



*Floating
Power*

february
ninety
six

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For details of area meetings,
please contact your local organiser

Floating Power

THE MAGAZINE OF THE
TRACTION OWNERS' CLUB

VOLUME TWENTY ISSUE FIVE/SIX **february
ninety
six**

Welcome to 1996, and a bumper double issue of Floating Power. Time has restricted me somewhat so I've had to combine issues five and six in this 32 page special.

1996 will see the TOC celebrate its 20th year, and I hope at some stage to do a retrospective of the club's first twenty years, so if any of you have any photos or anecdotes from the club's earlier years, please send them in.

But 1996 also looks like being extremely busy classic car calendar-wise. One quick glimpse at the events page gives some idea of the treats on offer this year. Top of the list are the big three – the Raid du Robin Hood, TOC Snowdonia '96 and that perennial plethora of overindulgence that is the Brittany Rally.

Other notable events include the French Connection (a new idea at Beaulieu, see page 5), and numerous shows and runs that are waiting for you and your Traction. So if you haven't quite completed that restoration project yet, what more motivation could you need?

Wouldn't it be great to get as many Tractions on the road as possible to celebrate the club's birthday.

As promised, this FP features the 10th International Citroën Car Clubs Rally held in France last August – with three articles on what has to be the biggest gathering of classic Citroëns in the world.

For the next issue:

- *Citroëns on the Internet*
- *The Cream of Jersey*

Be seeing you...

John Starke

PS
I'm still after your articles!

- 2 **contact**
AREA CONTACTS
- 4 **toctalk**
NEWSDESK
- 6 **first indirect**
THE RICARDO/CITROËN DIESEL COLLABORATION
- 9 **disk space**
WOT, NO MORE ROAD TAX?
- 10 **travelling light**
TO CLERMONT BY ROADSTER
- 14 **six, six, six**
A CHAIRMAN'S TALE
- 18 **du the lot**
TOC RAIDING PARTY HEADS SOUTH
- 20 **gone with the wind**
THE 1995 IRISH RALLY
- 22 **techtorque**
SOLEX SOLUTIONS – the carburettor doctor
- 24 **events**
WHAT'S ON WHERE – including Raid du Robin Hood
- 26 **correspondence**
HAVING YOUR SAY
- 29 **tocshop**
HOME SHOPPING
- 30 **classified**
MARKETPLACE



cover picture
Early morning at Chinon
photograph by John Aspinall

As it is impractical for us to verify the accuracy of information and advice given in this magazine, neither the Traction Owners' Club nor officers and members thereof selecting or contributing any material, accept any liability for any error, omission or inaccuracy therein.

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IT WAS TWENTY YEARS AGO TODAY...

THE Traction Owners Club began to play! January 1976 saw the first Floating Power appear.

This followed a meeting of enthusiasts at Fred Annell's house in December 1975, where it was decided to approach the Citroën Car Club with a view to becoming an autonomous subsection devoted to pre-'57 Citroëns. The subsequent meeting with the CCC resulted in the birth of a new club – the Traction Owners' Club. The first club year ran from 1st February 1976 with an initial membership of around 50.

Inside that very first Floating Power, the correspondence page includes a very supportive letter from the world's foremost traction aficionado Olivier de Serres. The adverts also make interesting reading, especially for investors: "1947 Light 15, MoT, generally sound but needs detailed work to make superb - £250"!

However, some things never change: "...your contributions to the magazine and suggestions are essential."



Back in 1976, Lord Kitchener was recruiting for the newly formed Traction Owners Club.



Volume One, Number One – the cover of the very first Floating Power.

Retromobile

THE ever popular showcase of the classic car world will take place from the 9th to the 18th of February at the usual venue, Porte de Versailles, Paris.

Always an Aladdin's Cave for Traction enthusiasts with all the main specialists usually present Retromobile features masses of cars, models, and parts, and this year the show will also feature the first 'Retronautique', so watch out for any boat-shaped Tractions!

Magazine award

IN their review of 1995, Classic & Sportscar made awards for club magazines in two categories, for clubs with under 5000 members and over 5000 members.

The editor is pleased to announce that Floating Power won the award for club magazine of the year for under 5000 members, with "...great use of pictures and a first class layout."

Somebody loves ya baby!

.....in brief

■ **WATCH OUT!** The March issue of Classic Cars magazine will feature the TOC on its Club News pages. Make sure you get your copy!

■ **POUR ON THE SAXO!** Citroën's replacement for the aging AX has been announced. Due to step out onto the world motoring stage at the Geneva Motor Show in March, the Saxo bears more than a passing resemblance to Peugeot's little 106.

■ **CASTROL** has extended its range of classic oils. Reintroduced are XXL40, a monograde SAE 40 for pre '50s cars and D140, a monograde SAE 140 gear oil. A free leaflet is available from Castrol Classic Oils, tel: 01954 231668.

■ **RYCOTEWOOD** College, Oxfordshire are offering a comprehensive two year course in vehicle restoration with a BTEC Higher National Diploma the award to be gained. For details phone the College on 01844 212501 or fax 01844 218809.



HELPLINE

01425 674476

(24hr answerphone)

When phoning please give:

- 1) Your name
- 2) Your phone number
- 3) Reason for calling



I didn't think Tractions could overtake anyway!

French Connection

THE TOC has been invited to join in at special French event being organised by Beaulieu Motor Museum later this year. Together with other French Car Clubs, the TOC will be present on 4th August to fly the Tricolore at this famous venue. However, it will be up to the individual clubs to decide what they actually do. For example, a French picnic springs to mind, as does celebrating the club's 20th Birthday. Do you have any ideas? If you do, please phone the Helpline and let us know.

There will be a special club ticket price for the day – £5 per adult, £2.50 per child. This will allow entry to the Beaulieu complex including the Motor Museum, the Palace House (home of Lord Montagu), the Abbey and of course a truly magnificent Francophile Rally! These tickets will only be available via the club, so why not book yours now with Stan Barker. Phone the TOC Helpline for details.

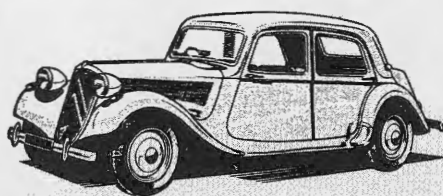
AA discovery

AA BADGES from the '50s have been discovered. These factory-fresh badges, still in their original wrapping, are £25 each and available in three fittings for bonnet or bar mounting. For details write to Jeremy Ford, PO Box 69, Fleet, Hampshire GU13 9YN.



Where have all the fellas gone? This was the female contingent of the TOC Christmas bash organised by Steve Southgate. I suppose the fellas are checking their con rods!

section scene



CENTRAL SOUTHERN

Sunday 24th March, 11.30am
Spring Meeting with Citroën Car Club Southern Section at Wellow Vineyard, Tanners Lane, East Wellow, nr Romsey, Hampshire (leave M27 at junction 2 on to the A36 Salisbury road).

The plan is to meet at the Vineyard at 11.30am for a wine tasting followed by a 3 course lunch and get together. If numbers are sufficient a separate function room will be available. The cost will be £7.50 (£5 for children) for traditional roast – vegetarian is also available.

Let's make it a good meeting with all the Road Tax exempt Tractions out in force. If you want to attend, please phone Stan Barker on the TOC Helpline so that catering can be organised. Please advise if vegetarian food is required. Phone calls during the first week of March please

Mike Wheels 0850 570444

WEST COUNTRY

The yokels in the West Country got their act together in January and produced a programme for the rest of the year. This is what we plan over the next few months.

Sunday 10 March
Assemble at the Market Square, Wells (in front of the Cathedral) at 11.00am. We have reserved parking. Leave at 12.30 for a convoy drive to the Haynes Motor Museum, Sparkford. Friends coming from other directions are welcome to meet us at the museum, where there is a café, from 1.00pm.

Sunday 14 April
Pub meeting at the Tunnel House, Coates (south of Cirencester) from 12.30.

Sunday 12 May
Barbeque chez Dave Hackett and Jackie Johns, at Neston, near Corsham. Bring your own choice of food for sizzling. A map will be available.

Sunday 9 June
Joint meeting with the South Midlands and Welsh Borders sections in the Malverns – venue to be confirmed.

Sunday 28 July
Our third annual Minchinhampton Common picnic, featuring a hat trick for cuisine à la Ryland.

Further dates will be 8 September, 13 October and 10 November. Please phone me for further details of any of these events.

Steve Hawes 01275 817973

Screen test

MEMBERS who would like to see their car become a star – success is only a phonecall away! Club Secretary Steve Reed is in contact with companies who organise classic vehicles for film and television. Steve can be contacted on 01730 821792.

Buyer beware

THE following warning is from the DVLA regarding the increase in trade of logbooks. "I am rather concerned to see an increasing number of advertisements offering 'shells and logbooks' for sale or offering to buy or sell logbooks, particularly for older vehicles. This is a practice I believe should be discouraged. A market in logbooks, whether or not associated with shells, genuine or otherwise, is unacceptable. It can provide the unscrupulous with the raw material for 'ringing' vehicles. This is arguably the worst form of car related criminal activity and appears to be becoming more of a problem in the classic car market. Adverts offering a logbook or V5 for sale should be treated with particular suspicion. This trade in logbooks is a threat to the classic car movement. It can result in enthusiasts being defrauded and it can cast doubt on the authenticity of vehicles."

R. Oliver, Head of DVLA Policy Group



The TOC was well represented by the London Section on a joint stand with the CCC and 2CVGB at Kempton Park end of last year.

tocSPARES

**SPARES HOTLINE
PHONE/FAX**

**01453
886463**

tractionARRIÈRE

first indirect

No, this isn't an article against modern telephone banking – but back in 1934, was this indirect-injection Citroën also the shape of things to come?

