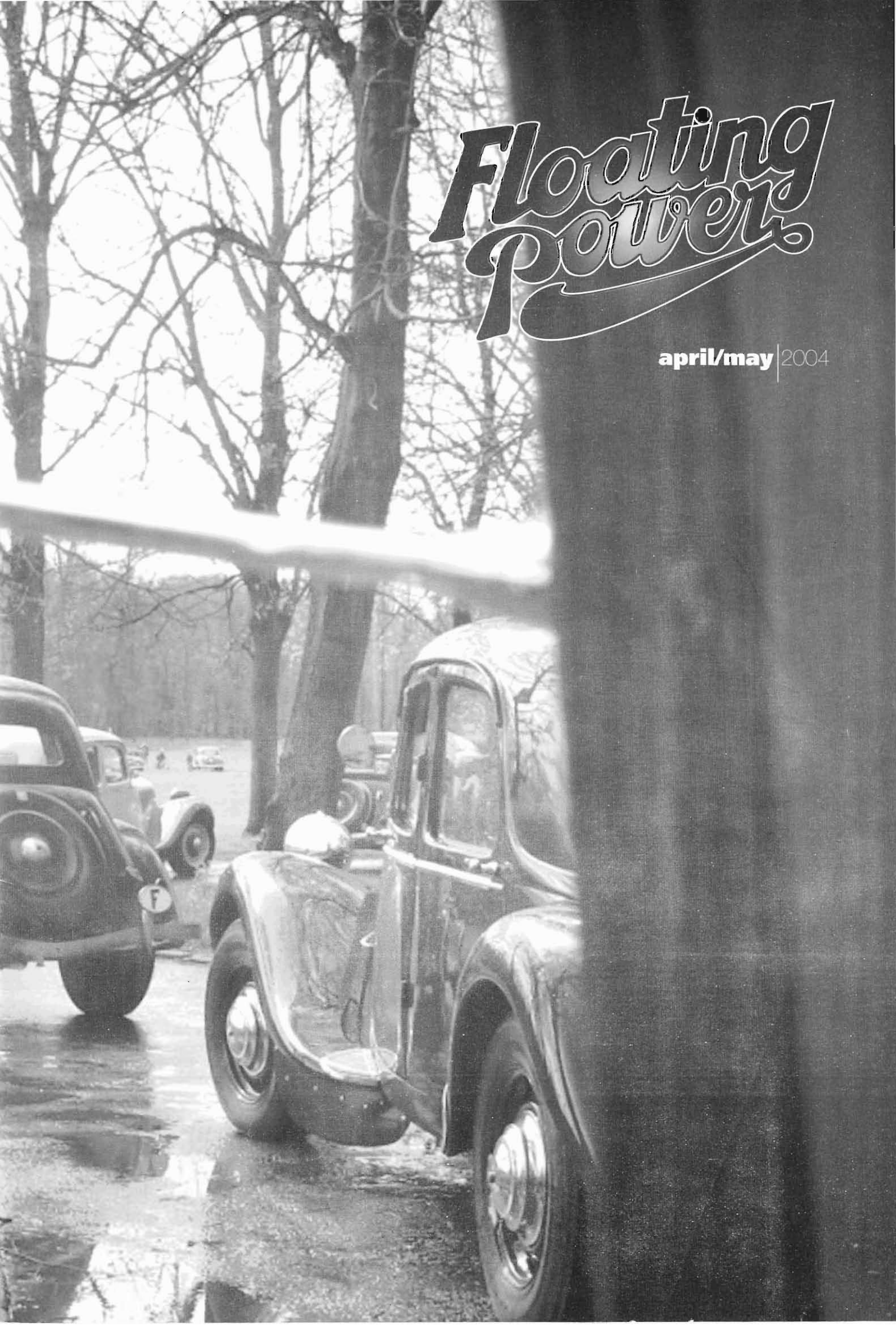


# *Floating Power*

april/may 2004



# toccontact



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To volunteer please call  
Paul De Felice on 020 8360 6837



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New Area Representative  
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Club Tools are available in these areas



Approximate position

For details of area meetings, please  
contact your local organiser

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## Editorial

*Interesting correspondence has arrived this month – much of it concerning our enthusiastic if a little confused correspondent, Tyrone P-Lott. Following Tyrone's detailed report on the Normandy Tour in the December/January issue, several members have expressed the opinion that Parker-Lott is not a real person and that his PA Frances Besscar is protecting his real identity. I then find that he had a similar problem to mine in the winter by also getting himself well and truly stuck in the snow. I have asked the membership secretary to check the register to identify him but unfortunately this is currently being updated with renewals and so the definitive situation cannot be concluded until after the end of June. Anyone who has any information on the true identity of this person is asked to inform any committee member or send information on a post card to the editor. Read the full details of this on-going saga on pages 20-21.*

*On a note of normality, Robin Dyke sends a report on the recent Traction event at the Palace of Versailles to celebrate the car's 70th anniversary. It was for just 70 cars from all over Europe and was enjoyed by all despite the terrible wet weather. For the Dunkerque rally to mark this same anniversary, over 60 cars are attending from the UK and the organisers have been delighted at the response of Traction owners from many countries. Even Parker-Lott is expected to arrive - on time this time as he has proposed a Three Day Test – cricket that is, not driving. Perhaps he will be identified at last?*

*There is still time to book onto the Annual Rally in the New Forest so be sure to send off your application soon as accommodation can be difficult even at that time of year.*

*Looking forward to seeing many of you at our events over the coming months.*

Copy date for next issue June 21st

## Front Cover



"Comings and Goings" at Versaille.

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## Chairman's Note Annual Rally

### Apr/May 2004

Hello and welcome to the summer issue of Floating Power.

First of all my heartfelt thanks to both Leslie & Joyce Scott who organised a memorable TOC Irish Rally combined together with wonderful food and legendary Irish hospitality, the club is really appreciative of all the effort they put into organising such a successful event.

The Dunkirk event in the middle of June looks to have around at least 60 cars going over from the UK and I am sure will be enjoyed by all with 600+ Tractions expected from all over Europe and is an event not to miss

The Spares Open Day is booked for Sunday 20th June at Chichester, but let Chris know if you're coming, and it really will be nice to see both old and new members coming along, rummaging amongst the numerous boxes of second hand parts, having a chat and enjoying the camaraderie of the TOC.

Enjoy the magazine and see you all soon at one of the many events planned this year.

*Paul De Felice*

## Subscriptions

Enclosed with the last issue you will have found your Annual Membership Renewal form. You are invited to renew your TOC membership for the year 2004/2005 at the rate shown on this form. Please check over the information and return with your remittance and remember that subscriptions overdue at June 30th will result in deletion from the Floating Power mailing list and suspension of membership. Then a £6 administration charge will be payable if you wish to rejoin. You will also be reminded that the Direct Debit facility has been discontinued so please make payment by Cheque or Credit Card.



**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.

### New Forest Attraction

#### 3-5th September 2004

If you haven't already booked on for the Club's Annual Rally in Hampshire's New Forest, can we suggest you delay no longer especially if you do not want to camp. We can supply our own fully coloured and vetted accommodation list but we have been warned that late booking may result in disappointment in your desired choice.

The rally will be based at Hill Farm Caravan Park, Sherfield English, east of Romsey, and all our recommended accommodation is within a four mile radius of the site, some being as close as one mile.

The Friday evening barbecue food and drink is costed into the rally price so we look forward to seeing everyone there any time from 6.00pm where we shall be signing on, handing out Road Books and rally plaques in readiness for an early departure at 9.00am from the campsite on Saturday morning.

Saturday evening at Dunwood Manor Golf Club.

Dress code: smart casual - strictly no jeans of any description, no trainers, no poloshirts or tee-shirts.

Leisurely start on Sunday morning for those wanting to take breakfast at a slower pace, departing campsite 11-11.30am for Breamore House following fun for all at Hill Farm.

For those who can only make the Sunday we look forward to seeing you but we will still require a completed application form and £10 entry and administration charge.

Pens and cheque books at the ready and we look forward to seeing in September.

