



TORQUETUBE

Newsletter of Riley Motor Club Qld Inc.

May 2010



Spare Parts Feature Inside

Next Meeting: 8:00 pm Thursday, 13th May
Queensland Sporting Car Club
206 Montague Road
WEST END 4101

Editor: Linden Thomson (07) 3139 1524 lindenthomson@optusnet.com.au
Club Website: www.rileyqld.org.au

Minutes of the OGM of the Riley Motor Club, Qld., Inc. held at the Brisbane Sporting Club, West End Thursday, 8th April 2010

Meeting opened by President Simon Schooneveldt at 8.08pm with 15 members and guests present.

Apologies: Lyn & Brian Jackson, Gary Britton, Shirley & Graham Ellwood, Trevor & Wendy Judd, Pat & Betty Elliott, Ian Hayward, Matthew Schooneveldt, John & Eve Romer, Jack Warr, Graham Mackay, Dick & Earla Self.

Minutes from previous meeting:

Moved, Wendy Lonie, seconded by Robin Hull that minutes be accepted. Carried.

Business arising from minutes:

Steel Cupboard for storage at the Brisbane Sporting Car Club Rooms. (General Business)

Inwards correspondence:

1. Auditors Report from Paul Doyle;
2. Invitation to IGA Sunshine Coast Car Rally for Leukaemia, August 29th 2010;
3. Invitation from Queensland Raceway, Best of British Day, Lakeside Raceway, June 14th 2010;
4. QHMC Minutes;
5. Membership List from Riley Victoria;
6. Tru' Brit Magazine;
7. Copies of Riley Blue Diamond, Riley Gazette, Riley Rattles.

Outwards correspondence:

1. Email to Ross Phillips Re: Change of Address for Tom Palygi;
2. Email to Brian Graham, Victorian Club President Re: Lorna Warr's passing.

Moved by Alan Hill, seconded by Linden Thomson that the inwards be received and the outwards be endorsed. Carried.

Treasurer's Report March, 2010

Balance as per Bank Statement, 28 th February 2010			\$5,103.92CR
Income	Membership Fees	\$115.00	
	Interest	<u>0.63</u>	
		<u>\$115.63</u>	\$5,219.55
Expenditure			
	L.Thomson N/Letter February	\$ 98.18	
	L.Thomson N/Letter March	\$ 88.46	
	Brisbane Sporting Club Room Rental March	<u>\$ 55.00</u>	
		<u>\$241.64</u>	\$4,977.91
Balance as per Bank Statement, 31 st March 2010			\$4,977.91CR

Moved by Ross Phillips that his Report be accepted, seconded Dorothy Cameron. Carried

Club Captain's Report:

The next Club Run will be on April 11 leaving the Phillips Residence, East Ipswich at 10.30am after morning tea for an observation run and then a pub lunch at the Rosevale Retreat.

Next run will be on Sunday 16th May to the Bribie Island Vintage Boat Regatta.

Spare Parts Report:

Stock take now completed. A gallant effort by Jack, Ross and Ian which is recognized by club members. An extensive spare parts list will be forth coming when Jack gives it a seal of approval.

Registrar's report 2009:

Nil Report but Matthew has a plan!!

General business:

From the previous minutes, the question of whether to purchase a second hand or a new steel cupboard was discussed. Neal Brandt donated a steel cupboard which will need to be picked up for cleaning/restoration at Alan Hill's place. Jack Warr has donated a number of English Riley magazines to the Club.

From the Queensland Historic Motoring Council the following matters were covered at the previous liaison meeting with the Department of Transport and Main Roads, and were revisited to ensure that all action items were closed or carried forward:

Re-registering vehicles after years of lapsed registration. As agreed at last meeting, QHMC provided copies of a guide prepared in consultation with a DTMR officer from Vehicle Standards to assist owners of historic vehicles in registering their vehicles when proof of origin and import cannot be produced. As a result, DTMR has "proof of import" on its issues log for review.

Non club old vehicle events. QHMC advocated re SIV vehicle usage and old car events that are clearly old car events and yet not obviously sponsored by a car club. Outcome: DTMR advises that attending well publicised 'old car' events is in keeping with the intention of the scheme. A club member may attend an event organised by another club or interested entity if the purpose of using the concessionally registered vehicle is for display or to participate in the planned activities. To remove concerns, the event could be listed in the member's club events calendar as a sanctioned event.

Consent to move SIV vehicles when changing address. QHMC stated that there is a need to ensure that CSCs have been made aware of the necessary consent letter required in such circumstances. Outcome: DTMR officers will draft a reminder message to CSC network of the requirement to issue a written authority to move SIV vehicles when changing residence, on request.

The following matter was raised by DTMR for further discussion at the March 2010 liaison meeting:

Dating Certificates: DTMR states that the dating certificate in use since last year has come under further scrutiny by the department re 'authenticity' of the vehicle. This has come under notice with registered SIVS registered vehicles being transferred and the new operator having to provide a dating certificate for a vehicle that has a year of manufacture already recorded. DTMR contends that the dating certificate should be renamed incorporating the word "*authenticity*", perhaps '*Certificate of Authenticity*'. QHMC does not see any reason why this should not occur and supports the DTMR position. Action: QHMC to provide suggestions to DTMR.

General Discussion on oil filter conversions with comments from Linden Thomson and Robin Hull. Linden and Simon pointed out to members whether they had forwarded their expressions of interest for the National Beechwood Riley Rally 2011. Copy provided in Newsletter.

Collectively, the club has agreed to not have the Queensland National Riley Rally at Easter in 2012. Expressions of interest were requested to form a National Rally committee.

Linden Thomson has asked members to look up the Club website on www.rileyqld.org.au and to give him some feedback and comments.

Secretary's Email: Redpath@aanet.com.au

Meeting closed: 9.16pm.

Next Meetings: Thursday, 13 May, 2010, Thursday, 10 June, 2010.

BRISBANE SPORTING CAR CLUB

Unit 1, 206 Montague Road

West End Q 4101 (UBD map 21 (P8) approximately opposite Donkin Street.

Club Captain's Report:

Alan Hill



Sheila and I were unable for family reasons to get to the April outing which was scheduled to meet at Ross and Di's place, and then on to the Rosevale Retreat for lunch. A small select group duly arrived for morning tea, but with the inclement weather (hot!) decided to hang around Ipswich, and ended up at the Prince Alfred, where I am told they at least finished up with free coffee.

This month's run is the **Bribie Island Classic Boat Regatta** on Sunday 16th. Meet at our place at 75 Sylvan Beach Esplanade for morning tea/coffee around 9.00 am, before we make our way across the park to display the cars in time to watch the boats cruise into the beach for public inspection at 10.30 am. Food stalls should be there, or you can BYO lunch. There will be a series of events and sailing races, culminating in a grand parade at 2.30 pm. All are then welcome back for a cuppa before heading for home.

June's run is the Queen's Birthday Weekend QHMC/RACQ Rally in Bundaberg. Could those who have entered please let me know as President Simon and myself would like to coordinate the run there to suit everyone.

Hopefully the Lynx will be back on the road soon, although the discovery of a crack in the cylinder head has delayed progress somewhat !!! In the meantime I will have to get a new battery for RMB 50, to get me mobile in a Riley.