Can the engine's designer, Sir Harry Ricardo, really lay claim to being the man behind the world's first diesel passenger car?

John Reynolds argues the case...

According to the history books, Daimler-Benz introduced the first passenger diesel car in 1936 with its 260D. But this recently-restored 1935 Citroën Rosalie proves otherwise. Under its bonnet is a 1750cc diesel engine designed for it jointly by Citroën and British consultant engineer Sir Harry Ricardo.

The car may be sluggish and slow, but it shows that, even in the '30s, engineers had started to look at the perennial private-car problems of smoky emissions and high fuel prices: in 1938, Citroën claimed its diesel model was up to 70 per cent more economical than the petrol version.

This Citroën is a recreation of the very first diesel car to run in the UK, bought by Sir Harry Ricardo in 1937. But it is identical in every major detail to the one that, according to documents in Ricardo's archives, was the first diesel car to take to the roads of Europe, in 1934.

Sir Harry Ricardo's collaboration with Automobiles Citroën of France began in 1925, when he was invited to design a performance enhancing cylinder head employing his 'squish' principle, for the sidevalve engines used in Citroën's 5CV C3 and 10CV B10 models. He was paid a fee for this work, but the expected royalty payments did not materialise and relations deteriorated – for a while, Citroën staff were banned from Ricardo's research centre at Shoreham-by-Sea in Sussex.

But in 1932 Ricardo was visited by Citroën's Maurice Sainturant, who was to design the long-lived Traction Avant engine. The purpose of his mission was to start a research and development project to provide a diesel engine for a new range of rear-wheel-drive cars which Citroën intended to introduce the following year – the so-called Rosalie series. Within two years the project bore fruit and a 1750cc Citroën engine incorporating Sir Harry's know-how of cylinder head turbulence had been designed, developed and tested, and was running in service trials in France.

Plenty of proof exists, carefully preserved in Ricardo's archives, that Citroën was running diesels that early on: in December

1932 a letter of intent was sent by Automobiles Citroën to Ricardo, indicating the possibility of a research contract 'if our intentions concerning the diesel engine are realised during 1933'. A licensing agreement was duly drawn up in 1933.

In a letter dated July 24 1934, André Citroën comments on the good results being obtained by 'our diesel engine' – a prototype four-cylinder engine constructed at the Citroën works. Five days previously, Citroën's diesel department head, René Wisner, had written to Sir Harry that the first 75x100mm 1750cc engine had successfully completed a programme of bench tests in Citroën's research laboratories and that he was now installing the engine in a taxi for road trials: 'The engine functions with perfect silence from 250 rpm up to 3500 rpm and seems to demonstrate all the qualities required from a passenger car engine', he reported. Various photos taken in July 1935 show three Rosalie 10CV saloons fitted with the 1750cc engine under test at Montlhéry. Archie Ferguson, Ricardo's chief test engineer, and René Wisner stand next to the cars.

Shell Oil, as a client and backer of the Ricardo company, had an interest in the diesel project from the start. In 1937 the London office of Shell International wrote to its associate office in Paris asking for a report. In reply, it received a letter from the Bureau d'Etudes of Shell France dated October 20 1937. The letter stated that, according to information received from Automobiles Citroën, a pre-production batch of 100 of these 1750cc engines was manufactured by the factory in early 1935, and that these were fitted to between 50 and 75 examples of the Rosalie type 10A taxi and commerciale estate van.

These were loaned to selected customers for in-service trials, but when Citroën got into financial difficulties they, and other cars fitted with the rest of the diesels from the first batch, were sold off. So in 1935 Citroën marketed 100 diesel passenger cars, rather more than the 15 claimed by Mercedes.



Sir Harry Ricardo

The distinguished engineer, scientist and inventor Sir Harry Ricardo (1885-1974) was one of the small band of British engineering thinkers who worked to investigate the principles of the internal combustion engine. Born in the year that the first motor car appeared, he devoted his talents to automobile and aircraft engines, designing the power units in the Mark V tank, the R 100 airship and the Triumph-Ricardo motorcycle, as well as making many other valuable contributions to progress in transport and power generation engineering. He was eventually elected Fellow of the Royal Society, the ultimate accolade of scientific achievement in Great Britain.

Most of Sir Harry's engineering work

was entirely theoretical but, in the course of his experiments into combustion chamber swirl, he invented the Ricardo Comet turbulent cylinder head. Originally intended for use on trucks and buses, this permitted petrol engines to run at high compression ratios and to be converted to run on the compression-ignition principle, thus opening up the possibility of small high speed diesel engines suitable for cars.

One of the first engineers in the world to examine thoroughly the chemistry of fuels

and lubricants, in 1919 Sir Harry formed his own company to offer research services to the automotive and petrochemical industries. He immediately gained a contract from the Anglo Dutch Shell petrol company to conduct research into fuel combustibility. This resulted in

the very first classification of octane ratings and indirectly, the special fuel that enabled Alcock and Brown to make the first non-stop trans-Atlantic flight that same year.



right: Diesel unit preserved from Sir Harry's Family Fifteen restored by Ricardo. Injector parts found on truck in France were needed.

At the 1936 London Motor Show, Citroën Cars Ltd announced the availability of its new rear-wheel-drive saloon, the Family Fifteen, with a choice of two engines – the 1911cc petrol four-cylinder from the Traction Avant, or the new 40bhp 1750cc diesel.

After protracted negotiations, Sir Harry Ricardo acquired a left-hand-drive Fifteen for his own use. The idea was that he would use it as a demonstration vehicle in his attempts to interest British manufacturers such as Morris and Austin in the new technology. Perhaps they would even enter into research and development agreements arrangements similar to his licensing agreement with Citroën.

Thanks to the conservatism of British car companies, no such agreement was forthcoming, so the car was pressed into service as general transport. Throughout the war it was used frequently by the Ricardo staff to travel between Shoreham and Oxford, where part of its business had been relocated due to the threat of a German invasions on the south coast. By the early '50s, Sir Harry's car had fallen into neglect and, being beyond repair, was scrapped. Fortunately, before the Family Fifteen went to the crusher, its engine was removed and stored at Shoreham, where it remained until it was rediscovered in 1992. The only other diesel Family Fifteen to run in the UK was Citroën Cars' own Motor Show car. It too was used extensively in the war and was destroyed shortly afterwards.

Sir Harry's company, now known as Ricardo Consulting Engineers, continues to flourish as an authority in the design, research and development of internal combustion engines. It's still involved with Citroën in the development of its diesels, and the XUD series units fitted to the AX, ZX, Xantia and XM models, and various Peugeots, have evolved directly from the Comet turbulent head technology first employed by Citroën in 1934.

So when the engine from Sir Harry's first diesel car was rediscovered, Ricardo decided to capitalise on its long history to maximise on publicity and promotion. It decided to find a Rosalie chassis and body in which to mount the surviving engine from Sir Harry's car.

No suitable long-wheelbase saloon exactly like the lost Family Fifteen could be found but a 1935 Paris-built left-hand drive commerciale was found in Cornwall. It had been brought to England from Auxerre, where it had been owned from new by a shopkeeper.

Ricardo entrusted chassis and body restoration to Malcolm Atterbury, a Citroën specialist near its premises in

Worthing. Although the car was in basically good condition, it was treated to a chassis-off, bare-metal rebuild taking about a year.

"It needed all new bushes in the steering and suspension, most of which I had to make myself" says Malcolm Atterbury. "But we had some luck along the way too. Malcolm Wright, who looked after the project for Ricardo, dropped in on the Retromobile autojumble when he was in Paris on business. He turned up some new parts – and some literature, including a wiring diagram. That was handy, as most of the wiring was missing. Interestingly, I reckon Citroën were among the first to use flashing indicators."

Ricardo's engineers rebuilt the old engine in their own workshops, using new pistons, liners and bearings. Parts of the injector mechanism and other minor items were missing, so components salvaged from two other similar diesels found in France in a pair of type 23 lorries were incorporated into the rebuild.

Even Sir Harry acknowledged that his handiwork was no ball of fire, writing in 1937 that 'the little [40bhp] engine is rather swamped by a large car weighing 29cwt (1500kg), all the more so because it only has three speeds'.

He was right. Lacking the flexibility of modern diesels, the old engine is sluggish: the Rosalie is not an agile car to drive. Acceleration proceeds at a snail's pace, and the car takes an eternity to reach its cruising gait

of 35-40 mph. There's very little torque available at low revs and this lack is compounded by the huge gap between second and third (top) gears.

And for a vehicle conceived as a taxi, it's very ponderous: the controls are heavy and the turning circle is so vast a Parisian cabbie would have needed the entire width of the Champs Elysees in which to execute a U-turn. It serves best to demonstrate how immense an improvement the Traction Avant must have seemed to Citroën customers when it appeared just a year later than this old-timer.

But it's a brave first effort. The engine doesn't seem as ancient as the rest of the car. At all but freezing temperatures it starts easily from cold and idles no more noisily than a London taxi. It still passes modern noise and exhaust emission regulations and, in these respects, it was truly the shape of things to come.

John Reynolds ■



Rear seat folds down

disk space

**free road fund licences for
cars over 25 years old
press release from the DVLA**

In his Budget speech, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that vehicles over 25 years of age in the Private/Light Goods, Motorcycle and Tricycle classes will, from 29th November 1995, be exempt from Vehicle Excise Duty (VED). Vehicles powered by steam will qualify for an annual VED rate of £35. From 29th November 1995 vehicles qualifying for the exemption will move into the new exempt '25 year' tax class. They will still be required to license annually and display a tax disc, and produce a valid MoT and certificate of insurance.

