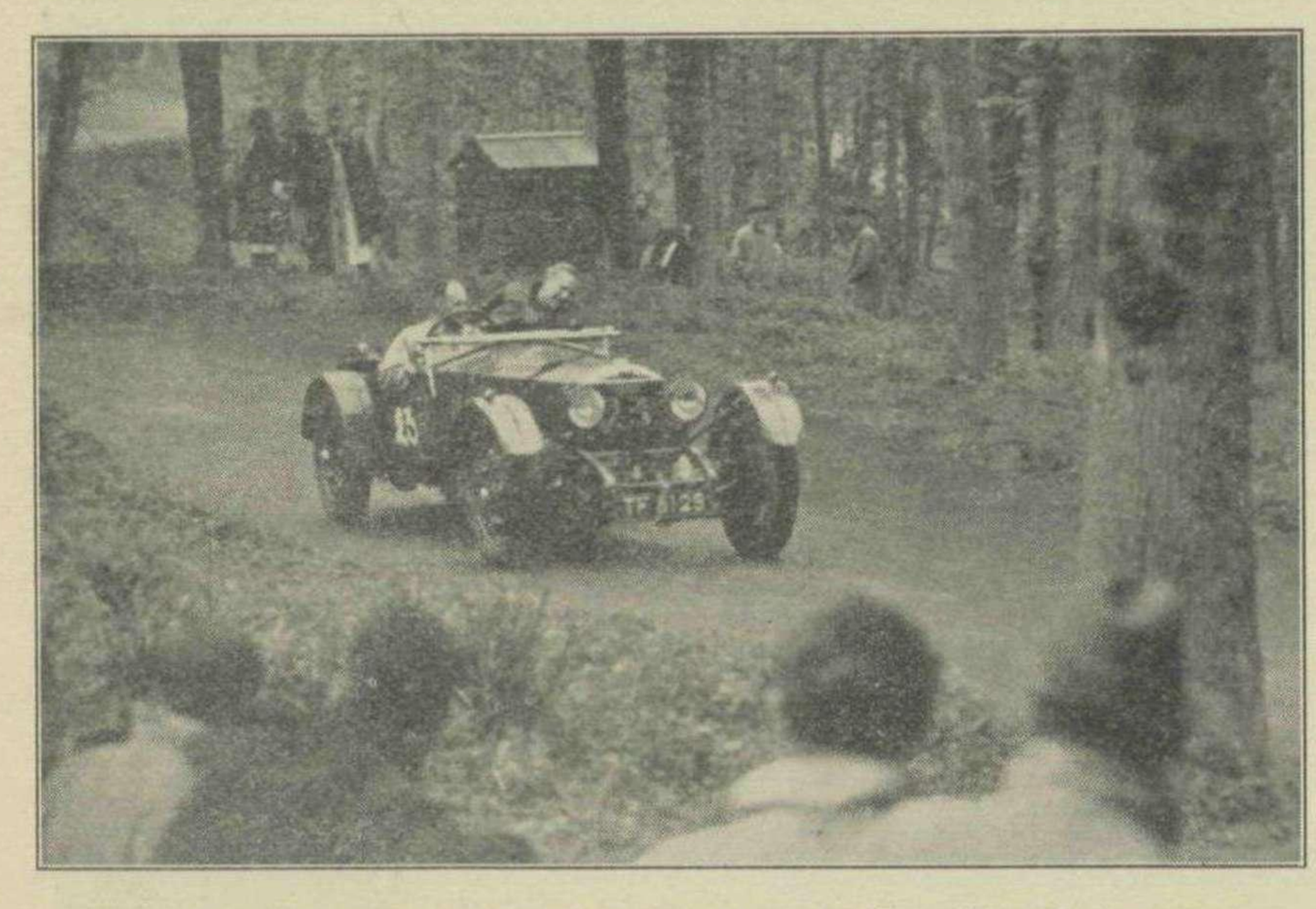
About January, 1926, I was very impressed with the test figures of the 12/40 Star, then handled by University Motors, and at this time one of these cars held the Ballybannon Hill Climb record (which I noted for future attention). I had a new two-seater mottled aluminium body built by Star, and on the salesman's advice (he was a friend), a higher radiator, the scuttle line giving them a great deal of trouble, though they were most helpful. This model had rather long flexible springs, but was quite fast, covering the half-mile at seventy, and zero to 50 took 20 seconds. Third showed 50 m.p.h., and the back axle ratio was 4.75 to 1. My first Shelsley ascent took 83 seconds.

The very young do queer things, and I remember that it was a point of etiquette in the very early morning going south, to business, to see how fast one could take the corner by Lord's cricket ground. One morning I gave my brother-in-law a lift, and we took it at forty-two on grease. To our port side a cemetery, to starboard a lighting standard. How we missed both when the tail came round I really don't know, but we sat there with queer feeling in the tummy, facing the way we had come, while a bus conductor expectorated from the curb, and remarked "Don't hurry to the cemetery, guvnor!" Three days afterwards, a large "GO SLOW" notice appeared on the standard, so as there was only the one witness I imagine that the bus conductor had passed on the glad news.

Wanting more speed and lighter body-work, I bought a three-seater 12/40 Star, scrapped the body, and fitted a rakish fabric two-seater by Hill and Boll, of Yeovil. I fitted a pump-type Zenith carburetter and a Thomson & Taylor exhaust, the police once paying me the

CARS I HAVE OWNED—continued

compliment of taking a technical interest in the latter, in spite of the fact that they had to leave an accident to do so. She again had a maximum of 70, but cornering was much improved, and on one occasion I was third in the 2-litre class at Shelsley, in 71 seconds. The main competitors in that class were Fairrie's 2-litre Bugatti, Cyril Durlacher's great team of three Diattos (they were mighty fine cars), 2-litre O.M.s (Oats), blown Lea-Francis, and Brescia Bugattis, the latter two makes being fast when all their plugs fired at the same time. Fairrie was generally in the lead with about 62 seconds, which seemed terrific to us then.



Donald Monro ascending Prescott in his Competition 4½-litre Invicta

After this I ran a 2-litre (high chassis) 1928 Speed Model Lagonda for the best part of a year, and the best fun I had was when I finally ran her at Ballybannon Hill Climb in Ulster, and made fifth fastest time out of eighteen nondescript cars. Really there were two T.T. Lea-Francis, one T.T. Bentley, *and the rest.* We practised about 6 a.m. with the road open, and just missed a donkey-trap; at about 11 a.m. I nearly got drowned in my host's lake, and I had four climbs (one extra for luck as a stranger), while on each run my third gear slipped out at 4,000 r.p.m. A bright soul in the house party sent me a wire:—"Your white helmet much appreciated on Ballybannon." I needed that helmet's moral support, as the car had a maximum of 74 (speedometer 82), and a real 68 on third, but we did beat the record-holding Star, which was past its best.

This car had a much better chassis than the Star, but was heavy, and took 24 seconds from zero to 50. The plugs oiled up a lot at low speeds, but in general she was one of the most reliable cars I've ever owned, and very well sprung.

I then bought a Mark I 18/80 M.G. tourer second-hand: it had a very fast and smooth engine, but the body was heavy and rattled a good deal, while suspension was not too good.

I changed her for an M.G. Mark I Speed, which was better sprung and cornered better, but a tall driver sat very high, and the body was narrow, so she was a smart but very chilly car. She did 81, and took 16 seconds to 50, being 4 m.p.h. faster than the Mark I tourer, and having the same acceleration to 50.

Both these M.G.s were good usable, production cars, their limitations to my mind being that they were rather narrow in proportion to their wheel-base, and suffered from the lack of a four-speed gearbox. The Mark II, which had a four-speed gearbox, cost £100 more, however, and was reported to be not quite so fast, and heavier.

I then acquired from the factory direct a used experimental model, with a shortened Mark I Speed chassis, and a Mark II gearbox, which was called, I believe, an "Experimental Tigresse," though it differed materially from the Mark III Tigresse. I fitted outside exhaust pipes of a non-standard type, which Mr. McConnell did not very much like—and I now think rightly so. The petrol distribution in this particular car was always difficult and the valves tended to stick as well: also I had non-standard carburetters, with vent holes at the top. The petrol used to shoot up through the vent holes on to the exhaust pipes in merry fountains, catching fire four times on one Saturday at the track, so that the approach of my car reminded one of the beacons that heralded the Spanish Armada.

The car was a fawn and chocolate two-seater, and looked like an enlarged edition of the first Midgets. She had a maximum of 82 on top, and 70 on third, and in view of the experimental features I incorporated, any failings the car had were my personal responsibility. She had her good points, being fast and interesting to handle, and I enjoyed using her. She took me up Shelsley in 62⅘ (compared with 71 seconds for the overloaded Mark I with three-speed box) and if on this occasion I was over-conscientious enough to enter her as a racing car, she was hardly a standard sports model. Her class consisted of two Nacional Pescaras and myself, and I did not at all object to taking 20 seconds longer than the best racing cars Spain could produce as a national effort.

I shall always remember the beautiful layout of the M.G. factory and its picturesque surroundings, while service there was a pleasure I looked forward to.

