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\* Club Tools are available in these areas

For details of area meetings, please  
contact your local organiser



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**EDITORIAL**

This issue celebrates the 50th anniversary of the H Van with an article kindly written by Mike Wheals. We hope the next issue will have a road test of one of the oldest and most original vans in the UK. Does anyone have H Van pictures and stories of interest for future publication?

After 2 years of slow progress legislation has been passed in Brussels with the council of Ministers to form the Road-worthiness Directive for historic vehicle owners. The idea is that in the UK all existing exemptions, which are in our MOT for pre 1960 cars, will continue in the same way and must *not* lead to stricter standards than the vehicles were originally designed to meet. This is great news for all "old car" owners and the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs is to be congratulated for its work.

When Jonathan and I suggested in conversation that we should run a small quiz someone made a comment about puerile questions such as what does "Traction Avant" mean? . . . well, perhaps that should have been the level of questions as I presume everyone found things so difficult that a reply was not worth attempting. Come on you lot, a good deal of effort was put into compiling the quiz so let's have some response!

We have just heard of a "barn find" car which is now in the process of being restored and will be the subject of a future article. Has anyone else written articles on their cars yet?

**FRONT COVER**

Many thanks to Dennis Ryland for the photograph on the front cover. This was first published in his local press and I am assured that the driver walked out unscathed!

G.R.



**Floating Power**

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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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## ANNUAL RALLY, GRIMSTHORPE CASTLE

The date for the completed Application Forms to be returned has been extended until the 8th June.

Rally fee (to include access to the Park Grounds and Castle on the Sunday together with a 3 course meal on Saturday night and Disco). Bring your own drinks for the meal, a Bar will be available for the Disco (no private drinks here).

THE MEAL AND DISCO MUST BE PRE-BOOKED BY 8th JUNE.

ADULT £19 per person.

Children (under 7) £10.

Sunday any day visitors must enter by the Main Castle Gate and pay £4 to enter the Castle and Park Grounds. Each car will be charged £5 on the Rally Field.

DON'T DELAY MAKE MOIRA AND MICKS DAY. SEND NOW.

TEL/FAX: 0115 9118218.

## REDUCED FERRY FARES FOR BOTH EASTERN AND WESTERN CHANNEL CROSSINGS

The T.O.C. is now affiliated to the Grand Touring Club. If you are thinking of crossing to the Continent just phone 0181 324 4047, give the Passcode



*Is this the only Commercial in REAL active service. Reply with photo proof!.*



GTCTROC and your T.O.C. Membership number, and the Travel Agency concerned will help you to find the best deal. Some may be at unsuitable sailing times but a discounted deal will be available.

### CITROPOLIS

The new magazine from Fabien Gabates will now be available from your newsagent. The bi-monthly journal costs £2.50 and number four is due out June/July.

### ANORAK'S QUIZ

To date there have been three sets of answers received. Two

have been from committee members, who scored 6/20 and 11/20. One member only has submitted a set of answers, scoring 4/20. I am genuinely surprised by the lack of knowledge and interest that members have in their cars, even with the incentive of glittering prizes on offer, which are: 1) a year's free subscription to the T.O.C., 2) Andre Citroën, The man and the motor cars by John Reynolds, 3) The British Citroën by Malcolm Bobbit. There is also a booby prize of a small trophy made from ruined traction parts for the entrant with the lowest score. As matters stand the one entrant will

win all four prizes!

Answers and explanations will appear in the July issue of F.P.

*Jonathan Howard*

## TRACTIONS IN PUBLICATION

It seems that the Traction is suddenly very much in vogue as almost every old car magazine recently has run articles on restoring buying and history - even the Financial Times (see article in this issue) has found reason to look in to the marque.

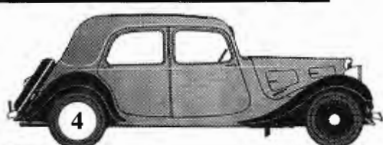


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## CHAIRMAN'S NOTE

By the time you read this, you will have in your hands volume 21, issue 7 of Floating Power. The new editors will have begun creating their own style. The club has had six or seven editors in its 20 years, and the style of the magazine has changed with each. As was to be expected, the rumpus stirred up after the famous questionnaire meant that Glen and Jonathan's first edition received a critical appraisal by members. The vast majority agreed that its presentation boded well for maintaining the club's reputation of being in the vanguard of club magazines. Certainly the amount and variety of the contents wanted for nothing, and that is its main purpose; it is a means of communication first, and can be a work of art afterwards.

The sunny spring weather has allowed, nay encouraged, our style of informal gathering-cum-convoy drive type of events to get into full swing early on. Local runs arranged by area organisers will naturally be successful if they are as well supported as those in the west London area. (Please note that Peter Simper's name has replaced mine as the London area

organiser).

Stan Barker is continuing to manage national events very well, and we have a full programme for this summer shown on page . It is to be hoped that by the time you read this you will have booked your long weekend in Lincolnshire, as it will be little more than a month to the T.O.C. Annual Rally where another huge gathering of curvaceous cars will please our eyes. Surely the site is not too far from anyone's home in the U.K.; if you need to push your traction to get it there, then start now! The more the merrier, everytime. The club's aim is to help members preserve and run tractions, and it is well known the best way to achieve this is to encourage owners to meet and compare the chrome plated dome nuts on their reverse flow double underhead swabble grunge pumps.

See you all there!

Alec Bilney

*Perhaps members might compose a caption to the cover photo, or indeed a limerick? e.g.*

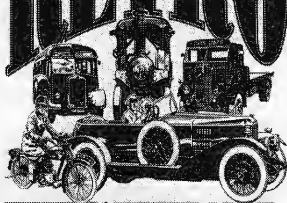
*There was an old man  
of Stroud  
Of his traction he was  
very proud  
He greatly resented  
That it was so dented  
He explained to the  
gathering crowd.*

*Please send in the fruits of your wit to the editor.*

**9&10 AUGUST 1997**

Centre Exhibitions, a Member of The NEC Group, have now launched the **RETRO FESTIVAL**, a sister event to their hugely successful National Classic Motor Show, also staged at the UK's premier venue The National Exhibition Centre. Building on Centre Exhibitions' acknowledged expertise and supported by the leading journals **RETRO FESTIVAL** will be the only major British event to bring together the whole range of cars, motorbikes, buses, boats, commercial and steam vehicles.

**THE FOOTMAN JAMES RETRO FESTIVAL**



**THE EVENT FOR VETERAN VINTAGE AND HISTORIC ENTHUSIASTS**

DER TERMIN FÜR FANS VON OLDTIMERN UND HISTORISCHEN FAHRZEUGEN  
L'EVENEMENT POUR LES VRAIS VÉTÉRANS ET POUR LES ENTHOUSIASTES DE L'HISTOIRE  
HET EVENEMENT VOOR LIEFHEBBERS VAN OUD MODEL VOERTUIGEN EN VOOR HISTORISCHE ENTHOUSIASTEN

**NATIONAL EXHIBITION CENTRE  
BIRMINGHAM • ENGLAND**

## sectionSCENE

### SOUTH MIDLANDS SECTION

Our new leader is Colin Crawford (see page 2) and our new meeting venue is The Fox Pub at Oddington, just off Stow/Chipping Norton A436. Meeting 2nd Wednesday at 8 p.m.

### IRELAND

Annual Irish Citroën run. Sunday 27th July. Outer Dublin area - starting point at a Citroën Dealer (Sur-Le-Pont Motors) Enfield.

### LONDON SECTION

Our first two events listed in last month's magazine were a great success, our trip to the BLUEBELL RAILWAY started with Sue and myself in our Big 15 and a friend with his friends driving our Normale, en route we picked up Carol and Alec and then Helen and John in their Normales. We convoyed to Sheffield Park Station in East Sussex to find three more Traction waiting, and a further Traction arrived later on, all new faces, a total of eight vehicles on our first outing of 1997 is very encouraging. We all took a trip down the line having flashed back in time to the good old days of steam engines, after which we had a look around the train sheds to see restoration going on (I'm glad I own a Traction and not an Engine). One of the old waiting rooms was full of very interesting memorabilia.

Our second event was the Cheam Fair and Classic Car Show organised by the Lions Club of Sutton for charity. Six cars arrived including two new cars and faces. Alec Bilney also took his BSA M20 Motor Bike. We had a ten minute downpour of rain but it did not spoil the day. Alec, known to us as 'lucky Alec' in the London section won free membership to the National Trust and Juliet York won an Electric Toaster. (does this mean Andrew and Karin will get breakfast in bed!).

Many thanks for everyone who turned up to these events.

*Events still to look forward to:*

8th June	HOLLYCOMBE STEAM FAIR - HAMPSHIRE
September	DENBIES VINEYARD - BOXHILL, SURREY
October	R.A.F. MUSEUM - HENDON

If interested in participating in any of these events please contact Peter Simper on 0181-891-1093 (9 p.m. - 10.30 p.m.)

### SECTION NEWS

Andy Burnett has written requesting his name to be added to the "Mutual Aid" list. He mentions that there are various members in the north of Scotland in the process of rebuilding and having a local club tool loan would help as Ian Nairn in Edinburgh is 130 miles south! Andy is at 013398 86290 (Aboyne, Aberdeenshire).

### WELSH BORDERS SECTION

The floods of calls to my pleas for a convoy of cars to The Annual Rally have left me breathless! So far its just us in P.S.K. I repeat, any Welsh Borders Tractionists that want to convoy please ring me. We have set the date for The Welsh Borders Barbecue, its on Saturday August the 2nd at the Spout House. I have arranged for a visit to the Hereford Museum of Cider at 3 p.m., so this will be our assembly point and after visiting the museum we will motor to Spout House for The Kevin Betts Boules Tournament, super prize for the winner, he says, followed by the Barbecue. If you wish to stay overnight you will be able to camp in our garden. Please bring a bottle or two and there will be a charge of £3 to help defray expenses. Please let us know if you are coming and if you would like an alternative feed to us carnivores. Mary and I look forward to welcoming as many T.O.C. members to Spout House as possible, there is plenty of room! If you have never been to Herefordshire and seen our beautiful county, now is your chance!