12th BRIBIE ISLAND CLASSIC BOAT REGATTA

Saturday 15th, Sunday 16th May 2010

For Steam, Sail, Motor & Row Boats
(Built to Traditional Designs)

This is a wonderful opportunity for you to see classic style boats, bay cruisers, sailing dinghies and timber boats. They present a rare spectacle on Bribie's waterways. Entry is open to all old and new classic and timber boat owners. Come along for a great day, *"Just messing about in boats."*

Club Events Program—2010

May	Club Meeting Thursday 13th Run Sunday 16th. Bribie Island Vintage Boat Regatta. Meet Alan Hill's 75 Sylvan Beach Esp. 9.30 am.
June	Club Meeting Thursday 10 th Run 12th-14th, Queens Birthday Weekend, Bundaberg. (RACQ/QHMC Rally)
July	Club Meeting Thursday 8th. Sunday 11th RACQ Motorfest, Eagle Farm.
August	Club Meeting Thursday 12th. Run Sunday 15th. Sunday 29th IGA Sunshine Coast Rally for Leukaemia
September	Club Meeting Thursday 9th. Run Weekend 11th&12th. Sunday 19th All British Car Day, Tennyson.
October	Club Meeting Thursday 14th. Run Sunday 17th.
November	Club Meeting Thursday 11th. Run Sunday 21st.
December	Club Meeting Thursday 9th. Xmas Dinner ?? Run Sunday 12th Maybe Xmas Picnic ?
January 2011	Presidents Run.

LOVE AND HATE

We all love our cars, but then there are those times when I'm not so sure. A month back I decided to check the diff in *El Caro* before heading down south to the National Riley Rally being held in Queanbeyan. I live a little west of Gympie and a good mate at Tewantin said he would help me with any problems.

I Arrived at his place around 9.30am, about a 1½-hour drive, and on the way over the geny light came on. We finished the change over of diffs plus new wheel bearings and seals just on dark. Now it was pouring rain and with the geny not charging my mate lent his nice Jag to drive home. I loved driving the Jag but hated having trucks etc pushing me along in the 90k zone in rain.

The drive back to Gympie in *El Caro* really comes into the hate section. The rain poured down again and I wasn't game to use the wipers with the geny not charging. Also the diff being a 4.2 instead of 3.7 put my speedo well and truly out and everyone wanted to pass (it can only be described as a nightmare) and it gets worse

That afternoon the diff was weeping a little so muggins me, in trying to tighten things up, snapped off a bolt, then I did have a leak.

Back to the drawing board. My Tewantin mate, who races an historic special that looks like a little "D"-type, came to the rescue again by replacing the 3.7 crown-wheel and pinion that the diff experts rejected using the special tools he has made up to work on his car which has the same type diff. Fortunately Dave had some spare studs in an old diff housing to replace the broken one. No more leaks, that is good!

'The Hate' comes in with the red light showing the generator is not working so you can't use your wipers and there is a Semi right in your back window, and also when you break a bolt and cause a real oil leak all leading to thoughts we just won't be able to go and enjoy the National Riley Rally .

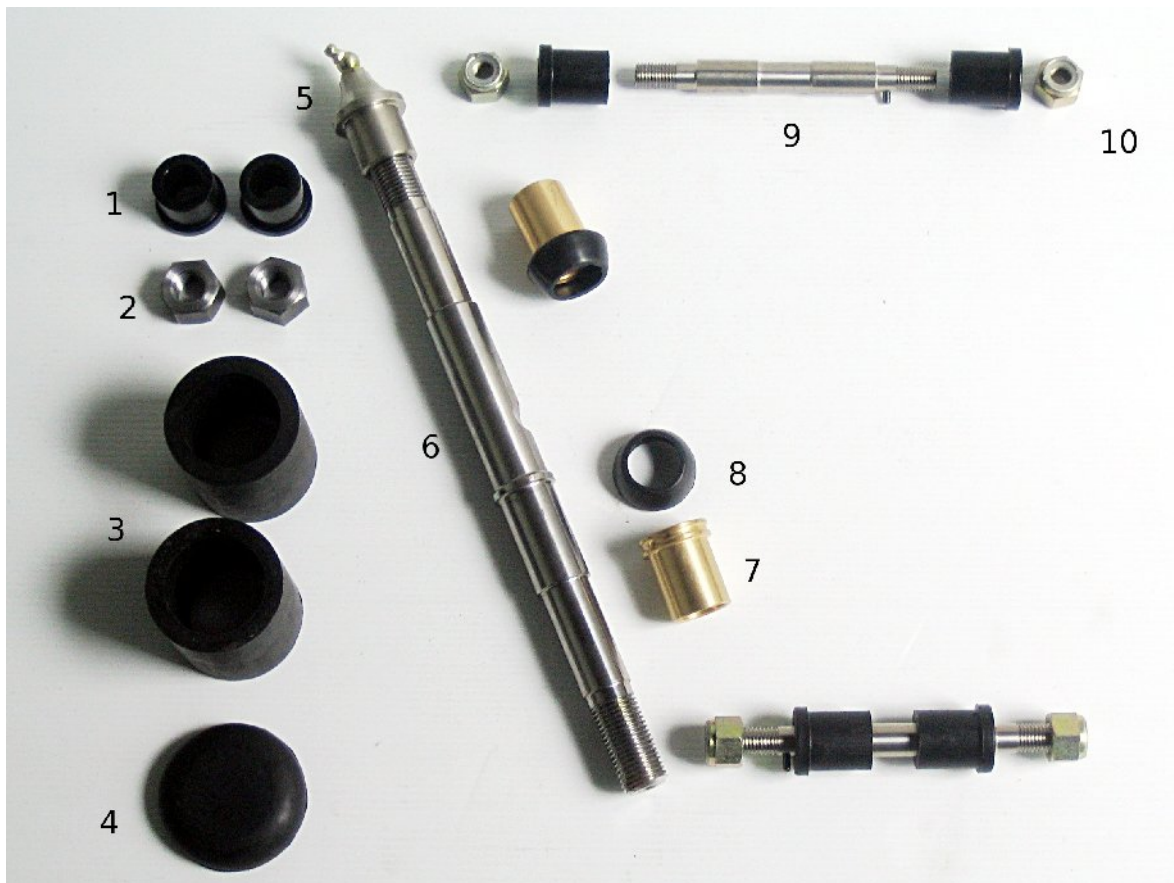
'The Love' comes in when everywhere we stopped people would admire our little car and want to talk to us. We loved that our little car didn't miss a beat excepting when a plug lead came loose, and she averaged 38mpg.

El Caro's carer—

Mick Thatcher.