*Pam & Richard Hutton. Tel 023 8046 3265*

## New Members

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

- 1840 H Thompson, Lower Halstow, Kent
- 1841 C R Wilson, Scampton, Lincoln
- 1842 K & J Childs, Stratford upon Avon
- 1843 C Drew, Buresdon, Hants
- 1844 H Macrae, Coupar, Angus
- 1845 B Annells, Bourne, Lincs
- 1846 D Penny, Hampton, Middx
- 1847 C Drake, Petersfield, Hants
- 1848 H. O'Hara, Edinburgh
- 1849 J R Kyle, Walton on Thames
- 1850 K Norris, Corby, Northants
- 1851 W P Krauss, Lake Forest, Illinois, USA
- 1852 F Mooney, Berlin
- 1853 G Aherne, Saxmundham, Suffolk
- 1854 S Gattress, Liphook, Hants
- 1855 A Robson, Cardigan
- 1856 W A Shingler, Kirkhampton, Bude

# Going Spare

**SPARES OPEN DAYS** - As announced in the last issue of Floating Power, following the popularity of the previous Open Days at the spares store, we are planning to hold two more this year, when members will be able to inspect and buy from the stock, which now includes more recently acquired additional items. Not only are there more new items, but an increased range of used parts, which could contain just that bit you are looking for.

The Open Days are scheduled for **Sun 20th June** and the afternoon of **Sunday 5th September**. This follows the TOC Annual Rally which is being held in the New Forest this year and we think is close enough for some people to detour via the spares store on their way home.

It's becoming good TOC therapy to inspect the bits, poke around the used parts and acquire a light coating of South African dust at the same time. If you are lucky, you may also find some old South African coins inside one of the doors like I did!

Chris's address and contact details are inside the front cover of Floating Power, for anyone to find their way to the Open Days.

**RECONDITIONED STOCK** - In addition to the new items shown in the parts list, there is a good selection of other used parts and easily restorable items. We have some good instruments if yours are looking tired [TOC part nos K 63 -71] and relined brake shoes are also now available, as service exchange items.

The note by Bernie Shaw on page 13 of the last Floating Power gives advice on centralising newly fitted shoes, but if you are struggling with rounded off brake-adjusters we have some brake backplates [TOC part no B16/a/b] in excellent condition. These are all service exchange items, which means that your old ones will need to be returned.

If there is anything in particular that you are after then it's worth contacting the Stores. Likewise, if there is anything that you think we should hold that is not there at present, then let us know.

Looking forward to seeing you at an Open day or the TOC Rally.

Tony Hodgekiss



**MEDICAL NOTE** - After a splendid Normandy Tour sadly one of our members reports a stiff back. His doctor recommends putting it in traction. But surely that's what caused it?

# Anniversaries



214 years ago...

8th May 1790 Tallyrand initiated the introduction of the metric system in France. Now you know who is to blame when you can't find the 11mm spanner!



40 years ago...

6th July 1854 Georg Ohm died. Because of his resistance to electricity we have him to thank for those brilliant pools of light that flood ahead of our Traction's at night.

Robin Dyke

# tocdiary

2004

**JUNE 11TH - 13TH**

**TRACTION 70TH ANNIVERSARY**

The French organisers hope to get 1000 Traction's 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 Traction's, 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. Robln Dyke will coordinate. Tel: 01865 858555 Email: [roblndyke@btpopenworld.com](mailto:roblndyke@btpopenworld.com)

**JUNE 20TH**

**SPARES OPEN DAY**

This event will be held at Chris Treagust's, 98 First Avenue, Batchmere, Chichester, W. Sussex, PO20 7LQ. Tel: 01234 511 378 Email: [chris.treagust@tesco.net](mailto:chris.treagust@tesco.net)

**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](mailto:vicmarnic@aol.com)

**AUGUST 13 - 15TH**

**13TH ICCCR - INTERLAKEN**

This is a vast rally for all models of Citroëns. There is a Citroën Village with restaurants, bars, club tents and stalls. Site opens on the morning of Friday 13th August. Early Bird welcome Apéro. Official reception on Friday and evening attractions and music. Saturday Concours d'Elégance 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.lcccr.org](http://www.lcccr.org). Dougie Lawson will coordinate and advise on travel Tel: 01256 329042 Email: [dougie.lawson@ukonline.co.uk](mailto:dougie.lawson@ukonline.co.uk)

**SEPTEMBER 3 - 5TH**

**TOC ANNUAL RALLY - NEW FOREST**

Friday evening get together at Hill Farm camp site just west of Romsey. Saturday touring around the New Forest to reach Bucklers Hard and to take a boat trip on the River Beaulieu. In the evening a buffet meal and entertainment at the Dunswood Manor Golf Club near the camp site. Sunday begins with driving tests at the camp site, then another tour via Fordingbridge to visit Breamore House, where the cars will be judged. Richard and Pam Hutton are organising the event. Tel: 023 8046 3265 Email: [prp@heatherdown.freeseerve.co.uk](mailto:prp@heatherdown.freeseerve.co.uk)

**SEPTEMBER 5TH**

**SPARES OPEN AFTERNOON**

This event will be held after the Annual Rally ends at Chris Treagust's, 98 First Avenue, Batchmere, Chichester, W. Sussex, PO20 7LQ. Tel: 01234 511 378 Email: [chris.treagust@tesco.net](mailto:chris.treagust@tesco.net)

Whilst dates & 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.

## FBHVC news

### ABANDONED VEHICLES

The government has withdrawn plans to reduce the notice period prior to removal of vehicles apparently abandoned on private land. The self-explanatory text of the letter from Francis Hughes at DEFRA advising this decision is reproduced in full:

*"We consulted in July 2003 on reducing the statutory notice period for occupiers of private land to object to the removal by a local authority of vehicle(s) abandoned on their land. This letter is addressed to the chief executive of all waste collection, waste disposal & joint waste disposal authorities in England and those who responded to the consultation.*

*The consultation closed on 24 October 2003 and we have now completed our consideration of the responses received. Local authorities were generally in favour the proposal although some shared the reservations put forward by those restoring cars and classic car owners, that reduction of the statutory notice period to five working days was insufficient time for private occupiers to respond given the possibility of holiday or business absence, or delays in the postal service*

*We have therefore decided not to make any change and to leave the statutory notice period at 15 days, because any benefits of shortening the notice period are outweighed by the practical difficulties referred to in the preceding paragraph. In addition, the Human Rights Act 1998 gives protection to an individual's private property and a reduction in the statutory notice period would adversely affect their rights in this respect.*

*However there are two areas where we do intend to take further action.*

*First, it is clear both from responses to an earlier consultation in 2001 and to the present one that some local authorities are not fully cognisant with the procedures that they are meant to follow when dealing with vehicles abandoned on private land. We will therefore be producing definitive guidance shortly as part of a wider national approach to tackling the problem of abandoned vehicles and will write to you again once it is complete.*

*Second, although we have decided not to reduce the statutory notice period, we are very keen to explore alternative mechanisms for tackling cases where occupier's fail to report a vehicle abandoned on their land. We will be working with the Association of London Government, the Chartered Institution of Wastes Management and the Local Government Association to take this forward starting in February, and would be interested to hear your views on the scale of the problem and any suggestions for solutions. These will be passed to the working group for their consideration."*

David Hurley, chairman of the FBHVC legislation committee, was already in correspondence with the Chartered Institute of Wastes Management over what we perceive to be inadequate guidelines for council officials seeking to determine whether or not a vehicle has been abandoned. We have asked DEFRA that FBHVC should be involved in both processes.

## FBHVC news

### DVLA NEWS by Sandy Hamilton

From the volume of calls and mail received it seems there are many myths and concerns, some genuine, surrounding the tightening of SORN regulations and the issue of new V5C logbooks. One of the confusions seems to be in use of the words 'registered/registration' and 'licensed/licensing' which have quite specific meanings depending upon the context, they are not interchangeable. We asked DVLA to reply to these concerns and received a helpful reply.

The Vehicle Registration Certificate (V5C) is simply an official document confirming that the vehicle is registered: after July 2005 it will be the only form of document that will be accepted as confirmation of registration, but that does not affect the underlying registration itself. Registration is the requirement to have the vehicle details recorded on the register, evidenced formerly by old-style RF60 logbooks or V5 printouts and now by the new V5C. When a vehicle is used on the road, it needs to be licensed and, from 31 January 1998, this requirement is extended to include those vehicles that are taken off the road (SORN) provided that they had held a valid licence at that date.

There has been no change to this legislation.

As SORN only applies to vehicles where a licence was in force on or after 31 January 1998 'off road' projects will only fall within SORN requirements when they are put back on the road and take out a new licence. If you change address or sell your project there is no requirement to declare SORN, neither is there a requirement if an off road project is the subject of a successful V765 application to reclaim a 'lost' number prior to being made roadworthy. Any other instruction from an official source is incorrect and you should, politely, ask them to obtain clarification from the SORN unit at DVLA Swansea.

