



"It is logical that there should be a really first-class road-racing circuit near London, yet the Capital—and the South—is still lacking in this respect," says the writer of this article, adding the reasons for the limitations of Brooklands and the Crystal Palace

imagine that Donington would be passed over in favour of either Brooklands or the Crystal Palace. This remains, in spite of the enormous prestige of the name Brooklands as the cradle of motor racing in this country, and the unrivalled transport facilities to the Crystal Palace, and its nearness to London itself.

Artificiality

Opinions are much divided about the value of the Brooklands road circuit as a venue for road racing in the South. Most agree, however, that it is too "artificial." It is difficult to define the exact disadvantage contained in this word, as any road, let alone any motor racing track, is artificial. That the Brooklands road circuit was so obviously built especially for racing, and not as an ordinary road, may have something to do with it, but this cannot be all. The Nürburg Ring, for instance, was built especially for road racing, though it is also used as a toll road.

Where Nürburg scores, I think, is in the fact that one can only see a small

Sauce for the Southerners

WHY THIS MIDLAND MONOPOLY OF A FIRST-CLASS ROAD CIRCUIT?

THERE has always been a certain latent rivalry between the North, the Midlands, and the South, and the viewpoints of the inhabitants of these different parts of England are often as dissimilar as the opinions, say, of the average Englishman and the average Frenchman. Northerners and Midlanders, often allied against the hated South, have the reputation of being the more hard-headed. In one respect, at any rate, the Midlands have got ahead of the South, inasmuch as the former area possesses a satisfactory road racing circuit, at Donington Park.

Mushroom Schemes

A few years ago the air was full of schemes for racing circuits, and wonderful new plans still crop up at intervals. Of them all, however, only one came to fruition, through the hard-headed acumen of Midland business men.

The Crystal Palace and the Brooklands road circuits I do not include amongst the mushroom schemes which I had in mind—Ivinghoe, Gopsall Park, and the Wash Speedway, to mention a few — because they followed at a later date, and it might be said that their construction was due to the success already achieved by the Donington track. Donington first popularised road racing in this country, in so far as it has been popularised.

The South, and London in particular, is still lacking a really first-class circuit of this type. To bear out this statement, I do not know how seriously the R.A.C. considered other venues for the Tourist Trophy, when Ulster and the Isle of Man both proved unsatisfactory, but it is difficult to

portion of the 14-mile course at one time, so that any artificiality in road construction is swamped by the grand scenic panoramas. When one is not actually looking at a racing car, one feels not so much that one is at a track but that one is out in the mountains, amid natural scenery.

Comparison with the Nürburg Ring, however, is a hard basis of judgment, as no finer site for motor racing would ever be found. The Montlhéry road

circuit is a fairer comparison, utilising as it does part of the banking of the track proper, just as in the case of the Brooklands road circuit. At Montlhéry the *circuit routière* is 7½ miles in length, and, up till the present season, it has for many years been the home of the French Grand Prix. One does get the impression of cars going off into the distance, as they set out on the road circuit, instead of still being confined within the limits of an artificial track.

By
B. P. W. Twist
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HERE'S wishing a Happy New Year to SPEED readers! May horses be more plentiful than ever in 1939, and may everyone win a prize.

The calendar of events appears to be as crowded as ever, and, indeed, the R.A.C. has had to put off the annual meeting of the clubs to discuss fixtures, owing to the tremendous number of applications for dates. If after the provisional fixture list has been sent out to the clubs a meeting is found to be necessary, it will probably be held early in February.

This year the R.A.C. stipulated that all applications for dates must be made before the end of November, and this has resulted in no fewer than seven

PATRICK WYNN'S

Current Commentary

hundred fixtures being applied for! When one considers that there are only fifty-two week-ends in the year, with, for the purposes of most events, only 104 available days, the total is indeed staggering. Moreover, the figure of seven hundred fixtures applies only to car events, and not to the numerous events for motor cycles under the jurisdiction of the A.C.U.

A huge preliminary—and, indeed, final—list was only to be expected this year, as the door is now closed, and, if I know the inexorable gentlemen of the Competitions Committee, there will have to be a very good reason for any "extra" events.

In other years a request has been made to club secretaries to file their applications before the dates meeting, but the fixture list was not final, and usually has been increased by approximately half as much again, compared with the original issue, by the time the season was over.

Rising Number of Events

The late-comers have caused some confusion on previous occasions, since the insertion of their dates could only be made after consultation with clubs already down to hold events on any particular day. Often those with the prior right gained by early application have felt impelled to agree, merely to avoid the stigma of taking up a "dog-in-the-manger" attitude. Now the R.A.C. has altered all that, as part of the great drive for setting competitions, and more particularly reliability trials, in better order.

