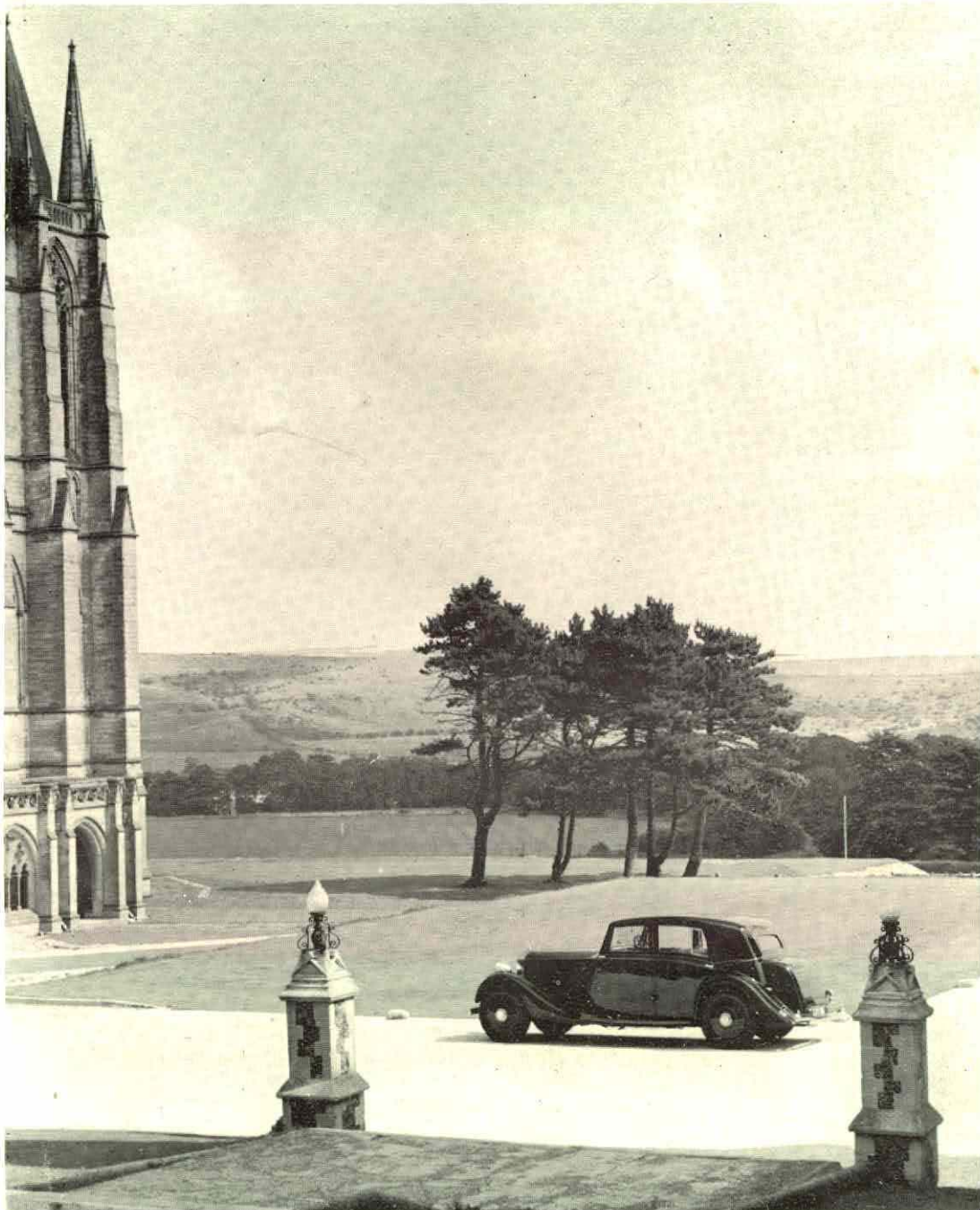


THE 20-GHOST



CLUB RECORD

Winter 1966



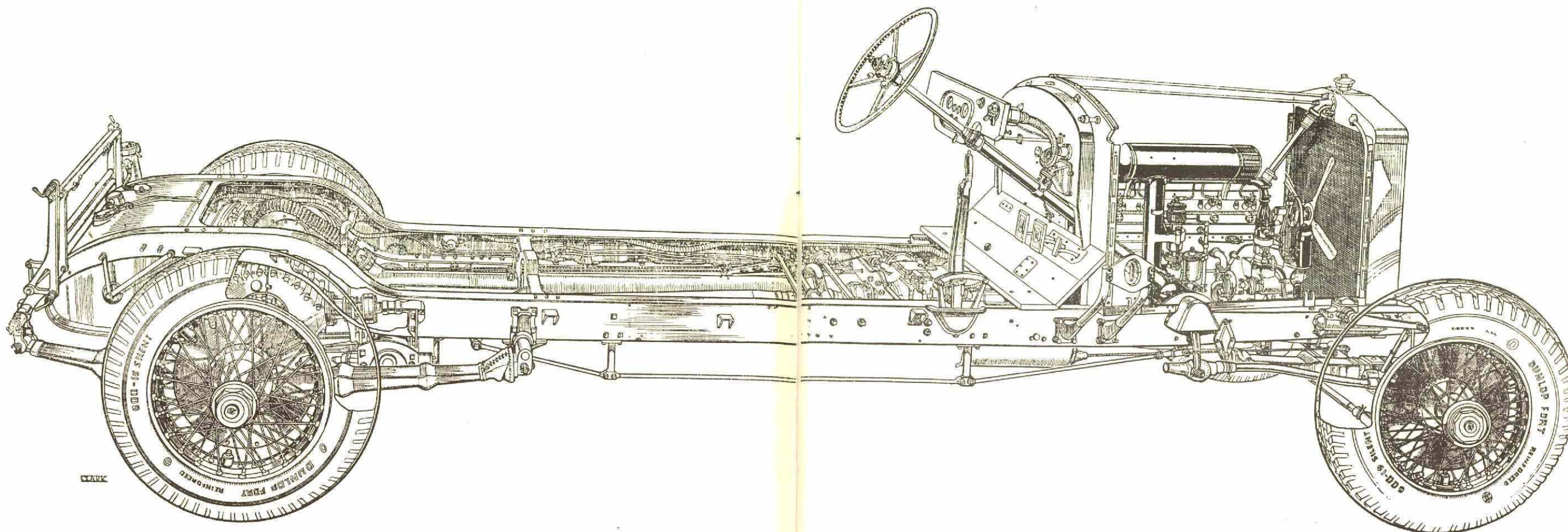
V W Hodgson's 25/30 at Lancing



Red or Black?

MOST members will at one time or another have had some of the better-known Rolls-Royce legends repeated to them as true incidents, usually involving a friend's brother. They may probably have always accepted, however, the story that the red R-R initials on the radiator badge were changed to black in 1933 as a sign of mourning on the death of Sir Henry Royce. Your editor, certainly, never had cause to question this explanation until he read in a little book called 'The Power of Grace' the statement that the company had said that 'actually it was planned well before his death in deference to the wishes of the customers, pre-eminent amongst whom was the then Prince of Wales, who considered that red clashed badly with the colour of the paintwork of many cars.'

No further authority is given for this statement, and it is rather surprising that nearly thirty years' production had taken place before this objection was raised - or at any rate attended to: also, a higher proportion of post-1933 cars is probably black than of pre-1933 ones and therefore not susceptible to colour clashes. Perhaps someone can give more definite authority for the statement quoted earlier or any further explanation.



20/25 Chassis Numbers

SUMMARY OF 20/25 CHASSIS NUMBERS

Letters	Year	Series	Letters	Year	Series	Letters	Year	Series
GAE	1934	E2	GHG	1935	G2	GRW	1932-3	W
GAF	1934-5	F2	GHW	1932-3	W	GSF	1934-5	F2
GAU	1932	U	GKC	1934	C2	GSR	1930	R
GAW	1932-3	W	GKT	1931-2	TB	GSY	1933	Y
GBA	1933	A2	GLB	1934	B2	GTK	1936	K2
GBJ	1935	J2	GLG	1935	G2	GTR	1930	R
GBK	1936	K2	GLJ	1935	J2	GTZ	1933	Z
GBT	1931-2	TA, TB	GLR	1930	R	GUB	1934	B2
GCJ	1935	J2	GLZ	1933	Z	GWE	1934	E2
GDP	1930	P	GMD	1934	D2	GWP	1930	P
GDX	1933	X	GMU	1932	U, V	GWX	1933	X
GED	1934	D2	GNC	1934	C2	GXB	1934	B2
GEX	1933	X	GNS	1930-1	S	G XK	1936	K2
GFE	1934	E2	GOH	1935	H2	G XO	1929-30	O
GFT	1931-2	TA	GOS	1930-1	S	GYD	1934	D2
GGA	1933	A2	GPG	1935	G2	GYH	1935	H2