In November, 1931, I was offered a really grand car, this being the spare Talbot 90 road-racing chassis (No. 4) which had never been raced, and had been fitted by its only owner, Prince George Imeretinsky, with a close-coupled touring body, and had seen extensive Alpine touring in his hands. We tested his car against my M.G. on the Barnet By-Pass as a prelude, and the two cars had identical acceleration right up the range. We each had a maximum of 82, and ran "yard for yard," until we called it a draw.

This car had a 25 gallon tank, and a wonderful instrument board. She held the road like a leech, but was a little heavy on sharp corners.

In the first R.A.C. Rally (1932) she covered the 100 yards slow top-gear test at an average of 2.2 m.p.h., being pitted against the fluid fly-wheel cars, and others with unconventional clutch and transmission layouts, and then accelerated from a five-yard start to cover the 100 yards acceleration in 8 seconds, with four people "up," being beaten in this test only by Healey's Invicta. As she crossed the line she stopped from 43 m.p.h. in 51½ feet, "The Autocar's" test figures being 50 feet from 40 m.p.h. After 1,000 miles of fast touring, we had made no brake adjustments, and never have I enjoyed such magnificent "all-round" brakes.

I raised the compression from 7 to 1 to 7½ to 1, changed the Champion plugs from R.3 to R.11, and raised the maximum speed to 87 at 4,600 r.p.m., with a lap speed of 82. Zero to fifty improved from 14⅘ to 13⅘ seconds, and Shelsley Walsh improved from 60⅛ to 58 seconds dead. Petrol consumption averaged 15.6 with all traffic included. This 2¼-litre car weighed 27 cwt.

My next event was a wedding! We wanted a more economical car, but with plenty of luggage space for our holiday suit-cases, and a compromise between first cost, road-ability, performance and long life led me to a one-year-old 12/45 Invicta tourer, which had a maximum of 70, and would tour at 65 indefinitely without trouble. This car cost us £315, and we used her for 18,000 miles without any major repairs, although she was driven flat-out through the J.C.C. One-Hour High Speed Trial. I subsequently raised the back axle ratio from 6 to 1 to 5 to 1, and the maximum remained the same, but third gear speed improved from 50 to 60.

For several reasons I remember her complete fidelity in the second R.A.C.

CARS I HAVE OWNED—continued

Rally, when I took the westerly route, and my brother-in-law took my old two-seater M.G. up North. He had the most appalling bad luck in skidding and buckling a wheel, on top of which his head-light fuse went at speed, and his timing wheels passed out at Newcastle, where he spent a week while it never stopped raining.

The Invicta had a trouble-free run through torrential rain, until finally we lost our way in the middle of the night coming out of Torquay, and ran into one-way lanes with many unsignposted turnings between the main road and the sea. When all appeared to be lost, we met the main road again, and covered 91 miles in appalling rain at a very respectable speed. Nerves were a little ragged. but my passenger remained composed until afterwards, when he merely said," Donald, I would not have minded if you only had some remote idea how headlamps should be focussed." We reached the control in time, and as we sailed in my sleeve caught our special long ignition lever, which snapped off, and the car started to boil.

In the elimination tests, cars were flagged off from 100 yards ahead, and I noticed in the crowd two red dresses that appeared to be flags through a misty windscreen, which had to be left erect. I saw the dresses, but not the flag when it fell.

An uncle subsequently introduced me to a friend as "A keen motorist who motored 1,000 miles to see a flag fall, and then went to sleep at the critical moment."

By this time the Invicta mechanics were my firm friends, and in 1934 I bought a 3-litre L.C. Invicta saloon, then seven years old, at an auctioneer's for £40. We overhauled her thoroughly, and then fitted a white close-coupled sports body of my own design. This car had a beautiful engine, the only real fault being chassis flex under braking. I put her into a ditch in Sweden, and a stub-axle went on the way down from Newcastle on a greasy road, causing some gyrations which ended near a very unpleasant manure heap. The insurance permitted me to fit the heavier type axles used in the 4½-litre cars. As a 3-litre, this car did 82 on her 3.6 to 1 top at 3,000 r.p.m., and zero to 60 took around 20 seconds. She had a trouble ree run through the J.C.C. 1934 High Speed Trial.

In mid-1935, after another Continental trip, I converted her to a 4½-litre, and this gave the same acceleration in top as third previously recorded, maximum being 87 at *circa* 3,500 r.p.m. In the Vintage Club's Aston-Clinton acceleration test she made fastest time by a Vintage car in 20.3 seconds for the standing quarter, and won the Aggregate Cup for that year.

This car went in for every Bugatti Owners' Club event, and many other Hill Climbs and Gymkhanas, and was finally sold to a neighbour, who still maintains her in new condition, to his great credit. She is thirteen years old now.

In March, 1936, I changed her for an N.L.C. heavy chassis 4½-litre Invicta fabric saloon, making up another touring body with one of Miss Violette Cordery's discarded shells and some of her other spare parts, the car being rendered as new in sea-green. This car must have been the lineal descendant of my old Talbot, having a lap speed of 85, similar road-holding, and a complete weight of 32½ cwt. At Aston-Clinton she took 20.8 seconds for the quarter, and was quite out-classed.

However, she was a most successful machine, and reduced my Shelsley figure to 54.99 seconds, having by now 6.8 to 1 compression ratio, and a maximum of 90 (3,800 r.p.m.) on the lower 3.9 ratio. MOTOR SPORT tested this car, so I must not duplicate the figures. [See issue July 1937.—Ed.]. Her engine is now in my Special tourer "Red Gauntlet," and her present owner again keeps her, with a standard engine, exactly as I myself would wish.

In October, 1937, I bought my first low chassis Invicta, a special job built by Flood St. for Messrs. Gardner Diesel, and the last but one to be turned out (actually in 1935). Having bought her "less engine," we converted her to spark-combustion, with an "A" type 4½ engine, having the steel sports con-rods; later additions being a sump-trap, clutch ventilator, and the new thin-metal bearings. The car weighs 31½ cwt. She is a little tail-light, but the tail has only come round twice, once on the Invicta Club's Rally when at midnight a flock of sheep concealed in a slight dip in the road were encountered at high speed. I pulled into the Conway Control with wheels over an inch out of line, emitting a queer whistling sound from the tyres, the Club's verdict being that "The Artful Monro had concealed the fact that the car was supercharged."

On the other occasion, we met a treacherous patch of ice, and she settled down in a reverse direction, when we were able to steer her perfectly straight to a standstill. These cars are not therefore the "Death Trap" that so many people seem to imagine. Her performance is 92 on top, and 77 on third (4,000 r.p.m.). She takes 20.6 for the standing quarter-mile, and 15 seconds from zero to 60, handling perfectly at Shelsley (51.5 seconds), and Prescott (57.09 seconds). I am still using her regularly as an alternate car.

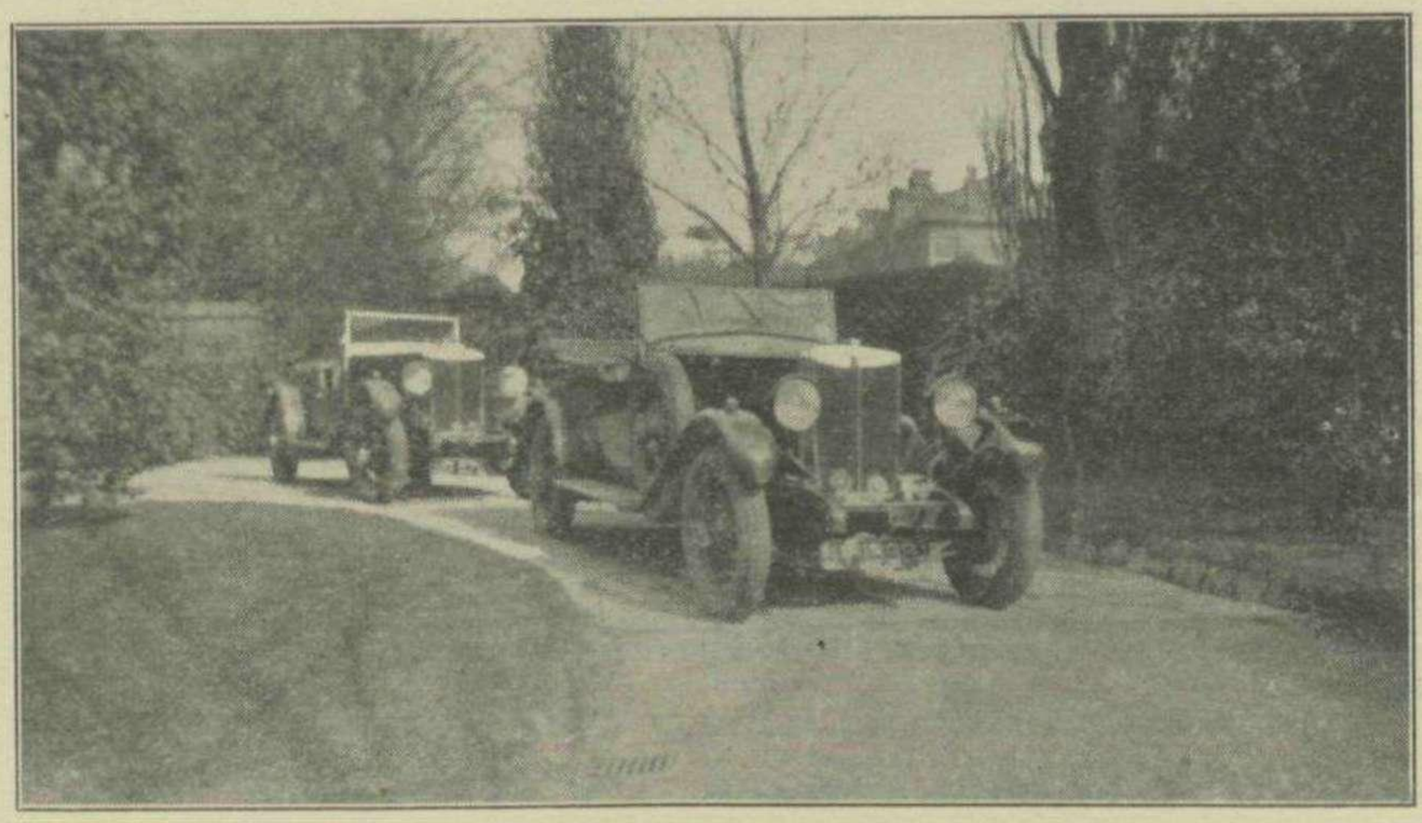
This February we stripped another closed car, and Invicta's late head tester, Tom Rotherham, put in all he knew to make this a real competition job. The chassis is shortened 6 in. and has an 8 gallon tank and skeleton mudguards, while a lot of drilling has taken place. She is the red two-seater known as "Red Gauntlet," and weighs 25½ cwt., all in. She laps Brooklands at 94, maximum being 99 at 3,800 r.p.m. off the banking, and many of Healey's features are incorporated, as Rotherham was with him when the three Invictas won Glacier Cups in the Alpine. The braking system is his, and special: it is far more efficient, and the chassis is much more rigid than standard, without being uncomfortable.