The number of fixtures has been steadily rising in recent years. The



Brookbank

1938

THE BRITISH CALENDAR PROBLEM

MONTE CARLO RALLY

USEFUL GADGETS

R.A.C. issued 335 permits in 1937, and just over 400 in 1938. Now, for 1939, there are likely to be about 700, though it is possible that not all the applications will be taken up. Of this total, about seventy-eight are for speed events, hill-climbs, etc.

As well as these British fixtures, there are the events run under an international permit, that is to say, those in which foreign drivers are eligible to take part. The international calendar has already been issued, and comprises an additional 86 events. Of this number, no fewer than 24 are due to take place in the British Isles, and 19 of these are scheduled for England itself, the remainder taking place in Ulster or Eire.

As regards the other principal countries taking part in European competitions, the French have 20 international events on the calendar, the Italians 13, and the Germans only five.

In considering these figures, it is interesting to note that whereas all the British international dates are for races or hill-climbs, seven of the French events are for rallies or trials, thus bringing their total of races down to parity with the Italians.

Thus one comes to the inevitable conclusion that Great Britain, in which country enthusiasm for motor racing cannot be said to equal that prevailing abroad, holds far more "big" races than any other country.

The quotation marks are important,

for many of the international races in England are international in name only, and are not really "big" events at all, as one merely sees the same cars and the same home favourites whom one sees in any other event.

The greatest crowds which assemble to watch motor races are seen in Germany. In 1937, 400,000 people attended the Avusrennen, and at the Nürburg Ring, with a maximum of two races a year, the crowd regularly exceeds the quarter-of-a-million mark. Yet Germany has the fewest number of races. Is it because England has so many races that none of them attracts a crowd of Continental dimensions?

A Ticklish Problem

The British Motor Race Organisers' Association, whose activities were recently outlined in SPEED, is, so I understand, not unaware of this question, but it is a thorny problem to solve. It has become regarded as traditional, for instance, that nearly all the meetings at Brooklands, the oldest and probably the most honoured track in the world, should have international status. Far be it from me to decry the value, or to under-estimate the privileges, of tradition. But other promoters have been led to the idea that their events "lose face" if these also are not international.

There is, admittedly, always the possibility that some of the Continental races will escape from the *mêlée* of events abroad, and bring helpful publicity and

freshness to one of the British events. Is not this fetish for foreign drivers due in itself to the number of home events in which the same drivers regularly compete? If we had fewer events, the foreign drivers would not be regarded as visiting deities from Olympus, but—a few real "deities" apart—would take their proper ranking with the faithful home drivers.

The mere substitution of a national for an international permit, however, does not solve the problem of the excessive number of races, especially as the man in the street has ceased to attach any significance to an international permit, if, indeed, he has ever heard of such a thing. A national permit, I may mention, restricts participation in an event to holders of a licence issued by the governing club of the home country.

Even the Tourist Trophy itself was once in recent years held under a national permit, owing to some muddle when the international list was drawn up, but scarcely anyone noticed the fact! Yet it is the Tourist Trophy, and not the Donington Grand Prix, which ranks technically as the Grande Epreuve, or principal event, of Great Britain.

It is a great step that a body such as the B.M.R.O.A. has been formed, and it will be interesting to see how they tackle the problem of reducing the number of races.

Monte Carlo Rally

Early in the New Year competitors will be starting off for the more distant points for the Monte Carlo Rally, which begins on the evening of January 17th, and finishes on January 21st. Actually the first competitors to start are those from Palermo, in Sicily, which provides the longest route of 2,540 miles. The Palermo route is only fourth highest in the markings, however, being credited with 497 marks, against 500 marks for Athens (2,343 miles), and 498 marks for Bucharest (3,272 miles), and Tallinn (2,354 miles). Stavanger (2,185 miles) receives 497 marks, and our own John o' Groats (2,256 miles) 496 marks. The route from Umea, farthest north of all the starting points, actually in the Arctic Circle, totals 2,255 miles, and also received 496 marks.

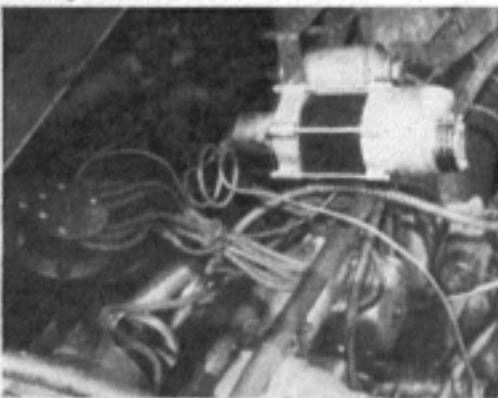
The eliminating test between Grenoble and Monte Carlo, a distance of 220 miles over the Winter Route des Alpes, first instituted last year, is retained. This stretch is divided into five sections, over each of which drivers have to average a speed between 31 and 37 m.p.h. Those who fail to keep within these limits—a difficult task on a route frequently covered with deep snow, and abounding in mountain

passes with series of hairpin corners—will be penalised .05 of a mark for each second of their error, thus losing one complete mark for each 20 seconds.

