

Floating Power

october/november 2003



toccontact



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Club Tools are available in these areas



Approximate position

For details of area meetings, please contact your local organiser

Contents

oct-nov 2003 volume 27 issue 6

**Floating
Power**



- 4 TOC Chairman's Note
- 5 TOC Diary
- 6 Tractionette's view of Brittany
- 10 TOC Design Museum



- 11 TOC Tech
- 16 TOC Charades
- 18 Traction Rotary



- 19 TOC Section Scene
- 20 TOC Correspondence
- 22 TOC Classifieds

Editorial

It is very gratifying to be getting so much correspondence from members. Last issue filled two pages of letters and this issue like June/July runs to three! A real debate has started up regarding the Vietnam Coupes and Cream Machine whose owner Alan Crisp responds in good humour to Wim Bloemendaal's letter. This issue also sees responses to David Boyd's article on the Douglas Sharp roadster from David de Saxe and Fred Annells.

Of interest to all those looking at restoration projects, the report from the FBHVC makes interesting reading. Perhaps even those members in possession of the 'Tractions with the Least Attraction' need to take great care of their beloved machines in the face of difficult neighbours and the local councils! On behalf of all veteran, vintage and classic vehicle owners, this organisation monitors forthcoming legislation and discussion documents from UK and Europe and lobbies on our behalf. This piece shows how ridiculous are some of the reports coming from our public servants.

Also in this issue are reports from Brittany although it sounds as if Hazel Shinebroom was lucky to have remembered all that happened! As always our French hosts had been most generous in their hospitality and a great time has been had by everyone. Graham Pitcher reports that Flaminio Bertoni, designer of the Traction Avant body style, among others, has been honoured by our very own Design Museum at an exhibition held this summer. Three members' cars were on display for the TV coverage.

Merry Christmas and a Happy, Prosperous and Healthy New Year to all from your editor and committee.

Copy date for next issue December 8th 2003.

Front Cover



*The panache of the
Left Bank parked on
the South Bank*

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Chairman's Note

Oct/Nov 2003

Paul De Felice

Hello and welcome to the Autumn issue of Floating Power.

Firstly I would like to thank both Martin & Vicky Nicholson and Peter & Sue Simper who organised a memorable Normandy Rally back in September. The whole event was thoroughly enjoyed by all with wonderful visits during the days, good drives between venues and marvellous food in the evenings.

2004 looks like being even busier than this year so next year our Annual Rally will be held the first week in September so as not to clash with the other events. We have a very full calendar planned for next year, and it really would be nice to see new members come along or even old friends who have not been along to an event for a long time. Come along and enjoy the camaraderie of the TOC.

We held the AGM a few weeks ago in the Oxford area and it was very nice to see new members coming forward with fresh ideas where we can improve the service we provide to club members.

I would also like to welcome Robin Dyke who at the AGM was voted on to the committee and has taken up the new post as Rally Liaison Officer and will assist Tony Latchford our Social Secretary in his duties.

See you all soon.

Paul De Felice

New Members

A warm welcome is extended to all new members of the club.

- 1830 J. Finch, Tenterden, Kent
- 1831 P. Butler, North Creake, Fakenham, Norfolk
- 1832 R. Gordon, Brentwood, Essex
- 1833 M. Laurie, Bethersden, Kent
- 1834 T. Bettison, Goudall, E. Yorks
- 1835 R. Gwynn, Diss, Norfolk
- 1836 P. Griffiths, Matlock, Derbys
- 1837 A. Purnell, Tiddington, Oxford
- 1838 P. Garfield, Deeping Gate, Peterborough
- 1839 R. Seggons, Orsett, Grays, Essex

1000 Tractions at the Seaside

The 70th anniversary meeting at Dunkerque is planned for the weekend 11-13 June 2004. Our French friends in Le Traction Universelle and Club Dunkerque en Torpedo will let us know more details later, and will give us a list of hotels and campsites where a discount has been arranged. There are lots of places to stay in the area, but few are taking bookings just yet. Robin Dyke is preparing a list of every one who has expressed an interest. Almost certainly each member will book his own crossing and accommodation to suit when they want to cross and for how long they want to stay. But when we consolidate this information we will be able to make up groups who can get together. Please let Robin know as soon as possible if you are interested on 01865 858555.






FBHVC monitors UK & EU legislation and lobbies on our behalf to protect our freedom to use vehicles of all ages on the roads.

FBHVC also provides discounted ferry travel and rescue services for members that earn commission for the club. These services are for any private vehicle, ancient or modern.

Telephone MST on 01295 278748 for details of the travel services and Britannia Rescue 0800 591563 for the rescue service. Quote the club and your membership number to ensure we receive commission.

SOME ANONYMOUS UNSAFE STATISTICS...

-  70% of vehicle accidents occur at road intersections so you should minimise the time spent going through junctions.
-  35% of vehicle accidents involve drunken drivers so clearly there would be less accidents if the sober 65% stayed off the roads.
-  Just a little joke! Take no notice - stay safe. Ed.

tocspares hotline

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FBHVC News - Abandoned Vehicles

FBHVC is still awaiting a response from the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) concerning the proposal to reduce from 15 to five working days the period during which a landowner may object to a council that plans to remove a vehicle that it deems to have been abandoned on the landowner's property.



After some preamble about speeding up removal of abandoned vehicles from the highway, all that is said in the consultation letter is 'We would now like to reduce that statutory notice period after which, providing no objection has been made, vehicles abandoned on "private land" can be removed.' - no further reason is given. In the absence of any explanation, FBHVC believes the proposed change is both pointless and dangerous.

Pointless because if the landowner signifies agreement, the vehicle can already be removed immediately. If the landowner objects, the council cannot legally remove the vehicle unless it is posing a danger to the public. If the landowner fails to respond, who but the landowner can be inconvenienced since the vehicle is on his/her private property? Who benefits by halving the notice period from a clear fortnight to a working week?

The existing regulation is dangerous enough: it enables a council to remove a vehicle that it believes to have been abandoned on private land if no objection is made within two weeks. To reduce this period to five working days would give council officials an opportunity to remove vehicles that are being kept perfectly legitimately while the owner is on holiday.

Having received no response from DEFRA, the Federation's committee has asked members of the newly constituted Parliamentary Historic Vehicles Club to investigate. Unless there is a compelling reason for the proposed change that has not so far become apparent, FBHVC will object.

Meanwhile, as one of our many correspondents has suggested, individuals worried that the restoration project sitting on their front drive might fall prey to over eager council officials can protect themselves very simply by ensuring that a notice stating that the vehicle is awaiting restoration or being kept for spares is attached to the vehicle concerned. If a saloon, inside the windscreen adjacent to the last tax disc would be as good a place as any.

tocdiary

2004

MAY 1ST - 3RD IRISH TOUR

Get together on the Friday evening (30th April). Saturday start at Cashel, then drive via Tipperary and Adare to Killarney (food, drink & slingsong). Sunday begins with a visit to Mucross House, then a tour round the Dingle peninsular (as far west as possible), and in the evening "bia ceol agus craic" in Dingle. Monday drive through the Connor Pass and Tralee, visit the Foynes Flying Boat museum, ferry across Shannon estuary and finally a medieval banquet in Bunratty Castle. Total mileage 290 miles (465 kms), Rosslare to Cashel is about 100 miles, Bunratty to Rosslare about 150 miles. Leslie Scott is organising the tour. Tel: 00 353 8 7259 2447 Email: lesliescott@eircom.net

JUNE 11TH - 13TH TRACTION 70TH ANNIVERSARY

The French organisers hope to get 1000 Tractions at the seaside. Book in from 3pm on the Friday at the Kursaal exhibition hall. There is a reception and dinner that evening. On Saturday morning the Kursaal is open, there is a reception of Tractions, an organised visit to Dunquerque, photos, at the seaside, a reception at the Town Hall and a Gala dinner. The Kursaal is open on Sunday, there is a picnic in the Park, back to the beach and it all ends at 6pm. We have a flexible offer from NorfolkLine (Dover - Dunquerque) for the whole of June - £89 return for a standard car & 2 passengers if booked before 15 March. RobIn Dyke will coordinate Tel: 01865 858555 Email: robIndyke@btopenworld.com

JULY 14TH - 17TH BRITTANY RALLY

This event is organised by the local French Club. A limited number from the TOC can attend as guests. It is usually over a weekend, stretched to include Bastille Day (14th July). Further details from Martin Nicholson who will co-ordinate the UK participants. E-mail: vicmarnic@aol.com