Shelsley takes 49.7 seconds, this time with the third gear usable, and reaching 60 m.p.h. on this ratio before the changing down for the Esses and at the finish. Prescott takes 54½ seconds.

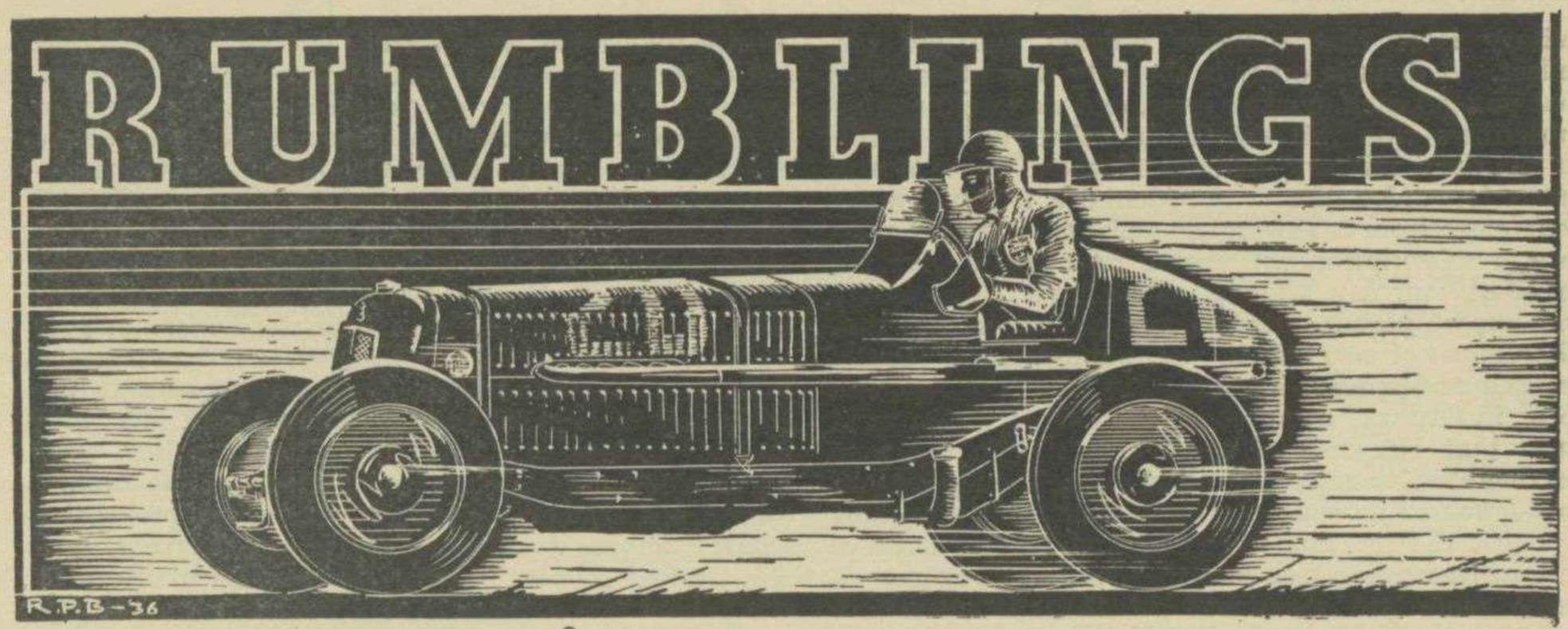
Special features of all Invictas I have owned are excellent seating position, and abnormal visibility, smooth and tireless engines, instantaneous starting, and a (to me) handsome radiator, set well back.

To conclude, for a short time I owned an O.M. 2-litre as spare car; an ex-Long Chassis saloon. I fitted her with roughly half a "tin" body, and her maximum was only 66, but steering, cornering and "balance of weight" were abnormally good. She, alas, is now in the breaker's hands, as the engine was "past it."

My wife now owns a 12/70 Alvis saloon, an excellent and most likeable car, but I must not comment on a current model, except to say that 78 m.p.h. with a 1,800 c.c. engine and 25 cwt., makes my sports Stars seem rather old-fashioned.



Two of Monro's M.G.s: the Mark I Six and, behind it, the Mark I Sprint Car



Advanced Design

OF recent years, sports-cars of advanced design, that is to say, of the roller-bearing, twin o.h.c., hand-assembled sort, have been equalled, if not overshadowed, in performance by more sober designs, having more simple valve gear, and of less specialised construction generally. We have often argued that this is mainly so only because the commercial demand for the specialised sports-car has decreased to such an extent that its development has been virtually at a standstill for some time. Now, Alfa-Romeo seem to have provided an answer, with the new V12 4½-litre job, which appeared at Liège just before the war The engine has its cylinders in a V, with twin o.h. camshafts to each block and three downdraught carburetters between the inner camshaft covers. As a streamlined two-seater, the maximum of this unblown motor is quoted as 140 m.p.h.

In the sphere of 1½-litre racing instances of design stimulus are the 54×94 mm., twelve-cylinder, 9,000 r.p.m., horizontally opposed Alfa-Romeos, the rumoured 1½-litre Auto-Union, and the said-to-be-improved-still-more, 1½-litre Mercédès-Benz. Alfa also has, they say, the sixteen-cylinder 3-litre, peaking at 9,000 r.p.m. Maserati appears to be leaving the 1½-litre, straight-eight, to concentrate on the four-cylinder, sixteen valve jobs. Tripoli, on May 12th, should be rather terrific.

The Home Racing Front

Latest news of the proposed race sponsored by Anthony Heal and Co. is not so good, because Harry Edwards can no wise be persuaded to open up the Crystal Palace circuit for such a contest. Donington is too far afield, and is believed to be barred anyway, and Brooklands also is out of the question. The idea of giving up the race is quite unpalatable to the vintagents concerned, and they are investigating every possible course. If the worst happens, a speed trial will possibly replace it, and Clutton is examining a course within thirty miles of the Metropolis.

A reply has now come through from the Mines Department, in answer to the Club's Memorandum, apologising for the delay in writing, and stating that the matter is still under consideration. Although there was no legal obligation to approach the Mines Department, to do so was a courteous and wise move, and that no objections have been raised so far is a point gained.

Further, both the Kentish Border C.C. and Bugatti Owners' Club look like lending support to the Vintage S.C.C. endeavour, and the possibilities of a racing circuit in which the former club was interested a year or two ago have not been overlooked. The practicability of holding a race for cars running on alternative fuels such as calor-gas, etc., at some future date, as advocated at the recent M.C.C. A.G.M., has also occupied the Vintage committee.

Let's go on hoping, and backing up Heal, Clark and Clutton all we can.