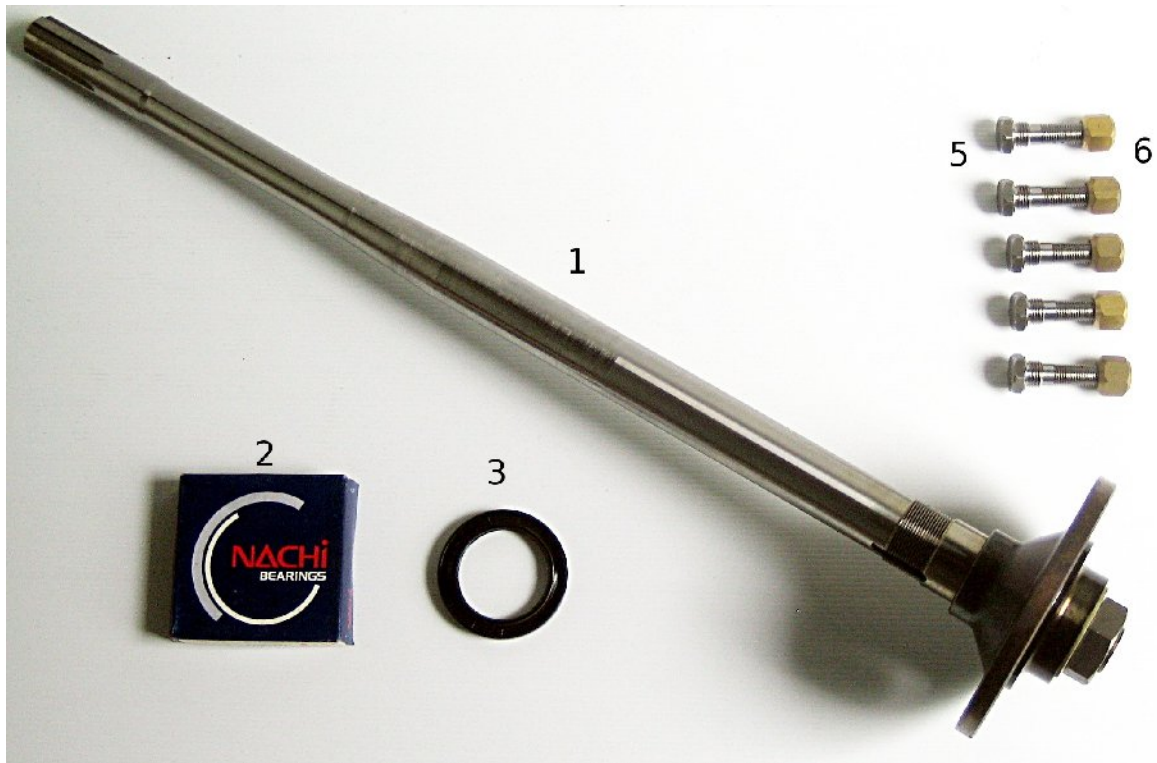
Spare Parts News:

Ross Phillips and Ian Henderson have been assisting Jack Warr with a stocktake of Spare Parts holdings. A comprehensive list will be available soon for distribution to members. In the meantime, Ian has been photographing some of the parts Jack is having manufactured, and these are showcased here.



Front Suspension Components

Item	Model	Component	Part No	Price
1	RMA, RMB	Bush - Top Link & Swivel Hsg (set of 16)	K6-19, 25	\$70.00
2	RMA, RMB	Upper Spindle Nut - 5/8"x16TPI	K6-31	\$5.00
3	RMA, RMB	Bush - Torsion Bar (set of 4)	K6-35	\$60.00
4	RMA, RMB	Cap - Torsion Bar Sleeve	K6-36	\$5.00
5	RMA, RMB	Screwed Bush - Swivel Pin	K6-17	\$20.00
6	RMA, RMB	Pin - Swivel (King Pin)	K6-8	\$90.00
7	RMA, RMB	Plain Bush - Swivel Pin (Bronze)	K6-16	\$20.00
8	RMA, RMB	Rubber Cover - Swivel Pin Bush (set of 2)	K6-14	\$5.00
9	RMA, RMB	Spindle - Swivel Housing (SS)	K6-20	\$16.00
10	Various	Nyloc Nut 1/2" BSF	K6-23	\$1.50



2 1/2 L Rear Axle Components

Item	Component	Part No	Price
1	Axle Shaft	H8-12	\$330.00
2	Bearing - rear hub	H8-12c	\$35.00
3	Oil seal - rear hub	H8-12d	\$15.00
4	Hub Nut & Tab Wshr	H8-12a, b	\$15.00 (Not shown)
5	Stud - rear wheel	H8-12g	\$12.00
6	Wheel nut		\$4.00

Steering Components

Item	Model	Component	Part No	Price
1	RMA, RMB	Steering Rack	K10-51	\$250.00
2	RMA, RMB	Housing - Steering Rack	K10-52	\$120.00
3	RMA, RMB	Double Eye Locating Bush	K10-11	\$20.00
4	RMA, RMB	Steering Rack Bearing	K10-13	\$14.00
5	RMA, RMB	Steering Rack Gaiters (set of 2)	K10-12	\$35.00
6	RMA, RMB	Swivel Ball	K10-31	\$18.00
7	RMA, RMB	Swivel Ball Socket (set of 2)	K10-32	\$16.00
8	Various	Nyloc Nut 1/2" BSF	K10-60	\$1.50
9	RMA, RMB	Swivel Ball Dust Cover (Set of 2)	K10-36	\$6.00
10	RMA, RMB	Swivel Ball Rubber Ring	K10-37	\$2.50
11	RMA, RMB	Steering Rack Steady Bush	K10-43	\$25.00
12	RMA, RMB	Steering Ball Rubber Cover	K10-61	\$6.00
13	RMA, RMB	Steering Ball	K10-24	\$18.00
14	RMA, RMB	Steering Ball Socket (set of 2)	K10-46	\$20.00
15	Various	Nyloc Nut 1/2" BSF	K10-60	\$1.50