GGH	1935	H2	GPS	1930-1	S	GYZ	1933	Z
GGP	1930	P	GRC	1934	C2	GZU	1932	V
GHA	1933	A2	GRF	1934-5	F2			

DATE	SERIES	CHASSIS NO.	NUMBERS SUBSEQUENTLY CHANGED (NEW NUMBERS IN BRACKETS)	NEW NUMBERS (PREVIOUS ONES IN BRACKETS)	NUMBERS MADE
1929-30	O	GXO11-111		GXO82(GVO34), GXO83(GVO59), GXO84(GVO68), GXO85(GVO75), GXO86(GVO76), GXO87(GVO79), GXO88(GXO5), GXO89(GXO7), GXO90(GXO9), GXO91(GXO10), GXO92(GVO51), GXO93(GVO32), GXO94(GVO46), GXO94(GVO54), GXO96(GVO65), GXO97(GVO71), GXO98(GVO11), GXO99(GVO72), GXO100(GVO81), GXO101(GVO20), GXO102(GVO32), GXO103(GVO64), GXO104(GVO49), GXO105(GXO1), GXO106(GXO2), GXO107(GVO22), GXO108(GVO78), GXO109(GVO53), GXO111(GVO24)	100
1930 1930	P R(1-25) R(26-200)	GGP1-81, GDPI-81, GWP1-41 GLR1-25 GLR26-82, GSR1-81, GTR1-41			401
1930-31	S	GNS1-81, GOS1-81, GPS1-41			200
1931-32	TA TB(101-180)	GFT1-81, GBT1-21 GBT22-82, GKT1-21			181
1932	TB(181-200) U V	GKT22-41 GAU1-81, GMU1-21 GMU22-81, GZU1-41			220
1932-33	W	GHW1-81, GRW1-81, GAW1-41			200
1933	X Y Z AZ	GEX1-81, GWX1-81, GDX1-41 GSY1-101 GLZ1-81, GTZ1-81, GYZ1-41 GBA1-81, GGA1-81, GHA1-41			700
1934	B2 C2 D2 E2	GXB1-81, GUB1-81, GLB1-41 GNC1-81, GRC1-81, GKC1-41 GED1-81 GMD1-81 GYD1-69 GAE1-81, GWE1-83 GFE1-41	GED10(GYD57), GED25(GYD60), GED28(GYD64), GED54(GYD63), GED60(GYD58), GED71(GYD43), GED74(GYD67), GED79(GYD69), GMD10(GYD53), GMD12(GYD49), GMD24(GYD44), GMD26(GYD45), GMD43(GYD51), GMD47(GYD59), GMD58(GYD68), GMD62(GWE82), GMD67(GYD61), GMD71(GYD56), GYD4(GYD52), GYD6(GYD46), GYD10(GYD62), GYD11(GYD48), GYD14(GWE83), GYD19(GYD65)	GYD43(GED71), GYD44(GMD24), GYD45(GMD26), GYD46(GYD6), GYD48(GYD11), GYD49(GMD12), GYD51(GMD43), GYD52(GYD4), GYD53(GMD10), GYD56(GMD71), GYD57(GED10), GYD58(GED60), GYD59(GMD47), GYD60(GED25), GYD61(GMD67), GYD62(GYD10), GYD63(GED54), GYD64(GED28), GYD65(GYD19), GYD67(GED74), GYD68(GMD58), GYD69(GED79), GWE82(GMD62), GWE83(GYD14)	806
1934-35	F2	GAF1-81, GSF1-81, GRF1-41			200
1935	G2 H2 J2	GLG1-81, GPG1-81, GHG1-41 GYH1-81, GOH1-81, GEH1-41 GBJ1-81, GLJ1-81, GCJ1-41			600
1936	K2	GXX1-81, GBK1-81, GTK1-63			222