The age of vehicles will be reckoned from 31st December in the year they were first registered (or the year they were first used on the road if that was earlier). Vehicles qualify for exemption when 25 years has elapsed from the qualifying date, i.e. on 1st January. So, vehicles first registered or used in 1969 will be exempt from 29th November 1995 and, from 1st January 1996, vehicles first registered or used in 1970 will also become exempt and so on.

For vehicles qualifying on 29th November 1995 and which have a current VED licence in force, DVLA will be sending automatic refund applications (Form V14/AR) showing the amount of duty refundable. This is calculated on the complete months remaining on the VED licence following the vehicle's 25th anniversary. When this has been completed and returned, DVLA will arrange for a refund to be despatched within six weeks. Keepers should not return the VED disc with the V14/AR application form, but continue to display it on the vehicle until the licence expires. On expiry of the licence DVLA will issue a re-licensing reminder (V11) in the new exempt '25 years' class, showing duty payable to be 'NIL'. Keepers may use this to re-license at any Motor Vehicle Licensing Post Office.

Once DVLA has authorised a refund of VED, the tax disc will have no value and no subsequent applications for a refund received at DVLA will be valid. Therefore,



anyone

purchasing a qualifying vehicle after 29th November 1995 should be aware that no further refund will be payable on the surrender of the licence. Similarly, anyone disposing of a vehicle with a tax disc, to which a refund has been made, should inform the enquirer that the vehicle is exempt from duty, a refund has been paid and the disc has no value.

A Keeper of a qualifying vehicle not identified under DVLA's rebate scheme may license in the new exempt class at one of the Agency's local Vehicle Regulation Offices, providing the date of registration or manufacture is shown on the vehicle's registration document (V5). If the V5 cannot be produced, the keeper will be required to prove the age of the vehicle. This might be done by producing a certified extract from manufacturers' records or, if the manufacturer is no longer in existence, a formal statement from an enthusiast's club. You may therefore receive a sudden surge in requests for written confirmation of vehicles ages. Vehicles registered under a 'Q' registration mark will not be able to claim the exemption, until they have held that mark for a period of 25 years.

Vehicles over 3.5 tonnes which are designed or adapted to carry goods or

burden but which were formerly taxed as PLG because they were used privately or 'Special Vehicle' group and will therefore pay a VED rate of £150 per annum.

Administratively, they will be termed 'Private/HGVs'. Vehicles used laden for HGV driver training and testing will pay the basic goods VED rate of £150 per annum, irrespective of their weight. The pre-1947 concession has been abolished and the 25 year exemption will not apply to the above vehicles.

Further information regarding the 25 year exemption can be obtained by contacting the Customer Enquiries (Vehicles) Unit, DVLA, Swansea SA99 1BL. Telephone 01792 772134 (Minicom 01792 782567) between 8.15 a.m. and 4.30 p.m. Monday to Friday.

Continuous Licensing and Joint Notification proposals

In his Budget speech the Chancellor also stated that there will now be no need for a specific 'off road' licence, which indicates that the proposals originally put forward in the Consultation Documents from the DVLA have been dropped. It is clear that the Government has listened to the protests and criticisms levelled at the proposals by the historic vehicle movement led by the FBHVC and supported by the CCC and many other clubs and organisations, as well as individuals. Reverting to the subject of the new Tax exemptions the FBHVC have commented as follows:

'We cannot claim credit for the VED concession for light vehicles over 25 years old. The Federation's aim is to protect the freedom of use for old vehicles and consequently we have maintained a policy of never seeking any fiscal concessions. However, despite the fear that lack of taxation might weaken our position, it would be inappropriate for us to reject a measure which most individual enthusiasts will welcome.'

A watchful eye will have to be kept on the situation, but hopefully in view of the enormous reaction the Continuous Licensing proposals created, Governments of the future will think twice before attempting to impose any use restriction on the historic vehicle owner.

Brian Drummond ■



travelling light

*“Be here at 3.00 pm, and don’t bring too much luggage.”
The 10th ICCCR in France was to be the destination of
the maiden trip of NXT 669, Steve Southgate’s newly
completed six cylinder roadster.*

For the previous two weeks, there had been feverish activity to complete the car in preparation for this ambitious first journey. However, at 3.00 pm on Sunday, 13th August, minor detailed finishing was still taking place. We departed at 4.00 pm and with only 270 miles on the clock and some degree of trepidation, headed south on the M5 to rendezvous with members of the TOC South West section who had kindly gathered at the Avon Inn, Avonwick for a farewell meal.

The night was spent comfortably at the home of John and Sheila Martin with the roadster parked safely in a neighbour’s barn, and the next morning saw us on our way to catch the Plymouth-Santander ferry. As we waited in the dockside queue, the roadster was, predictably, much admired and we took the opportunity of trying on the four alternative hats which Steve had purchased for the trip, selecting the ones with optimum posing value.

We drove ashore at Santander in cool, cloudy weather, but opted to leave the hood down as we travelled eastwards. Our first stop was the Parador at Argomaniz, and on leaving we were surprised to see a man on his knees in front of the roadster, almost in an attitude of prayer. It transpired that some years before he had left his native Chile to seek work in Spain.

When leaving Chile, he also left behind his beloved Traction, and on finding work in Spain he also found a young Spanish lady with whom he had made a life. But now he had seen such a magnificent car, he wondered about the choice he had made.

By now his beautiful wife had appeared, and avowed

Tractionists that we are, Steve and I had to agree that we think he made the right decision!

That evening after a thoroughly enjoyable drive along almost deserted roads, we

arrived in Pamplona. Along the way we had been heartened by shouts of encouragement (we assumed) from the locals as we passed through the villages.

As darkness fell, the pavement cafés around the centre of Pamplona came to life, and, donning appropriate headgear, so did we. There can be few cars, at any price, which have the charisma of a Traction roadster and we found "cruising" to be a most enjoyable pastime, and several subsequent evenings. were spent in similar fashion.

The next day we crossed over the Pyrenees via the Roncesvalles Pass and onwards to Biarritz where we had intended to spend the night. This was a mistake. The roads leading in to the town were badly congested and the town itself was worse - we didn't even manage to park, and by this time the car was overheating. After a quick re-scheduling, we headed out in the general direction of Pau, and ended up at the unspoilt town of Peyrehorade where we checked into the very pleasant Hotel Central. This town is overlooked by the tourist trade because no-one can pronounce it - apparently not even the French!

The hotel receptionist was concerned that the car, which as usual was the subject of much attention, should be safely housed overnight, and, with our agreement, arranged for one of the diners at the hotel to secure the car in the local Renault garage, of which he was the proprietor. However, we were asked to wait until the gentleman concerned had finished his meal, which, typically, was proceeding at a leisurely pace, largely due to the animated conversation taking place between our man and his two lady companions.

After an hour in the bar, and stretching our knowledge of body language to its limits, Steve and I were still undecided whether the garage proprietor was entertaining his wife and sister-in-law, or mistress - or both. After two hours in the bar we were past caring, but eventually, some time after midnight NXT became resident at the Renault garage. At this point we had travelled exactly 600 miles and it was time to give the car a quick check-over, whereupon we set off for Pau. On the way we visited a vineyard, and following a wine tasting session felt obliged to make room for a case of carefully selected wines.

We stopped for lunch in a village where it appeared that preparations were being made for a festival. As we were eating we watched a group of people erecting some scaffolding and woodwork, but our curiosity as to its eventual purpose was short-lived as an elderly gentleman on the other side of the street took exception to the construction and single-handedly started to knock it down. There was much shouting and gesticulation as the components of the structure were hurled

back and forth. With the safety of the car in mind, Steve prudently moved it across the square.

As we travelled north from Pau we stopped at a garage with some old cars outside and the appearance of the roadster brought all the family and mechanics out immediately. After an inspection of the car, Steve and I were taken around the rear of the premises and shown their own collection of cars - all to be restored one day.

***...it was
clear she
had been
seduced
by the
car rather
than its
occupants!***

In Agen we picked up our only hitch-hiker, a young woman who was a guitarist with a French rock band. After an hour and a half we discovered that we were taking her in the wrong direction. She didn't seem to mind, but it was clear she had been seduced by the car rather than its occupants. But for a brief while, as we drove into the setting sun, the long hair of our new friend blowing in the slipstream, life had never seemed better - two (almost) middle-aged men on a fantasy trip!

The night was spent at Villeneuve-sur-Lot which according to our hotel barman, and as a result of his sole efforts, is set to become famous for its night life.

Friday, 18th August. This was to be our final day prior to arriving at the rally site at Clermont Ferrand. We headed for Cahors but were side-tracked by a tempting roadside invitation to visit the Chateau Lagrezette vineyard; which of course we did. Another session of wine tasting necessitated a further re-arrangement of our luggage to make room for another case of wine. By now we had a jumble of shoes, gaskets, wires and fan belts, in the luggage compartment and one of the 'posing' hats had been lost (found later in the hood mechanism).