John Worthing





# LE CUBE UTILE - THE CITROEN H VAN

## by MIKE WHEALS

In the immediate post war years France as all other European countries was suffering from severe shortages. Their machine tool industry had in the main been either destroyed or removed to Germany, materials were in very short supply especially steel and their commercial vehicles had been either commandeered by various militaries or were so worn, old and decrepit to make that exercise not worth while. New commercial vehicles were needed to get the country on its feet as soon as possible but with

conditions were less hostile and allowed them greater design freedom we do not know but the design from the very start was no holds barred functional. By May 1946 the first prototype was well under construction embodying most of the ideas that would stay with it throughout its long production life.

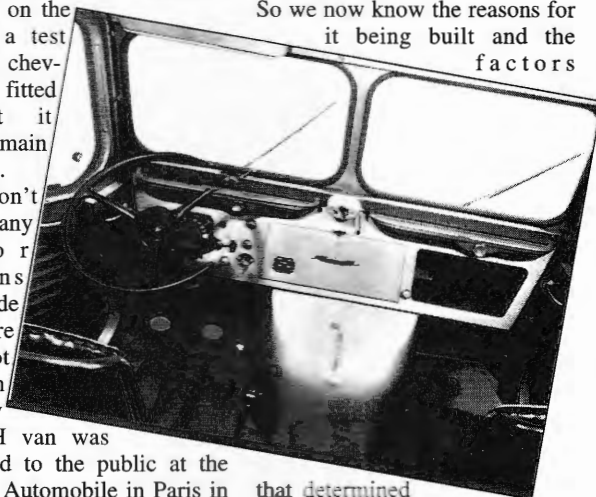
This prototype was designed around the front suspension, brakes and steering of the 6 cyl. Traction, and the engine of the 4 cyl. Traction are also used in the type 23 light commercial. The body of this prototype already featured the top hat section ribs and corrugated panels that were to become the trade mark of the H van through the decades to follow. The top hat ribs, vertical internally and horizontal externally sandwiched the

the third prototype was registered and used on the road as a test bed. No chevrons are fitted so that it would remain incognito. We don't know if any major revisions were made but there could not have been too many as the H van was introduced to the public at the Salon de Automobile in Paris in October, only three months later. It was very well received and large orders were placed however because of difficulties in material supply production did not really get under way until June 1948.

As mentioned at the beginning of this article the shop floor parts bins were the base upon which the H van was built. You know now that the Traction played the major role in this, supplying the engine, front suspension, brakes and steering. Other items incorporated in the design from the Traction parts bins were the radiator

have been built.

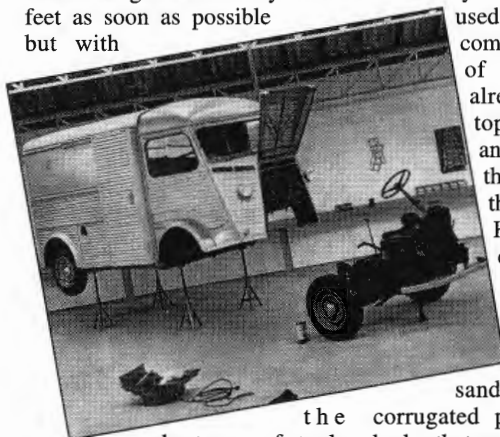
So we now know the reasons for it being built and the factors



that determined its construction but it is the design or concept that is so outstanding. Think back to the cars and vans of that time. The vast majority had beam axles, cart springs, side valve engines driving the rear wheels and separate chassis and body, most light vans were based on light cars, think of the Ford and Morris vans of that era, the maximum payload in most cases being no more than 1/2 a ton. The loading floor was of necessity high to allow clearance for the live beam axle and differential unit and the interior was cramped.

The H van was a completely new concept, although based on car components as were the others it featured front wheel drive, independent suspension on all 4 wheels, rack and pinion steering, integrated body and chassis. The H van weighed less than its competitors but had a far greater carrying capacity of 1.2 tons, the floor was very much lower enabling

loads to be simply carried into the interior and was so spacious that goods could be placed where one wished as you could walk around inside. An even greater asset was the ability to enter the rear of the van from the front without having to leave the van. 50 years later many vans in current production do not



shortages of tools and materials it was a truly daunting task. It was in this scenario that the Citroen H van was conceived, by sorting through the parts bins of the Traction range and the prewar commercial vehicles the design team put together the concept of a medium delivery van that could be put into production in the shortest time scale using only the minimum tooling and materials. It was quite a good design team that was employed on this task. They had already designed the Traction avant range of four and six cylinder cars and the prewar TUB van and had carried out considerable work on the Tout petite voiture (the 2CV) which was to follow the H van into production some two years later. They also went on to design the DS. On reflection to describe them as quite a good design team may be an understatement - they were possibly the best design team ever.

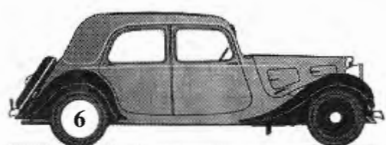
Only months after the end of hostilities work started, whether the team decided to create it as an interim model to tide over until

corrugated panels to create a body that was not only to be made with minimum tooling and material but was exceptionally strong and light in weight. Many lessons were learnt from this prototype and a 2nd one was commenced incorporating various modifications. To get some idea of the speed that this concept was evolving by September 1946 (only 5 months after the 1st prototype was started the 2nd one had reached a point where but for details the concept was effectively finished.

The step between a finalised concept and a finished design ready for production is however a big one - every item no matter how small has to be designed, drawings made, prototypes produced and tested, tooling made when the prototypes are proven and then incorporated in the total assembly which in turn has to be tested - it is therefore not surprising that it was not until July 1947 that the third and final prototype was completed. This,



(modified Normale) speedometer, ammeter and fuel gauge, dashboard controls, lighting switch, steering wheel and windscreen wiper motor. Many other less easily recognised items were also used - brake hoses, drive shaft parts and various electrical items - it could well be said that but for the Traction the H van could never



incorporate all these features. What are they like to drive, to live with, to use as every day vehicles.

For those meeting them for the first time they do seem to be big and ungainly - they are hardly sylphlike and elegant but they do have an honesty about them that attracts (well some people anyway). It is obvious that not a great deal was spent on styling. You get what you see. It looks the way it looks and its built the way its built because that was the best way of producing a medium sized van with the materials available at that time. I don't think it occurred to the designers to style it.

Coming back to the big and ungainly, appearances are deceptive. The H van is only 3" longer than the light 15 and only some 6" wider than the Big 15 or 6. I'll admit it is a bit higher, some 2'6" so it must be that that gives the impression of size or bulk. In weight it is only 150 kilo heavier than the Big 15.

With a pay load of 1.6 tonnes (the HY towards the end of the production run) and an unladen weight of only 1.375 tonnes it has a weight/pay load ratio unequalled even today which is a marvellous testimonial to its design.

Climb inside one, sit in the drivers seat, you will find that visibility is excellent, seating position is superb, everything falls to hand and with properly positioned door mirrors you not only have excellent rear vision but can actually see the rear bumpers on both sides which makes reversing to close tolerances easy. On the early vans no key is required to start the engine - just push in the knob marked C (contact), pull out the knob S (choke) and pull the knob D (starter). Owners of French built Traction will recognise these knobs straight away. The starter sounds like a Traction starter and the engine sounds like a Traction. Any Tractionist will quickly feel at home in an H, the steering is just as positive (but with a much improved turning circle). The brakes and clutch also have a familiar feel. The main difference is in the height that you sit, it gives a completely different perspective, you look down instead of along.

The engine pull strongly from

idling speeds in all the gears - top gear is used most of the time, it only being necessary to change down if balked to walking speeds. The H van was designed for local delivery work in the main which was all that vans were called upon to do in the late 1940's and early 1950's and the gearing was chosen accordingly. This makes an H van very easy and pleasant to drive in urban or rural environments as all normal road conditions are met with in top. On the other side of the coin - Motorways are a pain. The H is geared about 10 to 15 miles an hour slower than a Traction in top gear, so whereas you would cruise comfortably in your Traction at 60 miles an hour in an H the equivalent comfortable speed would be approximately 50. So don't use the motorways, allow a bit more time, take to the lanes and B roads and a whole new world is revealed - you look over the tops of the hedges and see vistas formally hidden, you trundle along, relaxed, when you come across a pleasant place to stop and have a picnic you can simply pop into the back and put the kettle on even if it's raining, you don't have to get out so you don't get wet.

It may be that the H you are in is a later model, the high tech. version, you need an ignition key to turn the ignition on, the starter is operated by pressing a red button (a feature now copied by

few pounds spent on undercarpet felt makes a huge difference and an H can become quite civilised. You can either accept it as it is, do as the Dutch do and carry out every possible modification or something in between. The variations are endless.

When launched in 1947 the H van was well received as already stated, production increased to try to meet orders. The Belgium factory also started producing H's although production was later switched to Holland. Large companies bought large fleets of H vans, smaller companies bought smaller fleets of H's, others bought them singly. Farmers, butchers, carpenters and people in all trades and walks of life bought them. Its design made it the most versatile van available.

Approved coachbuilders converted them into mobile shops, mobile post offices, refrigerated vans, furniture vans, workshops, buses, coaches and a hundred and one other varieties, some with extended bodies, long wheelbases, high roofs or combinations of all these. They proved so durable and useful that at the end of the production run on the 14 December 1981, some 35 years after the introduction of the H van the French military still had orders placed for them. A van I supplied to a customer was first registered in July 1982 to the French Air Force, some 7

captured by the Germans and sent to a concentration camp in East Germany. When the Russians arrived in 1944 he was taken by them to a slave labour camp where he was kept until 1951 when he was at last released. He didn't tell us what he did from that date until 1970 when he bought his H van but from then onwards till he retired in 1995 he used that H van every day to collect fruit and vegetables from the market and deliver to his customers. He was in tears when he came to part with the van as it had been such a big part of his life and he had to be assured that it would be well looked after. I'm glad to say it is, and it is still being used every day as a working van by its new and very proud owner.