Any advantage gained by starting point marks may thus easily be lost over this stretch, which thus helps to re-establish the old idea that the Rally should be lost and won by performance on the road section rather than by the result of the final tests.

Open Cars Banned

As before, open cars are banned, which seems to me to be a great pity, from the private enthusiast's point of view. Open tourers may not be as frequent as they used to be, but there is still a good proportion of sporting folk who prefer not to be enclosed by a roof and windows, scorning the extra comfort provided thereby. It has been argued that for a long-distance tour in winter a saloon is most suitable,



A new upper cylinder lubricating device made by David Alan and Co. It holds one pint of oil

but this is purely a matter of taste. Owing a perfectly standard open tourer which is quite suitable for winter motoring, I should be most incensed if I wished to enter it in the Rally, which I should not be able to do.

The rule has some basis, however, for there used to appear in the Rally a number of much abbreviated open bodies designed not for touring, but to be as light as possible with a view to performance in the final tests. Some jettisoned not only hoods and side-curtains, but the upholstery as well! Even doors were not regarded as essentials, while some bodies were made of aeroplane fabric, or plain three-ply wood. The men who piloted such cars through the rigours of a Central European winter were heroes indeed, and their only fault was that they imposed their own heroic standard on more comfort-loving folk who yet wished to do well in the final results.

Preparing for Fog

Fog is a great enemy of Rally competitors, and indeed of all motorists.

I have been trying one of the latest Trippe fog and road lamps, and can certainly recommend it without fear or favour. It has a white or clear glass, and gives a powerful, flat beam, without any upward rays. The lamp is also very useful for ordinary driving when there is no fog, and the nature of the beam it gives off may be judged from the fact that I have driven at 75 m.p.h. with only the fog lamp in operation, admittedly on a road that I knew well, but one without any street lighting or other "outside assistance."

Indeed, since fitting this lamp I have scarcely ever used the headlights, for journeys in the neighbourhood of London. One of the modern road lamps, such as the Trippe, or the well-known Lucas passlight, gives the great advantage that one is spared the necessity of continually dipping and undipping the headlights as one meets approaching traffic, for these lamps, if properly focused, are quite non-dazzling, in spite of the extent of their beam.

A Gadget Tested

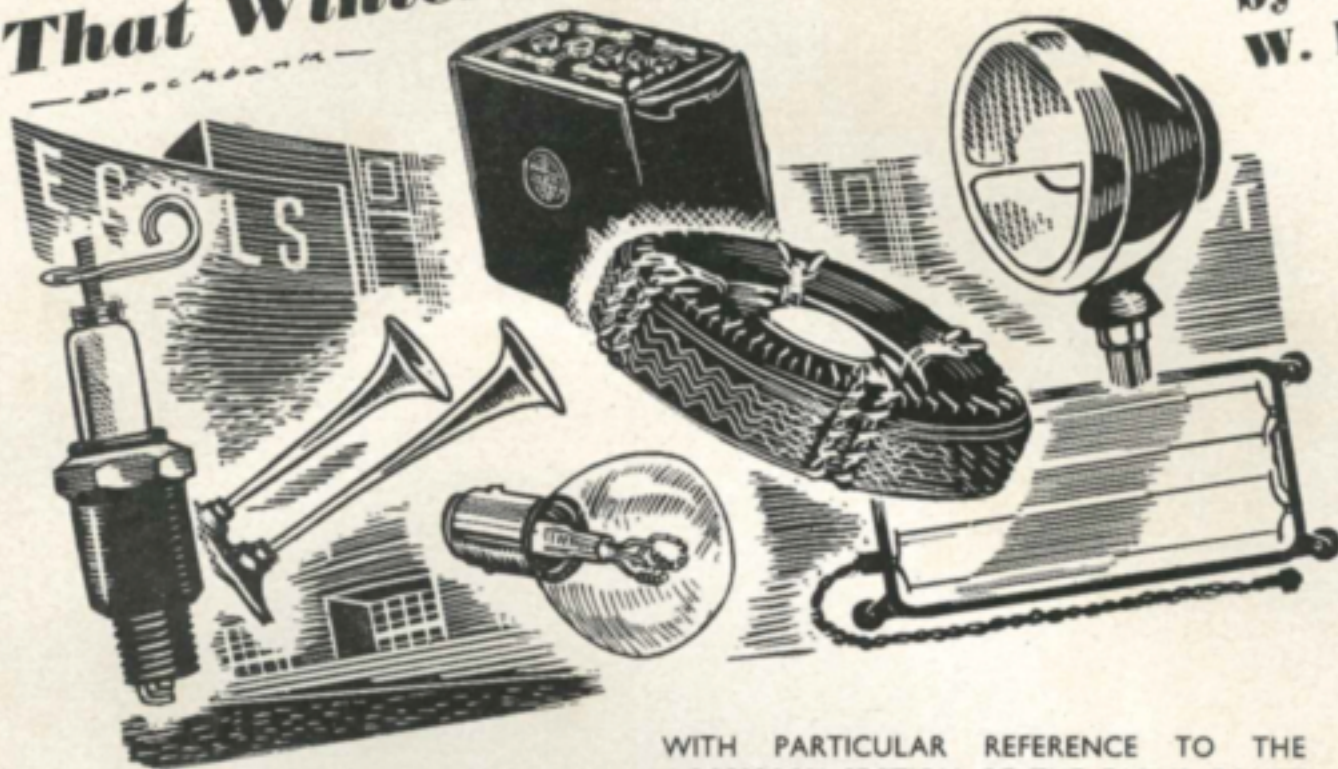
Another "gadget" which I have been trying is a new automatic upper cylinder oiler, made by David Alan and Co. The container holds just a pint of upper cylinder lubricant, equivalent to thirty-six "shots" from one of those guns which garage attendants use. Whereas by the latter method a charge of 3s. is incurred, a pint of upper cylinder lubricant bought in bulk costs about 2s. Moreover, the oil in the container lasts, I have found, for approximately 2,000 miles, whereas, taking a petrol consumption of 25 m.p.g., thirty-six "shots" in the fuel tank would suffice for only 900 miles. Thus a considerable saving is effected.