The drive along the Lot valley is superb and the Traction was in its element. By

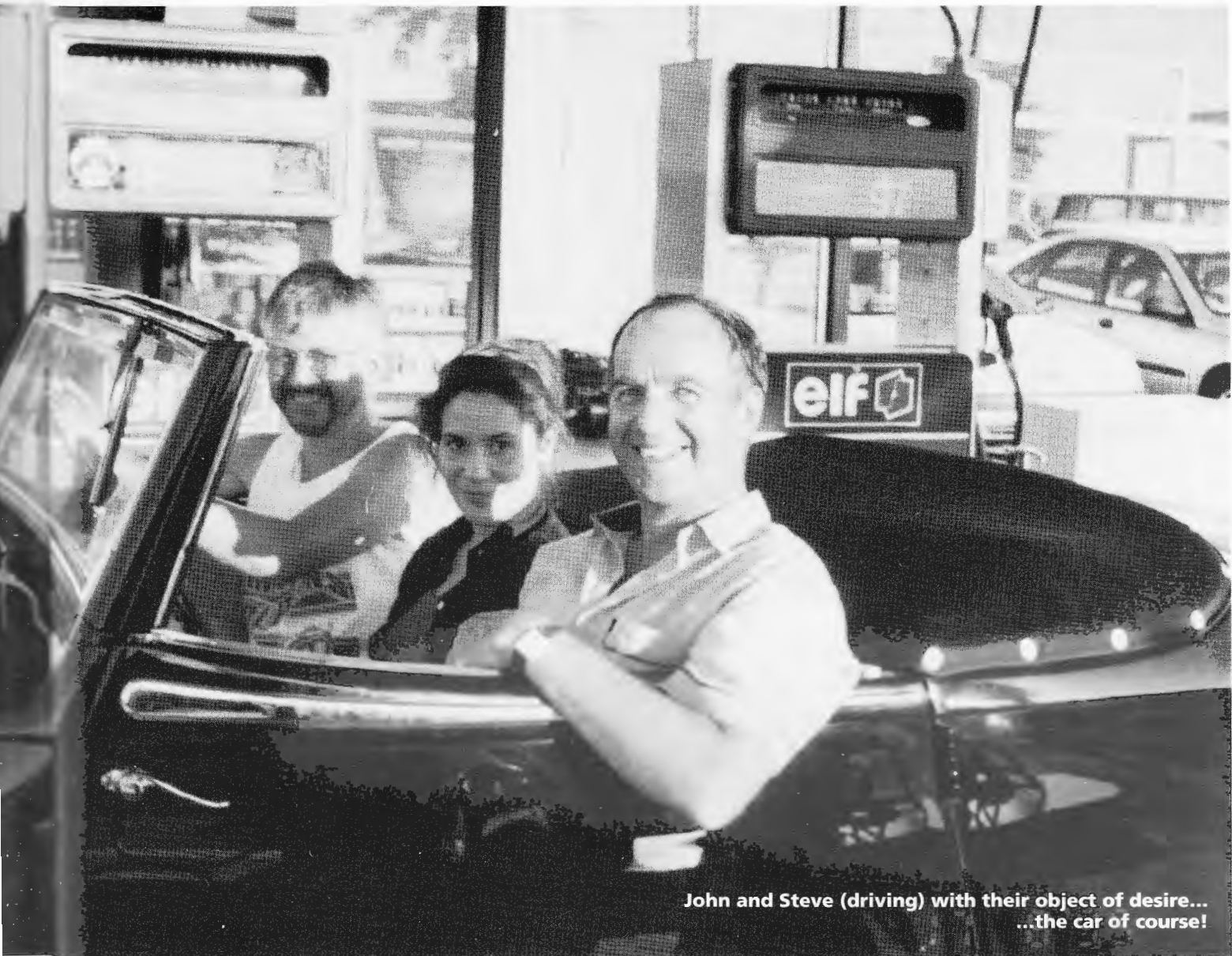


now we had noticed a significant increase in tourist traffic and this is obviously an area well-loved by the British. Even so, these roads can provide the ultimate in driving pleasure and we certainly enjoyed our route via Figeac, Aurillac and Mauriac.

In Rochefort we saw our first Traction, also a roadster, and sightings became more frequent as we came closer to Clermont. Not surprisingly, accommodation was difficult which was to be expected with so many visiting Citroëns arriving in the area. Eventually we found a hotel in Chatel Guyon, and the first people we met were David and Mark Boyd who were staying in the hotel next door. At this stage we had travelled 1,570 miles since leaving Walsall. The next two days were spent at the rally, which no doubt will be reported in greater detail elsewhere.

Following this event we returned home, with just one overnight stop in Chinon. The only remarkable event was that we got rained upon, so we did have to put the hood up, eventually.

John Aspinall ■



John and Steve (driving) with their object of desire...
...the car of course!

So that's why we got poor fuel consumption!



Guess what's in the boot?



SIXSIX SIX

The Devil's Number

Having spent three years restoring his rare Slough Big Six, TOC Chairman Marcus Lasance takes the road south to the ICCCR ...but would he be able to return?

His story starts on 'hell's highway' – the infamous Boulevard Périphérique around Paris...

It all seemed to good to be true. The traffic on the eastbound périphérique was flowing steadily. The six cylinder traction was carefully hopping from lane to lane to get in the right position for exiting at the 'Porte de Lyon' exit to catch the road south. An eighteen-ton juggernaut had the same idea and thundered along in the fast lane. Just when we entered the vaguely lit tunnel, a row of brake lights ignited in front of us. The brakes felt spongy. Frantic pumping brought the car to a standstill. Just then, the engine, which had been purring along, decided that it too had had enough and started spluttering and boiling. A vapour lock was instantly produced and the battery started to loose confidence. Could it really turn over this massive crankshaft and compress six cylinders with every turn? Don't panic, these continental truckers have eyes like hawks and never veer off to the right in a hazy Calvados induced doze. Take a deep breath, pretend everything is under control. Get the Tesco's 4 litre milk container out, which you had filled with water just for this event. Top up the radiator. Prime the petrol pump like mad and push the starter button again. Putt putt putt...with excruciating hesitation the engine comes back to life.

Don't worry dear

The traction's hand brake is designed to function as an emergency stopping aid in cars of this age. None of this dual braking circuit nonsense. At the next exit, the BP service station attendant, warns that we



should bleed the system. You just can't top it up and hope that it will work! Oui, oui. Je le sais. I just want to get to my friends house and have a stiff Calvados myself! I still had no idea where the brake fluid went so quickly.

The next morning we sat in a charming little garden sipping our café au lait and pigging on chocolate croissants. It was getting near eleven when Diane suggested I should have a look at the car if we planned to get to my brother's in the Ardeche that night. The culprit was found at the joint of the rear flexy rubber pipe and the brand new copper section that went to the offside rear wheel. Jean, who worked in pneumatics, had the perfect explanation. You should have put copper-ease around the flange before you tightened the nut!



10^{ème} ICCCR



main picture:
 Marcus, Diane and
 the six – relieved to
 have arrived.

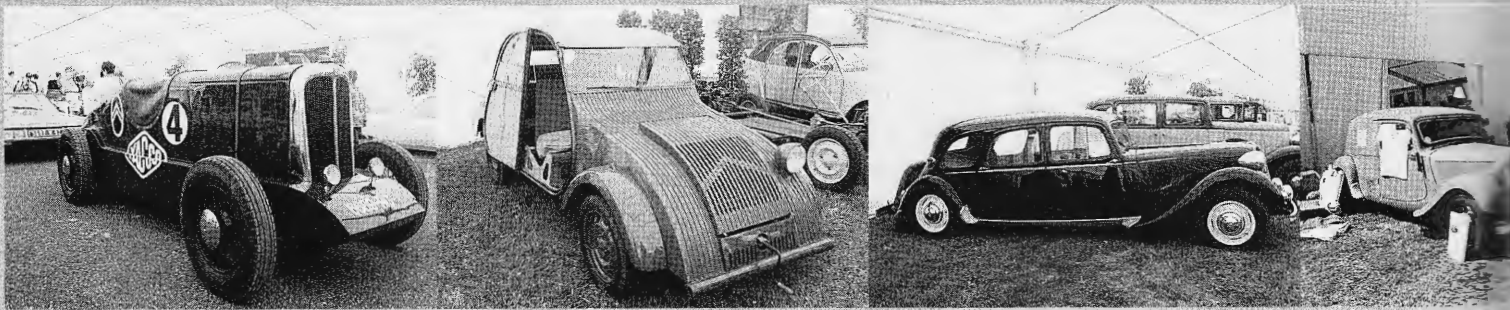
pictures: Ian Nixon



left:
 The same car 24hrs
 earlier – complete
 with helpful
 onlookers.

bottom row, l-r:
 classy camper; one
 careful owner (the
 French Resistance);
 flat front end; Fred
 and Barry Annells'
 taxi service; Normale
 roadster from
 Zimbabwe; ripe for
 restoration – Faux
 cabriolet with
 'sharknose'; flaps up
 on this immaculate
 six cylinder model.





When tightened too much, copper will grip on copper, and you almost certainly sheered off the collar of the flange that way. Liattelier de freinage nearby soon made a new flange on my pipe. This time I applied lubricant using a bit of grease from the rear wheel bearing. Diane did her pump - hold - release bit like an expert and after a quick lunch we were on our way.

I won't bore you with the entire voyage, but suffice to say, that when a hairline crack appeared for the third time at exactly the same spot in the brand-new copper tubing, I started to get a wee bit suspicious.

How not to mount copper brake pipes

The very helpful manager of the French 'Kwik Fit' establishment insisted, that the pipes were mounted in their original fittings, but I had the distinct impression, that when I made the car bounce up and down, (waking up Diane who was fast asleep on top of the hydraulic ramp, bored of the inside of yet another French garage), I could see the copper pipe bend, rather than the rubber section. I didn't want to offend the man who, as so many before him, charged little or nothing for his efforts, but as soon as I got to the next parking place outside of town, I undid all the pipe fixings, so that it sort of dangled in position, letting the short rubber flex take the strain. (Back home and John Gillard confirmed my suspicions and supplied me with a rubber brake pipe of the correct length which bypassed the first eye on the torsion arm and joined a copper pipe equally reduced in length.) Another one down to experience. I would hate to imagine what would have happened if the pipe had snapped coming down that huge mountain just outside Clermont Ferrand. Did you see the dead-end sections they have created at the end of some nasty hairpins in the peage, where you can deliberately crash your car in a series of buffers?