The H van was never imported into the U.K. by Citroen U.K. The only vans brought into this country are personal imports, this explains why they are so little known here but as the usefulness of these vans is belatedly realised they are becoming increasingly sought after for pleasure and for business. For example, a new van of comparable size would cost approx. £15,000.00 to £20,000.00. Have it sign written drive it around and see how much attention you get. The van may be a very useful working vehicle but as a promotional vehicle it could do better as my school master used to say. An H van costing £3,000.00 and sign written is a different matter. It is just as good a working vehicle (with the proviso that no motorway work is included) but when it comes to promotional usefulness it is no contest, the H is in a class of its own.

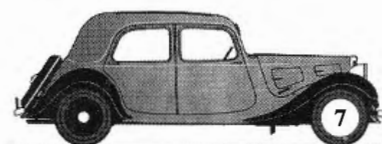
Many vans are of course bought for recreational use and are converted in various degrees into motor caravans, some conversions are no more than tin tents, others are superbly appointed with colour television, microwave ovens, hot and cold showers etc. and so on. You can make them what you want them to be. An H can be what you want it to be, but most of all an H van is fun, it makes you smile, and it makes others smile as well and that must be good.



the latest Bentley Continental R). The speedo unit now comes from the Dyane and the switches are from either DS, GS, or CX. The indicator switch is from a 2CV. Post 1964 H's had 12 volt electrics and post 1969 vans had more supple suspension. Noise levels are still high as there is no sound proofing of any kind but a

months after the end of production.

I have bought and sold H vans which were bought new, used for 25, 30 and in one case 41 years by the original owner, in many cases being the sole means of livelihood. One man who was only about 19 years of age at the start of the 2nd world war was





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Reflex	£134	£20	£114	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reflex with European Cover	£209	£31	£178	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Additional Members</b>				
Joint Membership (2 members)	£22	£3	£19	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Response 1 vehicle	£86	-	£86	<input type="checkbox"/>
Response 2/3 vehicle	£111	£4	£107	<input type="checkbox"/>

I apply for membership of the Associate Section of the RAC under the Rules which apply from time to time. I understand that the special terms are only available to me whilst in membership of my Associated Club.

SIGNATURE

DATE

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# REFLEXING IN EUROPE

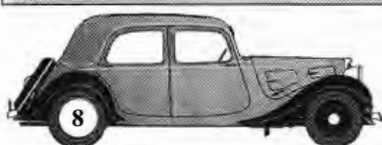
## RAC

Included in this issue of Floating Power are details of R.A.C. Reflex Europe and a report of a first-hand experience of its benefits from Ian and Elaine Nairn.

After the 1996 Brittany Rally Ian and Elaine were travelling in convoy with friends from the T.O.C. towards Angers when their car engine developed a 'nasty, knocking sound' which proved to be the big end. Ian was worried about 'phoning R.A.C. Reflex as he is unable to speak French but found they spoke perfect English. The R.A.C. turned up at their hotel (which they had just managed to reach) at the appointed time the next morning and took the car away on a lorry.

Ian and his friends, escorted by two helpful police motorcyclists, went to the local Avis Rental Office. Their details had already arrived there and they were able to continue their holiday in a new Renault Clio. They handed this car back at the Hoverport, picked up a Peugeot 405 at Dover and drove home to find their Traction waiting for them on the drive.

Ian and Elaine would like to convey their thanks to Dennis and Brenda Kelland, Barrie and Babs Longden and Andrew and Karin York and a recommendation for R.A.C. Reflex Europe. For further information telephone the Helpline.





In the roll-call of classic cars, there surely can be no more sublime creation than the Citroën Traction. The sweeping lines, the absurdly wide wings. That grille, with the two huge up-turned Vs. Others may disagree but, for me, it is the ultimate in sleek, seductive motoring. I admit to knowing little about them. Yet, ever since seeing a dazzling white version in the film *Diva*, I have craved ownership.

This explains why, after eight years in Asia, I had become determined to track down Madame Le Thi Thu. I knew that, somewhere in the paddy fields of Indochina, she runs a business devoted to sourcing and restoring these cars.

At first I had trouble believing the story. Vietnam is having a rush of economic growth in which most working folk would sooner open a Honda motorcycle dealership than tinker about with such museum pieces as a 1930s' Citroën. It did not seem possible that someone would want to make a living from welding together old body parts.

It started to make sense only after meeting increasing numbers of expatriate businessmen in Ho Chi Minh City who own Citroën Tractions. Almost all of them had come from Madame Thu's garage.

How these cars reached Vietnam in the first place is no secret. In the days of French colonial rule, the Traction was the vehicle of choice for civil servants and other worthies.

Self-important bureaucrats favoured the beefy six-cylinder version. The rest made do with the four-cylinder, fixed head coupé or the sporty cabriolet. Hundreds survived the departure of the French and, in 1975, the hasty retreat of the US from South Vietnam as Communist troops overran Saigon.

It was in a gleaming, black, six-cylinder Traction that I was chauffeured through the countryside by Nguyen Trung dong, a charming young hotelier with a wiry moustache. He runs a Traction "limousine service" on the side ("The First in Vietnam. We Serve With Pleasure!") and knew where to find Madame Thu. Besides, his car could use an oil change.

The first half-hour of the journey took us down the congested two-lane highway that runs south from Ho Chi Minh City past rows of cheerless, foreign, joint-venture factories. Dong then turned down a quiet country road lined with palm

# Madame Thu and Her Traction Action

Jeremy Grant meets a mechanic with a difference as he tracks down the Citroën of his dreams

trees and, suddenly, we were there.

Madame Thu's garage was little more than a collection of flimsy huts with corrugated iron roofs next to a shoe stall. But I counted four Citroëns and a rogue 1950s' Mercedes 190 under the awning. This was for real.

With deeply rouged face and nails painted in burgundy polish, Madame Thu emerged. She looked an improbable garage mechanic in her plastic slippers and florid silk blouse.

First, though, there was one small problem. Today was the first working day after the lunar new year *Tet* holiday and so, custom dictated, it was a day of business. No other activity was allowed. Speaking to reporters would bring bad luck. I felt sure I had heard this one before. So, after agreeing that a bit of old-fashioned media exposure might bring her some business, she relented.

How did it all start? After the war, she said, vehicles that could be used for public transport were in short supply. Like many people in southern Vietnam, her family found that the spacious Traction fitted the bill. She and her husband did the obvious thing and started a shuttle bus service.

Often, operators would be able to squeeze in a few more people by slicing the cars in half, adding a few inches to the chassis and reassembling them. "We had up to 21 people in them most days," said her husband.

By 1992, Madame Thu was getting inquiries from expatriates who had spotted the workhorses outside Ho Chi Minh City. She realised there could be more money in selling them to foreigners than ferrying farmers and their livestock to the market.

The family then set about scouring southern provinces for Tractions that were still on the road, travelling as far as Danang



"Your limousine, sir?" Nguyen Trung Dong and his six-cylinder Traction

on the central coast and the central highlands retreat of Dalat. More than 40 now have passed through the garage and into foreign hands. One was even sent to a crown prince of Malaysia. Export formalities? No problem, confided Madame Thu's husband.

It was time to inspect the work in progress. Outside, on the roadside forecourt, she pointed to the shell of a cream-coloured Cabriolet, one of two being restored. "You don't like the colour? I can change that. You want different coloured seats?"

She rapped on the exposed metal floor with her knuckles and kicked a couple of tyres in a way that only second car salesmen know how. Mine for just \$6,000 (£3,704).

Her voice had the shrill authority of a drill sergeant, perhaps something to do with her stint as a cashier on a US air force base in the war years. But I was not for buying. Those who do acquire them do so mostly for the cachet, it seems. There are perhaps up to 30 in Ho Chi Minh City alone.

For others, such as Mike Gray of accounting firm Coopers & Lybrand, the Traction has a practical purpose. "It's a moving billboard - and a very effective one, too," he says.

Driving a Traction in Ho Chi Minh City's busy streets is a big problem. They do not have power steering. This means they

can "be a pig to drive", according to John Lay of Inchcape Motors.

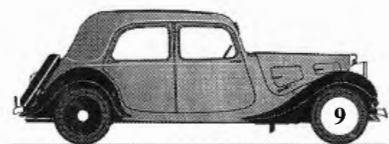
Perhaps because of this, many owners are trying to sell their Tractions - and few are willing to buy. "The bottom has really dropped out of the market on these cars," says Lay. Recently, and sight unseen, he bought three in need of restoration for \$1,500.

The Traction has been good to Madame Thu. Business has turned out better than she expected and the family has enough money to send one of their 10 children to Canada to study computer science for six months. This will cost \$11,000 - or roughly 10 times more than most Honda motorcycle dealers earn in a year.

Madame Le Thi Thu, 269 Phan Dinh Phung Street, Bien Hoa City, Dong Nai province, Vietnam. Tel: (84-61) 824 296 (no fax).

Mr. Dong's Citroën Traction Limousine Service, 205 Phan Ngu Lao Street, Ho Chi Minh City. Telfax: (848) 832 4027.

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Financial Times  
15-3-97



# WHAT'S THE TIME?!!!

Every time I used my traction, (Slough Lt 15) the first thing I used to look at on the dashboard was the clock, which has never worked!, so after about two years of this, I thought it's about time I did something about it, but what? Having talked to other members of the club it seems this is not an uncommon fault, but the solution can be expensive!, i.e. to have the original clock repaired.

While on the Brittany Rally this year 1996, we camped near Mike Tennant, who showed me his car fitted with a quartz battery operated clock, but without the original Jaeger face, I never did find out which clock it was, as he told me he got it on a stall in a market somewhere!

On my return from the rally I spent some time going around the local stores, looking for a clock to fit in place of the original, and at last I found a unit to fit, which I will now try to explain how to modify and fit to your car (if it is fitted with square instruments)!