There are some who scoff at the merits of upper cylinder lubrication, but even they usually put it in with a new car, just to make sure. So the inference might well be that it continues to help in minimising wear of various working parts, such as valve guides and piston rings, even when the car is not new. As it happened, I had occasion to take the cylinder head off when the car had covered 2,000 miles since the Alan container was fitted, and I found everything very nicely lubricated.

Upper cylinder oil is led in through a special flange fitted between the carburetter and the induction pipe. Its flow is regulated entirely by the suction of the engine, and no adjustment is necessary. The acceleration of the car also appears to be improved, but as I have no positive figures to give on that point I will leave it at that.

That Winter Overhaul

by
W. Boddy



WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE
ACCESSORY SECTION OF THE EARL'S COURT
SHOW

I HAVE never been able to understand the mentality of those persons who habitually lock their cars away in a garage during the winter months. Surely the discomforts of the English winter emphasise very soundly the benefits of owning transport of your very own, nor does the safety factor of such transport deteriorate very materially under the worst weather conditions—modern design, present-day brakes, and the full equipment which figures as standard nowadays on the cheapest of cars looks to that. Fortunately, sportsmen hardly give a thought to the change of season, and continue to use their cars for business and pleasure all the year round. However, in this world of ours, it does not do to take too much for granted, and it is as well to recognise that winter-motoring is much harder on the car and its equipment than were the proceeding six months' labour. Moreover, breakdowns can be more inconvenient, and decidedly less amusing, under a leaden sky than they may be when the sun blazes down; you feel lazy, and have nothing very urgent to do.

Thoughts like this prompted me to pay especial attention to the accessories at the Earl's Court Show, because there was so much of interest exhibited that had a bearing on winter motoring and the annual overhaul.

For the sake of easy reference, I am describing the various components in alphabetical order.

Car heaters are increasing in popularity; and the makers of the well-

known A.C. sparking plugs showed a new heater which worked in conjunction with the car's cooling system. Barimar, Ltd., had a stand which could not be overlooked, because it was comforting to reflect on what skilful welding repairs these engineers can undertake on cylinder blocks, heads, crankcases, etc., which have suffered cruelly at the hands of Jack Frost.

Keeping Up Appearances

Cleaning the car is, naturally, a more tedious job in winter than in summer, and, consequently, many people lingered at the stand of Cornercroft, Ltd., thinking not only that "Ace" wheel-discs improve a car's outward appearance in themselves, but that they contribute to a presentable exterior, being far easier to keep pristine than wheels with spokes. Desmo, Ltd., featured a very useful heater for warming the sump, to ensure an easy-flowing supply of lubricant from the very commencement of the drive on the coldest day, a provision that acts both as a wear-preventer and a time-saver—it being possible to stamp on the loud pedal right away without endangering the bearings. On the same stand there was a new Desmo wing mirror—useful accessory for night driving—and the Sunbeam anti-dazzle road-lamp. Alexander Duckham proved to an

interested public that they can supply all manner of lubricants to meet the abnormal conditions which winter imposes. The Thermoil lubricator, charged with Duckham's Adcane fluid, is standardized on certain British marques, and is just the thing for looking after an overhauled engine, while Duckham's Adcoids work in a similar, if more simple, way.