The rally site in Auvergne

Puy de Dôme welcomed us as we approached Clermont Ferrand from the direction of the Rhone valley and offered us some spectacular views. At the last toll booth there was a delightful queue of all sorts of Citroëns, whose owners were probably getting just as excited as I was. Registration on the Friday evening was short and sweet. However, the directions to the campsites were abysmal and no signposting worth mentioning. The problem was that every Citroën followed others that were equally lost. Eventually we pitched our tent in Nirvana and found ourselves next to some of my old mates



Brian and Esther Wade from Australia

sixsix
SIX

Legs & Co., aka Sheila and Elaine



from South Section in the Dutch TAN. The facilities were pretty basic, but the atmosphere was like on all ICCCRs – Fantastic!

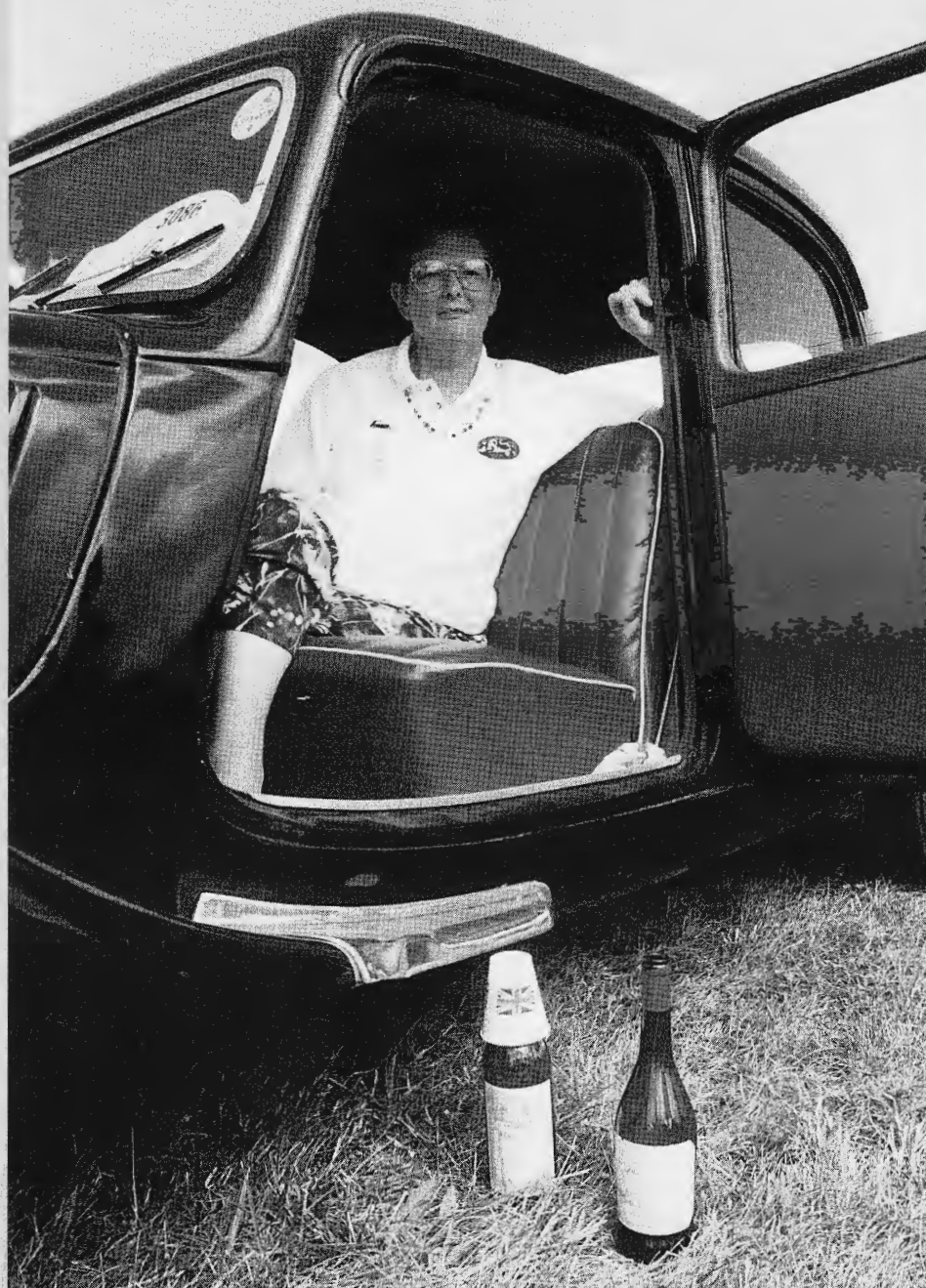
The next morning the traffic jam of Cabriolets, sixes and immaculate DSs was unimaginable. I must say the worst queue jumpers are the Swiss, not the Dutch! Driving onto the Michelin test tracks, was

like entering another world. It was big, bigger, biggest. Any aspiration to proudly show off my newly restored Six was instantly forgotten. It was a case of not seeing the wood for the trees. Where on previous meetings the odd Six is bound to be the centre of attention, there now was a mammoth parking lot full of them.

The next day I decided to make my pitch



Audrey Wyland, offers some traction-type hospitality



by the entrance of the huge spare parts marquee. The display of Floating Power magazines lasted the day and I chatted to several of our members from South Africa to Australia, which was a nice surprise. Diane took care of the stand and signed up several potential new members while I attended the Amicale meeting held on site, to discuss where the next ICCCR was to

take place. I am afraid we bullied our Belgian friends into starting a peace process between the French and Dutch speaking part of that country, because we all felt that their little hospitable country is conveniently centrally located in Europe (and has a great gastronomic and beer brewing tradition!). So, in three years time it will be the Ardennes offensive all over

top l-r: Yacco Rosalie; prototype 2CV; Hydraulique Limousine; Danish vans; Michelin tyre testing DS; Scarabee roadster; the Future?

again. Start planning the next invasion! Some might say the 10th ICCCR was a bit impersonal and too big. Personally, I enjoyed every minute of it – even waiting till past midnight for my dessert at the gala dinner. You will never see such a concentration of cabriolets, Rosengarts, Liberation army vehicles or fire engines again, all bearing our famous marquee.

The long road back

After yet another pit stop, this time in the ‘remorque’ of a local traction enthusiast who got his dad out of bed to do a bit of copper soldering on my brake pipe, we headed for the vallée of the Loire on our way back. This is when I noticed my oil level was going up rather than down, and I wished I had tightened that cylinder head one more time before I set out. I clearly recognised the whoosh of water leaving the sump at the local Citroen dealer, who skipped lunch to help me out. Can you imagine it? Inspecting the inside of the rocker cover, I discovered Charlie’s secret milk chocolate factory and could well imagine how pumping that sludge around the engine made the oil pressure seem higher than before. Also the engine started making clonking noises and wondered if I was ever going to make it home!

The engine in bits again

Well I did, but it was a bit nerve racking, was I slowly grinding up my precious bearings? I had let the water out of the radiator overnight, to stop it leaking down the sump, but there were definitely noises there, that were never there before and sounded to me like clanking conrods on knackered white metal bearings. Back home Roger Williams could not believe that damage could be done so quickly. Apparently water can be an excellent lubricant. [Steam Car Developments!] Also John Gillard came and visited the patient in hospital and said; “It doesn’t sound like bearing trouble to me.” Steve Southgate gave me the courage to whip the engine out again and assess the damage. “I bet you it’s the rear flywheel. They are for ever coming off the back of six cylinder engines. One darned nearly took my foot off!”

(to be continued)

Marcus Lasance

du the lot

*After the
ICCCR, a
raiding party*



*from the
TOC
penetrated
deepest south
west France.
They made
their base at
Rik Blote's
campsite
near Touzac
on the banks
of the Lot.*

We had a great time and attendance was very good with initially 15 vehicles arriving and then the surprise arrival of Jonathan Howard in his C4 and three French friends and their Traction which boosted our total to 19 Citroëns. I have not written to you earlier because I felt an objective view from the participants was what was needed, as organisers we would not be able to give an objective view or offer any real criticism, constructive or otherwise! But for our part, we had a great time and enjoyed the week very much indeed!

The entertainment programme was much as the original proposal, ie. Arrival Monday, welcome drinks in the bar. Day 2, petanque competition in the afternoon followed in the evening by a French evening complete with accordian player. Day 3, wine tasting trip, followed by a traditional Quercycoise meal on the terrace.

Day 4, mystery tour (follow the leader) in the afternoon (lost 2 tractions though!). Day 5, farewell meal in local restaurant. Unfortunately I couldn't attend due to running the campsite, but all reports were favourable – hardly surprising as it is a remarkably good restaurant.

What made everything run so well was of course the participants. As with most events it is their enthusiasm, camaraderie and sense of fun that makes it so enjoyable for everybody and one could not wish for a nicer bunch of people than those who came on the Raid du Lot. I would like to say thank you to all of them, thank you for coming and making it such a good event.

There was talk of repeating the event and we would be delighted to host it again, though I really need someone to help with the organisation and to liaise with in the UK – any ideas? I'm open to suggestions.

I hope this isn't the only report you receive on the Raid, since it's the participants' views that are important, and here's hoping for another Raid du Lot!
[Andrew York is sweating over a hot keyboard at this very moment!]

Rik Blote ■



pictures: Barry Lockyer



Isn't there supposed to be a chateau around here somewhere?



left:
supper's ready

right:
the magical
mystery tour



inset opposite page:
Jonathan Howard's C4

far left:
Barry Lockyer's Traction on
the bridge at Touzac

left:
Cooling off at the campsite

gone with the wind

the 1995 Irish Rally visits Tara

(that's the hill not the house!)