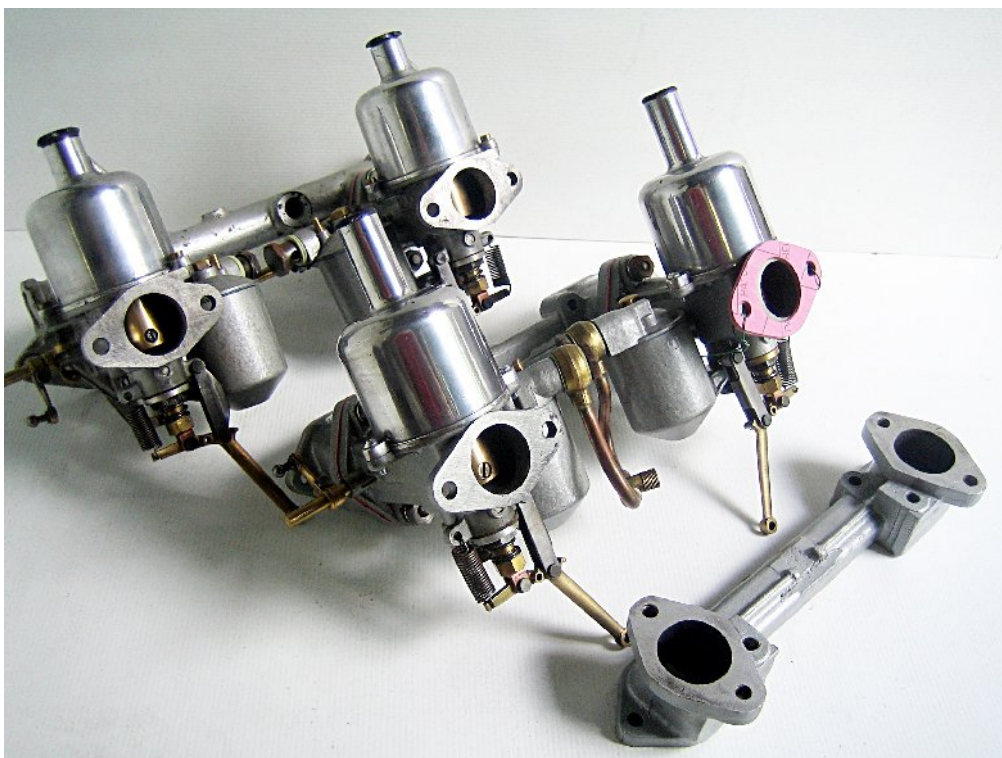


Water Pump Components

Item	Model	Component	Part No	Price
1	RMA	Water Pump Pulley (Cast Alum)	AA10-54	\$100.00
2	RMA	Water Pump Impeller	AA4-9	\$35.00
3	RMB	Water Pump Pulley (CNC Machined)	A12-28	\$110.00
4	RMB	Water Pump Pulley (Cast Alum)	A12-28	\$80.00
5	Various	Nyloc Nut 3/8" BSF		\$0.75
6	Various	Nyloc Nut 5/16" BSF		\$0.50
7	RMA, RMB	Water Pump Brg Front	AA4-14, A12-21	\$10.00
8	RMA, RMB	Water Pump Brg Rear	AA4-15, A12-20	\$12.00
9	RMA, RMB	Water Pump Shaft	AA4-2, A12-8	\$40.00
10	RMA, RMB	Oil seal - Water Pump Shaft	AA4-18, A12-18	\$10.00
11	RMA, RMB	Water Pump Impeller Housing	AA4-47, A12-47	\$10.00
12	RMA, RMB	Water Pump Water Seal	AA4-46, A12-46	\$20.00
13	RMB	Water Pump Impeller	A12-15	\$10.00
14	RMH	Water Pump Pulley (CNC Machined)	A10-44	\$90.00
15	RMH	Water Pump Bearing	A10-30	\$10.00
16	RMH	Water Pump Shaft	A10-34	\$40.00
17	RMH	Water Pump Water Seal	A10-40	\$40.00
18	RMH	Water Pump Impeller	A10-47	\$40.00

The part number convention used above is the Workshop Manual page number followed by the key number in the illustration on that page.

Pre-War parts will feature in the next TT. In the meantime, here's a picture of another of Jack's accomplishments—reconditioned S.U. carburetors for Rileys (and other makes). Shown are Pathfinder (at rear), and 2½-litre carburetors and a modified 2½ inlet manifold.



Some Riley History:

LT

In the Winter 1963 issue of The Bulletin of The Vintage Sports-Car Club (U.K.) is an article on the history of the Riley Companies written by David Walters. Since that time the history of Riley has been canvassed a number of times in a number of books and articles, most thoroughly by Vernon Barker of The Riley Register who has documented the decline of the Company in as much detail as remaining sources allow.

However, David Walters' article, written while the Blue Diamond badge was still in badge-engineering use, tells an interesting story. His opening sentence shows that by 1963, the achievements of the Company had been largely relegated to "the dustbin of history" (see another article in this TT), but the article did provoke some interesting correspondence from readers of the VSCC Bulletin.

THE RILEY COMPANIES

The name of Riley normally makes one think, if one thinks about the matter at all, of just another firm which manufactured cars in Coventry from Edwardian times until the late thirties. A closer look, however, reveals a fascinating web of companies, controlled by this family of a father and five sons; many of these companies were born, at least in the earlier days, out of some disagreement or stress within the family, and the story of all these things, so far as I have been able to discover it, contains much of human, as well as technical, interest.

If one trains one's spy-glass on to the town of Coventry in the year 1890, one discovers, not without difficulty, a moderately obscure but fairly successful ribbon-weaving firm called WILLIAM RILEY & SONS. In that year the head of the firm, William Riley, having decided that the ribbon-weaving trade was about to face a prolonged recession, and casting about for a new form of activity, purchased the cycle-manufacturing business of BONNICK & CO. Riley made cycles under this name for about six years, but in 1896, concluding that the trade of ribbon-weaving was not merely depressed but actually dead, he merged his two firms under the title THE RILEY CYCLE CO., ceased ribbon-weaving entirely, and concentrated the whole resources of his outfit on the more profitable occupation of making and selling cycles.

On this occasion, William was joined by two of his five gifted sons, Victor and his younger brother Percy who had just left grammar school. In the following year these two brothers, in the face of solid opposition from their father, accepted a commission to design and build a motor car for two engineers who were in Coventry to supervise the construction of the town's electric generating station. Old William regarded a further development of his firm into the field of motor car manufacture as a waste of time and money, but Victor and Percy had very different notions. They completed this car, largely by stealth, in 1898 and the only detail of its performance which I have been able to discover is that its trial run from Coventry to Stratford and back was accomplished in a shorter time than had hitherto been achieved on a bicycle ! A photograph of the car survives, but no specification; it is recorded, however, that it had a single-cylinder air-cooled engine with a mechanically operated inlet valve. The success of the little car, and of an

improved engine which Percy built soon afterwards still failed to convince William that there was any useful future in the motor car and so, exasperated by their father's intransigence, Victor and Percy, together with a third brother, Allan, pooled their resources and, assisted financially by their mother, founded THE RILEY ENGINE CO. in 1902.

Within a year they were producing and selling to car and cycle manufacturers a small number of single-cylinder air-cooled engines of Percy's design. A little later they started to build three-wheeled forecars (of which two are known to survive), and in 1905 there appeared their first four-wheeled, 9 h.p. V-twin engined car. Their obvious success convinced even William Riley that there was perhaps something in the motor car after all, and he himself began making four-wheeled vehicles, powered by Percy's V-twin engines. As well as complete cars, the Riley Cycle Co. produced, in 1907, a detachable motor car wheel of Percy's design which they fitted as standard to all their vehicles from then on. This device was similar in principle to the more familiar Rudge-Whitworth arrangement. The wheel was retained by a screwed locking-ring at the centre, and the whole of the splined portion of the hub was tapered. Within a short time the patent wheel was being supplied as an optional extra to a large number of car manufacturers (183 of them by 1912) including Rolls-Royce, Sheffield Simplex, Napier, Benz, Mercedes, Pierce-Arrow, Spyker and Austro-Daimler. The celebrated Blitzen-Benz was fitted with Riley's patent wheels and hubs.

It must be said that old William Riley was never a true motor car pioneer; his achievements in that sphere seem always to have been due to the drive and single-mindedness of his sons. His guiding principle appears rather to have been : "Anything for a quiet life, consistent with making a decent profit" . In a very short time wheel-making became the most profitable side of the business, and cycle production tailed-off, ceasing entirely in 1911. In 1913 William Riley went further and decided to close down the motor car side of the Riley Cycle Co. also, and concentrate solely on wheel-making. That might so easily have been the end of the story of Riley as a motor manufacturing concern; only the determination of Percy and Allan prevented it from being so. They bought up the motor car side of William's firm and re-established it, in the factory in King Street, Coventry, as THE RILEY MOTOR MANUFACTURING CO., to make cars to take the power units and gearboxes that Percy was turning out from the engine works (Percy's principal customer had been the Riley Cycle Co.). They continued the production of cars powered by their V-twin range of engines, of which perhaps the most interesting was a fairly large tourer with a 12/18 V-twin engine. It is a pity that none seem to have survived, except as photographs; all the four-wheeled cars made by Riley Cycle Co. and Riley Motor Manufacturing Co. had a radiator of circular form.