The legislation was introduced to ensure that the vehicle register is kept up-to-date at least once per year and there will be a penalty if one does not do so. Thus while all historic classification vehicles are on the register (excluding those that missed the 1983 'cut' or closure of the Swansea Register to inactive records) only those that are both registered and licensed, or covered by SORN are subject to the annual declaration with consequent penalties for non-compliance.

It is recognised that some motorists, especially those who may be abroad for extended periods, may find it difficult to declare SORN on time. Prior to this legislation those people usually let an existing licence expire (or applied for a refund) and then took out a new licence upon their return. There is no longer an option to do nothing: however, you can apply up to six weeks in advance of a current SORN expiring using a V890 SORN Declaration. This must be supported by a written explanation of the circumstances and both sent to DVLA. For those motorists taking extended breaks they should either arrange for someone to submit the relevant forms or contact DVLA in advance of departure and explain their particular circumstances. It is also possible to return a tax disc at any time using form V14 which also provides the opportunity to declare SORN as well as claiming a refund (if applicable) for any complete months of unexpired Vehicle Excise Duty.

DVLA tries to ensure that vehicle keepers receive an up-to-date reminder (V11) to enable them to re-license with the minimum of disruption but there is no statutory obligation to do so. Full responsibility for ensuring that vehicles are currently licensed, or subject to SORN where applicable, rests with the keeper.

Absence or late receipt of a V11 does not alter or release a keeper from this responsibility so we suggest that keepers make a note of all relevant declarations and monitor the list regularly.

One final point on SORN, a valid declaration is not transferred with change of ownership (unlike an unexpired licence disc) and a new keeper of an untaxed vehicle must take steps to ascertain the SORN status. He/she has two options, either a new licence is obtained or he/she must declare SORN immediately. This will be enforced but DVLA will treat each case on merit and does retain the right to exercise discretion.

The new V5C documents do not point out the obligation to declare SORN immediately upon acquisition although this lack may be corrected at a future revision. Anyone unsure whether SORN applies to a vehicle (lack of documents or an uncooperative owner) there is an enquiry line at 09067 657585 to establish the date of last licensing. Note that this is a premium rate line that costs 49p/minute.

The new V5C documents have generated many queries in their short life. At present they are only being issued to newly registered vehicles or upon notification of a change of particulars. Anyone applying for a duplicate document will also receive the new format but will now have to pay a fee for the replacement. Starting in July all keepers applying for a replacement licence or declaring/renewing SORN will receive a new V5C some six weeks after renewal. This process will continue until June 2005 when the exercise is expected to be completed for all registered and licensed vehicles, in excess of 30 million. This process does not include those non-SORN vehicles that were off road prior to 31 January 1998 and, at present, plans have not been finalised to enable them to obtain new V5C logbooks although we have been promised that arrangements will be made to allow this to happen.

At 1 July 2005 all old style documents will cease to have legal validity. This does not mean that keepers will lose entitlement to their marks nor that these marks will have any restrictions placed upon them. If you wish to licence your vehicle that has been off the road prior to 1998, to sell your project or advise changed details

then these can only be recorded after you have applied for a new V5C at a local DVLA office. It is quite possible that keepers in this category will receive a mailing encouraging them to apply for a new V5C but we are assured there will be no compulsion and that new documents will NOT be sent unsolicited. At the risk of being repetitive this probable process will not trigger SORN if there is no existing obligation to do so.

Many enquirers have made the point that while they support the principles behind the new legislation they have the impression that it is only the law-abiding who will suffer penalties due to lack of relevant information or through genuine inability to meet seemingly arbitrary deadlines. We have been assured that it is not the Agency's intention to persecute honest motorists but to crack down on offenders who repeatedly abuse the system. Long-term evaders will be targeted through increased roadside enforcement, in particular through wheel-clamping and removal (either by DVLA or joint operations with Local Authorities) and that tough targets have been set by ministers. DVLA will also be working closely with the 23 police forces operating ANPR cameras (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) which are reportedly very effective in detecting these vehicles.

Some of the confusion arising from these two issues may be due to an excess of enthusiasm by DVLA customer enquiry responders. Perhaps the complexity of the two issues and the volume of changes being simultaneously introduced caused a few divergences from the agreed script. Everyone who contacted me, without exception, mentioned that their telephone enquiry had been answered promptly and in a polite and friendly manner. Long may that continue.

One further item relates to the registration marks allocated to those vehicles manufactured between 1906-30. Until now, the letters SV followed by four numbers have been used but this series is now exhausted. All vehicles manufactured prior to 1930 will now be allocated registration marks in the BS series which had formerly been reserved only for those vehicle manufactured prior to 1906.

## REPAIRS & RESTORATION QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

### TOC SPARES

Chris Treagust  
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Tel: 01243 511378  
Email: chris.treagust@tesco.net

### TOC HELPLINE

Mick Holmes  
Tel: 0870 012 2002  
From abroad: 0044 115 911 0960

### TOC CLUB SHOP

Keith Feazey  
21 Paris Avenue, Westlands, Newcastle-  
under-Lyme, Staffordshire ST5 2RQ  
Tel: 01782 618497

### SALES & MAINTENANCE

Imperial Cars, Steve Southgate  
Oxford Street, Bilston WV14 8AA  
Tel 01902 495758

### SALES, MAINTENANCE AND RESTORATION

Classic Restorations, John Gillard  
First Floor, 636 Old Kent Road,  
London SE15 1JE  
Tel/Fax 0207 358 9969

Traction Renaissance Services, Dennis  
Ryland  
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Stroud GL6 8AD  
Tel 01452 771011

### STAINLESS STEEL BUMPERS

Jonathan Howard  
Tel: 01608 643065 Fax: 01608 642973

### INTERIORS

South Bound Motor Trimmers  
Little Dean Yard, London Road,  
Stockbridge, Hampshire SO20 6EL  
Tel: 01264 810080

### TRANSMISSION

Roger Williams  
35/37 Wood Lane, Beverley,  
North Humberside HU17 8BS  
Tel: 01482 863344 Fax: 01482 888619  
email: rdw@steam-car-dev.karoo.co.uk

### RUBBER COMPONENTS

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

### INSURANCE

Heritage  
Tel: 0121 246 6060

### WWW

Club website: [www.traction-owners.co.uk](http://www.traction-owners.co.uk)

Club chat: [inside\\_trac@egroups.com](mailto:inside_trac@egroups.com)

To sign up contact TOC Moderator Helen  
Brixton at: [mid-shires\\_toc@upaloft.co.uk](mailto:mid-shires_toc@upaloft.co.uk)

# 70 years of Traction Avant

## Royal Party at the Palace of Versailles

Sunday 18th April 2004 was a very special day for 70 lucky Traction owners.

At the invitation of Eric Massiet du Biest they attended a 70th Anniversary meeting within the grounds of the Palace of Versailles. Eric is well known for his memorable Globe-Driver and Tracbar events and to get permission to organise this special day was a considerable achievement. News of the event spread quickly and applications to attend soon flooded in. A strict limit of 70 cars was set and Eric selected Tractions of virtually every model and every year and which represented as many clubs and countries as possible. However there was a reserve list and several cars were on standby in case any cars dropped out.

Three "équipages" and their cars went from England - Graham Pitcher & John Gillard in Graham's 1954 Normale, Allan & Jan Reece with their 1955 Normale and Robin & Sue Dyke with their 1953 Light 15. We met at the Channel Tunnel early on the Saturday morning and drove in convoy to Versailles in fine weather.

Three Belgian crews were just ahead of us and we all stayed at the same hotel - just 100 metres from the Palace. Walter & Noëlla Callens (also TOC members) took their 1934 7B on a trailer and their convoy included a 1952 Légère and a 1952 15-Six. Most of the cars came from France but there were other Tractions from Italy, Germany, Holland, Luxembourg and two more from Belgium. One of these being the splendid 1940 Big 15 roadster that Fred Annells had restored so well. This and Robin's Light 15 were the only right-hand drive Slough built cars.

On the Sunday the 70 Tractions were lined up in a chevron format in the cobbled Place des Armes in front of the main Palace gates. To say that it rained would be something of an understatement. The crews were treated to breakfast and tours of the Palace and the Coach Museum. Then wearing security badges all 70 Tractions drove in convoy into the Palace grounds via the Sailor's gate. A main feature of the gardens is the Grand Canal - laid out like an enormous plus sign.

We parked in a long line at the side of one arm and had a very Gallic lunch at La Flotille restaurant. Jonathan Howard joined us for the day but his Commerciale stayed parked outside with the reserves.

It was around the canals that original publicity photos were taken in 1934.

