

SPIT AND POLISH

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THE



N.S.W.

Hon. Editor:

A. G. LERESCHE

Phone: WX 1608

Editorial Office

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LOOK FELLERS - NO HANDS

by Skid Rowe.

Reprinted from: "Man About Town"

This story is concerned with a little week-end diversion organised by Veteran car clubs for the entertainment of the country and loosely described as a Navigational and Regularity Competition for Motor Cars and their Crews. It seems a light-hearted enough venture and when apprised of one to be held in a particularly beautiful part of the country I was only too happy to fall in with a suggestion cooed at me by a powerful member of the car club fraternity that I should join him in giving it a whirl.

On the face of it, it was a pleasant proposition "Nothing very hectic in it for you, old boy. I'll do all the driving and and all you need do is to follow the route card, click the odd stop watch, and generally sit back and admire the scenery".

Add to this the fact that it was intended to stop over at a little country pub during the week end of the event - and I was on my way North feeling absolutely no pain whatsoever.

I am taking some trouble in setting the scene if only to drive home the fact that this sort of thing can happen to absolutely anyone, and it is about time somebody blew the whistle.

In the fullness of time I found myself ensconced in a beamy old pub beside a wide and placid lake. After easing myself into my older - it is a fine difference - clothes, I betook myself to the bar and with the ease of a world traveller prepared to be chummy with the locals when they called in after muck spreading for a pint of good English ale. They would shuffle, I knew, their feet in the presence of the gentry, tug at a forelock or two, wipe their hands, old hands, on their smocks before shaking hands and listen wide-eyed to my tales of life in the big city.

Two hours later I was fighting a losing battle to keep at least one foot in the pub and the other out from under an arriving Mercedes SL 500 while blowing the mink hairs and cashmere fluff off the top of my bitter into an atmosphere heavy with Balkan Sobranie, Worth, and cries of "you know damned well Gregory that I always have my brandy in a pewter mug".

Towards midnight a faint cry of "time gentlemen please" was greeted with a stunned silence that sent the bar man hurrying back to his pumps as if he had said a dirty word.

I was called down to breakfast the next morning by an inspired rendering on a Post Horn. The day of the rally was on hand and I was happy in the knowledge of a pleasant drive around the countryside to blow away the cobwebs.

We gathered in a pretty little village square for the distribution of route maps and a final briefing. It was simple enough. All you had to do was to be at certain points on the map at certain times. There were to be secret checks along the route to make sure that you were clocking in correctly and that you were maintaining the required average. There were to be some special checks at the end of the day to sort out the cream.

My driver friend explained his system of maintaining regularity. First of all you had to work out the distances between the check points, and then work out the number of minutes it should take to cover each mile to arrive at the check points on time. There were two stop watches which would be used independently and started and stopped at the beginning and end of each mile; and the trick was to get the speedometer to roll around in conjunction with the stopwatches. Then all would be well.

All I had to do, then, was to work the watches over every mile of the route, watch the speedometer, add or subtract according to the state of the parties, keep the driver informed, light his cigarettes, read the route card,

watch for signposts and landmarks, say right, left, straight on, faster, slower, or reverse, when, as if, why, because, when and where applicable. Apart from this my time was my own. The driver would drive.

He was a prominent figure in the rally world and at the start he indulged in some tense, throw-away kind of humour with a bunch of respectful officials. He gave them a stoic, Eve of Gettysburg, wave of farewell, and we were off.

"Where do we go?" he said. "It says 'Pst ch. B.L. at Yards and T.R. S.O. at 2 Xrds and T.L. at Trds'. There has been some mistake, we have a Bulgarian translation". He gave me a sort of laugh one reserves for chance meetings with cretins. "Rally abbreviations, old boy, just give them to me straight and I'll translate them into action. Now stop mooning about and get back to your clocks".

It was during a furious rally between the left clock and the right clock and while I was applying the principle of quadratics to the variance of front and back wheel size and its effect of a reading of fourteen and a third miles from the start Brain found himself in need of further information. "Where are we," he said. Such was my grip of the situation that I was able to leap into action immediately. Winding down the side window I said to a small boy who was standing beside the road, "Where are we?" "If", he said with the charming naivety of the country born "you are with the other mad lot you should have turned left at the cross roads five miles back." Here the driver's ability came into its own. The car appeared to rise vertically, turn, and hare off in the opposite direction while a sustained groaning came from the driver whose feet were thrashing up and down on the pedals like an inspired grape treader. By the time we roared into the first control there was so much clicking of stop-watches going on that from ten paces it sounded like fiesta time in Old Seville.