NOTE: - Number 13 was not used in any series

TOTAL 3830

A Plea for the 25/30

WHY is the 25/30 h p Rolls-Royce not more popular? My experience with Rolls-Royce cars is limited to my 1936 25/30 owner-driver saloon, which I have had for nine years, and a very nice 1937 25/30 limousine which I owned for a few months three years ago. I am therefore at a disadvantage in being unable to make comparisons with other models through personal observation. Perhaps members who are owners of 25/30's with other models of the 1930's will let us have their views.

The 25/30 is thoroughly capable of holding its own in modern traffic and if it is in good condition it can be driven reasonably hard very safely. The performance is still quite as good as that of the modern family saloon and the top-gear acceleration in the useful ranges may be superior. This is illustrated in the tables which were compiled from information in 'Autocar' and 'Motor' road test reports.

ACCELERATION: TIME (SECONDS)

<u>TOP GEAR</u>					
m p h	Continental P11	25/30	Vauxhall VX4-90		
10-30	10	8.5	9.6		
10-40	15	13	-		
10-50	20	18.5	21.4		
10-60	26.5	26	-		
10-70	35	36.5	39.3		
<u>THIRD GEAR</u>					
m p h	Continental P11	25/30	Vauxhall VX4-90	Morris 1800	Rover 2000 TC
10-30	7	6	6.8	8.2	7.8
10-40	10.5	9.5	-	-	-
10-50	15	14	14.1	16.2	14.9
10-60	21.5	21	-	-	-

ACCELERATION: TIMES THROUGH THE GEARS (SECONDS)

m p h	Continental P II	25/30	Vauxhall VX4-90	Morris 1800	Rover 2000 TC
0-50	-	15	10.3	12.3	8.5
0-60	23	23.5	15.4	17.4	11.9

TAPLEY METER READINGS (LB/TON)

Gear	Continental P II	25/30
Top	278	270
Third	365	360
Second	540	550

Figures relating to three modern cars are included only to show how the Continental Phantom II and 25/30 compare in top/third gear acceleration through the useful range. (It will be observed that two of the modern cars are by no means stodgy performers). The quiet and effortless manner in which the 25/30 overtakes the 35-40 m p h traffic is thus explained. If the modern car driver uses the gearbox, the story becomes quite different, of course, as the figures for acceleration from rest indicate. It is noteworthy that many cars will not accelerate smoothly from 10 m p h in top gear. It is possibly not generally appreciated that in the range from 10 to 60 m p h the acceleration of the 25/30 is marginally better than that of the Continental Phantom II.

In the early morning on winding cross-country roads, the 25/30 will cruise very comfortably at 50 m p h with little or no necessity to reduce speed on ordinary bends. Under such conditions, the car can be steered firmly and accurately, and the deceptively smooth brakes afford a safe margin for emergencies. Higher speeds can be indulged in for long distances if one so desires, but at 50 m p h progress is extremely comfortable and wind noise is scarcely noticeable, while the engine is not extended

at all. On open stretches, my car is still comfortable at 70 m p h with far less wind noise than the majority of modern cars costing under £1000. Above 10 m p h it is a top-gear car and from 25 m p h it is unnecessary to use third to pass other vehicles. In towns, passengers cannot distinguish any difference in the sound of engine or transmission between third and top gears. First gear is needed only for starting on steep hills, the clutch being so smooth that one normally starts in second from a tick-over, opening the throttle progressively as the car gets under way. On cross-country runs, the petrol consumption is about 17 m p g of the cheapest obtainable, but the average over a year is 15 m p g. My car weighs 4,520 lb dry and empty.

Thus, one wonders what is lacking in the 25/30. Do the Phantom II and 20/25 handle better? Are they more comfortable, or are the controls silkier? Do the cubic inches and the long stride of the Continental Phantom II bring it to the fore on open and hilly roads? I hear that the Wraith front suspension is far superior, but this model is not very popular, either! The pre-1930 cars and the Phantom III are not comparable. (I would very much like to own a 20 h p with a light open body, however). Certainly, the Continental Phantom II has an aura which puts it into a class of its own and of which its owners are justifiably proud. Perhaps there is also some subtle difference in the 20/25 which somebody can portray. - V W H