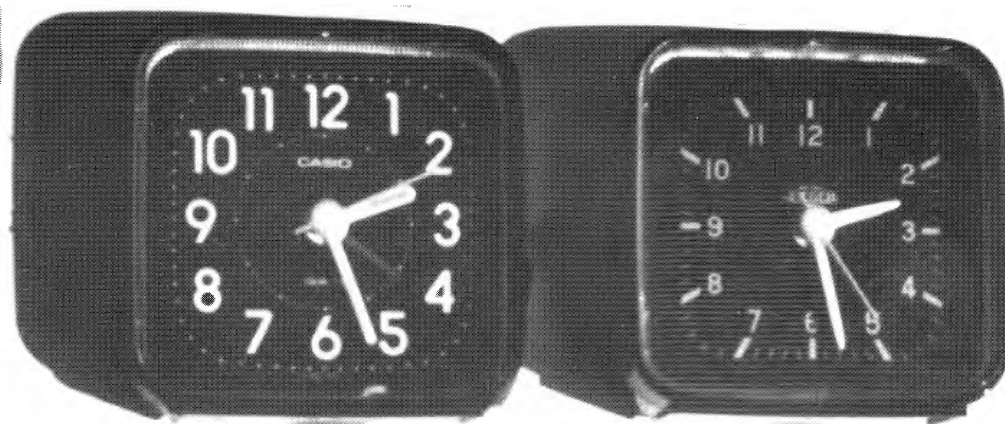
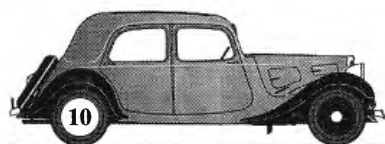
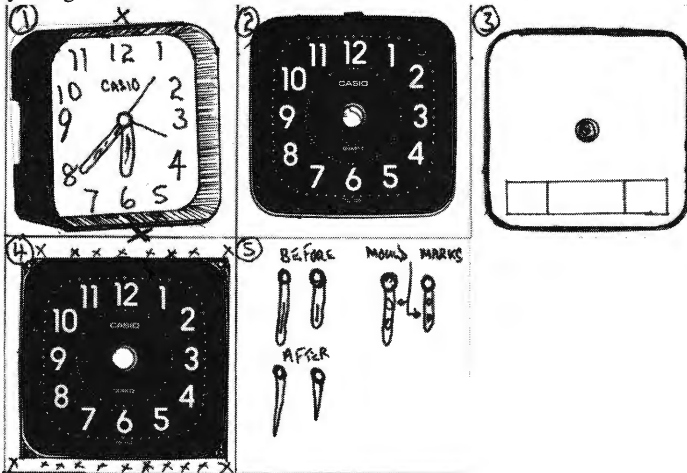
## HOW TO MODIFY THE CLOCK, FITTED TO SLOUGH CARS WITH SQUARE INSTRUMENTS

Do **not** remove dashboard, the clock can be removed from under dashboard.

There are two types of clock retainers. The early type which has two screws that screw into two lugs cast into the outer clock casing (see Fig. B).

The later type is held in place by clips. The type I have modified is the early screw type, as follows:

(a) Open air-vent flap, to give you light under dashboard.



Before and After

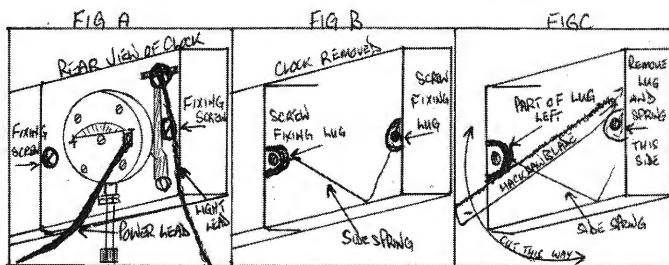
(b) Remove clock light lead and tape-up with insulating tape.

(c) Disconnect clock power lead and tape-up.

(d) Unscrew clock adjusting control.

(e) Remove the two clock fixing screws (see Fig. A).

(f) Tilt the clock forward to enable the clock face to clear the two side fixing screw lugs. Remove clock from outer casing.



In order to fit the new Casio clock into the dashboard outer casing the two fixing screw lugs must be *modified*, by removing one lug and most of the other.

(g) Use a junior hacksaw blade to cut the lugs from underneath, cut off one fixing screw lug, then cut *almost* through the second lug, but leave a small amount of the lug to hold one of the side springs - that hold the clock face

plate and glass in place (see Fig. C). This is done by cutting through the lug from underneath in an arc towards the front of the lug (facing you), when almost cut, put a nail in the screw hole and snap the lug off! This should leave enough lug to hold the side spring in place when modified clock is fitted.

(h) Discard one side spring as there is not enough room in the

the original clock face at **Xxxx** to the same size as the Casio face, you will also need to enlarge the hole in the centre of the original clock face. This is done with a round file (from behind the face) in order that you do not damage the paint on the original clock face, use the red alarm hand boss to gauge the size of the hole.

(6) You will see the hour and minute hands are too wide, and have luminous paint on them, you cannot just turn them over as there are mould marks on the back of the new hands (see Fig. 5). Take a sharp knife and scrape off the luminous paint, and using a fine flat file, file the sides of the hour and minute hands to about the same shape as the original old hands (be careful as the new hands are made of thin plastic), finish off the front of the hands with the fine file (see Fig. 5).

(7) Fit the original face into the Casio clock case, discard the red alarm hand, first fit the hour hand then the minute hand, I also refitted the yellow second hand, but this is optional. In order to align the hands correctly, set them at six o'clock, with the second hand at twelve o'clock.

(8) Open rear battery panel in the new clock and remove the plastic insulation from the battery, the movement should now start to work, set the clock to the correct time.

(9) You do not need to refit the plastic clock face cover as you have the car's glass clock cover fitted in the original clock outer casing, don't forget to clean the inside of the original clock glass, before you fit the modified clock to the car ... So **what's the time?!!!**

Dennis Kallend

(1) Insert a thin blade at point X (see Fig. 1) at the top and bottom of plastic face cover and prise out cover (it is not glued into clock).

(2) Having removed the plastic cover you can now remove all the hands and lift out the clock face (see Fig. 2).

(3) You now have an open case front, with only the four hand shafts sticking up (see Fig. 3).

(4) Pull the hands off the old clock and remove the original clock face by removing the three screws which hold the face on, you will see the original face is square.

(5) Use the Casio clock face as a template (see Fig. 4) and file

# WANNA HEAR A STORY?

*(Apologies to Max Bygraves)*

Over the years many people have asked me how I came by ENE 442, the blue coupé, known to many simply as Ennie and to my family affectionately as 'The Old Girl'. As it is now 25 years since I bought her I thought I would tell the story.

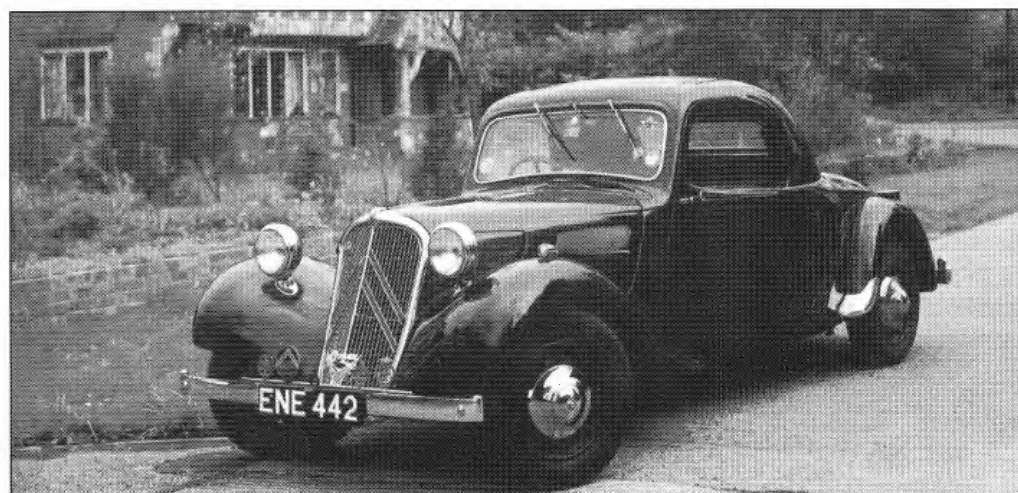
The ritual was in those days to buy Exchange & Mart for 4d (old pennies) on a Thursday and scan the column under Citroën and also the Vintage and Veteran section. In early April I spotted in small print "Citroën Coupé", 1 lady owner from new, £400'. I thought of the usual sales hype but had to quench my curiosity by 'phoning the Chester number to see if it was genuine. On ringing the number a Mr. Peter White answered (not our treasurer) and confirmed he was not a dealer but a dental surgeon. In almost 20 years of the Traction I had only seen a picture of Mrs. Flora Smith's coupé from New Zealand! Now I was to see one in the flesh! Mrs. Smith's coupé is a 1936 Light 12, maroon, now owned by John Vanechop in Sydney, Australia.

My difficulty now was to get to Chester as British Rail were on strike. (Time changes nothing! Ed.). I began to think it was a lost opportunity but over the weekend my mind kept thinking and nagging me to ring again. On the Tuesday I decided to 'phone again and find out if the car had been sold and ask the name of the NEW OWNER! "It isn't sold", was the answer. There had just been two calls, one from Scotland and the other from Kent, and I knew who they would have been!

Next came a visit to the Bank Manager to see if I could borrow £400. He asked what it was for and I told him "An old car". I left the Bank with a Banker's draft in my pocket - such high finance! However, it was a case of "Go for it or regret it for ever". The rail strike was still on and I had not thought about getting to see it but by Saturday I had made up my mind to hitch hike, starting at 6.30 the next

morning. So I set off to London with a bag of tools.

Living close to the A3 did help and a milk lorry came along almost immediately and dropped me at Raynes Park. I caught a No 77 bus to Euston Station and felt great. The weather was fine and luckily I met a chap in the queue for the ticket office who was a regular visitor to Chester and knew that if we caught a train to Crewe we could get a bus to Nantwich and another one to Chester. I felt all was going well and hoped that the car would fulfil my hopes.



From Chester Station I took a taxi to the address and there on a semi-circular drive in front of a large impressive house stood the coupé, nicely polished. The owner greeted me, told me that the car had been left to him by his aunt but he had no use for it. Over a cup of tea we talked about Tractions, Coupés and Roadsters and then to view the car!