A rather pleasant young man came out of a watchman's hut affair shaking his head over an imposing array of chronometers. "What rotten luck" he said, "you're five minutes too early."

At the lunch stop I was left to look after a few chores while the driver refreshed himself. After all, I was just along for the ride. Check petrol, oil, water, tyre pressures, wash down, sweep out inside, and polish bright-work. This was timed nicely so that upon completion I was just in time to swing the door open for the returning driver who, in friendly and expansive mood, passed over a bag of crisps and a breath of bitter. So on to the afternoon's run. Having got the easy bits over and the pack settled down so to speak, we were required to follow a route that had been pioneered and annotated by an ibex mounted anagram expert. Much of the way seemed to be across uncharted hinterland barred, for the sheer hell of it, by a succession of enormous gates. The system for overcoming this hazard was to throw out the navigator at some distance from the gate, he then picked himself up, overtook the car, opened the gate, braced himself for a mud bath as the car roared through, shut the gate, dash after the car which slowed not one whit and hurled myself aboard in a practised manifestation of pierhead jump. A good average performance for the last trick was one in the seat for three in the slosh, and one had barely gathered one's limbs together before there was a cry of "Gate" and the whole thing started over.

Arriving finally and with some surprise at the final check we passed on to the real red-blooded stuff - the special tests. I never did quite get the hang of this but for some reason everyone was required to dash up and down cliff faces at full bore, in and out of imaginary garages, and do all manner of things which hitherto I had thought confined to Commando landing assault on Everest. It is here the navigator is divested of his last shreds of dignity and humanity. There is prevailing misconception that all these antics are assisted no end if the navigator places himself in the rear seat and bounces up and down as to the manner Gibbon. It is doubtful whether this indeed serves to improve locomotion, but it certainly makes the spectator's day. So there I was revving up and down to the hysterical satisfaction of the onlookers, when came a terse command. "Clear the rear view" - I relaxed thankfully. When all entrants had lived through this final caper, the officials retired to work out the results. There is strong suspicion that this is arrived at by writing a few names on separate pieces of paper, dipping them in the President's beer and throwing them up in the air - the one that sticks to the ceiling is the winner. Be this as it may, we found that the victor, in the face of competition from a raft of electronic navigational devices, and on his first rally, had passed all the checks dead on time aided only by his grandfather's portable sundial.

The cheer that greeted the announcement was only slightly less than the one that followed the immediate announcement that the bar was now open. This completely drowned whatever the winner had to say about the chromium-plated egg cup he was left clutching. There was some talk about the rally, during which time one character who had passed us five times in the same section - twice in the opposite direction, discovered why he covered 84 miles between two points described on the route card as 18 miles apart. Finally if there is any resemblance to either persons, or happenings in this story to anything that happens in OUR Club Rallies, please don't blame your editor - he merely copied it from "Man About Town".

BITS AND PIECES

FOR SALE: Hotchkiss engine, radiator, differential and gear box, there is no chassis available at the moment, if you are interested contact:
Victor Jacobs,
Broadway Motors, Sydney.

WANTED:- Richard Brazier motor, clutch and radiator 1908 model.
1 only rear wheel 26" with brake drum for 1912 Overland.
1 only radiator badge for 1907 I T A L A.
12 only 34 x 4 tyres.
Chassis and front end for Unic car.

Contact: Barry Willis King
XY 3845.

DID YOU KNOW

That the Club was founded on 1st May 1954, this was learnt from our Founder Member Ron Grant, Ron suggests that a suitable outing should be staged to commemorate this day, and he would be pleased to hear other Members views on the matter, he was not easy to find, first you went round a couple of 30-98's, then past some more treasures, round past some Rolls Royces and finally after passing a very interesting DeDion there was Ron working on his Bugatti, all smiles and with the usual righthearthed welcome. Fortunately the Hup was not there or it would have hung it's head in sulks at the sight of that Full Brescia engine all ready and waiting to roar off.