Number plates become illegible much more rapidly under adverse weather conditions, so that I was interested in the display of Homo Hygrade aluminium plates with very clear, die-pressed characters, and the "Allywytte" number plates shown on the stand of Homo, Ltd. It is really surprising what an improvement a pair of new number plates can make to the external appearance of an elderly car.

Very applicable to motoring in winter were the exhibits of the well-known Houdaille Hydraulic Suspension Co., Ltd. The "Berkshire" electric windscreen wiper can be relied on to maintain a clear field of vision under the most adverse conditions, when assisted by the electric defrosted, ice and sleet remover. Many Monte Carlo Rally personalities were thanking their favourite stars that such a fitment can now be bought as a standard line.

Comfort on long runs was the theme of the Latex people, and the Dunlopillo upholstery was displayed in a wide variety of forms.

Naturally, Joseph Lucas, Ltd., had staged a show which well merited a whole day's study. Lucas research engineers have obviously been very fully occupied, with the happy result that almost every line of Lucas equipment shows material and practical improvement. The constant-voltage control, for instance, which safeguards the battery of so many modern cars, is now fitted with a thermostatic element which ensures the correct charging rate, no matter what the under-bonnet temperature changes due to engine heat or atmospheric variations. The big range of Lucas lamps, including the famous P100 headlamps, friend of innumerable fast drivers, have been still further improved, and the under-bonnet pattern screen-wipers rendered even more efficient in operation than previously. Similarly, Lucas accumulators are better than last year's models, while the range of lamps, mirrors, horns, and ignition apparatus is more extensive than ever. An entirely new distributor unit has been introduced for coil ignition engines, having both speed and suction control of the timing, and with both these automatic controls very neatly in-built. The Lucas sports coil is in wide employment for high-speed engines, and this season notable successes have been scored at Brooklands, Donington and Le Mans, etc., by cars equipped with the Lucas vertical magneto. Sir Herbert Austin's Austin Seven racing cars use these magnetos. A Lucas radiator heating lamp is but one dependable winter accessory amongst a comprehensive range. More and more car manufacturers are damping their suspension systems with Lucas "Luvax" hydraulic shock-absorbers, and lubricating vital chassis points automatically with the Luvax-Bijur system.

Racing Ancestry

Coloured glass for anti-dazzle visors was shown by Lancegay, besides the better-known clear, safety glass, while Laystall, Ltd., had much that was of intense interest to enthusiasts for engine efficiency and high-speed tuning—remember the racing Laystall-Special?

The sort of upholstery used by racing men of George Eyston's calibre was found at the stand occupied by David Moseley and Sons, Ltd., and a most comprehensive collection of fog, spot, and road lamps and radiator heaters must be credited to James Neale and Sons, Ltd. There are few better lamps than those constructed expressly as spot-lamps to light one's way on misty or foggy nights, yet not every manufacturer fits such a lamp as standard. One of the best extras in this sphere is the well-established

"Notex" non-glaring fog and spot-lamp. This lamp, which is of an attractive appearance and very sound construction, is now entirely British made.

R. M. Papelian, Ltd., are the people to consult in the matter of winter lighting aids, car-heaters and car-radio. The interior heater is a fitting which the ordinary owner, as distinct from the Rally competitor, is only just beginning to appreciate, but when you have travelled in a car so equipped you will crave one in your own vehicle.

Chains and the Expert

Skidding, thanks to Mr. Dunlop, is hardly the nightmare that it once was, but it cannot be denied that on ice the most stable of cars will behave very unpleasantly. In this country ice forms far more often than many drivers are aware, and it is especially dangerous because it is not easy to detect, particularly as it occurs only in patches. On freezing nights, after rain or mist, nothing is more comforting than the good, old-fashioned wheel-chains, and the Parsons Chain Co., Ltd., will tell you that they supply sets of chains to a far bigger circle of motorists than is embraced by Monte Carlo Rally folk and out-back Colonials. Usually you associate the chain-shod car with the expert—because the expert is not ashamed to disguise his respect for frozen roads.

"Pyrene" has become a household word in connection with fire-fighting, and now that the law says that every garage in which petrol is stored must be provided with a fire-extinguisher, a "Pyrene" carried on the car is a very sound investment.

There are two distinct ways of regarding car-cleaning during the winter months. One is to let the mud and dirt accumulate until the joyous advent of Spring; the other, to clean the car regularly so that harmful dirt does not damage good paintwork and plating. Of the divers' polishes and preparations for imparting a pristine finish to the hosed-down car, "Karpol," manufactured by the old-established firm of Reckitt and Sons, Ltd., is one of the best-known and most widely used. The Romac firm also lists a very good polish—"Celerbrite"—as well as anti-freezing mixture.

