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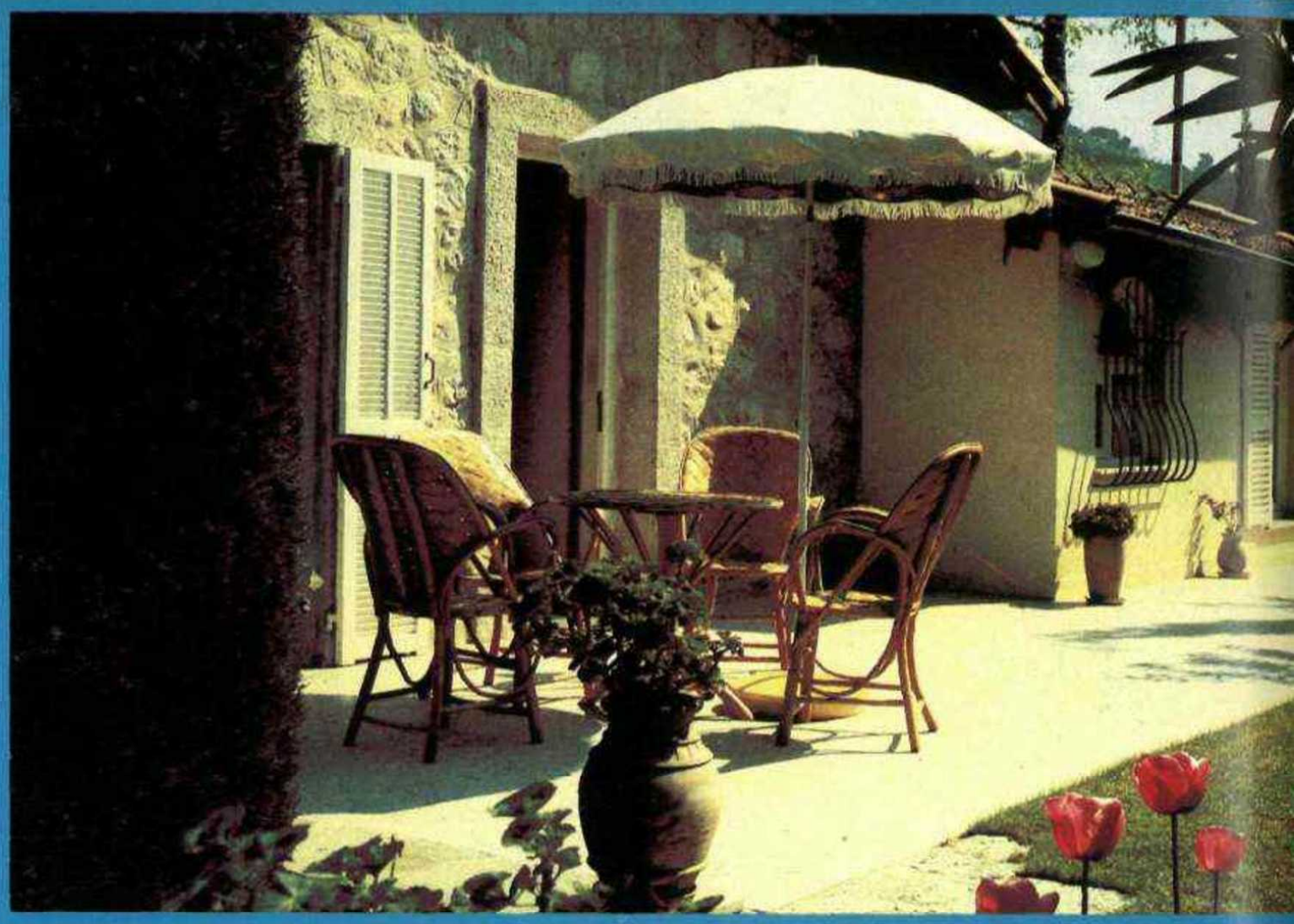
DAYTONA: Bell denies Jaguar

ALFA 2.9: Mille Miglia survivor

TRACK TEST: GM-Lotus winner

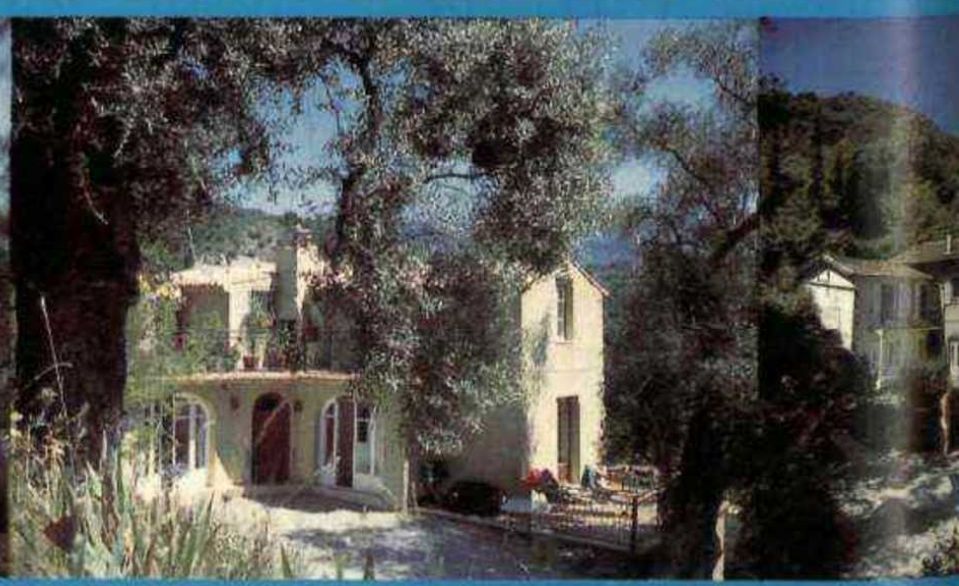
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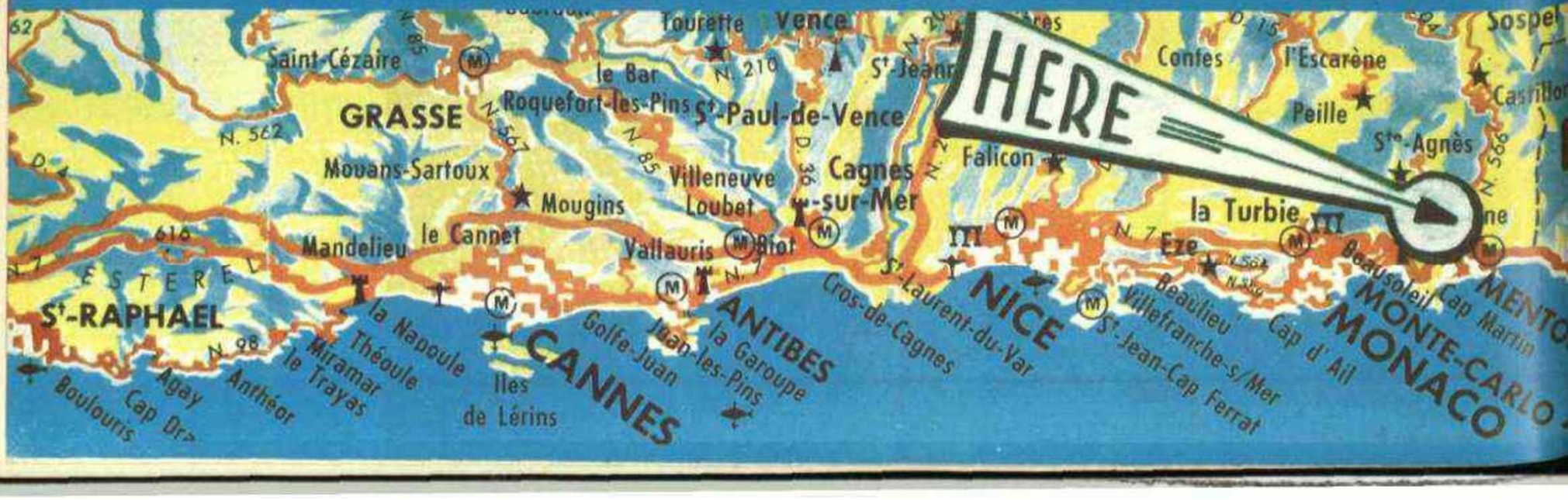
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ISSN 0027-2019

MATTERS OF MOMENT



Never mind the lack of refinements, Morgans are fun. Long live the open sports-car!

Too Soft for Soft Tops?

Those who purchase cars for the pleasure of driving them are presented with a splendid selection from which to make a difficult choice. But the more rewarding the enjoyment, the greater the purchase price.

Buyers now find themselves in a situation in which increasing inflation is being chased by rising interest-rates. If this financial instability continues, it may be that fewer and fewer enthusiasts will be able to afford Ferraris, Maseratis, Lamborghinis and the like, or the Aston Martins, Jaguars and Bentley Turbo-Rs which they should have been buying. Those who enjoy their driving may need to turn to less expensive cars.

Though now in danger of extinction, the open sports-car provides fun driving, and could amply compensate for having to forsake exotic-looking super-speed cars which drink fuel and whose performance is not readily usable in this country anyway. So, bring back sports-cars!

Such cars are not necessarily intended for competitive motoring. When they were freely available they were purchased by those who were either too timid, too busy, or did not possess the required skills to go racing or hill-climbing. But with crisp handling and good performance, even the lower-priced sports-cars provided more fun than a conventional saloon. The fresh-air soft-top was an additional bonus.

The unique attraction of this kind of motor car still exists, as evidenced by the long waiting-list for the Morgan Plus 8 — not exactly an example of the world's most sophisticated engineering — at £17,700 a time. Never mind the lack of refinements, Morgans are *fun*. We think the time may be ripening for more such fun-cars: sports-cars.

Once upon a time even Rolls-Royce recognised their merit — the first 3½-litre Bentley, "the silent sports-car", was an open tourer — and the stately Daimler became available in fast, plastic-bodied open two-seater SP250 guise. Since then a surfeit of excellent, but very similar, saloons and coupés has replaced the once frequently encountered soft-top sports models, and now, perhaps in desperation, people are telling us that the Skoda Rapid 136 turns them on . . .

So are we due for a sports-car renaissance? Lotus and Mazda recognise the appeal of this kind of high-performance fast car, but how long will we have to wait for the new two-seater Elan and the MX-5 roadster, and how much will they cost? Perhaps there is a need for something, in the image of the former Austin-Healey Sprite, MG-B or Sunbeam Alpine, offering driving appeal and impressive performance at not too high a price?

Of course, if you enjoy riding a motorcycle, some of the old fun-factor remains, and certainly, if the Highway Code stipulation that one must overtake slower vehicles only on the offside is ignored, you will be able to make good head-way in the sort of traffic congestion that is paralysing London and other cities. But since crash-helmets were made compulsory even motorcycling has lost some of its appeal.

All credit to Caterham, Morgan, TVR, Panther, Reliant and others who still make openable sports-cars, and to the few companies, such as Ford, Peugeot, Vauxhall and Volkswagen, which offer comparatively inexpensive convertibles. It would be good to see others following this trend. Or have most so-called enthusiasts grown too soft to want them?

The Things They Say

"The testing of the (Alfa Romeo) Bimotore was carried out on the motorway between Florence and the sea at Altopascio . . . and the 'Flying Mantuan' (Tazio Nuvolari) reached 364.183 kph . . . Bazzi told me that Nuvolari gave him 10,000 lire for that result, saying that 'the twin-engine drives like a Lancia Aprilia'. In other words the Bimotore was as well-mannered as a family car." Gino Rancati, in his new book *Enzo Ferrari — The Man*.

Club News

Starting in Edinburgh on Friday May 12 and finishing there two days later, the Ecurie Ecosse Historic Motor Tour of Scotland includes four daytime rest-halts designated for public viewing and a race finale at Knockhill on the Sunday. Spectator information is in the hands of the Scottish Tourist Board, 23 Ravelston Terrace, Edinburgh EH4 3EU.

750 Motor Club's 1989 Year Book contains everything you could possibly want to know about the various formulae under which this active and ambitious organisation operates — in the racing and trials fields — and the results of last season's contests. Regulations for the 750 racing formulae are also given, with 1989 fixtures. Non-members should apply to D Bradley, 16 Woodstock Road, Witney, Oxfordshire OX8 6DT.

This year's Brooklands Society Reunion is scheduled for June 18, with Test Hill ascents, a paddock *Concours d'Elegance* and garden party. Numbers are restricted to 1500.

All exhibition space for the London International Classic Car Show at Alexandra Palace was sold before Christmas, and the organisers claim the event, which takes place over Easter weekend, March 25-27, has the largest trade representation of any show in Britain.

John Bridcutt has taken over as secretary to the Jaguar Car Club which was formed last spring. Club magazine *Jaguar World* is a well-printed, glossy 30-page publication which includes news, book and model reviews, reports on events, features on personalities and useful advertisements.

BMW Drivers Club now has more than a thousand '02 models on its register, and will be organising an international gathering of these cars at Snetterton this year, possibly at the Willhire 24-Hour Race. Telephone the Club Secretary on 0362-694459 for details.

Weston Park in Shropshire hosts the second Midlands Festival of Transport on March 26-27, and Dartmouth Park in West Bromwich is the venue for the twelfth Sandwell Historic Vehicle Parade and Transport Show on May 14. For details and entry forms for either, contact Geoff and Linda Price at 37 Comberford Drive, Tiffany Green, Wednesbury, West Midlands WS10 0UA.

Doing good business at January's Racing Car Show, not surprisingly, was the official Ayrton Senna Fan Club. For membership details write to Dept 1, Snetterton Circuit, Norwich, Norfolk NR16 2JU.

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AROUND AND ABOUT

Chauche Revenge at Chamonix



The Chamonix 24-Hour Ice Race (actually composed of 15 separate races) on February 4-5 gave last year's runner-up François Chauche his taste of victory after he and team-mate Jean-Pierre Malchet won most of the heats in their BMW 325iX. F1 drivers Jacques Laffite and Jean-Pierre Jabouille joined rally stars such as Bernard Beguin and Bernard Darniche for the unique event in its spectacular setting at the foot of Mont Blanc. Above, Chauche heads Beltoise (Peugeot T16) and Beguin (BMW). Beguin and co-driver Chatriot made it a BMW 1-2. (Photo: Philip Scott)

Nissan signs Bailey and Blundell

Nissan's newly confirmed assault on the World Sports-Prototype Championship will feature an all-British driving squad for its single British-built Group C chassis.

Dubbed the Nissan R89C, the chassis will be manufactured by Lola Cars in Huntingdon, equipped with the latest Japanese 3½-litre twin-turbo V8 engine and run by Howard Marsden's NISMO UK operation in Milton Keynes.

Nominated drivers are Julian Bailey, who has failed to find further employment in Formula One after an unsuccessful year with Tyrrell, and last year's works Lola Formula 3000 team-leader Mark Blundell. They will debut the new car at the first European round, after a Japanese-based crew has contested the series-opener at Suzuka in a 1988 chassis.

This will be Nissan's first full World Championship programme, having competed only at Fuji and Le Mans in recent years using chassis built by March.FISA's insistence that teams contest the entire series or not at all has also succeeded in attracting works entries from Toyota and Mazda.

Ferrari unveils revised F1 car

At Fiorano on February 1 Ferrari launched its pukka 1989 Formula One chassis, designated F640, in time for tyre-testing at Jerez.

The new car is outwardly very similar to the interim F639 which has been extensively tested by Nigel Mansell, Gerhard Berger and Roberto Moreno since its construction last year, but incorporates slightly revised aerodynamics. The team remains committed to the use of designer John Barnard's seven-speed semi-automatic gearbox.

Dallara's 1989 challenger



BMS Dallara F189-Cosworth.

Scuderia Italia launched its BMS Dallara 189 in Varese on February 2. The new chassis, clearly influenced by last year's March and Tyrrell models, is fitted with Ford's Cosworth-built DFR V8 engine, prepared by Heini Mader, and Dallara's own longitudinal six-speed gearbox.

Alex Caffi and new signing Andrea de Cesaris are entered for all 1989 Grands Prix. The latter brings Marlboro sponsorship and is nominated as the number one driver, while the former must pre-qualify.

MARCH FIXTURES

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

Date	*Organiser*	*Venue*	*Event*	*Type*
Feb 24-25	**De Lacy Motor Club**	**Bradford, Yorkshire**	**Cartel International Rally (BORC)**	**INT**
Feb 26	**Enterprise AC/Lydden IMRC**	**Lydden, Dover, Kent**	**Rallycross**	**INT**
Feb 28-Mar 5	**Automobile Club de Portugal**	**Estoril, Portugal**	**Portuguese Rally (WRC)**	**INT**
Mar 4	Vintage Sports-Car Club	Silverstone, Towcester, Northamptonshire	Race Meeting	R
Mar 5	Brands Hatch Leisure RC	Brands Hatch, Dartford, Kent	Race Meeting	N
Mar 12	BARC	Thruxton, Andover, Hampshire	Race Meeting	N
Mar 12	BRDC/Enterprise AC	Brands Hatch, Dartford, Kent	Race Meeting	N
Mar 19	**BRDC/Enterprise AC**	**Cadwell Park, Louth, Lincolnshire**	**Rallycross**	**INT**
Mar 19	Brands Hatch Leisure RC	Brands Hatch, Dartford, Kent	British Formula 3000 Championship	N
Mar 23-24	BARC(NW)	Oulton Park, Tarporley, Cheshire	Race Meeting	R
Mar 23-27	**Safari Rally**	**Nairobi, Kenya**	**Safari Rally (WRC)**	**INT**
Mar 24	Brands Hatch Leisure RC	Snetterton, Norwich, Norfolk	Race Meeting	N
Mar 24	Darlington & BMC Ltd	Croft Circuit, Darlington, Co. Durham	Race Meeting	N
Mar 24	BARC	Thruxton, Andover, Hampshire	British Touring Car Championship	N
Mar 26	**CBA**	**Rio de Janeiro, Brazil**	**Brazilian Grand Prix**	**INT**
Mar 26-27	British Racing & Sports Car Club	Brands Hatch, Dartford, Kent	Race Meeting	N
Mar 27	BARC	Thruxton, Andover, Hampshire	British Formula 3000 Championship	N
Mar 27	BRDC	Silverstone, Towcester, Northamptonshire	Race Meeting	N
Mar 27	**Enterprise AC/Lydden IMRC**	**Lydden, Dover, Kent**	**Rallycross**	**INT**
Apr 2	BARC	Donington Park, Castle Donington, Derbyshire	British Formula Three Championship	N

Forty Entries for new Formula One

The number of entries for the World Championship series has, as anticipated last year, reached unprecendented levels in response to the new 3½-litre Formula One.

By the final deadline for registrations on January 31, 21 teams and 40 drivers had committed themselves to a full year, in spite of FISA's eventual failure to enforce its previous commandment that all competing teams must enter two cars.

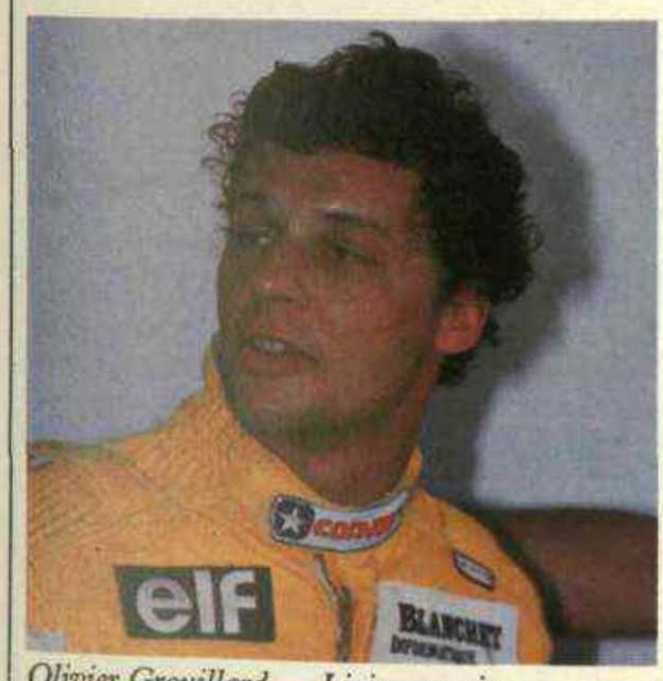
Osella, BMS Dallara, Coloni, Rial and AGS have all gone ahead with expansion plans, and the returning Brabham and debutant Onyx teams have each named two drivers, but the EuroBrun organisation has shrunk to a single entry in company with the second Formula 3000 graduate, First Racing.

F3000 also provides most of the new drivers in the list — Japanese champion Aguri Suzuki and European champion Roberto Moreno being joined by Olivier Grouillard, Johnny Herbert, Gregor Foitek, Bertrand Gachot, Pierre-Henri Raphanel and Volker Weidler — but Joachim Winkelhock (younger brother of the late ATS and RAM F1 driver Manfred) comes direct from winning the German Formula Three series. Martin Brundle returns after a year's sabbatical in which he became World Sports-car Champion for Jaguar.

With only 30 places available in qualifying sessions themselves, a quarter of the entries face elimination at the Friday morning pre-qualification stage at each Grand Prix meeting.

FORMULA ONE ENTRIES

McLaren	Ayrton Senna
	Alain Prost
Tyrrell	Jonathan Palmer
	Michele Alboreto
Williams	Thierry Boutsen
	Riccardo Patrese
Brabham	Stefano Modena
	Martin Brundle
Arrows	Derek Warwick
	Eddie Cheever
Lotus	Nelson Piquet
	Satoru Nakajima
March	Mauricio Gugelmin
	Ivan Capelli
Osella	Piercarlo Ghinzani
	Nicola Larini
Benetton	Johnny Herbert
	Alessandro Nannini
BMS Dallara	Alex Caffi
	Andrea de Cesaris
Minardi	Luis Perez Sala
	Pierluigi Martini
Ligier	René Arnoux
	Olivier Grouillard
Ferrari	Nigel Mansell
	Gerhard Berger
Larrousse-Calmels	Philippe Alliot
	Yannick Dalmas
Coloni	Pierre-Henri Raphanel
	Roberto Moreno
EuroBrun	Gregor Foitek
Zakspeed	Aguri Suzuki
	Bernd Schneider
Onyx	Stefan Johansson
	Bertrand Gachot
Rial	Christian Danner
	Volker Weidler
AGS	Philippe Streiff
	Joachim Winkelhock
First	Gabriele Tarquini



Olivier Grouillard — Ligier recruit.

Silverstone Group C Fixture Returns

Although not listed on the original schedule for 1989, Silverstone's round of the World Sports-Prototype Championship has been reinstated in the latest of FISA's now-traditional calendar reshuffles.

The contentious one-round-per-country rule had excluded the Northamptonshire circuit from the nine-race series in favour of a visit to Brands Hatch on July 23. But the new regulation was waived as soon as Monza withdrew on the grounds that its new pits would not be ready for April 30.

Silverstone's May 14 date, just one week before the Dijon race, has not been confirmed, and May 1 is known to have been discussed as an alternative.

With the Spa-Francorchamps race also in some doubt and the venue for the final round in the United States still undecided, it is clear that FISA's commitment to this reformed championship has been unable to guarantee the stability of forward planning.

Peugeot's Paris-Dakar Toss-Up



Masters of the West African desert — Ari Vatanen, Bruno Berglund and Peugeot.

Ari Vatanen won the eleventh Paris-Dakar rally raid for Peugeot on January 13, on the toss of a ten-franc coin!

After rolling his 405 T16 during the Prologue in Barcelona on December 26 and falling behind, Vatanen had been reeling in leader Jacky Ickx's similar car throughout the 7000-mile trek across Tunisia, Libya, Niger, Mali, Guinea and Senegal. With the French team dominating but the Finn rolling once more in the Teneré desert, team manager Jean Todt decided to issue team orders six days before the finish, and Vatanen won the toss.

The 1981 World Rally Champion had won the event in 1986, and led last year until the abduction of his car and his controversial subsequent disqualification for exceeding maximum lateness. His winning margin on this occasion was only 3 min 44 sec.

Third place was claimed by Patrick Tambay, leading a team of seven works-entered Mitsubishi Pajeros, three of which finished in the top seven.

Ted Toleman's Metro 6R4-derived T89 Enduro suffered electrical trouble in Libya, his son Gary's Range Rover was destroyed by an engine fire, and Andrew Cowan's Pajero was stopped by piston failure, so no British crews made it to Dakar.



The factory Lancia squad celebrates another routine 1-2-3 on the finish ramp in Monaco.

A Routine Expedition

As man's achievements have grown, and his machines become more advanced, many of what were once difficult, strenuous challenges are now considered no more than routine. Journeying by road to the south of France in winter, via the Alps, was once a risky undertaking indeed. The Monte Carlo Rally was a venture not for the faint-hearted, and those well-wrapped ladies and gentlemen who packed their chains, snow shovels, evening wear and roulette systems into immaculate automobiles each January basked in glamorous limelight.

In those days, getting there was an exploit in itself. Indeed, that was the main part of the competition, and what followed were no more than supplementary contests. It was an uncomfortable, even perilous way of getting to Mediterranean sunshine whilst countries to the north shivered in their winters.

Today, those concentration runs, as they are now called, have virtually no significance except to maintain a tradition. There have been cries to eliminate them altogether, and to have the rally start and finish in the Principality itself, but that would be a sad departure — almost as bad as the occasions when, in its later years, Britain's London Rally started and finished at Manchester!

As the concentration routes became less important, critics of the rally called for some means of injecting an element of competition into what had become a boring prelude to the main part of the rally, so that there would be some kind of significant classification when the cars arrived at Monaco. What was then introduced was a handful of special stages built into the final part of the concentration, so that a leaderboard could be produced.



Runner-up Didier Auriol congratulates winning team-mate Miki Biaison after a hard-fought contest.

Today, those classification tests have expanded, and what happens now is that no-one actually arrives in Monaco until the day before the final leg, the Mountain Circuit as it was popularly called, and this cannot have found much favour among the Principality's hoteliers and restaurateurs.

The Concentration Runs used to take from Saturday to Monday, and it was always quite an occasion as crews moved along the rows of tents on the quayside completing their documentation and scrutineering and arranging transport to hotels where they hoped to meet up with their luggage. Castrol used to organise baggage transport for British crews, and very well they did it, too, somehow managing to get every suitcase to the correct hotel.

The main part of the rally, the Common Run, took from Tuesday morning to late on Wednesday (without a night stop), whilst the final leg lasted from the Thursday afternoon to early on the Friday morning.

All that has now gone. From the five starting points at Barcelona, Bad Homburg, Monte Carlo, Lausanne and Sestrière (others such as Glasgow, Oslo and Warsaw have long ceased to figure), crews converged this year at St Etienne near Lyon in the small hours of the Sunday morning, from which they set out nine hours later for the four special stages of what is called the Classification Run. A full night's rest followed, after which came the Monday and Tuesday of the Common Run, its ten special stages divided by yet another night stop.

The Monte Carlo arrival was not until late on the Tuesday afternoon, after which the final leg stretched from 11am on the Wednesday to 9am on the Thursday, divided by a two-and-a-half-hour stop at Monaco. If you were a private entrant on a tight budget, and planned to leave Monaco as soon as the rally was over, you need only have spent one night in a Monaco hotel; quite a change from years past when the sojourn there used to span the best part of a week.

This year's rally was marred by a tragic and ironic accident which claimed the lives of a well-known driver and co-driver who were not themselves competing in the rally. Making ice-notes for the Swedish driver Fredrik Skoghag were his fellow countrymen Lars-Erik Torph and Bertil Rehnfeldt, and after they had completed their discussions with the crew before the start of the fifth stage at Chateau de Boulogne, the first on the Tuesday morning, they had some time to spare so they went into the stage to watch.

On a piece of road which was not particularly twisty, Alessandro Fiorio's Lancia Delta went off the road and down a bank, hitting the two Swedes and three other spectators. Torph was killed instantly, and Rehnfeldt died later in hospital. Of the others, one sustained serious abdominal injuries and two were only slightly hurt.

Twenty-seven-year-old Torph had been a Toyota driver, and indeed had scored second and third places in the Safari and was

planning to go to Kenya after the Monte to begin his practice for this year's event, in which he was to have driven a works Volkswagen. Rehnfeldt, aged 52, had many years of rallying behind him, and had been Bo Ljungfeldt's co-driver in the 1963 Monte Carlo Rally when they made the best time in their Ford Falcon but were not winners due to the handicap system in force at the time.

It was Fiorio's second accident of the rally, for on the very first special stage he had taken to an escape road and injured two spectators who should not have been in that position. Neither Fiorio nor his co-driver Pirollo was injured in the second accident, but their car was wrecked and they both suffered severe shock.

On the subject of spectators, FISA chairman Jean-Marie Balestre said later at a Press conference that the Monte Carlo Rally had the best record for spectator behaviour and control, but this is not true at all. Snow-shovelling, particularly on the Col de Turini during the final night, has been a common spectator practice for as long as we can remember, whilst fights and missile-throwing amongst rival supporters have frequently taken place, particularly between French and Italian contingents.

Other events with bad spectator-safety records, notably the Portuguese Rally, have improved tremendously in the past two years, but the Monte Carlo Rally seems to have gone the opposite way.

It was always Portugal which was considered to be the event in which spectators were most foolhardy, lining the very edge of the road; sometimes even filling it completely and jumping to one side at the last possible moment before a car arrived. Things are now not at all as bad in Portugal, but the very same sort of behaviour is now not uncommon during the Monte Carlo Rally. This year many of the stages were thronged, and it was noticed quite often that people wanted to get as close as possible to the cars without actually touching them. More than one competitor complained of being unable to see the exit road from a junction because it was crammed with people.



Hannu Mikkola's Mazda finished fourth, preferring the snow and ice to dry roads.

The popular conception of the Monte Carlo Rally is one of a constant battle with snow and ice, but that is not the case at all. Only the highest passes usually have such conditions, whereas roads at lower altitudes are generally clear. The weather is as unpredictable in the Alps as it is anywhere, and there have been some Montes run entirely on snow and ice, and others on completely dry roads.

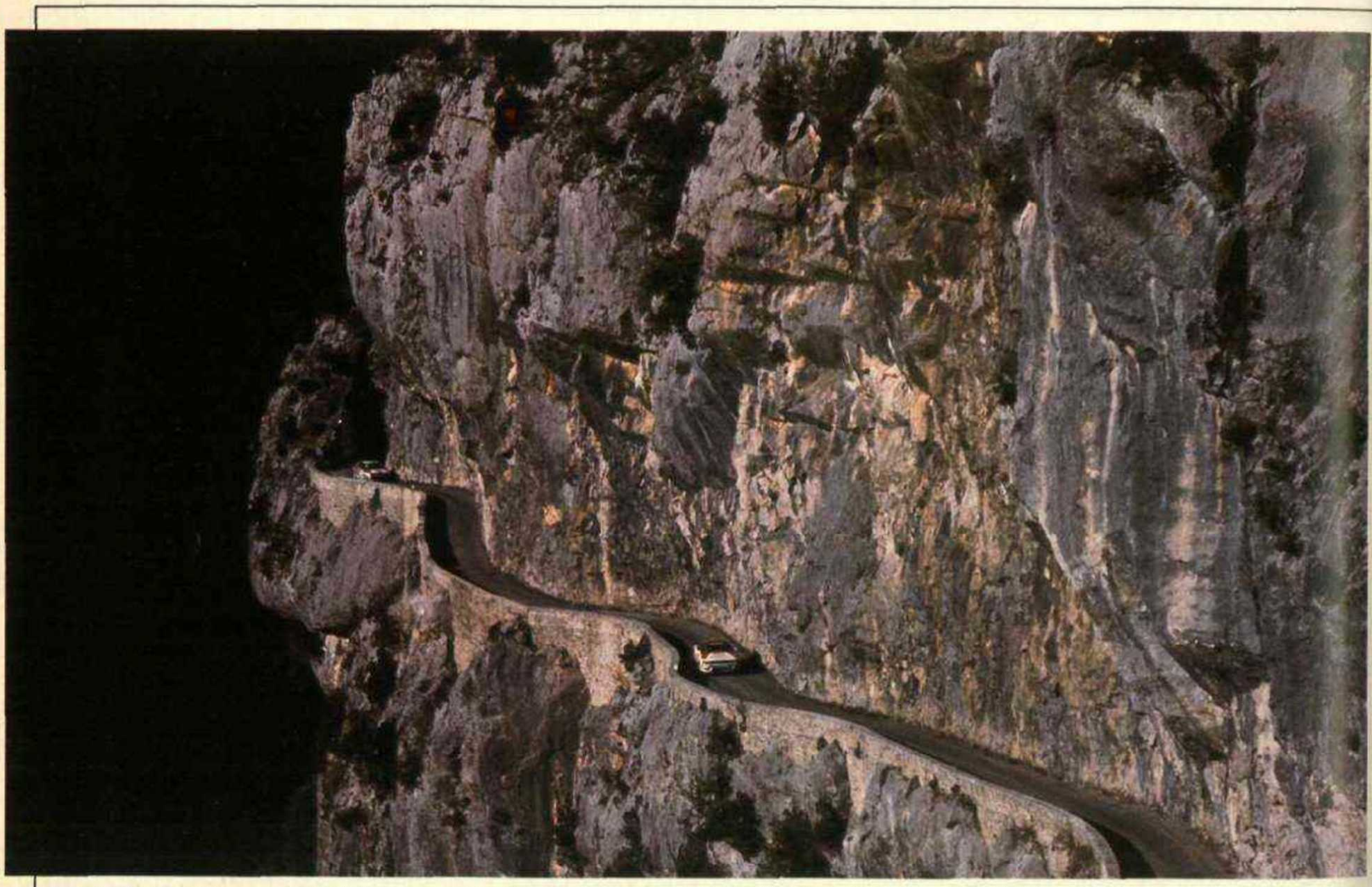
This year it did not seem that there would be much snow at all, for during their practice competitors found very little indeed. However, just a day before the start it began snowing in the Haute Loire region where the first stage was held around the loop starting and finishing at St Bonnet le Froid. Perhaps it would be a snowy event after all, and recce crews were kept busy making trips over the stages, noting surface conditions and temperatures.

But that first stage was the only one with any appreciable snow. The others were predominantly dry, although patches of ice, slush or frozen slush here and there made the job of competitors' ice-note crews very important indeed, and tyre choice extremely critical.

When a special stage is dry in parts and icy in others, the studded tyres necessary for the latter condition may not be able to survive the harsh treatment of braking, accelerating



Crowds lining the route were not always good natured or safe. Kankkunen's rally was blighted by an icy stage on which he lost front-wheel drive . . .



Lancia closes on Toyota on one of the more spectacular stages; the ever-promising Japanese challenge again failed to ruffle the south Europeans.

and cornering on the former. Studs which have become dislodged and moved over at an angle are worse than no studs at all, and it is often the best plan for a mixed surface stage to use dry tarmac tyres and ease off when approaching icy patches. This is where the work of the ice-notes crews becomes really important, for it is vital that a competitor knows in advance where to expect the ice, and whether it is on the approach to, departure from, or the apex of a corner.

Such costly and manpower-consuming team support may not be in the spirit of adventure into the unknown, to which rallying owes its origins, but when a team is all out for victory and its rivals are putting all their efforts towards the same object, then it has to do likewise.

Lancia's five cars were divided into two groups, as usual; three in Martini colours and two backed by the Jolly Club and the betting and lottery chain Totip. The official cars were driven by Massimo Biasion/Tiziano Siviero, Bruno Saby/Jean-François Fauchille and Didier Auriol/Bernard Occelli — two French crews and one Italian. Both Jolly Club cars were crewed by Italians, Alessandro Fiorio/Luigi Pirollo and Dario Cerrato/Gianni Vasino. Lest anyone should wonder about the identity of the latter co-driver, he was an Italian TV reporter who had never before competed in a rally of any kind. It's small wonder that Cerrato was driving "on sight", without the benefit of notes, and to his great credit that he finished seventh.

All five Lancias were using Michelin tyres, a departure from the 1988 situation when the works cars used Michelins and the Jolly Club cars Pirellis. Fiorio's car was the only one fitted with the electronic clutch announced before the Sanremo Rally last October.

Most members of Toyota Team Europe have considerable experience of the Monte Carlo Rally in one way or another, some even ranking among past winners, but the team itself has never before competed in the event. However, after very encouraging exploratory sorties last year with its new four-wheel-drive Celica GT-Four, notably to Finland and the RAC Rally, TTE decided that the time had come to forsake its former policy of individual events backed by local dealers or importers, and to tackle the World Championship as a whole.

Three works GT-Fours were driven by Juha Kankkunen/Juha Piironen, Björn Waldegård/Fred Gallagher and, newly recruited from Ford, Spaniards Carlos Sainz/Luis Moya. A fourth Celica, backed by Bastos, was driven by Belgians Patrick Snijers/Dany Colebunders, and all four cars used Pirelli tyres on 16in wheels.

Mazda brought two cars as usual, driven by Timo Salonen/Voitto Silander and Hannu Mikkola/Christian Geistdörfer, both on Michelin tyres, whilst a diminutive Nissan March Turbo, weighing just 934kg (2059 lb) was driven by Per Eklund/Dave Whittock, using Dunlop tyres.

Weighing in at 1370kg (3020 lb), one of the heaviest cars in the event was the UK-prepared Mitsubishi Galant VR-4 driven by Ari Vatanen/Bruno Berglund, much of this being due to the car's four-wheel-drive and four-wheel-steering mechanisms, the latter providing a 1.5° rear wheel deflection to the left or to the right. This was the only car entered by the Essex-based team, and it ran on Michelin tyres.

There was a solitary, Pirelli-shod BMW M3 from Britain's Prodrive for Belgians Marc Duez/ Alain Lopes, whilst Alain Oreille and Gilles Thimonier drove a Renault R5 GT Turbo, privately entered but enjoying factory support.

Unlike the halcyon days of the past, when veritable convoys of British crews drove down to Monaco, there was not a single British driver this year, and the only "GBs" in evidence were those of UK-based teams, a strong contingent of British mechanics and team personnel, and the co-drivers Gallagher and Whittock.

We have said before that Lancia domination was about to end with the arrival of

Monte Carlo Rally



Ari Vatanen took Mitsubishi's Galant VR-4 further up the leaderboard than most expected.

competitive cars from Toyota and Mazda. The Monte showed that a third Japanese make is following suit, for Vatanen's Mitsubishi was both reliable and fast, and it was a great pity that the car hit a wall on the final night and did not finish. There was talk that gravel had been scattered on the corner, but Vatanan himself maintained that it was entirely his fault for hitting both brake and throttle pedals at the same time, with the same foot. The pedals were too close together for his liking, and he had neglected to ask that they be moved further apart.

Vatanen himself showed that he is certainly back on form after a gradual recovery from serious injuries in the Argentina Rally. That he had come to Monte Carlo directly from winning the Paris-Dakar Rally — albeit by the toss of the Peugeot team manager's coin from Jacky Ickx — was also to his credit, for it cannot be easy to spend weeks crossing deserts and then launch yourself immediately into a fierce competition in the Alps.

The underpowered Mazdas did not shine at all on the dry roads, even though Mikkola managed a good fourth place. Team-mate Salonen lost such a massive chunk of time having repairs after a front wheel bearing collapsed, destroying the brake disc and caliper, that at the end of the first leg it was decided that he should withdraw. The logistical problems of servicing two cars more than half-an-hour apart on the road would have been considerable.

Among the Toyotas, Waldegård had repeated transmission trouble, sometimes having drive only at the rear and sometimes only at the front. However, just as it seemed that the problem had been cured the car's engine gave up and he was out.

Sainz, too, went out, having slid off the road when using slicks on ice. That tyre choice was not entirely wrong for that stage, for his team-mates used the same; it just happened that he may have gone faster into that paricular corner. Kankkunen was not without problems either, and he was without front-wheel drive for a while, having to spend some time pushing to get up a slippery hill.