So in the afternoon we drove in a very slow procession around the whole canal complex, stopping for photos. For most of us a quick snapshot was all that was required but the crews with the oldest cars wanted to replicate the photos at the exact places. Some crews had dressed in 1934 costumes and the ladies looked especially attractive. The stars of the day were the four musqueteers - Pietro Turchi's 1934 7A, Walter Callens' 1934 7B, Roger Brosselin's 1934 7C, and Guy Loos, 1934 7S. You can see the original and new photos on Jérôme Collignon's website, and other reports and photos are available on the websites listed below. The final photo was of all 70 cars arranged in curved ranks around the Horseshoe Basin near the Grand Trianon. Finally we were treated to a reception in



Sailor's Gate



1934 7B

1934 7B

Horseshoe Basin





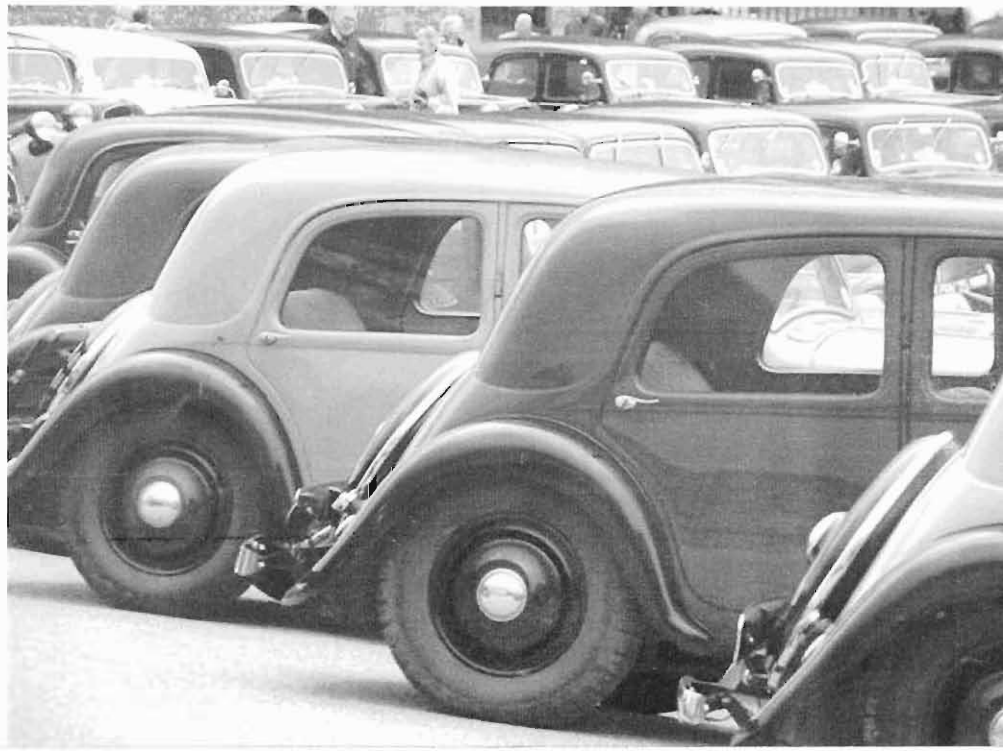
# 1934 - 2004

the Orangerie. The weather was against us throughout the day and so it was hard to take good photos.

But it certainly was a day to remember and our thanks go to Eric and his team of helpers. On Monday the weather was fine and we drove back in convoy to the Channel Tunnel.



1934 (above) and 2004 (below)



# tocgallery



*Suitable attire for the Tractioniste*



*The metre gauge railway at St. Valery-Sur-Somme*



*Daffodils in the grounds of the school*



*Bringing my Solex Home*



*Group Inspection - 9 Head Power!*

**CITROËN**

**toc**tech



volume 1

Maintenance **18**

● **INTERIOR**

- Retrimming the interior - Part 2

● **ELECTRICS**

- More on Flashing Indicators

● **TYRES**

- Tyre Dating

## Trimming a Traction - Part 2

**Part Two of a comprehensive account of the interior restoration of John Prescott-Thomas's Légère.**

**Part Two deals with the headlining - one of those jobs that always looks impossible, but John seems to have mastered it. The article will conclude in the next issue.**

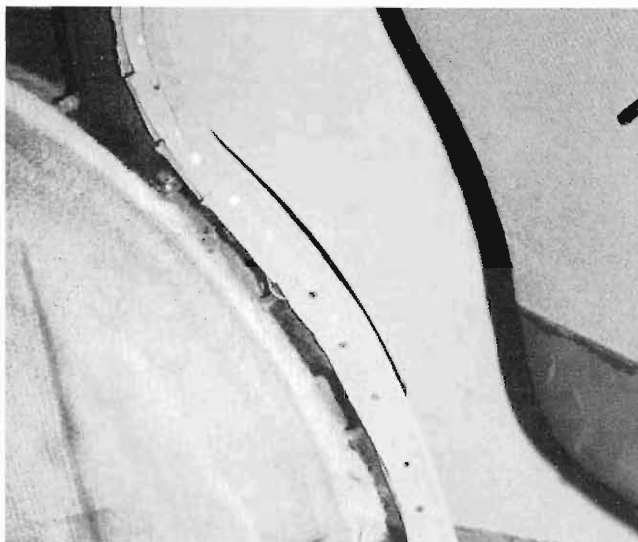
Installing the new door-surround is pretty straightforward and, again, after painstakingly using tacks for the first half-metre or so (Picture 5), I reverted to the staple-gun, so saving yet more time and effort. Needless to say you have to take a bit of care to ensure that the staples are far enough from the outer edge to be hidden in due course by the overlying trim.

To remove the old head-liner, you need to start at the front and work back; installing the new one, you do the opposite. But it helps if you first remove the metal frame of the rear window and un-tack the material from the plywood under-frame; if you left this until the end, you'd find yourself trying to do it while entangled underneath a great swathe of head-lining. Then remove the windscreen surround (a combination of self-tappers and more spring clips), unhook the leading edge of the liner from the triangular hooks above the frame and 'spring out' the spigots at the ends of the foremost stretcher-bar from their locating holes (Picture 6). The triangular hooks which pierce and hold the fabric pocket for the front bar are quite delicate and, if they're rusty, can snap off quite easily: I lost two that way but self-tapping screws and big washers filled the gaps.

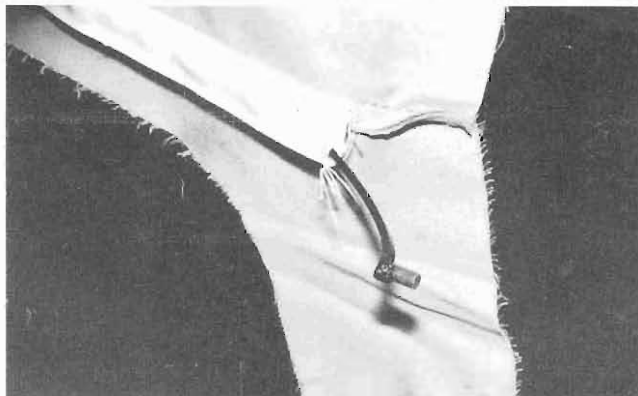
Then, taking them one at a time, disengage the fabric pockets holding the other stretcher-bars from their triangular hooks in the roof, unscrew the bars at each end and remove them from the pockets. Pull the material away from the teeth in the flexible metal side-plates as you go (Picture 7) - and, of course, remove the ceiling-light when you reach it. In no time you've reached the rear window and can lever open the hook-like clips which grip the liner's curved fibre end-piece and there you go - no head-liner. (The end-piece on the new liner is a lot flimsier than the original, so I rescued the old one and doubled them up for strength.)

Seeing its innards displayed, it's surprising how low-tech the bodywork of a Traction is: there's rather more wood than you might expect, some of it looking as though it might have come from old orange-boxes. In my case, the lower half of the rear window's plywood under-frame had become wet and was rotten; but it was quick and easy to cut a replacement with a jig-saw, using the original as a template (Picture 8). The two halves are simply stapled together, as in the original.

Contrary to my initial fears, installing the new head-liner was probably the most satisfying task of the whole operation. You tuck the rear curved fibre end-piece under its hooks and squeeze them closed (Picture 9). Then you lift up the liner and work forward, inserting the stretcher-bars in their pockets, screwing the ends to the roof sides and hooking the pockets on to the triangular hooks in the roof (Picture 10). When they're all fitted, cut out the aperture for the rear window, stretch and tack (or staple) the rear ends in place and replace the window-frame.