Sports car owners who find the attention of court and other cops unwelcome away from the police stand at Earl's Court, will be interested in the straight-through silencers made by Servais Silencers, Ltd., who also supply air intake silencers.

S. Smith and Sons, Ltd., can truly supply almost every item of car equipment which one can possibly require; but from the aspect of winter motoring their electric defroster, which is fitted

directly to the windscreen; the new Smith-Hadees water-type interior heater which also demists and defrosts the screen, and the "Blucol" anti-freeze mixture, are notable lines. Smith's "Jackall" built-in jacks are a very popular means of ensuring the minimum of discomfort and time loss in the event of tyre trouble.

The "Pneugrippa" grooving process applied to tyres by Tecalemit, Ltd. is effective for both new and worn covers and, indeed, is made use of by Shelsley Walsh competitors.

Herbert Terry and Sons, Ltd., recommend a change of valve springs every 10,000 miles, if you wish to keep your engine brisk. Stronger-than-standard springs will push-up the performance of many engines, and valve clearances should be checked during overhaul with Terry spanners.

We are all aware of the shortcomings of the normal type of suction screen-wiper, which "dries-up" at wide throttle openings, especially inconvenient in heavy downpours, or a snowstorm. To overcome this tendency Trico-Folberth, Ltd., have introduced the "Trico" vacuum pump, which supplements engine minus-pressure under extreme conditions. In addition, defrosters and screen-sprays are listed.

Triplex Safety Glass is known the world over, and the Triplex Toughened version is quite immune from discolouration or blistering, and crumbles into harmless fragments when smashed.