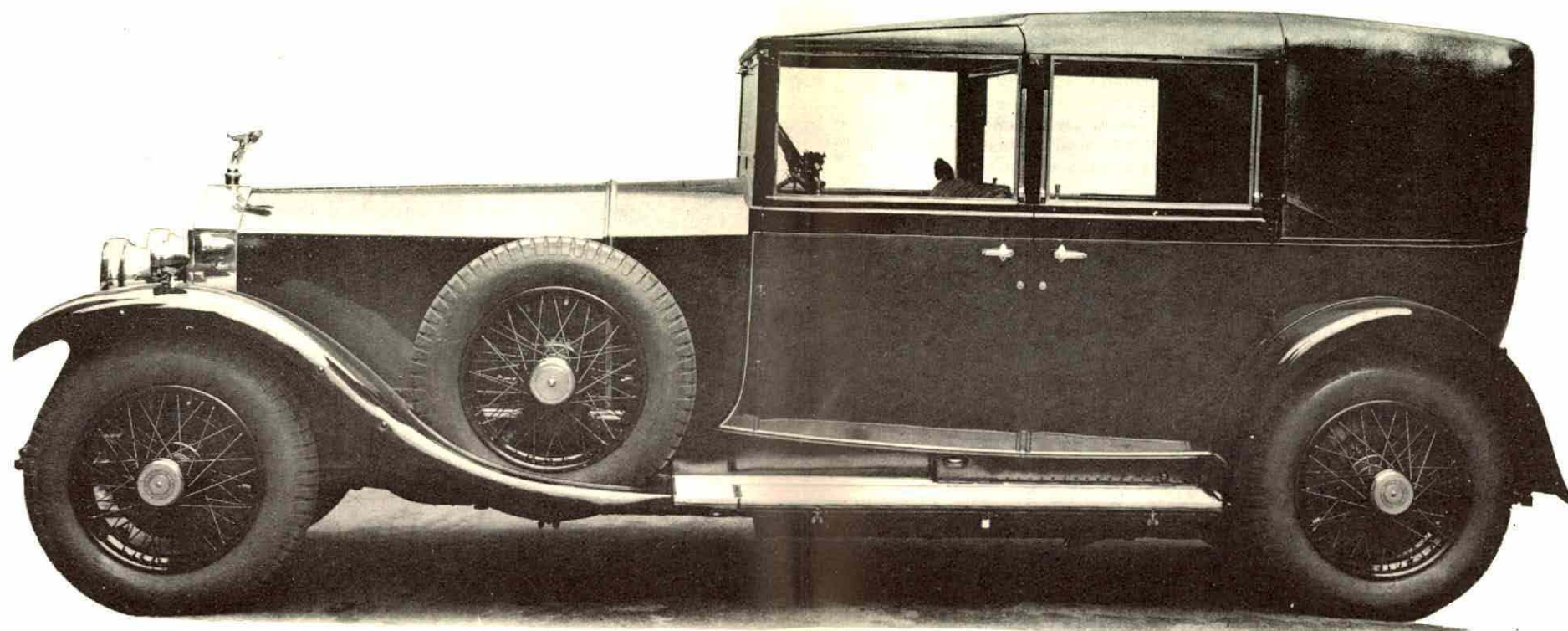
The Master, the Chairman and Committee members join me in sending the very best wishes for Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year.

The next Club event will be the annual Dinner-dance at the Hyde Park Hotel on Saturday, 28 January. I fear the price will have to be raised slightly owing to circumstances over which we have no control but I hope this will not deter members from attending and ensuring another jolly and successful gathering.

Greetings to you all.

Fred Latham

President



Portrait of 85AL

1928 long chassis Phantom I with cabriolet de ville
body by Barker (body no 6175). Chassis no 85AL.
C steering column and extra seats facing sideways.
Colour of body blue.

The Story of BM 4465

I WAS out exercising my PII on a sunny October afternoon in 1965 when I passed a humble yet spruce village petrol station. Out of the corner of my eye, I noticed a Rolls-Royce radiator, well back beside the adjacent garage and workshop, so I stopped and, feeling slightly guilty at trespassing, went round the back to find out what model it was. Investigation revealed a very nicely kept 20/25 of about 1935 vintage with a fawn Gurney Nutting drophead coupé body; but sadly the whole of the rear side of the car had been badly scarred in some recent crash. I noticed the registration number BM4465 and then for some unaccountable reason I began to feel there was something sinister about the whole setup. Slowly it dawned on me that I had passed the selfsame way a couple of decades before when visiting some friends nearby on my precious leave petrol in the Autumn of 1944, and then I recalled that BM4465 had been there then, also damaged after a crash. I felt an urge to discover, if I could, what happened to it between those years.

I got back into my car and drove in to fill up with petrol, using the line-bell as I did so; a neatly dressed man in overalls, about sixty, with a severe limp came out of the garage to fill her up. He showed a little more interest and knowledge than is usual in my PII and then to my surprise and delight he asked me if I would like to see his PII. Naturally I accepted, expecting to find a 'heap', but he showed me into his garage where stood a beautifully polished Hooper touring limousine in maroon and black.

"I use it for occasional hire work and local weddings. Rather expensive, I suppose, but I have a sentimental attachment to it, I'm afraid."

"I know how you feel," I replied.

I showed as much interest in his PII as I could, but I was yearning to discover more about the Gurney Nutting 20/25 outside. He was quiet and reserved yet had a fascinating way of expressing himself, and I felt he was slowly warming towards me. Eventually, I turned his attention to BM4465. "I don't suppose you remember that Rolls round the back, but I clearly recall seeing it here in a damaged condition twenty-one years ago."

"Indeed I do, I am sorry to say," he replied. "I'll tell you why it's back here again, only it will take a little while."

"I'd certainly like to hear if you could spare the time."

He took me outside and round the back, and

I only hoped no one would come and ask for petrol and so interrupt him.

"Well, it was like this. I was chauffeur to the local squire, as you might say, and these two Rolls-Royces were his motor-cars. Soon after war broke out, Harry Field who ran this garage, being a Terrier, joined up and was killed at Dunkirk. The squire, who owned this garage, put me in charge. I couldn't get into uniform" Here he tapped his left knee.