Victor does not seem to have joined his two brothers in their new venture, but in 1910 or 1911 he reappears as the head of a new company of his own, THE NERO ENGINE CO. Its origins are obscure and I have not been able to trace the exact date of its founding or where it first carried on its affairs, but I have seen a photograph, dated 1913, of a prototype Nero car, a fairly conventional four-cylinder machine of about 12 h.p. or so, I would judge. Presumably the outbreak of the Great War and the consequent government contracts put paid to the plans for producing this model.

To complete the Riley genealogy, of the remaining two brothers, Stanley joined Victor at the Nero in 1913, and Cecil, who seems to have concentrated on the selling rather than the technical aspects of the work, was associated both with the Riley Cycle Co. and with the Riley Motor Manufacturing Co.

To sum up this already ravelled skein, the position at the outbreak of war in 1914 was : Percy (Riley Engine Co.) making engines and gearboxes in Aldbourne Road, Percy and Allan (Riley Motor Manufacturing Co.) making cars in King Street, old William (Riley Cycle Co.) making wheels (and, one hopes, a satisfactory profit) in St. Nicholas Street, and Victor and Stanley (Nero Engine Co.) preparing to go into production with a complete car in some undiscovered corner of Coventry.

The war brought plenty for all of them to do, and Victor found it necessary to move the Nero into new premises at Foleshill in 1916. This is the first time that the Nero Engine Co. appears in the directories, and the works which Victor built for it in Durbar Avenue formed the nucleus of the factory which, after the war, became the headquarters of the Riley group of companies.

1919 saw a complete reorganisation. The Nero and the Riley Cycle Co. amalgamated to become RILEY (COVENTRY) LTD., and established themselves in the Durbar Avenue works, where they set about the development and production of their first post-war car, the 10.8 h.p. side-valve model. The well-known form of radiator and the blue diamond badge date from this time. Most of the coachwork for this model was built by MIDLAND MOTOR BODIES, which was none other than a re-incarnation of the Riley Motor Manufacturing Co., under the command of Allan Riley, now established in premises in Widdrington Road, and concentrating solely on coachbuilding. During the 19 years of this company's existence virtually its whole output was taken by Riley (Coventry) Ltd. The Riley Engine Co. retained its old name and remained somewhat independent for a time: a few more of the Edwardian 12/18 V-twin tourers are said to have been made, but the immediate post-war effort was directed towards the production of a marine power unit called the "Orion"; I know nothing about this, and if anyone has ever come across an example I would be most interested to hear about it.

But as early as 1922 Percy was thinking about producing a refined light car of advanced mechanical design, to meet his own criticism of the average post-war car as being too large and too heavy. The prototypes of the Riley Nine were on the road in 1926, and the production version appeared at the 1927 Motor Show.

Though marketed through the selling organisation of Riley (Coventry) Ltd., the first year's production of the "Nine" was done entirely by the Engine Co. The overall conception of the car had been Percy's, and the detail design of engine and gearbox was also his; the chassis layout, axles, brakes and probably also the coachwork were by Stanley Riley. Such was the success of Percy's little car, that the space available in the engine works was inadequate to meet the increased production necessary, and for the 1928-29 season, erection was moved to Durbar Avenue.

The "Nine" was regarded as something of a hostile interloper in the large erecting shop there, which it now shared with the side-valve cars, and, as a counterblast, the 11.9 h.p. model appeared at the 1928 Show (alongside the "Nine") with a number of detailed improvements, including a new (and quite awful) plate clutch and a re-

designed cylinder head. But the success of the little Riley was irresistible and the demand for it so overwhelming that side-valve production ceased towards the end of the year, and the whole resources of Durbar Avenue were thereafter concentrated on the production of the "Nine" and its later derivatives. Engines and, until pre-selector boxes became fashionable, gear-boxes were all made at the Riley Engine Co., and all but a very few of the bodies by Midland Motor Bodies; this remained the pattern of things until the final collapse in 1938.

The three companies, though nominally separate, were closely linked in practice, with directors common to all three boards, pursuing a co-ordinated policy. Occasional flurries ruffled the surface of this fraternal tranquillity, as in 1933 when they could not agree on the design of the 1½-litre engine, and Victor, as Chairman of Riley (Coventry) Ltd., appointed an outsider, Hugh Rose (later of Lea-Francis), to design it for them.

Yet one more Riley company remains to be mentioned. AUTOVIA CARS LTD. was launched in 1935, with Victor Riley as Chairman and Managing Director, to produce a moderately luxurious car in the £1.000 class. A few cars were made in 1937 and 1938, but the great expense involved in the project must have contributed considerably to the final downfall of the companies.

In September 1938, when most of us were concerned about a much greater disaster that seemed likely to fall upon us, this curious tangle of companies disappeared quietly from the pages of history, shortly afterwards making a penumbral re-appearance as a component of the Nuffield empire, under the name of Riley Motors Ltd. But this was not quite the end. As on at least two occasions before, when the concern seemed to be taking a wrong turning, Percy Riley, who was of the five brothers the most outstanding mechanical engineer, and outwardly at least the gentlest of men, did something dramatic. He managed to re-acquire his part of the outfit, the Riley Engine Co., and got it going again in its old premises under the title P. R. MOTORS. This firm is still in business, though its founder died in 1947, and specialises in production gear-cutting. It is thus the only surviving Riley Company, true lineal descendant of Bonnick & Co., and on its board of directors several members of the next generation of the Riley family.

DAVID WALTERS.

The next issue, Spring 1964, carried two responses to this brief history. One was from a member who was not happy with Walters' statements about pre-WWI models—

"Wyndcroft", Church Park,
Newton Ferrers,
Plymouth, Devon

The Editor,
Dear Sir,

I was very interested in the article on "The Riley Companies" in the Winter, 1963, Bulletin. There appear to be some inaccuracies which I am sure you will not object to correcting.

Regarding the 3-wheeled forecar, there are about half-a-dozen in the V.C.C. of G.B. records I believe, which include the two owned by Riley Motors, and

the one we are about to restore.

I am surprised that the author did not know that Bill Vaux, of Ilchester, Somerset, has a very fine 12/18 V-twin four-seater. I am also surprised at the remark that *ALL* four-wheeled (Edwardian) Rileys had round radiators. The V-twin two-seater owned by Riley Motors has a very square radiator.

Yours sincerely,
DICK BARTON.

The second letter was from well-known motoring historian and author Michael Sedgwick who raises a question about a "mystery" Riley model—

The Montagu Motor Museum,
Beaulieu, Hampshire.

The Editor,
Dear Sir,

Mr. David Walters' piece on the Riley empire was one of the most delightful unravellings of obscure history that I have read for a long time.

May I confuse the issue still further, though, by drawing Mr. Walters' attention to a car which was actually built by the Riley Engine Co. in 1922, and which rated a full illustrated description in the weekly motoring press at the time?