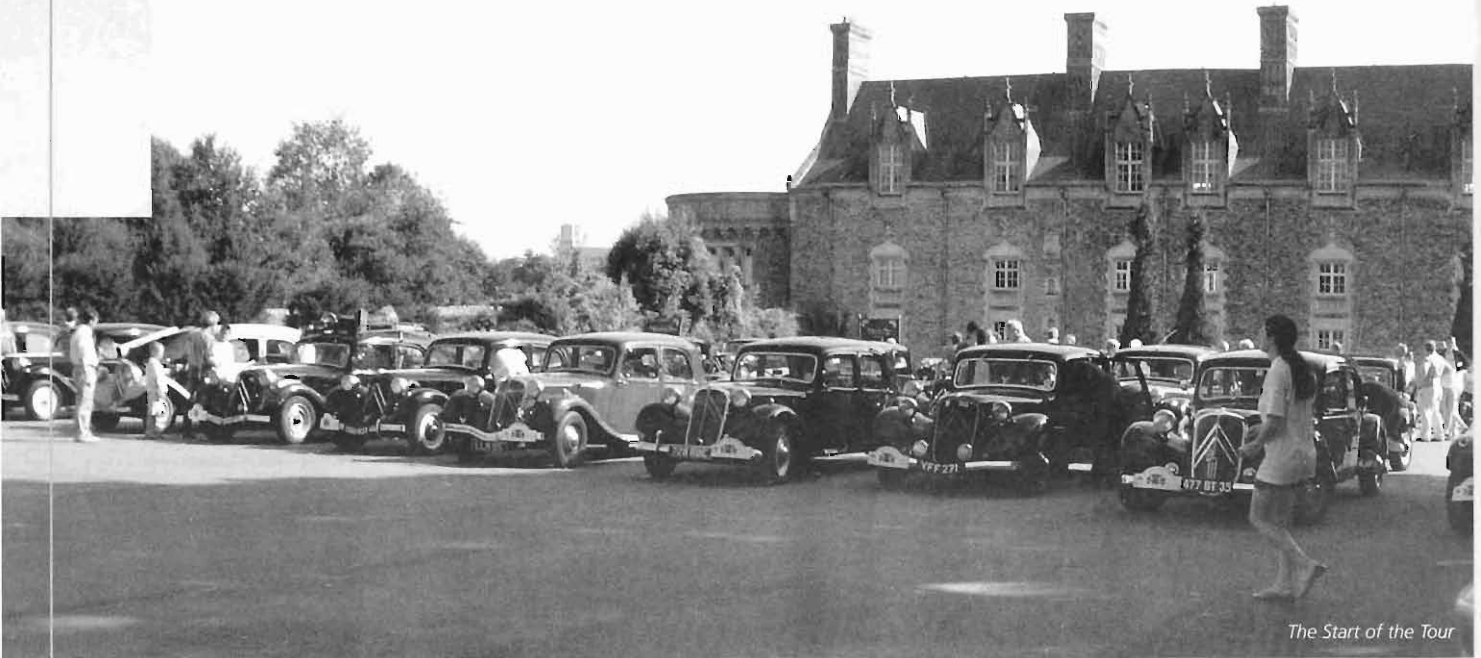
AUGUST 13 - 15TH 13TH ICCCR - INTERLAKEN

This a vast rally for all models of Citroëns. There is a Citroen Village with restaurants, bars, club tents and stalls. Site opens at noon on Thursday 12th August. Early Bird welcome 'Apéro. Official reception on Friday and evening attractions and music. Saturday Concours d'Élégance and the winners parade through town. Gala dinner in evening. Lazy Sunday brunch. Restaurants stay open so you can stay until Monday. Details and booking form on www.icccr.org. Dougie Lawson will coordinate and advise on travel Tel: 01256 329042 Email: dougie.lawson@ukonline.co.uk

SEPTEMBER 3 - 5TH TOC ANNUAL RALLY - NEW FOREST

Friday get together at camp site near Romsey. Saturday touring around the New Forest with a meal in the evening. Sunday visit Breamore House. Richard and Pam Hutton are organising the event. Tel: 023 8046 3265 Email: prp@heatherdown.freereserve.co.uk

Whilst the dates and the venues are current at the time of going to press, we recommend you confirm the details with the event, prior to setting off on your day out.



A Tractionette's View of Brittany

Hazel Shinebroom reflects on a new experience

Bernie Shaw sent us an e-mail stating that as we were virgin members we would have to write the Brittany Report. Knowing that Steve (in fact all men) can't multi-function, I was given the task of taking notes. So on Thursday, 10th July 2003 we left Loughton as virgin Tractioneers and Tractionettes for our first Brittany Tour together with our friends and neighbours Jeannie and Tony.

After packing as much as we could into our car we got on the road around 4 am and "Cissie the Citroën" drove like a dream blowing out all the cobwebs on the M25. We arrived in the Tesco car park in Portsmouth at 7am to meet up with Bernie & Pearl, he said that we would recognise his car as it would be pulling Pearl's mobile library.

We filled up with petrol and used the rest rooms with the compliments of Tesco - 'Every little helps'.

We then drove to the port to catch the Bam ferry and Steve said that he didn't like the sound of the engine. As soon as we were in line for the ferry he told Bernie and they both went to look under the bonnet - what a man magnet, every man (not even Tractioneers) stopped to look at the engine! Bernie, in his usual jovial way, said there was nothing to worry about.

JET PROPELLED

A couple of other Tractionettes drove onto the ferry and as we were waiting to go on we saw that Letsie and Bill Tilley had stopped on the ramp, or should I say as we found out later, had broken down. They told us that 5 Ferrymen came over and pushed them on. Bill said he had blocked jets.

After having breakfast in the cafeteria we went out on deck. The ferry was great,

very modern and lots of shops for a little bit of retail therapy. Unfortunately, this did not help our friend Jeannie as she doesn't travel too well on the sea but we told her to keep taking the sickness pills and she was a proper trouper.

The weather was beautiful and I decided it was time to sun bathe and have a vodka and tonic - what a life! We arrived at Caen on time and hit the road.

A couple of days before we left for Brittany, Bernie told us that we were all invited to their friends in France, Martin and Vickie (Tractioneers who could not make the trip) for tea together with Peter and Sue Simper who we would meet there. Bernie joked that Peter was always late and to our surprise Peter and Sue were there before us! Before we had left home I offered to make a marmalade cake for tea but unfortunately, as we drove off the ferry I managed to put my elbow right into the middle of it - but it still tasted good and went down well.

Steve told the guys that his exhaust was making a funny noise and scraping the road - again all of them were under the car - we were informed that the exhaust


bracket had gone. Before Steve got under the car I told him to take his shirt off - Pearl said that she was impressed that he did. I explained that I was tired of trying to get oil and grease stains out of his clothes and that I didn't have my washing machine with me. We all had a good laugh over that as the other Tractionettes understood exactly what I was saying! The boys fixed the car as Steve had a spare strap with him and we settled down for a nice cup of tea or two and lots of cakes.

STEAM POWERED

We said our goodbyes and then set off for our overnight stay in Blain. We got onto the motorway with Bernie in the lead and Peter behind us. We were driving along quite happily when all of a sudden Steve said "Where's all that water on my windscreen coming from?". We said that maybe another driver was washing his windscreen, but when we saw steam coming from under the bonnet we thought we had better stop!

A quick flick of headlights and hooters tooting alerted Bernie that we had a problem. We stopped on the side of the road with Peter pulling in behind us and



 Don't ask! Ed

the "Three Tractioneers" discovered that our top hose had come off. Again, this was easily fixed by them screwing and bolting things together whilst our friend Tony just looked on in horror.

Pearl came over to us laughing and said that Steve has now lost his virginity!

We all got back on the road and low and behold Bernie's fuel pump got stuck and after some fiddling, twiddling and turning things under the bonnet they got the car going. We managed to keep up with Bernie but all of a sudden Steve exclaimed "I've lost power" and as Bernie sped off into the horizon, we came to a leisurely halt. Luckily Peter was behind us. Our friends got out of the car and directed traffic around us, out came the triangles and it looked like we were going to be there for a long time.

Fortunately, we all had mobiles and Bernie telephoned to say that he would go on to the hotel whilst Steve and Peter repaired the car - after undoing things and blowing jets it was found to be dirt in the carburettor.

Amazingly, all these mishaps happened before the tour had actually started!

We eventually arrived at our hotel at 8.30 pm. which was down the road from Bernie's, who telephoned and said that if we could be at his hotel by 9 pm we would be able to have dinner with him. We rushed like mad and eventually sat down to a few bottles of wine and a very nice relaxing meal. Tony and Janet Latchford arrived later as they had had some trouble with their car and we all had a lovely evening.

9am Friday morning the Tractioneers arrived at our hotel to check Steve's jets then wagons rolled off to Château de la Groulais at Blain for the 19th Brittany Rally where we were to meet up with the French Tractioneers and Tractionettes.