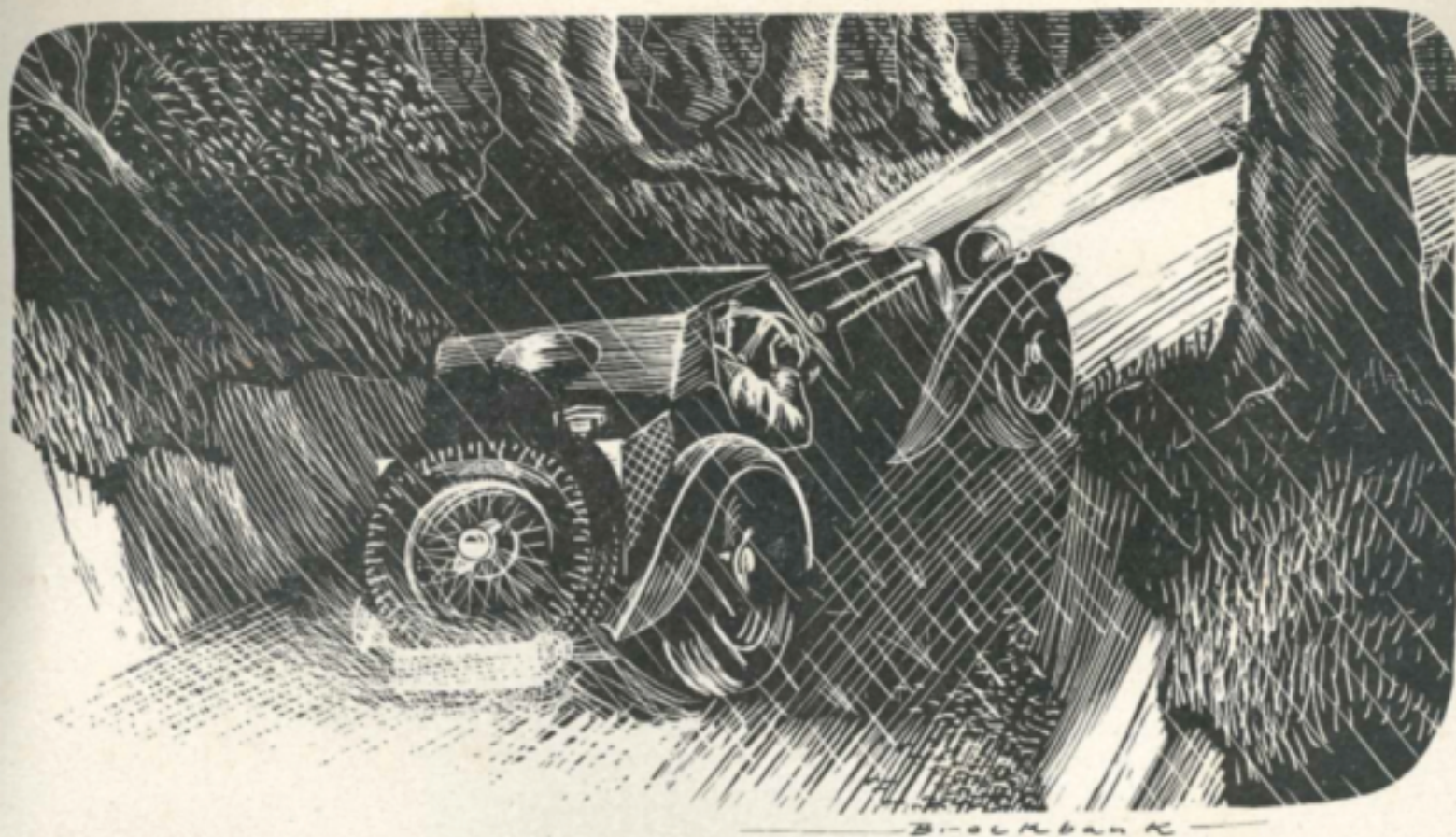
Desirable Equipment

Trippe lamps have a special appeal to the winter motorist, the largest lamp of the range projecting a beam of 1,000 feet, yet still contriving to give a wide spread of light just ahead of the car.

Those who contemplate reborning their engines, nowadays find an excellent range of replacement pistons at their disposal, and "Clupet" and "Brico" piston rings are a wise investment.

Builders of "specials" were interested in the Girling system of brake actuation, as used by E.R.A., shown by New Hudson, Ltd., and sports car owners were catered for on the Dunlop stand by exhibits of the Dunlop "Sports" covers in the new Fort construction.

In the space at my disposal it has been impossible to mention all the equipment at Earl's Court of interest to those overhauling for the coming winter, or adding desirable extra equipment to their cars. But I hope the foregoing account will indicate how much of real value there is in the accessory market, of interest even to those whose cars appear to carry very comprehensive standard equipment.



Night Trial

A Short Story by

FREDERICK LAWERENCE

FROM the blackness of the mid-winter night, a veritable blizzard slashed at the windscreen and filled the yellow glare of the headlamps with long oblique needles of icy rain. Above the quick drumming of the rain on the hood, the grim-faced man at the wheel could hear the rising note of the gale. He felt the little vehicle rock as a furious gust tore past.

He slipped into third gear, and turned off the main road into a narrow by-lane. A glance at the dashboard clock caused him to knit his brows in calculation. From the instructions he had received and from his previous experience of the locality, he reckoned he had only about twenty minutes to cover three miles of muddy rock-strewn track up the mountain side.

Before his eyes left the dashboard they ranged quickly over the instruments. The engine temperature was reasonably high, the ammeter was showing a definite charge—he would need all the light possible—the oil pressure was normal. How snug and warm the softly-lit dash appeared in contrast to the sleety rain driving down the mountain!

The car rocked and swayed as it climbed. The twin fans of light from the headlamps rose and fell, playing alternatively on tossing hedge tops and rock-spurred road. As the gradient

stiffened, the engine revolutions began to drop. He changed down to second, and the high whine of the baby engine reasserted itself. Suddenly, the back of the car reared up as a wheel jumped on a rocky outcrop. The wheel spun vainly for nearly half a minute on the slippery surface before gripping. With a sideways lurch the car picked up its course again.

The driver dropped his eyes to the clock for a moment. Of his calculated time, nearly half had ticked away. He was ahead of schedule, however, for there was only a mile to his destination.



Abruptly he slowed down and swung the car to the left through a gap in the hedge on to an ill-defined cart-track along the bottom of a field. For a few yards the track fell slightly downhill. Even so, he still kept the car in second gear. It tilted grotesquely as two wheels moved along one of the deep ruts, while the rain beat a tattoo on the upturned side. The tyres squelched through liquid mud and bumped over hidden stones.

Suddenly the car dipped and almost stopped. A muddy wave flung itself upon the radiator and momentarily blotted out the headlights. The driver only muttered, "The devil! I forgot that blasted hole!"

While he was crawling along the short stretch of level, he became aware of a steadily recurring *thump, thump, thump*, at the rear of the car. Too exasperated even to swear, he pulled up and got out. By the light of his pocket torch he saw that one of the rear tyres was flat.

Holding the torch in his teeth, he fished in the tool-kit for jack and brace. He was whipped by the wind, and felt an increasing dampness where the seeking rain penetrated above and below his coat. In spite of the discomfort, his mind was filled with the one thought—to get on, to get on.

In his haste he did not realize the necessity for a firm foundation beneath the jack, and found to his dismay that when it was fully wound up the wheel was not free of the mud. He had to hunt round for a flat stone, and place it below the jack before he could start changing the wheel. The operation finally concluded, he threw the tools and the replaced wheel into the back

The Open Road

A MOTORIST'S SOLILOQUY

By Peter Watson

"WHAT'S that, Matilda? You'd like a run? Yes, it is a glorious evening. I'll get the car. Shan't be long. Nothing like the open road on an evening like this.

"Comfortable, Matilda? Good. Now we're off. Pity these roads are so narrow. So difficult to turn. Never mind. Suppose they've other things to think about besides roads. After all, I'm only a motorist.