This machine, known as the Riley Seventeen, was a hefty four-cylinder affair of 2.9-litres capacity. Side valves and a fixed cylinder head represent some pretty conservative thinking, four-wheel brakes were not offered, and, believe it or not, the footbrake worked on the transmission (come to think of it, why not: this Edwardian survival was good enough for Crossley and Vauxhall). It did, however, boast a five-bearing crankshaft, which has been hailed by the present generation's P.R. boys as an entirely new departure on four-cylinder engines (!), and the published output was 58 b.h.p. at 2.500 r.p.m. This is quite a lot when one considers that the contemporary 2.9-litre Star Six, a fairly average Vintage tourer, got along quite well on 40 b.h.p. and a few less revs. Apart from the use of a flat-fronted radiator, the styling was unmistakably Riley.

But the rest is, alas! silence. The Riley "17" never turned up at Olympia, let alone in the editorial columns of the press. It survived in the Buyers' Guides until 1925, incidentally, but I have never met anyone who has seen one. Maybe a price of £750 killed it, but then the same figure was being asked for the "15.9" Humber in 1923, and, with all due respect to the boys at Stoke, their big car never had anything like 58 horses under the bonnet.

Perhaps it was a case, like the 6½-litre Bentley, of trying to fight against a totally different "make-image". Or perhaps it was a plain bad car. Does anyone know'?

The Bulletin continues to be the most readable motoring paper that comes my way. Long may this state of affairs continue!

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL SEDGWICK

This thread continued in the following Summer 1964 Bulletin. The first letter was from a knowledgeable source!—

The Old House,
Gaydon, Warwick.

The Editor.

Dear Sir,

Having read Mr. Sedgwick's letter in the Spring Bulletin 1964, perhaps I can throw some light on the fate of the Riley Seventeen.

I understand that my father, Percy Riley, designed, and patented, a 17/30 h.p. sleeve valve engine in 1913, but abandoned this idea, and disposed of the patent to American interests, as he favoured the side valve engine. This car first appeared at the Motor Exhibition at Olympia in 1913, and it would have gone into production had it not been for the First World War. After the war, it was decided to build a series of the 1913 17/30 car, using stock remaining from pre-war days.

But it was the horsepower tax of 1921 which finally decided the fate of the Seventeen.

My mother remembers the Seventeen with great affection, as my father gave her one as a wedding present!

Yours sincerely,

PATRICIA M. FELLOWES.

David Walters also responded to the other correspondents and provided information on the Riley Seventeen—

16 Station Road,
Kenilworth, Warwicks.

The Editor.

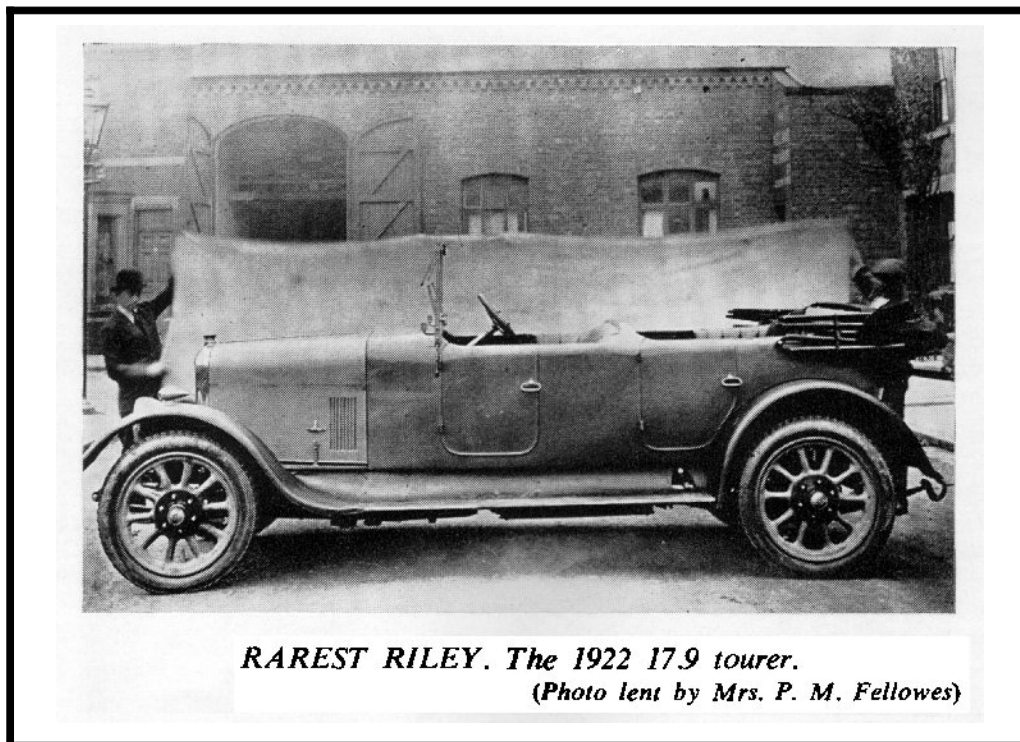
Dear Sir,

It was good of Mr. Barton and Mr. Sedgwick to write pointing out errors and omissions in my piece about the Riley Companies. It is a sad thing, but it seems that there is little more that can be found out about the technical details of the Riley Seventeen than was given in the contemporary motoring press, and quoted by Mr. Sedgwick. All the Riley Engine Company's papers and records were destroyed in the bombing of the city, and it is hard to find a memory that can go back with precision to 1922 after this lapse of time. It is clear that not more than about a dozen cars were made, and also that they were of high engineering quality. It is said that one at least had a lorry body fitted, and was used for transporting finished coachwork from Midland Motor Bodies up to the works in Foleshill, and several people have told me that, on one occasion when the gas engine which powered the Engine Works was being overhauled, one of the "Seventeen" engines was rigged up to serve in its place. Apart from these snippets, nothing. Why the model did not sell in any numbers must remain a matter of conjecture. The high price, the horsepower tax, the abrupt change in "make-image"? Perhaps all three factors contributed. The picture of the car (which I hope has come out well enough for the block-maker) is copied from

one in the possession of the Riley family. It shows one of the cars standing at end of Widdrington Road, outside the Midland Motor Bodies works, now occupied by Coventry Climax.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID WALTERS.

Here is the photograph (of the car being photographed!) as printed in the Bulletin. The bottom two-thirds of it is also printed in Styles' "As Old As The Industry" but reversed—



In the same issue of the Bulletin was another letter that asked about another "vanished" Riley model—

151a Preston Hill.
Kenton, Harrow, Middx.

The Editor.
Dear Sir,

Having enjoyed the all too brief article on "The Riley Companies" last winter and the following Bulletin correspondence on the marque, I am surprised that no one has yet mentioned a model that Riley placed in the Motor Show catalogue and on the stand in 1927. This was a crank blown overhead valve sporting car derived from the 11.9. Someone said that it was withdrawn because of an infringement of patents.

Possibly more light can be thrown on this? Those fortunate enough to be able to do so may care to turn up the Motor Show edition of either Motor or Autocar, I forget which, where there is a frontal photograph of the car.

(Non-Riley paragraph omitted....LT)

Yours sincerely,
KEITH BRETTELL.

This question was answered in the next (Autumn 1964) issue with the following letter, which seems to have been the last in the chain—

3a Dollis Park,
Finchley, London, N.3.