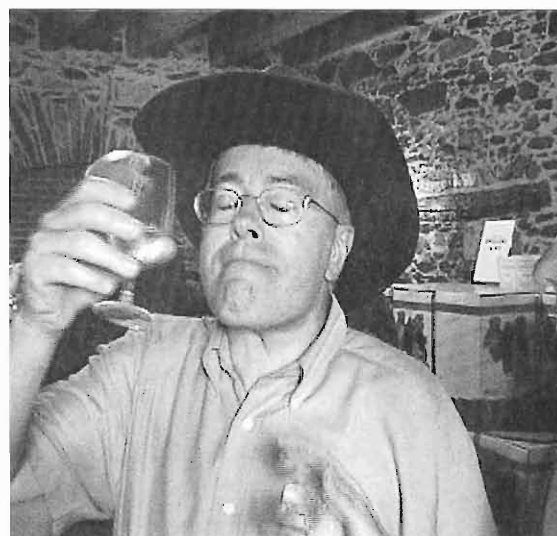
It was a most wonderful sight to see, the camaraderie was absolutely overwhelming. There were around 30 Tractions lined up, hooters were tooting, cake and drinks being served by the French organizers, and Bernie was giving out name tags (Bernie that's SHINEBROOM with an "R"!!!!).

We were introduced to lots of people including a couple from Ireland (hope to see you there in the very near future) and another couple from Jersey. We also met the new President of Club des Tractions Avant de Bretagne, Roland Robert and his wife Martine together with the Honorary President Patrice Crusson.

The klaxon was sounded and everyone went back to their cars and the convoy was on its way. We drove through the villages hooting and tooting with people waving in return. Arriving at a river, it was tremendous to see all the Tractions being guided onto the ferry.

On the other side we all lined up as the ferry had to make two trips for all the cars. Then we went on to the Citroen Joubert Garage, Le Pellerin for refreshments - here I had my first, and might I add not last, taste of Cassis.

We then drove to fill up our tanks and buy lunch at the local supermarche and headed for Château de Lorie, Cave Herve Vincent's plonkery for a picnic and of course lots of compulsory wine tasting.



The bikers were there all the time leading the way and they were absolutely fabulous. It was great seeing their smiling faces at prominent junctions and roundabouts. It made us feel very safe as we had no idea of where we were going.

We arrived at the Camping de la Breteche and left the happy campers there to set up their tents. We went on to our accommodation and had to be back at 7 pm as we were going for a meal in a restaurant at the Puc Du Fou followed by the fantastic Cine-Scenie Show. The show was great; there were hundreds of participants who enacted French history, there was also a brilliant lightshow followed by fireworks which added to a most spectacular evening.

I can quite honestly say that I watched and listened to everything and did not understand a word - oh how I wish I'd listened to my French teacher at school!

10,000 SPECTATORS

We were told there were about 10,000 people watching the spectacular and when it had finished we all went back to our cars. After saying our goodnights, we got caught up in a massive traffic jam trying to leave the park.

Eventually, we were on our way back home all alone, and on one of the loneliest, darkest roads in the area, suddenly Steve said that the car was dead again! We rolled to a halt and got out. Fortunately there was one lamp post and we managed to push the car under it. Steve said "Oh, it's the jets again - Tony, I think it's time for a Hamlet". Tony then produced two of the biggest Cuban cigars we had ever seen and they lit up. Steve just stood there smoking and smiling whilst he waited for the engine to cool down. Once again he had to blow out his jets and the car started.

About 2.45am we got back to the hotel and Steve said that he had to have a cup of coffee and a biscuit to eat as he still had the taste of petrol from the jets in his mouth - yeah right, oh the life of a Tractioneer!

The itinerary stated that we had to be back at the campsite at 9 am for a day trip to see the Puc Du Fou exhibitions. We decided to meet at the park as it was on our way. When we arrived an attendant waved us past the queues and told us to go to the car park we were in the night before. The guy with the klaxon came running over and told us to be quick as we had to collect our tickets. The shows were amazing and the weather was glorious too, around 36°C.



That evening we all met at the campsite and went off to the Aloe Restaurant. There was a room especially for the Tractioneers and Tractionettes. There was plenty of lovely food, and lots of wine flowed throughout the evening. Before we had coffee the Brits put on a very funny cabaret, the actors were Bernie, Peter, Dave, Terence and John who all looked fantastic dressed in their "strong man" leopard leotards and tights.

Thanks go out to Pearl and Maureen who worked very hard behind the scenes making sure each actor came out at the right time and throwing props at them, and Bill who worked as sound engineer. Bernie told us that they only had an hour to rehearse but, as we would find out on future tours this was nothing unusual.

ALLGONE!

Sunday morning and we were off to a ride on a restored steam train. Now, as I have said this is our first tour, and we were told that no one ever meets on time, so we decided to have a nice leisurely breakfast and drive into town for petrol before arriving at the meeting place at about 11.30 am. We arrived at the camp site and to our horror and surprise there was not a Traction in sight, all the group had gone. Tony and Jeannie got out the maps (I don't do maps!) and got us on the road to Montagne sur Sevre. Eventually we caught up with the convoy in a super marche car park.

We all headed off to the rail station and when we arrived aperitifs were being served. We then set up our picnics and more wine and beer flowed.

I was told that John and Linda's camping table had collapsed trapping Brian's private parts and the only thing the ladies were worried about was spilling their wine. Then John's burner caught fire and it was a complete fiasco. In the end they decided to throw their "new" table away on a nearby tip, evidently it was a great mad half hour.

However, they then saw other Tractioneers scavenging the tip for the table and they now expect to see it renovated and being used at the next rally. Brian made great pains to let everyone know it was Jeanette's fault! You had to be there!

Now it was time to board the steam train.

Our friend Tony, who is a steam train anorak, was beaming like a Cheshire cat, but to his disappointment we were told that because of the exceptionally hot weather, 38°C, the steam engine could not be used for fear of setting the countryside alight - I think that was quite a good reason. So we just had to make do with a diesel. It was so hot that we poured our drinking water over our heads to cool ourselves down. When we arrived at Le Herbiers everyone rushed off the train to the little kiosk and bought up everything that was cold. The vendor must have thought it was Christmas in the middle of July and he actually sold out.

BIRDSONG

Steve had been videoing all the time and when we got back to the car he put it in the boot - unbeknown to any of us. As we were driving along I said that it sounded like we had birds in the boot - Steve said I didn't know what I was talking about and that it was the dynamo squeaking again. All of a sudden he asked where the video camera was and of course none of us knew. He stopped the car and jumped out to look in the boot. We then heard him laughing - he said that he had found the birds. Bernie had stuck a whistle in the exhaust - evidently a thing Bernie does to all virgins!

That night we went back to the Aloe restaurant for dinner and cabaret by the French Club. This was extremely funny. Steve was initiated into the club by Jean doing the Barber of Seville with him. It was hilarious and all caught on video thanks to Pearl shouting at me "get the video ready". Of course, I have never used it before and even Steve was surprised and impressed that I managed to capture the moment.

Last day of the tour we headed for Parc des Loisirs in Chemere where we had a picnic lunch and aperitifs. Then on to Bains Sur Oust for a reception and speeches.

Mr. & Mrs. President and the local Mayor thanked us all for coming. Bernie said thank you to everyone on our behalf in French to all those who helped organize the tour, and gifts were presented from the TOC. We were all presented with a commemorative plaque and key rings. We then said our goodbyes - French style of

Traction Club de Bretagne Rally - July 2000

Janette and Brian Norris give their account of the experience

course saying in broken French, and English with an accent, that we looked forward to next year so that we could meet our new found friends again.

Now off to Redon for the night. Unfortunately, Bernie had been driving with no brakes for the last leg of the tour, so Peter Simper said he would tow Bernie's trailer back to his French abode and then in the morning on to Caen. Bernie followed driving carefully and was prepared to "run into the back of his trailer if necessary". He stayed at Peter and Sue's that night.

We made our own way to the hotel in Redon and arranged to catch up with Bernie and Pearl at the port in Caen the next day. Next morning we set off for Caen using a map book that Tony Latchford had lent us at the beginning of the tour - just in case! We did quite well until we got to Fougeres. The directions on the map said go to page 36 - just to let you know Tony & Janet - page 36 is missing - nice one!

Luckily for us, Caen is quite well sign posted on the A84 so we just used our initiative - anyway Steve says that I am useless at map reading (as I said I don't do maps) - but he can't make marmalade cake!

We met up with Bernie and Pearl and boarded the ferry which was even more luxurious than the outward trip. We had dinner and it was a brilliant ending to our Brittany experience - except - on the way home when we were on the M25 at 11 pm after cruising at 70 mph we got caught up in a traffic jam.

Steve had to change down to 1st gear and there was the most awful clonking and banging, and the same in 2nd, but when he went into 3rd gear all was okay. We got home in one piece and next morning he drove the car and tried to make the noise happen again, but nothing - any ideas lads?

Well, now we are back home in England with lots of fond memories of Brittany and new found friends. Steve has told me that next year I can drive the car. I said certainly, but there are a few adjustments I would like him to make - power steering, air conditioning, an automatic gear box, CD player, satellite navigation, reversing sensors etc. etc. - Then I would be extremely happy to drive back to Brittany in "Cissie the Citroën", meanwhile I will be very happy to return next year with Steve in the driving seat again.