Anent Ourselves

If anyone wants any proof as to the undamped enthusiasm existing in this country for sports motoring, he should wade through Motor Sport's monthly correspondence. We only regret that the war has made things difficult for us just as it has altered so many other activities, and delay in replying to correspondents is inevitable, nor is it possible to publish more than a few of the extremely educative letters which each month arrive to stimulate our own unquenchable keenness. However, in spite of A.R.P. ties and no real staff, we do contrive to answer lots of queries, and to pass on much information, while the demand for photographs, and for back numbers, especially those containing road-test reports and tuning articles, seems undiminishing. Nor does circulation suffer, and in fact, the March issue was right out of print by the middle of the month, and the Editor himself could not send out the copies he had promised to many of his friends. The paper is no longer returnable from newsagents, so if you are in need of this particular issue, a round-up of newsagents large and small might conceivably reveal a

RUMBLINGS—continued

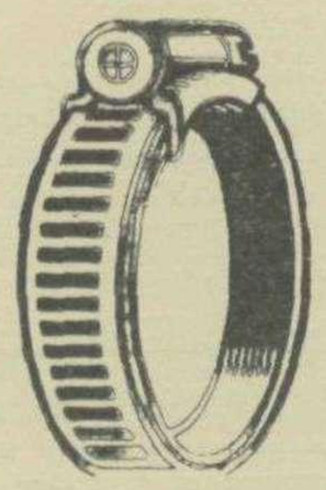
solitary issue that someone ordered and did not collect. A definite order is the only way of ensuring that you get each month's issue, and we would remind subscribers who will shortly be called up to notify us of their military address if they want MOTOR SPORT forwarded direct. Incidentally, if you now get your copy from a newsagent and expect to go overseas, a subscription will ensure that you receive the paper at your new address, as we have the necessary war export permit, which every newsagent has not. The Census of cars still in use, published last month, aroused widespread interest, but did not pretend to be in any way comprehensive! Observation must show that hundreds of sports-cars still in use were not included therein, and all that the Census set out to do was to indicate the enthusiasm still prevailing amongst the sporting fraternity and to give news of certain interesting fast cars that remain in operation. Some more are mentioned in the correspondence pages, and J. Mitchell of Belfast taxed his home-built 1932 Austin Seven two-seater for the first quarter, using supplementary fuel, and also had his 1933 J.2 M.G. Midget taxed, while H. F. Hart intends to go on using his 1½-litre Singer Le Mans until he is called up, though he has only basic rations to burn.

For Fast Drivers

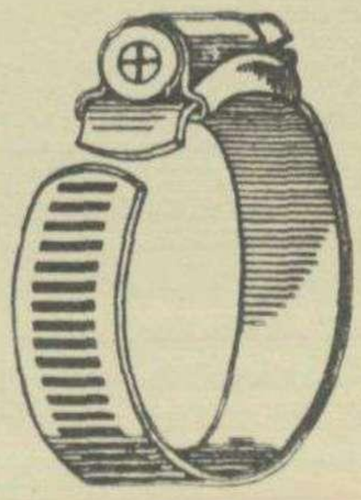
Although the lighter days will greatly reduce the strain of black-out driving, drivers will still have to contend with many hours of darkness if they do not strictly limit the times at which they motor. Under such conditions, the Hartley lamp mask will be found something of a godsend. The proprietor of MOTOR SPORT has been testing one and reports that not only does a normal headlamp so masked pick out pedestrians at a really considerable distance, but that a very respectable spread of illumination is cast before the car. The Hartley mask, although not of the three-slot type which is now referred to as the "official" mask, has been approved by Scotland Yard and is entirely within the law. It is the product of V. & N. Hartley, Axtell House, Warwick Street, W.1 (Ger. 3692) and Greenfield, nr. Oldham, Lancs, and is worth investigating by any fast driver not acquainted with it. Another matter of special concern to the enthusiast is that of battery maintenance now that limited mileage and black-out driving makes such big demands on the electrical system. The private owner and trader alike can obtain comprehensive battery service at any one of the specially-equipped and staffed Lucas Battery Service Agents located throughout the country. If a car has been laid up, attention to the battery beyond merely re-charging is highly desirable, while continuous use under present conditions is liable to damage the battery, so that in both cases a visit to a Lucas agent can save much trouble and expense. Incidentally, the Lucas Two Years' Insured Life Scheme enables a brand-new battery to be obtained from the local garage at a price proportionate to the time the old battery has been in use, provided it is less than two years old—an excellent war-time insurance. Readers doing their own overhauls will find "Electricalities—publication No. 444" very helpful—a copy will be sent free from Joseph Lucas, Ltd., Birmingham 19, on mention of this paper.

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Letters from Readers

Sir,

I read with great interest the article by Mr. Cooper, in the January issue, on the 12/50 and 12/60 Alvis car, and have been intending to drop you a line on the subject ever since.

It would appear impertinent of me to disagree with him on any point, in view of his connection with the manufacturers of the cars; however, there are several points where we differ, so that I will take his paragraphs in order :—

Engines: The TE had a stroke of 110 mm., and was the standard touring engine of 1926. The gudgeon pin clamp bolt was altogether an infernal device, and provided everything was a really good fit, I found it best only to tighten it half a turn more than finger tight; even so, it would invariably break, if the engine was taken over 4,700 r.p.m. By far the quietest and best wearing timing gear combination was all three gears steel, the camshaft one being the standard built up arrangement to stop ringing. To make the gears as quiet as possible, one must bed in the main bearings, so that the timing gear teeth are practically bottoming; they will whine for a bit, but will be quite all right after about 1,000 miles. It is entire waste of time to put the compression ratio over 6.3 for the small port head, and 6.9 for the big port, as even with Discol the car will only go slower. I do not agree with removing the "mask" in the plug hole, and never did so on my own car. For this reason, perhaps, we disagree considerably over the ignition timing; I always used, and understood to be standard, 13½ starter ring teeth before TDC (points just opening, control fully advanced), which I work out at approximately 42 degrees. With everything in first-class order 25/30 lbs. oil pressure can be maintained, but for touring, I found 10 lbs. the minimum for safety. The normal cause of poor oil pressure is a worn centre main bearing, which wear was far too rapid, and was the worst point in the engine. It is well worth while boring out *all* the pipes on the suction side of the oil pump from $\frac{5}{16}$ to $\frac{3}{8}$ inch. The easiest place to take a drive for a revolution counter is from the front of the camshaft and timing case; I recently saw one made out of a gearbox rear cover, which made a very neat assembly.

Clutch: With any close ratio gearbox, it is essential to use the full twelve springs, at any rate with a four-seater car. There is no disadvantage from their use. An aluminium clutch body must have steel inserts for the locating pegs for the withdrawal gear to slide in.

Gearbox: Mr. Cooper knows far more of the different tooth formations than I do, but provided all the gears come from a box with four lug mounting they will work together. My own assortment consists of standard close ratio 1st and 2nd, standard wide ratio 3rd, and special constants of 19 and 30 teeth. I do not bother about reverse, although one of its gears is 1 tooth out, it works perfectly satisfactorily, even with the power of my 20 h.p. car. No 12/50 or 12/60 will really pull this very close assembly for restarting in hilly country, but the standard "S" box is very reasonable; even though bottom is distinctly tricky on really steep hills, unless one can keep going fast. Incidentally I first had the idea of my assembly from Mr. Powys-Lybbe, who used it long before I did.

Propeller Shaft: The Timken affair was quite impossible unless brand new. A cheap way of fitting a Hardy Spicer is to have one off an American car shortened to suit, which is not expensive. One must either obtain the gearbox flange from the works, or machine the old fork to take a flat plate for the Hardy Spicer to bolt on to. The bevel end is sometimes obtainable from scrap heaps, but I forget off what car. One of the greatest troubles with *any* propeller shaft is that it hits the chassis cross member between the front mounting for the rear springs. This can easily be overcome by welding an arch into the cross member, and bending an arch into the brake cross shaft rod (which entails packing out its bearings to suit the shorter effective length). The post-1930 cars have had this trouble dealt with in their design.

Rear Axle: All the touring cars had a 4.77 axle ratio, and the big port cars, a 4.55. I do not think the wide tooth gears were used before 1929, and anyway it is easy to bore out the diff. box to take their larger bolts. I do not think the 4.33 was used after 1925, certainly never with the wide tooth gears. All the post-1930 cars had the 4.77, which is really quite as high as they will pull adequately with standard tyres. Oil finding its way on to a rear brake is generally caused by something being slightly bent, and can usually be stopped by having a thou. or two machined off the oil thrower, at the inner end of the axle shaft, as this thrower must have clearance.

Chassis: The sub-frame was definitely not used after 1925, and never with a positive drive dynamo engine or plate clutch. I cannot imagine why Mr. Cooper is so down on the 21 in. straight-sided wheel. I always found them most satisfactory, and the tyres much easier to change than a well base. The old type wire wheel with the "open" hub is far better than the later type, which is always breaking both spokes and hubs. Springs were not by any means all the same, nor were their mounting. The earlier cars had shorter front springs with less leaves in them, and they were much more inclined to break. The mounting of the shackle was altered for the better at the same time, about 1929. The rear spring mountings were altered twice; in 1929, the front bracket had more than the original three bolts to hold it on to the frame, and in 1931 this bracket was mounted higher on the frame to lower the back of the car slightly. Prior to 1931, there was a wedge shape plate between the spring and the rear axle, and the shock absorber bracket was below the spring. Afterwards the plate was flat as was also the Hartford bracket; the top shock absorber was also altered at the same time; it is not possible to use one of each type together. The 1926 cars had single Hartfords, and had for the front axle bracket a plate between the spring and the axle—a not too good arrangement. Nineteen twenty-eight, I think, saw the bracket forged on to and below the front axle, which incidentally was heavier section. Nineteen thirty-one, and onwards, the bracket went through the axle beam, which once again was different and had more "drop." In 1926, the outer front brake cable was held by a clip on to one of the shackle bracket bolts, and invariably fell off. Afterwards it had its own bolt through the frame. The 1931 brakes were altered considerably, as the rear cross shaft was done away with, and the front outer cables were much longer. The radiator of 1931 onwards was mounted in a much more satisfactory way, but had no noticeable cooling effects. All the cars ran their water permanently and normally at 100 Centigrade, but they did not lose water, and the earlier type radiator ones never boiled in normal circumstances, not even in traffic. The oil also ran extremely hot when raced, frequently at 100 also, but this never mattered at all in my experience.