Tyre choice was so critical that some teams were making sure that at least one of their drivers chose "safe" tyres. Among the Lancias, for instance, it seemed that it was Saby who was the man delegated to use such tyres, whilst his team-mates used those which would be faster, but less safe in the event of a small error.

There was a spot of bother at La Bollene, after the first crossing of the Turini on the Wednesday when several cars had to slow down and deviate to avoid wires which were strung across the road. It was not a deliberate booby trap, but the result of a wire-strike by a helicopter carrying a Japanese film crew. One car came off the stage dragging a substantial length of wire behind it, and it must have been quite a job to clear the twisted cable from the rear axle, around which it had wrapped.

Even though its opposition is gathering strength, it was Lancia once again which occupied the first three places, and Biasion who took victory ahead of Auriol and Saby. The subject of team orders came up again, but this time there was no evidence that anyone had slowed to allow Biasion to win. The Italian driver got there on merit, and Lancia even put out a written statement mid-way through the rally to the effect that no team orders had been given, or would be given.

Among the makes, Lancia has taken the first round, whilst among the drivers Carlsson and Biasion share the lead with 20 points each. No-one who scored points in Sweden was among the first ten in Monte Carlo, so already twenty drivers appear on the list of scorers. However, the Portuguese Rally in early March will no doubt change the regularity of that pattern, whilst the Safari later in the month is certain to do so. **GP**



Marc Duez and Alain Lopes brought the Prodrive M3 home eighth.

WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP
Round 2 for Drivers and Round 1 for Makes, Monte Carlo Rally, January 21-26

TOP 20 STARTERS

1	Saby/Fauchille	Lancia Delta HF Integrale
2	Kankkunen/Piironen	Toyota Celica GT-Four
3	Salonen/Silander	Mazda 323 Turbo 4 × 4
4	Biasion/Siviero	Lancia Delta HF Integrale
5	Waldegård/Gallagher	Toyota Celica GT-Four
6	Auriol/Occelli	Lancia Delta HF Integrale
7	Mikkola/Geistdörfer	Mazda 323 Turbo 4 × 4
8	Fiorio/Pirollo	Lancia Delta HF Integrale
9	Eklund/Whittock	Nissan March Turbo
10	Snijers/Colebunders	Toyota Celica GT-Four
11	Cerrato/Vasino	Lancia Delta HF Integrale
12	Gaban/Chevalier	Lancia Delta HF Integrale
14	Ballet/Lallement	Peugeot 205 GTi 1.9
15	Sainz/Moya	Toyota Celica GT-Four
16	Vatanen/Berglund	Mitsubishi Galant VR-4
17	Martini/Gibellini	Audi 90 Quattro
18	Duez/Lopes	BMW M3
19	Oreille/Thimonier	Renault 5 GT Turbo
20	"Tchine"/Borie	Lancia Delta HF Integrale
21	Deila/Gullino	Lancia Delta HF Integrale

RESULTS

1st	Massimo Biasion (I)/Tiziano Siviero (I)	Lancia Delta Integrale	A		7h 13m 27s
2nd	Didier Auriol (F)/Bernard Occelli (F)	Lancia Delta Integrale	A		7h 19m 54s
3rd	Bruno Saby (F)/Jean-François Fauchille (F)	Lancia Delta Integrale	A		7h 21m 08s
4th	Hannu Mikkola (SF)/Christian Geistdörfer (D)	Mazda 323 4WD	A		7h 25m 41s
5th	Juha Kankkunen (SF)/Juha Piironen (SF)	Toyota Celica GT-Four	A	(1m)	7h 25m 16s
6th	Patrick Snijers (B)/Dany Colebunders (B)	Toyota Celica GT-Four	A		7h 31m 38s
7th	Dario Cerrato (I)/Gianni Vasino (I)	Lancia Delta Integrale	A		7h 44m 21s
8th	Marc Duez (B)/Alain Lopes (B)	BMW M3	A		7h 47m 29s
9th	Paola de Martini (I)/Umberta Gibellini (I)	Audi 90 Quattro	A		7h 58m 33s
10th	Alain Oreille (F)/Gilles Thimonier (F)	Renault 5 GT Turbo	N		7h 59m 33s

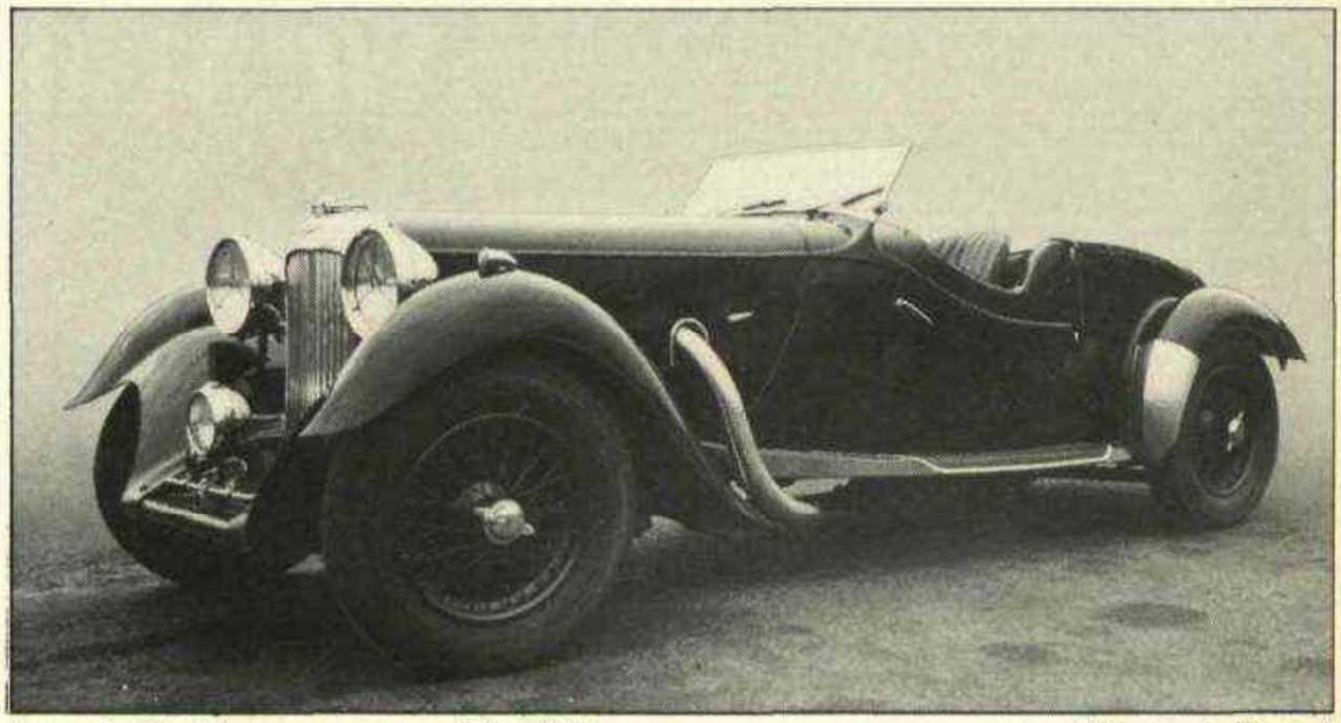
172 starters, 109 classified as finishers; 100 started final leg, 83 finished.
(Figure in brackets denotes road penalty)

Group A and over 2000cc: Biasion/Siviero;
1600-2000cc: Gilbert Renoux/Serge Roussel (Peugeot 205 GTi);
1300-1600cc: Remi Tosello/Olivier Viout (Peugeot 205 GTi);
Up to 1300cc: Patrick Magaud/J.J. Ferrier (Citröen AX Sport);
Group N Overall: Oreille/Thimonier.

Drivers' Championship (after 2 of 13 rounds):
1, Ingvar Carlsson (S) and Massimo Biasion (I) 20; 2, Per Eklund (S) and Didier Auriol (F) 15; 3, Kenneth Eriksson (S) and Bruno Saby (F) 12.
(20 drivers have scored points)
Makes Championship (after 1 of 10 rounds):
1, Lancia 20; 2, Mazda 12; 3, Toyota 10; 4, Renault 9; 5, BMW 4; 6, Audi 2.



LETTER TO READERS



Lagonda Rapide — a great car of the 1930s. *(Photo: A. Davey)*

Great Cars

Dear Reader,

In every decade there seems to be a "great car", one that stands out above the rest, stamps its identity on the motoring scene in some way or another and lives on regardless of time. A great car that was great when it was designed will stand the test of time. Unlike a lot of popularly accepted "classic" (I use the word casually) cars, a truly great car becomes no greater with the passage of time.

Today there are many cars that are hailed as "classics" when in reality they were awful when they were designed, and anyone who drove them when they were new will soon tell you the truth about what they were like to own.

The old-car "Trade", and by that I mean anyone who makes money out of old cars, be he a journalist, a photographer, a used-car dealer, an auctioneer, a restorer, a collector or merely a manipulator, will hype up a particular model to make it appear to be worth more money than any self-respecting worker can visualise, let alone have in the bank. People who owned the model when it was new will tell you how awful it was; not necessarily a bad car, but merely awful. That goes for just about anything from a Ferrari to an Austin 7.

The Trade relies on two things. Firstly that anyone who has paid an astronomical sum of money for something is very unlikely to admit he has bought an awful car, for not only would it reflect on his knowledge and judgement, but it would make it difficult for him to sell it on to the next person. And secondly that such a car is hardly likely to be driven very far, so the owner will never really find out how awful it can be. If journalists borrow it to do a fancy article about the car, few of them will drive it further than up the road and back so they will never find out, and will merely perpetuate the hype in their writings.

Last year, when I had a brief run in a 300SL Mercedes-Benz "Gullwing" coupé, it brought back happy memories of the many thousands of miles I did in various versions in 1955-56. Those trips covered everything from the Targa Florio circuit in Sicily to stony, unmade roads in the Arctic Circle. I always rated the 300 SL a "great car" and it still is; it has stood the test of time.

Another brief encounter at the end of 1988 stirred up similar recollections of a pre-war great car. This was a short run in a 4½-litre Lagonda LG45R "Rapide" of 1938. When it was introduced in 1936, it was one of those cars you looked at in awe as you breathed a quiet "Cor!" to yourself. Fifty-three years later it still has that same effect; but it hasn't needed time to make it great, it was great when it was created.

Apart from the magnificence of its looks, the LG45R shattered everyone when *The Motor* put it through its road-test programme and it recorded 108.2 mph over a flying half-mile. This was at a time when very few cars could achieve 100 mph in full touring trim, and the average family box was lucky to reach 60 mph. There were two-seater sports-cars that could clock over 100 mph, and here was Lagonda's Grand Tourer travelling way over that magic figure.

The earlier 4½-litre Lagondas did not hang about, but the big 6-cylinder Meadows engine was not the smoothest thing in the world. These were the M45 series, and in the LG series Lagonda had gone to town on refining the basic engine, so that it was more Lagonda than Meadows, and power and smoothness was impressive. A short trundle down our local "public race-track" at an effortless 80 mph recalled what a great car the Rapide was.

Back in 1947 I had a memorable run in a 4½-litre Rapide with a well-known racing drive of the time; this four-seater tourer was his everyday transport and we had been to see someone about a car deal. The return cross-country run on fast clear roads was one of those you remember. My racing driver friend was not necessarily in a hurry, but it was a lovely sunny day, the roads were clear, he was in a happy mood and he knew the car well. We seemed to be at "over 90 mph" most of the time and the run ended with a final blast along the famous Hog's Back road in Hampshire.

We hadn't been home long before the telephone rang and the racing driver's wife answered it, tactfully. It was the car dealer we had been to see, and a quick word between husband and wife had her saying: "Oh I'm so sorry, he's not back yet. I'll get him to ring you." As we had a relaxing cup of tea my friend said, "I don't want him to know how fast you can cover the ground in that Lagonda." He rang the dealer about half-an-hour later and concluded their business, but I never did understand the philosophy behind that action, for I had a simple outlook on life and would have enjoyed boasting about the average speed we had achieved; my racing driver friend wasn't like that.

Since then I have driven many 4½-litre Lagondas, and enjoyed them all. Lagonda may have only won the Le Mans 24-Hour Race once, unlike its arch-rival Bentley, but for me the "Rapide" is the great car of the 1930s.

Looking to other decades, more than 200,000 miles in E-type Jaguars satisfied me in nominating the E-type as the great car of the 1960s, and in the other direction my nomination for the 1920s is the Vauxhall 30/98, the OE overhead-valve 4½-litre. I know Vauxhall enthusiasts will explain how the side-valve E-type 30/98 was a much nicer car, smoother running and with better steering on its beaded-edge tyres, but the muscle of the OE is what I like. If you haven't cruised across Salisbury Plain in the early morning at a restful 85 mph in a 30/98 Vauxhall, you haven't experienced pure vintage motoring.

In the Edwardian era the big 11-litre Napier with its smooth 6-cylinder engine has to be the great car, regardless of the merits of early Mercedes or Panhards. The Napier Ron Barker rebuilt, which is still used regularly by "vintagents" Trevor Tarring and Tony Jones, is a truly great car, and a fast run on the open road in it makes you wonder whether we have made all that much progress in 80 years.

That is until you get into a Porsche 928 or Ferrari Berlinetta Boxer, and then you realise that great cars are still being made.

Yours, DSJ



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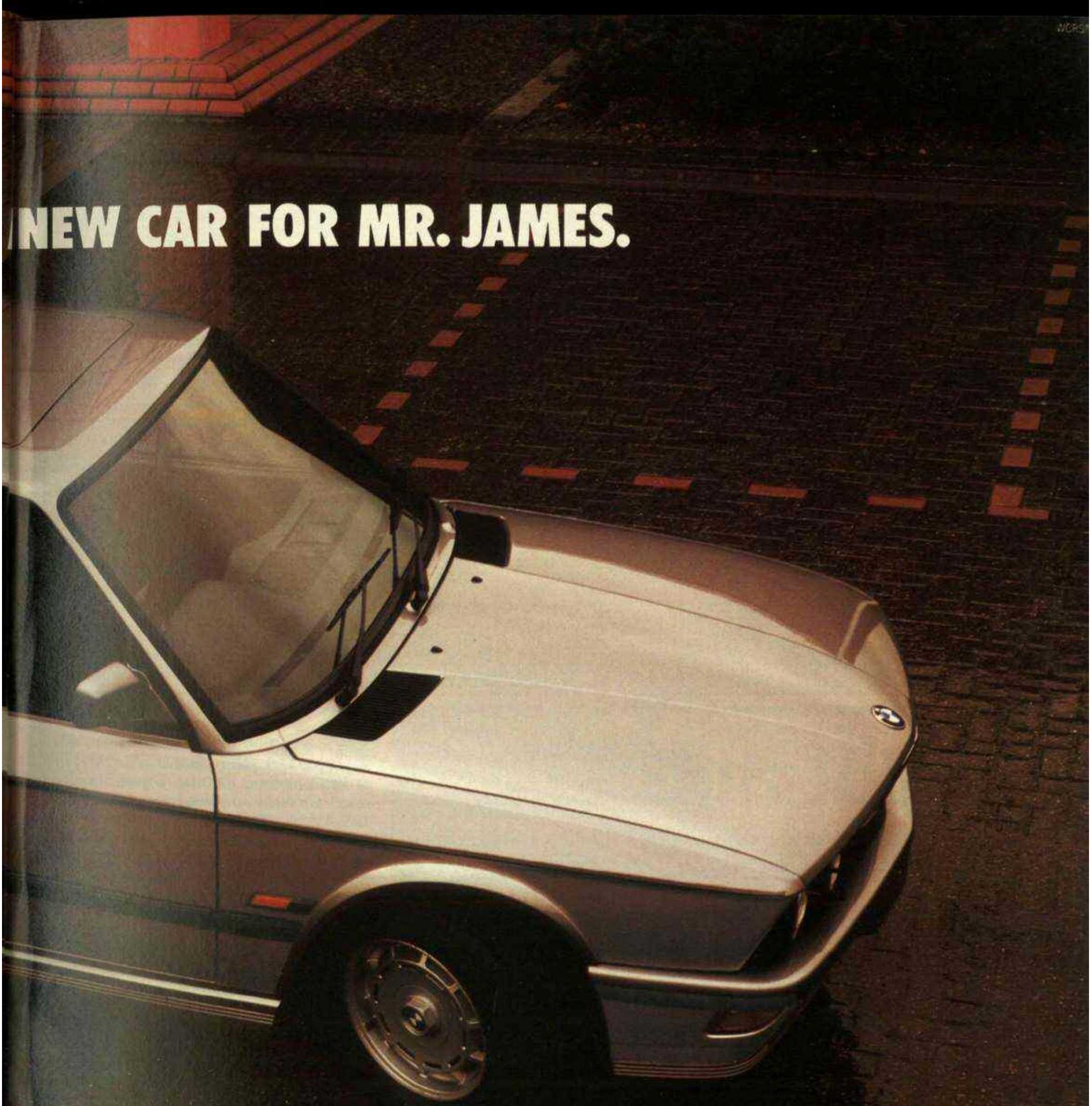
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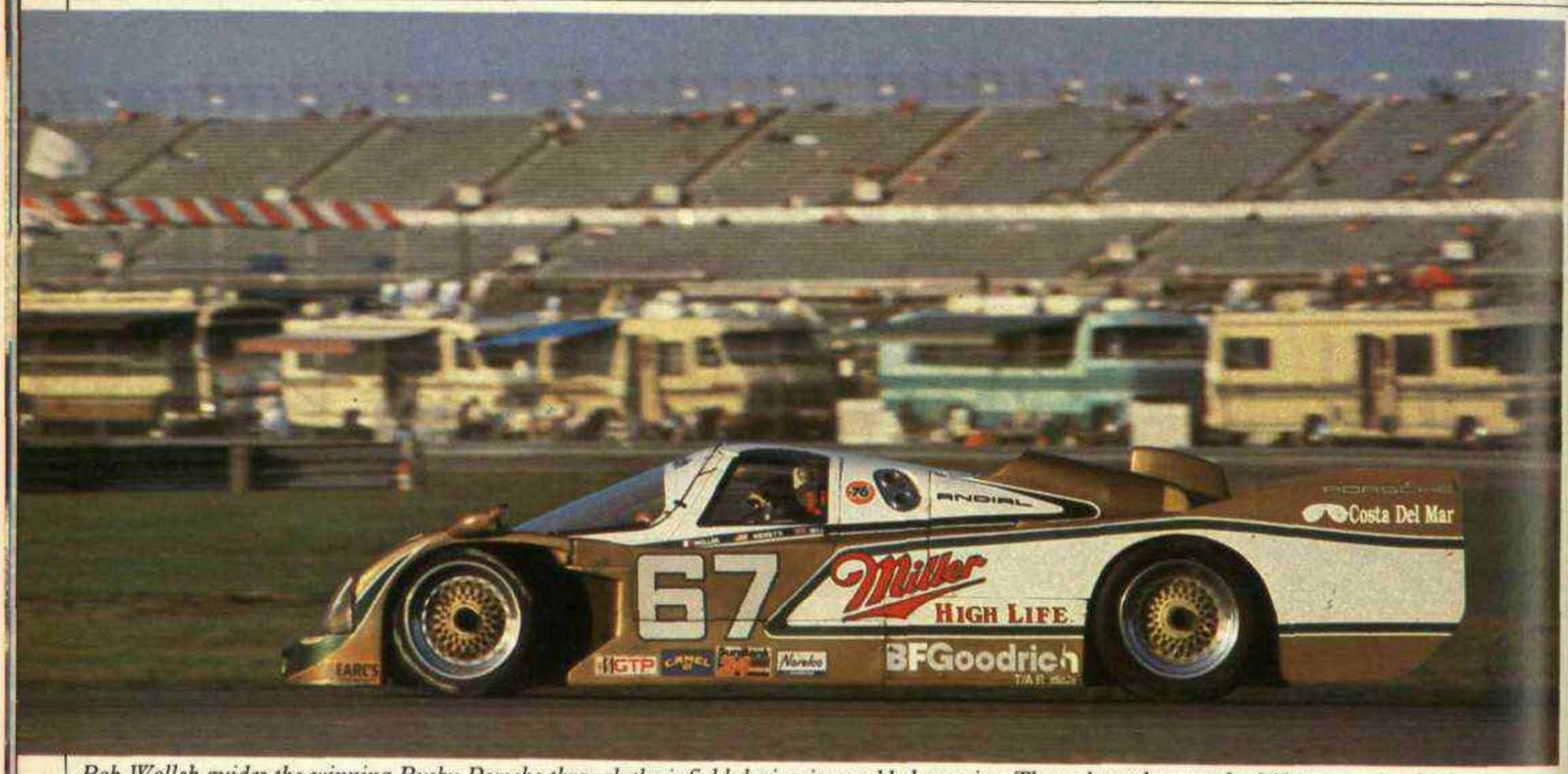
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IMSA GTP CHAMPIONSHIP



Bob Wollek guides the winning Busby Porsche through the infield during its troubled practice. Throughout the race the 962 never missed a beat.

Night and Day!



Geoff Brabham's ever-impressive Nissan fends off Jaguar and the Dyson Porsche in the early stages.

Derek Bell's particular blend of skill and good luck earned him his third victory at Daytona, and his eighth 24-hour race laurels in all, in the opening round of the 1989 IMSA GTP Championship.

The Pagham driver's personal technique and car sympathy can only be one factor in this phenomenal record of victories; the other is to be in the right car at the right time, with co-drivers who can make their contribution. The car, of course, was a Porsche 962, prepared by Jim Busby for sponsors Miller Beer and the BF Goodrich tyre company, co-drivers being the veteran Bob Wollek and the relatively inexperienced John Andretti.

Just 76 seconds behind at the finish, in the closest Daytona finish for two decades, was the Castrol Jaguar XJR-9 driven by Price Cobb, John Nielson and Andy Wallace, with a contribution from Jan Lammers on Sunday morning.

Some of the parallels with last year's race were almost uncanny, even though the result was reversed, for it was Jim Busby's Porsche which lost a gallant battle with the newly-formed Jaguar team in 1988, and it was Lammers who stepped into Nielsen's car just when, in Tom Walkinshaw's opinion, it need a fresh driver in the cockpit.

Then again, although Bell did not refer to it at the time, there was the personal satisfaction of avenging his 2½-minute defeat at Le Mans last June. Walkinshaw has absolutely no doubt that Lammers' Jaguar would have won the French event even if Klaus Ludwig hadn't run Bell's Porsche out of fuel and lost time, but Bell never agreed. On that occasion he had been pushed into the back-

ground by Stuck and Ludwig (and even failed to earn the points that would have been due if he'd driven 30% of the distance), but at Daytona the Englishman played the leading role, and savoured his success.

"I don't actually enjoy 24-hour races at all," he announced at the post-race press gathering. "Several times in the race I'll say, this is the last time I'm ever going to do it." Having achieved something his uncle Mario has never managed, John Andretti was equally laid-back: "The best thing about winning a 24-hour race is you don't have to come back if you don't want to!" Having shown that he has the ability to win a marathon event, though, it is hardly likely that John won't be around to uphold the family name in future classics.

It has to be said that there was always another 24-hour victory in the Porsche 962, a model which was really designed for endurance rather than sprinting, and that last year the Jaguar team didn't beat a Porsche that had no problems at all.

Bell's Porsche and Cobb's Jaguar were tied together throughout the race, usually on the same lap, lying fifth and seventh after the first hour and moving up the leaderboard together. The Porsche lost three minutes, a lap and a half maybe, when a rock hit the windscreen and Busby's crew changed the glass, but no more than that.

The surviving Jaguar, on the other hand, had any advantages peeled away in layers: the V12 engine was overheating on Saturday evening and into Sunday morning (water temperature was a steady 100°, oil temperature 125°), so that eventually new air-induction side plates had to be fitted, with larger scoops; there was a deflated rear tyre, probably cut by debris while Wallace was driving, a spin by Price Cobb at the moment he was putting Bell under great pressure, and a subsequent damage check. It all mounted up, to around five minutes in total, and indicated the near-parity between the two crews.

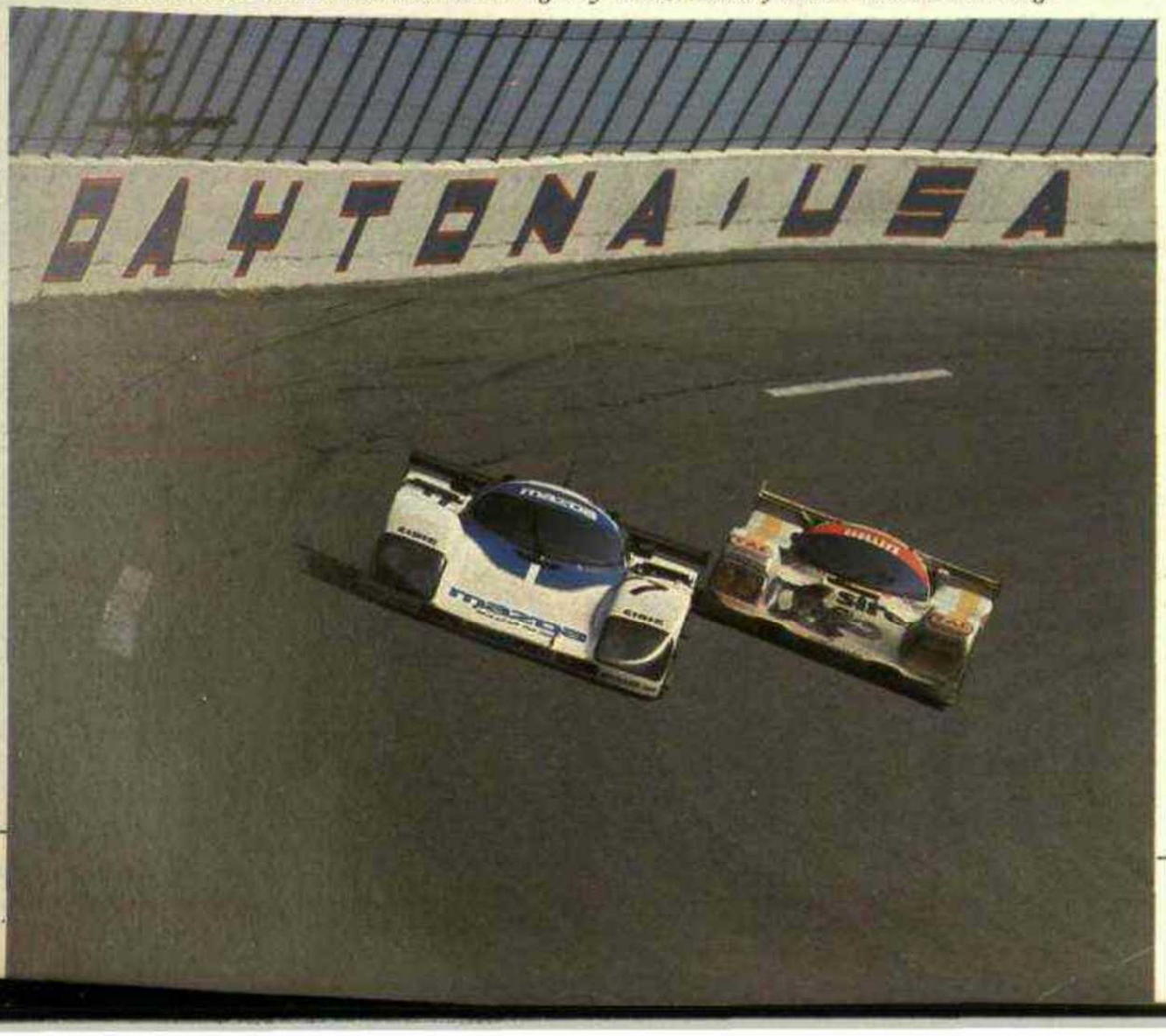
The last three marathon sports-car races therefore have been decided by one lap, by 2½ minutes and by 1¼ minutes respectively, indicating, if we did not know it already, that Tom Walkinshaw's Jaguars have raised the level of competition to a new peak, and that the team that beats them has to be outstanding on its day.

Curiously, the Busby Porsche looked anything but a likely winner during qualifying. While Mario and Michael Andretti had a completely untroubled practice in the second BFG/Miller 962 and qualified ninth, well in touch with the pole-sitting Nissan, Bell's car refused to show any speed at all. It sounded flat as it went past the pits at full speed, short of nearly 1000 rpm, was no quicker next day with lower gearing, and again failed to show form when a new engine was installed. The problem lay with the turbocharger unit or with the newish underbody profile, both of which were changed the night before the race.



Debriefing in the TWR pit for Andy Wallace, while his co-drivers chase victory.

Mazda's fifth-placed 767B dices with Brun's grimy 962C on the famous Florida banking.



"Then suddenly we had a race car, it was night and day," said Bell once the race was under way. As it turned out, Mario's Porsche threw a tyre tread in the third hour, damaging the rear bodywork and undertray, and later a rear suspension top link had to be changed, then a brake caliper, almost certainly as a consequence of the original failure. It was embarrassing for BFG to find that Busby's team had a dud tyre-gauge which was over-reading by five pounds; every tyre in the pit was dangerously under-inflated, and that car was withdrawn when it went an impossible 40 laps down.

Although IMSA has rewritten the rulebook to discriminate against the runaway Nissan (Geoff Brabham won eight consecutive races in the blue car last year, an unprecedented record), it still seemed to have the measure of the normally-aspirated Jaguars. The inlet restrictor upstream of the big turbocharger has been reduced in diameter from 57mm to 54mm, supposedly robbing it of about 50bhp, while the air-cooled Porsches kept their 57mm restrictors and the water-cooled Porsches (Group C type, recently admitted) had their restrictors increased in orifice diameter from 36mm to 38mm.

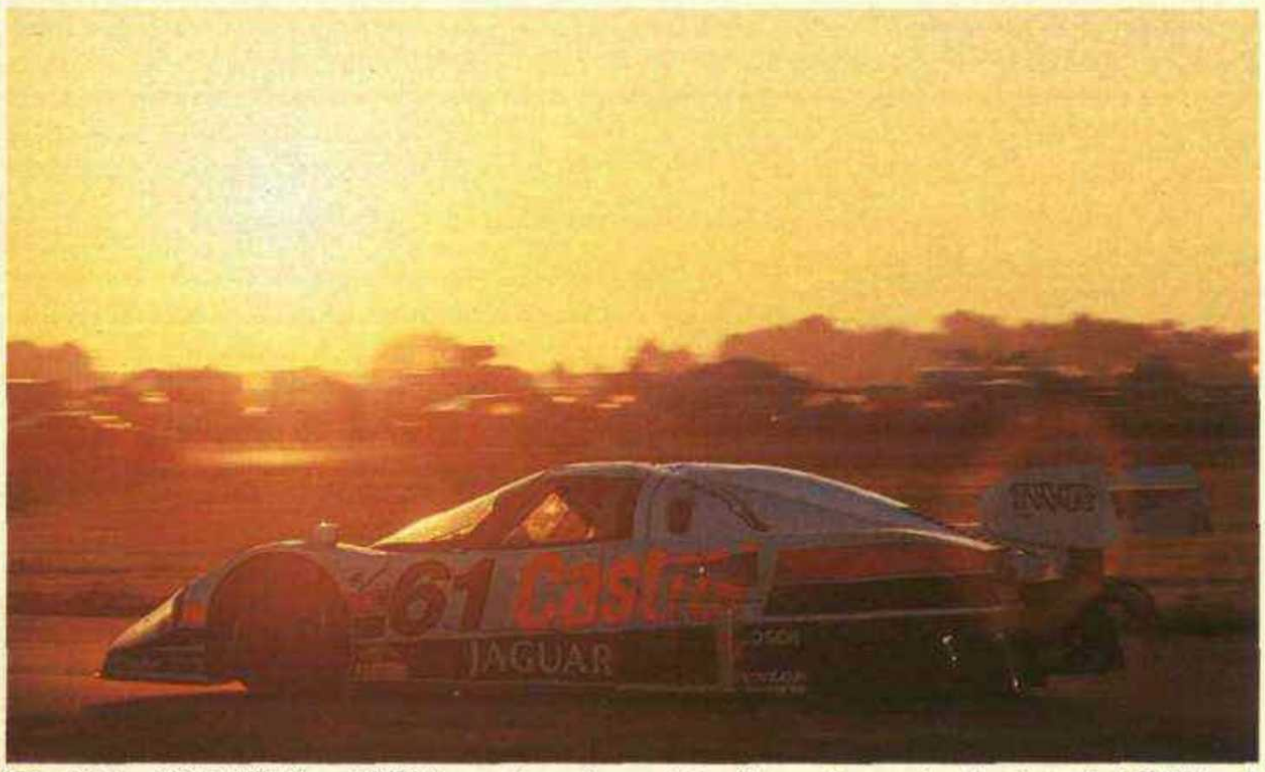
It did indeed seem that IMSA had brought the rival teams close together in the 660-680 horsepower bracket, though with Nissan maintaining an advantage. Brabham was on pole position in his Nissan, though half-a-second slower than Baldi went last year in the BFG Porsche, then came Jan Lammers' Jaguar, Chip Robinson in the second Nissan, Hans Stuck in Walter Brun's water-cooled twin-turbo Porsche, Klaus Ludwig in Bruce Leven's similar 962, then Jeff Kline in the "works" Spice Pontiac 5-litre V8 GTP, followed by two more Jaguars.

Four different makes in the top six really is new in IMSA racing, and it was particularly pleasing to see the Spice up there with the top makes. Spice Engineering has clearly established itself as the top make in Group C2 and IMSA Camel Lights, with its excellent car designed by Graham Humphrys at Silverstone, and is moving into the upper echelons with impeccable timing. At the 5-litre capacity the Spice GTP enjoys an advantage of 95kg (it has to be ballasted to reach the minimum of 805kg) which makes it a very nimble machine indeed, and managing director Jeff Hazell anticipates that it will be particularly suitable for the street circuits such as Miami in March.

Even by Floridian standards the 85°F temperatures were unusual, and a really torrid race was held while the rest of America froze. Temperature gauges went sky-high in the neighbouring Jaguar and Nissan pits in the first few seconds of the race, as fellow Irishmen Derek Daly (Jaguar) and Michael



A popular choice among smaller-class entrants is the Mazda RX-7; this GTU example managed 344 laps.



The Nielsen/Cobb/Wallace XJR-9 was the only surviving Jaguar by sunrise, but it pushed Bell hard.

Roe (Nissan) managed to collide at the fifth corner of the infield section.

To hear their comments was to hear about two different accidents, but Roe had been ahead as Daly drove into the side of his car, damaging the Jaguar's front suspension and monocoque so badly that the car had to be withdrawn. Walkinshaw is sure to have explained to his man that you just don't do things like that at the start of a 24-hour race: in fact it would have been better to stop and count ten rather than risk an accident at that stage. Roe's Nissan was withdrawn, as had been planned, after it had been used to scrub in more tyres and brake-pads for Brabham's car.

The three-way battle between Nissan, Jaguar and Porsche went on for many hours. Until now the Electramotive-prepared Nissan, which is designed and built in California, had never been called upon to race for more than three hours, but all that was about to change.

Though it had never appeared in the Daytona 24 Hours before, this unknown quantity proved to have slightly superior speed to its rivals, and excellent reliability too. Driving quickly but cautiously, Brabham, Roe, Arie Luyendyk and Chip Robinson moved into the lead in the fifth hour and commanded the race until mid-morning on Sunday. A dragging clutch was merely a nuisance, but a dropped valve was a terminal problem.

The Nissan may have led the race at 10.15am on Sunday, but it hadn't been *racing* all that time. All the competing cars, in fact, were lined up silently in the wide pit-lane for nearly four hours as a warm, humid fog swirled up from the seashore at one o'clock in the morning. The pace-car went out for half-an-hour and then, as conditions worsened, the red light was shown. Racing at a potential 200 mph around a banked track with visibility down to 100 metres is nobody's idea of a breeze, and there was unanimous approval for IMSA's decision.

Lammers, Davy Jones and Raul Boesel became spectators soon after midnight when their V12 deranged itself without warning, and by that time the Jaguar team was seriously concerned about the surviving car, which moved up to second place though a lap behind the Nissan. Third, though only a matter of seconds away, was Bell's Porsche, and by that stage this trio had no serious opposition.

Walter Brun's Porsche, driven by Brun himself with Hans Stuck, Oscar Larrauri and Doc Bundy, made a dreadful start when the linkage bent between the brake pedal and the hydraulic reservoir. Soon afterwards more time slipped by when the on-board jacking system failed, but having lost 14 laps in the first couple of hours the Swiss team was to recover to a fine third place.

Fourth by the finish was the Dyson team's Texaco-sponsored Porsche handled by Ludwig, James Weaver and Sarel van der Merwe, which fairly commanded the first two hours, only to lose 16 laps in the third hour when the throttle-linkage fell apart.

Almost simultaneously Mauro Baldi crashed the Momo/Gebhardt Porsche as a result of hydraulic fluid leaking from a rear caliper, the Italian surviving a nasty head-long crash into the barriers with a broken right ankle. It could have been much worse, but even so it jeopardises the start of Baldi's 1989 season with the Sauber Mercedes team; Peter Sauber will want him to be on duty at Suzuka early in April, but the doctor who pinned his broken bones forecast two months in plaster.

The Spice Pontiac driven by Kline, Costas Los and Dieter Quester set off for a steady race and ran as high as sixth, but lost a dozen laps when a wheel fell off, more time investigating a misfire, and finally retired with a broken engine. Spice's badge was also carried to sixth place on Sunday morning by Steve Durst's Buick V6-powered car, but the transmission failed him before the finish.

There had been nothing fluky about Jim Busby's first 24-hour success, which was practically copybook after many years of trying. Porsche personnel had had a huge banner ready in the support truck proclaiming the 962's sixtieth IMSA race win — an impressive tally in five seasons of racing — and there was jubilation as it was at last unfurled.

Further down the list, fifth place was taken by the shrill Mazda 767B driven by Yoshimi Katayama, Takashi Yorino and Elliott Forbes-Robinson; Paul Stewart (son of Jackie) briefly joined Pete Halsmer and Bob Earl in the sixth-placed GTO class-winning Jack Roush Mercury Cougar, and the Camel Lights class was won by reigning champion Tom Hessert in his Essex Racing Buick-powered Tiga.

Brian Redman got a result too, eleventh overall in a GTO-class Mazda RX-7 as his daughter Charlotte celebrated her 21st birthday at the circuit. Redman recalled that he was racing a factory Porsche at Daytona on February 5, 1968, so he and his wife Marion had plenty to celebrate with their daughter.