That The Veteran Car Club Of Australia (Queensland) are holding their 1960 North Coast Rall on 15th and 16th October next. Starting from Brisbane on the Saturday morning it proceeds North to Caloundra for the overnight stop, returning to Brisbane on the Sunday. Entries close on 22nd August, nice warm weather and a hearty welcome are assured.

That Treasurer, Jack Garwood, has all but finished restoring another Twin Cylinder Renault car, it has a very attractive body on it with dickey seat in rear which will no doubt be proudly occupied by his son. It is hoped to see this car lined up at the forthcoming Brighton Run, there are still 2 more Renaults in his stable waiting restoration making 4 in all.

That The Events Committee who are always trying to think up something new and more attractive are working on a possible new route for Brighton Run, the finish will no doubt be at Bondi as usual, but the start will be up the North Shore, then possibly Ryde, Strathfield and so on. It certainly sounds a very attractive run passing through a much more interesting part of Sydney and Suburbs than the previous runs did, no doubt Chairman George Green will have more to say about this in the near future.

LETTERS FROM READERS

Any opinions expressed by the writers are not necessarily those of the Club.

The Editor, SPIT AND POLISH.

Dear Sir,

My Renault was purchased from Guyra, being well canabalised before I purchased it, all the brass work was missing including radiator and lamps.

The top was pushed out of No. 1 cylinder due to a broken valve, and that part of the water jacket carrying the engine No. broke out. However I managed to obtain a 4 cylinder engine with the same size blocks, so using No. 2 block have managed to restore the engine. This engine carried a No.468 and the O 2 after the number being No. 2 block, and the other block carried No.468 O 1.

The only dating that I can find is on the crankshaft which carries the date before the part No. and is 6-8-06, the rear axle carrying the date 17-10-07 and the rear axle housing 9-7-08, this being the last dating it may be reasonable to date it 1908.

I have completed making a radiator through the good grace of Jack Garwood lending me one to take the sizes from, the only difference being I used $\frac{1}{4}$ " tubes instead of $\frac{3}{16}$ ", the reason being $\frac{1}{4}$ " copper tube was available for nothing, whereas the $\frac{3}{16}$ " would have cost me approx. £28, and it looks very similar.

I am using a K.D. carburettor and ML magneto as the original ones are missing (somebody may be able to obtain the correct ones). I am making and fitting a body similar to original, which was a roadster with oval tank behind the seat, bucket seats with diamond pattern upholstery, but these are not completed yet. Having made mudguards for Mr. Ron Hepworth's Straker Squire, I made mine at the same time. I still have the gear box to overhaul, wheels to make also body, and then overhaul the diff. and gear box, and it looks like being 5 months away from completion, but hope to have it ready for the next Brighton Run.

My F.N. is completed and I have been fortunate enough to purchase another of the same series, this one carries the original magneto, so this will thoroughly complete mine. Anyone requiring parts for F.N. I would be very pleased to pass on, I also have some parts for 4 cylinder Renault, which includes original magneto and distributor, steering etc. which may help someone to restore yet another veteran.

89 Harriet Street
WARATAH. N.S.W.

Yours sincerely,
Eric C. Barlow

Editor's Notes: Engine No. on this model Renault generally to be found on the brass oil filler cap on top of the timing case, and this No. is repeated and stamped on the aluminium timing case just behind this filler cap. Also all early Renaults had an all brass petrol tank under the front seat. Hope this information will help.

The Editor, SPIT AND POLISH.

Dear Sir, Please note my change of address, as I don't want to miss out on "SPIT AND POLISH". I apologise for not writing you sooner regarding my intentions with wheels for Straker Squire, but I decided to do the right thing and build the original 815 x 105 mm wheels to original specification. The car has been found to be in very bad mechanical condition, the crown wheel and pinion being one of the many parts that have had to be made.

It has been very difficult getting information of any sort on Straker Squire cars here in Australia. I feel quite sure that the V.C.C. of Great Britain could supply quite a lot of data, but they won't help unless one is a member. I wrote to our Secretary asking if he would find me two members of the G.B. Club who would sponsor me regarding membership of the Club, but the letter either went astray, or something happened and I did not get a reply.

You may be able to help me in this regard, if so I will appreciate it very much indeed.

C/o 75 Melbourne Street,
East Maitland, N.S.W.

Yours sincerely,
Ron Hepworth.