In the glorious sunshine of last summer it would have been ill luck for any rally to have taken place in poor weather conditions. Certainly August 6th, the date of the third All-Ireland Rally, was no exception; it was clear that the heat, not the rain, would be the problem for a change.

This year it was the turn of the South of Ireland to entertain the North, and we trekked towards Dublin on a bright, hazy morning. The cars from the North met at Newry, near the border, and we were expertly guided to the Seapoint Golf Club at Termonfeckin, near Drogheda, by John Fox in his blue 11B aided by some well-placed Citroën signs en route.

Quite a few Citroëns of various shapes and sizes had managed to find their way to the Golf Club, although the number of Tractions was slightly disappointing – just six, far fewer than last year. However, there were genuine excuses – for example, Frank Gallagher and Norman Moore decided to bring along their DSs instead of their earlier models as it was the 40th anniversary of the DS. I suppose it's nice to have a choice! Certainly, for the first time (but probably not the last) DSs outnumbered Tractions. We were delighted, however, to welcome the first English visitors to one of our rallies. Chris Goffey (hot-foot from BBC2's Top Gear programme) arrived in his well-known mustard and yellow Belgian Onze Normale, taking part in the rally as part of a holiday driving around Ireland.

All participants in the rally received a 'welcome pack' which included a specially commissioned rally plaque, and, after refreshments, set off along the Boyne Valley to our next stop, the Hill of Tara. The plan was to keep all eighteen cars in a tight convoy but heavy local traffic managed to split us up completely. In twos

and threes, we ultimately reached our rendezvous point, a field close to the Hill. Some intrepid explorers set out to discover the seat of the ancient Kings of Ireland; for others the heat was too much, and they just admired the impressive line-up of cars.

The second half of the run involved a drive up the N3 to Virginia, Co. Cavan, and this time we kept in convoy, finally arriving at the Park Hotel. Here we dined in style, enjoying an excellent meal, and a special DS 40th birthday cake, iced beautifully in yellow with blue chevrons. Chris Goffey kindly presented the prizes afterwards. Best runner-up Traction was won for the second year running by Dave Davies and his 1951 Light 15. Best DS went to Con Shiven and his lovely 1968 ID19. The Gallic Distributors Perpetual Trophy for the Best Car Overall went to my 1949 Light Fifteen. Thanks to the sponsorship of Gallic Distributors and supplies from the TOC and CCC shops, nobody went home empty handed. Perhaps our English visitors should have been awarded a trophy – just to ensure that they come back next year to return it!

We welcome all visitors, from anywhere, to next year's event which is to be held in the North, around the scenic Upper Lough Erne area in Co. Fermanagh and taking in Enniskillen and Beleek. Frank Gallagher has kindly volunteered to organise it – so make a date in your diaries for Sunday, 4th August!

As for this year's rally, we finally made our way home, still basking in the evening



main picture:
Chris Goffey's Belgian delight

above:
Line-up of cars at the Hill of Tara

heat, tired and laden down with goodies. Many thanks for an excellent, well-organised event must go to co-organisers Con Shiven and Frank Gallagher, and especially organiser-in-chief Frank Bergin, who worked tirelessly throughout. Good luck with the DS restoration, Frank – perhaps we'll actually see it next year!

Michael Wood ■



The Classic and Sportscar Show is now firmly established as Britain's showcase of the classic world, covering every aspect of the classic movement. This year the show will be more exciting than ever. As part of the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the British Motor Industry, the show is proud to announce the "Auto Windscreens Century of Motoring" charting 100 years of British motor manufacturing. Apart from this unique event, the show will also host all the regular features:

- Fantastic displays from classic car clubs
- Over 1000 classics on display
- A massive autojumble
- Superb inter-club concours sponsored by Autoglym
- Dream rides in amazing vehicles

Club Ticket Order Form

Your name

Club name

Your Address

Please send me adult tickets @ the special price of £8 each

Please send me adult tickets for the price of seven (£70)

I enclose a cheque for £

Applications to be received by April 30 1996. Remember children 14 and under are free.



NEC Birmingham 4th - 6th May

For 1996, car club members will be able to purchase tickets at superb discounts. Club members can purchase up to six tickets at £8 each (normal price £10), or for every seven tickets purchased we will send you three extra tickets absolutely free!

That means 10 tickets for only £70. Remember children 14 and under are free. Simply complete and return the coupon below to: Haymarket Exhibitions Ltd., 55 North Wharf Road, London W12 1LA.

Please make cheques payable to Haymarket Exhibitions Ltd. (Photocopy it if you don't want to damage the magazine)

SOLEX solutions

Model 32 PBIC Bi-Starter Carburettor

Dust-proofing

Dust-proofing is obtained by special construction of the carburettor so that the air required for ventilating the float chamber, for the slow running mixture, the emulsification of the main spraying mixture as well as the air for the starting device, is all passed through the air filter normally fitted to the carburettor.

This arrangement has a double advantage. As well as eliminating dirt, it ensures constant mixture strength, so that even if the air cleaner is neglected and allowed to clog, petrol consumption is not affected, though it must be borne in mind that the restriction imposed by a clogged air cleaner will reduce the volume of air, and consequently mixture, which the engine can inspire, and so lead to power loss. When this happens, with the consequent necessity to use intermediate gears too frequently, then, of course, miles per gallon will fall.

Bi-Starter

The Solex 'bi-starter' is a small auxiliary carburettor integral with the main carburettor to ensure easy and certain starting from cold, and to assist "get-away" until the engine is warm enough to function satisfactorily without its aid.

It has two adjustable units to provide a correct balance of air and petrol for the above purposes.

The air jet Ga meters the air supply. The petrol jet Gs regulates the petrol.

It is to be emphasised that the bi-starter should be operated in its two positions

during the process of starting from cold and driving away, as follows:

(a) To start the engine when cold, pull out fully the dashboard control to which the bi-starter lever is connected. In this position it gives a very rich mixture which is essential for cold starting.

(b) Almost immediately after starting, the engine begins to warm up and the dashboard control should be pushed into the "bi-starter" position, i.e., approximately half-way, when a marked resistance will be felt indicating when the correct position is reached.

At this stage the mixture strength is considerably reduced, for the volume of the air inspired by the engine increases proportionately to the rise in engine speed as it continues to warm up, whilst the petrol supply is restricted. Without any risk of overdosing, the strength of the mixture is sufficient to ensure immediate get-away without stalling as the foot pedal is depressed.

(c) As soon as the engine is warm enough (usually after driving a few hundred yards) to dispense with the aid of the bi-starter, the dashboard control must be pushed fully home, thus putting the starting device completely out of action.

Slow running (Idling)

When idling the mixture strength is provided by the idling or pilot jet (g), the air bleed (u), the volume control screw (W), the last decreasing the mixture strength when turned in a clockwise direction and vice versa.

*Overhauling or adjusting
your Light 15's carburettor?
Here's some technical info to
help you get it right*

Normal running

For normal running, driving at cruising speeds, the fuel is provided by the main jet (Gg), and the main air supply for disintegration of petrol by the choke tube (K). The correct balance of mixture i.e., air petrol ratio, is further automatically maintained by the additional air supply in the form of a calibrated jet called the air correction jet (a).

Dismounting the carburettor

Should it be necessary for any specific purpose to alter the carburettor setting, it is not usually necessary to remove the carburettor.

All the jets are fitted externally and are usually easily accessible. Note that the main jet (Gg) is screwed into the submerged end of its carrier or holder (Y).

The emulsion tube (S) is held in position by the correction jet (a) and access is obtained by removal of the air cleaner.

The needle-valve and float can be removed by unscrewing the slot headed screws which secure the float chamber cover and lifting off the latter.

Accelerating device

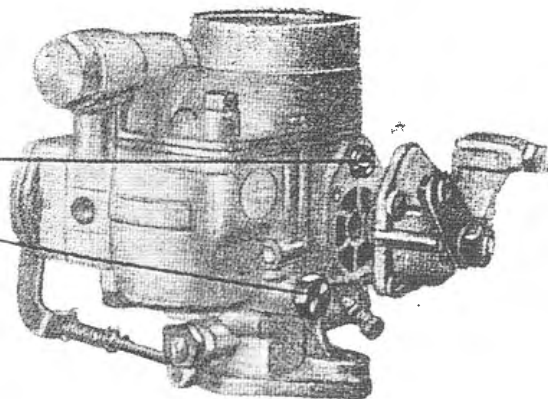
The function of this is as follows:

When the throttle is closed the expansion spring in the pump chamber forces the membrane (M) into a defined position allowing the chamber on the left to fill with petrol. The membrane (M) is connected to the accelerator via an adjustable linkage fitted to the throttle spindle. Thus, the instant the throttle is

COLD STARTING Setting items:

Ga Petrol air jet

Gs Petrol starter jet



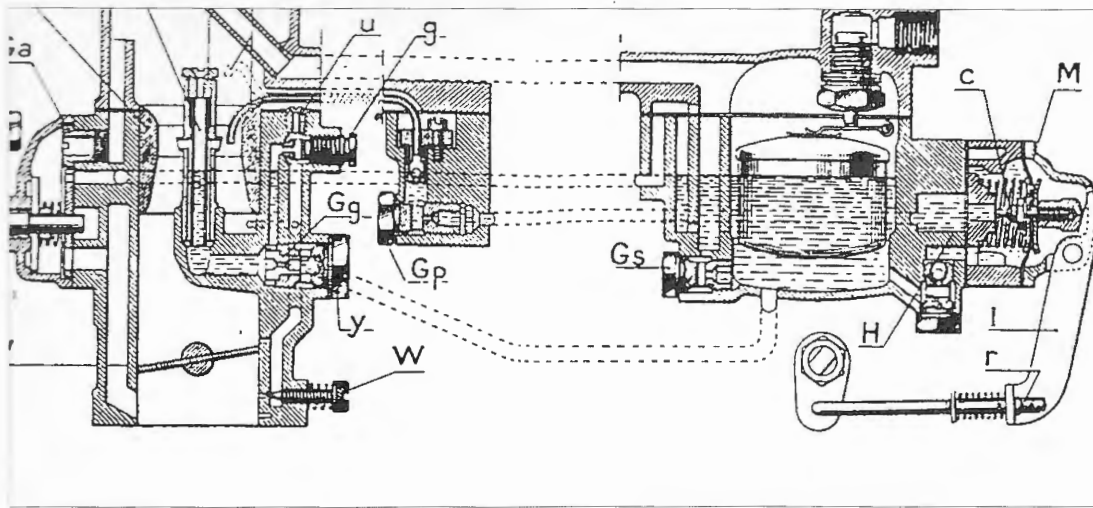
SLOW RUNNING.