MLC

Sportscars RESULTS

IMSA GTP CHAMPIONSHIP
Daytona 24 Hours, February 4-5

TOP 15 QUALIFIERS

Brabham/Robinson/Luyendyk/Roe	Nissan	1m39.182s
Lammers/Boesel/Jones	Jaguar	1m39.855s
Roe/Luyendyk/Robinson	Nissan	1m39.908s
Larrauri/Stuck/Brun	Porsche	1m39.937s
Ludwig/Weaver/van der Merwe	Porsche	1m39.969s
Los/Quester/Kline	Spice	1m40.525s
Cobb/Nielsen/Wallace/Lammers	Jaguar	1m40.803s
Daly/Donnelly/Tambay	Jaguar	1m40.884s
Andretti/Andretti	Porsche	1m41.381s
Katayama/Yorino/Forbes-Robinson	Mazda	1m41.937s
Jourdain/Berg/Manautou/Contreas	Porsche	1m42.715s
Bell/Wollek/Andretti	Porsche	1m42.944s
Cord/Olsen/Bren	Toyota	1m43.076s
Baldi/Sigala/Moretti	Porsche	1m43.400s
Leven/Dyson/Dobson/Paul	Porsche	1m43.405s

RESULTS

1st	D. Bell/B. Wollek/J. Andretti	3.0t Porsche 962	GTP	621 laps
2nd	P. Cobb/J. Nielsen/J. Lammers/A. Wallace	6.0 Jaguar XJR9	GTP	621 laps
3rd	O. Larrauri/H. Stuck/W. Brun	3.0t Porsche 962	GTP	603 laps
4th	K. Ludwig/J. Weaver/S. van der Merwe	3.0t Porsche 962	GTP	600 laps
5th	Y. Katayama/T. Yorino/E. Forbes-Robinson	1.3r Mazda 767B	GTP	559 laps
6th	P. Halsmer/B. Earl/P. Stewart/M. Martin	6.0 Mercury Cougar XR7	GTO	554 laps
7th	W. Dallenbach/D. Schroeder	6.0 Mercury Cougar XR7	GTO	534 laps
8th	T. Hessert/C. Morgan/J. Morrison	3.0 Tiga Buick GT287	CL	530 laps
9th	B. Zeeb/B. Akin/J. Purner	6.0 Mercury Capri	GTO	530 laps
10th	A. Petery/L. Delano/C. Carter	6.0 Mercury Capri	GTO	528 laps
11th	B. Redman/K. Marsh/G. Drummond/R. Mandeville	1.3r Mazda RX7	GTO	528 laps
12th	R. Millen/B. Reid/A. Bacon	1.3r Mazda RX7	GTU	526 laps
13th	B. Leitzinger/C. Kurtz/B. Leitzinger	2.4 Nissan 240SX	GTU	517 laps
14th	A. Johnson/D. Shaw/B. Lazier	1.3r Mazda RX7	GTO	516 laps
15th	T. McAdam/C. Mead/B. Adam	5.7 Fabcar Buick	GTP	515 laps

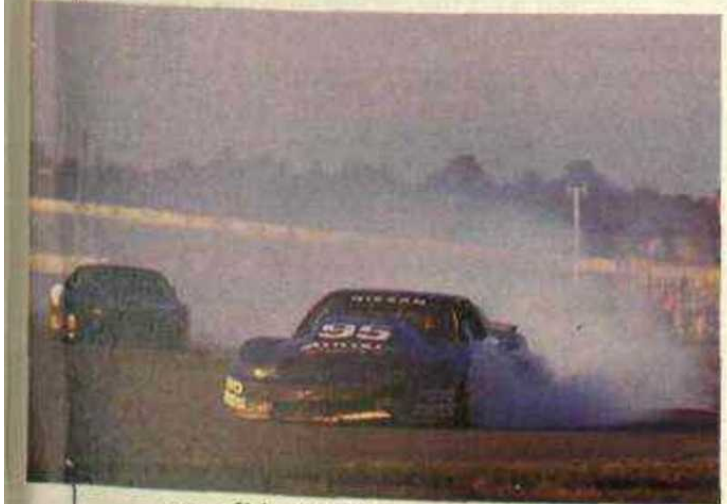
Time of Race: 24 hr 1 min 39.925 sec; **Winners' Average Speed:** 92.009 mph for 621 laps (2210.760 miles); **Margin of Victory:** 1 min 26.664 sec.



Jean-Pierre Frey of Switzerland had a spot of bother with the colourful Ford Probe . . .



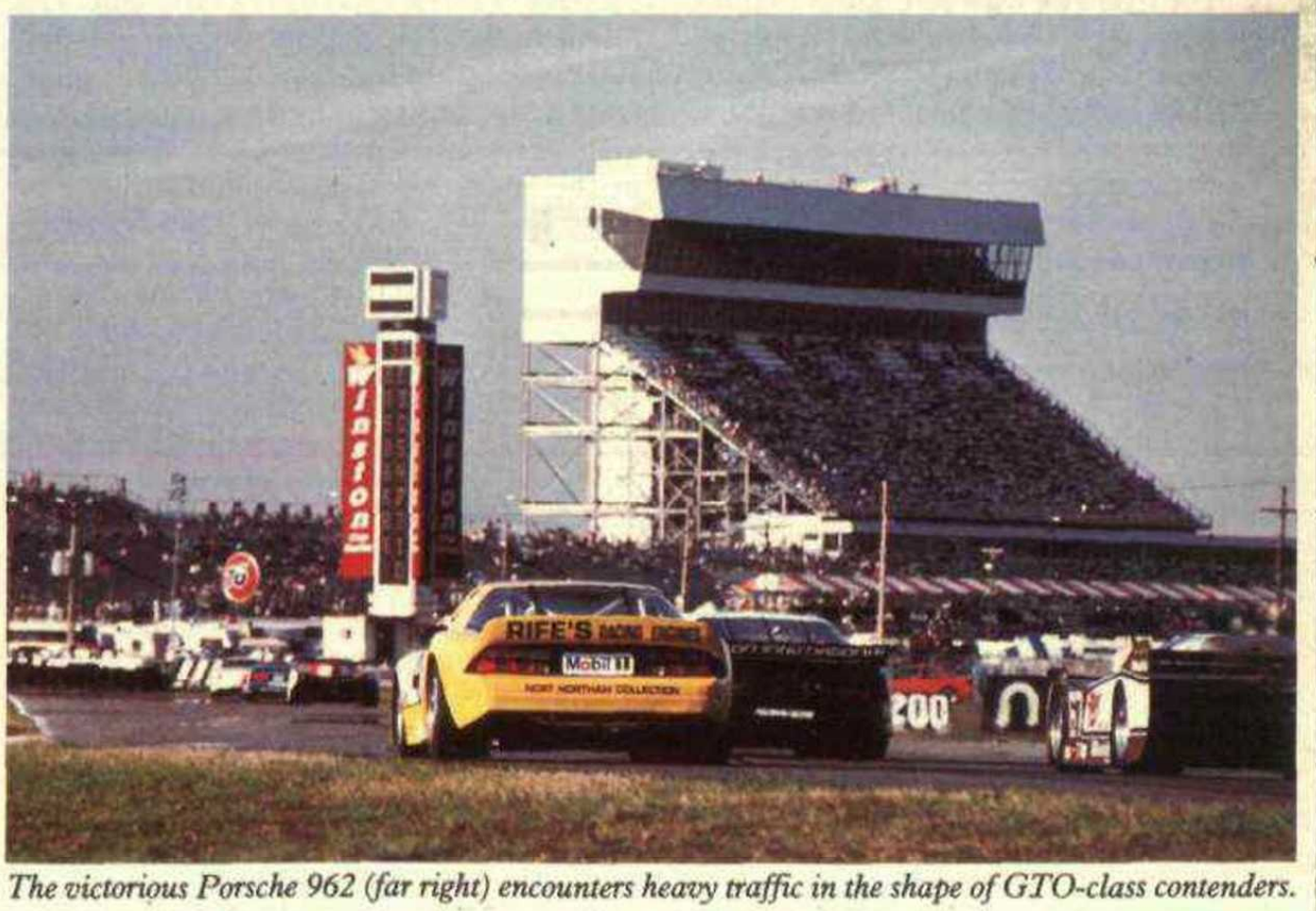
High on the banking, Porsche 962 breezes past Chevrolet Camaro.



. . . as did GTU runners-up Leitzinger/ Leitzinger/Kurtz in their Nissan 240 SX.



Uli Bieri's Tiga-Ferrari (Camel Lights) versus Alex Job's Porsche 911 (GTU); Daytona sees a wide range of silhouettes in competition.



The victorious Porsche 962 (far right) encounters heavy traffic in the shape of GTO-class contenders.

Shambles!

No self-respecting sport, other than motor racing it seems, would tolerate the shambles that its governing body "arranges" each year when publication of the calendar is due.

FISA has neglected the World Sports-Prototype Championship almost absolutely for many years now, except to tell the manufacturers and entrants what they cannot do, but in the midst of his extraordinary tirade at Le Mans last June Jean-Marie Balestre promised that FISA would lead the formula into a golden era, and subsequently that sports-car racing would be as important as Formula One.

Despite all that, by the middle of February the calendar for 1989 contained six definite fixtures (although "definite" should be taken as "probable", since Jarama does not have the pits space for more than two-thirds of the 36 cars that will compete) and two "possibles" in Canada and America, while Spa has moved into the "likely" phase for September (the reason for its removal from the calendar never having been explained) and Silverstone has been reinstated at a late stage, but not on the May 14 date initially offered to the BRDC.

Is it surprising, therefore, that no-one can take Group C very seriously, even though it represents the might of Jaguar, Mercedes, Aston Martin, Nissan, Toyota and Mazda?

It is difficult at the best of times for team owners, managers and drivers to plan their schedules, their travel, their sponsorship and especially their budgets, but as long as the calendar remains as worthless as a £9 note their task is almost impossible.

It must be the highest priority of FISA to produce a credible calendar of World Championship events no later than September, and for the national automobile clubs to have firm dates for five years ahead. If that were to be the case, we would know that the British Grand Prix would be held on July 15, 1990 (for instance) even if FISA, FOCA and the BRDC had a tiff and it was moved to Donington Park.

We put it like that because it seems that circuit suitability and financial viability is the biggest stumbling block. Of course circuit owners might fall behind in their updating programmes if they were certain of keeping their Grand Prix for five years — all the more reason for FISA to encourage a second, or even a third circuit to maintain its international status.

Monaco and San Marino might find it difficult to maintain a second circuit, having enough problems with one, but almost without exception long-term contracts could be forged for Grands Prix, World Championship sports-car races, and presumably for World rallies as well.

FISA insists on an absolutely professional approach from the participants, and rightly so where world-class competitions are concerned. However the ruling body itself only rarely reaches a high degree of professional competence, and it could begin to put its house in order this coming September by announcing an absolutely inviolable calendar for 1990.

Despite the confusion over the programme of events, no fewer than 36 sports-prototypes had been committed to the World Championship when the list closed on January 31, of which 22 are in the Group C1 class, three in the new 3½-litre class and 11 in C2, the latter group remaining rather more popular than many people expected.

The top class contains two Silk Cut Jaguars and two Sauber Mercedes on a regular basis, one Aston Martin, Yves Courage's Cougar-Porsche, Gianni Mussato's Lancia LC2, one Toyota, one Nissan, one Mazda, and a dozen privately-owned Porsches — the most notable of these being three from Walter Brun's Repsol-sponsored team, two from Joest Racing and one each from Richard Lloyd and the Kremer brothers. Derek Bell, twice World Champion and eight times a 24-hour event winner, has a full contract with RLR and PCGB, and Tiff Needell and Martin Donnelly have signed options, but they had hoped for a little more tangible commitment by now.

"Is it surprising that no-one can take Group C very seriously, while the calendar remains as worthless as a £9 note?"

All three of the Japanese cars taking part in the entire world championship will be based in England. The new Lola-chassised Nissan V8 will be maintained by Howard Marsden in Milton Keynes, a Mazda 767 will be operated by Alan Docking at Silverstone, and the Toyota for Johnny Dumfries and Geoff Lees will be run by Dave Sims at the Tom's subsidiary near Norwich.

Not all teams have yet named their drivers but Jaguar has Jan Lammers, John Nielsen and Andy Wallace on full strength, Sauber-Mercedes has Jean-Louis Schlesser, Jochen Mass, Mauro Baldi and Kenny Acheson, and Aston Martin has David Leslie and Brian Redman.

The 3½-litre class is a little disappointing at first, with just three Cosworth DFL V8-powered Spices, but the group will fill up rapidly next year when Alfa Romeo and Peugeot begin their programmes. Two of the Spices are works cars driven, it is expected, by World C2 champions Gordon Spice and Ray Bellm, and Thorkild Thyrring with Wayne Taylor. The third car will be run by MT Sport, based at Montlhéry, for Michel Ferté.

Spice team director Jeff Hazell expects his nimble SE89s to be extremely competitive on the twisty tracks especially, and he looks forward to the first encounter at Suzuka. He calculates that while the Jaguars will be 18% heavier and 30% more powerful, their advantage will be reduced to 10% or less in race conditions, while the Spices will have the advantage of being able to use as much fuel as they like.

Hazell's equation assumes a Jaguar weighing the minimum of 900kg, with a driver weighing 75kg and half a tank of fuel weighing 30kg. Midway through a stint therefore the XJR might weigh 1005kg, which, assuming a power output of 750 bhp, would mean 1.34kg per bhp. A Spice will easily weigh 750kg in the scrutineering bay, plus a driver at 75kg and half a tank of fuel of 25kg. At the same point, therefore, the Spice will weigh 850kg, which, assuming a power output of 575 bhp, is 1.478kg per bhp.

Even with 600 bhp, which is feasible in 1990, the 3½-litre cars would be nowhere near parity, but Hazell also calculates that the "unlimited" engines cannot develop their claimed 750 bhp from start to finish, on the allocation of 245 litres per 480km, and at places like Brands Hatch he hopes to see his cars moving in for a possible victory.

Remember Brands Hatch in April 1971? The 3-litre Alfa Romeo team finally caught and passed the omnipotent Porsche 917s there, and did it again at Watkins Glen later in the season. Next year, maybe, when the thunderous Group C cars are on their run-out, there could be the odd surprise.

Hugh Chamberlain, whose team we featured last month, has been temporarily frustrated in his hopes to move into the 3½-litre class, but looks to be the class of the C2 category with a pair of Spices for Nick Adams, Fermin Velez (who won the title with Gordon Spice in 1987), Gigi Taverna and Richard Jones.

Sadly though, the Grand Touring category will never happen. Only two possible entries were spoken of, the Ferrari F40s ordered by French importer Charles Pozzi, but at the final count they were not among the cars registered, apparently because they would not be competitive for outright victories. FISA, of course, never intended that they should be, the cars being at least 100kg heavier and confined to "production" shapes, so the whole programme appears to have been ill-conceived. **MLC**

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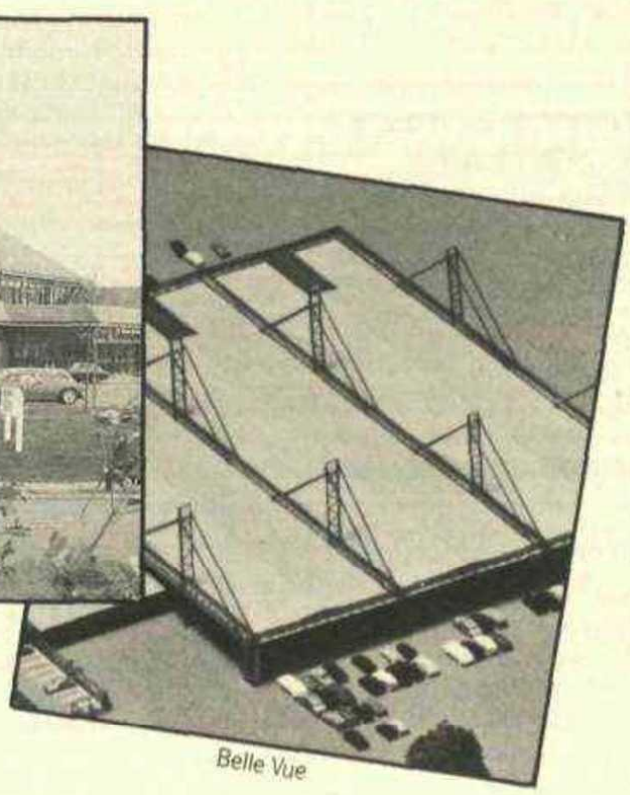
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National Motorcycle Museum



Belle Vue





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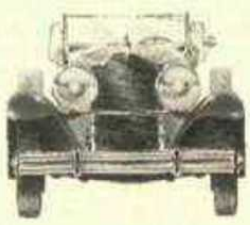
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Other dates in the 1989 auction programme:

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26 June – Blackbushe
11 September – National Motorcycle Museum
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Appliance of Science

Science fiction films love to depict a future society dominated by machines serving a morose and unhappy populace, the moral being that material wellbeing does not necessarily bring spiritual contentment. And yet as the computer chip has taken over much of humanity's workload our quality of life has in reality improved. Britain is still one of the most innovative of nations, and throughout the country are dotted research centres which are quietly pushing back the boundaries of technology. We investigated one ten miles south of Cambridge and another, ironically, ten miles south of Oxford, which could have a significant effect on the future of road transport and motorsport.

The Cambridgeshire organisation is one which the motor racing world knows very little about and whose name would be an immediate turn-off, for it conjures up completely the wrong image. And yet it is a technological centre whose work has ramifications far beyond the realms of the United Kingdom.

It is an organisation to which more than 700 companies are affiliated, ranging in size from the multinational to the family business. What each has in common is the access to top-rate advice.

The work of this organisation, however, falls into three areas: research undertaken on a co-operative basis, with results being made generally available; confidential research commissioned by a member company, in which case all the information obtained is for its exclusive use; and its role as a worldwide problem-solver.

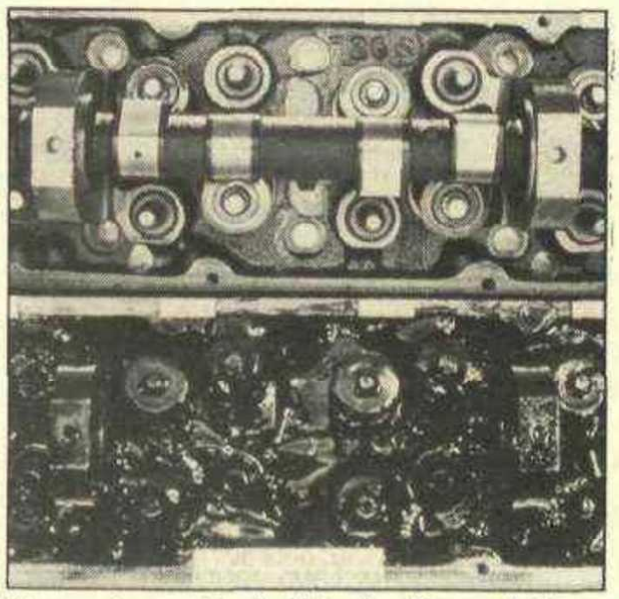
It was while visiting it that I had first-hand experience of its trouble-shooting activities. A telephone call came through from an engineer having problems extending a hangar and was unsure of the safety parameters of one particular aspect. Calm technical advice reassured the caller that he was tackling it in the correct way.

Although not exclusively involved with the automotive world, this institute has amongst its members Jaguar, Range Rover, Ford, General Motors and Nissan, and component manufacturers such as Lucas. Other areas of industry represented include aerospace, offshore drilling, traditional engineering and computers.

The Aladdin's Cave of laboratories and research areas is a treasure trove of variety. In one area is a huge section of offshore oil-pipe undergoing deep-water tests, or the tall tower in which items are dropped from a great height to measure their destruction capabilities, but elsewhere research into computer chips with 3-micron wire (7-micron being the dimension at which the wire is so light that it points up when unwound) are being tested in con-rods, valves, pistons and even wheels. Problems encountered in one industry have often been overcome in another and it is via this organisation that the flow of information is maintained.

So what has all this got to do with motor sport? Nothing at the moment, for there are no racing car manufacturers or teams utilising the facilities and expertise on tap here. Part of the problem is that if this organisation is known about, its title conjures up the wrong image, and partly because racing car manufacturers are so sensitive about secrecy that they could not countenance the thought of their secrets becoming general knowledge.

While on my visit to this establishment I came across evidence of previously unheard-of problem-solving. For instance, it is acknowledged that carbon-fibre cannot be bonded together, yet I saw it done, and such a breakthrough implies that a chassis, for instance, need have no metal in it, and even parts of the engine can be altered. The ceramic engine is already known about, but plastic inlet manifolds have already been used by one car company; they were a commercial failure despite their weight-saving and cleaner interior, but there is no reason why this and other ideas cannot be transferred to the race-track, where financial constraints are less inhibiting.



Test engines at Esso's Abingdon Research Centre with (above) and without Black Sludge.

Despite all the high-tech equipment, the most impressive aspect of my visit was the quality of the staff. The place is manned by wall-to-wall lateral thinkers for whom nothing is impossible. The boundaries are being pushed ever further forward and the horizons of designers in several industries are being increasingly extended. The only constraint is money, for there is never any other reason to stop.

The name of the organisation, by the way, is the Welding Institute. I told you it conjured up the wrong image...

For all my motoring career, oil has been nothing more than the liquid I had to pour into my engine to keep it healthy, but after a tour around the Esso Research Centre near Abingdon, I have become a little more enlightened.

The work that which engine oil needs to do has altogether changed since the turn of the century. It was in the Twenties that oils were universally standardised as to their viscosity with the adoption of the Society of Automotive Engineers "SAE" classification and in the Thirties that anti-wear additives were introduced to bolster the performance of the traditional straight mineral oil. In 1952 the multigrade made its first appearance and negated the necessity of the bi-annual oil change between "summer" and "winter" grades, but the real revolution occured in the 1960s.

Oil already had to last twice as long, because new car oil-change intervals had increased from 1500 miles to 3000 miles, but the advent of the Mini with its transverse engine and integral gearbox created a new series of problems. The oil now had to withstand the shearing action of the gearchanges and the continuous high-speed meshing of the gears, it had to cope with the "mayonnaise" phenomenon caused by the ram air stream hitting the transverse rocker box, it had to deal with a fast-revving, more highly stressed engine and it still had to prevent excessive oil consumption. The result was the introduction of a thicker multigrade known by its SAE rating as 20W/50, which subsequently and inappropriately became the motorist's byword for quality and allowed many an indifferent oil to masquerade as desirable.

In the two decades since, engines have become smaller, lighter and faster-revving; they have more power per litre and produce more miles per gallon. Single overhead

camshafts, five-speed gearboxes, petrol injection and turbocharging have all become commonplace, while the engine's "breathing" system has been changed in order to re-cycle partially burnt exhaust gases. Oil is now expected to last four times as long, as intervals between change extend towards 12,000 miles.

To cope with this ever-increasing demand, each oil company has its own research centre. Esso has three worldwide, with Abingdon responsible for European product development.

On its 60-acre site, tests are continuously carried out every day of the year, with the exception of a short shut-down over Christmas. The laboratories would be bliss for any do-it-yourselfer, for the parts of pretty well every engine manufactured are stored on site. When an engine comes into the laboratory it is completely stripped and rebuilt with new parts, so that every unit has the same starting base. Approximately 1200 engines every year are "blueprinted" in this way.

The centre has three rolling roads (one with climate control), engine test laboratories and a fleet of up to 150 passenger cars, vans and trucks across Europe, each with its own blueprinted engine which is carefully monitored. The centre gets through more than one million gallons of fuel a year in tests.

The problem exercising every oil company at present is a blight known as Black Sludge. In the same way that computers can catch viruses, engines can catch the "Black Death", an epidemic that has already swept Germany. This is not to be confused with the sludge of yore which could be overcome with sophisticated detergents and dispersals. The new strain is of an entirely different character: a virus which might not affect similar vehicles in the same way, or at the same time.

Black Sludge is a thick, noxious tar-like agglomeration that gradually builds up into rippling layers within the cooler parts of the engine. These layers spread, clogging oil-ways, blocking filters and eventually causing the engine to seize as the bearings become starved of oil. Its cause is still unknown, but it is thought to be related to ventilation systems in certain engine designs, fuel composition, driving patterns and also to the lubricant. Unfortunately you cannot see if the car is suffering without taking off the rocker cover, which is where it starts before it travels down onto the valve deck, into the sump and the engine vent pipes.

At the moment there is no cure other than to have your car thoroughly drained of oil, flushed through with a detergent, and then refilled with a top-quality lubricant — likely to be synthetic-based and thus have more inherent stability under intense heat and pressure, than the traditional mineral-based lubricant.

WPK

Saab and Chips



Saab has the benefit of Erik Carlsson as a Traction Control System test driver.

As in every aspect of technology, the microchip is playing an ever-increasing role in the development of the car. Engine technology has advanced in leaps and bounds in the last ten years, and we can expect the chassis to be the next major area of advance.

Having been at the forefront of turbo technology as used in road cars, Saab has more recently been developing a Traction Control System (TCS). Since work started on the project in the autumn of 1986, it has undergone field tests through two winters and two summers, and should become available as an option sometime this year.

Apart from an extensive re-mapping of the engine, the only additional items to the ABS equipment as fitted to the 9000 series (and as an option on the 900 series as from now), are a valve block, electronic throttle and two processors which add less than 2kg to the weight.

The function of TCS is to improve mobility at low speed. As anybody who has been stuck in snow knows, once one of the driving wheels loses its grip it spins uselessly while the other remains stationary, even if it is on tarmac or on a dry service. This happens because the differential's function is to allow the wheels on the inside of a corner to travel more slowly than those on the outside. Very few cars are fitted with a limited-slip differential which would overcome this problem.

Saab's system uses the ABS sensors which are already located in the wheels, to send messages back to the car's electronic control unit, or brain, telling it that one wheel is losing its grip and about to spin. This information triggers another message to the brakes of that wheel to apply themselves as little as is necessary to enable the torque load to even up. The power from the engine is then directed through both driveshafts as neither offers a lesser line of resistance allowing the wheel with the grip to revolve. This means that the car starts to move. The idea is simple, the application is complicated and the result is good.

TCS can perform other tricks, too. While moving, if the brake sensors detect that one of the driving wheels has hit a slippery patch, is losing traction and about to spin, it is activated again. At speeds lower than 40 kph it performs the same braking function, but at higher speeds there is a different response.

Instead of applying the brakes, the brain takes over the throttle control and progressively decreases the revs until the spinning wheel begins to revolve at the same pace as the other one. The driver's foot may be pressed hard down on the accelerator pedal, but until that wheel has caught up, the engine will not obey. The sensitivity of the system decreases at higher speeds so that above 200 kph it is completely cut out.

The electronic throttle cable is an essential part of the equipment: it is more than a linkage as it communicates directly with the management system. The traditional throttle cable will be retained more for the sake of assurance than anything else, but there is no doubt it will be dispensed with once the idea has been generally accepted by the public.

The electronic cable also ensures a smoother ride, as the engine mapping system it communicates with countermands a twitchy right foot. It can also respond to other demands such as increasing the engine speed a millisecond before the air conditioning is activated so that there is no loss of power.

I found the system very impressive when testing a prototype on a Saab 9000 recently. Even when braking at a speed of 100 kph over a section of frozen lake that had strips of rubber laid down alternately to left and right every twenty yards, the car was never thrown off balance. Torque-steer was totally absent on hard acceleration as well.

Naturally, with the system relying so much on the brakes at slower speeds, there is the worry that there will be increased pad wear and, more dangerously, high temperatures will be generated on the move. Saab is adamant that pad-wear will not be significantly increased and that heat will not be a factor except in exceptional circumstances, but when a certain temperature is reached, the system will automatically de-activate and a warning light will flash in front of the driver. Once the pads have cooled down, the system will resume operation again.

Though this development will doubtless become as *de rigueur* in Scandinavian cars as has ABS, it remains to be seen how significant it is for British motorists. **WPK**



Attention to detail has helped Jimmy McRae and RED to consecutive British Open rally titles.

The French Connection

Jimmy McRae has received a great deal of praise in the last couple of years following his success in the British Open Rally Championship in both 1987 and 1988, as has Ford since he claimed the title on both occasions driving a Sierra Cosworth. Talent and a competitive car would not be enough, however, without the third side of the triangle, that of the preparation. To the casual observer, it might seem that the popular Scotsman was driving a car prepared by Ford itself, but this is far from the case.

The evolution of Rally Engineering Development (RED) is typical of many specialist motorsport companies. Geoff Fielding was a rally enthusiast who did not have the time to prepare his car but, as the director of a number of lucrative businesses, he did have the necessary finance. Following the principle that paying off a mortgage is preferable to paying rent, he was prepared to spend his money provided it might one day bring him some return. The result was that Ray Sherratt, a mechanic with Mainland Car Deliveries (MCD), a car transport business owned by Fielding, was employed to prepare a rally car full-time.

From such humble beginnings in 1979, this fledgling preparation outfit, known at the time as MCD Services in deference to Fielding's main business, quickly broadened its horizons. The following year a Group 4 Escort was prepared for Malcolm Patrick to run in 21 events, and even won first time out. Such rally stars as Roger Clark, Ari Vatanen, Louise Aitken-Walker, Malcolm Wilson, Mark Lovell and Willie Rutherford all went on to drive MCD-prepared cars at some stage in the early Eighties.

To cope with the demand for its services, the team, by now managed by David Campion, expanded out of Fielding's garage into small premises in Widnes. And, having evolved out of MCD Services in 1984, RED moved yet again in 1988, into 5000 sq ft of purpose-built property in one of Widnes' many industrial estates.

When Campion left the team his place as General Manager was taken by Peter Cattanach, who now presides over a staff of 22. In charge of logistics and ensuring all the hotels are booked, the transportation organised and the carnets correctly filled is Rallies Manager John Millington, who also has to look after the French-registered car which continually travels backwards and forwards across the Channel on a British-registered transporter surrounded by British-made spares. In Millington's case, 1992 is eagerly awaited!

The fleet at his disposal includes five fully-kitted vans loaned from Ford, five estate cars, three of which also belong to Ford, and a very impressive transporter which has been specially adapted from a three-decker to enable two fully-loaded service vans to be accommodated on the lower deck and a rally car and two estate cars on the upper. A large box at the front can carry up to 80 tyres.



The crucial Channel-hopping transporter divides its workload between two championship campaigns.



General manager Peter Cattanach.

Technical matters are the responsibility of Ray Sherratt, who will be looking after Colin (son of Jimmy) McRae's Group N Sierra Cosworth this year, and Frank Rowland, the leading mechanic on the Group A machines. Working under them are 17 mechanics, while two secretaries take care of the office administration.

As it has done since 1986, the team operates in two arenas, running cars in the British Open and, surprisingly, in the French championship. Despite the anti-social conditions and long hours the crew has to endure in the field, none pass up the opportunity of going out with the team. Cattanach believes one of the principal reasons for the low turnover of personnel is this perk of the job, although there are many times when a warm open fire and a pint of bitter might seem more enticing for the hard-worked staff.

In 1988 the team ran Jimmy McRae in the British series and Didier Auriol in France, which required four cars, but this year the inclusion of a Group N programme in Britain for the first time has meant an expansion to six cars.

All the cars actually belong to Ford, their official entrant, although RED has full responsibility for their preparation and maintenance. They arrive as shells, and Ford provides all the parts necessary to build them.

The financial arrangements between manufacturer and preparation company

differ each year. In 1988, for example, RED was paid a sum of money to run the cars and the tab for replacement parts was picked up by Ford's motorsport division; this year a budget has been provided for running McRae which includes an allowance for parts, but if that allowance is exceeded RED must pick up the tab. The deal on Colin's car is similar to that for his father, with the cars, spares and replacements on loan and a budget provided, but this restriction does not apply to the French programme.

Pirelli tyres will be used in 1989, maintaining a long relationship between the two companies. There is little to choose between Pirellis and Michelins — the French firm makes a better slick, but Pirelli's intermediate is superior — so tyre-choice has hinged on which offers the better deal; as RED would expect to get through 80 tyres per car per event, at the average price of £110 each, it is an expensive business. In a deal negotiated through Ford, Andy Hallam of Pirelli has calculated what he considers a reasonable number of tyres for each event; any extras will be paid for.

The team works very closely with its suppliers and there is a constant flow of information between manufacturer, supplier and team. The feedback suppliers can get from rallying was well illustrated on last year's Ulster, when the bigger brakes fitted to the Sierra were not working properly and were causing uneven wear. RED isolated the cause and reported back to Automotive Products who, once they accepted that there was a problem, promptly rectified it.

As with decorating, it is preparation which is the secret of success. According to Cattanach: "We set ourselves the highest standards possible, from the preparation of the cars themselves to the loading of the vans, where everything is meticulously checked. Some think we go over the top, but if we spend so much money going to the event there is no point in skimping on anything."

On arrival from the manufacturer, major units such as gearboxes and differentials are stripped down and checked by the two mechanics in the transmission department, and this is repeated after every event. RED does not have the staff, however, to inspect every item in minute detail, and has to accept that the parts fabricated especially for Group A, brake calipers for example, will be of a higher quality than standard mass-produced ones. Where possible the car is given a day's shakedown prior to its next outing, so as to show up any weaknesses.

The workshop also includes sub-assembly and machine-tool areas where the various lathes and drills are located. Engines, however, are not touched, but are sent to specialist tuner Terry Hoyle in Essex. New engines are converted into Group A spec, and can normally go through two British Open events if nothing untoward happens. They are then sent back to Hoyle, who strips them down, rebuilds and then tests them on the dyno, using the same slave turbo on each unit to ensure consistent output figures.

RED itself refurbishes the turbochargers, which have improved since their early days as the Achilles heel of the Sierra Cosworth but still need changing after every event. Since the complete unit costs £1000, the body is retained unless damaged and a new turbo core is installed.

The Sierra's simplicity helps to explain its reliability. The 2-litre engine was developed as a competition unit which was subsequently fitted into road cars, in complete contrast to the updated standard engines which many manufacturers adopt for competition use. The simple five-speed Getrag gearbox rarely gives a problem and differentials are generally reliable although they can suffer on long events. Brakes can be marginal on tarmac rallies.

Although the opposition has been catching up, Cattanach expects the Cosworth to hold its own against the competition in the 1989 British Open. On the loose-surface rallies, where four-wheel-drive cars have an advantage, a great deal will depend on the conditions, but if Jimmy McRae can finish consistently in the top three and win the tarmac events, he should be able to retain his title. His biggest challenge is likely to come from David Llewellin in the Toyota GT-Four, a car RED got to know last year in a brief and unproductive spell.

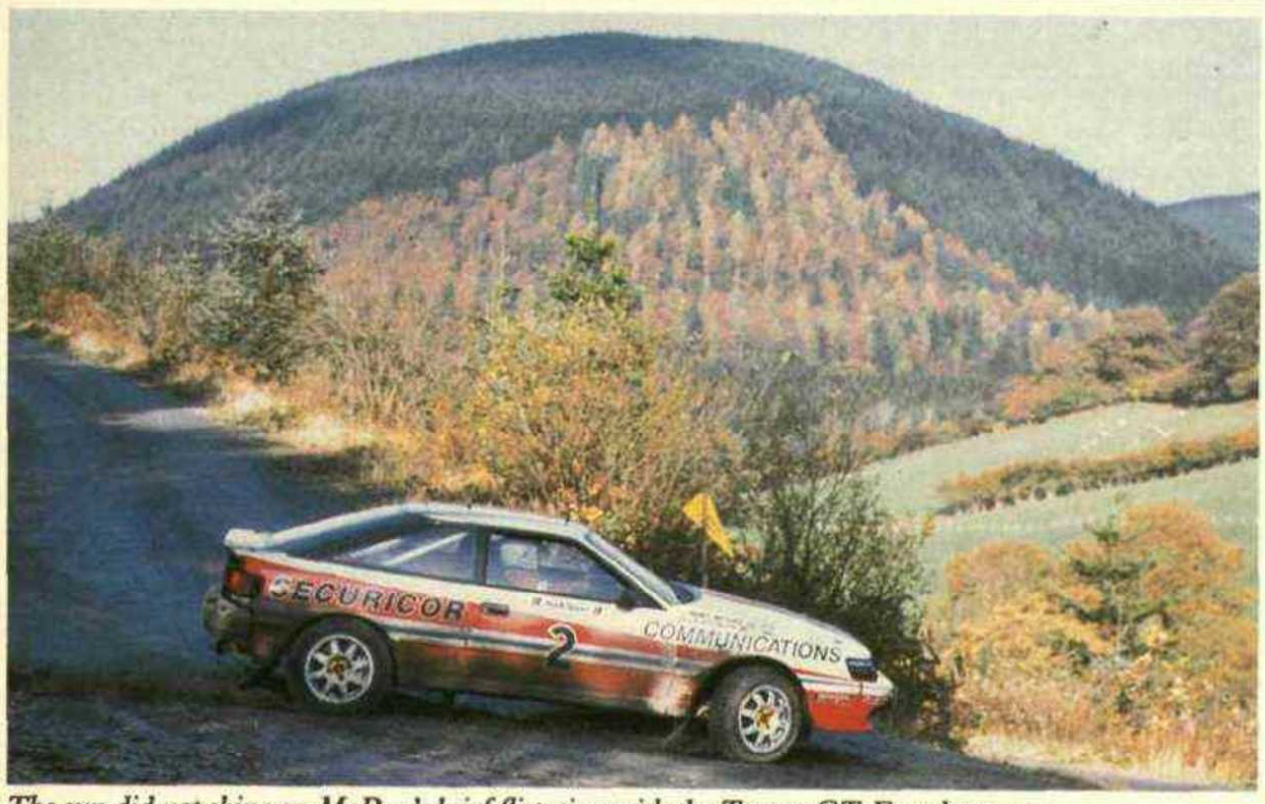


Everything bar engines is engineered in Widnes.



A standard Group N Sierra? Look again: all four wheels are driven on Willie Rutherford's 1985 National Championship challenger, the turbocharged 4T.

UNDER SCRUTINY



The sun did not shine on McRae's brief flirtation with the Toyota GT-Four last year.

Through no fault of Ray Sherratt, the man in charge of the project, the Toyota experiment foundered due to lack of preparation time. The car did not start the Quip Stages rally because the engine failed, retired halfway through the Audi Sport with a cracked gearbox casing and stopped after only four stages of the RAC with another engine failure. In every case, the components which failed were not RED's responsibility.

Where Toyota Team Europe had had two years to develop the car, RED received a shell at the end of July, for the Quip Stages in September. Parts took time to arrive and the car was still being built on the afternoon of the rally. Naturally there was no time at all for testing.

RED was prepared to persevere with the Toyota in 1989, but as Cattanach explained: "Toyota GB's only interest, as their name suggests, was in Great Britain. Also all they could promise for 1989 was just one car for the British Open and the RAC and an outside chance of a second one if they could raise some money. To keep RED occupied it was nothing like enough. On the other hand Toyota would not have minded us running other cars in different events, such as the Sierra in France.

"Ford, however, offered us France and drives for Jimmy and Colin. Jimmy has won the British Open five times and wants to do other things, but there were two deciding factors in his decision to stay with us and Ford. Firstly a car is available for other events if RED can raise the money, and secondly his position in the team ensured a place for his son."

It is in sponsorship-hunting that the team is at its weakest. A journalist and an advertising agency are retained to look for sponsors while Jimmy also devotes some of his time to the task. To assess the magnitude of the job, the sum required to run two cars on three European events costs in the region of £200,000, a figure far beyond the budget of local businesses.

All this is far removed from 1985, when RED found itself in the luxurious position of having a manufacturer approaching it with a budget: Austin Rover offered the company a three-year contract to run the bright new hope of Britain, the ill-fated Metro 6R4, for Didier Auriol in the French championship, Willie Rutherford in the National Rally Championship and David Llewellin and Harri Toivonen in the 1986 British Open. Sadly, the contract was terminated after one year following the ban on Group B cars in international rallying.

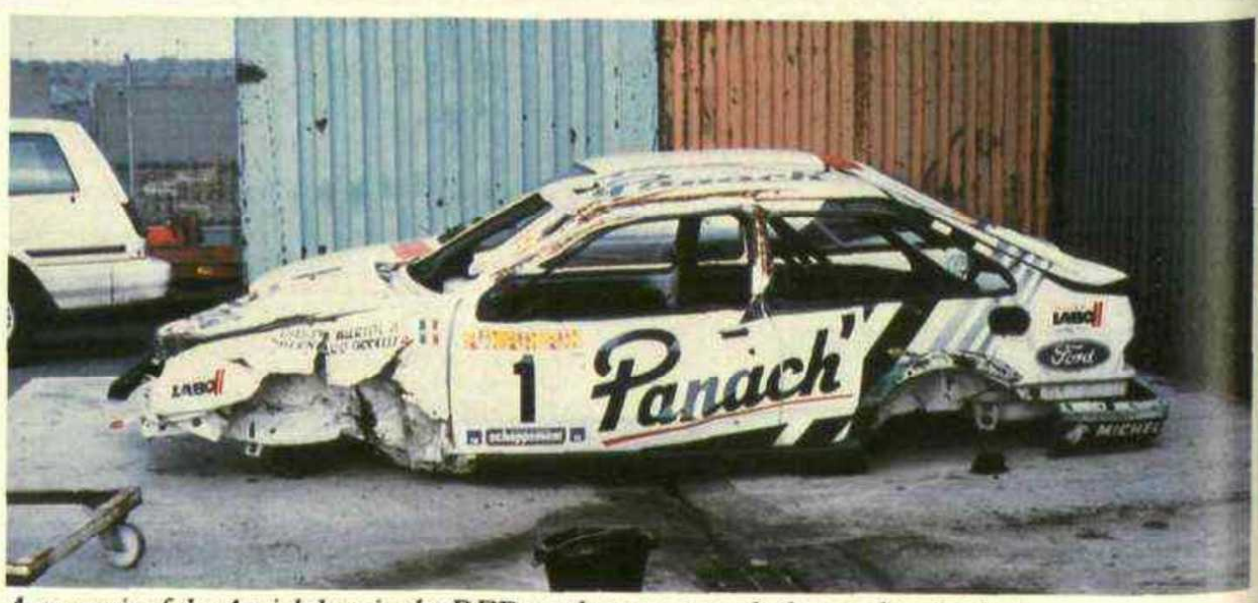
RED had attracted a great deal of attention in 1984 when it introduced the RED 4T Sierra, a development of the two-wheel-drive Sierra with a Terry Hoyle-developed 2.0 BDG turbocharged engine which Louise Aitken-Walker took to third place in the National Championship. The factory then spent the winter fitting Ferguson four-wheel drive to its special, which, in the hands of Roger Clark, promptly took third place behind Tony Pond's Metro 6R4 and the works Quattro of David Llewellin on its debut in Wales. Willie Rutherford subsequently took over the car, won the Granite City and Cumbria rallies, and was runner-up in the 1985 championship.