*Pic 5 - Starting the rear door-surround with tacks, as in the original. The staple gun again proved a much better solution.*



*Pic 6 - Locating lug on the front stretcher-bar of the head-liner.*



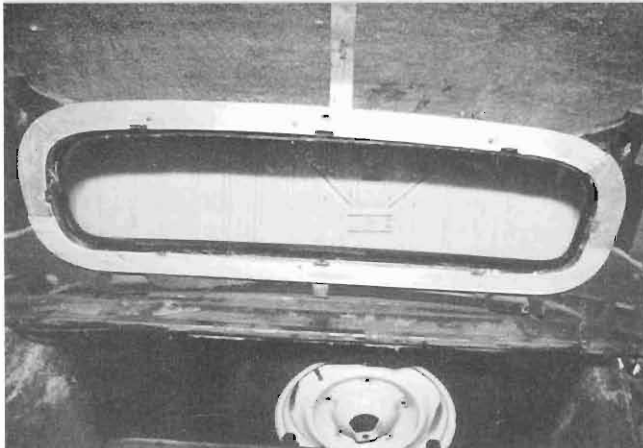
*Pic 7 - The flexible side-plates, with triangular teeth which grip the edges of the stretched head-liner.*

Before you deal with the edges, it's worth removing the flexible metal side-panels and very gently opening up the small triangular hooks with a blade before replacing them. Then work round each side of the liner from the rear, sliding the edge of the material under the panels so that it engages with the hooks. I used a new plastic adhesive-spreader, which was smooth and flexible: it performed brilliantly, with no risk of catching or tearing the cloth. The underside of the roof is pretty rough and, if you bark your knuckles during the head-lining process (I did), do something about it immediately or you'll get bloodstains on your beautiful pristine grey velour (I did).

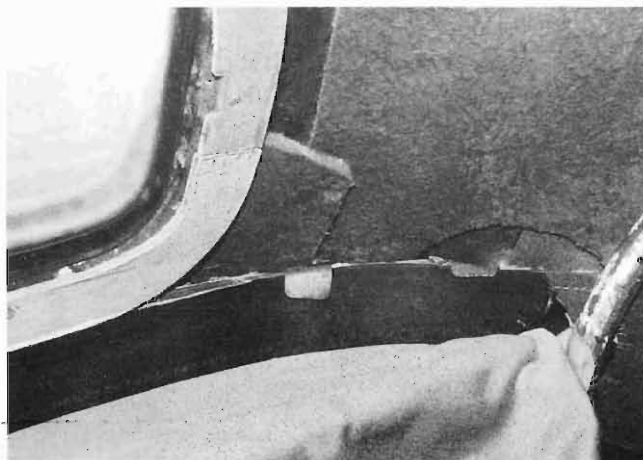
Overall, I couldn't quite believe how easy it was to get the whole head-liner well-stretched and wrinkle-free (Picture 11). Who could imagine that screwing a ceiling-light back in place could bring such a buzz of satisfaction?

The car came with only one sun-visor, on the driver's side; but when you remove the head-liner you'll find that there's a matching mounting on the other side too.

The original visor was the usual flimsy and dilapidated cardboard affair but Chris Treagust was able to supply two new arms - important to note that they're 'handed' right and left - and Depanoto two new 'blades' in blue Perspex, with the rivets to attach them. (All right, I know that Perspex sun-visors are strictly speaking post-1953 but what do you want, more blood?)



**Pic 8** - The new bottom half of the rear window under-frame in place.



**Pic 9** - The new head-liner end piece, doubled-up with the old one and hooked into its retaining clips.

Unfortunately, neither source could provide a second hinge-piece; but I discovered that, though the old one ran the full length of the visor, the arm was only half its length. Careful work with a razor-saw cut the hinge-piece exactly in two and, after a quick re-spray, the two halves did the business for both visors. You can see the result in Picture 12. Not strictly authentic maybe but it looks all right and works well. Lining up the holes to position the visor arms is fiddly and arm-aching because, of course, the mountings are under the headlining; you also need to be careful not to catch a thread of the material in the thread of the screws, or everything will seize up.



**Pic 10** - The stretcher-bars are screwed to the lugs at each end; the fabric pockets are pierced and held by triangular metal hooks in the roof.



**Pic 11** - The head-liner in place and fully stretched.



**Pic 12** - A single hinge piece modified to mount twin sun-visors.

## Tyre Dates

Mike Tennant explains the subtleties of date codes on tyres and a word of warning. Aside from safety issues, this could become increasingly important if the rumours concerning rules governing the allowable age of tyres come into force. This article refers to Michelin tyres only.

On one side-wall of the tyre you will find the word "DOT" followed by a series of letters and an oval shape. For example: DOT HMCEJ9○ with three or four numbers in the oval to denote the date. The first two numbers run from 01 to 52 (the week number) and the second two run from 00 to 04 (the year). For example, 0603 would indicate manufacture in week 6 of 2003.

For tyres made between 1990 and 1999, there are only 3 numbers in the rectangle plus a small triangle▲. As before, the first two numbers indicate the week but the third number is simply the last digit of the decade. For example, 357▲ indicates manufacture in week 35 of 1997 and 410▲ indicates manufacture in week 41 of 1990.

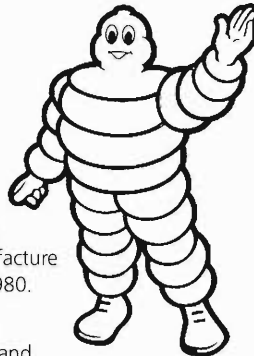
For tyres made between 1980 and 1989, the same scheme applies as for the nineties but, instead of a triangle, there is a small dot●.

For example, 195● indicates manufacture in week 19 of 1985 and 080● indicates manufacture in week 8 of 1980.

For tyres made between 1970 and 1979, the same scheme applies but this is not triangle or dot. Tyres made before 1970 have no word "DOT", no rectangle, and no date code. The only indication of an early tyre is the word "Michelin" in script.

The same inner tube is used for both 165 x 400 and 185 x 400 tyres. The code to ask for from your tyre dealer is "165 x 400; 16 FRET". The rubber used for this specification of tube is twice as thick as that used in the standard tube.

As a word of advice, I would recommend that anyone who has tyres made before 1990 keeps a very close eye on them. One member with a Michelin tyre recently had it blow out; it split across the tread and knocked out the wing-mounted rear light.

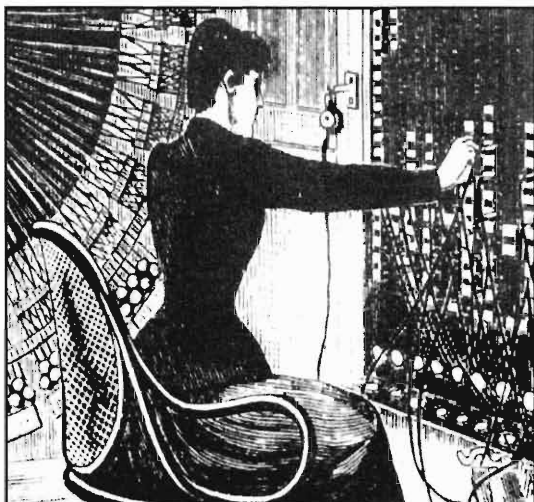


## Flashing Brake Lights

**John Ogborne comments on the use of brake lights to fulfil the function of indicators.**

In response to David De Saxe's comments and reservations concerning the use of brake lights as indicators, I am entirely in agreement with him. When Steve contacted me to ask how he should wire them up to achieve this, I questioned him as to the legality of it and the reaction of other road users. Steve assured me that it was legally acceptable and that a number of other cars had been modified in this way and subsequently passed their MoT test.

I remain of the opinion, like David, that modern road users are looking for orange indicators and would either not notice red flashing ones, interpret them as faulty, or as intermittent braking. However, I respect Steve's right to carry out the modification and hence maintain originality, so I worked out a wiring scheme for him which he successfully implemented. Every owner must make their own judgement.



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## Know Your Tools...

Some tool definitions from "The Chevrons", the magazine of the Citroën Car Club of New South Wales, inc, Australia

**WHITWORTH SOCKETS:** Once used for working on older British cars and motorcycles, they are now used mainly for impersonating that 9/16 or 1/2 socket you've been searching for the last 15 minutes.

**DRILL PRESS:** A tall upright machine useful for suddenly snatching flat metal bar stock out of your hands so that it smacks you in the chest and flings your drink across the room, splattering it against that freshly painted part you were drying.

**WIRE WHEEL:** Cleans rust off old bolts and then throws them somewhere under the workbench with the speed of light. Also removes fingerprint whorls and hard earned guitar calluses in about the time it takes you to say "Shi...".