The Editor.
Dear Sir,

I was interested to see the reference in the Summer Bulletin to the Riley Supercharged Sports Car. I had never heard of this model until I acquired a copy of the original sales brochure, when I bought a 1935 model Twelve, in 1958.

The Supercharged Sports Car (makers' description) was also called the 11/50/65 h.p. It was based on the 11/40 h.p. 1498 c.c., side-valve engined "Redwinger", the chassis being identical except for turning the rear spring shackles upwards to undersling the rear end. The engine, 65.8 m.m. x 110 m.m., had the cylinder block modified to accommodate a push-rod overhead valve head, with the same inlet passage from the off-side of the block between the two middle cylinders to an internal manifold on the near-side. and thence up through the head joint to the ports in the head. The exhaust manifold was transferred to the offside. The Roots type supercharger, of very substantial dimensions, was built on to the front cover and directly driven from the crankshaft. The crankshaft and connecting-rods were the larger type used in the 69 m.m. bore "Twelve".

With 65 h p., a speed of 80 m.p.h. was guaranteed and I am confident that this would have been achieved, and the car would have handled well at this speed, judging by my Twelve.

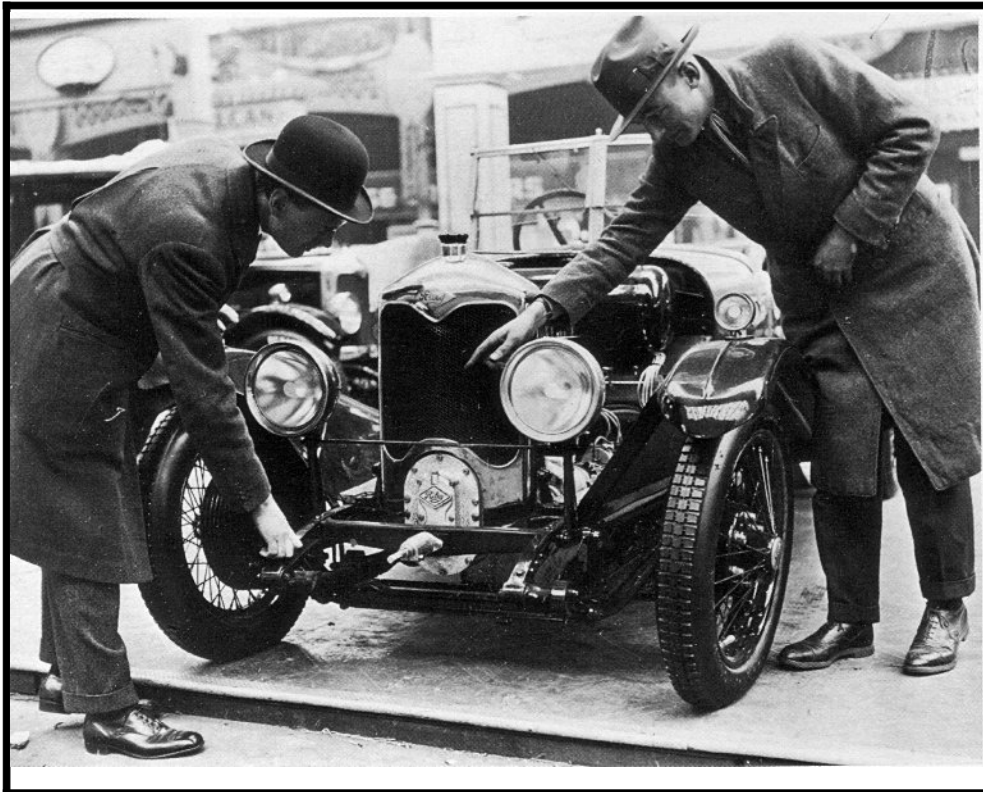
Apparently the Riley Suprohead, as they called it, very closely resembled that of the Delage DI and DIS models, and legal proceedings were threatened. Consequently the 11/50/65 was never put into production, and the success of the Nine rendered it superfluous. The prototype car remained in the Experimental Department, under a dust sheet for several years, before being scrapped. So perished "Britain's first standard supercharged sports car".

With regard to the Riley Seventeen, with its reputed 58 b.h.p., I think the Riley horses of this period, although numerous, must have been rather small, as the Eleven was said to develop 35 h.p. and the catalogue at one time reproduced an alleged b.h.p. curve which was a straight line peaking at 40 h.p. at 3,600 r.p.m. How they obtained these revs with the inlet valves opening 10° after t.d.c. is a bit of a mystery. However, these side-valve engined Rileys will

achieve them on the road, as I have proved, and the splash-lubricated engine lasts for 100.000 miles between overhauls.

Yours faithfully,
K. G. GILLING.
Chairman, The Riley Register.

This is the often-published photograph of the prototype Supercharged Sports Car.



The immediate future of the Riley Company would be based on the Nine motor and the Monaco.

"The Most Successful Car In The World"

LT

This was the title used by Riley (Coventry) Limited for their 1933 catalogue, published as a hard-cover book. Hubris? Hyperbole?

David Styles titled his second major book on the Riley marque "Sporting Rileys: The Forgotten Champions." Was he wrong, not about the forgetting but about the achievements ?

Perhaps the following compiled nearly 50 years ago and published in the Winter 1961-62 Bulletin of the Vintage Sports-Car Club (U.K.) may help answer the question. It makes interesting reading—

A FEW FIGURES

Racing improves the breed, they say. Actually that is not true. It merely provides a more healthy corpse. Success in competition promotes, through publicity, better sales. Again, quite untrue, at least during the inter-war years, the period in which we are most interested. Which were the most successful makes ? Bentley, Aston Martin, Riley, Lagonda. Notice anything ? A few more, Talbot, Lea-Francis, Singer, Frazer-Nash, Sunbeam. They all have something in common, a new address in Carey Street. Alvis, M.G. and Austin came out a little better, largely due, one suspects, to other ventures within the management. Some of the names live on, thank goodness, but in other hands.

Having reached this conclusion the other day I went on to list the Le Mans and T.T. successes of British cars between the wars to see just how well some of them made out, and to use as comparisons in argument. As a ready guide I thought I would write it out again.

Going merely on the number of finishing places our eleven makes came out like this: Riley, 41 places, 10 at Le Mans, 31 at T.T.; M.G., 27 places, 9 at Le Mans, 18 at T.T.; Aston Martin, 25 places, 16 at Le Mans, 9 at T.T.; Bentley, 19 places, 11 at Le Mans, 8 at T.T.; Singer, 19 places, 13 at Le Mans, 6 at T.T.; Lagonda, 16 places, 6 at Le Mans, 10 at T.T.; Talbot, 13 places, 4 at Le Mans, 9 at T.T.; Austin, 10 places, 2 at Le Mans, 8 at T.T.; Alvis, 9 places, 2 at Le Mans, 7 at T.T.; Lea-Francis, 5 places, 2 at Le Mans, 3 at T.T.; Frazer-Nash, 3 places, all at T.T.

Some of this was due to swamping the entry, particularly among the smaller cars, so it is necessary to go rather further into it. Only two British makes won at Le Mans, Bentley and Lagonda, big cars obviously because everyone started level. Three makes won the T.T. Riley, Lea-Francis and M.G., on handicap. No British make won both races, Riley and Bentley coming nearest with a 1st and a 2nd. Actually only one make of any nationality won both, Alfa-Romeo.