Although the team's contract with Austin Rover came to a premature end, it brought about one positive result for which the team is even today very grateful — it brought it into contact with the man Peter Cattanach thinks is one of the top five rally drivers in the world, Didier Auriol. Austin Rover France had approached ARG's rally supremo John Davenport as it wanted to enter a car in France for up-and-coming Auriol. The job of running him was put out to tender to private teams, so RED put in a quote. To its amazement it won the contract. Naturally there was a steep learning curve at first, but within a couple of years RED came to be regarded by many in France as one of Europe's premier rally teams.

None of the team had met Didier before, and if the truth be known, they had not even heard of him, but by the end of the championship they had struck up such a good relationship with him, they wanted to run him again in 1987.

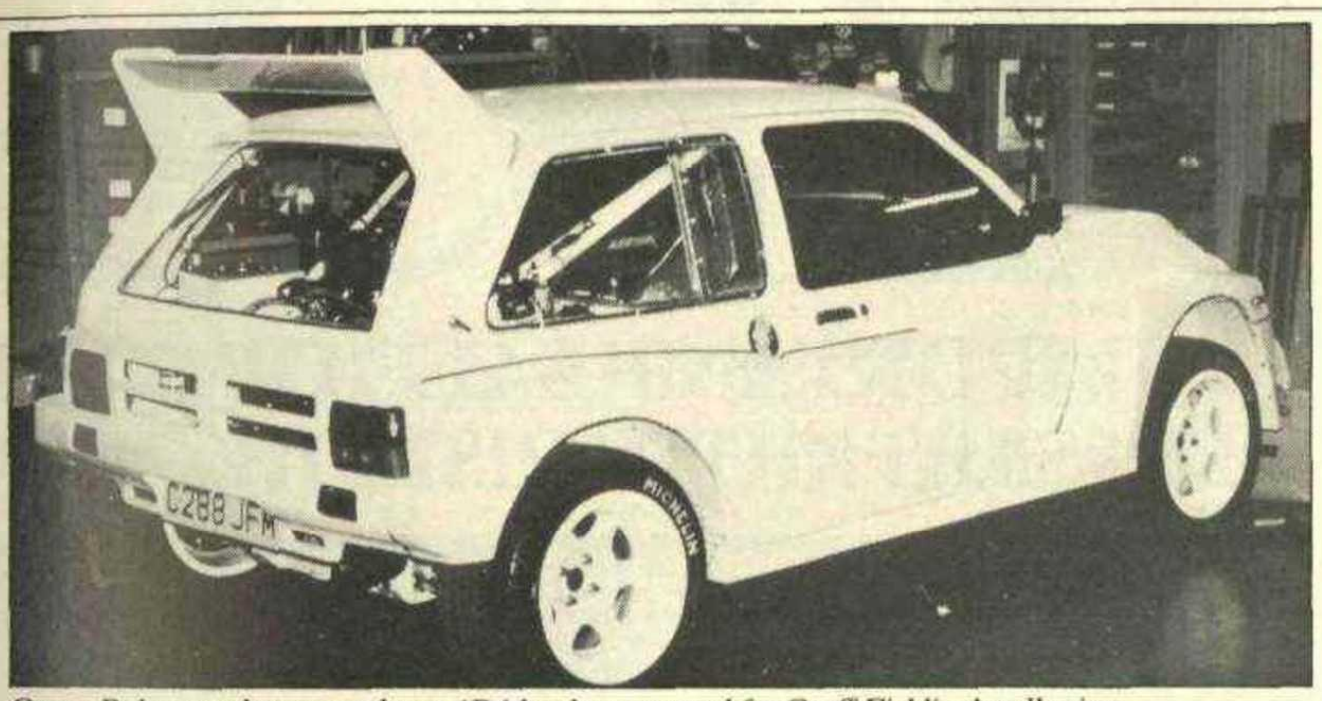
After becoming France's new champion in the Metro, and having money in his pocket in the shape of backing from '33 Export, Auriol was heavily courted by the Snobeck team, which was running semi-works Mercedes-Benz, but in the end he decided to stay if RED could run him in a competitive car. Stuart Turner, the head of Ford motorsport, convinced Ford France to become involved, and the happy result for all parties was further championships in both 1987 and 1988, and an invitation for the popular Frenchman to join the works Lancia team in 1989.

His place in the team has been taken by Cesar Boroni, Group N champion of France, who will be run by RED in all rounds of the 1989 French series except the Tour de Corse, where he will be taken on by



A souvenir of the Auriol days in the RED yard proves even the best make mistakes!

Rally Engineering Development



Group B days are long gone, but a 6R4 has been restored for Geoff Fielding's collection.

the works Ford team for this world championship qualifier. In the past RED has relied on its own crew rather than on local recruits, but Boroni will be bringing one mechanic to accompany him on recces and join the 12-man team for the events themselves.

The Ford contract is for only one year at a time, though Cattanach concedes a three-year deal would help to encourage long-term development: "A clever man in my position should watch what car manufacturers are releasing that could form the basis of a good rally car. Ideally we would like to have a contract with a major manufacturer to run a team on the World Championship, like Toyota Team Europe. It is important to do it for a manufacturer and not as a privateer, for that is the only way of ensuring state-of-the-art equipment. Ford is very good in this respect, and we receive parts soon after the works cars. Occasionally, however, they use parts we do not receive. For example they ran alloy rear wishbones in Corsica last year and we are only getting them now.

"We would also like to get into touring car racing, but we cannot risk setting the wheels in motion without the finance. We need to convince somebody that we are capable of doing it, and get them to pay. At one stage it looked a distinct possibility, but it all fell through. We would not consider any other type of racing. Ray Sherratt has a thing about rallycross, but that branch of the sport has limited sponsorship opportunities.

"Another factor we have to take into consideration is that most of our mechanics are ex-navigators and ex-drivers, and working with us is a way they can continue in the sport. If we decided to switch away from rallying, many would leave, as they love to go rallying at the top level."

1989 will not be a walkover for the team in either the British or French championships, indeed it might well be an uphill battle with extra opposition forming in the shape of Toyota's GT-Four and Mitsubishi's four-wheel-steered Galant, but according to Ford's Stuart Turner, "the key reason for their excellent record as a rally team is their complete professionalism and business-like approach", and that is not about to change. **WPK**



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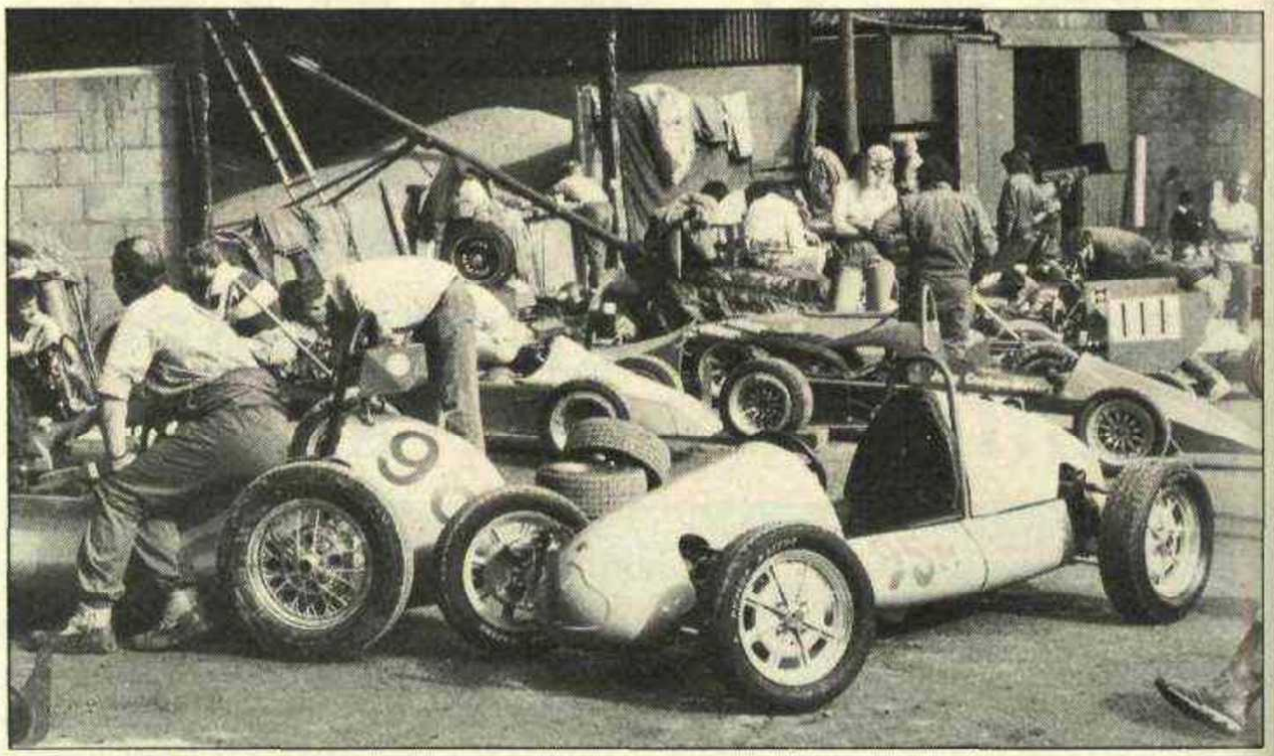
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GRASS ROOTS 500cc Racing



A scene from the Fifties? No, Emeryson (No 96) and Cooper Mk6 (No 95A) 500cc racers decorate Gurston Down's farmyard pits, but behind them John Corbyn's Jedi tells us this is 1988.

Out of Austerity

In searching for the best value in motor racing, it must be logical to look for the smallest car with a single-cylinder engine — all costs being relative to size and the number of pots under the bonnet. The advent of the single-cylinder, 500cc racing car at the end of the Second World War resulted from the desire to find a means of racing cheaply in those austere days. A simple formula was devised which enabled any competent enthusiast to build his own car at home.

Following the early example of Colin Strang, many home-made cars appeared in the years 1947-50. But alongside these enthusiasts, commerce was soon at work, with the Cooper brothers first building their own car and then, seeing the business potential, selling fully-prepared cars until the late 1950s.

Today, a good Cooper can be bought (depending upon its history, originality and condition) for about £8000. And as long as one has some mechanical skills, the cost of running the car should be no more than £1200 for a full season.

The Cooper approach was to build a light, aluminium-panelled, tubular chassis with independent suspension by front and rear upper transverse leaf-springs over lower wishbones, incorporating telescopic dampers. The steering was rack-and-pinion, with hydraulic drum brakes all round. The driver sat low in the car in the upright position; behind him was bolted a JAP air-cooled engine running on methanol fuel.

Engine power was tranferred by chain to a separate four-speed Norton gearbox, and then to a solid back axle. Overall weight was about 540 lb. A good power-to-weight ratio gave a responsive car, which was at its best on hill-climb and sprint courses. Lack of overall power and air-cooling made the cars somewhat vulnerable to the rigours of circuit use, but there is a growing band of Historic owners who, thanks to the Monoposto Club, are currently competing in a class for front-engined Formula Junior cars.

The 500 Owners Association was set up to help preserve these early cars and keep them in regular use at a variety of circuit, hill-climb and sprint meetings. In recent years the club has broadened its scope to cater for the resurgence of interest in modern 500cc cars, which has been a mirror-image of those earlier post-war years, with individual enthusiasts building their own one-off cars and then some offering further cars for sale.

This time around it is John Corbyn from Wellingborough in Northamptonshire who is the leading constructor, building his Jedi cars for those who have approximately £4000 to spare for a car which comes complete except for engine and gearbox.

The well-designed spaceframe chassis is built from 1in and ⅞in square tube, to which are bronze-brazed all the various mounting points. The aluminium floor pan and side body-panels are riveted on to add further strength. Upper bodywork consists of three removable GRP sections.



Series sponsor David Tearle exits Orchard Hairpin at Prescott in his Jedi.

The rear suspension is attached to an upright fabricated from 18-gauge sheet steel to take a twin-bearing hub; to this is fixed a lower wishbone and a single link, both with trailing arms. At the front, a Mini stub-axle is grafted into a fabricated tube upright to which are fitted unequal-length upper and lower wishbones. Adjustable Spax shock absorbers within coil-springs are fitted all round.

The 13in × 6in split-rim alloy wheels are shod with either Avon or Yokohama slick tyres, to give excellent adhesion which has now been further improved by the fitting of front canard fins and a rear single-post wing, all with Gurney edges. This completes an attractive and compact body. All pedal controls and the Knight rack-and-pinion steering are adjustable to suit the driver. Minifin hydraulic drum brakes are used all round to give excellent braking for the lightweight frame.

Choice of power-unit is left to the customer, but John will install the required engine mountings. Regardless of which engine/gearbox unit is used, power is transmitted by chain to the final-drive assembly, consisting of a Mini diff with its crown wheel converted to a sprocket carrier. Mini driveshafts take the power out to the wheels.

Enthusiasm for modern 500s has mushroomed to the point where David Tearle of Corby-based Phoenix Foods Ltd has stepped in to provide a sponsored championship. This has given the whole movement the transfusion of status necessary to carry the class to a full revival.

Another link in this renaissance is being forged by David Peers from Kidderminster in Worcestershire, who recently unveiled his Hi-Tech 500, which is aimed primarily at circuit racing. The complete car will cost £6000, coming in kit form to suit the customer's pocket.

Its power-unit is an Australian-built KTM water-cooled 500cc single. The engine, gearbox and diff are together, and the final drive is made from modified Mini parts. Suspension is by unequal-length, rose-jointed wishbones, which are adjustable, and incorporates coil-spring and damper units; steering is by a lightweight rack-and-pinion assembly.

The Hi-Tech's very attractive body consists of four GRP mouldings with side pods — one housing the radiator, the other the fuel tank. It has the appearance of a miniature Grand Prix car, and production examples will be fitted with canard fins on the nose and a single-post rear wing. This newcomer is due to receive its race baptism in a seven-race pre-series Championship to be called Formula 500S. **MM**



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Reynard's compulsory Vauxhall-powered chassis is light, nimble, and not much slower than an F3 car.

Dragonfly

The inaugural year of the Vauxhall-Lotus Challenge in Britain, and its Opel-labelled European counterpart, ostensibly filled every hope expressed for it, and the massive backing of the world's biggest car manufacturer, General Motors, ensured that the series was seen in all the right places: it gave European competitors a better preview of current Formula One tracks than did either F3000 or F3.

Allan McNish of Dumfries and British-domiciled Finn Mika Hakkinen, GM's two first-year Champions, have already announced their ascension to 1989 Formula Three with top-line teams. British series winner Allan McNish won the top Cellnet (*née* Grovewood) Motorsport Award ahead of another Vauxhall Championship driver, Peter Hardman. The perfect send-off for a new series in 1988? Not quite . . .

Mechanically and financially, the tightly-controlled formula worked beyond expectations, and changes for 1989 will be minimal, but there was a large hiccup. Expatriate Yorkshireman Tony Fall, manager of GM's European motorsport operations from the Russelsheim headquarters, was arrested by West German police. He was still in custody when we attended the Vauxhall-Lotus track-test session at the Estoril Grand Prix circuit.

Deputising for the absent Fall is an engineer of great versatility and sporting enthusiasm, Dr Fritz Indra, who started his career helping out on Niki Lauda's Formula Vee and subsequently worked at Alpina-BMW and Audi. Dr Indra was intimately involved in four-valve-per-cylinder technology at Ingolstadt R&D before his move to Opel, where he has been a senior member of the team working on the 16V Astra/Kadett 2-litre engine which lies at the heart of these Vauxhall-Opel single-seaters.

Naturally, the upheaval did produce some administrative and parts supply problems in all General Motors European Motorsport activities. But, to its great credit, the Luxembourg-based co-ordinator of the series, Dan Partel's European Formula Drivers Association, seems to have overcome these political shock waves, and the 1989 season promises to maintain the momentum of this alternative stepping stone to stardom for ambitious drivers.

To help us to understand what the formula was about, Berkshire-based Dragon Motorsport had brought along the two most successful 1988 cars for our appraisal. These were the British and European Championship mounts of Messrs McNish and Hakkinen, but it is worth remembering that all cars in the category have to use the same chassis, engine, tyres, gearboxes, *et al.* So the Reynard-built open monocoque we enjoyed for eight increasingly wet laps was the best possible amalgamation of mandatory features.

Most confusing aspect in 1988 was the use of the Lotus name, which not only extended to the publicity material but was also appended to chassis-plates. Apparently the Lotus role was simply to set a seal of approval on the design, the GM-owned Hethel Group's name more reassuring to overseas customers at the time of the formula's conception. Now, following Reynard's sparkling F3000 results and enlarged international prestige, we can expect 1989 cars to carry only Reynard chassis-plates.

The test car was No 30 amongst an estimated total of "up to 115" made so far, but some of those have been cannibalised for further spares so it is thought "there are probably 80-odd running around at the moment."

The 1989 British Vauxhall Challenge saw Dragon Motorsport's duo finish 1-2 in the points, both virtually doubling the score of third-placed Justin (son of Derek) Bell. Thus it was a competitive honour to drive one of the partially 1989-uprated cars.

The team ensures we are well prepared for the challenging 2.7-mile laps ahead. Allan McNish, still only 19, picks us up at the airport and provides a mature guide to the formula and car characteristics that belies his years. Asked his biggest problem in the formula, he nominates with a grin "my team-mate Mika Hakkinen". The £100,000 which a professional team such as Dragon will demand to run a full season is not nominated as a particular problem! It is acknowledged that plenty of other front-runners have delivered top-three placings for considerably less — £35,000 seems the favourite starting point.

McNish completes our wet morning introduction to the Estoril Grand Prix layout with a thoughtful drive in a LHD equivalent to the Vauxhall Carlton, his two instructional laps accompanied by a map with preferred dry-weather gearchange points and a request for the three journalists present to complete one lap with the young champion as passenger.

I cheat my way through the personal demonstration on two counts: first, having spent several days tyre-testing in assorted saloons, I have an idea about what happens over some of the brows which will be completely blind in a single-seater, and secondly because a passing "real" competitor is etching the correct racing line on the dampening tarmac.

As soon as the team starts to fit the car to you, it is obvious that the drivers with this equipe start with the traditional racer's "unfair advantage", in that these people are geared to giving the driver such a feeling of cosseted superiority that anything less than victory with the ultimate in lap times would represent itself in the driver's mind as a mild betrayal.

Entry was made easier by leaving off the top covers for the cockpit and engine-bay. The pedals were brought into adjustable contact with my feet whilst foam padding elevated me from supine to recommended angle of recline. Behind my borrowed helmet

Cockpit confines grow ever tighter . . .



Vauxhall-Lotus Reynard



Dragon Motorsport's Allan McNish (above and right) is Britain's inaugural Vauxhall-Lotus champion. With a Cellnet Award in his pocket, he graduates to Formula Three this year.

and single-layer overalls there was the choice of two "head-stops" which filled the role of a road car head restraint.

Instrumentation is still of the familiar analogue kind at this level, and our conventional Momo steering wheel, with its heavily padded and contoured rim, is probably too big for use in the current F3000 cars, which have echoed F1 in the adoption of ever-tighter cockpit confines for the driver. Significantly McNish and 1989 Dragon Motorsport signing Ben Edwards (winner of the first Formula First series in 1987) are even smaller than my modest 5ft 8in.

"The weight of the steering tugging against your forearm soon told you how fast the Reynard-Vauxhall alliance was conquering Estoril's second- and third-gear turns. The effect of four-wheel disc braking in such a light car was stunning"

There is just a combined water temperature and oil pressure gauge, plus a rev-counter supported by a 7100 rpm cutout to monitor. After the initial exploratory lap a turn is taken off the brake bias to lessen the risk of locking up the fronts on Estoril's tricky corner entries.

Starting is not the simple matter of a saloon turn-key action. An external battery supplies power and, for the dismal conditions on hand, we take the precaution of illuminating the rear warning light as well as dropping a switch and pressing a button to set the warm 2-litre in motion.

We are wearing silencers at this circuit, which "accounts for about 3 bhp" in the words of Dragon partner Doug Bebb. The best units he has seen have been right in the Formula Three league (165 bhp), but the formula itself calls for all power-units to be equalised within 3 bhp of 158 on the production line. The Vauxhall-Opel 16-valve sounds supremely at home on the circuit, pulling just over 160 mph and towards 7000 rpm in the dry conditions of 1988's Estoril Grand Prix supporting event. Today we will be lucky to exceed 6200 revs, but that is still some 140 mph in what feels like an open-air shower bath.

Even though conditions are far from ideal, with the inevitable carburation problems of a slow and wet day and long periods of novice over-run on the throttle, tickover speeds are maintained with urban decorum at 500 rpm. The 8.8in single-plate clutch takes up the story from little over 1000 rpm with ponderous ease, but the five-speed gearbox and the lack of a limited-slip differential take some acclimatising.

The left-hand-drive saloon had prepared us for the vagaries of changing gear with the right hand in the usual single-seater manner, but the Mk 9 Hewland gearchange is heavily spring-loaded. The change pattern is the traditional competition one of isolating first gear, whilst second to fifth lie in the usual

TRACK TEST Vauxhall-Lotus Reynard



Our man checks helmet fits head, while Dragon personnel make car fit driver . . .

"H-pattern". That is not a problem, though accurately guiding the shift from first to second, and third to fourth, across the gate in both cases, took some practice in the opening lap. Only thereafter could one guarantee success.

From the security of a comfortably heated saloon, the prospect of open-air lappery amidst the rubber and oil slime, now brought to skid-pan perfection by heavier rain, had been uninviting. Out there on this fabulous track (almost a match for Brands' Grand Prix circuit in its imaginative use of rising and falling terrain), the raw exhilaration of conducting a single-seater again permeated through three years' absence from such an opportunity.

After seasons of sloppy 290 bhp saloons on 205 road tyres, the prime impression must be of the sheer cornering accuracy that is supplied and demanded in a solo machine. You can brush the paint strip beside a kerb with Van Gogh artistry because there is none of the stuck-pig tyre squeal and rubber-bushing slop that lies between you and such commands in a road car.

On heavily treaded wet tyres there was not much opportunity to measure the sheer grip supplied, but the weight of the steering tugging against forearms previously pampered by power-steering systems soon told you how fast the Reynard-Vauxhall alliance was conquering even second and third gear twirls. So did the rate at which the tyres steamed back to a fully dry state when under shelter at the pits...

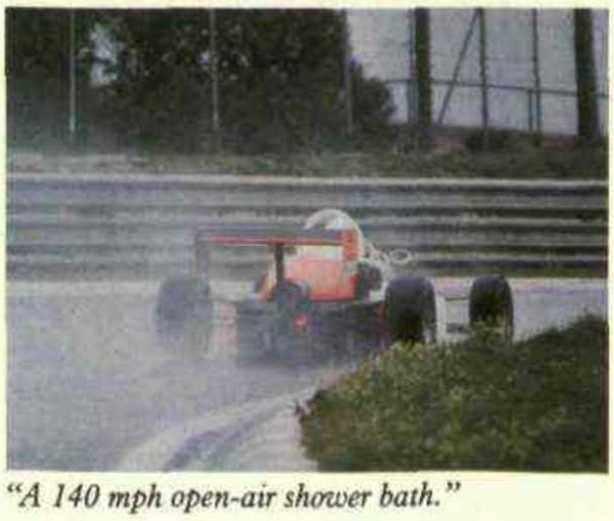
The outstanding single-seater characteristic that compliments such an agile chassis is the stunning effect of four-wheel disc braking (using generously sized four-piston calipers at the front) in such a light car. In wet conditions nobody was brave enough to come close to their capabilities, which would take them so close to the corner itself that rapid-fire gearchanging would become a necessity.

The gear choices indicated by Allan McNish came from a dry day's racing experience, but the engine proved so flexible that we could afford to run in fourth and third from low revs (2500 upward) and still find rapid response. Of course, it works best if kept between 4000 and 7000 rpm, but like its roadgoing ancestor it uses its two litres to compliment 16V high-rpm thrills with flexible co-operation, almost regardless of gear.

The amount of under- or oversteer exhibited in anything up to a fourth-gear corner in these conditions was simply dependent on the amount of throttle applied. Lots of throttle equalled a signal to the rear wheels to try and overtake the fronts in second and third. Accessible torque and lack of a limited-slip differential meant that most forward thrust was safely dissipated in wheelspin under full throttle.

Generally the front always went where pointed, and the rear simply followed on as best it could within the limited confines of the traction available. A peek rearwards gave one a slight inkling of the view for the aces of this world, the Marlboro colours filling trembling mirrors.

Whatever the conditions it always felt like a "proper" racing car, something Formula First has failed, in my view, to offer. **JW**



"A 140 mph open-air shower bath."

Rolling Chassis: All built, and spares supplied, by Reynard Racing, Bicester, Oxon. Aluminium monocoque with honeycomb side structures, single-alloy sheet floor, cast-alloy bulkheads, steel rollcage and suspension arms. Safety fuel-bag tank; 6.6 gallons (30 litres). For 1989, aluminium honeycomb nose section.
Dimensions: Length 159.4in; width 64.5in; wheelbase 96.4in; height 37.7in. Weight: 420kg (925 lb).
Engine: GM "Family 2" Astra GTE/Kadett GSi unit with dry-sump lubrication and twin 40 DCOE Weber side-draught carburettors. DOHC, 16V, 10.5:1 cr. Bore × stroke: 86mm × 86mm. Capacity: 1998cc.
Power Figures: Average maximum horsepower: 158 bhp at 7000 rpm. Torque: 155 lb ft at 4700 rpm.
Suspension: Triangulated wishbones front and rear, upper rockers operating inboard White Power gas-filled shock-absorbers and three choices of coil-spring rates. Adjustable front anti-roll bar. For 1989, adjustable rear anti-roll bar.
Wheels & Tyres: Techno Magnesio 6 × 13 front, 8 × 13 rears. Bridgestone Potenza wet and dry tyres.
Brakes: Solid 9.8in (250mm) diameter discs. Cockpit-adjustable front/rear bias. For 1989, disc diameters up by 1mm.
Steering: Rack and pinion; 10.5in-diameter wheel controls; 0.8 lock-to-lock gearing.
Performance: 0-62 mph in 4.5 seconds. Up to 161 mph, dependent on gearing.
Price: £17,400 complete. Engine £3,900 (approx).



Astra-derived two-litre gives up to 160 bhp.

Also in attendance at Estoril were the Runnacles family, father Keith and daughter Amanda, sorting out one of three Vision Clubmans cars they will run with the help of former independent preparation specialist Colin Davids. Next season, one Clubmans series will be entirely for the 16V Vauxhall-engined machines, with another permitting them to run against the highly modified and traditional "A" category Clubmans machinery. The signs are that the Vauxhall-engined cars should not be too far adrift of the outright winning pace, whilst offering a lot more reliability. **JW**

Audi Coupé



If you want to get on the roads before the Germans, you'd better get an Audi Coupé.

You Saw It Here First!

It makes a change for a German car to come on sale in the UK before it reaches showrooms in its native land, but in launching its new Coupé in Britain immediately after its official debut at the Birmingham Motorshow, Audi gave British customers a fortnight's head-start on their continental cousins.

Such a move, the reverse of the usual LHD/RHD clash, demonstrates the strength of British demand in the coupé class, where two doors and some headroom are usually sacrificed for more sporting looks. Audi's new Coupé, though, continues its predecessor's combination of roominess and performance on the floorpan of the Audi 90, with five-cylinder engines and two- or four-wheel drive.

This time, though, the fastback styling is substantially different to the saloon, with a new windscreen and a full-length hatch made of plastic instead of the previous model's narrow bootlid. Despite its stubby lines, the wheelbase is 18mm greater than before, and the drag factor has fallen from 0.38 to 0.32, helped by the deep front apron. That is not quite as good as the 90 saloon it is derived from, because of the wider tyres and shorter tail. It still looks like a new-generation Audi, but not very elegant, being rather solid and heavy around the rear cabin, without the lightness which distinguishes the 80/90 profile.

Well-shaped rear seats can be made to fold down to provide a flat floor, offering the flexibility such a car needs with only two doors, and a small hatch to cope with skis and the like is a £165 option. Rear head and leg room is generous, though the seats are shaped for two not three. Height adjustment on the driver's seat and on both front seatbelts is standard, and the simple, legible dials are in a tidy group under a pronounced lip.

Two engines are offered: the long-running 2.2-litre 136 bhp, five-cylinder, or the new twin-cam four-valve five producing 170 bhp and 162 lb ft of torque. A sophisticated electronic injection and management system, sodium-cooled exhaust valves and anti-knock devices allow this 2309cc unit to run a 10.3:1 compression ratio even on unleaded fuel.

2.2E models can stretch to 129 mph, and reach the magic 60 mph is a little over nine seconds; 20 MV buyers will see 137 mph and 8.4 seconds respectively. With the lesser engine buyers have the choice of two-or four-wheel drive, but the 20V will only be available in quattro form, unchanged from the 90 quattro and using the Torsen centre differential so that the ABS (standard on quattros, £1000 extra otherwise) is always operative.

Like the 80/90, MacPherson struts support the front, with a trailing arm torsion beam behind on 2WD cars and two more struts on the quattro. Sports suspension,



Fascia is simple and tidy, dials legible.

stiffer and lower than the 90 saloon, is standard, along with alloy wheels, 205/60 VR15 tyres and power-assisted steering.

Along with the crumple-zones in its all-galvanised shell, the Coupé can be ordered with the ingenious Procon-Ten safety device which, in the event of head-on collision, retracts the steering wheel and tensions the safety-belts. Available for the first time on an RHD Audi, this is one of the cheaper options at £411, whereas an electric sunroof adds a hefty £904 to the total.

Standard equipment for UK cars includes electric windows, locks and heated mirrors, rear wash/wipe, and separate rear heater outlets. This takes the 2.2E to £17,994, while a 2.2 quattro soars to £22,486. The 20V car will not be available until the spring.

Due to adverse weather interfering with Audi's Press launch (the company coped impressively well with an overnight replanning of the operation), our experience is limited to the 2.2E quattro.

As expected it feels solid and well-constructed, with nicely engineered controls, excellent visibility, and good relaxing support from the sports seats — just the sort of car to face bad weather with confidence. Hastily fitted with M + S tyres and sending occasional warning ABS tremors through the brake pedal, the test fleet was able largely to ignore the three or four inches of snow overlaying much of Germany: there was no wheelspin at any time and the car's balance was stable and predictable.

On dry tarmac, however, the Coupé shows a less welcome Audi characteristic, a tendency to dip and bob on its suspension which can make rapid travel uncomfortable. Not that it seems soft; the ride is quite sharp in the favoured German style, but the car does feel top-heavy in the same way as bigger Audis. Chassis response is confident, with a good solid feeling through the power steering.

That very recognisable five-cylinder snarl resounds from the exhaust under acceleration, though the sound insulation is so good that you have to have the window open to hear it, and the gearchange quality is smooth. The ratios, however, are borrowed from the saloon and are too far apart to keep the engine happily whirring at its best.

Though the Audi Coupé quattro is a fine car endowed with the impressive abilities of the quattro 4WD system, it is hard to see what it offers for the extra cost over the 90 quattro saloon, other than a degree of rarity and a useful hatchback. Yet that is more a comment on the market than on Audi, and the advent of the 170 bhp engine will almost certainly make the Coupé 20V an object of desire. **GC**

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New 911 3.3 Turbo. Guards red with linen leather and red piping, unregistered ..... **POA**

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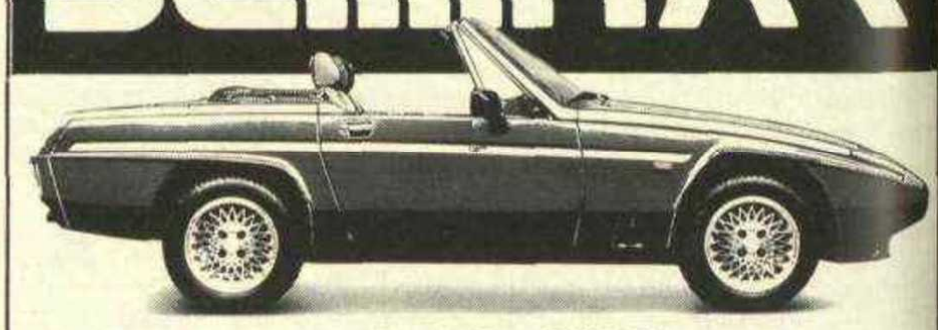
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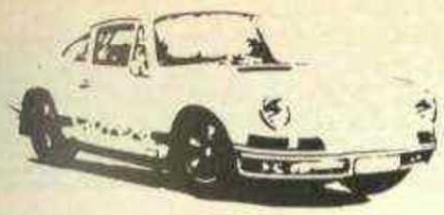
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911 and 912 Porsche. A Restorer's Guide To Authenticity.

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It covers all the visual and cosmetic aspects of these from 1964 to 1973, altough it doesn't get involved with mechanical details. For those you'll have to continue to get in touch with our Slores Team, although they will of course still be happy to advise on such maters as the correct finish on the washer for your optional widget support bracket.

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Fellow Porsche fanatic **Chester Wedgewood** is again sponsoring the **Inter-Marque** series under his **Gordon Russell Furniture** banner, this series also having a test day, on March 22nd at Silverstone. And there are already over 50 registrations in our series!

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Don't forget our annual exhaust sale is on until **March 11th 1989.** Details in last month's advert. And watch out for next month's **Glassfibre Sale!**

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1982 (X) 911 SC Coupe. Light Blue Metallic, Black pasha, 54,000 miles, FSH, new clutch, Personal plate, fitted sports spoilers **£17,500**
1980 (W) 911 SC Targa. Brown with Tan pasha. Comprehensive history file, well above average condition, 72,000 miles **£14,450**
1985 (B) 911 3.2 Carrera Sport Coupe. Guards Red with Black pin/1/2 leather, air conditioning, cruise, central locking, high mileage hence **£22,000**
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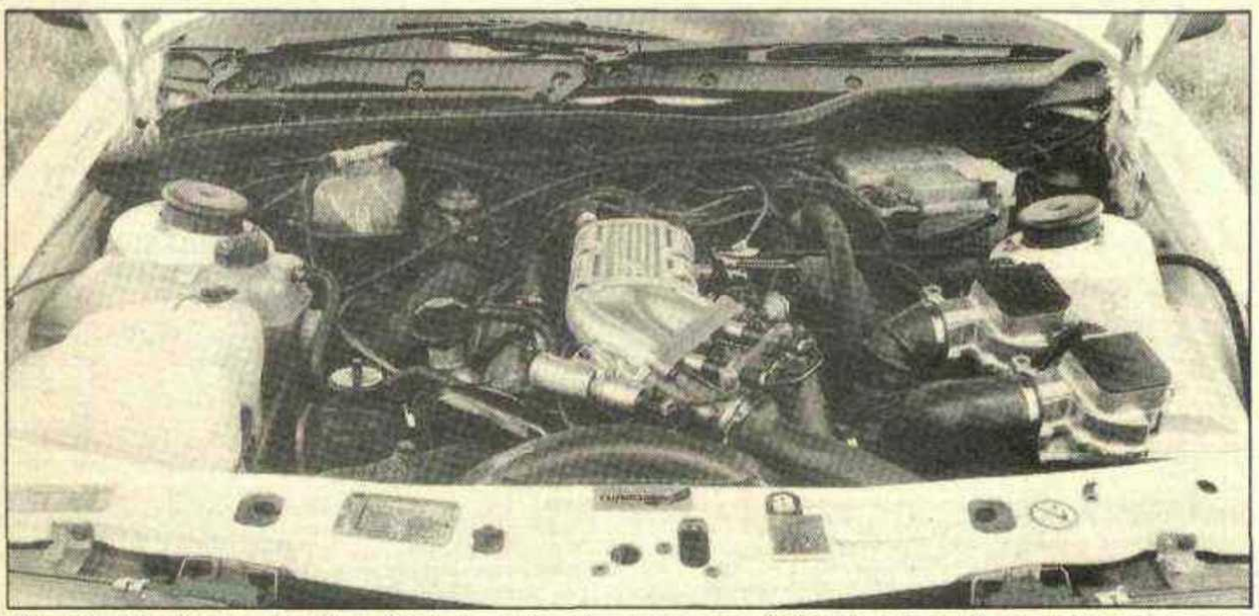
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Plumbing looks complex but efficient, and turbo power transforms the sluggish executive Granada.

A Smoother Blend

Now that turbochargers as a fashion have abated, a turbo is now more often employed where it is genuinely appropriate instead of as window dressing. At the same time, with the steady increase of expertise, such installations are incomparably better than they used to be, especially from a specialist such as Turbo Technics, which produces the twin-turbo Ford Granada 2.9 conversion we recently tried, courtesy of Bristol Street Motors (Worcester).

There was a period when a turbo was seen as an easy bolt-on tuning device which needed very little engine work to install — perhaps merely lowering the compression ratio with a thick cylinder-head gasket. Certainly the hours of work which once went into conventional tuning (fitting larger valves and bigger carburetters, and re-profiling inlet tracts), suddenly seemed excessive for the modest power gains available, whereas the turbo seemed to offer a magical solution to large increases in power for less work.

The result of this "short cut" approach by some tuners (and some manufacturers too) was that the turbo developed a reputation for poor power delivery, a reputation which was often justified.



Sportier body-kit helps Turbo Technics' conversion look the part it can now play.

With advancing knowledge, it has become clear that while the older mechanical complexities have been by-passed, a new field of expertise is equally vital to a successful system. Digital electronics has replaced trial-and-error carburetter tuning; time-switched water cooling systems are common, and turbine and tract sizing has become an exact science.

With 2500 conversions under its belt, Northampton-based firm Turbo Technics is perhaps the best-known British outfit, working directly with turbo makers Garrett AiResearch in developing new installations. The firm currently lists 24 different Ford conversions among the 50 or so packages it offers, and these make up the bread-and-butter work amongst the 10 or so cars dealt with each week. Cabriolet Escorts are a popular subject, but the Sierra 4x4 has proved the most prolific of the range.

Sharing the same four-wheel drive system, the heavier Granada 2.9 stands to benefit even more because of its sluggishness in standard form. Turbo Technics has had a great deal of experience of the Ford V6, starting with a blown 2.8i Capri and carrying on to the present 2.9-litre unit, and the system fitted to the Granada 4x4 blends in so smoothly that it would be impossible to guess that it was installed afterwards.

As in every such installation, the big objective is to reduce response times, and so two turbos are used, mounted on short specially-cast exhaust manifolds from each cylinder bank. The tiny blowers, the size of a couple of oranges squashed together, are water-cooled Garrett T2 units which have an integral boost control wastegate and an oil feed from the block. These cram the air through a large intercooler below the radiator, making it denser and more "nutritious" before it is passed back into the standard twin-plenum intake body.