"The squire's only child was 'Miss Angela' as we always knew her - a sweet, natural girl, not at all spoilt like some only children of the well-to-do, and most considerate to all of us. No doubt at all she was attractive and full of life, and she had a lot of young gentlemen seeking her favours, even in this remote spot in war time. But there was one she had a particular place for, a young Lieutenant in the Airborne Corps - Peter Wayne by name - every inch a soldier. He came on leave after escaping from Arnhem where he gained the M.C., and the young couple became betrothed, at least I think that's the right term.

"They were ideally suited, I should say from the little I know of the subject and blissfully happy for all to see - all the world loves a lover as the saying goes. I had known Miss Angela since before pram days, and like so many of that era their happiness was to be short lived. As they set off on that fatal trip on September 30th 1944 in this car that the squire had lent them, I can see her now as she waved her left hand with the sparkling diamond engagement ring. 'Isn't love wonderful, Nobby,' she always called me Nobby - young couples in love can't see far." Tears came into his eyes, so I looked the other way, and there was quite a pause before he went on.

"On the way back, in the middle of the night, I don't think anyone is very clear what happened, but the car crashed into a lamp-post as the result of a nearby explosion by one of those wretched buzz-bomb things. Miss Angela was taken to hospital with severe concussion; the Lieutenant was shaken but unhurt, and when his leave was over he returned to his unit, absolutely distraught, only to win greater laurels in the closing stages of the war.

"The squire sent me up to collect the car, so you must have seen it here shortly afterwards. However, Miss Angela had more than severe concussion, some form of loss of memory I suppose: she never spoke again nor seemed to register, although she could do the automatic things of life such as eating and walking.

I don't know anything about the formation of the brain, but I understand some of the nerves in the brain had been damaged or severed, and it was decided it was too dangerous to operate on her, and they hoped over a period of time to cure her by some form of electric treatment.

"Because she needed constant and expert medical treatment, she never went home and they put her in the Antoine Nursing Home about a mile from here. They used to get people who knew her to go and talk to her as this was supposed to help her; of course her parents and friends went frequently. I went once, but it was enough for me; to see the blank expression on a face one was once fond of was too much for Nobby, I'm afraid.

"Captain Peter was very faithful, he came whenever he could, and he always used to come here and have a chat - proper gentleman he was; he never talked about himself; he didn't want to talk about Miss Angela, so we usually talked about motor cars.

"About two years after the accident, the squire's madam died - of a broken heart they said, as she wasn't old or frail - and shortly after that they had to take the squire away. I suppose it's possible to break the heart of Old England if sufficient forces are brought to bear." He paused in reverent silence. He had told his tale so sincerely and convincingly that I felt I knew the people myself.

He went on, "Anyway, some six months later, a smartly dressed gentleman from London town came to see me, a solicitor I suppose, and told me that the garage and the PII was mine but I mustn't sell them as I was responsible to two persons they called trustees, attorneys, very complicated. One of them was Captain Peter and he took the 20/25 and had it completely reconditioned by a London coach builder and it looked as good as new.

"Well time went by, sir, Miss Angela didn't get any better; she did speak I gather very occasionally, but not in conversation with anyone, and it didn't add up to much. I believe they used to take her for walks around the grounds of Antoinettes, arm-in-arm as you might say. I do hope I'm not boring you."

"Not a bit, I'm fascinated - do go on."

"After about four years, Captain Peter (or was he a Major then, I can't recall) stopped coming down so often, but he always came down on the anniversary of that fatal day, year after year, save once when he was fighting in Korea; he always came in the 20/25 which never seemed to look any older.

From the small increase in mileage, it seems to me he could have used the car for little other than these annual trips. I never discovered much about him until about three years ago. He'd got to Lieutenant Colonel by then, and the only time he brought a friend with him. When he went to pay his visit to Antoinettes, he left his friend with me for about an hour; the friend told me that Colonel Peter was what he called a War-Office pattern soldier, very clever, very reserved, did what every officer should do including hearty participation in all the peacetime frolics; but due to his reserve, no one really ever got to know him. To all his friends, his private life remained a closed book - he apparently had no one - it was work, work and more work.

"Last year, when he came down on his annual visit, he told me that he'd heard of some doctor who could operate on Miss Angela with a new technique, which could join or replace the damaged nerves, but that the chances of success were very small. The other trustees and doctors would not agree - they called him a crank.

"Well, that's brought me up to this year, and when the Colonel came in three weeks ago, he somehow looked different, and restless. It was a lovely sunny afternoon and he had the car's hood down. He said very little, which wasn't unusual, and just before he drove off he shook me warmly by the hand, and with fire in his eyes he said "Good-bye, Nobby, this is the last time, I'm going to finish it all off" and he was gone.

"I tried to work out what he meant: should I ring Antoinettes to warn them that he seemed desperate - no, that wouldn't be right; so I thought I could best be of help if I could get with him, I might calm him down. The only car I had available was the PII; I had used it on hire work that morning, so I got in and drove as quickly as I could to Antoinettes. As I came through the Eastern gate, at the end of the long drive, I could see his car and a few figures struggling outside the main entrance. The Colonel was there holding on to Miss Angela and then I saw him knock down a white-coated male nurse. I could not draw up alongside his car as the drive was too narrow so I jammed on my brakes and pulled up just behind the 20/25. Just before I did so, I saw him punch the middle-aged matron, who was trying to restrain him. "Take that, you b...y battle axe"; he threw Miss Angela into the back seat, vaulted over the off side door and was off. It all happened so quickly, but I couldn't help admiring him - he'd

done it all better than a film star, and it didn't look as if he'd even scratched the paintwork.