Editor's Notes: On receipt of your letter an air letter was sent to The V.C.C. of Great Britain requesting further supplies of Proposal forms, these have now come to hand, and one has been sent on to you for completion.

The Editor, SPIT AND POLISH.

Dear Sir, Being well known as a pig-headed individual, I fear that Mr. Perdriau's dating of his Le Zebre from an article in "L'Automobile" during 1955 would have had more chance of convincing me if the facts in it had agreed with statements made by the same M. Salomon thirty years earlier and backed up by M. Baudray de Saunier, who was chairman of the Societe Le Zebre (see "Motor Sport", August 1946, pages 180-181).

I must ask for an adjournment of this case while data is assembled from contemporary sources - has anyone access to the issue of "The Motor" for 30th November 1909, as there is said to be a photo of a single cylinder Le Zebre there.

Yours faithfully,
G. H. Brooks.

Box 131,
Mount Gambier. S.A.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

George Sevenoaks is restoring yet another Rolls Royce, this one is a 1913 Silver Ghost, which was originally delivered to Lord Rhonda in London on 5th April, 1913. Later this car came out to Australia, but before doing so the original landaulette body was removed just before leaving London in 1929 and the chassis was then fitted with a touring body taken from a car owned by King Alexander of Greece, the wheels were also changed to 20 inch. George certainly has a very interesting car, and most appropriate for our leading dealer in used R.R's. and other high class vehicles.

R. M. Farrell still has his 1913 FIAT running on the original rings, and the original Edison battery. How's that for a record?

Wal Barker is at it again, this time it is a 1915 Ford model T, and when he has finished burning the midnight oil he intends putting it on the Club market for sale.

Mr. L. O'Neil is having a very fine picture of his Curved Dash Oldsmobile framed and presented to the Club for hanging in the new Club Rooms, if he and Mr. George Green decide to send one of each of their cars we will have to look for larger Rooms with more wall space, it is a very nice thought of Laurie O'Neil and will be much appreciated.

You are reminded that there will be a Picnic and Swap Day at St. Ives Show Grounds on Sunday August 28th, next, our Events Committee are making every effort to see that this is a great success, YOU of course and as many bits and pieces as possible are expected there, even the Weather Man has been contacted and he has promised to do his best, and if we all do that the Outing is assured of success.

Information is to hand from several Clubs that they have now changed their names: such as The Veteran Car Club of Australia (Queensland), The Veteran Car Club of Australia (Victoria), The Veteran Car Club of Australia (Tasmania), and as you all know we were the first to change ours to The Veteran Car Club of Australia (N.S.W.) perhaps in the near future we shall hear of South Australia and West Australia doing likewise, we shall all be one big happy family then, not that we are not so now, we are, but it should simplify things in many ways.

The Editor, SPIT AND POLISH.

Dear Sir, I bought my Sizaire-Naudin car from Ron. Grant just before Easter 1958, and later borrowed a trailer from Ron. and towed it home.

Friends and neighbours came from near and far to see my veteran car, all said "I was mad, and could never ever make a car from that heap of junk" - that was two years ago - they still say I am mad, but they have all had a ride in "the heap of junk" and enjoyed every minute of it.

After looking at what I had for about a fortnight, I began to dismantle what wasn't in pieces, and as one piece after another came off the car, so I drove a nail in the garage wall and hung it up. Needless to say it was not long before on that wall hung a car.

I spent every spare hour from then on cleaning parts - removing rust - and priming the parts I had already cleaned. With all these jobs done I began to really understand what a big job it was to restore a veteran car.

Now came the big jobs. The front of the wooden chassis had been burnt, also the two front wheels, and a lot of the body section. I was unable to buy the correct timber - 6 x 2 ash to have a new chassis made or for that matter have one bent, so the next best thing was to replace the burnt out section and hope for the best. A friend came to light with a few short pieces of 6 x 2 ash from under his laundry floor (yes the floor is still standing) and then came many hours getting the chassis into shape. With the chassis finished I turned to the diff. but first I ordered a pair of front wheels from Mr. Bishop of Burwood who made an excellent job of them. The diff. was a big job with quite a lot of parts missing that had to be made. I think I had to assemble and dismantle this unit about 20 times before I was able to satisfy myself it was right.

With the chassis finished and the diff. underneath on the original springs that had been retempered I was feeling very happy with myself.