Hazel Shinebroom

There are some offers that it would be foolish to refuse. John and Lynda Ogborne's offer of a seriously good time on Traction Rally was one of these. We knew they would have thought things over before inviting us - average load on axles, ability to pack light, usefulness in case of trouble, and the chance to beat us at cards. We had rallied in Brittany before - I Wayfarer dinghy - so we even had some limited experience - of Floating Power?!

Just to test our nerve, some 12 miles after leaving home John heard an unusual noise and leapt out with a wheel brace, reappeared after a few moments and announced that the rear nearside hub cap was now secure and we could continue. muttered words like 'tres bien' and 'une tasse de the' and smiled cheerfully - so we passed the first passenger test.

We had expected a busy few days but it was so busy in fact that it seemed like a fortnight. On the Friday morning we arrived for the 10.00 am rendezvous in front of the beautiful Chateau de la Groulais. Everyone was somewhat astonished to discover the convoy setting off promptly - apparently very different from countless previous years. Now that Roland Robert was in charge maybe timings were to be believed! Terence McAuley and Jane were a bit taken aback - a mobile phone call at 10.30 located them, all alone at the rendezvous, muttering about 'l'heure francaise'.

The first obstacle to the convoy was the River Loire - 18 Tractions fitted neatly onto the ferry, so, after 3 ferry loads all the cars were safely ashore and (after glasses of Pastis at a Citroën garage) we headed for the vineyard lunch-time stop. The vigneron was generous with the tastings, the shade of his trees was welcome and the wicker baskets came out for 'le picnic'. The really big event was the evening spectacle at the 'Puy de Fou' Chateau. We found ourselves in a massive hall with 600 others eating a medieval meal and then took our seats in the outdoor arena seating 14,000 spectators. For the next 2 hours we watched a combination of son et lumiere, pageant and medieval painting. Only the French could produce such a riveting spectacle depicting the history of the castle, village and region. Some 2,500 local residents were the amateur actors, joined by geese, pigs, donkeys and a couple of hundred horse riders. They provided an action packed performance, together with fountain of flames and fireworks.

At the same site the following day we were treated to a kaleidoscope of medieval activities, including falconry displays, vultures and eagles at extremely close quarters. You might think all this has little to do with Tractions - but it tells you everything about the Brittany Club Rally! Great fun for all ages - from toddlers to grannies - and delightful surprises. We were pleased to have a later start the next day - meeting up at the campsite where the majority of the rallyers were staying. Local people waved as the Traction convoy hooted its way through the villages - none of your British reserve here. It was often the older people who were the most pleased to see the Tractions, perhaps bringing back lots of memories. Yet more Pastis and off to the railway station where we boarded a veteran train. Temperatures were around 40 degrees by now and it took much British upper lip to make the most of this feat of endurance!

Almost 100 of us enjoyed two more evening meals together. The cabaret performance on the first evening starred the 'Strong Men' Team of the TOC. Cavorting in leotards and delicate white tights they tried to flex muscles and considered attempting feats of strength. The following evening the French Club, cleverly imitating rural peasants, entertained us with songs including 'The Vicars Maid' (ably performed by Lilli) and a Franglais rendition of 'Only You', by Dave Hackett and Jean. Language is no barrier at these events!



Throughout all the activities, we, as 'Rally Virgins', enjoyed open hospitality and felt the great friendship established between the members of the two clubs. We have learnt about Familiale, Normale and Commerciale, heard about restoration history and listened to the arguments about sealing scuttle vents, replacing master cylinders etc. This really must be rallying at its best. A diverse range of people focussed on a single shared interest having lots of fun together and developing their knowledge of their Tractions and each other. We immensely enjoyed being both participants and spectators. Long may 'entente cordiale' continue - and thanks to Lynda and John for the 'lift'.

tractions on camera

from Graham Pitcher

For those who are not aware, this year (2003) marks 100 years of the TOUR de FRANCE, which is now regarded as a French institution.

More importantly it also marks the birth of Flaminio Bertoni who was born in the northern Italian town of Masnago, gifted in both art and design he left technical school an accomplished draughtsman in 1918.

While working at a car bodywork factory he also studied with a local sculptor, this paving the way for his future and our own love affair.

It was in 1932 Bertoni moved to Paris and was hired by André Citroën where he began a close collaboration with André Lefebvre, the company's gifted chief engineer.

Bertoni's place in design history was assured when he designed the bodywork of the Traction Avant in a single night by moulding a plasticine model, this was the first time that a car was produced directly from a mould rather than a sketch. This brings me back to the design of our cars. The second of August saw Tony Latchford (Legere) Paul de Felice driving Dante Mansi's (Legere) and myself (Normale) taking part in a photo call along with eight DS's, one 2CV and an Ami6 in front of our own Design Museum on the River Thames with Tower Bridge as a back drop.

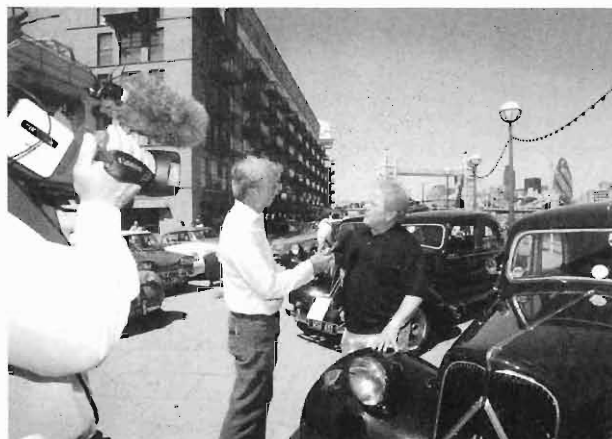
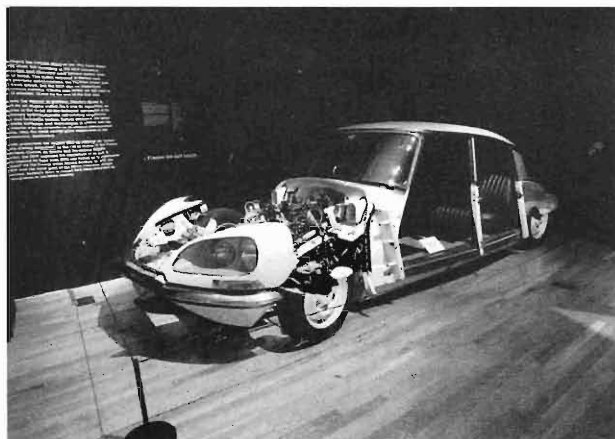
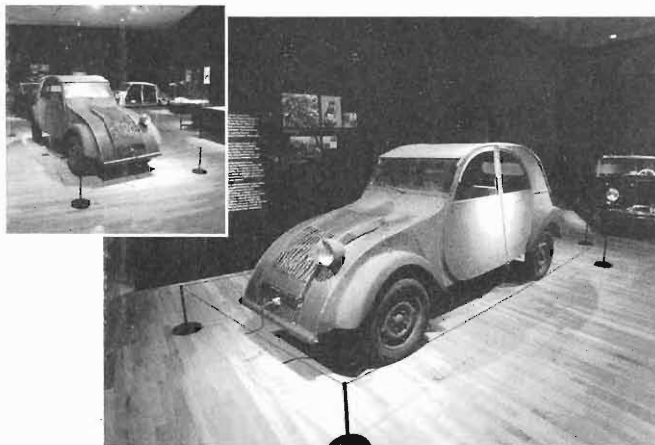
David Conway asked Paul if he could supply any Tractions at short notice so the three mentioned (French built) went along. Little did we know what was in store when we arrived.

It was just not a photo call but a special celebration of the designs of Bertoni, organised by the Design Museum and by Granada TV who were making a one hour documentary for their Men and Motors programme which is scheduled to be shown some time in the autumn.

The day was perfect, the cars magnificent and those who attended where all Citroën devotees, headed by André Citroën's great grandson Bernard Citroën his nephew Louise Citroën with also from France Charles Herval, from Citroën Germany was Ulrich Knaach and the home shores was also well represented, Chris Goffey, Malcolm Bobbitt, Tony Stokoe, David Conway to name a few and of course those I had mentioned earlier.

Tony, Paul and I would like to thank Jennifer and her staff for making our day at the museum great and also to Peter Baker (editor) and Jo Ground (PR) of Granada TV for having the foresight to put our great cars on TV, Chris Goffey and Peter Baker as I understand are to go to the Conservatoire next month to put the finishing touches to the documentary. Something to look forward to in the darker nights - www.designmuseum.org where there is a very interesting article on Flaminio Bertoni.

Graham Pitcher



CITROËN

toctech



volume 1

Maintenance **15**

● **ENGINE**

- **Overhaul, Part 1**

● **SUSPENSION**

- **More on Load Distribution**

● **ELECTRICS**

- **Flashing Indicators**

Engine Overhaul

Julian Taylor of Bridgwater has unearthed this article from a 1950's book called 'Automobile Repairs', edited by E Molloy and published by George Newnes who we gratefully acknowledge.