Setting Items : g Pilot jet

Z Slow running stop screw (controls the idling speed)

W Volume control screw (by screwing in the mixture strength is made weaker)





Key to diagram

a	Air correction jet
Ga	Starter air jet
Gg	Main jet
Gp	Pump jet
Gs	Starter petrol jet
g	Slow running jet
H	Pump housing
i	Pump injector
K	Choke tube
l	Pump lever
l¹	Bi-starter lever
M	Pump membrane
r	Pump lever split pin
s	Emulsion tube
u	Idling air bleed
W	Volume control screw
Y	Main jet carrier
V	Throttle butterfly

opened the spindle turns and the link operating with it forces the membrane to the left, ejecting the petrol in the pump chamber through the pump jet (Gp) and via the injector (i) projecting into the choke tube area.

Two types of injector may be used – a ‘high’ injector shown by the dotted lines (as used in the case of the Citroen Light 15 for example) or a ‘low’ injector shown by the solid lines. The choice is determined by engine requirements and once established must not be changed.

The volume of the injection is regulated by the adjustment of the linkage and the size of the jet (Gp) controls the speed of the injection.

NOTE that although this pump is mechanically operated, there is complete absence of friction, thus precluding all possibility of parts getting out of adjustment or jamming.

AFTER starting a cold engine

Do not forget to push in fully the dashboard control as soon as the engine is warm enough to run satisfactorily on the main carburettor output.

On warm days, if the engine is not stone cold, it is usually possible to start it with the dashboard control pulled out only to the half-way position.

If an instant start is not forthcoming, check up possible causes as follows:

1. Remove and clean the Gs starter petrol jet. Blow through it with compressed air or a cycle pump.
2. If the engine has not been run for

some time, prime the petrol pump.

3. Clean and reset the plug points.

4. The Battery may be low and need recharging (a point frequently overlooked is that whilst strong enough to operate the electric starter the current may in consequence be completely absorbed, leaving none to give a spark at the plug points).

Starting engine when hot

If when hot, particularly in summer, the engine does not start immediately, depress the foot accelerator, operate the electric starter, when the engine will start within a few seconds. (With a hot engine, however, if the carburettor is correctly adjusted and the ignition in good order, it is normally possible to start the engine on the pilot jet output i.e. with the throttle closed).

Adjusting the idling

This adjustment is of considerable importance and depends on the mechanical perfection of both engine and carburettor. Compressions must be equal, ignition in good order, and the induction system free from air leaks. The throttle “pull-off” spring must pull the throttle back to its stop, i.e., closed position, and all nuts, screws, etc., used in the assembly of the carburettor must be tight. Note particularly that the volume control screw (W) has not been broken or distorted by over-tightening. If it has, a new screw must be obtained.

Normal adjustment is carried out as follows:

1. Wait until the engine is hot.

2. Set the throttle adjustment screw (Z) until the idling speed is on the high side.

3. Slacken the volume control screw (W) until the engine begins to hunt.

4. Screw it in gradually until the hunting disappears.

5. If the engine; speed is too high, reset the screw (Z) to slow it down to idling speed of about 500 rpm.

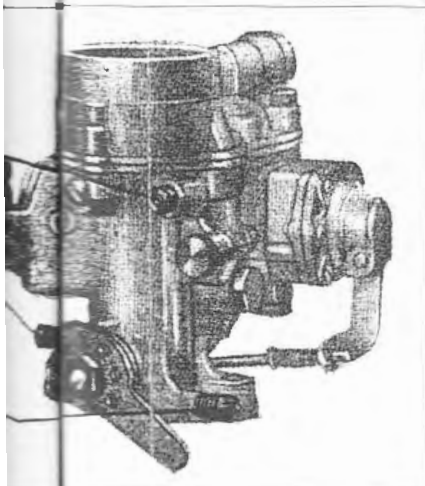
6. This may cause a resumption of slight hunting. If so, turn the volume control screw (W) gently in a clockwise direction until idling is perfect.

Detecting and remedying defects

The carburettor must be kept in 800d condition. To dean it, remove the jets and blow through them and the carburettor channels with compressed air. Make sure that all assembly screws, etc., are tight. See that there is no side play in the throttle spindle.

If acceleration is bad, make sure that the jet (Gp) is not choked. (Such a condition, however, will usually affect the general performance). Never interfere with the membranes in the accelerating device, if they need renewal, replace the complete assembly (fixed by the four corner screws) to the carburettor.

Do not forget to check and, if necessary, adjust the ignition. Plugs and valve timing play a considerable part in the performance of an engine.



NORMAL RUNNING.

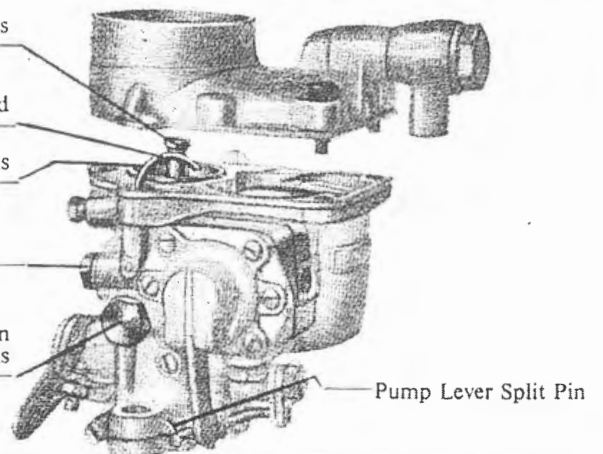
Setting Items : a Correction jet-controls emulsifying air

i Injector tube supplied by (Gp).

K Choke tube – controls main air flow

Gp. Pump jet

Y. Main jet holder on which main jet (Gg) is fitted



toc SNOWDONIA '96

28 - 30 June, 1996

GLAN GWNA
CAERNARFON
NORTH WALES

contact: Bob Anderson
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The premier UK event for all
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Ye Olde Traction Owners Club

RAID *du* ROBIN HOOD

OR MORE precisely...

The Traction Owners Club Heart of England Tour 1996

Following the last two highly successful tours, the 1996 gathering has some hard acts to follow. Who could forget Barrie Longden taking Pat McCauley for a ride on the handle bars of a vintage bicycle! Free beer at the Bass Museum and Sunday lunch "First Class" on the Silver Jubilee steam train. But in true TOC style we have no fears that this next tour throughout Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire will be no exception to the rule! Our preliminary plans include the following visits:

- SHERWOOD FOREST
- YE OLDE TRIP TO JERUSALEM
- THE MAJOR OAK
- NOTTINGHAM CASTLE
- SNEINTON SCIENCE WINDMILL
- BREWHOUSE YARD

As in previous years, we will base ourselves close to a campsite where there will also be a good selection of hotels and B&Bs in the locality.

The tour will span Saturday, Sunday and Monday May 24-26 and there will be a pre-tour gathering at a suitable hostelry on the Friday night where an informal TOC supper will be arranged. This will be available as and when you arrive at a specially negotiated price. Rally plates, route books and tour packs will be issued to each crew and an average of 60 to 80 miles will be covered each day - mostly on little-used country roads.

So the emphasis will be on a leisurely drive through beautiful English countryside with good company, brilliant food and humorous (some might say even raucous) entertainment. Make sure you put these dates in your diary and look out for reservation details in the next issue. Remember, it may not be possible to just turn up on the day because some venues will have restricted numbers.

See you in May!

National and International Events

16/17 March

London Classic Motor Show Alexandra Palace

Taking place at Alexandra Palace, this is "The Enthusiasts' Show" and will celebrate the centenary of the British Motor Industry. Adult £6, OAP £5, Child (5-14) £2, under 5 free. £1 discount off adult and OAP advance tickets - Greenwood Exhibitions 01296 631181

24 March

Joint TOC/CCC Spring Meeting Wellow Vineyard, East Wellow, Hampshire

Meet at the Vineyard at 11.30am for a wine tasting followed by a 3 course lunch and get together. Cost: £7.50 (£5 children) traditional roast or vegetarian meals will be available. Please book via the TOC Helpline so catering can be organised

4-6 May

Classic & Sportscar Show NEC

The number one UK classic car show. Special ticket price for TOC members, see page 21

24-26 May

Raid Robin Hood 1996 TOC Heart of England Tour

If you want to see organiser Richard Hooley wearing green tights, don't miss this one! Follow that arrow! See opposite page for details.

24-26 May

Anniversary Meeting Mollis aerodrome, Switzerland

The Swiss Citroën Traction Avant Club will celebrate its 20th anniversary with an international meeting for Citroëns built between 1919 and 1957. An ideal venue surrounded by beautiful mountains. Contact: Christian Heussi, Badstr. 57, CH-8867 Niederurnen, Switzerland. Tel/fax (41) 58 21 35 70.