The next job was to retube the radiator - yes 250 feet of copper tube cut into 168 lengths took many days. During these operations the mudguards had been dealt with and a friend had just about rebuilt the body for me, and Mr. Bishop had finished the front wheels, so my already overcrowded garage was overflowing with bits and pieces.

The car was on 4 wheels at last, but as yet I had not touched the motor, so during my annual holidays for 1959, the motor was taken apart cleaned and reassembled again to working order. It was on the Queen's birthday holiday that I first heard that 1 cylinder motor spring into life. I felt as if I had won the battle, but I knew that I still had a long way to go for the clutch had been broken, and the tail shaft was missing. I have never known one clutch to give so much trouble, I had to have special races made and a dozen small jobs done, and here I found that the small jobs take the most time. The clutch is simple but effective - no facings - just a cast iron plate against the steel fly-wheel, operated by means of a right foot pedal. Now came the job of making the tailshaft gear change shaft and other bits and pieces for now it was getting very close to the 1960 Blue Mountains Rally - the race was on, so it was every spare minute I had to spare, plus some mid-night oil went into the Sizaire-Naudin.

Finally after two years battle I drove the car on the road for the first time, this was three days before the Rally, not finished of course but roadworthy and looking like a car and I was a very proud man to line up for the Rally on the Saturday morning.

Although I haven't mentioned names, I owe a great deal to many Members of the V.C.C.A. (N.S.W.) for their assistance in this restoration and wish to thank them one and all.

Since the Blue Mountains Rally there has been an item by Bill Daly in "Modern Motor" (May) also another by Peder Davis in "Wheels" (June) that you may like to read.

Hoping these notes will be of interest to fellow Members.

Yours faithfully,

Jack Smith.

77 Partanna Avenue,
MATRAVILLE, N.S.W.

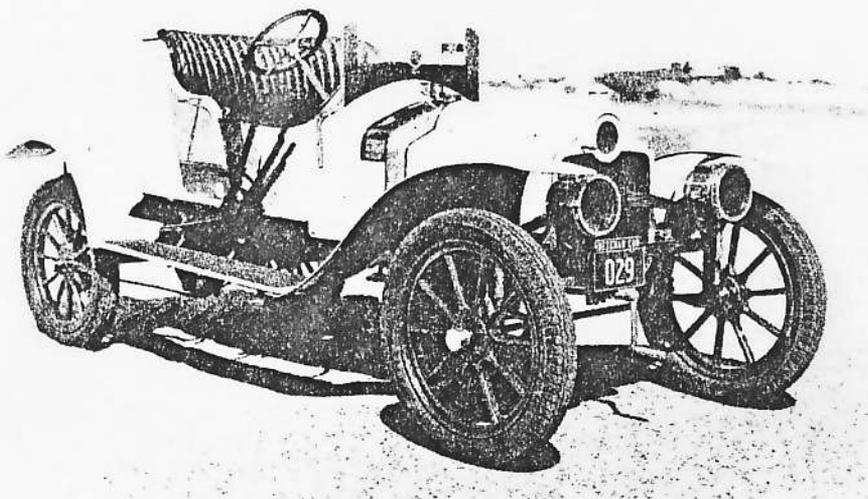


Photo by Lionel Jones

The above 1909 Sizaire-Naudin car is owned by Member Jack Smith, who after 2 years of hard work restoring it, entered it for it's first run in the 1959 Katoomba Rally. Below are some of the interesting specifications of this unique car.

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Cylinders. | 1. vertical |
| Position. | under bonnet in front. |
| Bore & Stroke. | 120 x 130 mm. |
| capacity | 1,470 C.C. |
| Out Put | 12 h.p. at 1,200 R.P.M. |
| Valves. | Mechanical - inlet over exhaust. |
| Ignition. | Magneto (Simms-Bosch) |
| Transmission | Three Speed by pinions on sliding propeller shaft. |
| Final drive. | Live Axle. |
| Chassis. | Wood with flitch plates |
| Springing | Front independent, rear $\frac{3}{4}$ elliptic |
| Brakes. | Hand, internal shoes on rear wheels Foot, Internal shoes on drum of crown wheel |
| Clutch. | Plate type |

The engine speed is governed by means of a sliding cam which in turn increases the lift or fall of the inlet valve.