Due to its length, the article will be published in two or three episodes starting this time mainly with removal and dismantling of the engine. No attempt has been made to change the text, which does not represent the best of English grammar, but the meaning remains clear!

OVERHAULING THE CITROEN "LIGHT FIFTEEN"

This car is of rather unique design, being a front-wheel-drive model. It has no separate chassis frame, as the body panels are welded to a pressed steel "hull" to form a complete body unit to which is assembled the power unit and front and rear axles. No servicing difficulties should be encountered provided that the design is understood and the correct tools and equipment are available. The leverage to be applied when tightening various parts has been indicated in brackets and is given in pounds-feet. The degree of tightening in these cases is important and the correct setting should be obtained by the use of a reliable torsion wrench or similar tool.

Removing Power Unit (Engine, Clutch, and Gearbox)

Remove the bonnet, radiator shell, radiator, and gearbox suspension cross-member. (If the gearbox or clutch only is to be removed it will still be necessary to remove these items.) Take out battery and disconnect coil, starter and dynamo wires. Uncouple gear rods from levers on bell-housing tower, clutch cable (or rod) from fork lever, speedometer cable from gearbox, flexible pipe at petrol pump, also all other controls at engine.

Disconnect exhaust pipe at manifold and also its tie rod from base of engine. Uncouple drive-shaft flanges from gearbox. With suitable chain sling and hoist, lift out unit and place on work stand. It should be noted that the cylinder head, rocker shaft, manifolds, water pump and shaft can be easily removed, serviced, and refitted without the power unit being removed from the car.

Refitting Power Unit

Using the chain sling and hoist, fit the power unit into the car by first introducing the rear mounting block into its housing. Place lateral volute springs on their brackets and lower unit, taking care to engage drive-shaft flanges with coupling bolts on gearbox. Fit gearbox suspension cross member and bolt gearbox cover

brackets to it. The position of the power unit is determined by this mounting point. Complete coupling of drive-shaft flanges.

The rear mounting-block housing on the bulkhead is supplied in various depths. Select one to give a clearance of 2-10 mm between the rear face of the mounting block and rear face of housing. Ensure a snug fit of the mounting block by adjusting the loading of the lateral volute springs and also by positioning the rear housing about its four bolts. Connect exhaust pipe and tie rod.

With the rear edge of the clutch-pedal pad about 175 mm. above floor carpet, fit clutch cable to withdrawal-shaft lever. If the clutch has six pressure springs adjust the cable to give 30 mm lost motion on pedal. When the clutch has nine springs adjust the rear guide so that both ends of sheath rest on guide seats. After working the pedal a few times, unscrew rear guide 1½ turns, then tighten its locknut. Finally, adjust the cable at the front end by bringing nuts into contact with the withdrawal-shaft lever trunnion. If a rod is fitted instead of a cable it should be adjusted at the front lever end to give a similar result. Fit speedometer cable, controls, wiring, and also gear-change rods. Fit radiator and shell, connect hoses, replace battery and bonnet.

Ignition Timing

If it is necessary to retune the ignition, turn the engine slowly until No. 1 cylinder (front) nears end of compression stroke. Insert a 6-mm. diameter pin into timing hole in clutch bell housing, and turn engine slowly until the pin falls in recess in flywheel. The engine is now set at 8° advance. Engage distributor with drive and turn until contacts for No.1 plug open. Tighten distributor, fit cap, connect up leads, and withdraw locating pin. Start engine and, after 15 minutes' idling, tighten cylinder-head nuts (36 lb-ft.). Stop engine and, while it is still hot, adjust tappets to 0.15 mm. for inlet and 0.20 mm. for exhaust.

Removing Engine Accessories

This must be carried out with the power unit mounted on a stand prior to any dismantling of the engine itself. Remove in the following order the dynamo, starter motor, distributor, petrol pump, carburettor, spark plugs, rear engine bearer (rubber block) and breather pipe. Uncouple gearbox and bell-housing assembly, remove bell housing, dust cover, and finally detach clutch from flywheel.

Refitting Engine Accessories

Using a mandrel to centralise the clutch plate with the crankshaft ballrace, fit clutch to flywheel. After ensuring that the mandrel slides freely, tighten bolts holding

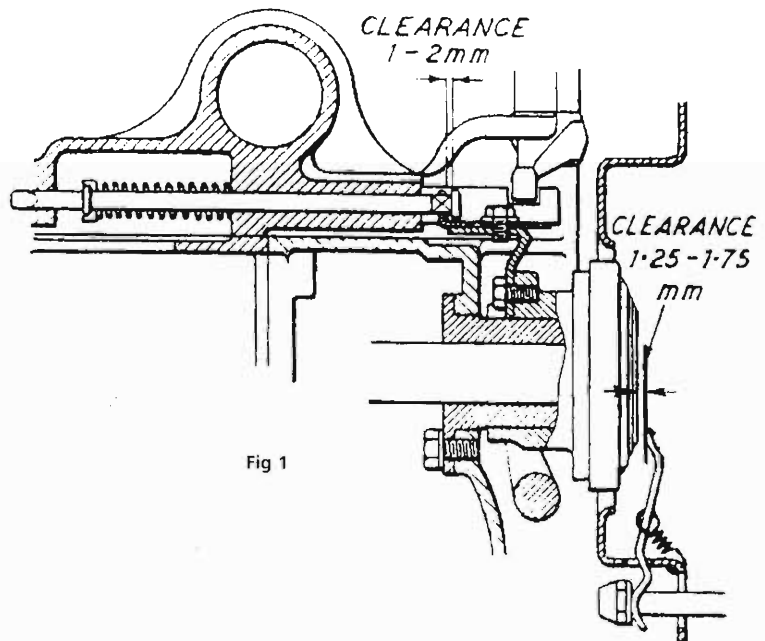


Fig 1

clutch (14.5 lb.-ft.). To cylinder block, fit bell housing locating dowels and circlips. Grease splines in clutch-plate hub, offer up gearbox, and turn mainshaft to engage with splines. Line up fan-pulley shaft dog with end of camshaft, and push gearbox home. Fit and tighten holding bolts (14.5 lb.-ft.). Adjust clutch-toggle clearance to 1.25 - 1.75 mm. by means of setscrew on bell housing. Fit gear-lock withdrawal fork, giving 1 - 2 mm. clearance between plunger head and fork face (Fig. 1). Fit distributor, plugs, carburettor and air silencer, dynamo and belt, starter motor, petrol pump, and carburettor feed pipe, and finally, engine rear mounting cushion.

● Dismantling Engine

After placing the engine on a suitable stand remove manifolds, oil breather, volute spring, brackets, valve cover, water pump, oil-pump setscrew, and rockershaft oil supply pipe. Lay engine plug side down and remove sump, timing cover, cylinder head, push rods, tappet cups, and oil pump. Take off the timing chain and wheels together. Mark each connecting rod and big-end cap, then remove the latter and also main-bearing caps. Take out crankshaft and flywheel assembly and separate them. Remove connecting rods and pistons, also cylinder barrels. Take off thrust plate to remove camshaft. Remove corner brackets.

Dismantle the cylinder block by removing distributor bush, chain lubricator, rear hoist plate, upper half of oil baffle, oil duct, and water drain plugs, and cylinder-head studs and dowel. Dismantle the cylinder head by removing the valves guides, rocker-shaft assembly, and studs. If necessary dismantle rocker shaft, noting order of parts. Remove pistons from connecting rods by taking out circlips and then push out gudgeon pins after heating pistons to about 140 deg. F. Use a mandrel to press out small-end bushes.

● Dismantling Oil Pump

Remove gauzes, pump base, and idler gear. Take out shaft with fixed gear after removing driving pinion at top. Take off fixed gear after sliding it along the shaft to permit removal of split locking ring and Woodruff key. Take out tubular column from main casting then drive out idler-gear spindle. Remove release-valve parts and finally remove bush in tubular column.

Dismantling Water Pump

Remove fan, pulley and key. Remove ballrace ring nut, then drive out shaft half-way to remove split lock rings. Remove shaft completely. Next remove gland nut, gland and packing. Finally drive out bronze bush.

Load Distribution

More thoughts on Height Settings and Weight Distribution

Rik Blote, from Lot in France, has come up with an alternative way of ensuring that height settings and weight distribution are correct. Please excuse the mention of two alien car manufacturers in this item!

The article on weight distribution prompted me to write and explain how I have set up a few Tractions. The main problem with setting up suspension is that if one axle has uneven weight distribution then it will cause false readings on the other, making the whole process more laborious than it already is. The solution to this is to adjust each axle on its own.

Starting on the statutory flat and level concrete surface, I use a good quality trolley jack and one of those small rubber blocks similar to those that they put under the sills of cars on commercial garage lifts. Thoroughly clean off all the grease and dirt from the bottom of the front cradle so that the rubber block won't slip. Place the rubber block in the exact centre of the trolley jack cup and then jack up the car on the exact centre of the cradle until the wheels are about 2cm off the ground. Gently rock the car to settle the rear suspension and then measure and set the rear hull clearances.