Ford's electronic injection system is unaltered, but to cope with the increased demand, extra fuel is squirted in by two supplementary injectors controlled by a separate digital black box. Compression is reduced from 9.5:1 to 8.7:1, while automatic ignition retard is tied in to the boost system.

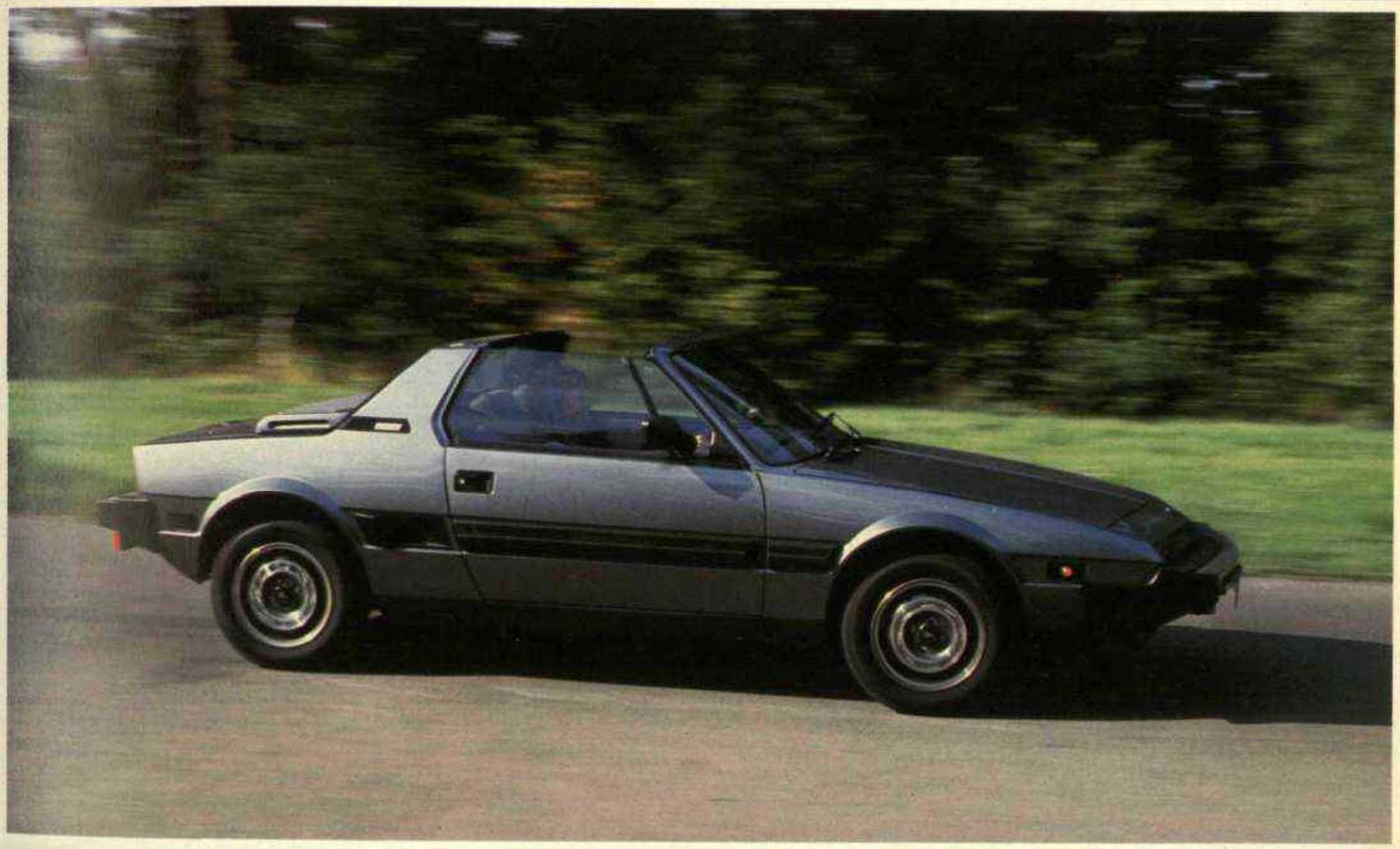
Looking under the heavy bonnet, the plumbing looks complex, but, as the turbos and intercooler are hidden from view, no more so than on most fuel-injection cars today. What is impressive is the look of quality; the manifold castings, brackets, pipes and hoses are all well made and obviously carefully thought-out.

Not surprisingly considering its complexity, this is the most expensive kit on Turbo Technics' long list at £2950, plus the eternal VAT: twice the cost of boosting a Fiesta. Yet on a £20,000 executive car this forms a smaller percentage, and it really transforms the Granada. Where normally it ambles along on 150 unenthusiastic horsepower, TT pushes this to 210 bhp of a far smoother and urgent nature. It even idles more placidly, and spins right up the scale with all its usual roughness planed off, which would be an improvement even without the extra performance.

On the road, though, the added urge is addictive. Where the standard Granada needs a downshift or two to heave it past a truck, the TT car is brisk in fifth, and a revelation in fourth: on one of the A5's long hills I was able to pick off two articulated lorries without strain where the unblown car would have been gasping. At the other end of things, the Granada would waft along in top gear as low as 1500 rpm with nary a shudder.

No hiccoughs or starting problems appeared, and the standard suspension proved more capable than I had remembered it. This was in fact the first time I have actually enjoyed driving a Granada, and it makes me wonder why Ford is happy to let someone else bring out the car's good points; after all, the Cosworth engine would fit nicely in here. But this is an executive car, not looking for such a sporting engine.

There had to be a snag even to such an effective conversion, though it is actually a minor Ford problem highlighted by the extra power. There is a little slack somewhere in the drive-line, and even the gentlest nudge of throttle can send the whole affair into a kangaroo resonance at low speeds. But it is not enough to detract from the overall improvement to a worthy but stolid machine. **GC**



Soldiering On . . .

After 17 years, everybody's favourite Fiat is being phased out. The last X1/9s have rolled off the Bertone lines, and about 300 are on their way to this country to satisfy a demand which has tapered off over the years but never quite disappeared.

In fact, last year Fiat UK sold 900 X1/9s, more than it did in 1987, helping towards a grand total over the years of around 180,000 examples of the pretty targa-top which brought mid-engined motoring to a mass market.

The car's announcement was in November 1972, making it a year older than that other long-running Bertone mid-engined sports-car, the Lamborghini Countach. But while the Countach has continued to be the sales leader of the Bolognese marque, rolling out of the Sant' Agata factory faster than ever before, the attractive little Fiat faced a serious decline in demand in the early Eighties.

There were a number of reasons for this fall-off; there had been only one up-dating of the car, but that would have been less important had the power unit matured further. As it was, the car had seen one major advance with the change from the original 1300cc engine to a 1500cc version some six years into production, but continued to be available only as an unsophisticated single-cam with a lowly 85 bhp, while other Fiat and Lancia products were boasting much higher specifications.

More damaging for Fiat as a whole was the serious rust scare which burst the company's sales bubble at this time, and as sales of all models slid rapidly down, both the sports models, X1/9 and Fiat 124 Spyder, suddenly became fringe products, eating up production space without generating much return.

Fiat's solution was neat and rapid: the shells of both of these sport-cars were built by their respective designers, Bertone and Pininfarina, before being transported to Fiat's plant at Mirafiori for assembly. During 1981 Fiat smartly shifted the complete assembly job over to the two coachbuilders, starting with the ailing American versions, and both cars lost their Fiat badges, becoming instead the Pininfarina 124 Spyder and the Bertone X1/9.

X1/9 production stabilised at a lower level of around 30 complete cars per day compared to the one-time peak of 100 shells a day, and Bertone also took over the marketing. After this, demand settled to a limited but steady level which has carried the wedge-shaped machine well beyond what would have been its natural life as a purely Fiat product.

Rumours of its death have been frequent over the years, but the versions currently on offer through Fiat UK are definitely the final ones. You can have it penny plain or twopence coloured: £8926 buys the ordinary model in one body colour, while spending £10,124 brings one of two metallic paint finishes, different alloy wheels, fancy interior trim, and a small spoiler — the first body add-on in the X1/9's history, apart from the arrival of the Federal 5 mph bumpers with the 1500cc model in 1978.

This sort of special edition is the norm for the run-out of a long-standing model, but the cheaper version (stocks are dwindling fast) is extraordinary value for money even for a twilight car. Forget the unsophisticated engine, the very ordinary acceleration figures, and roadholding which a good hatchback can see off — the X1/9 has other charms. Even now it is a handsome machine, and its clever detachable roof offers a practical choice for a wet climate. Mechanically, the car is reliable and robust, with its well-proven parts from more mundane family cars, it is comfortable, and it is economical.

Against these fun aspects must be placed the dated feel of the mechanics, showing an almost complete lack of development since the 1500cc engine was inserted — a surprising history for a car which arrived in the showrooms almost exactly as it left the drawing board. Given this, it is a tribute to the original car that it is still often compared to the sophisticated Toyota MR2, two generations younger.

All mid-engined cars are sensitive to side-winds, but the Fiat's light weight and rather stodgy steering make it a wandery motorway car in gusty conditions. Running over cats-eyes produces sharp thumps which feel heavily damped by the time they reach the driver's hands, and the rack ratio is slow, needing large movements in rapid manoeuvres.

A pair of MacPherson struts is crammed under the low nose, with lateral forces going into a slightly-leading transverse link while braking forces are resisted by a long tubular trailing link. Behind, the Fiat 128 strut and hub is used, but located beneath by a very wide-based fabricated wishbone.

Unusually, the X1/9 is not equipped with anti-roll bars at either end. While these do help to control roll angles, they are often used more as a means of trimming a car's handling behaviour because of the pronounced effect they can have on the side-to-side weight transference either at the front, the rear, or both. Their absence here indicates a desirable basic balance in the handling which makes this a pleasant machine which merits the term "sports-car" for its responsive cornering attitude rather than for any high adhesion levels. It comes on 165/70 SR13 tyres which look meagre by the standards even of today's family cars, and would probably fall short of the g-forces a Cavalier can generate. Yet to my mind predictability counts for more than grip when it comes to confident cornering.

In this low car roll is not a problem, despite the heavy detachable roof panel; in fact the feel of the chassis improves as the body tilts away from the corner: with the first wheel movement the front is slow to answer, but into the curve the car settles down at the back and the front seems to bite. By the time the throttle is wide open on the exit the inside front wheel feels as if it is doing very little, not quite lifting just before the car flattens out leaving the bend.

In other words, the harder you drive it the better it is. The understeer and steering stodginess which show up in relaxed driving disappear when pressing on over an interesting piece of road with the engine echoing loudly through the thin bulkhead. Much of this rather coarse sound battles through to the cabin despite being separated from it by the fuel tank (behind the passenger) and the spare wheel, which sits upright behind the driver, a unique and very practical position.

This is not a quiet car at any time; with the roof on the engine is plainly audible, and without it the wind noise is pronounced, though, oddly, the racket seems to diminish if the electric windows are open. Very little air disturbs the roofless cell which makes cold weather travel pleasant. Excellent ventilation grilles help the climate inside, and good legroom (for those of average height at least) plus a well-placed wheel make it a relaxing car to sit in.

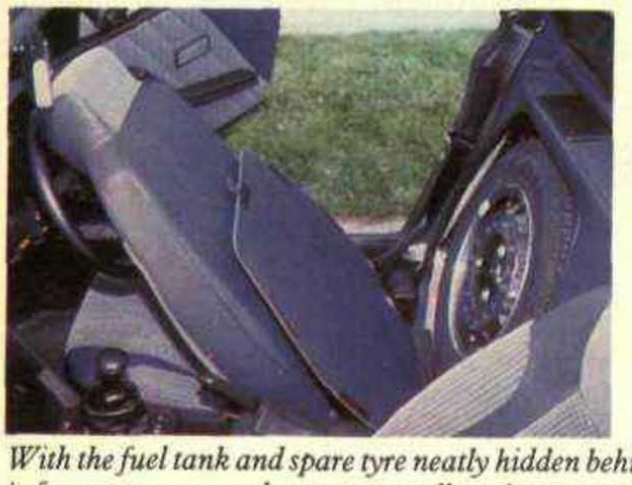
Designed at a time when legislation looked like stifling open cars, the targa-top principle was well-suited to the mid-engined layout, with a solid rollbar to give rigidity to the shell with its deep sills and central service tunnel. The structure feels stiff and strong, and though the side pillars obscure some of the view, the fixed glass rear window is a bonus for an open-top.

Fiat/Lancia sometimes produces some very fine fascia designs, and though the X1/9 has not had a major internal revision for over ten years the layout still looks crisp. As always some of the minor dials are obscured by the hands, but the legible main instruments carry on an Italian tradition with an anti-clockwise rev-counter. Two things have changed: a comfortable leather-clad Momo wheel replaces the very Seventies Lancia Stratos-style one, and the nasty paddle-shaped gearlever has thankfully been supplanted by a plain leather knob.

This is as well, since the gearchange is particularly bad. This was a low mileage Press car, but it is hard to believe that this clonking, stiff and stubborn mechanism would ever improve. First was difficult to engage from standstill, and third sometimes completely elusive. Even fourth was hard to find at times.



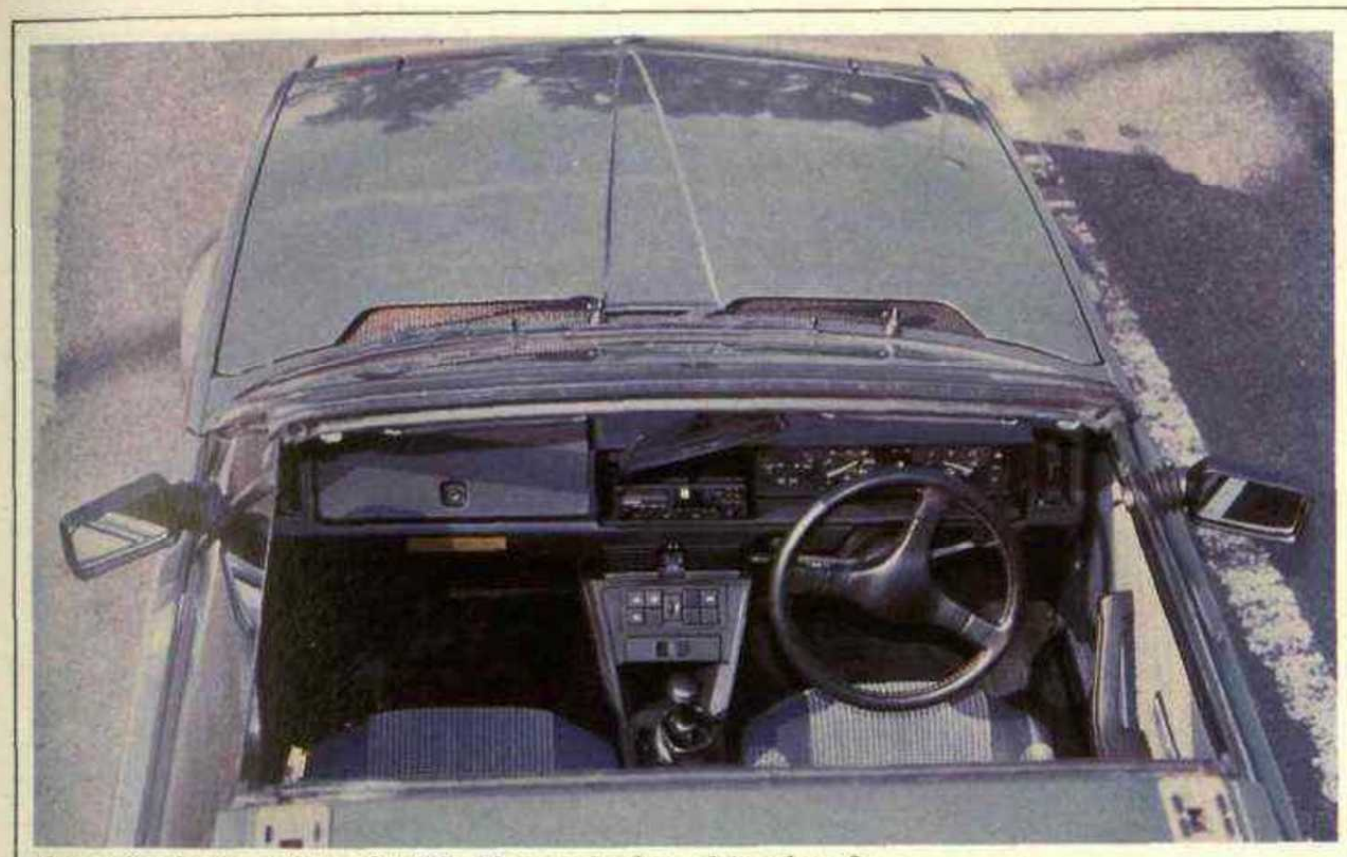
Bystanders are invariably surprised at the clever boot and engine compartment layout.





With the fuel tank and spare tyre neatly hidden behind the seats (above left), the front boot (above right) is free to carry extra luggage as well as the targa top.

Fiat X1/9



Attractive fascia and comfortable Momo wheel are driver benefits.

Model: X1/9.
Maker: Bertone, Italy.
Importer: Fiat UK Ltd, Uxbridge.
Type: Two-seat mid-engined sports.
Engine: Transverse four in line, 1498cc (86.4mm x 63.9mm), sohc, two valves per cylinder, alloy head, 9.2:1cr. Weber downdraught twin-choke carburettor. Power: 85 bhp at 6000 rpm. Torque: 87 lb ft at 3200 rpm.
Transmission: RWD, five-speed, single-plate clutch.
Suspension: (Front): MacPherson strut, transverse plus trailing link. (Rear): MacPherson strut, wide-based lower wishbone.
Steering: Rack and pinion.
Brakes: (front and rear): plain discs, no servo.
Wheels and tyres: 165/70 SR13 tyres on 13in alloy rims.
Performance: 0-60 mph: 11 sec; Maximum speed: 106 mph.
Price: £8926.

Even worse was the throttle, apparently lubricated with Araldite if anything at all: so sticky from closed that it literally needed a kick to get the car moving. This was another reason to keep driving the car hard, which it seems to like, being Italian. A heavy but nicely sharp clutch pedal also thrives on firm use. Other aspects of the assembly were perfectly good: the doors and covers all shut properly, and the delicate pink/blue check trim was neatly applied.

There can be few production cars available today which have no brake servo. Fiat decided there was no need for one on the X1/9, and after the fiasco over the braking on the Lancia Beta Montecarlo, must have breathed sighs of relief. Mid-engined cars are always at some risk of locking the lightly-loaded front end, and the Montecarlo's front-only brake-booster gave it a premature enthusiasm for this which almost killed the car. In the X1/9 the unassisted pedal operates on four small 8.9in plain discs and does not feel heavy at all, but the brakes do fade appreciably with surprisingly short bursts of speed, needing some babying to restore them to health.

Bertone's layout for this car was exceptionally efficient for its time, and has not really been improved on for a mid-engined car today. It must be said that, for a small sports-car, a front-engined vehicle designed with modern technology can in practice equal the theoretical handling abilities of the central plan, without the packaging compromises and on-the-limit severity; examples are the BMW Z1 or forthcoming FWD Lotus Elan.

Nevertheless the Fiat has one flaw in its practicality (which it shares with several conventional cars, the Z1 amongst them), which is the complete lack of inside stowage. A healthy stack of soft bags will fit in the tail boot, and the front cover will swallow an assortment of coats and wellingtons as well as the roof panel. But in the cabin there is only a tiny glovebox, and with two up the everyday clutter of atlases, sunglasses and briefcase has to be decanted into the boot.

A normal lever under the passenger's side of the dash releases the front cover when it is time to put the roof away. This requires practice and effort, for the panel is large and heavy; the two screenrail catches undo easily enough, but there is a knack to tipping up the vinyl-covered slab, lifting it over the windscreen, turning it through 90° and easing it into exactly the right position in the nose without falling in after it. Once settled on its rubber mounts a rubber toggle holds it in place, leaving luggage space below it, though difficult to get to.

Engine access is fairly limited through the lift-up cover behind the cabin, released like the boot by a lockable catch set into the left-hand door opening. Under it is the 1498cc transverse four borrowed many years ago from the Fiat 128.

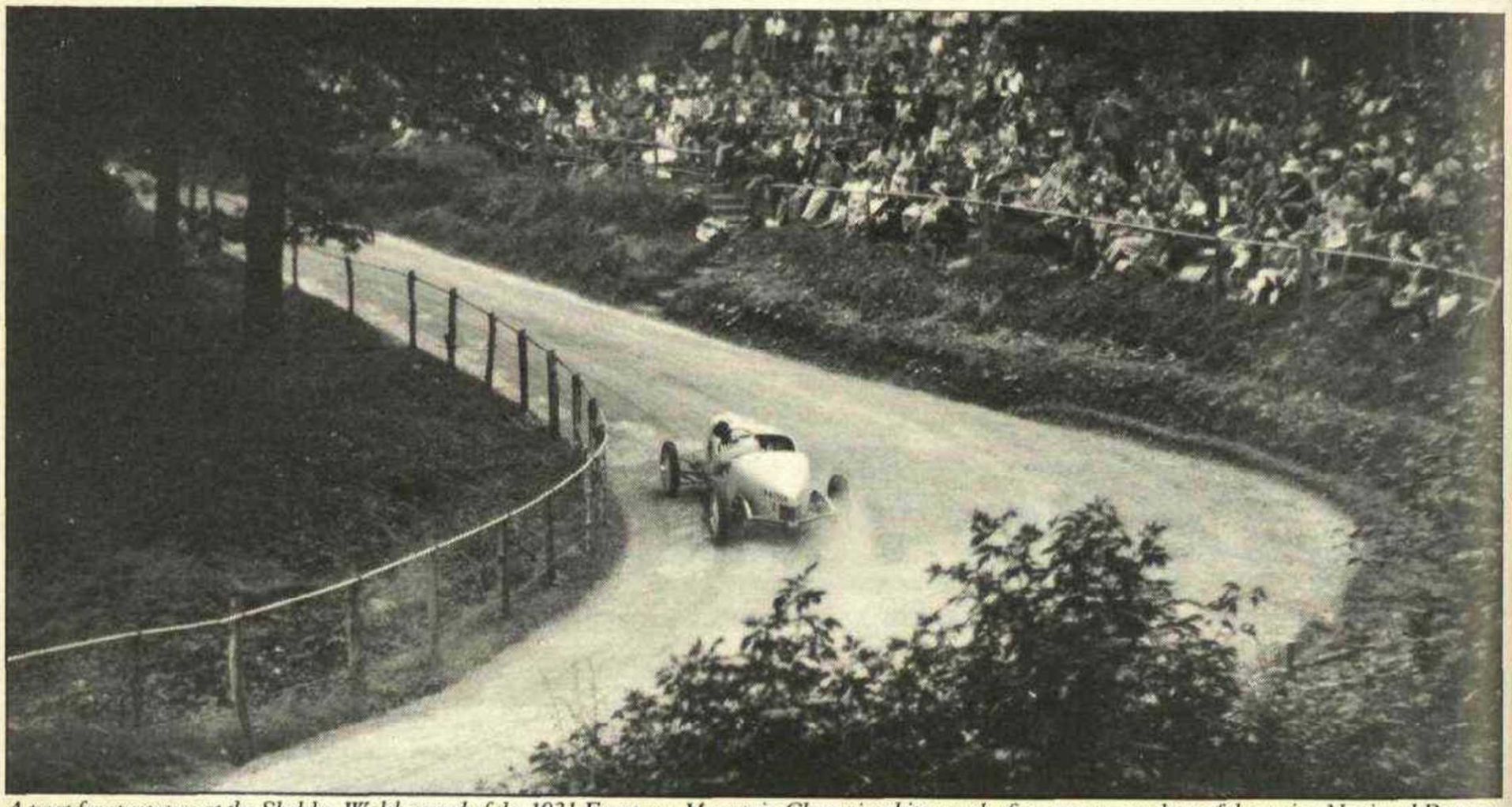
It has always seemed a shame that the X1/9 retained this thrashy single-cam engine when very similar twin-cam engines of much greater power were fitted to other Fiats and Lancias, but the investment to modify the installation no doubt exceeded the probable returns on this relatively small-production machine. In addition the X1/9 was planned to run alongside the Lancia Beta Montecarlo, which did use the Fiat/Lancia twin-cam, and there was a clear marketing distinction to be made between them.

As it is, the motive power feels very old-fashioned now, slow to start on its autochoke downdraught twin-barrel carburetter, and buzzing from its uneven idle to a raucous maximum of 6500 rpm, 500 over the best power rating of 85 bhp. Pulling its highest torque at 3200 rpm means that it has a healthy band over which it performs at its best, and the 0-60 mph time is around 11 seconds. Gear spacings are not close, but neither are they critical, the level torque allowing a choice of gears for most hazards.



The end of the X1/9 . . .

Given that the X1/9 has soldiered on unaltered for such a long time, mainly as a result of customer demand rather than long-term planning on the part of Fiat or Bertone, it is only fair to revel in the fun aspects of the little machine rather than make direct comparisons with today's sports-cars, and on those grounds the final 300 UK buyers will certainly enjoy their X1/9s. **GC**



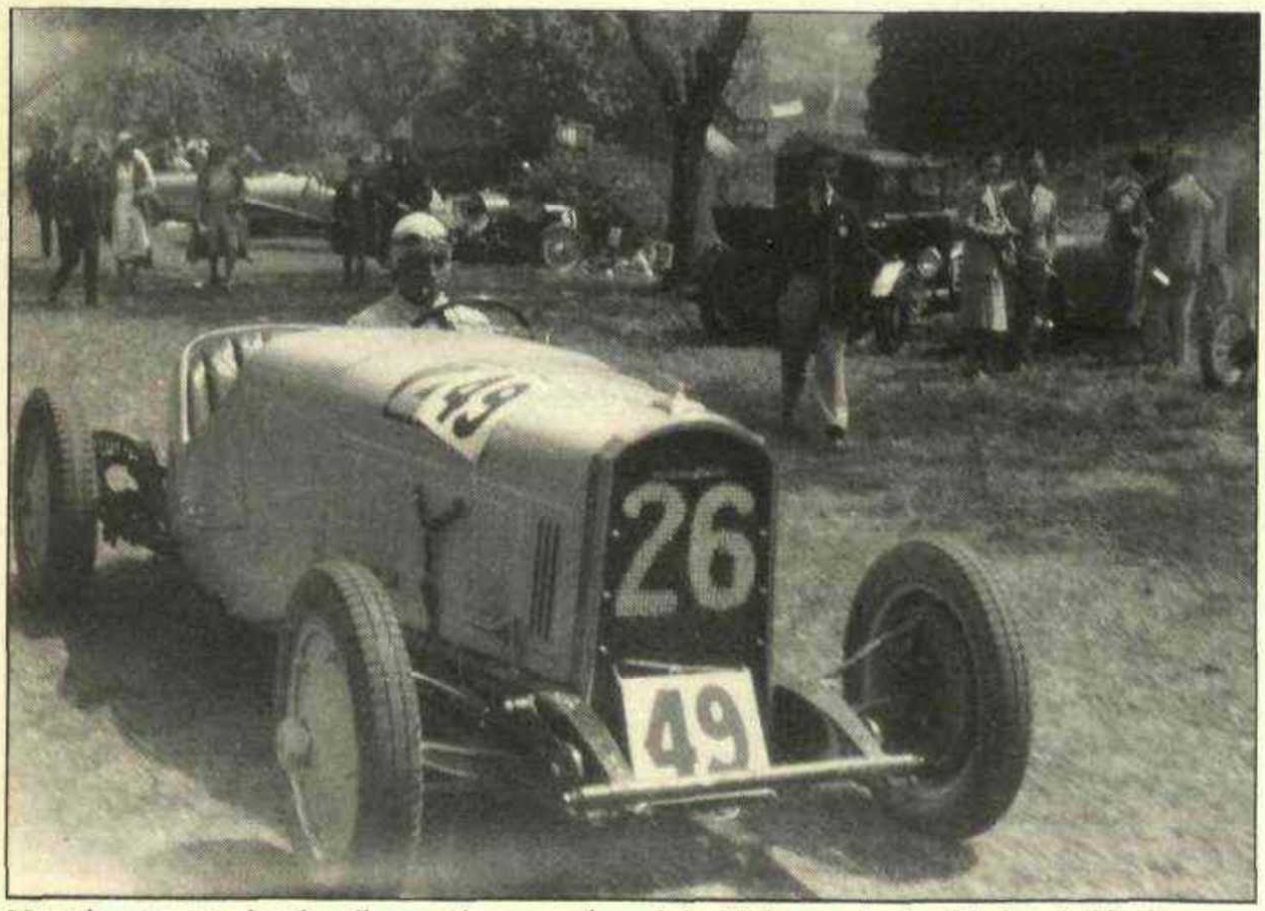
A treat for spectators at the Shelsley Walsh round of the 1931 European Mountain Championship was the first appearance here of the racing Naçional Pescara.

Spanish Invader

The erudite article by David Hebb about V10 and W12 engines (MOTOR SPORT, December 1988) reminded me of Naçional Pescara, because that company toyed with a 3.9-litre in-line power-unit with ten cylinders — although I concede that it may have gone no further than the drawing board.

Between the wars a number of Continental cars and drivers came to compete at the Shelsley Walsh speed hill-climb, and among them were two identical 3-litre Naçional Pescaras, in 1931.

Coming, like Manuel of *Fawlty Towers*, from Barcelona, this Spanish make had appeared in 1929. Finance came from the wealthy Marquis Raoul de Poteras Pescara, and the car was so notably advanced in design that King Alfonso XIII, that considerable motoring enthusiast, saw it as a successor to the great Hispano Suiza which had done much for Spanish automobile prestige but whose best days were over and whose manufacture had anyway been transferred to France.



Note the upswept chassis rails over the rear axle and the Elektron wheels with detachable rims.

The production Naçional Pescaras had 2.8-litre straight-eight engines, at a time when this multiplication of cylinders was fashionable. There were two inclined valves in each cylinder, actuated by twin overhead-camshafts driven by shaft and gears from the front of the crankshaft. It was all very promising, a neat compilation of American and European engineering, but unfortunately it was ended by the advent of a Republican Government which sent Alfonso into exile.

Racing cars had been laid down just before this, with finance coming from the Garriga Bank. They had 3-litre straight-eight engines designed by Enrique Pescara (brother of the Marquis) and Italian engineer Edmond Moglia, and their specification followed quite closely that of the production cars.

The crankshaft ran in nine bearings and the cylinder-block was of aluminium, as was the cylinder-head. Steel liners were shrunk into the cylinder-block, and the pistons were of die-cast aluminium, with four

Naçional Pescara

narrow rings. The combustion-chambers were hemispherical, the domed crowns of the pistons conforming to them, and valve-seats, guides and sparking-plug bosses were bronze inserts. The chrome-nickel steel crankshaft not only had that generous number of bearings but was balanced statically and dynamically. Water jacketing was also generous, the coolant circulated by pump and fan, the pump being driven from the crankshaft by a transverse shaft.

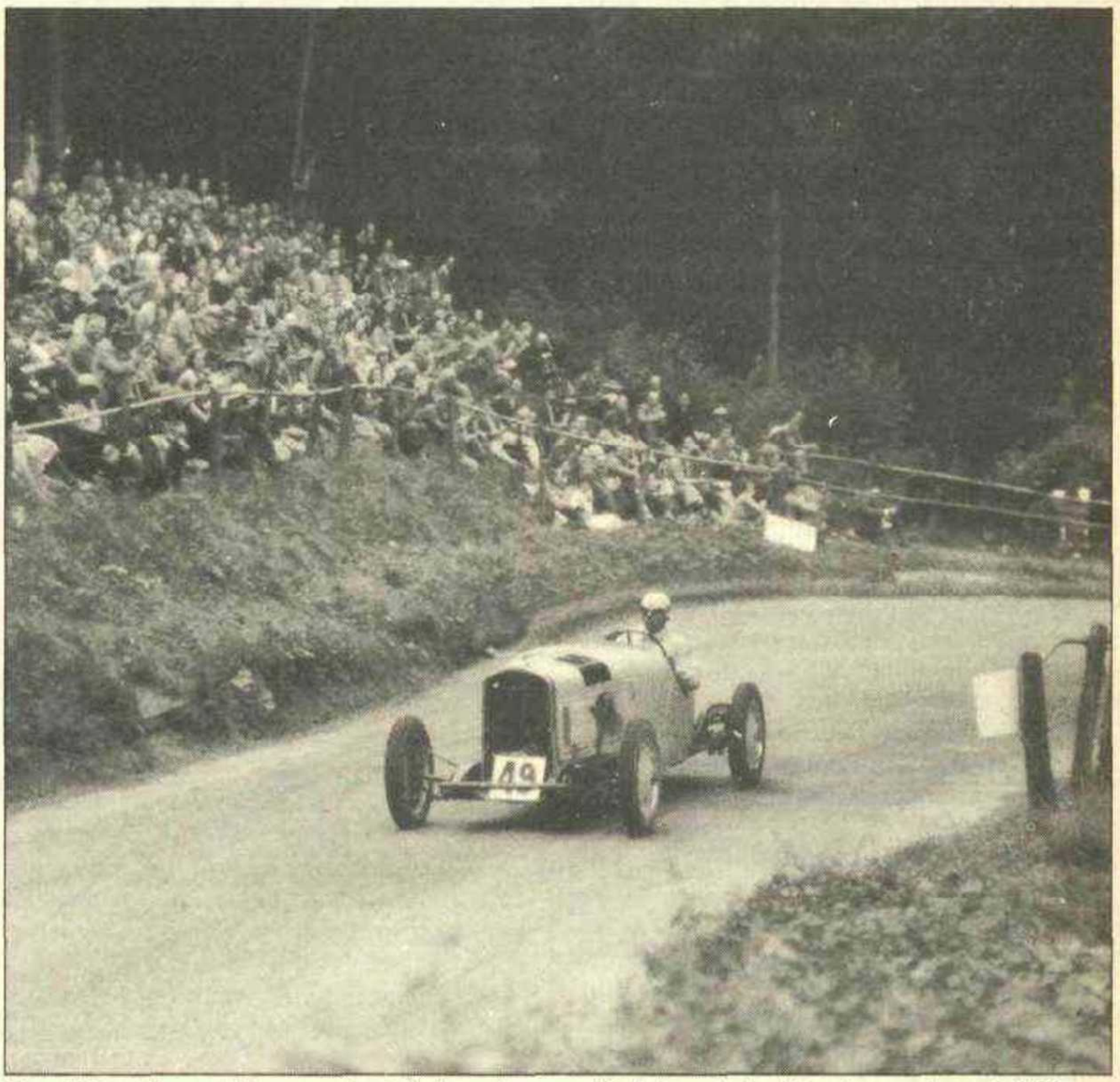
The base-chamber of the engine was of Elektron, lubrication being by a gear-type pump, with an oil filter; ignition was by Delco-Remy coil and distributor, the latter accessibly mounted at the front of the engine. The power-unit was not supercharged, and it was a surprise to find that a single down-draught Zenith carburettor was deemed sufficient, feeding into a four-outlet manifold which branched into the paired cylinders. The crossflow head was aided by a large-diameter nearside exhaust-pipe.

This racing power-unit developed 110 bhp at 4800 rpm and had a bore and stroke of 72.2mm × 90mm. This was some 30 bhp more than the production 2.8-litre engine, and there was rumour of a supercharged racing engine that gave 180 bhp.

The chassis into which this effective engine was installed was notably American in concept, yet of advanced design. While the gearbox gave only three forward speeds, the casing, in unit with the engine, was of Elektron and the gear-shafts were short and rigid, running on roller bearings. Ratios were close-spaced, and the central gear-lever worked in a ball-gate.

A light flywheel incorporated the single-plate clutch, and final drive was by an open propeller-shaft with Hardy Spicer universal joints, to a semi-floating, hypoid back-axle. Springing was half-elliptic front and back, and cam-steering was used with an adjustable-rake steering-column. Hydraulic four-wheel brakes were fitted. The petrol tank was of Elektron and the chassis had deep, channel-section side-members swept up steeply over both axles. Even the disc wheels were Elektron stampings, with detachable rims secured with five studs.

"The production Naçional Pescaras were so notably advanced in design that King Alfonso XIII saw the company as a successor to the great Hispano Suiza which had done so much for Spanish automobile prestige."



Zanelli's unblown 3-litre was denied class victory at Shelsley only by Mays' supercharged Villiers.

In 1930 the racing Naçional Pescaras had some successes in Spanish races, and their fame became international the following year when two of them, driven by Juan Zanelli and Esteban Tort, led the European Mountain (or hill-climbing) Championship.

It was the quest for continued success in this series which brought them to Britain in 1931 — for much the same reason that the celebrated Hans von Stuck had come to Shelsley the year before with a 3-litre Austro-Daimler which set the course record to 42.8 seconds, but with no intention of taking the car on to Brooklands or elsewhere, and much as this same driver would arrive with a V16 Auto-Union in 1936.

Zanelli was by 1931 quite well-known in this country. After racing a Fiat in 1926, he had acquired a T35 Bugatti with which he won the Ettore Bugatti Grands Prix at Le Mans in 1929 and in 1930. Not only that, but this Chilean driver had come home second to Etancelin in the 1929 Marne GP, and in the same position in the 1930 Bordino GP which Varzi had won; and in that year's French Grand Prix at Pau he had taken third place behind Etancelin's Bugatti and Sir Henry Birkin's blower-4½ Bentley, again in a Bugatti. In contrast, Tort was hardly known here.

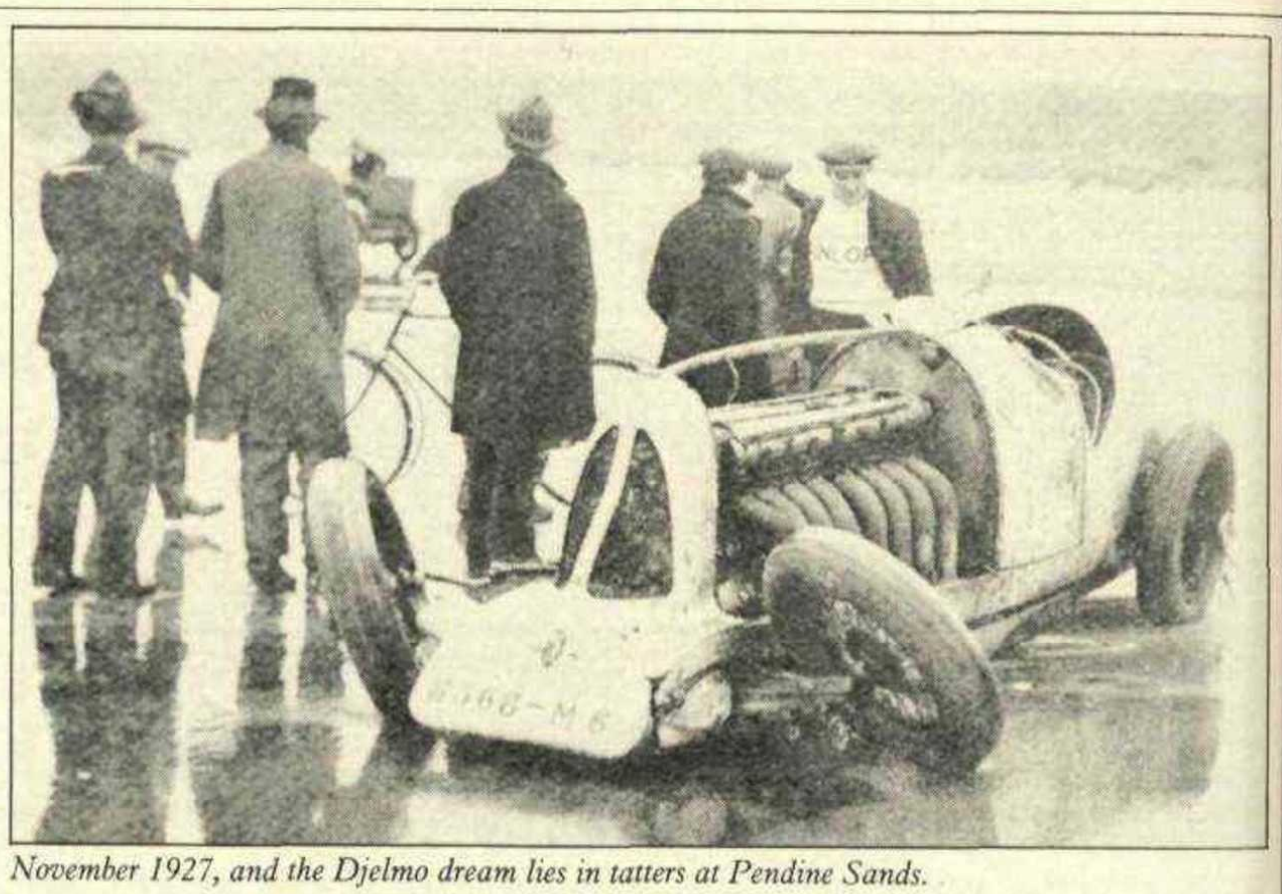
When the two Naçional Pescaras arrived at the Worcestershire hill in their vans, with plenty of spares, on the morning of the event, they caused considerable interest. There was time for a practice run, after which the back-axle ratios of both cars were changed, not once but twice, before Zanelli and Tort felt the cars were suitable for Shelsley Walsh.