**HYDRAULIC JACK:** Used for lowering a BX to the ground after you've installed your new front disk pads, trapping the jack handle firmly under the front wing.

**EIGHT-FOOT LONG DOUGLAS FIR 2X4:** Used for levering a BX upwards off a hydraulic jack.

**TWEEZERS:** A tool for removing wood or wire splinters. See WIRE WHEEL

**PHONE:** Tool for calling your neighbour to see if he has another hydraulic jack.



If you have any further definitions we will print them here for the benefit of members. Ed



# the cream machine

## Alan Crisp brings us up to date with the first outing of the controversial Cream Machine

The Cream Machine, now Blue, finally left the boys at Bisley on the 27th March. Dennis, Steve and I went to the Bell at Sapperton for a champagne lunch leaving Martin to sweep-up the workshop and attend to a customers' car. After a great meal, melting-eyed beauties in black lacy underthings fought with each other to serve us kummel, well Dennis was very well known here. A couple of days later with Bob Lowe, from America, I rushed to Ypres for the Three Castles Classic Rally which started on the 1st April. Well, the first problem was the glass in the drivers door shattered on the parking spaces in Portsmouth and glass merchants in Le Havre were unable to replace the 50 year old glass without three days prior notice; we did the Rally with the roof down in all weathers. The car roared through the Normandy countryside in great style until on the second day, after leaving Dieppe, we lost power on hills and generally the performance was sluggish. We checked the plug leads, the fuel filter, changed the new rotor arm and distributor cap and after calls to Martin Ryland, the genius who put the car together, we decided that the new electronic ignition was to blame. The reason we installed a Pertronix system was to make the car more reliable and cut out any problems with points and condensers but here we were 500 miles from new and a possible breakdown in this fool-proof system.

Arriving at Ypres we changed the Pertronix, which necessitated some re-tapping and rewiring and the car still did

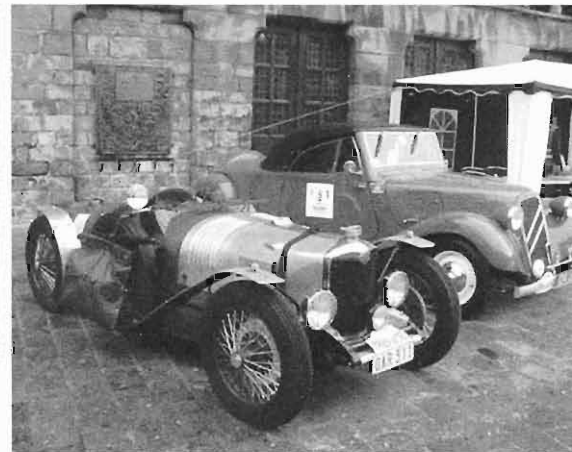
not run as good as new. But then it got better and we could only surmise it was duff petrol as for the rest of the rally it went very well and beat several of the fast cars, including a Healey MK1, in the special stages due to the great handling and the superior ground clearance of the Roadster.

After six days of fast driving including three days and one night of rallying against strong competition the car came through with virtually no faults. If it can survive this test then any rally such as London to Australia or wherever I choose to go in the Blue Machine will not be a problem.

The car was a show stopper and brought great cheers from the Belgian crowds. We also won Best of Class beating a Jaguar XK120, Riley Brooklands and others.

I am going to China this month for the HERO rally so the Roadster will go back to Bisley for further finishing and an apology for the chips to the once immaculate paintwork. One relic of the Hanoi past of the car stood us in good stead were the hub caps which are all built in stainless steel due to the lack of chrome in Vietnam; these are very strong and when I took a corner too sharp one of them connected with a wall and demolished it without causing much damage to the hub cap!.

Last month I saw the sister car to mine was still for sale in Benedorm, if anyone is interested.



# Traction to Marathon

## Paris not Greece

**The story started in January 2003 when I became the proud owner of a 1953 11BL some 28 years after my introduction to Citroën with a 2CV in my student days.**

The ambition to return the BL to its homeland existed however a combination of work commitments, a hernia operation and sailing meant that the longest journey undertaken in 2003 was to Henley for Robin Dyke's spring meeting (a 60 mile round trip).

I used the car for work throughout the winter avoiding the worst weather (when I cycle or if snowing the XM). My partner Catherine's enthusiasm for a long trip was somewhat less than mine - she finds facing oncoming traffic without a seatbelt disconcerting. I maintained it would be better when in France.

When her daughter visited in January and announced her intention to run her first Marathon in Paris in April, a scheme formed in my mind. Would you like to watch her run? Yes, good we can take the BL. Planning followed. A hotel close to the Arc de Triomphe and garage was booked with ferry to Le Havre it's only 70 miles to Portsmouth and 130 the other side!. We can stop off at Monets garden on the Friday and be in Paris on Saturday, watch the runners on Sunday and catch the Ferry back Monday.

March involved as much preparation, oil changing and greasing as I have ever done. Long range forecasts for driving (and running conditions were avidly studied).

Departure on the Thursday evening was arranged for 6.00pm Thursday to arrive before dark at the ferry due to 6v lighting. Following a hasty departure from the office all was well - local knowledge circumventing the A34 M4 roadworks and a first refuelling stop at Sutton Scotney. Then calamity torrential rain on the M27 brought darkness and the discovery that wipers and headlights lead to a negative ammeter reading. Surprisingly despite the torrential rain we did not need to don our waterproofs (do I dare open the scuttle vent this summer).

Arriving 3 hours early we checked in the ferry queue and departed to a local pub for supper. After a good nights sleep we descended to the car deck where we had negotiated an early departure by pleading to be excused the steep ramps to the upper decks.

After escaping le Havre and crossing the Tancarville Bridge we left the motorway for our first croissants and coffee. We used the motorway to avoid Rouen (toll-free) and then crossed to Les Andelys to visit the Chateau. Worth the climb on foot for the views down the Seine. On to Giverny where, whilst picnicking in the car park, we attracted the interest of those visiting the gardens under sufferance. They had only opened the day before and the water lilies were in short supply but the house and gardens and art exhibition were worth the visit.

On to our hotel at La Roche Guyon where we parked in pride of place outside the front door. The constant questions were

becoming a test of my limited French but we got quite a reception. At breakfast we were advised to take the train as the Saturday traffic could be bad. Not deterred we set off at 10.30 following the N13 & A14 and after a brief flirt with the pereriphique were at our hotel by 1200. The proprietor came out to admire the BL and directed us to the garage. The gardienne was also enthusiastic (not surprising at £20 a day) waving us in between a Jag & Merc. We even managed to hang on to our keys having explained they were our only set and we wanted to try and get some cut. Much sucking of teeth and at the second establishment we got a set. They wanted us to return on Monday but had a go and we now have a spare door and ignition key.

On we went (by Metro) to meet our 2 runners Rachel & Chris (who came by Eurostar) under the Eiffel tower. Runners need pasta. A table for 25 had been booked at an Italian in Mabillon - 7 runners and 18 supporters. (The supporters made up for the abstinence of the runners).

Nerves on all sides made for an early night and I was out at 6.30am searching for croissants for carb loading (not a mechanical activity). The start (at 34,500 larger than London) was spectacular down the Champs Elysees. Then we invented a new sport of marathon watching requiring a tube map and orienteering skills and an idea of the runners pace. Between 20k and 30k we did 25 Metro stops in 40 minutes!





The atmosphere was fantastic and stopping to buy champagne we made our way to the finish where thanks to the mobile phones and climbing a few fences we all met up. All 7 runners finished between 3.55 and 4.30 hours with Rachel the fastest. After spraying Champagne Schumacher style the runners came for a shower and lunch before the ride across Paris in the 11 to the Gare de Nord around Montmartre the traffic was interesting and the temperature gauge reached places it has never seen before. The runners on a train for hospital work on Monday (not as patients) the car was returned to its garage. We then learnt that the Queen was visiting the next day for the centenary of the Entente Cordial and major road closures were planned.

Departure time was moved to 7.30 (first light) and we missed the worse jams. A coffee stop in a tiny village café de poste at Muids near Rouen brought an unexpected pleasure, Madame was effusive about the car and a visit to the facilities was rewarded with a large framed picture of her own family's 11BL. Lunch in Honfleur followed by a test of 3rd gear climbing on the spectacular Pont de Normandy brought us safely to Le Havre. A wet and dark trip up the A34 confident that the 6 volts would last passed uneventfully. Total distance covered 700km fuel consumption 24mpg cruising speed 85kph. No oil consumption. Nervous energy considerable but rewarded by the welcome for the car and slightly less exhausting than running 26 miles!