Generally: It is interesting to note how to tell the date of a car :—Prior to 1926, fixed starting handle, sub-frame and belt driven dynamo. Nineteen twenty-six, low radiator with CAV headlamps mounted low on the radiator brackets. Nineteen twenty-seven, Lucas headlamps mounted still on the radiator brackets, but higher. Nineteen twenty-eight, headlamps mounted on separate brackets, which also held the wings. The touring cars had a taller radiator. Nineteen twenty-nine was the same as 1928 as far as I can remember. Nineteen thirty-one, chromium radiator with dummy shell. Nineteen thirty-two, knock-off wheels as opposed to bolt-on for all other years.

I trust these notes may be of help in addition to what Mr. Cooper so admirably said. If any reader is interested in the 1931 and earlier Silver Eagle cars, I shall be pleased to give any information I can. I have two of these cars myself at the moment, and my brother has one also. I include the 14/75 in the genera

LETTERS FROM READERS—continued

category of Silver Eagles, although this is, perhaps, rather an insult to the latter!

I am, Yours etc.,
MICHAEL W. B. MAY.

Send,
Surrey.

* * *

Sir,

I wish to buy an existing G.N. Special, and improve it as time and facilities allow, so I am writing to find out if you happen to know of any sprint specials in need of a new home?

I have never before paid an annual subscription to a paper, but I should hate to see MOTOR SPORT go under.

Don't you think Mr. Wike is a bit libellous in calling the 1,100 c.c. H.R.G. "an admirable commercial traveller's hack"? True it is very docile, and its starting (on Pool) and pulling from cold in the recent 30° of frost shamed every car in Ripon, but its behaviour on snow and ice (without chains) is exemplary, and its handling is real fun. His figures are about right, though my tendency to hill hunting gives fewer m.p.g. than his. Pool petrol is quite usable, but the Tapley pull is now 150 (recently decarbonised) as compared with 170 on Discol, so it is not above reproach, apart from its low octane number.

The Royal Engineers is definitely no place for an enthusiast, but there seems to be a good number of sports-cars on the road here: M.G.s, a 4/4 Morgan, two Lagondas, a lot of closed Talbots, S.S., and Riley. When I get week-end leave to London I go by rail from York, and regular neighbours at the Station Hotel Garage there are a T Midget, Lancia Aprilia, o.h.c. Norton, and Riley M.P.H. (all taxed), so the sport is not quite dead up here.

A recent discovery in Ripon was a (laid up) six-cylinder torsionally sprung open Lagonda Rapide, only 7,000 miles old. There is some Discol in the tank, and when the owner gets over his measles it is going out once again . . . I should be interested to hear if other folk experience my 10 per cent. drop in power on "Pool," also about the G.N. specials, if any.

I am, Yours etc.,
J. LOWREY.

Ripon,
Yorks.

* * *

Sir,

I was sorry to have to admit that my M.G. Magna was laid up, but it had to be so owing to financial difficulties. I have now sold the M.G., and the new owner intends to use it for the whole year. I have a Rudge "Ulster" motor-cycle combination, which is also laid up, but I hope to use it for three months this summer.

During the last two years I have also owned a 250 c.c. B.S.A. cycle, 172 c.c. James two-stroke, a 1928 Austin Seven Special, an M.G. "M" type Midget and an Austin "Ulster," which I consider was a very fine car with remarkable road-holding and excellent acceleration; it was not everybody's car, but I dusted up many a car of greater capacity, and I was never anything but pleased with it.

I would like to get hold of an old Frazer-Nash with s.v. Anzani engine, as I have a very high regard for them. I have noticed several fast cars out lately, i.e., S.S. 100, Lea-Francis, Alvis, Bentley, B.M.W.

Incidentally, the Orpington A.R.P. have had a "Big Six" Bentley converted into an ambulance, and I have seen it travelling at a very fast rate on the Orpington By-Pass, driven by a tough female.

My father used to run a Riley "Redwing" (1925) sports, and I would be pleased if anyone could supply any details of this car, as it was a little before my time, but I always remembered that it had a fine performance, and was very economical.

I am, Yours etc.,
A. J. D. BROWN.

Orpington.

* * *

Sir,

I am very interested in the scheme of the Vintage Sports Car Club for a limited resumption of motor sport, as I am sure are all enthusiasts. I have, however, one suggestion to make, and that is that to get on the good books of the Ministry of Mines it would be good policy to include in any proposed races or rallies a special class for vehicles running on alternative fuels, i.e., producer gas, calor gas, coal gas, creosote, etc. I make this suggestion because my father's company holds one of the twenty-five licences issued for the manufacture of the Government producer gas plant, designed by the Fuel Research Station, Greenwich, and I know how tremendously keen they are to encourage the use of any alternative fuels. As you may know, a committee has been appointed under Lord Ridley to investigate all forms of alternative fuel, including, I believe, steam cars.

However, in reference to the above suggestion, I would like it clearly understood that I put it forward only as an enthusiast (who has been one of your readers for eight years) and not on behalf of any commercial interests. I should myself make a point of entering my Terraplane if such a class was provided.

In answer to query from H. L. Biggs, the Spikins Hudson Special is to be seen in Maidenhead almost any day, being used for shopping. I immensely enjoyed your article on the appeal of Vintage sports-cars, but was sorry not to see the name of Lea-Francis mentioned, verily a worthy vintage motor, if there ever was one!

I am, Yours etc.,
J. P. GROSSCURTH.

Maidenhead.

* * *

Sir,

Please accept my compliments on your excellent journal, and on your courage in continuing it during the trying times now at hand. It makes very excellent reading in spite of the fact that there are few races and trials to report these days.

It occurred to me that you might be interested to know about our organisation, the Cord Owners' Club (Illinois), for while groups of enthusiasts for a particular make or variety of car are quite common in your country, here they are decidedly the exception. Unfortunately, most Americans regard automobiles simply as a means of transportation—as prosaic and commonplace as the kitchen stove, and not one whit more exciting.

When production was discontinued on Auburn, Cord, and Duesenberg motor cars in August 1937, many enthusiasts felt the loss very keenly, and a few months later this club was organised. I am enclosing a copy of the constitution which sets forth the purposes and form of organisation. Among these purposes, you will notice, is to work for the production of a front wheel drive car, with genuine sporting characteristics to replace the Cord. The Club is at present engaged in development work along these lines, under the direction of Mr. W. J. Muller, designer of the Ruxton front wheel drive car, and is about to build an experimental chassis. In this connection, we would like very much to secure from abroad a number of English and Continental front drive designs, for study and experimental purposes. Your help in locating suitable cars and suggestions for procuring and shipping some to this country would be very much appreciated. Among the cars we have in mind are:—

B.S.A.; Alvis front wheel drive 1929 or 1930; Tracta; Citroen; Adler; Stoewer; and any others you think might be of interest to us.

We would particularly value your help in securing the B.S.A. and the Alvis, as well as any of the others that might be available in England.

I am, Yours etc.,
D. CAMERON PECK.

Cord Owners' Club (Illinois).
Chicago.

* * *

Sir,

I forgot to send you particulars of my car last month for your census.

Well, they are as follows: Bentley 1926 3-litre, taxed by the quarter, supplementary allowance gives me an odd good "blind." Last week we had a wonderful run up to Cheshire and back in the day; average going, including stops for petrol, 46 m.p.h. and not so good coming back owing to poor illumination.

I wonder do you know of a very great Vintage enthusiast who lives in the south of Ireland, Mr. Punch. He owns a 3-litre Austro-Daimler and a 3-litre Bentley, both in very excellent form. He is a big man, aged about fifty, and I met him when I had stopped at the side of the road near Cork to consult my map. He drove up with a friend older than himself in the Austro, *sans* hood, and adorned as to the head with bowler hats. A remarkable sight. He strode over to my bus, picked up the bonnet, and started taking down the engine number while my wife and I sat gaping at him.

Having satisfied himself that all was correct, there followed a long and detailed conversation about the works, and about modifications that he had carried out on his Bentley. Later on during the same

LETTERS FROM READERS—continued

month, we came across a type 44 Bug. and a 4½-litre Bentley. The Bentley was a 1929 model literally unmarked, and was for sale in a little garage in the north of Ireland.