I had a quick look round inside and out and noted the mileage reading 71,000. He took me for a drive, which did not impress me and on looking under the bonnet I noticed that the Bell Housing and Gearbox had been welded and 155 x 400 Radial tyres fitted on the rear and 525" x 15" on the front. This gave me the chance to bargain so I offered him £350 but he pointed out the bills he had for work done by the local Mercedes Garage for £72. I then offered

£375 which he accepted on account of the distance I had come. I was now a Coupé owner with paperwork, and Citroën Genuine Guarantee books. I asked if I could 'phone home to say I would be on my way at 4.30.

I decided on a country route home but after about 15 miles I felt the car was not going very well. It had no power and was definitely sluggish and on glancing in the rear-view mirror I saw smoke coming from the rear wheel. The nearside drum was hot, the offside one almost seized and grease running out of the cap over the hub bearing. I began to wonder what I had bought as I waited for things to cool down before I could lever off the brake drum. The wheel cylinder was stuck open, the brakes locked on

without power, which later proved to be the case. I drove home in the bright moonlight without further trouble. I arrived at 1.30a.m. and my wife, who had fallen asleep on the settee, came out, looked at the car and said "Oh, don't sell that one!" I replied "No I shan't, it's caused me some headache!"

Next morning by 11.30 the gearbox unit was out and stripped and sure enough one tooth out on the valve timing - my diagnosis proved correct! Rebuilding work proceeded - a new gearbox, brakes and engine and two weeks later its first outing, which was to a Rolls Royce and Citroën meet at Penshurst Place. On arrival I was chased by two chaps wanting to know where I had found it. It raised a few eyebrows among the

and the brake fluid was like black treacle. Obviously nothing had been done since new!

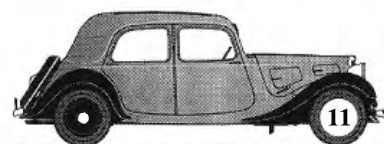
Luckily I had put a couple of "toolmaker's clamps" in my kit. These are two bars, one threaded at the end and a dimple at the other to accept a screw. When they are screwed together they make a spanner. I clamped up both rear hoses and, with only front brakes, I gingerly headed home. The car had a maximum speed of just 40 mph and I could not make the engine revs pick up. I continued on, hoping that I would have no further problems but the lack of revs had me more than puzzled. I thought maybe the Mercedes Garage had not got the timing right. "Lack of power answers" kept going through my mind but I kept coming back to the one "One tooth out". These engines, being a long stroke (100mm) means they will run but

"bit bunch" who, like me, had never seen one before.

I had a few puzzles with her; she had 140x400 rims, not pilotes, a coque no. 772 only seen in Roadsters and coupés and a Light 15 instead of a Light 12 which I think pointed to an earlier shell. The model was dropped in 1938 after only a very small number had been made at Slough, perhaps only made to order. As the factory picture shows, they were aimed at women drivers and only about five now exist.

On May 13th that year, 1972 Ennie celebrated her 34th birthday on a jaunt around Europe with five other Tractions but that is another story!

*Fred Annells*











This photograph is the first proof of the "22" Faux Cabriolet. It dates from the 1934 Paris Exhibition Palais. The Brochure was found in some archives in Finland by Wouter Janson, editor of the Dutch magazine 'Citroexpert', and was published in the first issue of 'The New Citropolis' magazine.

**CITROPOLIS**

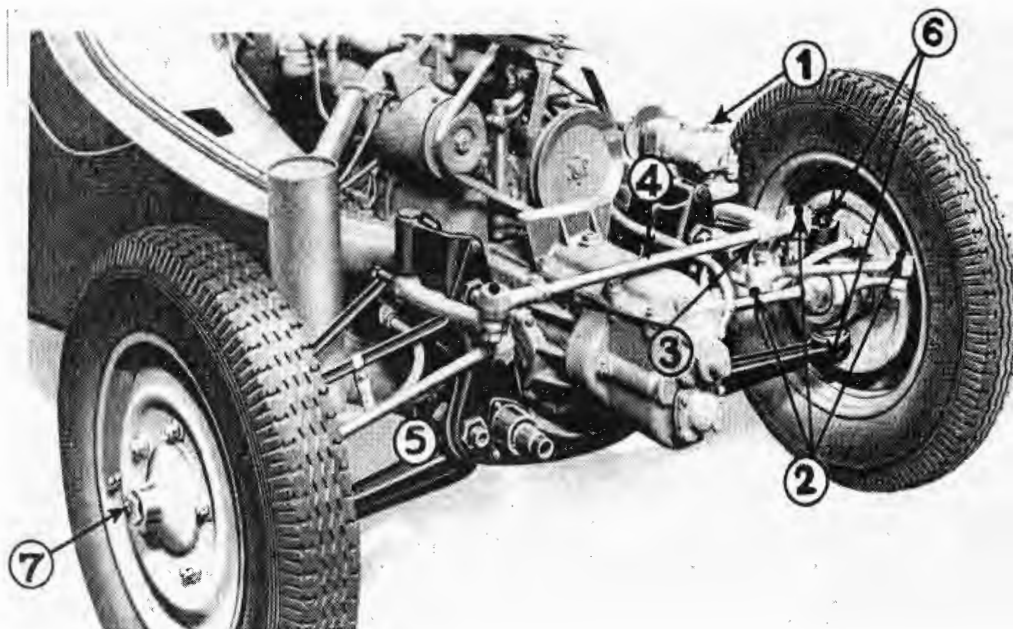
# FLOATING POWER:

## The Facts

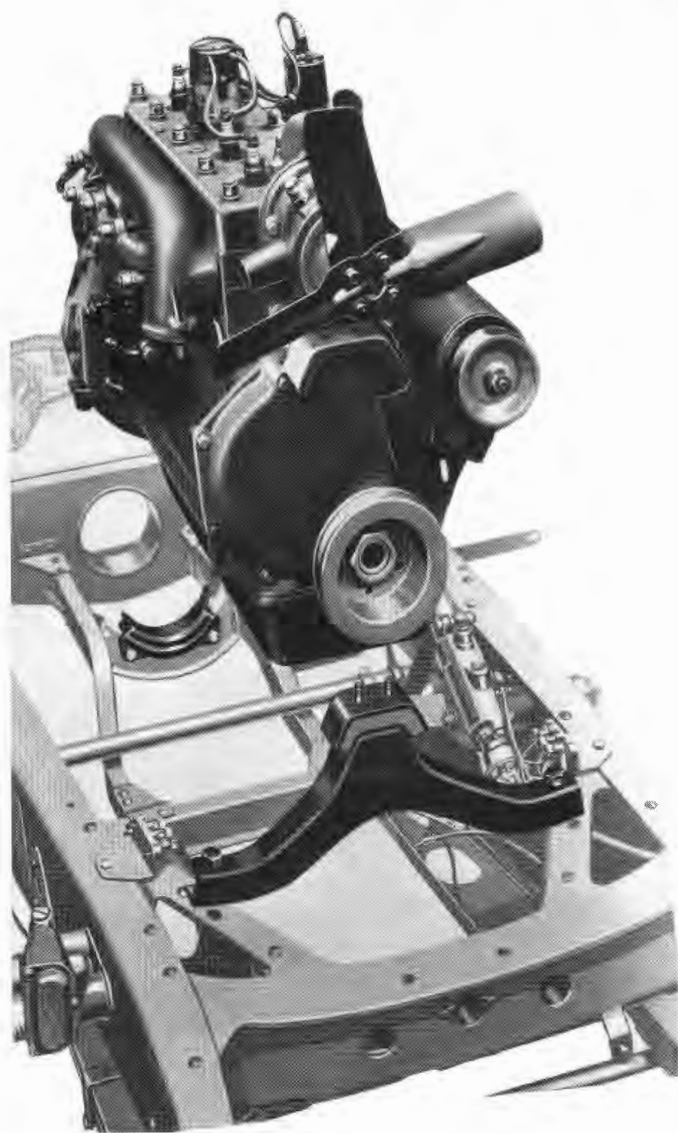
In the early stages of the development of the motor car scant attention was paid to the effects of motor vibrations not only on the car but also to the occupants.

Vibration can cause sheet metal to crack, derange instruments and electrical components, and can cause nuts and bolts to loosen. As car usage and reliability increased as well as engine speeds, more effective means to reduce this nuisance had to be taken.

In 1931 Andrew Citroën bought the licence for the Floating



*Only the first Traction were fitted with 'Floating Power'*



*Floating Power engine mounts on a C4*

Power engine mounting system from the Chrysler corporation. As from April 1932 this system was applied to the C4 and C6 amid great fanfare. Much was made of the fact that the motor/gearbox assembly was suspended at two points only, allowing the motor to oscillate without vibrations being transmitted to the chassis and body. Rubber block mountings at three or four points were dismissed as obsolete technology which had already been tried and found wanting.

In 1933 Floating Power was applied to the Rosalie where its efficiency was much praised. Drivers liked the remoteness that it appeared to give to the engine.

In 1934 the Traction Avant appeared, also fitted with Floating Power. The first Traction were underdeveloped and very troublesome. The radiator was bolted to the motor/gearbox assembly and was thus shaken to an early death, and the exhaust manifolds cracked owing largely to the silencer being bolted vertically under the front wing.

Two French engineers, Pierre Lemaire and Paul d'Aubarede persuaded Andre Citroën that the Floating Power system was old-fashioned and flawed, being an idea that they had perfected in 1905, and which had been inexpertly copied by American engineers who had failed to understand the basic principles involved, and that Andre Citroën had done a bad deal when he bought the patents.

The Lemaire and d'Aubarede motor/gearbox suspension

system employed two flexible engine mounts (does this sound familiar?) With the added refinement of Volute springs to limit engine oscillations. The radiator was bolted to the front crossmember with rubber pads between, and the silencer was moved away to the back of the car, obviating breakage.

This system was called 'Pausodyne' and was adopted on Traction as from spring 1935. When the 15-6 came out in the summer of 1938, the motor/gearbox suspension consisted of three point rubber mountings of the type that Citroën had themselves so roundly derided some six years earlier.

So does your traction have 'Floating Power'? If it was made after May 1935 or is a six cylinder it does not. Should this magazine be renamed "Pausodyne"? Even in the interests of historical accuracy, I think not.