*Mike Roberts, LSJ 349, Member 1799*



## New Forest Attraction

Annual Rally, Hampshire,  
3/5 September 2004

Please Register NOW if you wish to attend

### New Forest Attraction

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Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Vehicle:

Model: \_\_\_\_\_ Colour: \_\_\_\_\_

Reg. No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Accommodation:

B&B \_\_\_\_\_

Accommodation List \_\_\_\_\_

Camping \_\_\_\_\_

#### Rally Cost

Adult Fri/Sat/Sun £34 \_\_\_\_\_

Child Fri/Sat/Sun £15 \_\_\_\_\_

Adult Sunday Only £10 \_\_\_\_\_

Child Sunday Only £4 \_\_\_\_\_

Camping £15 / pitch / night \_\_\_\_\_

[Children: 5 – 15]  Dogs welcome on campsite

Total / Amount Enclosed £ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make cheques payable to "Traction Owners Club"

Vegetarian

Please return your completed application and cheque as soon as possible to:

Mrs P Hutton,  
44 Douglas Crescent,  
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Southampton, SO19 5JQ

September is still peak time in the New Forest for accommodation and camping.

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## ICCCR news

Hello and welcome to you from sunny Zürich, Switzerland.

It is now less than 9 weeks to the 13th ICCCR in Interlaken.

There is a slight but important change in the diary entry in Floating Power. Please note that registration and camping opens from Thursday, 12th August, noon, but **not** the SITE itself.

The Site, i.e. the airfield Interlaken/Wilderswil, with its Citroën Village, Parts Market, Special Expo, runways for participants' cars etc. only opens on Friday morning.

Of course we welcome everyone who is keen to avoid the registration queues on Friday and arrives on the Thursday. The registration area will look as a French "péage" station on the motorway, i.e. we have different lanes for cars to enter the site. But before you can enter, you have to show your participation confirmation or enroll and pay on the spot.

We encourage everyone to register now. You will have access to the express lane (all you need is the confirmation sent to you along with the programme), instead of waiting in line in order to pay your fee.

As many things need to be paid by the organizing committee in advance - liquidity is crucial to us before rather than at the event itself.

Caspar Tuerler

# tocsection scene

## Hants, Surrey & Sussex Borders

Meetings at the Fairmile, Cobham continue to be well supported, and the staff there are very co-operative, reserving an area for us.

In addition we have been invited as a club to attend a barbeque at the 'Fairmile' on August 27th, starting at 7pm. All the Surrey motor clubs that meet at the Fairmile have been invited and although there won't be a charge for the barbeque, it is a ticket event in order that the staff know how many people to cater for. The cars will be lined up on the extensive lawns and the press will be in attendance. All those who would like to attend the event, please let Helen know as soon as possible.

- June 20th** Barbeque and boules at The Barley Mow, West Horsley (must be pre-booked)
- July 18th** Meeting at The Fairmile Arms from 12 noon, after lunch walk in Claremont Park, Esher, Surrey (weather permitting) not compulsory.
- August 15th** Meeting at The Fairmile Arms from 12 noon
- September 19th** Meet at The Fairmile Arms 10am convoy (or meet at) Bentley Wildfowl and Motor Museum, Halland, nr Lewes, East Sussex BN8 5A Website [www.bentley.org.uk](http://www.bentley.org.uk) on this date there is a wood fair taking place
- October 17th** Meeting at The Fairmile Arms from 12 noon
- November 21st** Meeting at The Fairmile Arms from 12 noon bring photographs you have taken at any of the years events to share your memories
- December 19th** Christmas lunch at The Barley Mow (must be pre-booked). Menus and booking forms will be available.

We hope to see you when possible. No need to book for the Fairmile Arms, come for lunch, a snack or a drink and a chat. We have a reserved area for our meetings, ask at the bar. Friends and families welcome. (If you can't come in a Traction, still come)

John & Helen White Tel: 020 8330 7216

## 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).

## South Midlands

### Mapledurham

The weather was not kind to us, and a few car (and owners) were exhausted after the Irish Tour. However a dozen of us had an excellent lunch at The Pack Horse Inn, and then went on to visit the water mill and house at Mapledurham. The bread I baked from the freshly milled flour turned out well.

### Woodcote Rally

The festival of steam, vintage & veteran transport will be held on the weekend July 10th & 11th 2004. The best day for Traction will be the Saturday. Please let me know if you want to book in.

For health (and age) reasons I must take a less active role, and so the club is looking for a new representative for this section.

Robin Dyke Tel: 01865 858555

Email: [robindyke@btinternet.com](mailto:robindyke@btinternet.com)

## West of England

Our first meeting of the year was in April when Mike Tennant organised a meeting in the Forest of Dean. We had lunch at the White Horse Inn near the Dean Heritage Centre and then made our way in convoy (and pouring rain!) to an organ museum. No, not a medical centre, but an eclectic collection of mechanical musical instruments ranging from small musical boxes to fairground organs via singing ostriches and Polyphons.

Wally, who owns the museum, introduced each item in his own inimitable style and provided what can only be described as a unique experience.

Many thanks to Mike for organising it.

Our next meeting is in August when we hope to take an afternoon boat trip on the Avon somewhere between Bath and Bristol.

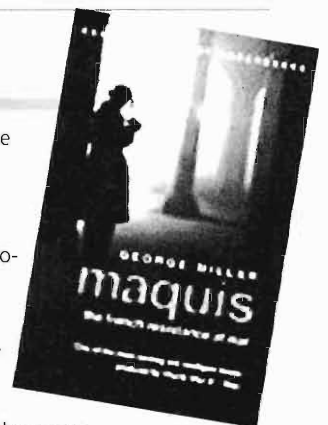
John Ogborne

[jogborne@onetel.net.uk](mailto:jogborne@onetel.net.uk)

## Maquis

Your readers might be interested in the recently re-published wartime classic "Maquis" by George Millar (Cassell £6.99). Millar was parachuted into eastern France just prior to D-day to co-ordinate resistance activities around Besancon. His vehicle of choice for outrunning the enemy was, of course, the Traction Avant and there are several glowing passages in this first-hand account extolling the virtues of these cars.

Michael Robinson



# toc correspondence


## THE MISSING LINK

Not being part of the TOC's "inner circle", I am unable to guess at the true name of Mr Tyrone P-Lott, author in the December/January issue of FP of the report of the 2003 Tour de Basse-Normandie, all periodic destinations of which he apparently contrived on a daily basis narrowly to miss.

This piece of motoring (?) journalism is quite the funniest I have ever had the pleasure to enjoy. We "ordinary" members of the TOC deserve to know the real-life identity of Mr P-Lott, so as to be able personally to congratulate him on a facility with words that enables him to create out of what to many might otherwise seem to be a mundane account of a holiday that went wrong, a magnificently hilarious anecdote.

While I commiserate with him on his series of misfortunes on the Tour of which he was never quite a part, could Mr P-Lott please raise his head above the table, for the sake of us "also-ran" members? His wit deserves the widest possible audience.

David De Saxe

 We have checked the membership list and can find no record of Mr Tyrone Parker-Lott. Ed

## MAKING ROOM

Two films, made mid-50's, were recently shown on afternoon TV. In these films the following "sad" observations were made.

In "GENEVIEVE", a film set against the LONDON TO BRIGHTON run, when John Gregson was driving from Brighton, what was driving behind him in glorious Technicolour? A silver Slough Light 15. However, I wasn't so "sad" as to notice the registration number; but wish I had. I bet not many people know that?

Secondly, in a film, again in colour, called "THE HOUSE OF SECRETS" set in France, it was awash with Normales, Familiales and "Sixes".

These snippets of information are guaranteed to make plenty of room to be served at a crowded bar.

Regards,

John Stewart.


## THE ARCHERS

I enclose a little item cut out of the 'Archers' 2004 calender (an unwanted christmas present, you understand, and nothing whatsoever to do with the fact that I don't answer the phone between 7pm and 7.15pm on weekdays!) Anyhow, it rather looks as if Phil Archer was the proud owner of a silver Big 15 back in the 50's - then again it might just have belonged to some hack in the BBC's publicity department!

## The Archers



Regards,  
Walford Bruen

 Must have been on the London to Brighton. Ed

## AGE RELATED

The FBHVC news item in the February/March issue of "Floating Power" warns that in the near future, supplies of "traditional" age-related registration marks with letter/number configurations will be exhausted, and that it is quite possible that the DVLA will require to issue marks in "number/letter" sequences.