"With my lame leg, I couldn't get out of the car in time to stop him. I got back in as quick as I could and followed out of the Western entrance of Antoinettes. He had a good hundred yards' start on me, and I thought I'd try to pull up alongside him and make him see sense. Somehow, I don't think he'd try physical violence on me.

"You'd probably say, Sir, it should be easy to catch a 20/25 with a PII and I agree with you on a straight road with two people of similar temperament driving; but it wasn't like that, and a late 20/25 with a Stromberg carburettor is a different car from the earlier ones. He was determined not to be caught, driving like a madman, disregarding all the rules of the road, trying to shake me off going round all sorts of little lanes and corners, and anyway I don't find changing gear all that easy now with this stiff leg. I set my ride-control to hard and kept the PII in third and after a while I found I was definitely gaining. Naturally as you can imagine whenever we passed through inhabited localities, two old Rolls-Royces at speed with tyres screaming and dust and gravel flying as we sped around some of the corners caused quite a commotion, quite apart from various ruderies from drivers of lesser vehicles.

"When we came to Cobblers crossroads, I saw a police-car, a Wolseley, come up fast from the left, and he was soon in the chase with his silly blue light flashing and his siren screaming to encourage us to go even faster. I was determined not to let him pass, tho' I doubt he could have done so, because by now the PII was really warmed up and all forty-four horses had really got their bits between their teeth.

"I suppose we had been going about twenty minutes and I still hadn't caught the Colonel - dangerous driving but magnificent car control he had, and what I gained on the straights I lost on the corners; when we came to the bottom of Birdslip Hill, a mile or so long, I knew barring interference from oncoming traffic I could catch him. I had got my bonnet level with his boot and was in the process of drawing alongside when he mis-judged the curve of the sharp right-hand bend, skidded off the road and into the ditch. I stopped my car beyond, and hobbled back as fast as I could."

He paused a few moments before he went on, and I don't suppose he realized what suspense I was in; I said nothing but I was

rather ashamed to observe that my knuckles were white as they gripped the 20/25's Spirit of Ecstasy by which we were standing.

"As I got back to this car, sir, I saw Miss Angela lying in the field; she had been flung clear; she was alive and breathing, with one or two nasty scratches on her face and arms, and I noticed the engagement ring she'd probably flashed at me some 21 years before. I saw Colonel Peter pinned under the car. With the help of the Police we righted the car to discover that he didn't appear at first sight to be badly hurt.

"I went back to Miss Angela; she opened her eyes, groaned and in a quiet yet shocked voice she began to mumble "How's Peter, Where's Peter." She continued to repeat this very slowly over and over again. After what seemed ages but I suppose it was only a few minutes she said "Those ruddy Germans, that wretched bomb - golly, Nobby, how you've changed, what are you doing here?" It took me quite a time, in all the shock of the disaster to realize that at long last she'd 'registered.' By then, the ambulance had arrived and they took them both away."

"Please, Nobby, finish the story off."

"Well that, sir, is the end of the story. I've been to visit them both in hospital; the Colonel is getting on well and Miss Angela from what I gather through a miracle is physically and mentally back to normal, but is having certain treatment and lessons to rectify 21 years of lost time. I understand that both the hospital staff and the Police are 'forgetting' to prosecute - they think they've suffered enough already."

After thanking Nobby, I gave him my address should he ever wish to come over and see my old cars and rushed home to record this strange tale while it was still clear in my mind.

About three weeks later, I got a letter from Nobby telling me that Miss Angela had asked him to give her away at her wedding - she wanted him rather than any of her 'pompous' relatives. He couldn't refuse, he said, but he wasn't keen to play the 'toff'. Would I help him and what ought he to wear and do, and could I possibly drive his car for the wedding? As it was a Saturday, I readily agreed, and anyway I wanted to see the hero and heroine of his story.

I drove Nobby, looking proud yet awkward in a morning suit I'd hired from Moss Bros for him, and 'Miss Angela' from Antoinettes to the little church at Bramble. I doubt if a bride

ever got a better send off than she got from the staff at Antoinettes including the 'b...y battle axe', who was easy to identify; and we arrived dead on time. I kept the division down, as Nobby had so asked me, and it was wonderful what the bride must have learnt in the last few weeks; she spoke slowly and occasionally slipped back into jargon that was fashionable twenty years ago.

There was a small crowd outside the church, as expected at a village wedding, and after the bride and Nobby had entered to the organ's playing of Mendelssohn's wedding

march, I peeped inside - it was absolutely packed.

Whilst the service was in progress, I waited outside with the car and mingled with the crowd and the waiting photographers and journalists. Standing at the back, on a slight incline, so that a good view could be obtained as the bride and groom came out, between two large men was a little old man dressed in a grey overcoat. I saw someone, possibly a reporter approach him. "Yes, that was my car, I was her father," he said.

ANON

CLUB OFFICERS & COMMITTEES

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Chairman: J C Dymock-Maunsell. Hon Secretary and Treasurer: W F Watson,
Aldwick Hundred, Bognor Regis, Sussex.

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W A L Cook (chairman); Capt and Mrs J E Castle; Mrs F Hellings.

OTHER OFFICERS

Hon Technical Liaison Officer: J G Hampton. Hon Historian and Librarian: R O Barnard.
Hon Editor and Press Liaison Officer: I S Hallows. Hon Solicitor: F Hellings.

GENERAL NOTES

LIBRARY - Members are reminded that the club library contains a considerable amount of Rolls-Royce literature, most of which may be borrowed from the Hon Librarian. This includes issues of 'The Flying Lady', instruction books, Rolls-Royce Bulletins and files of cuttings.

INSIGNIA - Club insignia available from the Hon Secretary include lapel brooches (for ladies and gentlemen) in sterling silver at 35s; club ties at 22s 6d; and silver cuff-links at 40s.

CLUB NEWS

Westward Ho!