1/2 June

Rendezvous des Voitures Anciennes Nogent-le-Rotrou

Deep in Depanoto country, the Citroën Club du Perche will be organising this event. Contact: Didier Blin, address: B.P. 161 28401 Nogent le Rotrou, France. Tel/fax 45.40.82.07 weekday evenings.

9 June

London - Brighton Classic Car Run

How about getting some Tractions together for this classic run? More info from organisers Greenwood Exhibitions on 01296 631181

14-16 June

CCC Rally Peterborough

The annual all-Citroën rally. Details from David Conway 01734 783533

28-30 June

TOC Annual Rally Snowdonia

Centred on Caernarfon. Bob Anderson is organising a Wizard Welsh Weekend! See opposite page for details.

11-14 July

1996 Brittany Rally

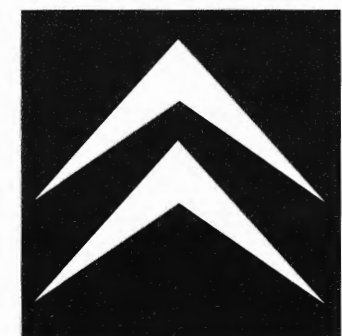
Our annual excursion to France.

4 August

The French Connection Beaulieu

A French Classic Car Extravaganza at this famous motoring venue. Viva Les Tractions! Special price entrance tickets (only available via the club) £5 adult £2.50 child, allows entry to the Beaulieu Motor Museum, Palace House (home of Lord Montagu), the Abbey.

For event information, please phone/fax the Helpline, 01425 674476.



Duty Free

As the Chancellor was sitting down I had Jason searching the house for a V14 (for those who aren't as mean with Vehicle Excise Duty as us, a V14 is the form used to cash in a tax disc). It's not mean really, we just don't like having tax on cars that aren't in use.

We guessed that there would be a plan to refund existing V.E.D., but with only a couple of days to go before December, I was prepared to risk not having the Traction on the road for Christmas – after all, there was a month's refund at stake!

As we all now know, there was really no immediate rush because the DVLC were to send out letters to all owners of cars over 25 years old and sporting a current tax disc. The letter said leave your tax disc in place and a refund would be sent out in due course. I had other plans, as did many other 'classic' owners in my area. A quick phone call to the DVLC confirmed that I could obtain a free tax disc from my local licencing office. Here two very nice chaps virtually filled in the application for us. Seconds later a disc bearing the words "25 YEAR EXEMPT" and "NIL" where PLG and £140 would otherwise have been. As the registration document (V5) has to be sent back to Swansea for updating to 25 year exempt status, I asked for a photocopy of the old V5, this was swiftly produced, double-sided no less!

I had heard a rumour that there were restrictions to use and other such catches. This I'm assured by Swansea and my local office at Chelmsford is not the case, it's simply a change of tax class. We are not alone in this exempt classification – showman's vehicles have been exempt since time began, but still have a disc. I asked if our discs would be available from post offices and was told, "not at this time". So just in case, when you want your new disc, allow enough time. Don't forget your MoT and Insurance certificates, and V5 registration document.



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Waiting for a new home?

Rear drive in the front garden

With two other cars over 25 years old we must get on and get them MoTed – who knows, one of us may end up commuting in a 1963 2CV! But I'll stick with the Traction.

Dave & Jason Houghton Gale
Leigh on Sea
Essex

If only everything over 25 was tax exempt!

Hot tip

Re. the Techtorque article last issue on fitting a thermostat and heater. Those of you who don't want to fit a metal thermostat housing can fit a housing from a Renault 9, which fits neatly in the top hose, though it is wise to drill a small bypass hole in the thermostat to ensure hot coolant flows enough to actuate the unit on initial start up.

Rik Blote
Camping Le Ch'Timi
Touzac
46700 Puy L'Eveque

This ruinous arriére truck was spotted sitting in a front garden in St Remy en Provence and makes an interesting comparison to John Howard's immaculately restored vehicle. However, despite appearances, it was complete and the engine had new plugs and leads and looked as if it had been run recently. The chrome was immaculate at the front but the interior of the cab definitely was not!

Eric & Sheila Pennington
Moseley
Birmingham

Tyre dating

Can anyone tell me when Michelin stopped producing 165x400 tyres in the UK? I have two still on my car, which is used daily, and I'm curious to know how old these may be. Better still, does anyone know the 'dating codes' which are supposedly embossed on the tyres?

Tony Hodgekiss
94 Oving Road
Chichester
West Sussex
PO19 4EW

TOC stand at the National Classic Car Show Picture courtesy Classic Cars





The ICCCR Park 'n' Ride scheme proved very popular (Ed. Unlike the one in Colchester)

H-vanitis

Despite having been in production for 34 years the Citroën H van is still little known in this country. Even the Citroën enthusiasts on the whole will have had little opportunity to examine one close up let alone to drive one. As a result many of the people who come to meet one for the first time are very pleasantly surprised, but then the "H" van is a very surprising vehicle.

At first sight it looks big, cumbersome and awkward to handle – in fact it isn't. The Traction owners who drove one at the Petersfield Rally discovered that it is the exact opposite, they found that they could manoeuvre within inches on the driving test after only minutes at the wheel, the positive steering, excellent visibility and very good turning circle made seemingly complex manoeuvres simple.

Okay, it's only a few inches longer than a Light 15 and a few inches wider than a normale, admittedly it is somewhat higher than both and it is this that makes it appear so large.

It's a van, so it can't be comfortable. Well, yes it is a van, but it's a Citroën van designed by the same team that designed the Traction, the 2CV and the DS. It is comfortable, the greatest surprise people have when first venturing forth in an 'H' is the quality of ride, the superb driving position and visibility and the overall agreeable experience.

Parts must be a problem, there are so few H vans in the country. Well this is where Citroën were so clever. Hardly any parts were specially made for the H van, they just integrated parts from other models that were available. When that particular model went out of production the H was simply adapted to use whatever replaced it. On the early vans most parts were sourced from the Traction parts bins. When the Traction went out of production, 2CV and DS parts were used. Eventually, as the DS went out, GS and CX items were incorporated. However,

many Traction parts were still being used right up to the end of the H vans' production in December 1981. Thanks to this, many Traction parts are still readily available.

What about insurance, that must be high? If you use it as a commercial vehicle you will have to pay a rate commensurate with the use you are putting it to and the goods you are carrying. However, if you are going to use it as a motor caravan or low mileage pleasure use, rates are very favourable.

They must be slow and heavy on fuel. The H is a surprisingly light vehicle (1375kgs) but not very well streamlined. Driven reasonably, a fuel consumption of between 22 and 25 mpg can be achieved. The top speed is approximately 65 mph with a cruising speed of around 50 mph.

Internal space. Now that is the biggest surprise – come in and walk around. You can do exactly that. You can stand up in an H, lie across an H, lay 8'x4' panels flat in an H, carry up to 1.6 tonnes in an H. The three part rear door makes an ideal serving hatch for catering purposes or acts as a porch if the H is a motor caravan. The number of options for use appears almost limitless. You only have to see the number of motor caravan conversions to discover that the variations on the H van theme are endless.

Good H vans are expensive. If space for money is the criterion then the answer is no. A good H can be purchased for about £1500. By good, I mean a sound, essentially rust free van. A van that with a good clean-up and some tender loving care will give years of service and pleasure. Higher prices are asked if the van is particularly clean or a long wheelbase or other rarer model. Conversely, vans in need of more attention carry lower price tags.

There must be some drawbacks, surely. I didn't want to mention this, but they are too high to get into the average garage!

If they are so good, why aren't they more popular? Well, in a way they are. There are two H clubs in Holland with a total

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membership of about 1200 and dedicated clubs exist elsewhere in Europe. As they were never imported into the UK other than by enthusiasts until recently the number here is still relatively low, but there is a growing band of owners, a register of members and a growing social calendar. Not everyone of course is attracted to them, some wives/husbands/girlfriends/boyfriends would not be seen dead in them. On the other hand, most kids love them! but if you are interested come up and see me sometime. (But please phone first as I may be in France. 0850 570444)

Mike Wheals
The Barn
Breach Farm
St Mary Bourne
Hampshire

Boxing Day success

As a member of the Jersey Old Motor Car Club, on December 26th I completed the Jersey Boxing Day Church Run in my newly restored 1938 11BL (visiting every church in Jersey). This annual event is always very popular, and this year was no exception with exactly 100 pre-war cars taking part. To my sheer delight and astonishment, I won the shield for the Best Car on the Run! This was my very outing with André Citroën and I was over the moon, it justified four years of hard work.

Brian Fallan
Jersey

Well done, Brian. Next FP will feature Brian's Traction in all its glory.



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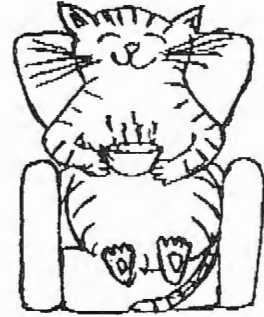
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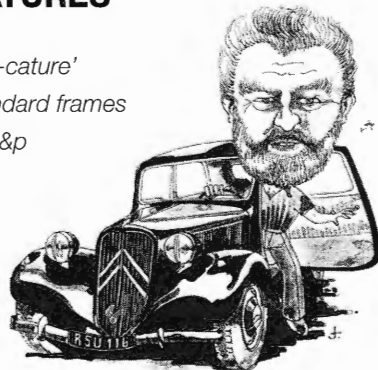
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