The "double" of Le Mans Biennial Cup and T.T. team prize was achieved in 1935 by Aston Martin, the year the make was compelled to give up the expensive 1½-litre, dry-sump car and produce, instead, a cheaper 2-litre. Only three makes won the Le Mans Index of Performance prize, Aston Martin (three times), Bentley (twice) and Riley. Only two, Riley and Aston Martin (both twice), won the T.T. team prize.

As far as these two races are concerned the sorriest record belongs to Frazer-Nash. Never mind how many started, none finished at Le Mans. Of the total of eight cars entered for the T.T. in 1928, 1929 and 1931, not a single car finished. One out of two finished in 1932 and two out of four in 1934, none in high positions.

For ready reference, as I said, these were the results :

RILEY

- 1928. T.T. 11th (1st in class).
- 1929. T.T. 12th, 19th and 21st (1st, 2nd and 3rd in class).
- 1930. T.T. 8th (1st in class)
- 1931. T.T. 5th, 11th and 13th (1st, 2nd and 3rd in class, and team prize).
- 1932. T.T. 1st, 2nd and 8th (1st and 2nd in 1100 class, 1st in 1½-litre class).
- 1933. Le Mans, 4th (1st in class); T.T., 6th and 8th.
- 1934. Le Mans, 2nd, 3rd, 5th, 6th, 12th, and 13th (1st Index of Performance, 1st and 2nd in class); T.T., 9th, 11th, 12th and 16th (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th in class).
- 1935. Le Mans, 4th and 7th; T.T., 1st, 6th and 9th (1st in class).
- 1936. T.T. 1st, 6th, 10th, 11th and 12th (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th in class).
- 1937. T.T. 7th and 9th (1st and 2nd in class).
- 1938. T.T. 6th, 9th, 14th and 15th (team prize, 1st in class).
- 1939. Le Mans, 16th.

M.G.

- 1931. T.T. 1st, 3rd, 7th, 10th and 16th (1st, 2nd and 3rd in class).
- 1932. T.T. 3rd and 10th (1st and 2nd in class).
- 1933. Le Mans, 6th (1st in class); T.T. 1st, 2nd, 4th and 7th (1st and 2nd in 1100 class, 1st, 750 class).
- 1934. Le Mans, 4th and 17th; T.T. 1st and 14th (1st and 2nd in class).
- 1935. Le Mans, 9th, 24th, 25th and 26th; T.T. 10th, 12th and 13th (1st, 2nd and 3rd in class).
- 1937. Le Mans, 16th.
- 1938. Le Mans, 12th; T.T. 19th and 23rd.

ASTON MARTIN

- 1931. Le Mans, 5th (1st in class); T.T. 14th and 18th (1st and 2nd in class).
- 1932. Le Mans, 5th and 7th (1st Index of Performance, 1st and 2nd in class).
- 1933. Le Mans, 5th and 7th (2nd and 3rd in class).
- 1934. Le Mans, 10th, 11th; 3rd; T.T. 3rd, 6th and 7th (team prize, 1st, 2nd and 3rd in class).
- 1935. Le Mans, 3rd, 8th, 10th, 11th, 12th and 15th (1st Index of Performance, 1st in class); T.T. 4th, 5th and 11th (team prize, 2nd and 3rd in class).
- 1937. Le Mans, 5th and 11th (1st Index of Performance, 1st in class).
- 1938. T.T. 2nd (1st in class).
- 1939. Le Mans, 12th.

BENTLEY

- 1923. Le Mans, 4th.

- 1924. Le Mans, 1st (1st in class).
- 1927. Le Mans, 1st (1st in class).
- 1928. Le Mans, 1st and 5th (1st in class); T.T. 5th and 7th (1st and 2nd in class).
- 1929. Le Mans, 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th (1st Index of Performance, 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th in class); T.T. 11th (1st in class).
- 1930. Le Mans, 1st and 2nd (1st Index of Performance, 1st and 2nd in class); T.T. 11th and 12th (1st and 2nd in class).
- 1934. T.T. 2nd (1st in class).
- 1935. T.T. 2nd (1st in class).
- 1936. T.T. 2nd (1st in class).

SINGER

- 1933. Le Mans, 13th.
- 1934. Le Mans, 7th, 8th, 15th, 18th and 23rd.
- 1935. Le Mans, 16th, 17th, 19th, 20th, 22nd and 23rd.
- 1936. T.T. 15th (2nd in class).
- 1937. T.T. 4th and 6th (1st and 2nd in class).
- 1938. Le Mans, 8th; T.T. 8th, 12th and 26th (2nd in class).

LAGONDA

- 1928. Le Mans, 11th. 1929. T.T. 20th and 22nd.
- 1934. Le Mans, 16th; T.T. 4th, 5th and 8th (2nd, 3rd and 4th in class).
- 1935. Le Mans, 1st and 13th (1st in class); T.T. 7th and 8th.
- 1936. T.T. 4th, 5th and 14th (2nd and 3rd in class).
- 1939. Le Mans, 3rd and 4th.

TALBOT

- 1930. Le Mans, 3rd and 4th (1st and 2nd in class); T.T. 9th, 13th and 14th (1st, 2nd and 3rd in class).
- 1931. Le Mans, 3rd; T.T. 4th and 15th (2nd in class).
- 1932. Le Mans, 3rd; T.T. 6th and 7th.
- 1934. T.T. 10th and 13th (1st and 2nd in class).

AUSTIN

- 1929. T.T. 3rd, 4th, 15th and 18th (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th in class).
- 1930. T.T. 5th (1st in class).
- 1931. T.T. 9th, 12th and 17th.
- 1935. Le Mans, 27th and 28th.

ALVIS

- 1928. Le Mans, 6th and 9th (1st in class); T.T. 2nd.
- 1929. T.T. 8th, 10th and 16th.
- 1930. T.T. 4th, 6th and 7th (1st, 2nd and 3rd in class).

LEA-FRANCIS

- 1928. T.T. 1st and 6th (1st in class).
- 1929. Le Mans, 8th.
- 1930. Le Mans, 6th (1st in class); T.T. 16th.

FRAZER-NASH

- 1932. T.T. 9th (2nd in class).
- 1934. T.T. 15th and 17th.

Those were the facts between 1922 and 1939, as far as the two main sports-car events were concerned. In 20 years time it will be instructive to weigh up the

results between 1946 and 1963—and note how many manufacturers have departed.

R. A. HASTINGS

So on this measure, Riley was indeed the most successful marque, with half as many places again as M.G., and twice as many as Bentley and Singer. Still, Riley is not completely forgotten. There is the happy band of members of the various Riley Clubs and Registers, and Riley owners also have a large representation in the Vintage Sports-Car Club, (somewhat disparagingly claimed by Dennis Jenkinson in 1985, as “the lower income section”—he should be alive now to see the prices genuine competition Rileys, reproductions and specials command).

A note of explanation: “Carey Street” was the address of the Bankruptcy Court in London.

Wanted

NSW club member seeks a run-down pre-war Riley car or chassis or just parts to build a 2 seater Special.

Please phone Brin Hodges (02) 9975 5030

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