THE long-range weather forecasters had predicted a wet first half for October, and so it was until Saturday 8th when, with true 20-Ghost Club good fortune, sunshine was the main ingredient of the weather. True, there was fog early on and the Chairman in his P11 and Frank Hellings in his 20/25, each starting virtually from London before dawn, had more than an eyeful of it but they pressed on regardless (J C D-M reached Cheddar for breakfast!), and all of us were rewarded with quite beautiful weather by the time we gathered at the Wellington Hotel, Minehead, around lunch-time. Blue skies, flecked only with cloud - and most of that white - cast glorious lights and shades over the Quantock Hills as we approached the rendezvous; stone houses, lovely churches, redder and redder soil combined with narrow, twisty roads and high hedges to remind us that we were getting into the heart of the West Country.

Some had visited the Veteran Car Museum at Cheddar en route. This is a do-it-yourself venture by West Country enthusiasts who lend their own exhibits and change them around from time to time so that what you saw last week may be surpassed by what is on view next time you go. The Museum is most worthy of visitor support which it enjoyed to the tune of 45,000 this past summer.

By half past twelve, the main of us had arrived at the Wellington where the Police, a Traffic Warden and all, were present - at the request of the Hotel manager, Mr Robertson, to help us to park amongst a 'forest' of 'No Parking' signs! We were clearly destined to be Queens of the May, even in October. There, too, were the BBC (a copy of whose film has been purchased for the Club for showing in due course), the local Press and a mot of others to inspect, admire and photograph the eleven cars on show. Rowland-Hosbon's Wraith, which should have been there, was unfortunately hors-de-combat and Col Gresham had, overnight, hidden the 'pièce de resistance', his lovely white 1912 S G in a garage. He is too well aware of the proclivity of enthusiastic admirers to 'twiddle the knobs' and so cause him subsequent trouble. But by and large, the cars present

were treated only to respectful admiration and the owners to intelligent questions.

The 'Boot' bar of the hotel most adequately accommodated the earlier arrivals and, shortly after 12.30, we moved to a sumptuous private bar manned by Mr Robertson in person. Just after 1 o'clock, we sat down to luncheon in an adjoining room at tables set for four; and a jolly good lunch it was, swiftly and obligingly served. By 2.15, we were moving off, silently and as individual inclination dictated, direct to the Porlock Hill climb. (Some statistics of individual performances are shown opposite but, as was to be expected since we sought no special privileges so as to avoid being mixed up with the new Motor Rally Laws, baulks caused by other cars frequently thwarted our own.)

The early part of the hill is the real teaser and your reporter regrets that the instructions for foregathering at the eventual top were inaccurate and confusing, and many overshot; he apologizes and thanks those who, bowling happily along at good speed, had to brake heavily and reverse after being flagged down.

Then came what many have commented on as the best item of the day - the drive down a valley lane, roughly parallel to the main road, to Lynmouth. Eleven intrepid drivers elected to have a go. It starts with a sharp descent, including a tightish hairpin bend, and at the bottom a right-angle turn to cross a narrow bridge, needing careful judgment - not one faltered. Thence, it twists and turns amidst high banks, one car wide, with vistas and glimpses of the leafy stream which it follows amongst wooded hills on either side, odd far-from-nowhere farms, Oare church set high up on top of the left-side of the road, cottages amid fields far down on the right, many nowadays designated 'Bed and Breakfast' or 'Camping Site', but never obtrusively. 'Take it slowly' is the watchword and, indeed, who would wish to hurry through such an idyllic spot. The BBC cameraman, in the leading car, vowed that he would return on holiday now that he knew it existed.

Passing places are few and, with such a convoy, we might have had trouble. But luck was with us, and oncoming traffic was met only at places where it was possible to get by; in each case, the opposing driver most obligingly drew in and waited for the whole cavalcade to pass. Let us hope that he felt the sight compensated for his delay; certainly, all our cars were looking their best, or jolly near it.

So into Lynmouth, via Watersmeet - itself a noted beauty spot but, alas, the scene of the tragic floods a few years ago. We did not pause but went straight at the Lynmouth to Lynton hill, if 'straight' is the right word!

Notes on hill climbs

MR AND MRS F HELLINGS (20/25)

PORLOCK (driver F Hellings). Started in 3rd, 25 m ph, temperature 68. Baulked to a dead stop by Jaguar in front. Changed up to 2nd at 12 m ph but had to change down again, temperature 73. Took 2nd hairpin in bottom at 16 m ph. Changed up to 2nd, 20 m ph, temperature 77. Changed up to 2nd, 20 m ph, temperature 77. Baulked again but remained in 2nd, 15/12 m ph, temperature 82. At 22 m ph changed up to 3rd, up to 26 m ph, temperature 83. Baulked again, down to 2nd, 20 m ph, temp 83, my ears popped. Changed into 3rd, about 25 m ph, temperature at the top 75. LYNTON (driver Mrs Hellings). Temperature 58, oil 24. Took 1st hairpin at 15 m ph in 2nd. Baulked by car in front, premature change down to bottom. Took 2nd hairpin in bottom, 15/11 m ph.

H B POULTER (P11)

PORLOCK

	GEAR	TEMP C°
At bottom		
Rolling start	3	82°
1st R H Bend	2	81°
(badly baulked)		
L hairpin	2	83°
Next R H Bend	3	84°
1st straight near top	4	85°
	4	86°
Bend near top	3	86°
(baulked again)		
Open Moorland		
at top	4	83°

J NORRIS (P1)

The P1 climbed Porlock mostly in 2nd and 3rd towards the end with the temperature reaching 85° to 90°C but soon returning to normal. The Lynton hill was climbed in bottom and required two goes at the bend both ascending and descending. Temperature remained at about 75°C.