Ever since their introduction (in the 1980s), I have wondered why we accepted these figments of the DVLA's imagination as substitutes where the original registration mark for a vintage or classic vehicle had been "lost" or couldn't be proved. They are offered as "age-related", but the fact of the matter is that these marks never related to any age. What they are are unused three-letter marks, the last two letters of which were those issued, in the main, to the less-populated Scottish counties. These authorities registered so few vehicles that, by the time the year-letter suffix system was commenced in 1963, these authorities had, over forty years, registered fewer than 10,000 vehicles. They were still issuing marks with their allocated two letters followed by up to four numbers, as they had done when the registration process started in Britain in 1903!

For example, the index mark letters SJ were allocated to Bute County Council, but so meagre was the volume of vehicles registered there that by 1964 that authority had only reached SJ 2860. The marks ASJ, BSJ, CSJ, etc., were not on Bute's horizon.

What the DVLA did in the 1990s was to issue the previously-unissued ASJ, BSJ, CSJ marks and so on as "age-related", as well as -SU, -SV, -SK, -SL, AS, -YJ, -FO and others. A registration plate bearing such as WSJ 123, USU 604 or YSL 987 does not sit well on your 1949 Light 15 - it is clearly an anachronistic mismatch. And things will look even worse if the Normale in your garage awaiting rebuild ultimately receives a reverse horror such as 406 SSV, when ready for the road again.

Of course, many of us don't care a fig about authenticity - even if merely apparent - in the detail of our registration plates, and will feel such carping is carrying anorakism too far. However, I've always felt that in taking great care to recreate our Tractions as they were, but then to apply an ersatz index mark, is a de-Traction, if you'll pardon the pun.

Instead of accepting the DVLA's concept of "age-relation", I favour spending just a few more pounds by seeking out from among the legions of registration dealers who advertise in the general press and in motoring journals, a commercially undesirable index mark such as KXW 827, which can have little if any value and could be negotiated for purchase at little more than the DVLA's standard charge. I mean, who would have the initials KXW? But you'll find that the mark KXW was a 1949 London registration - just perfect for the Light 15 I mentioned which might have "lost" the right to retain its original mark.

If anyone feels as I do about these things and, needing to re-register his or her Traction, wants to know what registration marks might fit the year of its manufacture, I'd be only too pleased to assist.

Yours sincerely

David De Saxe

**Pietro Turchi from Milan, recovering after the excitement of taking his beautiful 1934 7A to Versailles, has flown to Sicily for a short holiday.**



**I cannot imagine how the airline knew, but outbound he sat in seat 11B, and on the return in seat 7A.**

## SNOW GOOD

I offer this account of a recent experience in that hope that publication in your magazine might prevent others from making a similar mistake.

In the recent inclement weather I was unfortunate to become stuck in a snow drift on one of the quieter roads near here. Fortunately there was a bag of gravel in the boot and was busily shovelling it under the rear wheels of the Light 15 when a young lad in a 2CV stopped to assist. It soon became very obvious that, despite being a Citroën owner himself, he did not realise the Traction is a front-wheel-drive car because he kept suggesting I should be placing the gravel under the front wheels. Eventually I was forced to point out that there was nothing wrong with the front wheels because they spun perfectly freely when the clutch was let out. In fact he was struck dumb when I demonstrated this and he saw for himself how the back wheels failed to turn at all. Having realised his error he suggested it might be better if I were to leave the car where it was (fortunately I had skidded well clear of the carriageway) and then return when the snow had cleared. My efforts with the gravel were getting me nowhere so I agreed and accepted his offer of a lift back to town. It was only when I returned to the car two days later that I remembered I had not been carrying gravel but quick setting fence-post mix and when I saw the car again both rear wheels were firmly encased in custom fitted concrete blocks.

The drive home was not too bad because after the first few yards the larger lumps were dislodged and the remaining smaller bits then ran clear of the inside of the wings (except in the most extreme circumstances). Once again the local garage have been most helpful and they promise I will get the car back in time for Dunkirk - as long as the replacement wiring loom arrives in time. (It has something to do with the wiring for the rear lights inside the wings - but I did not understand the whole story).

I trust others may benefit from my experience - but if anybody is offered help by a 2CV owner it might be worth pointing out that, unlike their vehicle, a Traction is Front Wheel Drive.

Tyrone Parker-Lott

## SMOUT FAMILY NORMANDY TOUR 2003

Dear Theo,

I understand you and your family participated in the recent Normandy Tour (although I am beginning to believe it was more akin to a school trip than a serious car club event).

I had hoped to join the tour myself but due to the fact I have been using a 2002 diary, I erroneously arrived at Cherbourg a day early and then never managed to quite catch up with you all. (I am still a little peeved that the organisers did not advise my secretary as I know she had made it quite clear I would be there on the Thursday).

By the time I finally reached the restaurant where you all gathered on the Sunday evening I was beginning to think with hindsight I might have been lucky to have missed the tour. To paraphrase Winston Churchill, "I have never before seen such devastation caused by so few in such a short time". However, I tried to find out what the plan was for the following day, but all the medics would allow the Maitre D time to say was "I do not know and I do not care - as long as they do not return here".

However, my reason for contacting you is simple. The only bit of sense I got was from another staff member who said you were nominated to write a report for the TOC's excellent magazine - the waitress thought it

## CRICKET AT DUNKERQUE

Dear Doctor Haft,

Mr Tyrone P-Lott is travelling at present and has therefore asked me to contact you concerning the forthcoming anniversary celebration in Dunquerque.

He was fortunate enough to be in Versailles recently when he witnessed a similar meeting and noted that many of the vehicle passengers were in period costume. He would therefore like to know if the same is expected at the June meeting. If so, he proposes flannels, blazer and cap because he apparently still has his "old school cricket togs".

Bearing that in mind, do you know of any other delegates that might have their cricket apparel? - He thinks it might be a jolly good idea to set up a three-day test, England v. the rest, on the beach. If not could you take his cricket equipment if he can get it to you in the first fortnight of June? (TPL would have taken all the necessary equipment himself but he will not have a car on the outward journey).

By the way, has he mentioned to you that he is arranging to buy a car from Mr De Felice in France and has already forwarded a steering wheel? As he says, for £110.00 it can't be much good but it should keep him mobile until the garage are able to re-assemble his other car. He will probably then write an article on the dangers of emulating the French "Cliff Test" which so impressed him when he saw it in the recent television programme about Citroën cars. (I hasten to add he did not intentionally attempt this feat, but the handbrake cable failed when he was parked at the coast prior to his departure to join the Irish Tour). Although the vehicle did move after the descent he considered that having only one front wing and no headlamps at all it was probably unwise to continue on to Ireland.

TPL is not due back for at least 10 days but I look forward to your response which I shall pass on when he contacts the office. He has also asked me to copy this to Mr De Felice so that he is aware the wheel is on its way and the deal is still on.

Best regards,

Frances Besscar, PA to Mr. Tyrone P-Lott

Dear Tyrone,

Miss Frances Besscar has kindly written to me on your behalf.

I totally agree with you that blazers and flannels would be most suitable apparel, preferably with an old school tie. A boater would be a smart alternative to a cap, or a panama hat for older gentlemen. Not having the good fortune to be married I hesitate to advise what the ladies should wear, but perhaps Frances might have some suggestions.

Your idea of a cricket match is excellent, and by copy of this I shall ask Mr De Felice to organise a game. I am sure that he will have all the necessary equipment, and soon a much larger car in which to carry it.

I know our hosts will do everything to make our visit memorable, in fact I understand the town band has been practising Rule Britannia.

Kind regards,

Yves Haft (Dr), UK Traction Avant Research Centre


was apparently because the most charming (and the only well behaved member) of the group was your son, Bill.

I know you are a busy man - most of us have our work cut out with only two balls to worry about - so as a professional pensmith I am offering to write this report for you. I believe it is likely to be less biased if it comes from somebody who, although not actually there, was close enough in the wake to have a clear picture of the event. I think you will agree that the quality of information I extracted from the restaurant demonstrates the accuracy with which I shall be able to produce this article and I look forward to an early reply with your acceptance of this offer. You may reply to either myself or Frances, my secretary at either of the addresses in the message header above. In addition, if there are any specific events or incidents which you would especially like me to mention please do not hesitate to tell me and I shall endeavour to include them.

Thanks.

Meanwhile I pass my best regards to you, your wife and of course little Bill and hope to meet you all at one of the TOC events in the future.

Tyrone Parker-Lott

 This letter mysteriously arrived and may give some indication to Mr Tyrone Parker-Lotts identity - or it may not! Ed