P.S.—Your paper is about the only bright spot in these months. The more vintage reports, the better.

I am, Yours etc.,
Sqn.-Ldr. R. I. SHIER.

R.A.F. Station.

* * *

Sir,

I would very much like to obtain an outside exhaust manifold for a J.2 type M.G., also could you put me in touch with a reader who has tuned a J.2 M.G. for speed trials?

I am, Yours etc.,
JOHN MACLAGAN.

"Morenish,"
Sledgate Lane,
Wickersley, Rotherham.

* * *

Sir,

I perused Mr. Cecil Clutton's valuable contribution, "The Appeal of the Vintage Sports-Car," in your March number with ever-increasing interest and pleasure. Particularly, I liked the view that a decade or so since witnessed the debauch—I had almost gone the length of saying the Americanisation—of the production side of the British motor car industry, the salesman usurping the functions of the designer. On the other hand, there is the question what constitutes "respectful treatment" of a twelve or more years-old rear axle? Should it extend to towing heavy loads about the country at high speed?

Gearbox ratios are, I think, more clearly presented when divorced from rear axle ratio. Thus, those of both the Bentley "D" and "A" boxes (the former a later and more robust version of the latter) are 1.23, 1.63 and 2.64, and of the "C" box 1.375, 1.823 and 3.364. Though termed widely spaced by Mr. Clutton, the latter ratios are materially less so than those of the "30/98" Vauxhall's box, indeed the second and third speeds provided by this box are so low in relation to top as to be hardly worthy of a true sports-car, though possibly explaining better times at events such as Shelsley Walsh than the 4½-litre Bentleys, and—some blow-ups!

Though now ancient history, may I refer to the report in the "skeleton" October issue of my 8-litre Bentley's British Class B standing start mile record at Brooklands on August 29th? The cause of the car running so wide at the bend on the clockwise trip was not its refusal to pull off the banking, but its not having been taken on to the banking sufficiently. My idea was to steer a short course, cutting the corner into the Railway Straight, but speed proved too high, with the result the car was called upon to negotiate the bend with no banking assistance, and it did so in one long four-wheel slide, which, naturally, had a slowing effect. Even so, the finishing line was crossed at fully 130 m.p.h. It had been my intention to make the attempt later in the year, but being convinced by mid-August of the imminence of war, I booked the track for the first available date despite personal indisposition and the risk of hot weather, which never suits the Bentley (I now attribute this to insufficient bonnet ventilation). As I feared, the day proved excessively hot and "stuffy," which, coupled with my own poor showing, leave no doubt in my mind that the old 8-litre has something still in hand over the standing start mile. As reported, except for the "stripping" the car was in its everyday touring trim even to the sparking plugs (K.L.G.s).

I am, Yours etc.,
F. LYCETT.

London, S.W.5.

* * *

Sir,

In my copy for March of your excellent paper I see a photo of Ralph de Palma on an alleged 1907 Fiat (G.P.). With all due respect to the American Press, I am very much inclined to doubt the vintage of the car shown as being 1907, and suggest it is 1913. Doubtless you remember Bruce Brown, Ralph de Palmer, and (wasn't it?) Wagner drove these elephants in the 1913 G.P.—Bruce Brown later taking his car to America where he did himself in on it, if my memory is correct, and to me this looks to be his or one of those three cars. (Another one may have gone to America for all I know.) The '07 Fiats differed particularly in the shape of radiator, having the old square type and not the narrow-top one. They also had inside exhausts, but of course, these could have been changed, and obviously the tyres have to a more modern type.

I do hope you keep on with articles on the older cars, and I should like to see more on these old G.P.s, if possible. They certainly had a fascination of their own, or was it because one was so very much younger then? They certainly were "he-men" cars. Anyway, I shall always keep on with my MOTOR SPORT and hope for happier days.

I am, Yours etc.,
H. W. BUNBURY.

Mildenhall.

[Capt. Bunbury was at the 1908 French G.P. and bought a postcard of an '07 Fiat on the course.—Ed.]

* * *

THE APPEAL OF THE VINTAGE SPORTS-CAR

Sir,

MOTOR SPORT reaches me every month where I am stationed "somewhere in England," and this month I was very interested to read the above article by Mr. Cecil Clutton; I was particularly interested in the detailed description he gave of the E-type 30/98 Vauxhall, and to learn of the high opinion he had of this model, because some years ago I owned one—Engine No. E-373—and I have always considered it to be one of the finest cars I have owned or driven.

As Mr. Clutton states, these cars had a very definite personality, and were, until one got thoroughly accustomed to their little ways, rather a "tough" motor to handle. E-373 was, I think, rather a good specimen of its breed, for its performance by stop-watch was better than the figures quoted in the article. The maximum speed ever attained under strictly fair conditions was 87.8 m.p.h., and 66 m.p.h. was quite possible in third.

A friend had a similar, but one-year-older, car than mine, the number of which was, I believe, E-212, and the performance figures tallied very closely with those Mr. Clutton gives. Both cars were in first-class condition at the time, and mine had a much "brisker" performance all round, though I was never able to find out why. Gear ratios, timing, and so forth were all identical, and it would be interesting to know if any differences in cam contours or overlap were introduced during the production of this model—perhaps Mr. Clutton or some other E-type enthusiast would know.

I still have the original handbook and maker's blueprint supplied in August 1921 with E-373, and in both the valve clearance is given as 62 thous. and not 48 thous. as Mr. Clutton says. As can be imagined, the resultant noise was distinctly reminiscent of a thrashing plant at low speeds, but the whole unit was entirely free from periods and much more tractable—when one had mastered the "tricks of the trade"—than anyone only accustomed to the modern engines can appreciate. Twelve m.p.h. in top gear with spark fully retarded was quite possible—and that with a 3:1 top gear, but considerable skill was needed to accelerate away without changing down, at such low revs.

When I bought E-373, it was about thirteen years old, and was reputed to have done about 160,000 miles. In spite of that, it was in marvellous condition mechanically. No major replacements had been made during its lifetime, and bearings and transmission were really as new. At some time prior to my buying it, a f.w.b. axle had been fitted—a gigantic affair with a five foot track and 18 in. brake drums, the front brake mechanism operating by rods through a universally jointed camshaft placed under the beam, and the whole layout resembling exactly in design a 14-60 Lagonda beam. At the same time, the roadwheels had been rebuilt with wellbase rims to take 21×5.25 covers, and the chassis reinforced at appropriate points by channel sections welded and rivetted in, to take triple Hartford "shockers" all round. The original hand and foot-brake controls had been changed round, so that the outside lever now operated the transmission brake, and the footbrake operated on all four wheels. Although the area of the front brakes was about double that of the rear, so that braking on tricky surfaces provided some thrills if one trod on things too heartily, these modifications entirely did away with the failings as regards braking and road-holding which these cars showed in their original form, and for riding on any sort of surface my car was probably the steadiest I have ever driven—cornering as a result of the high-geared and sensitive steering and firm suspension was 100 per cent.

Apart from these alterations, E-373—(it bore the registration number AK-9359, in case it is still on the road—I cannot imagine it ever wore out in fair use)—was completely standard even to its

LETTERS FROM READERS—continued

rather sketchy three-door four-seater touring body with cutaway driver's side, and was a grand example of the old-time fast touring car. If I had had room to keep it when I found it necessary to get a smaller and more economical car for everyday running, I should never have parted with it.

I believe E-373 originally belonged to a Mr. Pollock Conn of Almondbury, near Huddersfield, and if this gentleman or anyone who owned it before about 1934 could give me any details of the various conversions, and the car's past history, I should be very glad to hear from them.

I am, Yours etc.,
NEVILLE H. FOWLER.

41, Wensley Road,
Woodthorpe,
Nottingham.

* * *

Sir,

First of all, please let me congratulate you on your valiant efforts to keep things going for the duration. I have only written you once before, but am roused to dig out the old machine by the article on page 36 of the March issue.

The following comments may possibly fail to clear up any of the points raised in the article, but here they are, anyway.

First of all, the question of Yank spelling on page 234 of "Wall Smacker." Peter de Paolo says that he was driving a Mazzeratti car in practice for the Barcelona G.P. 1934. So, if the driver of a car can't spell, how can one expect a mere journalist to spell correctly?

And adverts. in American papers for their queer idea of motor racing proudly announce that racing will take place Monday *nite*, Tuesday *nite*, and so on.

As regards the engine speed in 1920, compare de Paolo, page 221 as above, "my engine was winding up 8,500 revolutions." This was in 1928.

Ray Keech *was* killed in a multiple crash at Altoona, but it was in June, 1929, and not in the early 1920s. See "Motor Racing and Record Breaking," by Eyston and Lyndon, and other authorities.

Frank Lockhart was killed at Daytona Beach in April, 1928.

Jimmy Murphy was certainly killed at the Syracuse track, when his car got out of control, and crashed into the guard rail, but I cannot trace the exact details. The crash occurred on September 15th, 1924, but the last races on both the Fresno and Charlotte (North Carolina) tracks did not take place until 1926. The Culver City board track did not open until 1925 or 1926. (De Paolo as above.)