Note: to adjust the torsion bars the weight must be off them. For safety, the front of the car must be lowered before jacking up the rear.

Having now got the rear correctly set, the front hull clearances can be set left and right without having to touch the rear axle settings. I have used this method to set up two Tractions and a Simca successfully. On checking the wheel weights on the machine at the local Renault garage I found the maximum variance to be a tad under 14 kg., which is not bad. However, this system did fail on a third Traction which turned out to have a slightly twisted bodyshell - hence the hull clearances did not tally with the wheel loadings. (The twist was discovered when I set the rear axle correctly and then checked the front hull clearances while the front was still on the jack).

I must add for safety and fear of litigation:- never go under a car supported only on a jack and never jack up a Traction on its rear axle because it is likely to bend it. I would also like to explain that this a method I have used and it is not the traditional workshop recommended way of doing it. There may be experts out there who will say you should not do it this way and who will be able to say why not.

A Flashy Solution

Thanks to a local club meeting, Steve Shinebroom spotted this solution to providing flashing indicators on the Light 15 without the need for conspicuous orange light fittings. An incentive for more of us to get along to these meetings!

At a club area meeting I was admiring another member's Light 15 when the subject of indicators arose. He showed me that his car had been wired so that the existing brake lights and front sidelights acted as indicators and the trafficators still worked as normal!

A demonstration showed that when indicating, the corresponding brake light is overridden and flashes together with the corresponding sidelight. It's not actually the existing front sidelight bulb that flashes but the 21 watt filament of a 5/21 watt bulb that, together with a new "double filament bulb holder", replaces the single existing 5 watt fitting. The 5 watt filament of course will be the normal sidelight.

This method of indicating was used I am told on early Morris Minors amongst others, and is legal on pre 1960 cars. So I left the meeting with a new project in hand!

I was given some clues by searching the web and another member who said he was told that relays and flasher units are involved. Our club secretary pointed me towards John Ogborne who quite simply sent me the details and diagram which I have used.

The circuit has to be duplicated for each side of the car and so consists of two flasher units and two switching relays. The diagram shows the left hand side only.

This necessitates splitting the existing brake light circuit into two (by disconnecting the wired link from the left to the right brake light which runs across inside the boot) and running a new feed to the disconnected right hand brake light. I managed to feed a wire from front to back following the existing loom down the side of the roof panel. However a wire "beneath the carpet" will work just as well.

(NOTE: the supply to the indicator switch should already be fused via the ignition switch)

I completed the wiring to the back end whilst waiting for the double filament bulb holders to arrive. When they did, I rushed to connect them as the coming weekend we were driving to the "Goodwood Revival Meeting". On the

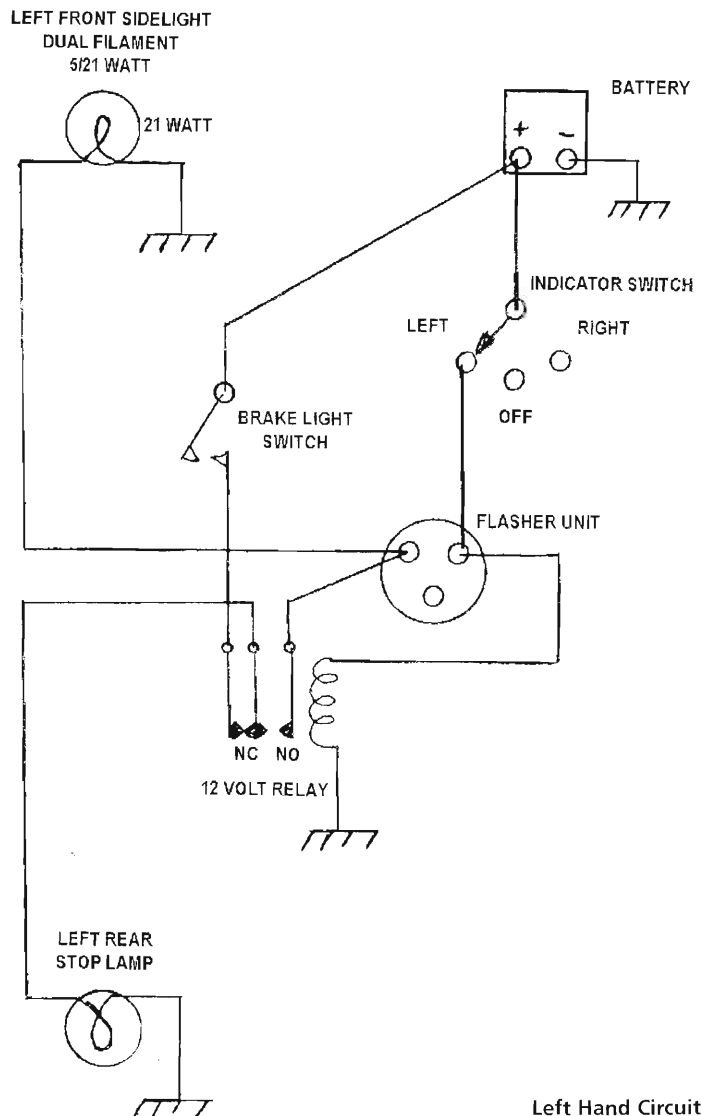
way I was stuck in traffic behind our club secretary Paul de Felice when he leaned out and said "You do know that when you brake your front side lights are coming on". "Don't wind me up" I said, remembering that I'd had the inaugurating whistle up the exhaust in Brittany recently.

We drove on and to my horror when I braked I could see the sidelights coming on brightly, reflected in the chrome back of the headlights! The previous day it

passed the MOT that way. Ah well, everybody makes mistakes! (Now corrected, don't ask)

Parts needed: approximate cost £35

- 2 flasher units (electronic)
- 2 switching relays
- 2 double filament bulb holders with 5/21 watt bulbs
- 5 amp wire, female spade and bullet connectors







Still on English plates. RHD. Slough built - but for sale with a French dealer - £25,000!!! - and the sills were very wavy! - look at the fit of the door!

tocharades

Mike Tebbett sends these photos from Charades

Having got the driveshafts loosened up a bit on our trip to Dunkerque and with fresh 165x400s installed on the driving wheels, the time was fast approaching to cross the channel again and head off to Charade.

Last minute checks and an oil change revealed a loose wheel bearing, so a quick disassembly of the front end was needed. Never mind, all went well with no stubborn bolts or cross threads! A friend and I drove down to Dover with the idea of following the Tour de France bike race to Never, then calling in to see Antonia Loysen who some of you may remember from the good old days racing and rallying Tractions. She lives near there now, unfortunately Tractionless, poor thing! All went to plan except the bikes were so fast we kept missing them, but the atmosphere, as always was superb.

The car went well in the extreme heat with just a little pinking on the hills - sans plomp I expect. I was surprised at the enthusiastic waves, light flashing and honking we got from motorists and especially lorry drivers (hopefully friendly!). A young Gendarme thought we were part of the cavalcade at Troyes, and waved us on to the 'Tour' route, only to be sternly waved off again a kilometre or two up the road. Hopefully the young guy didn't get in trouble as we enjoyed our brief moment of fame.

We left Antonia and Dominique on Friday and had a very hot trip down to Clermont-Ferrand in search of the Charade racetrack. At this point I decided that it was never going to rain again, so I might as well take a Stanley knife to the sealed up scuttle opening and let a bit of fresh air in. Ah sweet relief! We negotiated Clermont-Ferrand quite well and began to see a few Tractions on the road, but as usual the signposts run out at the vital junction. After climbing and climbing and climbing I eventually asked a bus driver the way. He confirmed we should keep going up to the top then turn left. I thought the car was going to boil, but when



This was a post-war car! - despite pre-war bonnet... notice there is no body moulding around the rear window



Decapts everywhere!



we got to the top and turned left we coasted down quite a way until eventually there was an old Traction shell on a roundabout and the entrance to the track.

Of course there was a quicker way up and on that route the organisers had kindly parked a water tanker half way up the route, in case of overheating! I don't know if this facility was ever put to use, but it was a good idea.

The event itself was very well organised with about 15 or 16 Traction teams doing the endurance race, all of which seemed to complete the 11 hours without problems. I did notice quite a few 4 speed D boxes in the cars, especially the Tracbar cars. As expected there were 100's of beautiful and unusual cars, a lovely bus and wood fired gas lorry. The track is magnificent, running up and down the volcanic hills. At the end of the event all the cars were allowed on to the track for about 3 laps. This was an amazing experience, about 400 Traction's driving round all with different horn tones. I believe a video is available of the event from Eric Massient du Biest www.globe-driver.com or www.tractionades.com.

The only criticism we had of the event was the catering (and of course the loos, but we were in France after all), and I heard others moaning the about the food as well. Definitely not what one would expect from France!