FTD at that meeting was made by RGJ Nash in his twin-rear-wheeled Frazer Nash Special "The Terror", in 43.4 seconds. Zanelli clocked an impressive 44.4 sec, Tort being 1.2 sec slower, and both cars seemed very steady, skidding hardly at all.

It looked as if they had dominated the 2-3-litre racing car class, but Raymond Mays, who was not ready when his time to start came ("he seldom is", observed MOTOR SPORT) then got the formidable Villiers Supercharge running and clocked 43.6 sec. So the supercharged car beat Zanelli's unblown car by 0.8 sec. Still, satisfactory points were scored in the European Mountain Championship, in which Zanelli and Tort were placed first and second.

Zanelli was to be seen again by British racegoers, because he came to Brooklands in 1934, winning the 2-3-litre class of the BRDC 500-Mile Race in an Alfa Romeo, the year after he had won the Penya Rhin GP in Barcelona in a 2.3-litre Alfa. Naçional Pescara continued to achieve hill-climb successes up to 1935, but then the make faded away. **WB**

VETERAN TO CLASSIC



November 1927, and the Djelmo dream lies in tatters at Pendine Sands.

The Djelmo Affair

As I remarked in *The Roads of the 1920s* in November, Parry Thomas and "Babs" were not the only casualties of record attempts at Pendine Sands in South Wales in 1927. Another car, the Djelmo, overturned in much the same way.

To understand the Djelmo saga it is necessary to appreciate the amount of interest which attacks on the World's Land Speed Record were creating in the mid-1920s. American claims were not then recognised by the sport's ruling body in Paris, so all records had to be established in Europe to be verified. Apart from the sheer prestige of driving the fastest car in the world, there was plenty of incentive: Sir Charles Wakefield was giving £1000 a year to the holder of the record, and many other bonus awards from petrol, oil, component and accessory suppliers also accrued.

By 1924 Ernest Eldridge had done 146.01 mph with the 300hp aero-engined Fiat on the road at Arpajon, near Montlhéry, but Malcolm Campbell (later to be knighted for these activities) later that year put the LSR to 146.16 mph on Pendine Sands in the ageing 18.3-litre V12 Sunbeam, and the following year he achieved the 150 mph target at the same venue.

However, the wily Louis Coatalen of Sunbeam, who had sold Campbell the giant car when it was becoming long-in-the-tooth, was preparing a quite different sort of record-breaker, in the form of a Grand Prix-like V12 car of only four litres, but supercharged. Henry Segrave (also later to be knighted) was sent to Southport Sands with this compact Sunbeam, raising the record to 152.33 mph.

A month later, in April 1926, Brooklands ace Parry Thomas replied with a brave, brute-force 169.30 mph at Pendine using his crude, chain-driven V12 Liberty aero-powered Thomas Special, "Babs", improving this to a meritorious 171.02 mph the next day. It was with an eye to these records that Djelmo was built.

Djelmo was constructed for an Egyptian sportsman, Prince Djelallelin, a racing car enthusiast who lived in an elegant apartment off the Champs Elysées in Paris. It was the work of Monsieur Edmond Moglia, which explains the origin of its title, a combination of both names.

Moglia had previously worked for the Ballot and STD organisations, and was later to assist in the design of the Naçional Pescara racing cars. Being between jobs, he was no doubt pleased to be hired for this task by the wealthy and enthusiastic prince. His was far more of a conventional racing car than the aeroplane-engined monsters which were vying for the LSR at the time; Campbell had had to get Jarvis of Wimbledon to re-streamline the old before it would clock 150.78 mph, while Eldridge's fearsome 21.7-litre Fiat's chassis dated from 1907.

Djelmo had a straight-eight engine, the cylinders in two blocks of four, with a bore and stroke of 107mm × 140mm giving a capacity of ten litres. There were twin overhead camshafts driven by a train of spur gears at the front of the engine actuating four valves per cylinder in hemispherical heads, with central sparking plugs. The massive crankshaft ran in nine bearings, with pressure lubrication from gear-type pumps, and there were I-section con-rods and aluminium pistons. Ignition was by dual Delco-Remy distributors driven from the front of the camshafts and fed from a Delco generator. Four updraught Claudel-Hobson carburettors on the nearside fed into four separate circular external inlet pipes, which had off-takes to each of the sixteen inlet valves.

There is a story, which Land Speed Record authority Cyril Posthumus endorses, that the engine and perhaps the entire car had been laid down by Coatalen and Bertarioni to compete against the V12 10½-litre Delage hill-climb job which had appeared in 1923 and had briefly wrested the LSR from Eldridge in 1924 on a protest by René Thomas. The prince was said to have paid £6000 for the drawings, but this he laughingly denied. I leave it to STD historians as to how likely this seems, comparing the design to those of contemporary Sunbeam racing engines. Incidentally, another authority states that the STD company had no hand in the car's design, it being "all Moglia".

Anyway, this big engine was taken to the French Government's aeronautical test-centre at Chalais-Meudon, where it produced 355 bhp at 3000 rpm. It was thought that, with extra tuning and perhaps one carburettor per cylinder, 400 bhp should be attainable. I do not know whether this testing was at Coatalen's behest (which seems probable, especially as two engines had been built) or at the prince's.

The engine was mounted at six points in a slim chassis, the massive bearers part of the alloy base-chamber. To save weight the water-jackets had been cut back and a lightweight aluminium plate used to seal them. Since the engine components were all at the front, it was possible to mount the steering box centrally above the gearbox, which gave two forward speeds, direct drive and a 2.0:1 low gear with the compulsory reverse (the absence of which on the Fiat had resulted in Eldridge's LSR disqualification until he had devised one). The multi-plate clutch was Ferodo-lined.

Springing was by half-elliptics front and back (those at the front passing through the axle, those at the rear taking the torque), the propshaft being open, with two universal joints. Wheelbase was 9ft 10in, front track 4ft 8in, and the rear axle had a crab-track of no less than 18½in so it could be enclosed by the tail fairing.

The car was low, narrow and well streamlined, exhaust gases being expelled from eight pipes through a port halfway along the nearside of the chassis to avoid the necessity for an external exhaust pipe. Rudge wheels, Hartford triple shock-absorbers and SRO ballbearings were used. Djelmo was painted blue, with the extremities of the faired-in front axle red and the radiator fairing white.

Prince Djelallelin tested Djelmo on the road and at Miramas, in company with Giulio Foresti, who was to drive it on record bids, and pronounced it to be very docile at up to 125 mph. He spoke of taking the car to Daytona or Murac for its LSR attempt.

Alas for these plans! Djelmo was still at Miramas in December 1925. By this time two Zenith carburettors were being tested, and an over-optimistic supercharging system had been tried and abandoned. It seems that Djelmo may have proved inflammable, because a bulkhead had by now been fitted to isolate the cockpit from the small under-bonnet fuel tank which sufficed for the short record runs planned.

Foresti had helped Malcolm Campbell with the big V12 Sunbeam but had left to race Schmidt and Bugatti cars without much success, so he too was probably glad to find himself on the princely payroll. He was entrusted with the task of tuning the car up for its record bid, but not until the summer of 1926 did his employer declare Djelmo to be ready.

He had by now given up the idea of taking the car to the United States and decided instead on Britain — Southport or Pendine, with the latter favoured because it was likely to be less populated by spectators. Parry Thomas and "Babs" had recently set the target at over 171 mph, which the prince thought a splendid achievement; he thought Djelmo could go faster, however.

But by the time Foresti finally arrived in Britain with Djelmo in August 1927, Segrave had raised the LSR to 203.79 mph in America with the twin-engined "1000hp" Sunbeam, another crude monster with aero-type engines and chain-drive, which was said to have cost only £5400. So all Djelmo could aim for was the British record, for which only the terrain counted, not the nationality of driver or car. This honour stood to Campbell, whose special 500hp Napier-Campbell (which had cost him some £9700) had done a two-way 174.883 mph, also at Pendine. Just within the capabilities of the prince's now ageing car?

Alas, Djelmo's engine was giving trouble, as VSCC member Ronald Barker remembers. While on holiday in Wales he visited the grave of "Babs" at Pendine, where it had been left after Thomas had been killed trying to defend his record, and then, through a hole in the wall of the Beach Hotel garage, he saw Foresti working on Djelmo.

Perhaps the Egyptian-sponsored car had been driven too far, for its pistons had too much clearance, causing plug-oiling. It was November 1927 before Djelmo finally tried for the Class A kilometre record.

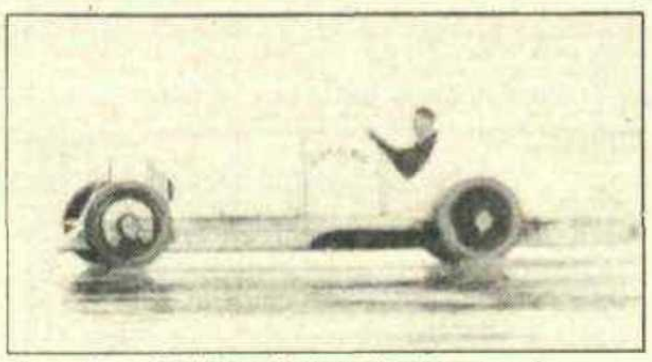
It ended in disaster, the car rolling at about 150 mph in a cloud of sand and smoke. The poor state of the beach, Djelmo's narrow rear track and its lack of a differential were blamed. Foresti, a very strong man who had thought nothing of swinging the giant Italas of his younger days, walked away from the wreck only slightly injured; the story that he stopped on the way to pick up a photographer who had fainted from shock and take him to the first-aid post may or may not be true.

The curious thing is how similar this accident was to that which had killed poor Parry Thomas eight months earlier: both cars slewed round in a wide circle and overturned before regaining their wheels. I hesitate to discuss again how Thomas was killed; the popular theory is that a broken offside driving-chain decapitated him, but many other views have been aired and it could be that he was killed when the car rolled over. Foresti's car was lighter; he did not wear a helmet, but only suffered scalp abrasions. In both cases the front stub-axles were bent, and the front wheels were left askew. One wonders whether a dip in the beach caused "Babs" to roll, with no prior mechanical failure.

Moglia tried to persuade the prince to let him build a four-wheel-drive car with two of the Djelmo engines, the driver sitting between them as did Segrave on the 200 mph Sunbeam. Perhaps this would have worked, had the combined output really been 800 bhp, as the 44.8-litre Sunbeam had only given about 70 bhp more, and probably with greater drag. But even the British Empire record went to 217.52 mph in April 1929, when the Napier-Campbell went to South Africa, so Prince Djelallelin wisely saved his money.

At least a modicum of good resulted from the two Pendine accidents, in as much as the "Babs" cot was endowed at Great Ormond Street Hospital in Thomas' memory, and while Foresti was recovering he said he owed his life to the British steel in Djelmo and to its sprung steering wheel!

What became of Djelmo? It is rumoured to have returned to Paris and been given to gypsies in exchange for bed linen... **WB**



Foresti and Djelmo before disaster struck.

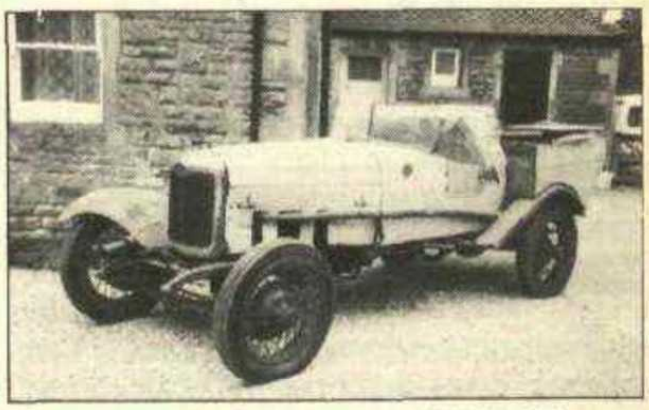
Readers' Requests

The new owner of the 1934 Olympia Show model Lagonda Rapide Gurney Nutting saloon (registration US 9772) seeks the missing history of the car, which was shipped to the USA in the early Sixties. It also appeared at the 1934 Scottish Show, and its last UK owner was a Mr L Potter.

The remains of a Series LV Standard have been found on a farm and details are required.

Another reader wants any information about Herbert Lomas of Manchester, who built ambulance bodies on 1937-38 Austin chassis, but whose records did not survive recent receivership.

Stuart Bennett of 56 Cabrera Avenue, Virginia Water, Surrey GU25 4HA has taken over the 8/18 Talbot Register, and asks owners to contact him. Of the 255 built, only 11 have so far surfaced. **WB**



Odell's latest Riley — a rare 1925 Redwing.

Restorations

R J Odell, who owns the side-valve Riley sand-racer and a 1923 sports model, has found a rare 1925 Riley Redwing two-seater sports-car (FG 1044), which has not been used for 30 years. To meet the needs of a growing family the pointed tail was removed and a box substituted, but the tail remained with the car (even to the dickey-seat) on its innumerable travels, so Odell is all set for another worthwhile restoration.

The special-bodied T30 Bugatti driven in the 1923 Indianapolis 500-Mile Race by Count Zborowski, and by George Duller and Woolf Barnato at Brooklands, is being restored in Monte Carlo.

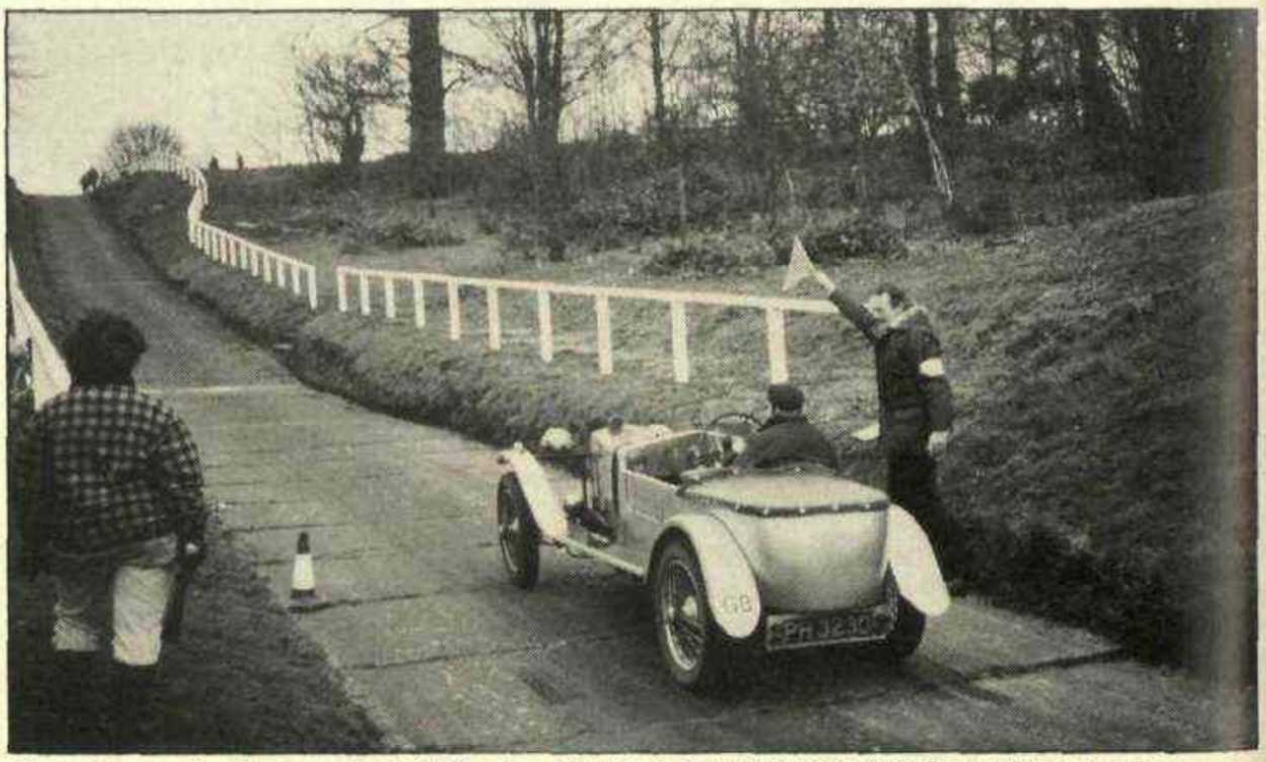
A Singer Le Mans enthusiast in California is rebuilding a 1936 two-seater (CBH 594), and has found in America the 1½-litre Singer (WP 4970) which Alf Langley drove in the 1934 Scottish Rally, when it finished thirteenth in class out of 59 starters; now a "basket case" with a six-cylinder cross-flow engine, it is apparently not for sale.

The ex-W B Scott 4½-litre Bentley returned here from the United States two years ago and is being restored. **WB**

The Hill is Alive!

For its February driving-tests the Vintage Sports-Car Club went to the Museum site at Brooklands, commencing proceedings with ascents of the 80-year-old Test Hill, which has been recently restored almost to its former glory. At the very summit, on the 1-in-4 gradient, there was a stop-and-restart, in the interests of safety, in case cars leapt too high in the air — how safe can you get?

The vintage cars were in fine fettle, and while I was watching the only ones to falter were de la Willis' 1924 short-chassis Jowett two-seater, which stopped because the wrong cog was engaged at the start but then climbed well, Stuart Bennett's smoky 1922 Talbot 8/18 coupé, which needed human assistance at the re-start. Incidentally, this Talbot and Pritchard's slightly later but identical two-seater were declared to have different-size engines — one larger and one smaller than history has taught us was Coatalen's intention . . .



Centrestage under the reconstructed Members' Bridge is Isobel Willis' 1925 Grand Sport Amilcar.

The oldest car competing (Roger Collings having elected to drive his 1912 Brixia-Zust instead of the Mercedes) was Dowell's little 1911 Renault, complete with Lucas Landalite headlamps and exhaust-whistle. On the Test Hill the Zust was slow but sure, while Rawlings' muddy 14/45 Roesch Talbot tourer got up but found its clutch badly adjusted for the re-start; Mazzotti's lofty 4.2-litre Benz went well, Dawes' smart Riley Monaco fabric saloon made it safely, and Rouse's big Alvis saloon showed contempt for the hill. Cornelius' Singer Porlock was easily seen, but slower than Rosomon's game A7 saloon, and Livesey's and Ives' Chummy A7s were both very presentable, even stretching to bagged hoods. The equally-smart 1925 Amilcar performed well for Isobel Willis after a push-start.

Malyan's ioe GN *crawled* up the steeper bit, whereas Tony Jones' Cup Model A7 showed traces of wheel spin at the start and went up quite quickly. Splendid chirps and chatterings indicated the clutch withdrawal on Barry Clarke's fast Ruby-GN, Still's Frazer Nash went up well after a flooding front carburettor had been attended to, Mark Garfitt changed-up early on his Frazer Nash-BMW, and so it went on, Brooklands alive again to the right sights and sounds.

This being Weybridge, the ten driving-tests were appropriately named Joyce's Jolly, Cobb's Corner, Purdy's Parking, Mays' Maze, Bira's Bends, Dunfee's Deviations, Tim's Turns and Zborowski's Zig-Zags; two more involved drivers endeavouring to avoid contact with an electric cable which would light lamps to give them penalty points, feats which passeth understanding!

I have said before, and will repeat, that you cannot adequately report Driving Tests, especially if you do not enter for them to make a fool of oneself, but it was great fun. The Museum was open at £2 a head, but the onlookers' cars were an entertainment in themselves — modern saloons looking more mundane than ever in such company.

Elgood's old Brooklands Bentley, a GN in full hood-up touring rig, an impressive disc-wheeled P1 Rolls-Royce tourer, a Hyper Lea-Francis, a vast Austin Six with flowers vased in its spacious parlour, three non-competing 30/98s, Aston-Martins ancient and modern, a big Roesch Talbot drop-head, a Delage two-seater "La Campanale", another 14/40 Delage, an early Lancia Lambda tourer, that Chenard-Walcker, plus Singers, Lagondas, Alvises and MGs of various kinds — the list of cars parked by the historic Brooklands tuning-sheds could be almost endless.

An entry of 70 was divided into three classes, with light-car and saloon sub-divisions in Class One. In Test Three drivers cavorted about the Members' Banking, in the lee of the new Members' Bridge. It is good to see the bridge back but, alas, these days it doesn't go anywhere! **WB**

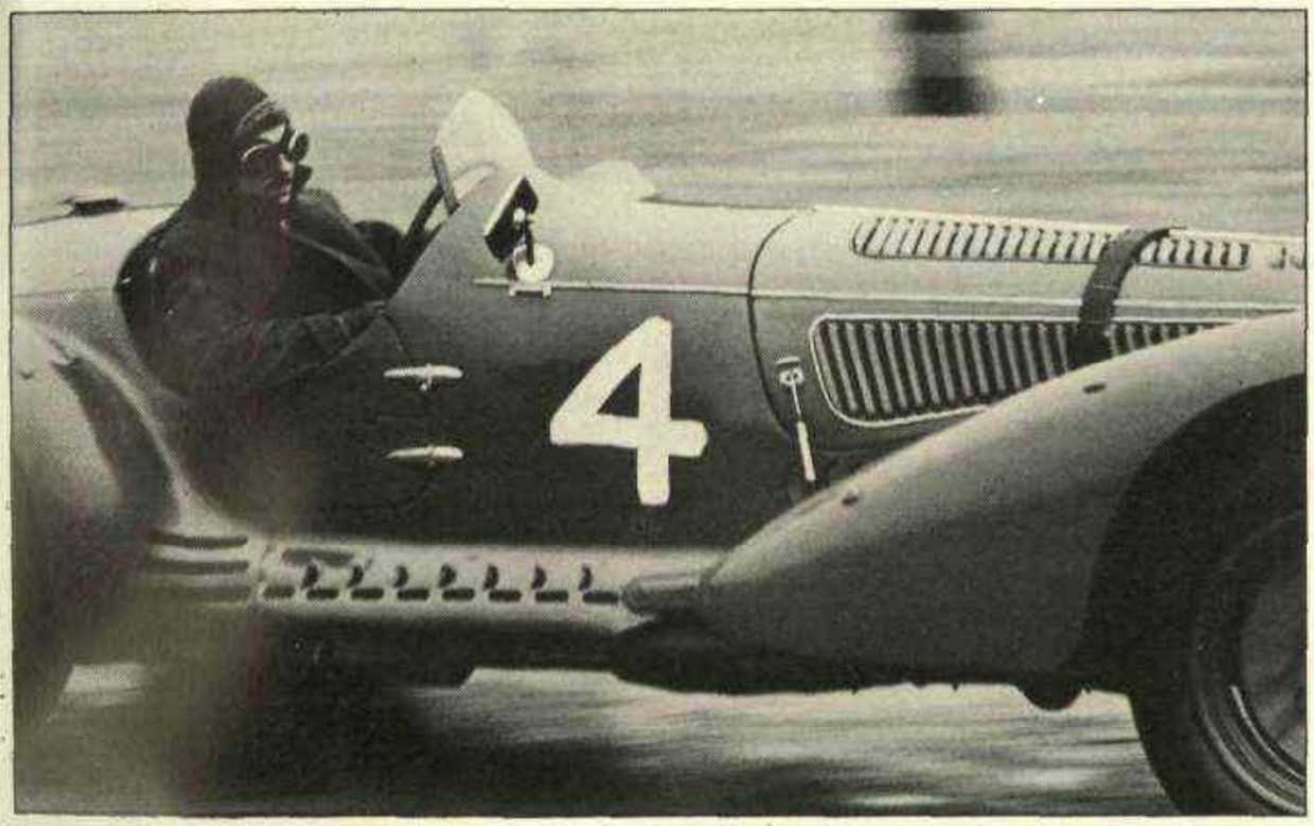


Brooklands' Test Hill, with its white railings newly restored, awaits Tarring's award-winning Frazer Nash.

RESULTS
VSCC Brooklands, February 5

Touring Class Award: ..... P. M. MacPherson (1938 1½-litre Riley)
Light Car Awards: ..... D. J. Bond (1926 Morris)
First-Class Awards: A. Jones (A7), E. Hayes (A7), G. Wright (Singer), R. Burrell (Bentley), J. Bevington (MG), D. Hescroff (AC).
Second-Class Awards: T. Tarring (Frazer Nash), C. Hancock (Fiat), P. Rosoman (A7), N. Ives (A7), J. Diffey (A7).
Third-Class Awards: P. Livesey (A7), B. Clarke (Frazer Nash-GN), Mrs Threlfall (BSA), P. Glover (Alvis), N. Benger (MG), R. Cox (Alvis), B. Summerfield (Avon-Bentley), P. Mather (A7).

Alfa Romeo 2900B VETERAN TO CLASSIC



Hugh Hunter in JML 1 on the Mountain Circuit at Brooklands in 1939.

Vincitore di Mille Miglia



The Mille Miglia winner as it now is in America.

As one of a handful of premier racing marques before the war, it behove Alfa Romeo's British distributor, Thomson & Taylor, to have a racing car to entice the public to its stand at the 1938 Motor Show. The car which the company sent from Italy could hardly have been more topical or more eye-catching — it was the 8C 2900 which had won the Mille Miglia that year in the hands of Clemente Biondetti. Similar team cars were second and third.

In the years after this, its greatest achievement, the car had moments of glory and established an enduring place in British motoring history, before disappearing from view in Scotland for 20 years. When it resurfaced it went to America, where it passed another 15 years in various workshops without getting the mechanical attention it deserved, and it was only in 1986 that it was reassembled in its proper form. True, part of the body had been replaced, but very little else, its mechanical integrity ensured by its long inactivity.

Its "debut" was at the Mille Miglia retrospective run of 1986, where I first saw the car and met its owner, Fred Simeone, a meeting which recently enabled me to drive this, possibly the most significant of all the rare and fast 2900B Alfa Romeos.

When it came to Olympia in 1938, the sensational machine was meant as a showpiece, not for sale, but the amateur racing driver Hugh Hunter managed to persuade T&T to sell it to him. That it should have agreed is not in itself surprising — it was at the Show to sell cars. Yet the four 8C Mille Miglia spiders were arguably the fastest sports-racers in Europe, and barely nine months old. They had a factory racing future assured for 1939 and were unlikely to be eclipsed by any other make (though the company had big hopes of its own 412, comprising a similar chassis and body with a 4.5-litre V12 engine borrowed from the experimental 12C 37 Grand Prix car, but without a supercharger). Thus the decision to release one of these cars, for which most European professional drivers would have given their eye-teeth, to an English amateur seems a peculiar one, especially given that the remaining three were retained by Alfa Romeo and later hidden with the "Alfetta" *voiturettes* for the duration of the war.

Nevertheless, the car was in Hunter's possession by December 1938, registered JML 1. He had a few minor modifications made, preparatory to a mixed season of road use and racing throughout 1939; a silencer was fitted where there had been none; Ranalah the coachbuilders fitted a removeable windscreen instead of the aeroscreens fitted after the Mille Miglia; sidelights were attached, and two extra dials affixed for boost pressure and water temperature.

Hunter remembers the car as being exactly as raced in the Mille Miglia, including the engine, but there is evidence to

suggest that in fact it made its competition debut fitted with another engine — the more powerful 3-litre 308 unit. Simon Moore, in his exhaustive work *The Immortal 2.9*, points out that the issue of *Alfa Corse* magazine reporting on the Parma-Berceto hill-climb shortly after the Mille Miglia describes the car as a 308 MM, but its apparent sister-car as a 2900 MM.

Developed for the new 3-litre Grand Prix formula of 1938, the 308 engine was similar to the 8C 2.9B *monoposto* engine, but with its bore increased by 1mm to 69mm (giving 2991cc), larger blowers, revised manifolding, cam and valve changes, which pushed the output to 295 bhp — well ahead of the 225 bhp of the 8C 2900B in Mille Miglia specification.

The team cars ran on home ground on a petrol/benzol mixture, but had to be detuned for events outside Italy where pump-fuel was mandatory. Thus when 412031 competed in the Spa 24-Hour Race, it could not run in Mille Miglia form, whether 2.9 or 3-litre. Certainly, tighter scrutineering abroad would have noticed the different manifolding and larger superchargers of the 308 specification. The larger engine might, of course, have been installed only for Parma-Berceto, unlikely though that seems, but the clue which is hardest to ignore is on the chassis-plate.

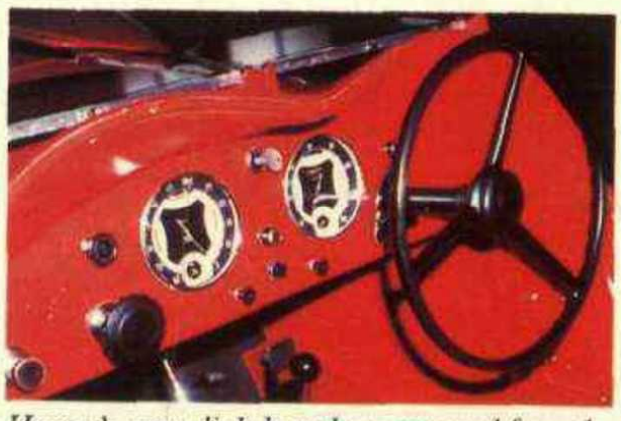
It is the 2900B which is best known of the 2.9s; the ten earliest 8C 2.9s were known as 2900A from their introduction and had a shorter wheelbase, with chassis and scuttle differences. But 412031 is described on its chassis plate as Tipo C, a factory differentiation which can only refer to its power-unit since in other aspects it was identical to the other three MM spiders, except for one item: the front brake-drums are the same width as 308 units, broader than normal 2.9B drums.

One other MM spider carries a Tipo C marking, but does not appear to have been labelled as a 3-litre or 308 in any contemporary reports. Why these cars should have been labelled Tipo C (a designation also used for the earlier 8C Grand Prix car) instead of 2900C, which would have been the logical progression, is unclear.

However it started its career, 412031 undoubtedly had a 2.9 engine when it came over here, plus a choice of normal or high-compression pistons, and standard or high Mille Miglia axle ratios. The hc pistons were quickly fitted, and the car began a season which would have been notable enough in its own right (for instance the JCC Members' Day at Brooklands, when Hunter won all but one of the eight events), but which is now famous for the "Fastest Sports-car" Match Races at Brooklands on Whit Monday, 1939.



38 gallons of fuel, 5 of oil and a spare wheel fill the slender tail.



Hunter's extra dials have been removed from the bare dashboard.

Arthur Dobson's victory driving Rob Walker's 3½-litre Delahaye in this BARC-backed one-off event failed to satisfy sports-car enthusiasts at the time, and continues to niggle Alfisti today, because Hunter and JML 1 would most probably have won had not the gear-selector mechanism failed at the start of the second, Mountain course, race after the Alfa had won the first contest on the Campbell circuit. However, the article by John Dugdale in *The Autocar* (January 27, 1939) which prompted the debate contended that the Hunter car was probably the fastest *road* car, and supporters of the Italian marque point to the considerable superiority of the Alfa Romeo over the Delahaye in road manners and suspension comfort as a kind of moral victory.

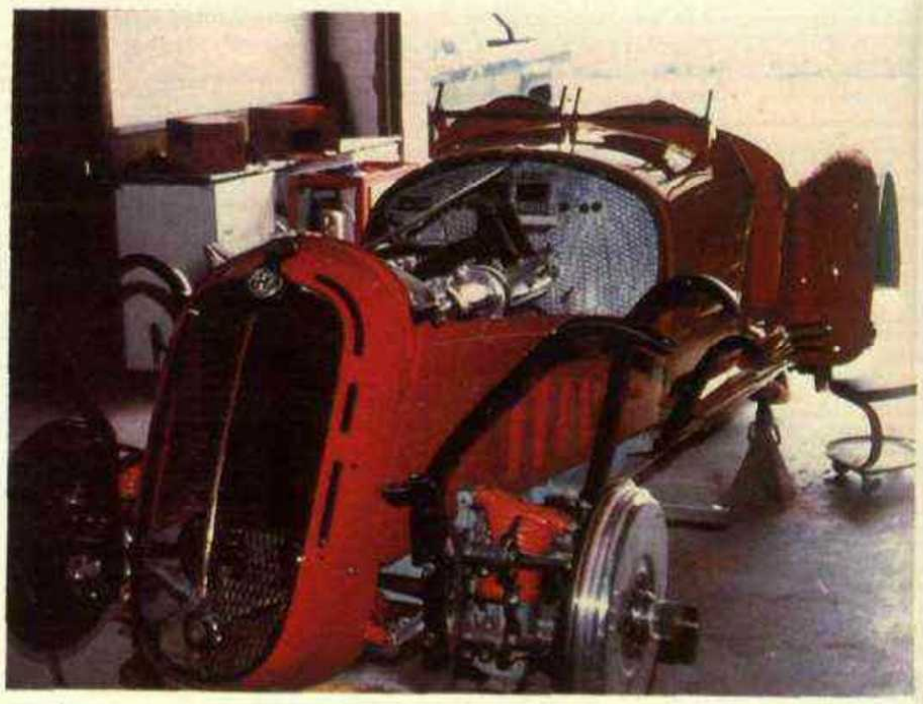
With the 8C 2900B the Milan company took a major step ahead of its competition. Europe had seen Alfas dominating Grand Prix racing with the Tipo B single-seater in the early Thirties, and when Germany began to steal the glory, Alfa Romeo threw itself into a creative frenzy of new models and engines. Much of this experimentation condensed in the specification of the 8C 2900 when it was announced in 1937. The engine layout had already been seen in the *monoposto,* though there are block differences which show that the units were designed for the sports-car and not left over from the Tipo B programme.

Two blocks of four cylinders split by camshaft gearing were fed by a pair of Roots-type superchargers on the side of the crank-case, also driven by gearing from the centre of the crank, which drew mixture from two Weber carburettors beneath. This central location is highly efficient and makes the big powerful engine compact and beautiful in its symmetry. Twin camshafts operated widely-angled valves.

Further back in the channel-section chassis, the gearbox was placed in unit with the differential, starting an Alfa tradition which even now has one or two models to run

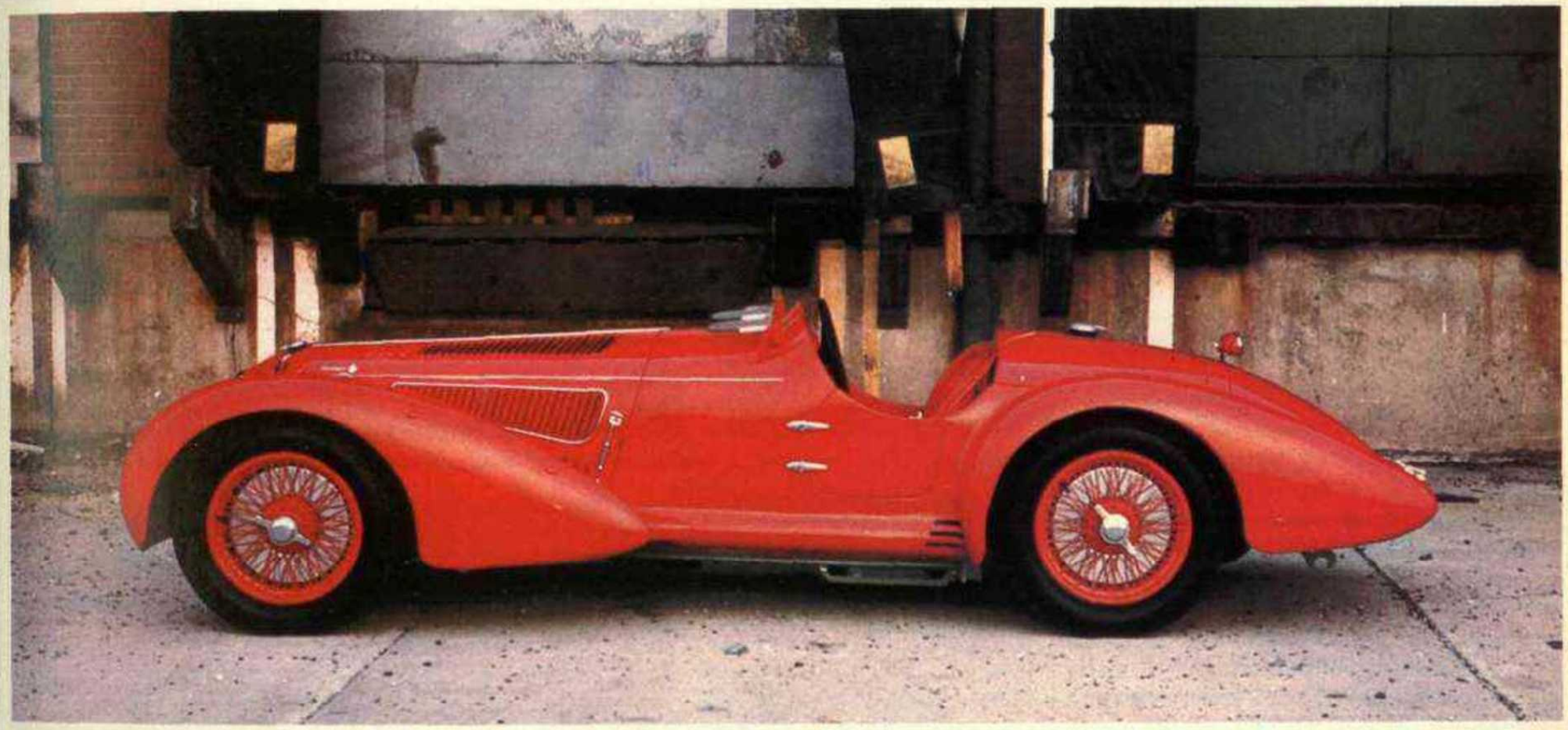


Running in more or less legally with jury-rigged lights and no front body only days before the 1986 Mille Miglia rally.



Without wings the Porsche-type independent suspension can be seen.

Alfa Romeo 2900B



The MM spyder is beautifully balanced, with the huge fuel tank right over the transaxle. Note the quick-lift jack points under the tail.

before front-wheel drive takes over. Swing-axles with fore-and-aft arms were borne by a transverse leaf spring pivoting behind the differential, while the front hubs and drums moved on small twin trailing arms controlled by an enclosed spring with integral damping. Adjustable friction dampers to the rear backed by a separate pair of hydraulic units completed a chassis which was unrivalled for sophistication and performance until well after the war.

Most of the 43 cars were bodied by Touring in graceful, streamlined shapes which, thanks to the war, took another ten years to become commonplace in car styling. But few designs have approached the almost perfect poise of a long-chassis 8C 2900B with spider body.