Jonathan Howard







## T.O.C. WINS AGAIN AT BIRMINGHAM!

**THE CLASSIC AND SPORTSCAR SHOW  
3, 4, 5, MAY 1997**

The Show is now over and the hard work done and the honours won. On our part it was a proud moment when I received the Trophy for the Boot Stand for Clubs of 251 to 750 members from Quentin Willson. As he said at the Presentation Ceremony these are not given lightly and the 26 Adjudicators had a very difficult task.

I must therefore give my personal thanks and those of the Club to the few who spent so much of their time Designing, Building, Erecting and Manning the Stand.

John Griffiths for the many nights and weekends in the workshop. I must say his painting of a traction on a heavy bend was outstanding, and the Cafe newly painted in Proper Citroën colours made the bulk of the Stand a pleasure to see. To Barrie Longden for bringing the U23 Truck with the Organ to complete the lefthand

side of the Stand, and for the time he gave helping John in the later stages in order to complete the work on time, and attending each day of the Show to help on the Stand and play the Organ (though there were some in the Hall who I think would have paid him to stay away, but we are all friends really). Steve Southgate for letting us use one of his staff to help with the loading and unloading of the lorry and for helping to man the Stand and of course provide the work space and storage for the Club's show equipment. To all the willing members who offered their services to man the Stand and of course to Richard Hooley and Keith Feazey for providing the care and helping on the Stand.

The whole project was worthwhile, many Club members visited the Stand, 3 new members signed up, including one from Belgium. Information Packs were taken by several others including one from South Africa.

The existing team is becoming weary after some 5 years, twice a year and would like a short rest.

We have a Show in November and one next May Bank Holiday, if anyone is prepared to give me assistance on either or both Shows please ring the Help Line, I will be only too pleased to receive help.

*Stan Barker  
Social Secretary*

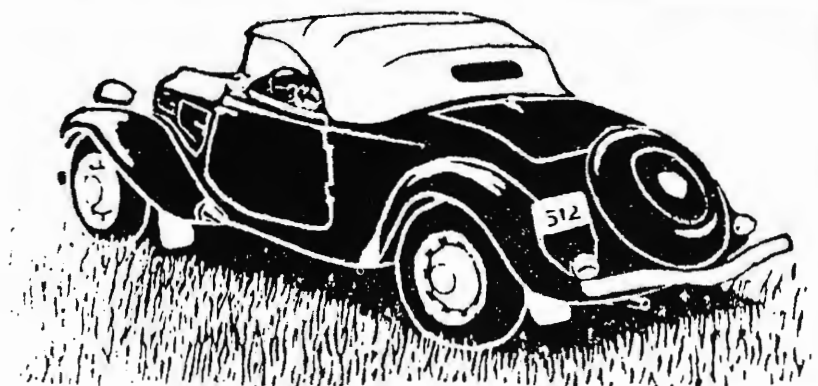




## THE CABRIOLET GROWTH

These two cars were offered at auction last November and were reported by our friends in the Danish Traction Club. They state that on first sight the cars look to be in a good well restored state but it was soon obvious that there were many wrong details and both cars were not genuine. We only hope the cars were purchased with this knowledge and not sold as they purport to be. The price guide indicated was £15,000.

Have any members seen or heard of any cars in the U.K. from Vietnam?



## BUT ON THE OTHER HAND .....

This 1939 11BL is the real thing and has been imported to Norway from Argentina by Bernt Bowitz from Oslo. This makes 5 Cabriolets in Norway which is a high percentage in relation to their membership.



## **national and international events 1997**

**21-29 June**

**T.O.C. Rally**

**Grimsthorpe Castle, Bourne Lincs.**

For more information phone/fax J&M Holmes on 0116 9118218

**11-14 July**

**Tour of Brittany**

Change of Plans. Now 4 days in Brittany starting in the vicinity of Rennes

9 - 9.30 Friday, 11th July.

See elsewhere in Magazine. Details from the Help Line.

**21st SEPTEMBER**

**The London Classic Car Show, Ascot Racecourse.**

**28th SEPTEMBER**

**T.O.C. A.G.M., J.B.'s Restaurant and Carvery, Solihull.**

**15/16 NOVEMBER**

**The International Classic Cars Show, N.E.C. Birmingham.**

**29/30 NOVEMBER**

**Walsall Bash.**

## **1998**

**21-23 August**

**11th International Citroen Car Clubs Rally.**

**Chevetogne nr Lamur, Belgium**

Phone Help Line for details and Application Form.

**Help Line Phone/Fax 01425 674476. (24 hr answerphone service)**

### **\*\*STOP PRESS\*\***

**\*Tour of Brittany 11-14 July 1997**

As Patrice Crusson is unable to obtain a reduction in the Ferry fares, the Bretons will reluctantly not be able to visit us for the 2 days as originally proposed. He now proposed to run a normal tour over the Bastille holiday commencing on the 11th July near Rennes and ending on Monday the 14th. Please contact the Help Line for details as and when they arrive, and to confirm, if you have already left your name, that you are still interested.

**focSPARES**

**SPARES  
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**PHONE/FAX**

**01453  
886463**

**TECHNICAL  
HOTLINE**

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Dear Sirs,

After many years of being a member of the T.O.C. I have finally managed to locate a suitable candidate for restoration. The car has stood for approximately twenty years in a dry stone constructed barn and is not in too bad shape (I hope!), but unfortunately over the years the owner has mislaid the log book and I do not have any information regarding its history. It is believed that the car dates back to the 1934-37 era. It is a small boot, right hand drive version and has a wooden dashboard, red/brown leather (I think) seats and is therefore most likely of Slough origin. The body colour is currently dark maroon and the wings are black and the bumpers are of the "dipped" type.

Details of the cars chassis and engine plate are as follows:-

Chassis plate  
 Type 11 CL6 Chassis No 12  
 7133  
 Citroën Cars Ltd  
 Trading Estate Slough  
 Telephone no Slough 23811  
 Engine plate  
 Andre Citroën  
 Ste Ame Paris  
 No AK 06901  
 4MPVB78

I would be extremely grateful if you could help me find out more information regarding this car because I would like to restore it to its original specification.

Any help which you could provide which would help me would be greatly appreciated.

I would also be very grateful if you could advise on how I should set about obtaining a vehicle registration document for the car, preferably with its original registration number.

Yours very truly  
 Malcolm Kirby

*From the chassis number it is possible to date this car as being made in 1946. If you do not have the registration document you should ring the DVLA in Swansea on 01792 772134. They will be able to tell you if the registration number of your car has been re-allocated. In any case they will forward you the necessary forms and information for you either to recover the original number, which will then be non-transferable, or to obtain a new but dateless number.*

*As far as the restoration of your car is concerned I would advise getting as much information as possible from the workshop manual,*

*T.O.C. technical officers, and back numbers of Floating Power before undertaking work yourself. If engaging someone else to do work, find somebody who is familiar with these cars and who has the necessary tools extractors and equipment. Much appalling and expensive damage has been done to tractions by those who have neither.*  
 Jonathan Howard

## THE TWO CV - A ROBUST DEFENCE

I read with some interest the diatribe on the 2CV in the latest issue of F.P. While I know the author to be the mechanical equivalent of a misogynist so far as these particular cars are concerned, I believe this car deserves a more balanced appraisal.

It is true that compared with many of its post-war British counterparts it does not compare favourably. It is equally true to say that there never was nor subsequently has been, any British car directly comparable.

The British have persisted with a love affair for liquid-cooled engines, best illustrated by their obsession with the V12 aero engine of Rolls-Royce, from the days of the Schneider Trophy to post-war austerity.

The Americans who are far more pragmatic and sensible realised that air-cooled engines, particularly for aeroplanes, are both cheaper to produce, and more efficient on a power to weight basis.

The Americans were certainly one of the first producers of a car with an air-cooled engine, the Franklin inline six.

Anyone who has run a car with an air-cooled engine will know the benefits, which I summarise below.

- 1) No anti-freeze necessary
- 2) Greater thermo-dynamic efficiency/shorter warming up time
- 3) No danger of cracked blocks or head
- 4) No water pump to leak or seize
- 5) No fan belt to break or slip
- 6) No hoses to perish or burst
- 7) No radiator to sludge up, or get damaged
- 8) No danger of distorted or leaking gaskets from lack of coolant
- 9) No thermostat to stick or require replacement
- 10) No recalcitrant drain taps or pools of coolant on the floor

In addition to these points the early 2CV engine did away with the need for a fan belt to drive the dynamo, by mounting it on the end of the cam-shaft.

It did not have a distributor as the double ended coil fired on both the power and exhaust stroke. In short the design swept away most of the weak points of a conventional engine, resulting in astounding reliability.

The 2CV is in its own way as revolutionary as its predecessor the Traction Avant, and should be recognised as such.

5th Columnist, C. J. Ryle

*I happen to know that the author of this letter has a large collection of interesting and worthy cars of French American and British origin. None of them is air-cooled, which would indicate that Mr. Ryle has not convinced himself of his own arguments in favour of air-cooled car engines. Moreover, Citroën no longer make air-cooled engines and one has to think hard to identify any large-volume manufacturer of air-cooled cars. Can all these manufacturers and auto engineers be wrong?*

*Concerning the 2CV engine, it's a small point but the dynamo was driven by the crankshaft. I doubt if a dynamo driven at half engine speed by the camshaft would be much use. Later 2CV engines were fitted with an alternator driven by a belt, presumably as an improvement on the original design. "Astounding reliability" is alas something I never experienced from these engines.*

Jonathan Howard

Christchurch  
 New Zealand  
 15-4-97

Dear Glen,

Your magazine is really wonderful, it's a real thrill to receive it, do try to keep up the very high standard. I bought my first Traction in 1969, so mine is obviously a terminal case. My current Traction is a 1954 Big 15, with some modifications, and I wonder if it's one of the fastest around.