"Confound the idiots. Why don't they look before they cross the road? Good job I had my eyes open. Well, I'm jiggered. Blest if they haven't stopped to light cigarettes. Supposing my brakes—ah, well, they wouldn't be blamed. Just look at the glares they gave me, too. Hullo, a Belisha crossing. Better slow up again, I suppose. All right, madam, you can cross. Don't stand dithering. What's the matter? Oh, Fido doesn't want to come, eh? Never mind. Persuade him gently. I'll wait. Pick him up and carry him. You'll never move him pulling his lead like that. That's right. Fuss him. You're only in the middle of the road, thanks to Belisha. Don't mind me. I'm only a motorist. Now what's happened? Ah. Fido's loose. Afraid you'll have to run after him, madam. You won't catch him while you stand there waving your umbrella. Ah! She's gone at last. What's that, Matilda? Delays? Yes, you're right. Never mind, we'll soon get going now. Idiot! No, not you, Matilda. That fool errand boy. D'ye see how he came flying out of that

turning? No bell, no brakes . . . There. Now he's over. Look, all his goods all over the road. Better not run through them, I suppose. All right, Sonny. I'm not in any hurry. Take your time, that's right. Don't stand there grinning. I want to pass some time. Good, now he's off. Yes Matilda, it is a bit irritating. Oh, heavens. Main road. Red light, another stop. Amber. Gre—well I'll be blowed. Dashed if that confounded tram hasn't got stuck right across the road. Wonder how long this is going to be. What's the time, Matilda? What, *already*? Ah, here's another tram. Give it a shove. Good, there it goes. All right, Matilda, we're off now. What's that? Lights? Dash. Another wait. Confound that tram. Here we go again. Hullo. More jay walkers. Why *do* they have to rush across at the last minute? Another stop. I wish they'd remember the green light means go. But then, why should they worry about a mere motorist? Yes. I *thought* they'd change their minds. Look at 'em. Dithering in the middle of the traffic. Don't look at *me* like that? You're the jay. Why don't you think before you leap? Confound the fellow.



"Plain sailing at last. What a difference it makes . . . Now what? Bless the cart. Dropped a case, has he? A little bit closer and I'd have been over it. Why don't they load these

things securely? But then, what's a delay of a few minutes to a motorist? Or to other road users for that matter? Ah, now the road's clear. What's that, Matilda? When do we get into the country? Oh, not long now. Look out, you idiot! No, *not* you Matilda. That ass jumping off that bus. Why couldn't he wait till it stopped. Just swerved in time. Never mind. All's well that ends well. Perhaps he'll remember next time. Or perhaps not.



"Now we *are* getting on. Twenty—thirty—forty. Good. Running beautifully, isn't she? This is something like motoring. Enjoying yourself, Matilda? What's that? You like it when we're moving. Of course. So do . . . Dash! A restricted area. Never mind. Road's quite deserted. Give Matilda a chance to look round. What's that, Matilda? Why are we slowing? Well, it's a built-up area. Ah, we're out of it now. That's better. Forty, forty-five—confound it. Five cyclists abreast. Too bad. No, don't bother to go into single file. I should hate to spoil your conversation. Ah, road's wider. Now I'll pass them. M-m-m. Doesn't the fresh air get you? My, it's good. The joy of the open road. Hallo, what's that Matilda. Somebody wants to pass us? All right. They *don't* want to pass? Following us? Not following us? *Gonging us*? Help, that's torn it! What's that I just said? The joy of the . . . Huh!"

NIGHT TRIAL

(Continued from page 2445)

of the car. The stop had cost him six precious minutes.

With a heave, the car drew itself out of the slush and slithered on.

The whitewashed corner of a farmhouse appeared out of the murk, with the rain beating off it in a haze. The lane swung round it and dipped into a long pool of mud. Beyond, it rose steeply up into the night. Loose stones and whorls of mud gleamed on the ascent as the car skidded round the farmhouse corner.

Coming round the corner the driver

changed into bottom gear and stamped on the accelerator. With the engine racing the car plunged through the pool and charged up the slope. It pitched and rolled and tail-wagged, but with set face the man at the wheel kept his foot hard down. He could feel the car mounting up and up in leaps, the rear wheels sliding and gripping, spinning and gripping again.



At length the track half turned to the left and the slope eased, and,

with a sigh of relief, the driver lifted his foot a trifle. The antics of the car settled as the respite came to the screaming engine.

It was not until a dim white cottage appeared, with a light gleaming out from an open door, that he allowed himself to relax.

Pulling on the brake, and reaching for his bag, he permitted himself a smile.

A shirt-sleeved figure had come to the doorway, saying, "The nurse is in with her now, Doctor. She says you're just in time."

The young doctor had not missed his first maternity case after all.