I only noticed 2 other Slough cars in attendance, one French owned and badly restored early coupe for sale (about £33,000!), and a '49 Big 6 from Austria. My Slough Big 15 got a fair bit of attention, and of course the 4 speed box and D engine promoted a few comments. Because of this we did meet a few interesting people including André Midl from Paris with a very special green 6 convertible he had made with dicky seat and adaptable front seating, so you could seat 6 and sleep in the car if you so wished! I didn't see any evidence of a hood though; but then again it wasn't going to rain, was it? Also Messier Thioux from Gien, in the Loire Valley, who constructs cabriolets from your traction wreck. We called in to his workshops on our way back and got an extensive guided tour - fascinating place, and superb workmanship. So if you fancy a cabriolet and have a healthy bank balance give him a call 00 33 38 67 02 47.

The trip back was uneventful, except a sticking throttle cable in a traffic jam on the outskirts of Paris, melting roads and the boot catch refused to operate. Good job I brought the binder twine!



Nice Pick-up...



...on a 'normale' chassis

tractionrotary

The Rotary Club of Chigwell

Classic Car Show 29th June 2003

Chris Bailey usually rounds up the local members and organises the TOC turnout at this annual charity show. Unfortunately this year Chris was unable to attend as "her indoors" made holiday arrangements without fully consulting the "master of the household".

So, the exhibitor's passes and show details were thrust upon me by a disappointed Chris with the words "It's all down to you now mate".

I made contact with local members and expected that there would be a contingent of five or six cars attending the show.

Disappointingly, what with some members having to recover from the post Scottish Tour repairs and others simply forgetting the "date", it became apparent that I was going to be the only person exhibiting their car if we were not going to disappoint the show organisers.

My wife Hazel, friend Tony and I arrived at the show and were ushered to a nice pitch which was marked out and designated with a "Traction Owners Club" sign. As I parked up in the centre of our pitch I felt a little lonely. However the sun was out and Chardonnay and Stella was cold and we soon got chatting to visitors and other exhibitors at the show.

The judges came round at about midday and took a brief look at my 1954 Light 15. They asked me to open the bonnet and asked if I had done much to the car, and then left.

The sun continued to shine all afternoon and the Traction got some great compliments from visitors. Well, it was the only one at the show! Then and to my surprise, the judges returned and told me that my car had been awarded the "Winner of Class for Cars 1948 -1960"

A parade in the small arena and presentation of an engraved pewter cup by Eleanor Laing, MP for Epping, ended a lovely day.

I'm glad I went!

Steve Shinebroom



toc section scene

London section

Regular meetings on the last Tuesday of each month at the following locations:

Even months: From 8 pm at "Ye Old Cherry Tree, 22 The Green, Southgate, London, N14 (Tel 020 8447 8022)

Odd months: From 8 pm at Café Dysart, Petersham Road, Richmond, London, TW10 (Tel 020 8940 8005)

If you need any further information please contact Peter or Sue Simper on 020 8560 3267 (days) or 020 8891 1093 (evenings).

West of England section

Another year of happy Tracting in the West of England came to end on Sunday 12th October with a visit to Berkeley Castle. A glorious autumn day saw us gathered at the Tudor Arms in Slimbridge and, after an excellent lunch, in convoy for the 5 or so miles to the Castle. We were also pleased to welcome Robin and Sue Dyke who had made the journey from darkest Oxfordshire.

The castle and its gardens proved to be very interesting, in particular with its associations with the allegedly very unpleasant death of Edward II that took place there. We therefore thought it rather insensitive that there were wooden swords for sale in the souvenir shop! The castle itself is around 800 years old and the original owners - not surprisingly, the Berkeleys - still live there. Architecturally it is a real mixture with what appears to be a sample of every style of window known to mankind in the last 8 centuries. All in all, a good end to the year with an excellent turn-out.

Our attempts to have a regular meeting place to slot in between visits to places of interest has not worked out very well and is, on second thoughts, perhaps not the best of ideas. What have worked well are the three visits to the coal mine in the Forest of Dean, Corsham Court and Berkeley Castle. A proposal for next year could be that we stick with three major meetings per year (plus the "planning meeting" at the newly refurbished Tunnel House) and avoid the middle of the year when there are so many other things taking place. These could be in any three out of March, April, May, September and October depending on the rest of the TOC calendar. Please give this some thought over the period between now and January when we will be at the Tunnel House - probably 11th.

Enjoy the festive season and see you in January.

Jon Ogbourne

Email: jogbourne@onetel.net.uk

South Midlands section

May 8th 2004

We plan to visit Mapledurham House in the afternoon of Saturday 8th May 2004, Mapledurham Estate is just north of Reading on the banks of the River Thames. You will probably remember the church and watermill scenes from the film "The Eagle Has Landed". We will meet for a pub lunch at the Pack Horse Inn in Chazey Heath nearby.

Further details from Robin Dyke Tel: 01865 858555

Email: robindyke@btopenworld.com

Surrey, Hampshire Sussex Borders section

A representative gathering of ten Tractions met at the 'Fairmile' Cobham plus one Acadiane, and departed in glorious sunshine for the Hollycombe Steam fair at Lipkook. Everyone picnicked on arrival, very British, not a drop of wine in sight! What fun this place is, my fourth visit this year. Steam and smoke everywhere!

December 21st - Barley Mow.

Please note: The annual Christmas Party will take place as last year at the 'Barley Mow', The Street, West Horsley, Surrey, on 21st December 2003. This event needs to be pre-booked.

Two course menu £14.50 per person.
Three course menu £17.95 per person

Don't forget the V.S.C.C meeting on New Years day. 12 noon.
It's crowded, but it is wonderful. Three cheers for a bit of pollution!
For further information phone John or Helen on 020 8330 7216.



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toc correspondence

CREAM MACHINE

William Bloemendaal's letter in the last edition of Floating Power containing kind advice on the virtues of installing a V8 engine with Porsche suspension were not considered too carefully as the rebuilding of the Cream Machine is nearing completion. I had read the story of Roger Barlow's trip across America in 1948 using a Light 15 with a Ford V8 engine and rear transmission with admiration. However I want to be true to the memory of André Citroën and fit the car with an improved engine and gearbox, one taken from an ID not a Chevrolet.

My last major rally was in a brand new Chevrolet Avalanche with a 6 litre V8 in which I covered 25,600 km in South America. However the transmission failed at the very furthest tip of the continent and I had to drive the car 3,000 km in second gear up to Buenos Aires where there was a specialist who repaired automatic transmission. In contrast, most bush mechanics could work on the Roadster. For long distance events it should prove to be an ideal car and fun to drive.

The boys at Bisleigh are wonderful craftsmen and the care shown in rebuilding the car a joy to behold. So much has to be made by hand to suit the purpose for which the car is intended. Sure it is taking longer than I thought but my grandchildren took 9 months to produce and they, like the Roadster are beautiful and could not be rushed.

The sad news for WB is that we are painting the car blue as we found the hood was black not brown as we thought and blue is more appropriate for a French car.

I will keep readers advised as matters progress.

Yours in earnest anticipation,

Alan Crisp

ROADSTER FBH 249

While I can't throw any light on the continuing existence or otherwise of the Roadster that Douglas Sharp once owned ("Floating Power, June/July 2003, page 15 and front cover), might I suggest that he could be looking in the wrong place? The registration number was FBH 249. This index mark was issued not in Birmingham as David Boyd indicates, but by Buckinghamshire County Council. The year of issue was 1938, so that if it was original to the car and there is no reason to suppose it would not have been, Douglas's memory of the car's year of manufacture would serve him well. The existence of twin scuttle vents poses further questions.

David's guess that the factory may have had the car back at some time may give further clues, not least because the registration letters FBH would have been applicable to Slough, which is in Buckinghamshire. It's possible that, if the car was a 1934/35 model, it could have been re-registered - but not later than 1938. However, re-registration was most unusual before the war, unless, for example, the car had been originally registered in the Channel Islands and later brought back to the United Kingdom. Douglas might be able to trace his Roadster through the Buckinghamshire County archivist. Some of these officials do retain records of vehicle registrations, and if there is such a facility in Buckinghamshire I should think it would be located either in Aylesbury or in Milton Keynes.

Yours sincerely,

David A De Saxe

SHARPE'S ROADSTER

What a nice bright and stunning picture on our June/July magazine cover - a car most enviable to the majority of Traction Owners.

If I can enlarge upon David Boyd's questions that Mr Sharp asks. Although I have to say, maybe I'll have more questions than answers!

I have to ask; Did Mr Sharp see an advertisement from Slough? I know they did take in 'Trade Sales.' It's possible a new car may have been taken in part exchange for the Roadster. Did he keep any paperwork from them? If so it would be fairly easy to identify year of manufacture from Chassis or Cocque details.

Slough did register cars with Buckinghamshire registrations. FBH 249 is one from their registrations - look at the advertisements issued from the factory: GBH, EBH etc. BH are the last letters for Bucks. Birmingham starts at O,OA OB, OC, OX.