I have a copy of the official programme issued on the occasion of the Silver Anniversary 500 Mile Race at Indianapolis in 1937. This gives the following information in respect of each race from 1911 to 1936 inclusive :—First ten cars home (number of cyls., bore and stroke in inches, piston displacement, time taken, and average speed), names of all others "still running," list of retirements with number of laps covered, and list of all other entrants who did not start.

In respect to the 1911 race, Tetzlaff drove a Lozier and retired after 20 laps, Disbrow drove a Pope-Hartford and retired after 45 laps. I cannot trace Joe Jaggersberger, but there were two Case cars in the race, driven by Jones (ret. 122 laps) and Strang (ret. 109). I cannot trace Knight and his Westcott, but admit that Greiner's Amplex retired after 12 laps, whilst Tower's Jackson was still running at the finish. The Apperson, by the way, was driven by Lytle, and retired at 82 laps.

Bolton, Lancs. I am, Yours etc.,
LESLIE MEE.

[Thank you.—Ed.]

Sir,

I was very interested in the article by Mr. F. J. Ames, in your March issue of MOTOR SPORT, concerning the prospects of forming some kind of club to carry on sporting events "for the duration."

I would also like to give as much of my spare time as would be possible, and would be required.

I feel that a recognised club would have more chance of success with the "Powers that B," than a few enthusiasts who have clubbed together, and are trying all they know to persuade our un-motor-minded Government that horse-racing, football, and all the other so-called sports, are not the only sports which afford recreation and pleasure to the public.

Wimbledon, S.W.19. I am, Yours etc.,
R. S. BROWN.

RECONSIDER YOUR VERDICT

continued from page 53

R.A.C.'s attitude. To say that basic fuel rations must only be used for "necessary domestic purposes" is a distorted statement, very unfair to owners paying the 25/- a h.p. tax on cars run solely for driver-relaxation—and the MOTOR SPORT Census showed that lots of people are continuing to tax such cars. To say that trials and races have lost their technical and military value is another sweeping statement. So far as we know, the opposition from the public and the clubs exists only in the R.A.C.'s imagination. That great motoring writer, Humfrey Symons, once attacked the old gentlemen on the Competitions Committee of the R.A.C. on their apathy of outlook. Their war-time outlook is additionally both pessimistic and distorted. We hope they will reconsider their verdict.

SPORTS-CAR DEVELOPMENT

LAURENCE POMEROY, JUNR., has contributed many articles of extreme interest to "The Motor" since becoming Technical Editor, and he has considerably livened-up this paper. In the issue of January 24th, he deals with five years' development of sports-type cars. He emphasises that in 1934 the Le Mans 24-Hour Race was won by a supercharged 2.3-litre Alfa-Romeo at 74.7 m.p.h., whereas the 1939 Le Mans Race, under the same rules, was won by a supercharged 3.3-litre Bugatti, at 86.8 m.p.h.

Independent front suspension was considered to have had a material effect on speeds at Le Mans, two cars exceeding a 70 m.p.h. average in 1934, nine in 1935, six in 1937, seven in 1938 and eleven in 1939. Mr. Pomeroy explains Bugatti's abilities with normal front suspension by saying that Bugatti's methods, like Nuvolari's, are not to be compared with those of ordinary mortals. He divides improvements under five headings :—maximum engine power, controllability, brakes, mechanical reliability, streamlining. He suggests that the smallest improvement is in respect of engine output, though Lagonda is an exception, the 1935 six-cylinder 4½-litre, which averaged 77.85 m.p.h., giving 130-140 b.h.p. on a stroke of 130 mm., whereas the 1939 V12 4½-litre, which easily averaged 83.5 m.p.h., gives over 200 b.h.p. on a stroke of 85 mm., or a gain of over 40 per cent. Bugatti and Alfa-Romeo are not considered to have increased greatly in power output, but the blown 3.3 Bugatti engine is considered to give slightly more maximum power than the unblown 4½-litre Lagonda. Synchromesh gearboxes assist by reducing driver-fatigue and the Cotal electric box is used by Delage and Delahaye. Better braking, mainly due to stiff drums and the use of floating cams, has also put up average speed in sports-car races. Reliability has improved by the use of jet cooling, lead-bronze bearings and the reduction in piston-speed by reason of shorter strokes. Softer springing, in conjunction with i.f.s., has reduced body breakages, leaky fuel pumps, broken fuel lines and similar troubles. Streamline of sports-car body-work is warmly praised. The decrease in wind resistance is calculated to average 30 per cent. to 40 per cent. over 1934 types, and speed goes up over orthodox types, even when these are 10 per cent. lighter and over 10 per cent. more powerful. Reliability is also enhanced by the possibility of using higher gear-ratios. Closed cars at Le Mans were represented by Adler, Alfa-Romeo, and B.M.W., and open streamline by Bugatti and Fiat. The Fiat is extremely warmly praised, putting up as an unblown 1,100 c.c. an average speed equal to that of the 1934 winner which had a *supercharged* engine of over twice the swept volume. We imagine that when the war is over the streamline Balilla Fiat saloon will have a big following in this country; as it is, a friend of ours has suggested that Italy is keeping out of hostilities because she realises what a fine market there is for the "Topolino" Fiat in countries affected by fuel rationing! The introduction of the four-seater 570 c.c. saloon last year was certainly most opportune.

ON SOME MOTORING ASPECTS OF THE PRESENT WAR

I THINK we can fairly safely assume that war is a novel experience for the great majority of present-day motoring enthusiasts. Although I was of this world during the 1914-18 affair, I was not much disturbed by the unrest until my father failed to return. I was told he died painlessly, which was probably true; he was blown to fragments. We have had other wars since that time, but somehow most of us have managed to regard these as remote and have probably found them of no great interest, except where there is a military tradition running in the family; admittedly, some of our keenest enthusiasts come from homes in which warfare means something more than mere headlines in the newspapers.

But to the majority of us, war is a new experience, unwanted, but seemingly inevitable, and when it came on that fateful morning of September 3rd, 1939, lots of young men and young women who had made motoring something more than a hobby, must have been concerned as to how this interest was going to be affected. It seemed that private motoring might well come to an immediate standstill, or that air raids might render conditions so grim that, for a time, at any rate, motoring for pleasure would have to cease. Up to the time of writing this article, nearly seven months after the outbreak of war, such a state of affairs has mercifully not come about, and the black-out, fuel rationing, the 20 m.p.h. limit, and the increased horse-power tax combined, have not entirely spoiled motoring for relaxation. But on that sunny September Sunday we could none of us foresee these things. Consequently, lots of us hoped to turn to driving in some official capacity, serving King and Country, while retaining our contact with matters motoring. In some cases, of course, untold good luck presented 1,030 h.p. or so to play with up in the sky. But amongst those who could not hope to get into the R.A.F. were lots of enthusiasts, expert at driving all kinds of motor vehicles fast on the road and successfully across slimy country, who were bursting to do any sort of useful job in this category, sacrificing sleep, regular meals, safety and peace-time interests, if need be. I think it was, and still is, a crying shame that they got so little encouragement. I believe that the Army and Air Force have drivers who are called upon to drive fast staff cars quickly over considerable distances. But exceptional experience as a competition driver or as a sports-car owner is no guarantee, on enlisting in the R.A.S.C. or R.A.F., that one would even be given the routine driving of lorries in convoy—although women of the A.T.S. and W.A.A.F. seem to have fallen into some attractive driving jobs at home. Civil Defence offers no solution, because the ordinary motorist has been given the job of driving A.R.P. vehicles without test or scrutiny and the imposition of an all-time 30 m.p.h. speed limit, the very limited range of operation, and the restrictions seemingly imposed by the authorities to curb individual motoring initiative, render such driving jobs unworthy of the experts' attention. Where you find well-known drivers in such jobs you can bet that they are only there because there is so little else to do these days, because their keenness to serve in a war-time motoring capacity makes even the most insignificant driving job better than nothing, or because they find certain advantages in being guests of His Majesty in an A.R.P. depot, at £3 a week to stand by and wait for the balloons to go up.