I bought the car nearly 10 years ago. It had been fitted with a 1961 I.D. motor, a 4 speed gearbox, and went very well. About 3 years ago, I decided to become involved in the local Vintage Car Club. They do a certain amount of circuit racing, hill climbs, and serious gymkhanas, and I discovered the Big 15 was very competitive so I got enthusiastic (or stupid) and changed the motor. The car now has a 1965 I.D.19 motor and gearbox. I fitted high compression pistons, and found a NEW crankshaft. The head has been skimmed, match posted etc., and there is 20 lbs off the flywheel. I run a standard twin choke Solex carb. The rest of the car is standard with the exception of rev counter, and oil and temp. gauges!! It will do a genuine 100 mph, the standing quarter is 21.40 seconds, and the flying quarter is 10.75 seconds - very similar to an MGB. With the exception of a Big 6, might this be one of the fastest Traction on the road? Have any other members done similar modifications? I realise the I.D. mod is very common, but I'm not sure if many people have put the 65 I.D. motor in, which has the bigger head, a twin choke Solex or Weber.

The whole exercise has been expensive but fun. Over the years, the car has been totally rebuilt, repainted, retrimmed etc. It cruises all day at 75 mph and scares all the

moderns to death!

I'd be very interested to know of any other modified Traction. Maybe publishing this might bring them out of the woodwork!

Keep up the great work.

Michael Williams

Canterbury Citroën Club, N.Z.

Jean Pirot  
 8, rue du Cloître Saint-Merri  
 75004 Paris  
 tel. (00 33 1) 42 74 66 97 (rep.)  
 fax. (00 33 1) 42 78 11 55

Dear Sir,

I have just joined the T.O.C. thanks to Roger Williams. So I have just received a set of Floating Power mag. This magazine is really impressive and beautiful and I really enjoy trying to improve my English (I have to do!) reading this production.

My 51.11 normale is now fitted with Roger's conversion (I.D. engine and gearbox) and runs perfectly. I usually use it to go to U.K. 3 trips with it during this year (the fourth was with a truck because I had to bring back a motorcycle). My car is in very sound running condition, but, paint and interior are original and a bit faded/dented ... I often said myself that I have to do some cosmetic work and eventually, I discovered in the last issue of F.P. a first class idea: a pink T.A. with lined seats ... really original and hard to steal!

During our first journey in London we saw TNC 49N parked in Soho. We were amazed and a little sorry because we did not see the owner.

This makes me conclude that, if any T.O.C. members pass in Paris, we shall be very happy to see him/her/them ... If they're not afraid with my English...

This proposition is valuable if you have mechanical problems. I'm not a mechanical wizard (I'm far from...) but I can provide help, tools, spares, address, wine...

"And now, something completely different..."

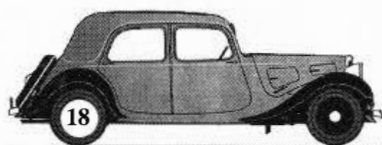
(Monty Python's flying circus)

I don't know if this advertising may interest T.O.C. members. I don't know if it's correct to include it in TOCads (Is "tocad" the same word than "tocade" in French?). See Members Advert. Ed.

Dear Sirs,

Congratulations on an entertaining magazine ... and not a fuzzily printed rag produced on Bronco Medicated, as the www ramblings of late would have us believe. I have already spent the £6.00 that I have saved on a litre of oil for the old 11BL. Most of it ends up on the garage floor.

Whilst the layout and design has suffered slightly at the hands of you two hapless rank amateurs, this is forgiveable as the content has



improved dramatically. What a novel idea, the editor actually contributing for a change. And what contributions...

What terrible physical or sexual abuse the infant Jonathan Howard must have suffered on the supremely uncomfortable seats of his family 2CV, one will never know, but clearly the experience has scarred him mentally for life. My father too purchased a new 2CV in the early sixties, part-exchanging the family's Consul Cortina, itself barely three months old. Unlike Mr. Howard, all I can recollect were happy memories of our car, certainly not moments of embarrassment. Perhaps his public school chums were more snobbish than mine.

As any fule kno, the 2CV concept is simple, but surely that was the point. To draw comparison with that Nazi commissioned abomination that is the KdF-Wagen is pointless, because the two cars were designed to fulfil different objectives; the Autobahnen of the Fuhrer's Germany were perfect for the Beetle because it was incapable, in its early form at least, of any form of cornering. Similarly, the 2CV was perfect for the bomb-cratered country roads of post war France (again courtesy of the Fuhrer's Germany) because of its compliant suspension.

This suspension system (notionally self levelling, of coil springs interconnected to front and rear, not torsion bars as you state) was sophisticated enough to survive with modification only to its shock absorption principle into the 1990s when the very last 2CV was built; the roadholding and comfort of which was unsurpassed for an economy car even then.

The fundamental problem with the 2CV in Britain was its cost alone. This was the fault of heavy taxation on foreign goods by the British Government, and an unhelpful pricing policy from Citroën Slough. The comparisons in your article with the prices of the Ford Popular, Austin A30 and Morris Minor illustrate this fact. What you do not continue to state is that the British cars mentioned were merely worthy vehicles with no novel technical merit, whilst the 2CV, packed with innovation in aesthetic and technical design, with only modest refinement lived on to survive the lot of them.

It could be that the example road tested in your article was not a particularly well sorted one, but more probably you are just a motor car bigot. Your apparent fixation with body fluids is also all too worrying.

Two can play at that game Mr. Howard.

The 2CV was the first true economy car. It was inexpensive to manufacture and to run. It was cheap to repair, fast enough for basic transportation needs and capable of carrying bulky and awkward loads.

Contrary to your own personal experience, most people also found it to be comfortable. It was safe with predictable handling and amazing roadholding. The Volkswagen, Ford, Austin et al, were all poo poo, and not worthy to share the same tarmac.

There, I've said it.

I am sure I speak for many when I say that I look forward to your next disinterested road test.

Yours etc.

Colin Crawford, Cheltenham

Thank you Mr. Crawford for an illuminating and amusing letter. Do you use a very exotic oil in your 11BL or do people really charge £6 a litre for oil in blessed and posh Cheltenham?

I am certain that the layout and design of the magazine can and will be improved as us hapless rank amateurs grapple with the complexities involved.

No one will ever know the abuse I suffered in our 2CV, as there was none. The unpleasant memories were generated by the car itself. I am however, immensely flattered that Mr. Crawford thinks that I was advanced enough to attend public school at the age of six.

I thought that I had made it clear that the ideal time and place for the 2CV was late 1940's France.

Concerning the suspension I admit unreservedly that I boomed. I apologise to you, and all readers of F.P. Perhaps a condign punishment would be lock me in a 2CV so that I may consider the error of my ways.

The exorbitant price of 2CVs in England was the fault of Citroën Slough, not the British Government. By using a certain amount of British components and labour, Citroën cars assembled in Slough were classed as British, and thus avoided import tariffs as well as being accessible to commonwealth countries at favourable terms. Hence oddities such as left hand drive Slough cars being sold in Egypt. Mr. Crawford's assertion that the British cars I mentioned were merely worthy vehicles with no novel technical merit would shock Alec Issigonis, the creator of the Morris Minor, a well liked and innovative car that came out the same year as the 2CV. I do pay tribute to the extraordinary longevity of the 2CV, and the fact that it remained so true to its original form. However, they were subjected to considerable improvement and uprating to the engine, gearbox, transmission shafts, brakes, damping, electrical system, instrumentation, lights, doorlocks, rear vision, seats, exhaust, and interior trim which I would suggest comprised more than 'modest refinements'. Moreover when the 2CV was reintroduced to the British market in 1974, the price was reduced to a level suited to the specifications and quality of the car.

I am sure that Mr. Crawford knows that a bigot is one who

irrespective of reason clings to a point of view or creed. Reading Mr. Crawford's scatological comments about cars other than 2CVs I am left wondering which one of us is really a bigot. With reference to the last comment in Mr. Crawford's letter, which has been cut, I hasten to assure Mr. Crawford that my parents were married. Were his?

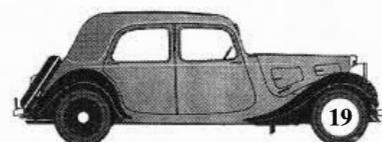
Jonathan Howard

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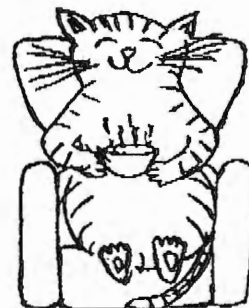
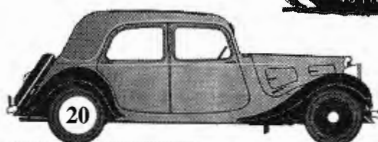
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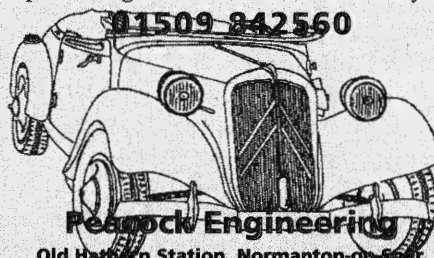
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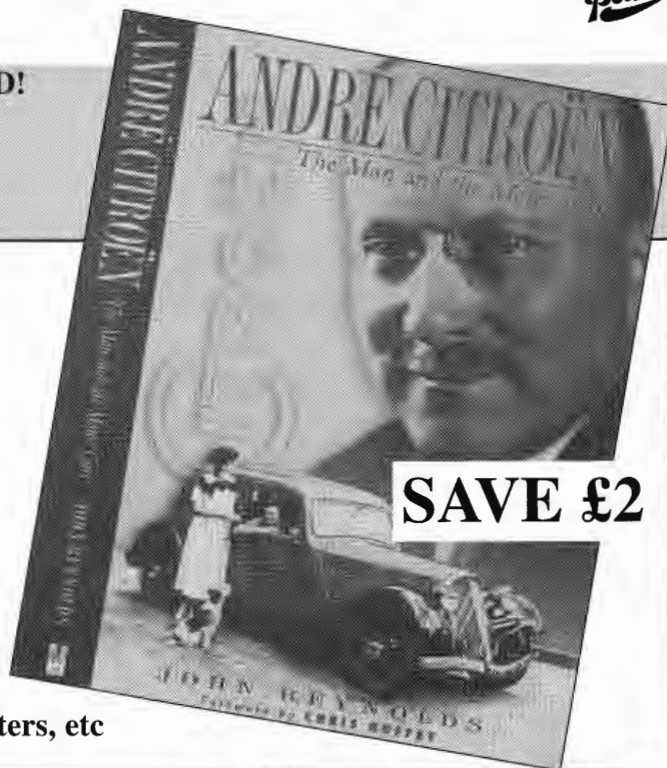
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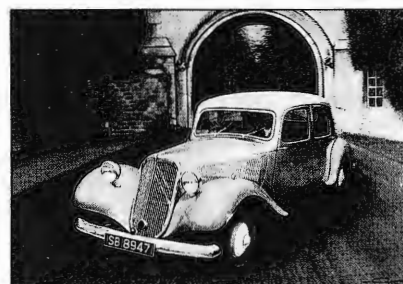


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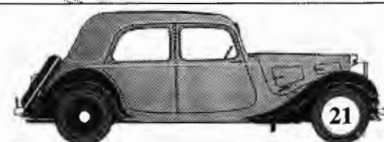
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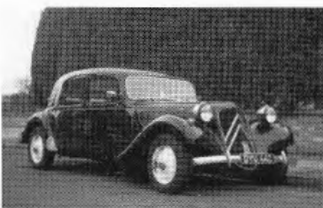
Bryn Leonard 01884 820799.