For its Mille Miglia entries, the team built four special cars with slender lightweight spider bodies planned by Alfa but shaped by Touring. Dominated by the plunging 2.9 grille, these outrageously attractive machines surrounded a tiny cockpit with teardrop wings blended in by smooth reverse curves to sills which bulged under the tiny doors. A vast 38-gallon reservoir for fuel, a five-gallon oil tank, and a nearly horizontal spare wheel were skinned over to form a tail of tapering elegance. To allow for the low spare, the chassis rails turned down behind the rear axle, a feature unique to the MM spiders. Full-width plastic windscreens were fitted, but these were changed for aeroscreens after the 1000-mile race.

Such was the car British enthusiasts were able to watch before the war in the hands of Hugh Hunter, and after it when Tony Crook had acquired it. He often raced it without the enclosed wings, substituting cycle-wings with a simple pointed tail or leaving the tyres exposed for Formula Libre events. He passed it on eventually, in 1951, to a Scottish collector who painted it black and ran it on the road, also with front cycle wings and odd rear pontoon wings. At some point the original rear body had vanished.

In this form JML 1 was auctioned in 1970, going to an American collector, Bill Serri. Apart from rebuilding the engine, only bits and pieces were done to the car until 1982, when Serri (who had just bought the sister car which Pintacuda drove to second place in the 1938 MM) agreed to pass it on to Fred Simeone after he had reassembled it.

Even then the rebuilding proceeded only slowly, the machine receiving the second of two unsuccessful new rear panels. Simeone had entered the car for the 1986 Mille Miglia rally, but although the organisers were ecstatic at the prospect there seemed no hope of it being ready in time.

Then the project was taken over by David George's shop in Pennsylvania, and in a strenuous night-after-night slog of less than a month the chassis was stripped and re-assembled, the existing body panels repaired, another new tail and four wings made, and the whole car built up, run-in overnight, painted, and flown to Italy just in time for the start. Over the succeeding 1000 hard miles, its first real journey for at least 20 years, the only thing that broke was a bonnet catch.

Since then the car has not been babied; it is kept licensed, sees regular though not frequent road use, and will join the Mille Miglia gathering again on April 28-30 this year. So there were no special arrangements to be made when Fred and I squeezed inside and settled in the narrow curved leather seats, he driving until the engine warmed.

It was difficult to be objective about mechanical things because of the swelling wake of wide-eyed onlookers we created. I saw this sort of fascination in Italy around the Mille Miglia route, but out there everyone is a car-lover; here were people who surely knew nothing of the car's pedigree, drawn to it simply by its shape and the cacophony oozing through the bonnet louvres.

On its tall 19in wheels, the Alfa is little bothered by potholes, the slightly flexible *Superleggera* body construction dampening out any tremors, and rolls easily in second and third between traffic lights — utterly incongruous for this racing car. We were making a minor detour before escaping the city, but it did catch up with us; although the engine showed no signs of discomfort at the time, we had oiled it up in the traffic and it did not want to restart after a pause.

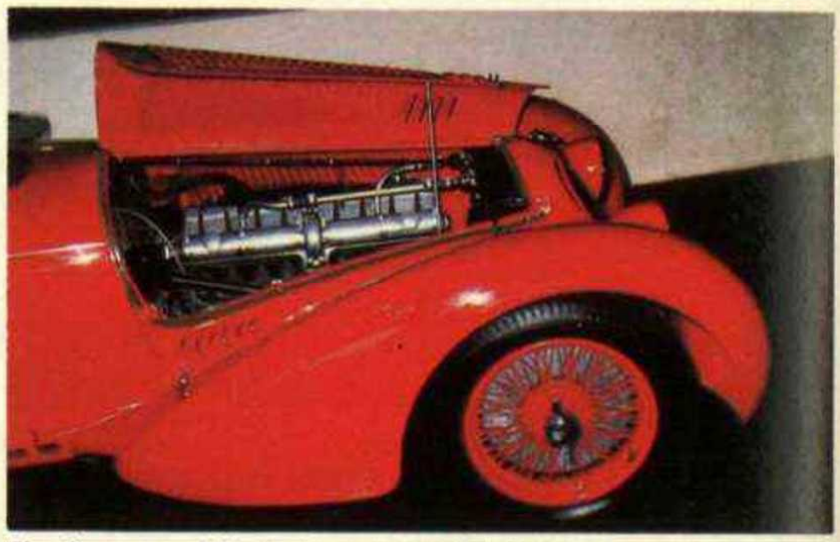
A phone call brought Dave George out with a spare battery as a safeguard, and after cleaning the plugs and being rewarded with the deep bark of eight cylinders, we loaded that in as a precaution, tucking it under my knees in the long narrow footwell, there being no other space for anything bar a few tools which can be crammed on top of the spare tyre.

However, there was no more problem once out of the traffic; stopping to take on some of the ordinary leaded petrol it now runs on, with a little oil added to smooth the path of the blower lobes (the bearings themselves have been converted to permanent lubrication at some point), it fired again without hesitation, and Fred demonstrated its performance for me. It was not until we were climbing the ramp onto the freeway that the engine had to pull hard, and what an electrifying sound it then becomes, the blowers' fine whistle intensifying to a wail like a

Alfa Romeo 2900B



Body colour is matched to several hidden original traces.



The dry-sumped block sits exceptionally low in the frame.

distant air-raid warning, backed by an abrasive note from the forked exhaust outlet.

I took over in a garage forecourt, whose open-mouthed proprietor missed the chance of the biggest tankful he'll ever sell, and practised the reversed gearchange — one and two against the driver's left knee, three and four against the passenger's right. Although John Dugdale and Tony Crook both recorded difficulty in getting smooth engagement from the powerful multiplate clutch, it now eases in, quick but smooth, without any fuss.

Contemporary accounts of the 8C's extraordinary flexibility are still appropriate: the power, certainly more than the standard 180 bhp but not recently measured, swells in a steady flow from 2000 rpm up to the 5000 or so deemed a sensible limit — a smooth rise accompanied by a blanket of noise.

Cold wind pours around the tiny aeroscreen and plucks at the arms, which barely have to move to twitch the wheels aside at 70, 80, 90 mph. The worm-and-wheel steering mechanism is balanced to need tiny corrections of the steering wheel, but it is light under the hand on these slender tyres. A few degrees is enough to pitch the long nose into the next bend and a push on the little central throttle keeps the car turning just as much as you want.

The balance is extraordinary, the effort needed so minor that 1000 miles suddenly sounds more exhilarating than tiring — except that Biondetti handled these delicate controls at an average of around 83 mph, streaking over the long plains at 130 mph or more as easily as he sent the car surging up narrow mountain hairpins.

From behind the wheel everything you can see is just as he saw it in 1938: the extra instruments have been removed (though a neat water temperature gauge hinges down from behind the dash when required), and the door panels even retain the original leather, though the seats have been recovered.

The scalloping inside the wings reflects the road in a shade of orangey-red which has caused many arguments, but which is reproduced from a patch of unfaded original paintwork found under one of the riveted brake-cooling scoops. Simeone's decision to stick to this unusual red was vindicated when in Italy he met the son of Touring's then proprietor, who confirmed that the team cars had a dash of yellow in the mix to mark them out from customer cars.



Sommer and Biondetti drove 412031 in the Spa 24-Hours later in 1938 (fitted with extra lamps and a number fin) but retired.

With synchromesh and crisp throttle response, flicking from gear to gear is rapid and sure: a bark as the revs kick up for the down-change, then a slower bellow on an open throttle to pull away from the bend. I have paid no attention to the kph speedometer behind the wheel, glancing only at the anti-clockwise tachometer further over, but we seem to be in a different realm to the plodding ordinary traffic. Again and again the blowers scream and the fine slotted cowl sweeps past another car.

The right-hand brake pedal is good and hard, and heavy, but it needs care to avoid locking the narrow tyres. In tighter curves the chassis shows its character: it tends towards oversteer, so that it can be balanced with steering or throttle, the equal weighting of front engine and rear gearbox feeling perfect. You can feel, and even see over the skimpy door, the swing-axle system at work, but its effects are minimal in ordinary cornering on the tall tyres. Even in today's terms the suspension works well; it must have been a revelation pre-war.

It would have been extraordinary if the entire bodywork of this important car had survived a competition career of some 13 years, but to retain chassis, engine, transmission, hubs, brakes — not only all running gear, instruments and seats, but also the bulk of the body from the fuel tank forward including the cowl and the slotted radiator shell — is a rare historical benefit. It is sad to hear of famous cars lying untended in the period between obsolescence and renaissance, but sometimes, as here, that fate can be the car's saviour. GC

Cars in Books

Reading *The Monocled Mutineer* by William Allison and John Fairley (Quartet Books, 1978), one sees how far the BBC departed from the true story of the notorious army deserter and mutineer of the First World War, depicting him as an accessory to murder, which was never proved: his shooting down by British policemen was controversial at the time, even though he was armed and threatening his assailants when cornered.

The book also shows up the BBC for not trying sufficiently hard to use the correct period motor vehicles for its television film. For instance, the car used by the Penrith police to apprehend Percy Topliss is described as a "blue open four-seater Armstrong" commandeered from the Crown Hotel, and the motorcycle used by the son of the Chief Constable as a "ten horsepower 1000cc American motorcycle capable of attaining the then phenomenal speed of 80 mph".

Now Topliss was shot in June 1920. Penrith is a town with many hotels but The Crown no longer appears to exist; it sounds like one of the smaller hotels however, and might have been expected to keep an old car, perhaps even a pre-war one, in which case the "Armstrong" could have been an Armstrong-Whitworth. The new 30hp Armstrong Siddeley had only been announced in 1919, but it is just possible one might have found its way to Penrith a year later.

As for the optimistically-fast American motorcycle, this would have been either a Harley-Davidson, an Indian or a Henderson surely?

One of the many money-spinning aspects of the old-car movement is that cars are available to film producers, who have agencies from which to obtain them. So one would have expected the BBC to use reasonably appropriate vehicles for this controversial film (seen in some quarters, incidentally, as anti-establishment). But what did it do? It obtained a late-type vintage Alvis and a mid-1930s twin-port Cotton-JAP for the chase scenes!

There were other unsuitable cars and commercial vehicles too. I spotted Morris Commercial, Austin 12/4 and others which were too recent, although the small open Humber used as the CO's staff-car in the mutiny scenes in France remained just credible, and it was clever to have found a single-cylinder 1910 Austin Seven or Swift (each virtually identical) for the lady to have her breakdown with and for Topliss to put right, when posing as an army officer. Then again, would he have announced to the world that it was a "1910 Austin or Swift"? One wonders whether Topliss would even have known the make of this little car when he encountered it?

Reverting to the book, the "Armstrong" is described as proceeding with the chase at a steady 45 mph along the Carlisle road, driven by the barman with armed police aboard. When Topliss was on the run, he stole a War Office Sunbeam (valued at £100) from Bulford Camp, to impress a girl; later he stole a "beautiful Darracq landaulette" which broke down temporarily, ran out of petrol (in spite of Topliss selling Army petrol unlawfully) and hit a cow, bending a mudguard and the bumper; it is *just* possible a 1920 Darracq could have had a bumper. In France, the official detailed to find Topliss rode a Triumph, which I believe *was* properly shown in the film.

One final incident in this dramatic but sorry story was that Topliss' body was taken by the police to the cemetery at Penrith on an old mineral lorry which, when the Press seemed to be pursuing it, speeded up to 45 mph — again, this seems a rather fast pace for what was very likely a pre-1914 truck on solid tyres!

But if you saw the play you might like to read the book and see if *you* can recall which vehicles the BBC wrongly represented.

I recently reviewed *The Vintage Car Murders* (edited by Jonathan Goodman), remarking that some of its chapters did not refer to cars at all.

One murder involving a vintage, or more likely an Edwardian, Mercedes, which did *not* appear, is of much interest for the way in which the murderer, a chauffeur who killed a girl in 1921 and was hanged in 1922, was traced not only by his misspelling of words on telegrams to his victims but by the car having an unusually long bonnet and other distinctive features which may interest owners of the older Mercedes cars. The police noted that it had stopped close to where the girl's body was found, recognising it by the depth of the tread mark of its Dunlop Magnum tyres — pure Sherlock Holmes!

Goodman is absolved from not including this case in his recent book because it appears in his earlier book *The Pleasures of Murder* (Allison & Busby, 1983). **WB**

V to C Miscellany

Centenary celebrations for the city of Birmingham in January included a montage of the Calthorpe family, on whose land road cars, racing cars and motorcycles were made in that city. Standing before it was a 1913 Kynoch motorcycle representing a make produced in Birmingham from 1903 until that year.

The VSCC party at the Verzons wasn't the only such New Year event. Another took place at the Old Thatched Inn at Adstock in Buckinghamshire, where the original Light Car Section Rally was once held, attracting amonst others three 30/98s, three WO Bentleys, including Ann Shoosmith's team car, three Model A Fords, two Sunbeams and a couple of GNs. Over 50 attended in all, the distance award going to Portway and Woollard, who came 115 miles from Stowmarket in their 30/98.

Austin 7s scored strongly in last year's VSCC Bwlchgwyn Trial, J P Proctor's winning outright, Ann Shoosmith's taking the Ladies' Award, and Miss Strangward's the Novices' prize, with others netting third- and fourth-class awards. In the long-chassis class the winner was David Hescroff (1935 AC), a Riley 9 taking a second-class award, a Morris Cowley a third-class, and a 12/50 Alvis a fourth-class award.

Congratulations to Roger Collings and his famous 1903 Mercedes, who won the 1988 VSCC Lycett Memorial Trophy — the first such victory by a veteran car.

A Glasgow reader who is restoring a 3½-litre Bentley Mulliner saloon requires an original wheel-nut hammer and Dunlop jack and handle. Letters can be forwarded.

Next June the Isle of Man Tourist Board hopes to be involved in the 75th Anniversary of the 1914 TT race. It is hoped that all three surviving Sunbeams, one of which won the race, will attend the celebrations together with Kenneth Neve's Humber. **WB**

Beaulieu News

Some interesting history relating to Lord Montagu's well-known 1909 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost has surfaced in the *Friends of the NMM Trust Newsletter*. This car was bought by a Colonel Fergusson of Dundee to replace his 1904 18/22hp Panhard-Levassor, and was originally a Hooper-bodied tourer. In 1930 a garage bought it and put on a hearse/ambulance body. By 1930 it had become a breakdown-crane. Lord Montagu purchased it in 1954, and by 1962 chassis No 939 was given a replica touring body.

Other Museum news is that Beaulieu has on display the 1896 Arnold which took part in the first Emancipation Run to Brighton, that there will be a Friends' talk about old-car restoration there on March 18, and that the cost of bringing the 1903 Gordon Bennett Napier back to this country from America is still £34,000 "in the red", a balance of £247,000 having been subscribed from various sources. **WB**

BOOK REVIEWS

Vatanen — Every Second Counts
by Ari Vatanen and Vesa Väisänen. 287pp. 8⅛" × 5⅛". (SAF Publishing, PO Box 151, Harrow, Middlesex HA3 0DH. £7.95).

Biographers, like rally navigators, have a thankless job. Have you ever felt, after reading the biography of someone you know pretty well, that the writer didn't really get to know his subject at all?

One who has succeeded in penetrating the intimate depths of his subject and turning his discoveries into a very readable work is the Finnish writer Vesa Väisänen, whose fascinating story on the life of Ari Vatanen, written in conjunction with the man himself, has been updated, translated into English and re-published as a high-quality paperback.

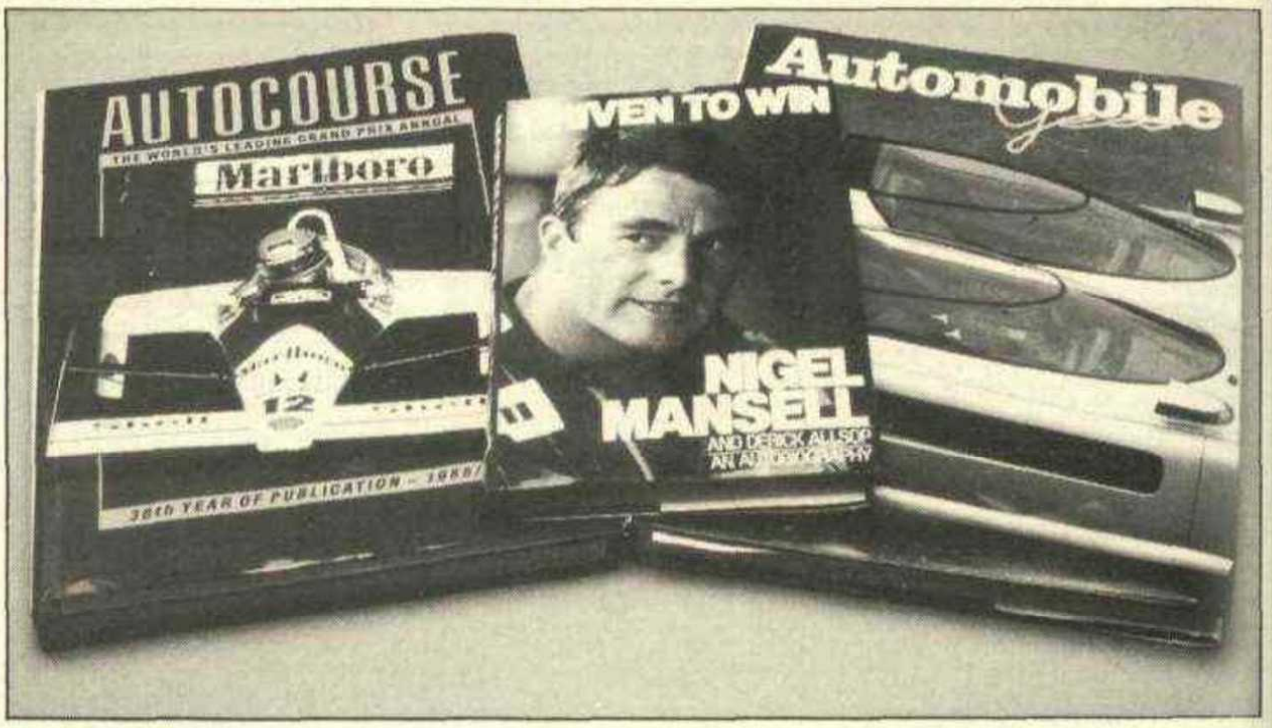
Väisänen and Vatanen were good friends long before the 1981 World Champion was known anywhere outside his native Tuupovaara, so Väisänen has been able to write with the benefit of an intimacy which few biographers are privileged to experience.

Books on drivers' lives all too often remain within the blinkered view through the windscreen. What seem to matter most to authors are how they started, how they progressed, what they won or lost and how they finished. Close personal details, save for occasional family portraits, rarely figure. This book is not in that category.

We have partnered Vatanen in the throes of competition, both in his native Finland and in the tropics, and can vouch for the book's authenticity, but its real peerlessness lies in its uncommon frankness. How many drivers, for instance, would want it published that for a long time they lived in fear of having contracted AIDS (from transfusions in this case, not for any other reason)? Or that depression caused their metabolism to sink so low that they were in danger of dying simply because fear had eroded their will to live? After his horrific accident in Argentina in 1985, when he broke his spine and eight ribs, and punctured a lung, Vatanen's recovery bordered the miraculous, and all this is related lucidly in the book.

Vatanen also has much of interest to say about Jean Todt, the one team manager who had the guts to challenge FISA and put his money where his mouth was, and who stuck to his belief that if a driver cannot turn to his team in time of immense personal stress, then the team isn't worth the paper its contacts are written on.

Vatanen is a sensitive, godly man at whom some people poke fun when he spurns champagne on winners' rostrums in favour of milk or lemonade, but to us he is a man of conviction whose attitude to life never varies according to the publicity climate. Vesa Väisänen and translator Kusnierz have produced a remarkably enlightening, almost confidential, volume which we have no hesitation in recommending, whether you are a rally enthusiast or a deep-sea diver. **GP**



Enzo Ferrari — The Man
by Gino Rancati. 198pp. 8½" × 5½". (GT Foulis & Co Ltd, Sparkford, Yeovil, Somerset BA22 7JJ. £9.95).

Following the death of Enzo Ferrari it is inevitable that books about the great man will appear; the Haynes Publishing Group is to be congratulated on getting this one by journalist Gino Rancati out so quickly.

Translated by Fergus McGrail, it is easy to read and contains reproductions of letters and telegrams which passed between Ferrari and the author, who was apparently the only close friend of this lonely man. On occasions one feels one has read some of it before, but this does not detract from what Rancati reveals about Ferrari's attitude to his drivers, and about his personal life.

Some of the stories may have a touch of the apochryphal about them, such as the report that he thought the E-Type Jaguar the most beautiful car in the world and said he would have liked a Rolls-Royce if he could afford one! But much is disclosed also of Ferrari's great regard for Nuvolari (and of a visit to his home in recent times), of his little-known "other" son, of the law-suit after de Portago's fatal Mille Miglia crash and of a ransom attempt on Dino's grave. Other tales concern the choice of a Peugeot 404(!) to drive Ferrari to the University of Bologna to receive his honorary degree in engineering, and Pope John-Paul II standing up in a Ferrari Mondiale Cabriolet driven by Enzo's son Piero-Lardi when visiting Fiorano last year.

The author writes from the journalist's angle, but where he is uncertain of Ferrari's meaning or has to take two experts' views of a situation he makes this clear. It is a book perhaps intended for general consumption but one which, with certain reservations and the thought that enthusiasts might well argue over some of Rancati's "inside" explanations of epic happenings, should be read before the flood of biographies arrives.

This account is complete to the Fiat take-over. There is no index, but the 20 photographs are good and sufficient. **WB**

Driven To Win: An Autobiography
by Nigel Mansell and Derick Allsop. 157pp. 9½" × 6½". (Stanley Paul and Co Ltd, 62-65 Chandos Place, London WC2N 4NW. £10.95).

The life story of Britain's most successful Grand Prix driver of the Eighties has been told before, but sufficient controversy has surrounded this uncomplicated man to make the subtitle "autobiography" quite a draw. In fact there is little new here — previously unpublished stories are few and far between — though it is comforting to hear it from the horse's mouth.

Ghostwriter Derick Allsop's adopted style consists of alternating direct quotes from his subject with his own comments, but this is no dialogue: Mansell talks, Allsop interjects, explains and links. At no time does the *Daily Mail* journalist interrogate, or put his man on the spot.

This is a pity, for there are times when the frustrated reader will crave more meat to fill out the bare bones of such incidents as the Monaco and Detroit shunts of 1984 and the celebrated *contretemps* with Senna at Rio in 1986 and Spa in 1987, or such cars as the twin-chassis Lotus 88. Mansell covers everything of significance to his own racing career, but seems anxious not to outstay his welcome; a more selective approach to what in its later stages becomes a race-by-race commentary of the championship-chasing years might have helped.

Greatest insight into the Mansell persona is afforded by the chapters covering his early life and career and by passing references to his relations with others in the sport: good with Prost and Chapman, bad with Piquet and Warr, improving with de Angelis and Rosberg, and deteriorating with Honda.

BOOK REVIEWS

With plenty of scandal, triumph and disaster involved, this cannot fail to be a fascinating tale, but for those who have followed the sport closely in recent years it will reinforce impressions already held rather than change or create them. **GT**

Autocourse
edited by Alan Henry. 272pp. 12½" × 9⅞". (Hazleton Publishing, 3 Richmond Hill, Richmond, Surrey TW10 6RE. £19.95).

Now in its 38th year of publication, this hardy annual goes from strength to strength. Former MOTOR SPORT and *Motoring News* Grand Prix reporter Alan Henry has taken over the editorship from Maurice Hamilton, and therefore has the job of listing and evaluating his top ten drivers. The list is hardly surprising, and is virtually a re-hash of the top ten in the World Championship anyway, minus Nelson Piquet.

Grand Prix reports by Henry and Hamilton make up the bulk of the book, and this year the publishers have moved the statistics from the wastelands at the back to accompany their respective race reports. The photographs and layout are superb and the technical file accompanying each race quite a useful source of reference.

The book abounds with statistics and other motor racing articles, including a profile of Senna by David Tremayne, an article on the European Touring Car Championship by Gwyn Dolphin and a Formula Three review by Mark Skewis. The one distasteful piece is the advertorial on the Vauxhall/Opel Challenge, but this is but one minor quibble in 272 pages of motor racing delight. **WPK**

Rallyworld
edited by Peter Foubister. 160pp. 12½" × 9¼". (Tudor Publications, 97-99 Botanic Avenue, Belfast BT7 1JN. £11.95).

Annuals quite often leave us cold. It's an effort to trundle through the statistical data, but we always do it just in case someone has picked up a point which we may have missed from our own records.

Often they are no more than rehashed collections of stories published throughout the year, and we often wonder whether the opinions expressed are genuine, or whether they have been conceived merely for the sake of giving birth to something which appears intelligent.

The price of some annuals is high, but production costs are high too, especially in the case of large-format hardbacks with heavy, glossy paper and lavish spreads of colour photographs. More reasonably attainable than most is this volume, which, at less than £12, offers excellent value.

This may be explained by a certain amount of advertising content, but other annuals do the same and cost far more. A large-format softback, it offers a good selection of photographs and stories, which says much for the skill of editor Peter Foubister, who managed to gather the pieces even though he was laid low at the crucial time by the need for spinal surgery.

There is much international material, of course, including interviews, statistics, specifications, reviews and an interesting insight into World Champion Biasion's home life, but British rallying hasn't been forgotten, and there is a chapter on the various home series. Such events as the Pike's Peak hill-climb, Paris-Dakar and even the Pirelli Classic Marathon also feature. **GP**

Pirelli World Rallying 11
by Martin Holmes. 192pp. 10¼" × 8". (Van + Van Publiciteit, Postbus 4, 2380 AA Zoeterwouse, Netherlands. £12.95).

Published by a Dutch company for the first time, this is nevertheless the eleventh in the series first published by Osprey in 1978, the link being author and photographer Martin Holmes.

The best section is the description of the World Rally Championship rounds, with succinct text backed up by colour and black-and-white photographs. Rallying is a very photogenic sport, and the book's designers have done full justice to the illustrations.

Other chapters include a profile on Toyota Team Europe, an interview with technical chief Andre de Cortanze on the philosophy behind Peugeot's rally raid programme, and the thoughts of Miki Biasion, 1988 World Rally Champion. The last 60 pages are devoted to rally car development in 1988 and mountains of results and statistics representing hours of compilation and research.

An attractive and useful package, this is good value at £12.95. **WPK**

Automobile Year 36 (1988-89)
edited by Jean-Rodolphe Piccard. 280pp. 12¼" × 9¼". (Motor Racing Publications Ltd, Unit 6, The Pilton Estate, Croydon, Surrey CR0 3RY. £22.95).

Twenty years ago *Automobile Year* was the leading annual in its field, a position it lost to *Autocourse* as time went by. In the last few years, however, it has started to bounce back, albeit on a slightly different course, under the guidance of its new publisher Jean-Rodolphe Piccard.

This annual never concentrated solely on the sport, but this year there are more informed articles on the industry than ever including 25 years of Lamborghini, a review of the car industry worldwide, and an interesting piece on Lenin's Rolls-Royces, to name just three.

The sporting half of the book covers Formula One, sports-car racing, Formula 3000, rallying, the European Touring Car Championship and the season in America, with detailed results at the end. Photographs are outstanding, enhanced by the use of fine art paper, and the book is beautifully bound.

MOTOR SPORT once described this annual as "the Rolls-Royce of motoring annuals", a description which does full justice to this year's edition. **WPK**

Video:
RAC Rally 1988
produced by Videovision Broadcast. 80 minutes. (Duke Marketing Ltd, PO Box 46, Douglas, Isle of Man. £19.95)

Few enthusiasts are going to be impressed with cover blurb which misspells the names of both Alén and Kankkunen after erroneously claiming that Britain's round of the World Rally Championship started from York! Fewer still, we suspect, will manage to hold back the yawns as that perennial failing of lacklustre commentary returns to haunt them during a bonus 20-minute review of the Thousand Lakes.

Fortunately, things improve immeasurably as producer Brian Kreisky talks us through the snow-hit RAC, which comes across as one of the more exciting events of 1988. Brief interviews with most of the leading drivers set the scene and Videovision's filming is up to its usual high standard, including footage of telling incidents such as Kankkunen's last-day crash. Light relief comes in the form of in-car pictures of Derek Bell's progress, with accompanying cries of anguish from his co-driver.

Despite a noticeable paucity of viewpoints — a drawback probably enforced by the hectic rally schedule — the final hour of this production shows what can be achieved by the motorsport film-maker. It is just a pity that poor presentation and commentary can so often be allowed to detract from the end result. **GT**

The Tiger Club is pretty distinguished and unique institution and now Lewis Benjamin, who joined it in 1957 after serving with the RAF from 1943-47 and with the RAFVR from 1951-56, having in the meantime formed a club for DIY aviation folk, has put its history into a 237-page soft-cover book **The Tiger Club — A Tribute.**

That this is only Volume One, covering the years 1957-66, shows that there is more to look forward to! In this first book Benjy packs in an enormous amount of Tiger Club history, lists its members of that period (see how many motoring personalities you can find — Sam Clutton appears on page 161) and unfolds his story with the light-hearted humour and understatement one expects from those who fly Tiger Moths.

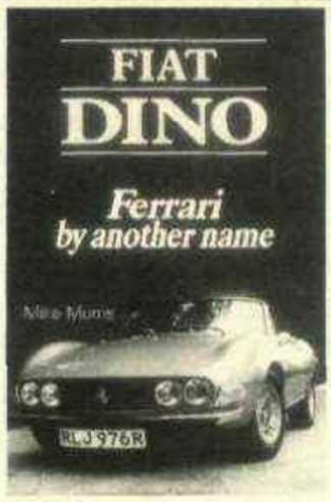
You can recall the great days in the Tiger Club, as its Chairman saw them, for £9.95, the publishers being Golf Area, SA, Loma de los Riscos 1, Torremolinos, Spain, where Benjy now lives. **WB**

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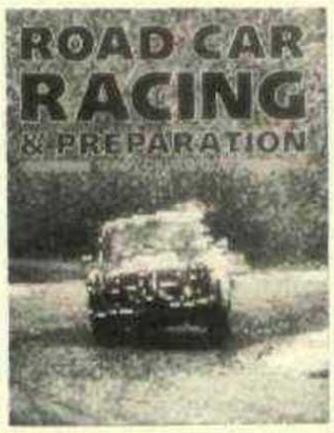
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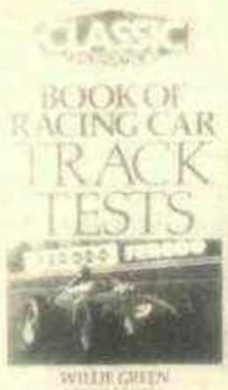
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LETTERS

Unfair Criticism

Sir,

In his article "Glamorous Aberration" (MOTOR SPORT, February 1988) GC has trotted out some well-worn history about blown 4½-litre Bentleys. But he is less than fair in attributing to the whole production line failures which he thinks he discovered in just one example (GT 8774, which is a much modified machine).

The blown 4½ was inevitably nose-heavy and this characteristic is bound to be more than usually apparent when the chassis is shortened, as in the case of GT 8774. I can say from experience of driving George Daniels' long-wheelbase Birkin blower 4½ that it is beautifully balanced.

GC goes on to to criticise the clutch and gearbox. If the clutch is fierce, there is certainly something wrong with it. It is, I imagine, the outrageously heavy plate-clutch which, whatever else, is beautifully smooth in action. The A & D type Bentley boxes must be among the easiest to operate of all vintage gearboxes; so easy that an experienced driver has no need to use the clutch when changing gear on them. Of course, if GT 8774 has a clutch-stop (GC does not say) this will certainly complicate gearchanging if the driver is unaware of it.

Lastly, GC complains of heavy steering. Certainly it is necessary to take both hands to any large vintage car except a Bugatti, but if anyone is silly enough to fit the grotesque doughnut tyres illustrated on the front wheels of GT 8774 he is bound to be making hard work for himself.

Moral: do not jump to general conclusions from an unrepresentative premise.

CECIL CLUTTON
Ramsey, Isle of Man

Birkin's Blower

Sir,

Your interesting article about the 4½-litre Blower Bentleys (MOTOR SPORT, January 1989) does not give credit to Birkin for his single-seater which drew the crowds to Brooklands.

Mr Boddy's book *The History of Brooklands* (plate 63) records that it did a flying lap at 137.96 mph in 1932, only 6 mph less than Cobb's later lap record in the huge Lion-engined Railton. At the time Birkin's car seemed to me, as a spectator, the ultimate Brooklands car.

However, the car was not reliable, and this seems to have proved WO's point that his cars were not suitable for blowing, and that his solution to more speed lay in the speed-6½ engine, which was fast and reliable enough for both Brooklands and Le Mans.

Also you article emphasises how unwieldy the standard blown 4½ was, unlike the unblown 4½ and all other unblown WO cars which were a delight to drive. One wonders how long the turbocharged cars which seem to be all the rage nowadays will last. Except for short-lived fun, give me the big engine every time.

J B ALTHAM
Little Shelford, Cambridge

Races for Places

Sir,

Messrs Ecclestone and Co are missing a fantastic opportunity with their schemes to pre-qualify newcomers to Grand Prix racing at a distant track a week or so before the race, or in a short session early on a Friday morning. Why not do what we do in America, and have every entrant qualify for every race? Copying the way it is done at small oval-track meets, especially sprint-car and stock-car racing on half-mile ovals, would give everyone the same chance.

Friday would be the usual practice for all 40 entrants, with their best qualifying times gridding them into four ten-car heats. These races would be run on Saturday, two in the morning and two in the afternoon, and be of reasonable distance, say 75-100 miles. The top four finishers in each would go directly to the main Grand Prix, the remaining six to one of two 30-minute semi-mains to be held on Sunday morning: the top two from each semi-main would bring up the rear two rows of the GP on Sunday afternoon.

The advantages are: the spectators would get three full days of Grand Prix racing; there ought to be certain excitement in the heats and semi-mains, dicing for last transfer position to the GP; there is no favouritism shown because you were last year's champ and seeded, or disadvantage because you are a newcomer with a fabulous new car. Furthermore, should you break or crash in a heat, you have the second chance of making the GP through the semi-main.

All in all, everyone has an equal opportunity to make the Grand Prix, and there are three days of *real* Grand Prix racing for the spectators.

DOUGLAS MOCKETT
California, USA

Benova in Belgium

Sir,

The Benova (MOTOR SPORT, February 1989, page 159) was the successor to the Benjamin (which originally played with rear engines and two strokes); it was marketed about 1927-29, and used Ruby or Chapius-Dornier engines. I encountered a very pretty (but over-restored) sports two-seater in Belgium a couple of years ago. I believe the manufacturer's final effort was a straight-eight.

JOHN WILLIS
Wanborough, Surrey

Bring on the GTs!

Sir,

I would like to support your excellent backing for a production sports-car World Championship series. Le Mans has, for years, become an over-commercialised cat-run for exotica that no-one can purchase from any manufacturer, let alone drive "street legal". I am sure that if we could see standard Testarossa v Countach v Porsche it would attract a huge following.

I do, though, think that they should be standard models, except perhaps for tyre choice. I say this because once you allow modifications the old "slippery slope" starts, and you end up with the biggest cheque book winning the race. I am sure people would like to see vehicles race in the spec in which you buy them.

M W FORREST
St Helier, Jersey

Sir,

Your outlined proposals for "Supercar GT" racing (*Cotton On, MOTOR SPORT,* February 1989) are excellent. I suggest that you also consider whether fuel should be restricted to unleaded pump fuel — in my opinion this might benefit the motorist as oil companies upgrade their non-lead fuel to 98-octane.

ARCHIBALD JEFFREY
Kirkcudbright, Dumfries

Sir,

On behalf of 35 Jaguar Enthusiasts Club members who regularly travel to WSC events and are dismayed by previous announcements about its future, well done! We support your proposals.

KELVIN PENGELLY
Basildon, Essex

Sir,

Your article *Bring Back The Grand Tourers* (MOTOR SPORT, February 1989) is the most exciting proposition I have come across in motorsport. Please press it home: it makes sense.