J C DYMOCK-MAUNSELL (P11)

PORLOCK. Changed to 2nd before steep bend, baulked by 25/30, passed, baulked by P11 and 25/30, passed both. Proceeded further up Porlock, overshot rendezvous. All cars smelt hot. LYNTON. Changed to 2nd, had to back round final bend, all long wheelbase Phantoms likewise. Down Lynton round sharp bend in one.

COUNTISBURY. In third for a steep bit, passed S G in top going very sweetly. Baulked by member driving Jaguar. Down Porlock, baulked all the way by cautious 3-litre Rover. Tested brakes to stand still on steep corner. Brakes smelt, no fade, R-R brakes never did.

R B HONNYWILL (P111)

PORLOCK. Utterly baulked to standstill at foot by coach coming down and Hillman ahead not moving up to give room. Temp 82°C. Hillman moves off. Eventually, started in 1st but quickly into 2nd (synchronesh). Overtook Hillman after hairpin bend which was taken and photographed at about 30 m ph in 2nd. Temp rising to 92°C (foot hard down). At top of worst part (temp 96° but no anxiety - she likes being warm) up to 3rd and then top (temp falls again to 92°). Back to 3rd for last bit of climb (now steady 45-50 m ph and temp steady at 92°). Stop at top by fork to Oare. Everything under control but engine smelling warm.

LYNTON. In 3rd to start, but down to 2nd (foot down) on 1st hairpin (temp 85°). Stay in 2nd on second hairpin and sweep round (20 m ph and temp up to 92°) soon back to 3rd and arrive fast (40 m ph ?) at car park (temp 92°).

COUNTISBURY. Slightly baulked by coach at foot, so change to 2nd at full bore (40-45 m ph) to pass. Thence back to 3rd (temp below 90°) for most of the rest. Pass several cars at 50 m ph or so and reach top with temp around 88° (no anxiety). Descend Porlock in top, relying on brakes with confidence (temp back to 76° at foot).

C J CURTIS (25/30)

PORLOCK. Although I did not realise it at the time, my engine was only firing on 5½ cylinders. However, we went up Porlock, I thought, quite well. Temperature at start of climb 70°C, at end of climb 80°C. Oil pressure around 20 all the time. 2nd gear at start of climb, then into 3rd after 2nd bend: up to top gear at RAC box near top of climb but down again into 3rd gear to finish climb.

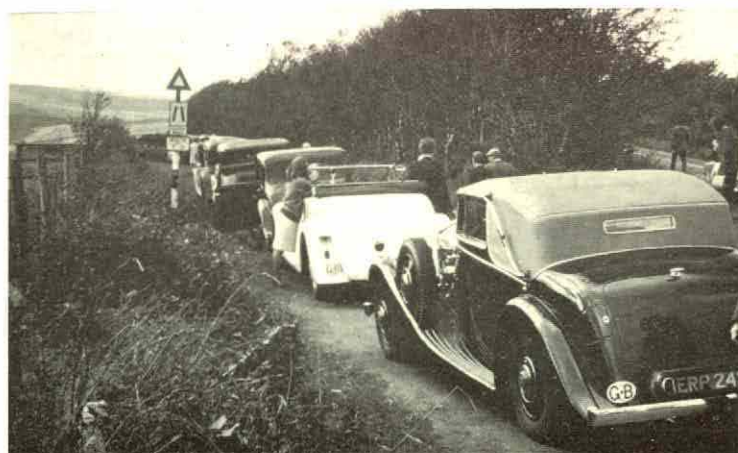
A comparatively mild hairpin is followed by a real corker which is also the junction with a road coming in from the left; oncoming traffic from either left or right can be a complete baulk but, even with a clear road, some of the 'big-uns' failed to make it in one. (Your reporter went up without trouble but fluffed it on the way down.)

It was about 3.40 p.m. that all cars had gathered at the car park towards the top - for free - and a move towards tea at Dunster was indicated. Off we went by the main road up Countisbury Hill out of Lynmouth, itself a long and fairly testing climb which would show up a motor out of condition. But the views over the Bristol Channel from the high coast road were superb. Alas, the drivers had little chance to admire the beauties of the day; on the hill climbs and in the valley road, it had been a matter of concentrating on the task in hand and now, up here on the moor, it was a case of watching the traffic and the numerous stray sheep on the road.

To Dunster, however, some half-dozen safely arrived, the others with a longish drive back home having peeled off. Not so our Chairman who, nothing daunted by time or weather, was

determined to have tea with the party at Dunster (and a nice Devonshire cream job it was, too, in this Somerset stronghold) and also to reach home at Weybridge for the night, which he did - 373 miles in the day! Parking in Dunster, in spite of the broad and picturesque main street, presented problems; the place was full of sight-seeing motorists and it was a matter of slipping in when and where someone else moved out. This was done with palpably more skill - and far less noise - than drivers of most modern cars achieved. Much of the available space is reserved for 'Coaches' and one is led to wonder if we are not more entitled to that space than the chromium-plated successors of mere char-à-bancs and horse brakes.

So, the gathering over, we dispersed around 5.30 p.m. on our several occasions, after a memorable day on which the weather had, throughout, treated us with extreme kindness and thus much enhanced our enjoyment. The main object, the hill climbs, had in many cases offered frustrations but our elderly ladies had demonstrated that, given a chance, they could pick up their skirts and show the youngsters a clean pair of heels - not to mention an elegant backside with the famous initials on the rear bumper. - R B H



ABOVE, LEFT - Outside the Wellington Hotel at Minehead. LEFT AND ABOVE, RIGHT - Halt after climbing Porlock Hill.

PHOTO SOURCES - V W Hodgson, cover; S J Lovegrove, 80 (bottom left); I Munro, 80 (upper two); Rolls-Royce Ltd, 72, 73