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### 1953 Paris Built Normale

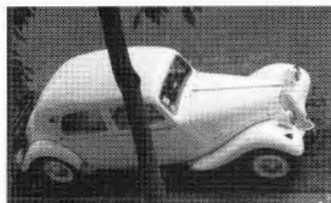
imported 1965, very sound roadworthy car, 11 months M.O.T. Tax exempt. Within the last 4,500km new clutch,

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1951 Paris built Légère 11 BL, white with small boot and dipped bumpers. M.O.T.'d and taxed, good runner. Bodywork untidy in places but cosmetic work only needed. A solid car for improving.

Offers around £4250.00. Contact Mark Hathaway 01923 854713 (Hertfordshire).

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**Commerciale, 1955**, near concours. Dark green/black wings, peacock drive shafts. Probably best available. Dennis Ryland maintained with engine and gearbox rebuilt. Valued £10,000. Ill health forces sale.

Offers to Kevin Bond. Tel. 01963 350464, Somerset.

### 1956 Paris-built Normale

Big boot, restored France 1991 used in Mairret TV series Granada 1994, UK registered 1996 & MoT'd. In very good order, colour grey. Recent rechroming to bumpers, new carpets, garaged, regularly driven - a solid and reliable car, well maintained, waxoiled - hence no rust. Offers £5,500.

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Normandie style body £6000 ono or PX for Traction Hugo Wilson Home 01420 561421 Work 01420 561025

### 1955 Light 15, Slough

MoT'd and in good running order. Black and maroon with large boot. A reluctant sale after 12 wonderful years of ownership.

Andy Rose 01732 862787 (Kent)

### 1952 Traction Light 11

Siebel Berlin. White with big boot. French with original registration, as seen in Next Directory. Requires minimal attention and T.L.C., has been garaged for 3 years. £3,000 o.n.o. Call Rex 01420 22949 Farnham evening.

### Normale French built 1957.

Regularly driven. Re-built engine/gearbox, steering,

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## WANTED

### Anybody seen my decap?

Dark green DS 21 Chapron Cecapotalle, fawn leather, late wings (faired headlamps) LLC 754P. Reluctantly sold against a promise of "first refusal". If resold; not kept. It would be nice to know it is being enjoyed and driven and not salted away. Please report sightings to Roger Prior on 01922 863117.

**Brakedrums with damaged** tapers required to create pool for an exchange service.

Roger Williams 01482 863344

### Small boot legere or light

**fifteen**, well sorted condition 2 car preferred but anything considered apart from basket case. Can any member assist with viewing and finding a car for me? Tel. Peter Tyson. 015394 45368 eve/wk.

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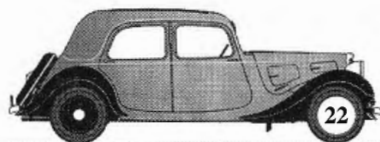
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*Phone Frank* 01365 325847

**Set of 5 easiclean wheels**  
Shot-blasted and stove enamelled in ivory/cream, with chrome hubcaps - £220 (stored near Chichester)  
*Tel Bob Wade*  
(00 33) 45 62 05 96

**S/H Traction Spares.** Big 15 drive shafts, gearbox, carbs, light 15 chrome grill, 6 volt starter, dynamo, 4 excellent doors in primer, cardan joints. 1926 B14 grill, other bits etc. Norwich (01603) 432912.

- **Pair of Bumpers** for post '52 Slough Light 15 (rechromed).
- **Dark red leather rear seat** complete for post '52 Lt. 15 (very good condition).
- **Heller Citroën Traction 1/8th scale model plastic kit** - as new.

Please phone Michael Wood  
01238-528221

## NEW PARTS

**French number plates.** Your traction is not equipped yet with authentic black/alu French number plates? Send me your car registration number, FF 400 in cash, U.K. or Euro cheques in French Francs. You will then receive them in 3 weeks (specify small or big boot). Write to Gwenaël André, 25 rue Saint-Hélène, 35000 Rennes, France. Phone: (33) 02.99.65.47.03.

**Rubber plugs for front cradle tubes.** £2.40 per set of 4+P+P  
Rear engine mount £10 each (exchange)  
Side engine mount pads £1.60 each +50p sae  
Silentblocs £60 per set of 4 (exchange)  
Petrol tank filler pipe rubbers (large and small boot) £2.50 each + 50p sae  
Triangle door rubbers £14.80 per set of eight + £2 P&P  
Gaiters for top & bottom swivels £2.50 each + £1.50 P&P  
Steering rack pin rubbers £1.20 per pair + 50p sae  
Rear Panard rod cones £2.50 per pair + 50p P&P  
Rear bumpstops £15 per pair + £1 P&P  
'H' van radiator hose set (three hoses) £17.50 per set + £3.25 P&P

Driveshaft inner bearing ring nut spanner (with reinforced ring around teeth for those nuts that are very tight). £28 + postage to cover 2.75lbs weight.  
Ball pin adjuster for the track rod end. £11 + £1.50 P&P.  
**PLEASE NOTE:**  
Exchange items only sent when old ones received first.

*Mike Tennant*  
49 Hollywell Road  
Mitcheldean  
Gloucestershire  
GL17 0DL

**New stainless steel bumpers** for Traction. Made from 3mm 304 grade stainless steel.  
Four types available:  
'dipped' Legere & Normale and post-'52 'straight' Legere & Normale.  
Supplied drilled and polished 'ready to fit'.  
These bumpers will not rust, are stronger than the originals, there is no plating to crack or peel - minor damage can be inexpensively corrected and repolished. All types £230 per pair

*Jonathan Howard*  
Tel 01608 643065  
Fax 642973

### P.F.P. MODEL CARS

These Citroën cars are revival of the Citroën toys from the thirties.  
At that time Citroën made, for advertising, children's model cars. Big ones were very luxurious but the 1/43 scale range was cheap. Bodies were made in plaster



and flour, with lead wheels and red rubber tyres. These toys were very naïve pretty charming, but because of Citroën financial managing, eventually production ceased. Nowadays, you can keep living the spirit of these toys by buying a P.F.P. model car (made in Paris).  
*Jean Pirot Price £17 (inc p+p)*  
8 Rue du Cloître Saint-Merri  
75004 Paris  
tel 00-33-1-42 74 66 97 (REP)  
fax 00-35-1-42 78 11 55

## OTHER

**Paris Central Location, Studio Apartment.**  
2 Metro stops from Eurostar Train Terminal. Quiet Street, 1st floor, Sleeps 4, Kitchenette.  
Available April onwards.  
*Phone Frank* 01365 325847.

**Western Loire**  
Charming village home. Sleeps 5/6. Exposed beams, splash pool, 300 metres from river (Thouet). Secure courtyard parking for four cars. Vineyard next door! Available May - October. 10% discount for TOC members.  
*Phone Colin or Jacky Porter*  
01865 204994 work  
01734 615721 home

**South Brittany**  
Farmhouse, 15 minutes from Quimperlé. Rural situation, but with shops only 3 mins. 15 mins to sandy beaches, forest, lovely rivers and estuary walks. 85 miles from Roscoff. Sleeps 7/9. Available to rent most dates. Early booking essential. From £120 to £265.  
*Phone John or Eileen Wain*  
for details 01803 782468

### Normandy

Two lovely 18th century gites. One hour from Cherbourg. Sleep 4 or 6 plus baby. Electric heating, log fires and every comfort. 13km from the sea. Ideal base for visiting invasion beaches, Bayeaux, Mont St Michel. Available separately or

together for short breaks or longer holidays. 10% discount for TOC members.  
*Phone Tom or Gill O'Malley*  
on 01252 795182 for details.

### Cote d'Azur

Very special B&B in the South of France. Bring your own Traction to meet ours and be pampered in a beautiful old villa overlooking the Med near Monte Carlo.  
*Margaret Ritson*  
Tel: (33) 93784725  
Fax: (33) 93786401

### Loire Valley

Large, classic country house 5km west of Langeais, (between Tours and Saumur), ideally situated for wine lovers and chateaux visiting. Sleeps 8-10 in 4 large bedrooms with 1 acre garden and ample space for Traction! Available to rent from £375-650 per week.  
*Tel. Brian Thorley*  
01253 295409 office  
882558 home

### Charente Swimming Holidays

Learn to swim in the sun during your holiday in SW France. A.S.A. qualified teacher - individual instruction - beginners/improvers. Bed & Breakfast or Half Board accommodation. Open June to September.  
For brochure tel:  
*Chichester (01243) 268959*

### CAHORS

Camping Le Ch'Timi, Lot 3 star campsite (70 pitches) plus static caravans. Full facilities, Swimming pool, Bar, Children's play area etc. Stunning areas with lots to see. Tractionistes especially welcome!  
*Phone Rik or Marie on*  
010 33 65 36 52 36

### Southern Brittany

Camping Le Bohat, Sarzeau. Large 4-berth caravan with awning and mains electricity. Available mid May - mid Sept. Swimming pool, children's pool, creperie.  
Bookings taken now.  
*Tel. Stan Barker* 01425 672311