SIMON JEFFERIES
London

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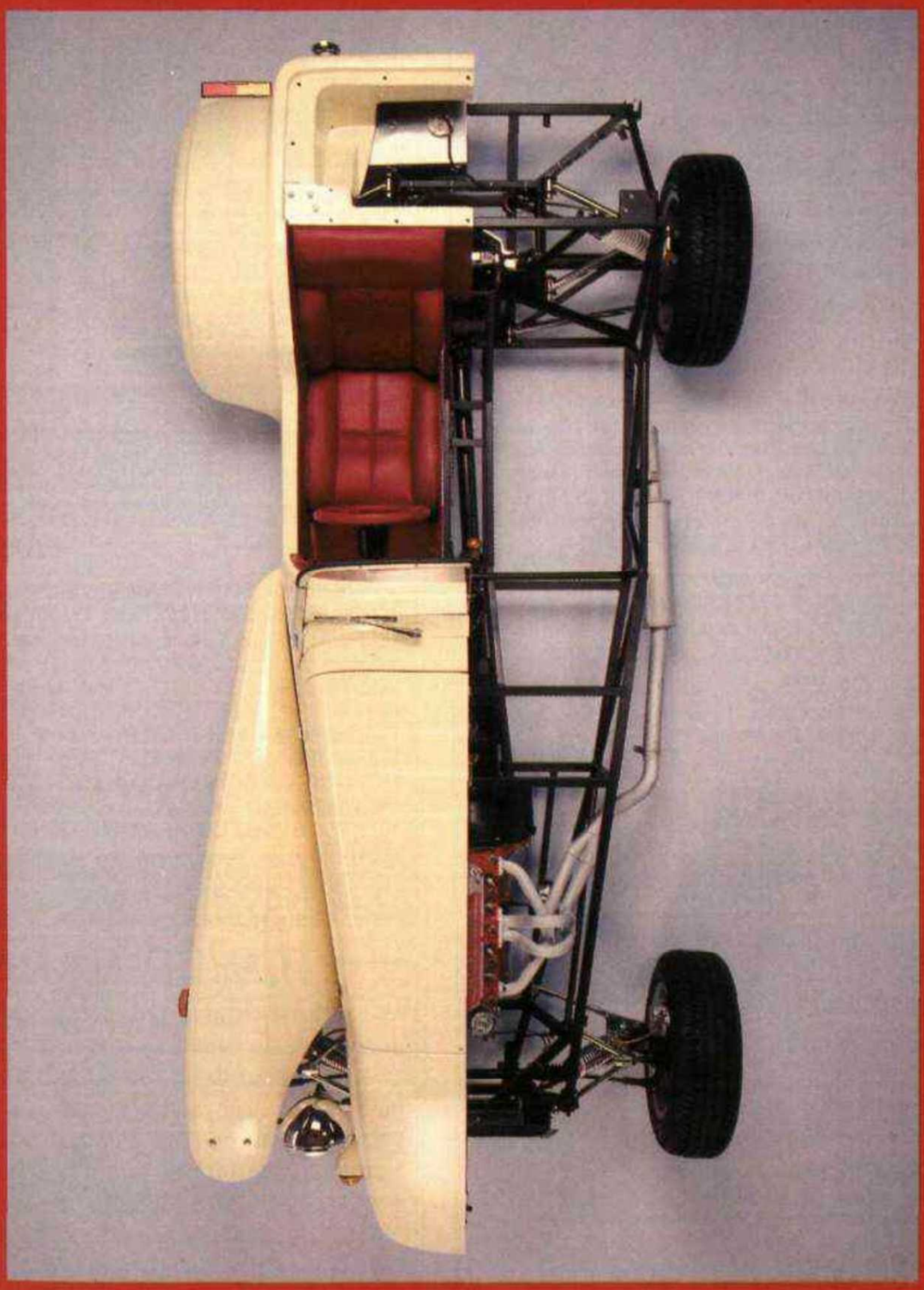
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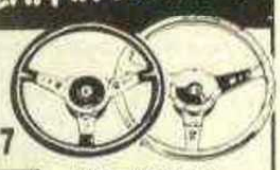
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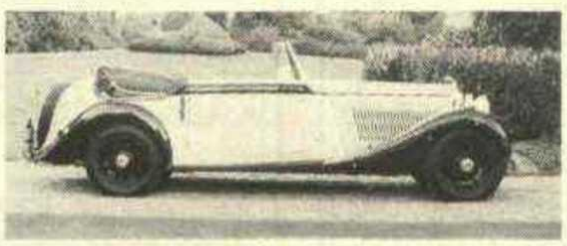
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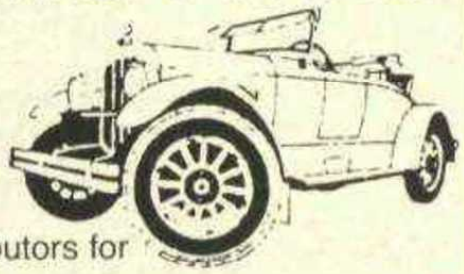
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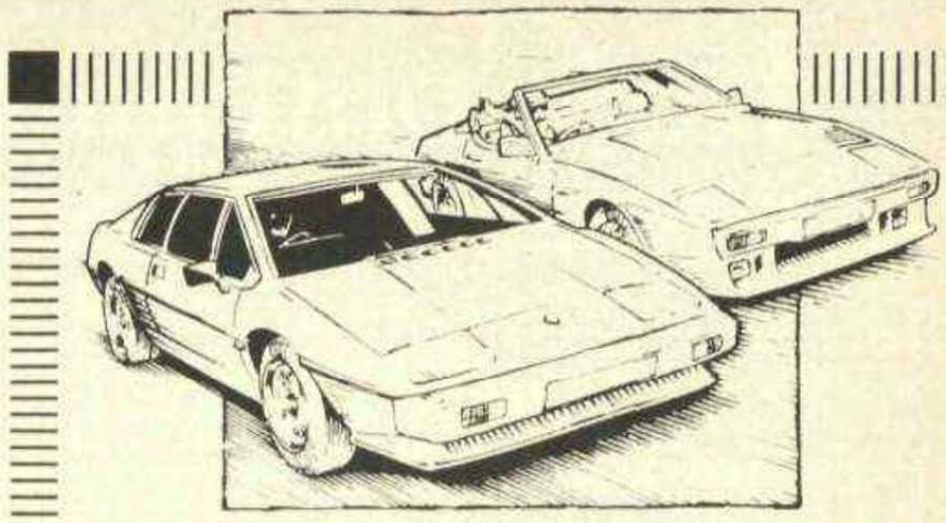
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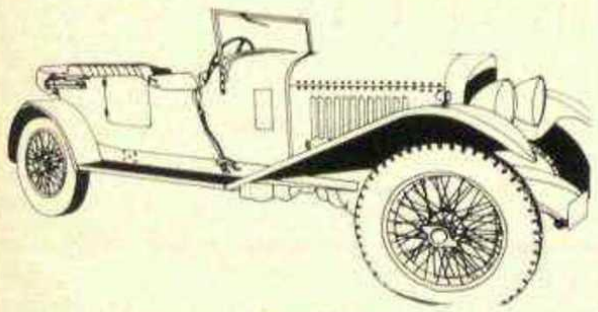
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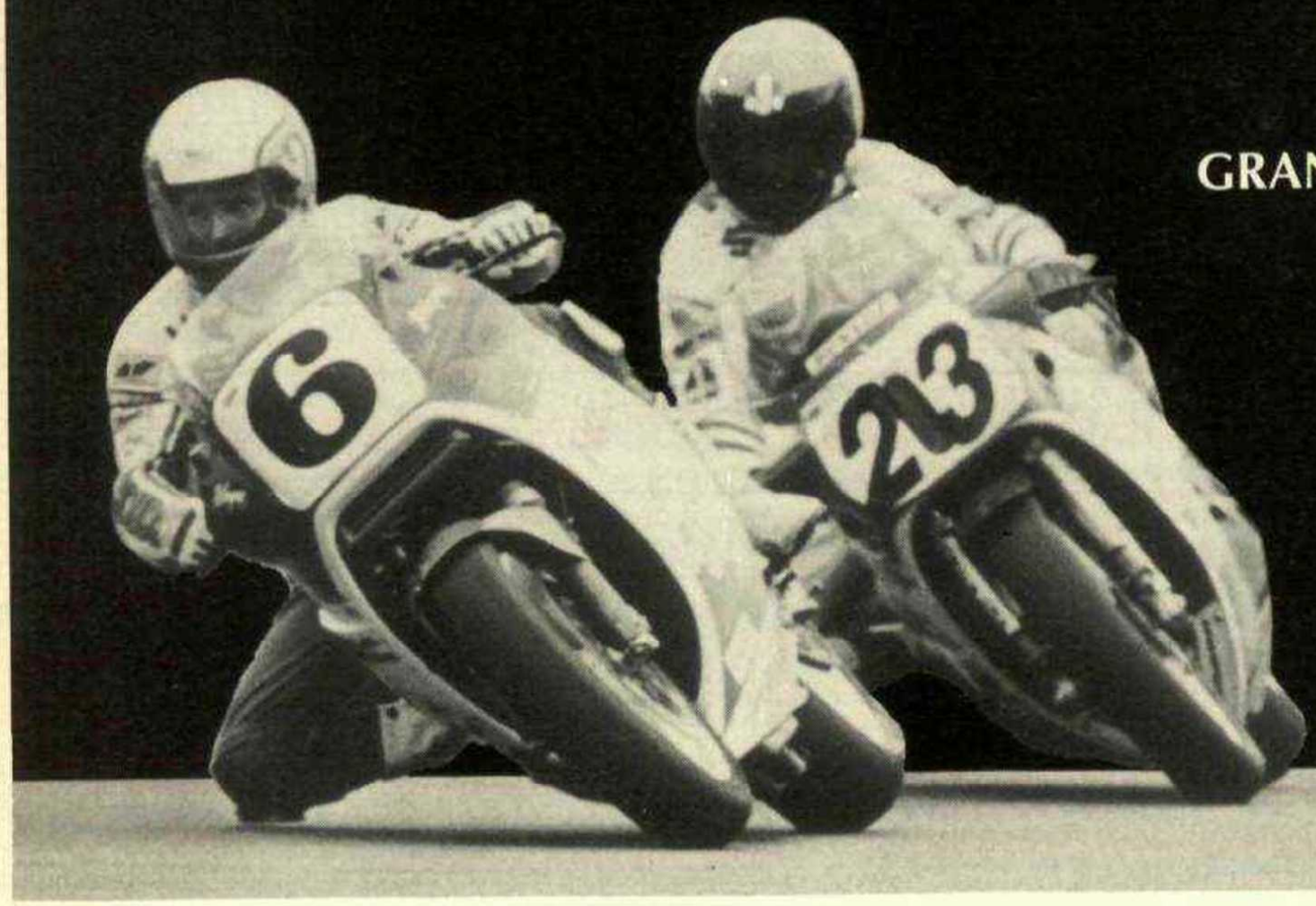


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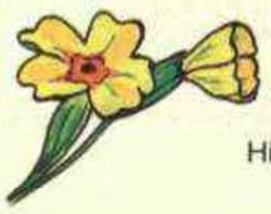
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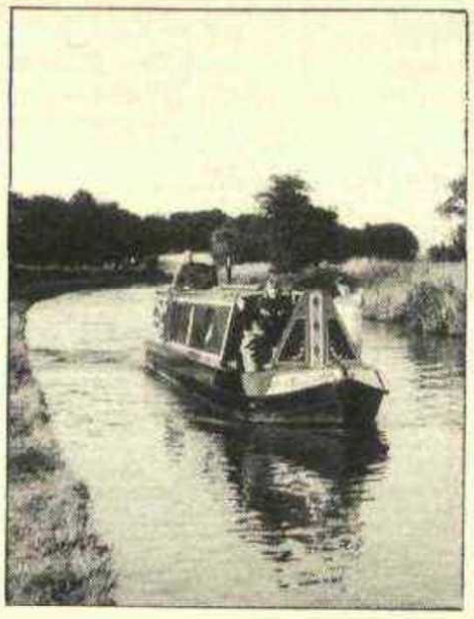
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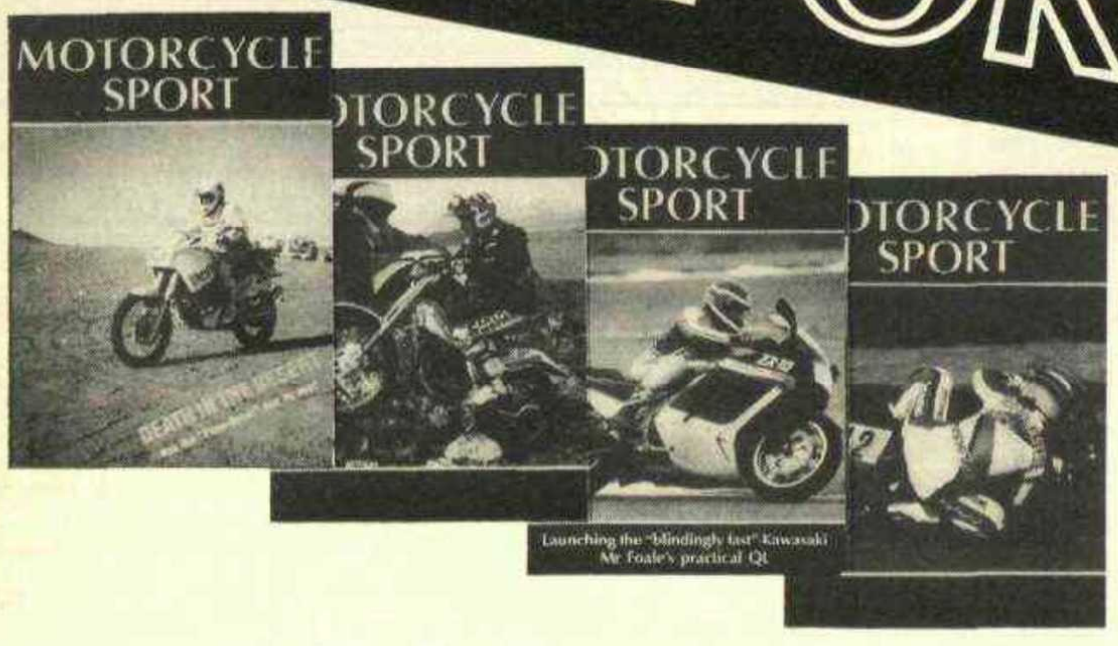
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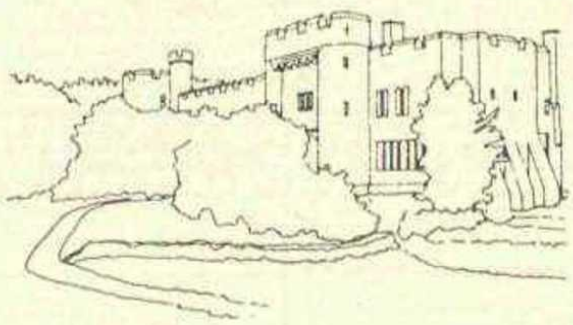
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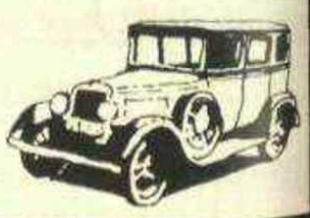
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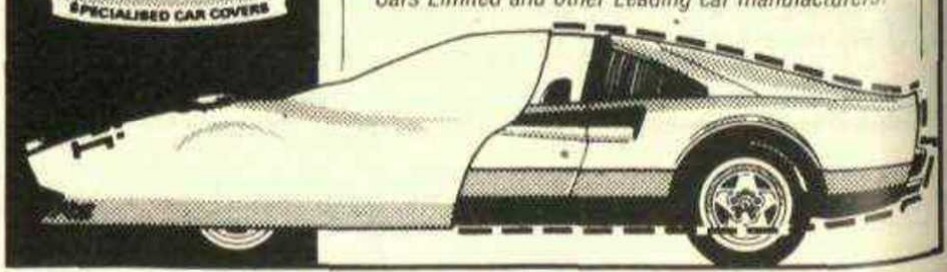
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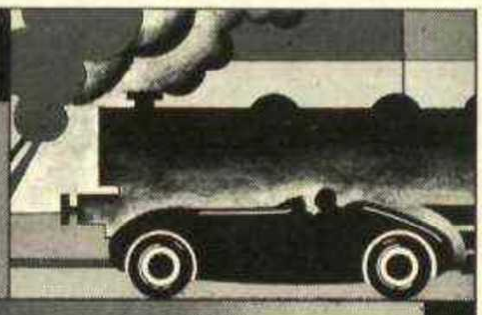


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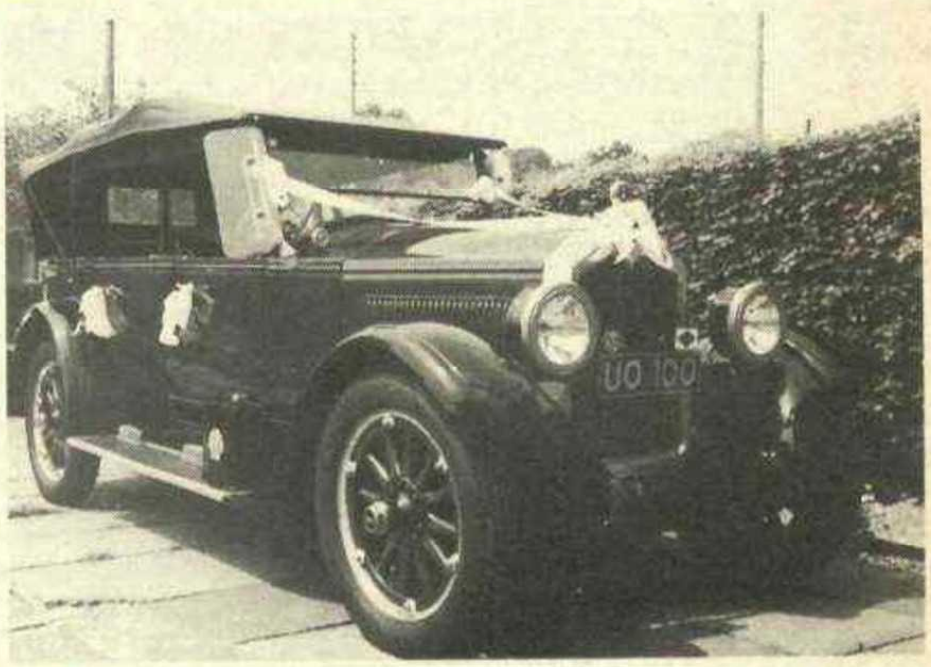
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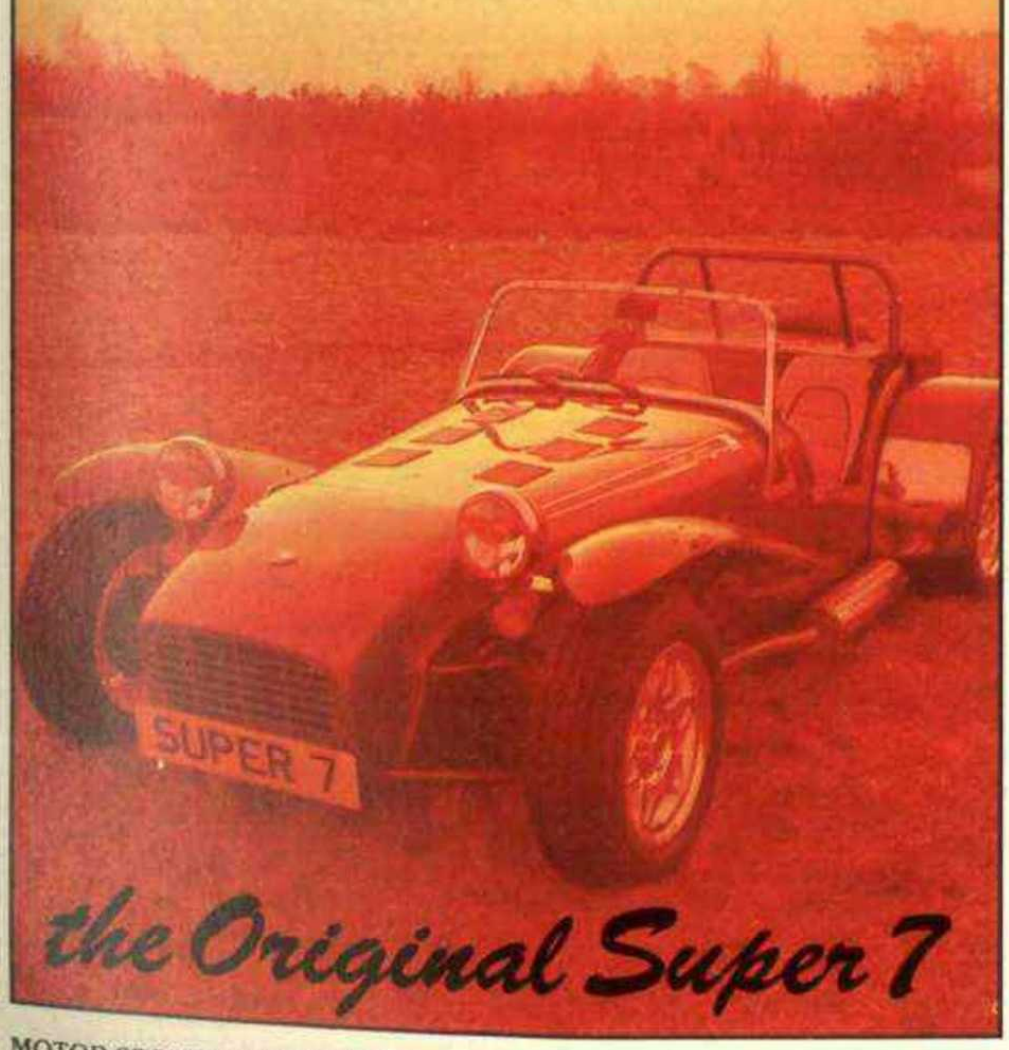
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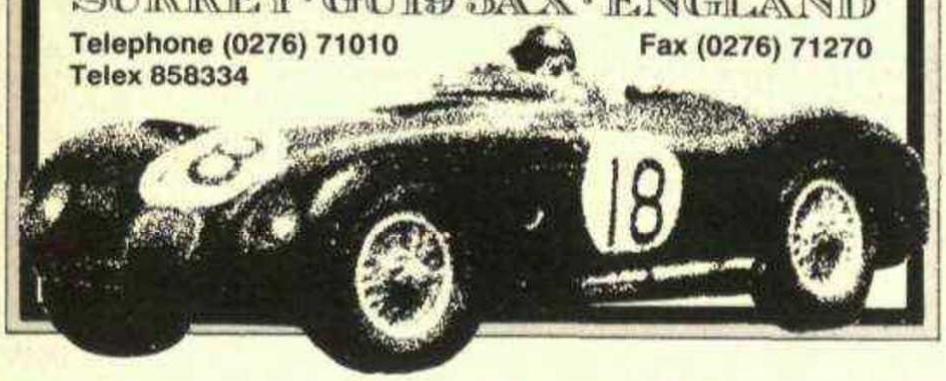


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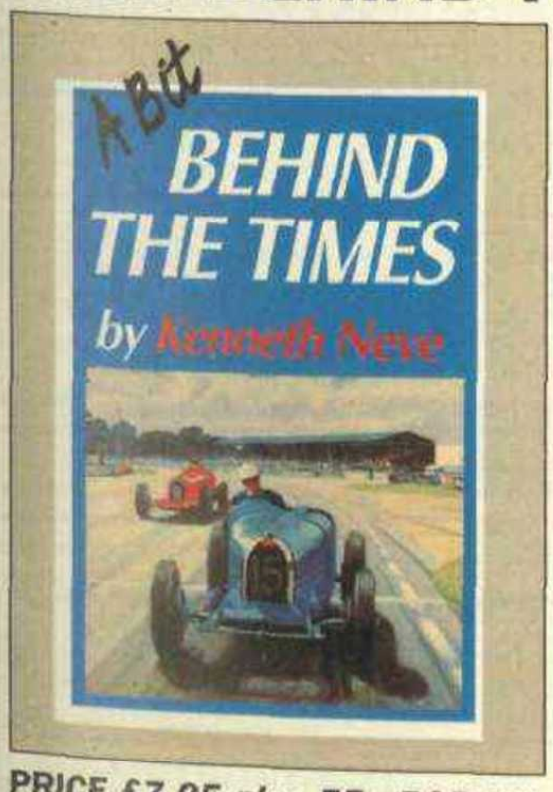
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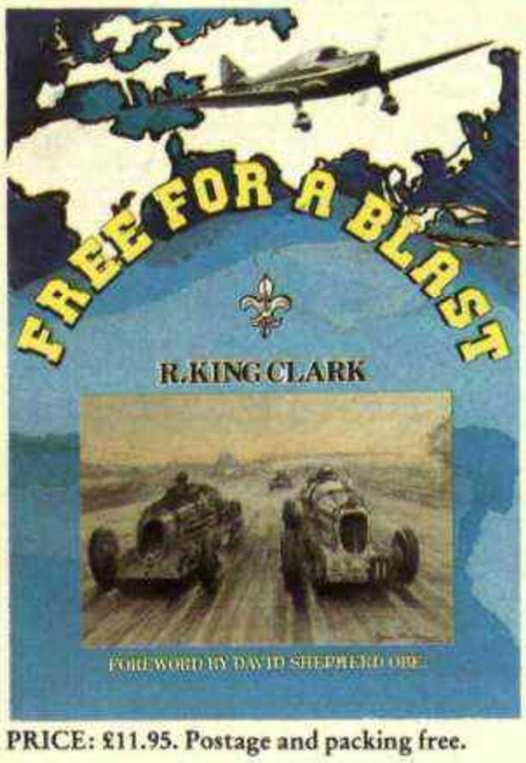
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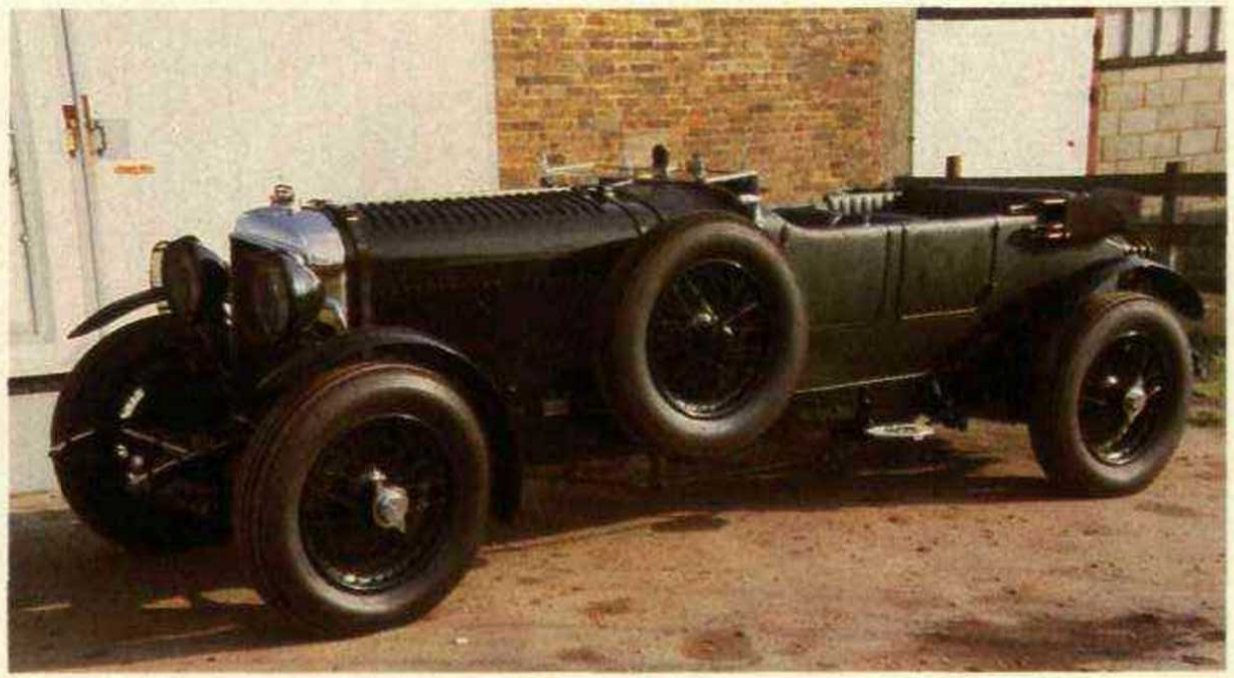
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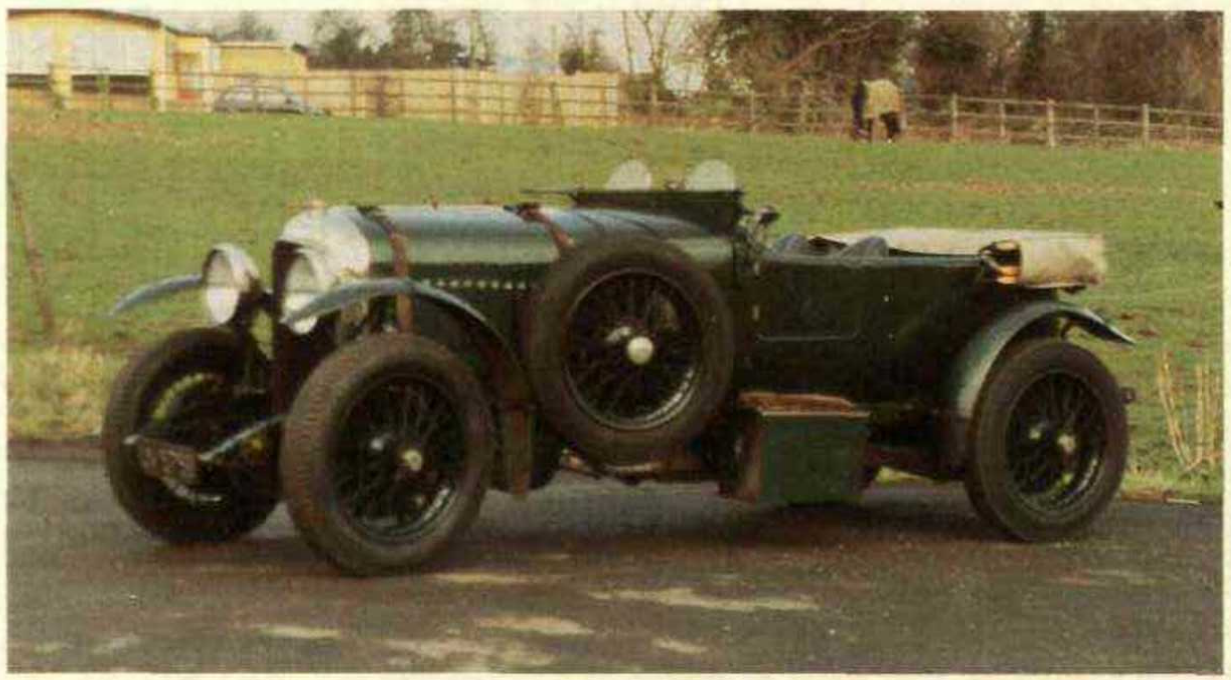
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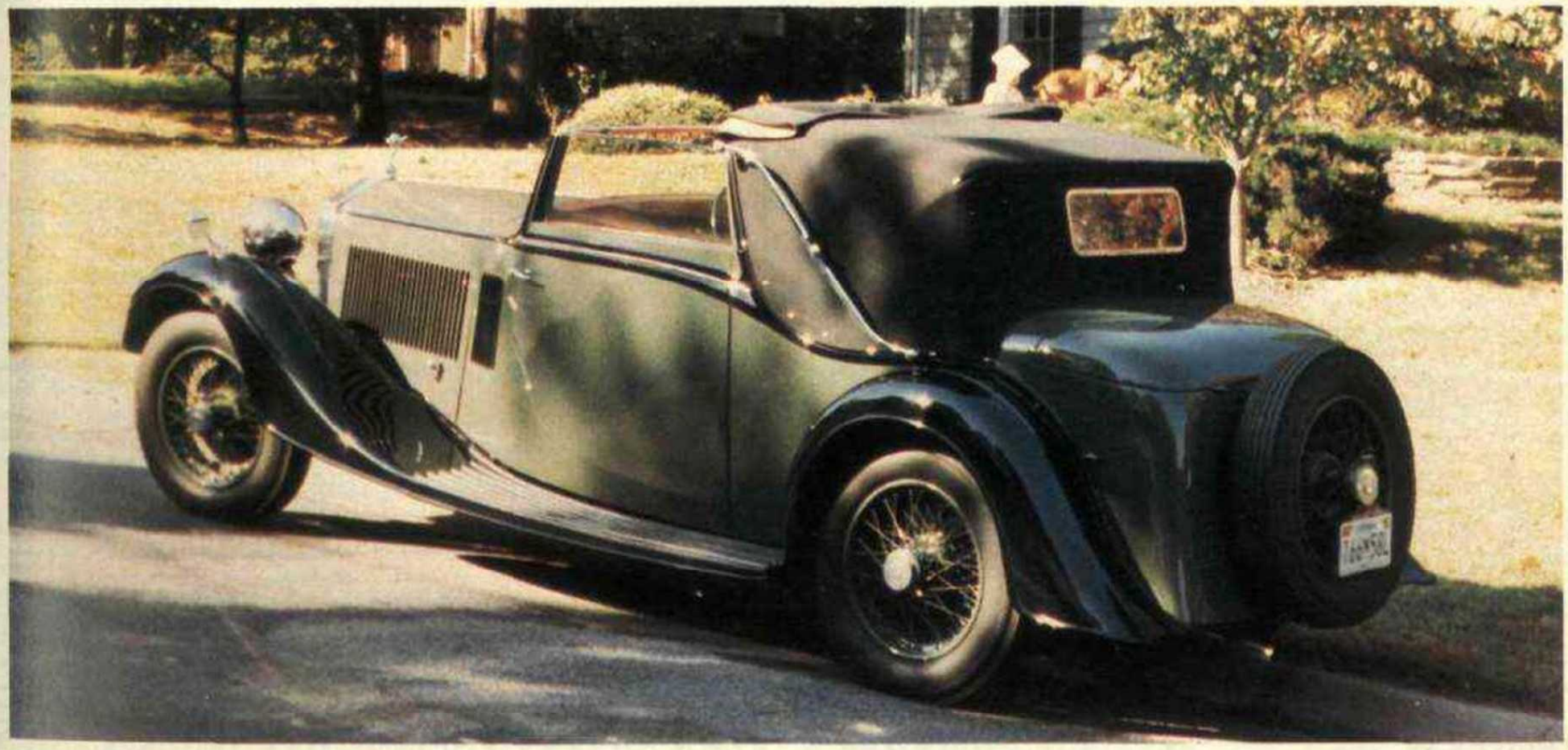
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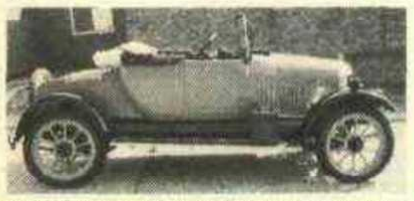
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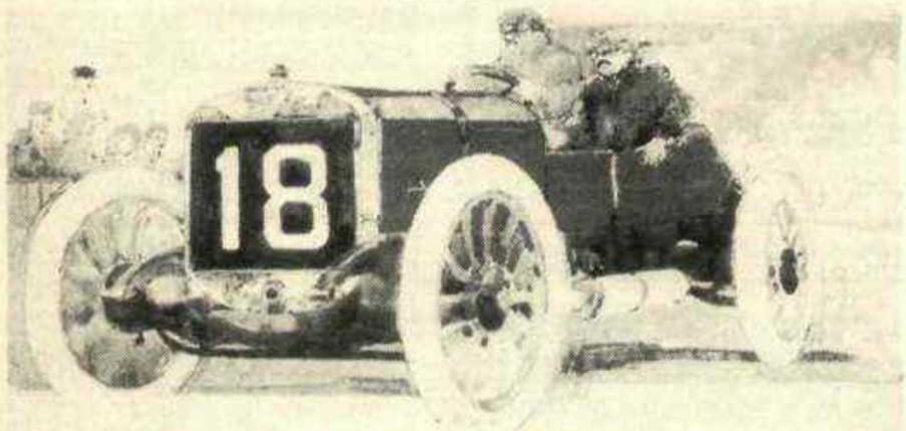
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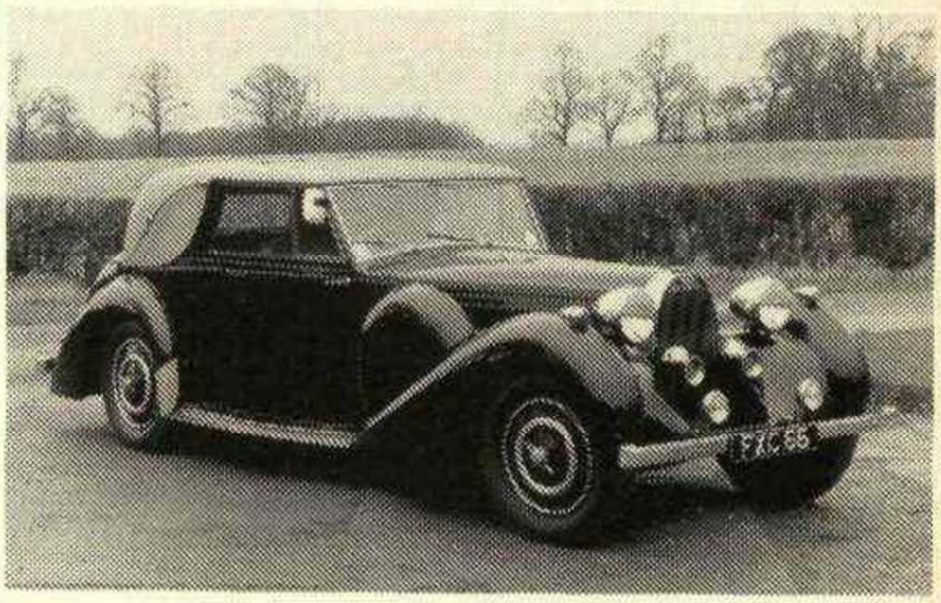
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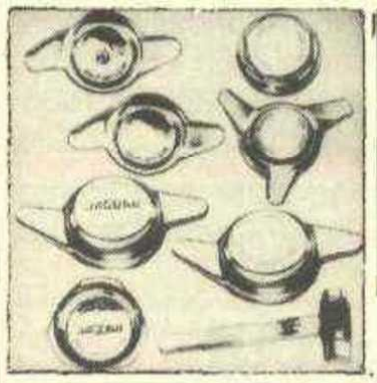
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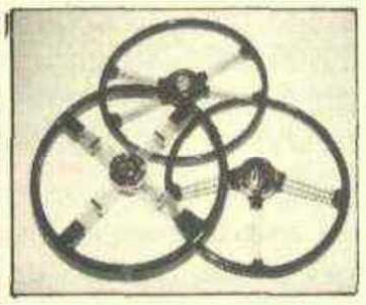
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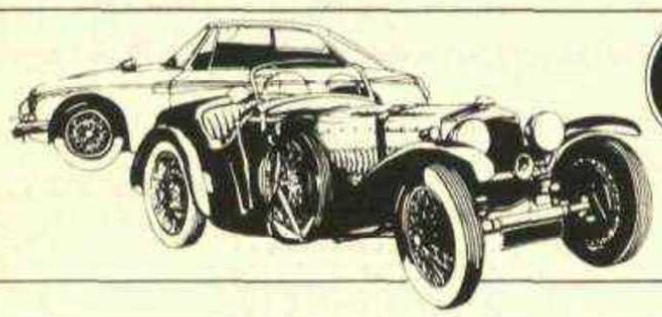




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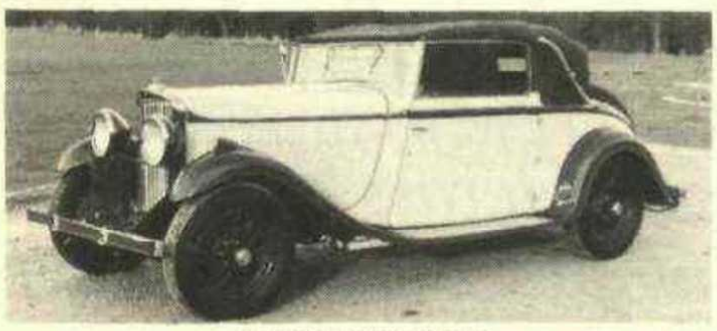
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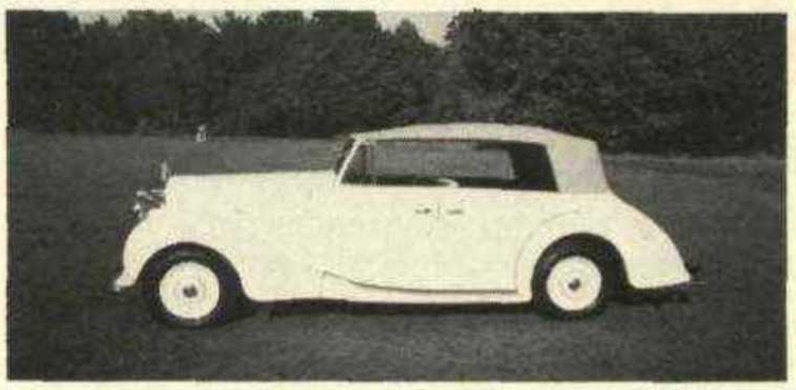
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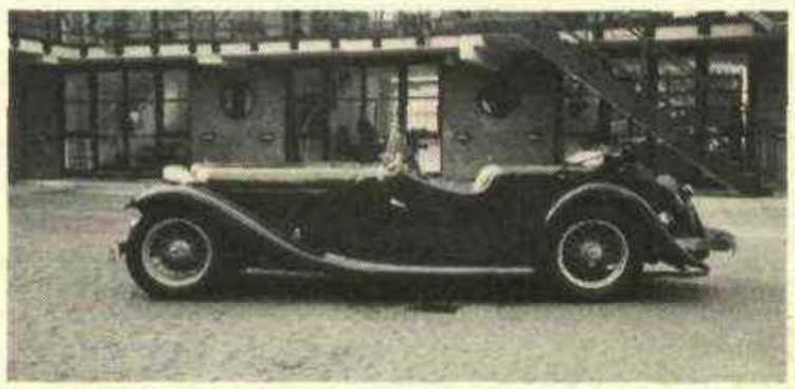
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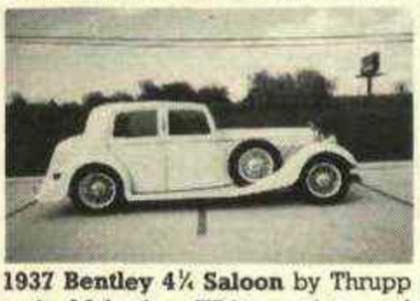
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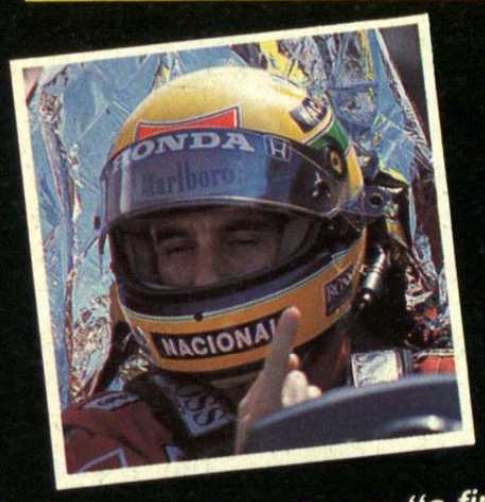
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