Looking at the car pictures for a 1938 vehicle, Pilote rims would have been correct. It looks as if it sports '35 rims with hub caps! Someone has put on what looks like Wilmot Breedon door handles in place of the usual 'French curved-type.'

Regarding its fate, it is just possible that this car may have gone abroad to Europe. I know of six Slough cars from France, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Majorca etc. So many envied these pretty cars. They were more coveted than the French ones due to the 'English Version.' The worst could be that it was sadly broken up as these convertibles suffered from rust due to water entering the main bearer supports. To my knowledge from a small number built at Slough, only 25-30 cars have survived worldwide. 1939 saw the last built. The model was discontinued after the war.

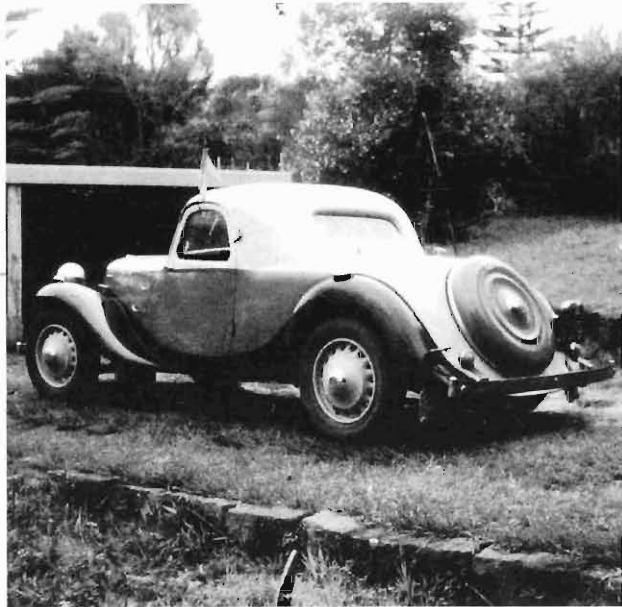
The Coupe ceased in 1938 according to Slough records. My own Coupe was produced that year although it was fitted not with Pilote wheels but 1934-35 wheels and hub caps. The overhead steering holes were closed off telling me it was an early Cocque. Sounds like what was on the shelf was fitted. It had a Light 15 engine and not as all the others I knew of as being Light 12. These were also fitted to a number of Roadsters. The Chassis numbers prove this, being given as 7C2-7C4 for a Light 12. Light 15 states 11C4 which would be the larger engine but the body shell would be the same.

However, according to Ken Smith, Chief Engineer at the factory, one, a coupe, was built to order from stocks in 1947. There isn't a chassis number known or where it was delivered.

Yours sincerely

Fred Annells





KIWI ANSWERS

I expect you will receive other more informed responses to Walford Bruen's "Kiwi Query" in your June/July issue, but if you don't I can advise that Ernie Sklenars has indeed 'moved on' by now - in July 1997 or thereabouts.

As far as I am aware he still owned the Mairangi Bay property that Walford visited in 1984 but most of his "collection" had been shifted many years before to a property that he shared with his son Alan in Hamilton, a city some 80 miles south of Auckland. In those days Alan ran a business importing and wrecking for old Citroëns from New Caladonia, in many respects a chip off the old block.

Ernie in his later years was a cantankerous sort, entirely capable of falling out with anyone, including it turned out his own son - on his death he left his collection to Te Puke Auto Barn, a car museum in a small Bay of Plenty town to the east of Hamilton.

That is where the Coupe pictured in Walford's letter can now be seen, nicely restored, alongside a couple of Ernie's other better cars. But the majority of his collection, having suffered the ravages of being stored outside too long, was sold off at an auction in October 1999.

I enclose snippets from our national magazine, *New Zealand Citroën*, which you may find of interest...

ERNIE SKLENARS' COLLECTION (NZ Citroën No. 61 - Feb '99)

I visited the Te Puke Auto Barn to view the new home of Ernie's car collection. Progress on the tidy-up of cars for viewing is going well, with the following near completion as I write this:

- Traction Coupe replica: Painted banana yellow & candy red, it looks great. This car has original tartan seat covers.
- 2CV Charleston: Panel & paint finished and on display.
- 1922 type A 10hp: Tourer body, chassis done, body underway. This car had to be dismantled to move, as Ernie had put it together in his downstairs bedroom.

Other tidy-ups soon to follow are a 2CV van; '37 12hp Saloon (very nice as it is); '49 Big 6; early DS19 & ID; French Big 15 rhd model x Aussie of '51-52 vintage; a possible 5CV cloverleaf or boat-tail; the famous Ernie 3 wheeler, plus more 15s, Ds and a GS. The museum also has 15 bins of spares. After inspecting the cars and talking to the directors, I must agree that the collection is in the best place. Most of the cars are junk, but at least someone is doing a tidy-up and saving the vehicles for future viewing.

Floating Power

TRACTION AVANT (NZ Citroën No. 63 - Aug '99)

by Dion de la Croix

Following my brief comment last issue about Ernie Sklenars Traction Coupe, I dug out the following from 'New Zealand Citroën' issue #18 of May 1988, which I believe readers will find of interest:



"The first picture, taken in 1962, shows a replica coupe built by Jack Weaver of Kawerau about 1960. It was made from a '39 saloon and used as a racing car, fitted with a 1911 cc Traction engine with high-lift cams and twin Solex carbs. In 1963 Peter Ackeroyd of Rotorua bought it and the car was refitted with a DS 19 motor coupled to a 4-speed Ersa gearbox, after which it became very well known in Waikato and BoP racing circles. The car weighed 18cwt, was capable of 105mph and would do a standing quarter in 17.9 seconds.

In those days the car was painted blue and was distinctive by having a lower body profile than a factory-built coupe.



Ernie's Coupe,

The car's whereabouts is unknown from 1964 on (written in 1988 remember), but it would seem that at least the body shell has survived, in the care of Ernie Sklenars of Mairangi bay, Auckland. This was evident by the second photo, taken in 1986 showing the same basic shape but with a few different panels and parts at the front end."



LEFT TO RIGHT

Michael Wortley sends this photo...

It was taken in 1956 while I was serving with The Royal Leicestershire Regiment during the troubles in Cyprus. The location is St.Hilarion Castle in the northern hills above Kyriena, and the two likely lads are on the left, Mike Sharkey of The Royal Signal Regiment from Chesterfield, while Moi leans on the Traction for support!

I think U994 must have been a 1946 - 48 (no chevrons) export from Slough. Although it is curious that it has the top mounted wiper arms.

At this time in my military service I was a driver for a Major Broadbent of the Royal Ordinance Corps and the Light Fifteen was his personal transport; which he would have acquired while in Cyprus. At off duty times he would allow me to use it, hence the little jolly up into the cool hills. I hasten to add that I have a little less hair 47 years later!

While I am writing, may I respectfully throw open a discussion on the idea of converting a left hand drive Traction to right hand drive. Has anyone done it, what are the problems - apart from the obvious ones, such as dash and pedals?

I know everyone will say, there is no need to do it, but when looking through the advertisements French cars out number Slough built Traction at least 3 to 1 ! I think I had better finish there before I get thrown out in my first year!

NORMANDY TOUR

On the last weekend of September we went on our first Normandy Tour, which really started on the Thursday when we meet other Tractionists on the ferry.

We were having a great time until Saturday afternoon, returning to the hotel after a little light exercise at the Velos-Rail at Pont Erambourg, where I believe a good time was had by all, when turning into a supermarket for supplies, the distributor became greedy and decided to keep all its sparks to its self, this upset the engine which then decided to stop, never to go again that day.

The Experts where called in and after much discussion about "THE****GAP" the decision was taken to change the distributor.

This was done on Sunday morning and the car ran very well for the rest of the Rally.

We would like to thank Pete Simper and the rest of you who stayed with us and then took us back to the hotel, once again thank you very much.

Peter and Sheila Marley

Floating Power

TRACTA +

I recently went on the 20th anniversary rally of the SM Club de France in Brittany.

On the Saturday we went to an amazing motor museum at Loheac called 'Le Manoir de l' Automobile'. Halls full of interesting cars, including several Citroëns. You will see in one photo a 15/6 and next to it a contemporary - indeed earlier front wheel drive car, called a TRACTA! Although much more old fashioned in its styling notice that it sits no higher than the Citroën and appeared similar in construction as well as engineering. The bodywork was assigned to Duval. The museum has an excellent website at: <http://www.manoir-automobile.fr>. This lists all the cars in the museum, EXCEPT the Tracta...

The other two pictures were taken at a dedicated Citroën event, 'Citroën Vision', one showing a fine big roadster with 'Splendilux' wings and grill. The other shows a delightful little car with very tidy styling called a "Ucorne", French for Unicorn. Eagle eyed viewers will spot the Traction windscreen and indeed the whole car was mechanically based on either a 7 or an 11. I took the photo including the information sheet but unfortunately its illegible! Interesting though.

Kind regards,

Tony Stokoe