I can personally verify that an occasional practice "turn-out" in a ten or fourteen horse-power family saloon is inadequate compensation for standing-by under very unpalatable conditions for continuous periods of up to twenty-four hours, suffering indignities that certainly were not foreseen when signing on the day war broke out, as a volunteer driver, experienced and anxious to do anything. The Government cannot be expected to provide an interesting and exciting job for every enthusiast who wants one, but I do think that much more care and thought could have been given to the enrolling of applicants for official driving duties from the commencement—which was long before the possibly excusable "rush-period" from September 3rd onwards. Men and women who had never passed any sort of driving test, people whose licences had been suspended or allowed to lapse, and drivers who became involved in accidents because they had had insufficient experience of handling quite ordinary cars under difficult conditions, would never have got into A.R.P. if experienced, practical motorists had been given a free hand in the engaging of driving personnel. As it is, many such persons got into A.R.P. and are in it still, and at many stations the fleets are in charge of a head driver whose qualification for the job consists of having been a commercial traveller in the piping days of peace or the proud owner of an eight-horse saloon, or, in many instances, of even vaguer motoring associations than these. Whereas, if general conditions were not so utterly impossible, and some encouragement had been given to the experienced enthusiast anxious to serve his country, lots of really useful drivers would have been forthcoming for A.R.P. duties, who would have worked as real volunteers and would not be costing the ratepayer 8d. each for every hour they are on duty. Women had obviously to be taken on as well as men against the day when the majority of male drivers would be engaged on military duties. Here, however, the same things apply, those experienced women competition drivers who in peace-time competed in races and trials on a level footing with mere men, have not been generally encouraged, or have not had any inclination to become A.R.P. personnel. Such women would be the best possible persons to take charge of and to instruct those who now emulate them in dress but whose motoring ability falls down when it comes to manipulating bulky vehicles, or changing wheels and suchlike. I note that someone who lives in my locality and who prefers to write under the *nom-de-plume* of "Chassis," in a recent letter in "The Autocar," suggests that the majority of the bright young things who handle ambulances do so for the joy of being allowed to wear "slacks" and tin-hats, and not on account of any special keenness for motoring as such. That he has not been convincingly contradicted seems to prove how true this is. I rather fear that "Boots the Chemists" are being unduly optimistic in addressing expensive advertising to she who has exchanged the wheel of her sports model for the wheel of an ambulance . . . What is going to happen if ever extensive enemy air raids make it necessary to rush A.R.P. vehicles to objectives at considerable distances from their bases (as was foreshadowed by the recent Chatham rally and by even more recent long-distance tests) perhaps in darkness and bad weather, I prefer not to think. I only hope we may never be troubled by such raids, but if we are, the expert driver may be seen in his or her true light. I am not alone in criticising A.R.P. drivers, for both Dobs Knight in "The Autocar" and W. G. McMinnies in his petrol-vapouring in "The Tatler" have had tales to tell of funny happenings at ambulance depots and during ambulance "turn-outs." Credit should be given to the London County Council for instituting a simple test before enrolling drivers for the Volunteer Ambulance Service—a test which I took recently from the lofty driving seat of a delightfully ancient W. & G. The tragedy is that those who were bursting to help seven months ago may now be in other jobs, or have been rendered less keen and efficient by sheer boredom. The R.A.F. has been particularly concerned to counter the effects of boredom on its pilots and I shouldn't be surprised if therein lies the answer to the frequent leaflet raids over Germany, which most of us regard as such a waste of valuable fuel and an unnecessary risk to personnel. The enthusiasm of the expert fast driver to serve in some really useful capacity when war was declared was something of immense value, if only those in authoritative positions could have seen it. So it is a great pity that a register of such drivers could not have been formed at the War Office, so that those offering proper proof of their keenness and driving ability would at least have been able to feel that they might be wanted for useful motoring jobs some day. As it was, the War Office was delighted when "The Light Car" appealed for details of driving experience amongst its readers and it elected to receive this information, but instead of accepting such applicants on their merits, it demanded, in the end, that all should join the R.A.S.C. as privates, or buy a commission if so disposed, and then be placed in suitable positions subsequently. I imagine this interpretation of the scheme was a great disappointment to Eric Findon, the Editor, and naturally lots

ON SOME MOTORING ASPECTS OF THE PRESENT WAR—continued

of good material failed to enrol because it had no desire to become lorry driver's mate, and had no definite guarantee of anything better. I still think expert drivers may be in demand if things get really hot on the western front, or if the enemy carries war in the air over our more thickly populated areas, so, even now, such a register, providing it is really official, might not come amiss. The danger of communication being impaired should extensive bombing of railways occur was mentioned in the Civil Aviation Argument, and if aerodromes are also bombed, fast cars properly handled will be wanted, and wanted badly. Here is a great opportunity for Commander Armstrong or Captain Phillips or someone else at the R.A.C. to do something on behalf of those who, in peace time, supported the club's events and competed under its rules and regulations. The "under thirties" should certainly be included, if such a register were ever to materialise, because they could then be transferred from the military positions they were in as jobs arose for them to do.

Apart from official service, the war has done no good to those in the motor trade or those just keen on motoring for relaxation; if I except some nice personal "mentions" in the weekly motoring Press which I certainly would not have got had there been more news about! Nevertheless, we contrive to continue motoring and fuel rationing is our biggest worry, now that lighter evenings will reduce the strain and danger of the black-out, and the inconvenience of its attendant 20 m.p.h. speed limit At one time I thought that this enforced mileage limitation might result in the enthusiast using his car as the family man uses his mobile glasshouse. This possibility is suggested by an experience which I had last year. Usually I avoid like the plague runs to near-London seaside resorts on summer Sundays, and usually there has been no time to spare away from motoring fixtures. One Easter, I took an Austin Ten down to Eastbourne, drawn by the sun, to return in a sleet-storm, and on one other occasion I crammed seven people into an elderly Austin Twelve tourer and made Hastings the objective, vowing afterwards never to face such unruly traffic again. However, last summer I again went to Eastbourne on a Sunday, in a decrepit Austin Seven. The traffic called for considerable concentration, and on arrival we sought to find a comparatively peaceful beach. It was then that I realised what "motoring" means to folk who do this kind of thing every week-end. They feel a perhaps justifiable thrill at discovering new haunts in the locality of one or other of the resorts which always constitute their objective, and such discovery forms a topic of proud conversation with fellow sun-worshippers all the following week, while the physical and nervous energy expended in getting safely through the heavy traffic encountered on both outward and homeward runs, makes them feel they have done some real "motoring," even though the speedometer registers less than 150 miles. They know nothing of motoring as we know it, and would probably not enjoy it if they did. The man who plans for a year ahead how he will go from London to Cornwall in a day, at the start of his holiday, will have no desire to drive all night to a trials' venue, returning through the following night, for instance. I almost begin to wonder if limited mileage will drive the *enthusiast* to emulate these happy, cautious car-owners. But I doubt it, because he will know how to find interesting and much quieter spots even nearer at hand, perhaps with some trials'-going thrown in, and will probably make such venues a playground when long runs are out of the question. Those who are fortunate enough to get extra petrol for fast motors have clear roads and should be able to set up some excellent averages, while going about their lawful business. My sympathy goes out to those who can only claim basic rations. We have become used to seeing uniforms everywhere—to encountering military traffic and troops on the road, to seeing balloons floating over our cities, coping with our masked lamps after dark, paying through the nose to motor at all—but it is very difficult indeed to get used to planning one's motoring on a basis of 50 miles or less a week. Yet enthusiasts contrive to enjoy motoring, and some of our greatest enthusiasts, now on active service—I only hope that between them they have managed to snaffle the really interesting jobs—will look forward to doing so when home on leave. But an increase in the fuel ration would be the best thing possible, for the Trade and the car-owner alike. Many people who expect to be in khaki by the end of the year, perhaps by the end of the summer, and so are justifiably seeking the greatest of good times now, feel the petrol ration more than any other war restriction. Yet, now we are at war, we must tolerate this, and the black-out, with a good heart. The traders must think themselves lucky to have the Motor Trade War Executive to air their grievances and watch their interests. With cars maintained on the road as they are being maintained at present, and government work given to the smaller firms, I think the Motor Trade may be afloat, even if badly waterlogged, when this war is over. Our leading manufacturers seem to be so nicely occupied with big government contracts that unkind people are saying they may well be sorry when this conflict finishes. All credit therefore to Alvis, Austin, Daimler, Hillman, Humber, Lanchester, M.G., Morris, Riley, Rover, Singer, S.S., Standard, Sunbeam, Vauxhall and Wolseley, etc., for still making cars of which we Britishers may be justly proud.

A motor race or two and some car trials would lighten our darkness. Messrs. Clutton and fellow plotters are doing all they know about the former, and if Authority can think of any reasonable replies to their arguments in favour of having a war-time race, I know that I cannot. Car trials have not happened yet, and, granting the greater fuel consumption of a car, and the difficulty of finding sufficient good hills in a compact area, the fact that the bicycle boys are running their trials and scrambles with big entries does not do much credit to the car clubs. Especially as some enthusiasts are taxing two cars and would willingly spend the fuel ration for one month on the sports job, in driving in a trial.

However, socials were slow to pick up after the outbreak of war, so we can go on hoping . . . And war or no war, we can truthfully say that motoring is still the best means of relaxing and forgetting present worries. Even those keen folk who were building up specials cars for competition work for which there is now no suitable employment, must agree that the war is enabling them to put more care into the construction of cars which they hope to use as soon as hostilities cease. Personally, I give thanks that we have had seven months during which the women and children, apart from ourselves, have been spared the horrors of raids from the sky. When depression assails us, let us remember that, picturesque as uniforms may have rendered fashionable West End hotels and restaurants, they are not so pleasant seen on the departure platforms of Victoria Station. Many youngsters with whom we duelled on the road in the past, and with whom we shared the interest and incident of races and trials, have already left their cars behind them and have gone out to play a sterner game; to them the chance of motoring even 200 miles a month under civilian conditions must seem too dear to allow of any grumbling.

So let those of us who are not yet taking an active part in this war keep our chins up, even though we secretly crave the time when conditions return to normal, and any shooting to be done can safely be left to Messrs. Klemantaski, Brymer and Co.

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