



NEWSLETTER

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The Society of Automotive Historians

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PRESIDENT'S PARAGRAPHS

I didn't think I would be making this noise again this issue, but here I am. The annual meeting was quite different this year. The president didn't show up until it was over. Due to a combination of many excruciating circumstances it took me $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours to go from the flea market field to the Congress on the Harrisburg exit and back to the Hotel Hershey. Normally this would be, en total two hours with some time for cleaning up, eating and other minor details. This points up only too clearly the problems with Hershey.

Compadre Fred Roe did a magnificent service in taking over the meeting. The special awards were given and some of the future of SAH were gone over. After I arrived, we reconvened and went over a few other items. We had received a cable from our Vice-President Mike Worthington-Williams, which was read. Reports from our editors were read and those not receiving the last issue of our magazine were promptly rewarded with same.

The meeting was a good one with fairly good attendance. The main problem that was talked about was the bad communications and the lack of a set of rules or bylaws. Committees were appointed and positive steps will be taken by the end of the year. We are hoping that by that time also, they will have appointed some new officers. It seems that the self-perpetuating group that was appointed a few years ago didn't perpetuate.

It was very good to see these once-a-year acquaintances. We missed seeing Marshall Naul and Dick Brigham and sincerely they will be with us next year. Ralph Dunwoodie was greatly missed also and we will certainly hope that he has a good and proper excuse for not being in attendance. With that I bid adieu until next time, with another plea for support.

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From the Editor:

The S.A.H. has just passed a milestone of sorts: it was formed five years ago and inaugurated by the formation meeting at Hershey in October 1969.

However, as Stan Yost mentions, communications remains the largest complaint, and justifiably so. In order to make some improvements it has been decided to limit the Newsletter to the shorter items and pass on the longer articles to Dick Brigham for use in the A.H.R.. By doing this, the Newsletter will come closer to being what its name implies. By eliminating most of the photographic material considerable time will be saved, and it is hoped that future issues can be issued more frequently than in the past.

To sustain this Newsletter the editor will need relatively short items, say less than 500 words. The more, the better.

ANNUAL MEETING AT HOTEL HERSHEY, OCTOBER 4, 1974

Treasurer Fred Roe called the Sixth Annual Meeting of the Society of Automotive Historians to order at 7:30 PM, Friday, October 4, 1974 in the Mosaic Room of the Hotel Hershey, Hershey, Pa. Twenty-seven members were present at the start of the meeting.

President Stan Yost, delayed in the Hershey traffic, had called to inform the membership that he would be late for the scheduled 7:30 PM meeting.

Mr. Roe read his Treasurer's report. The Society's receipts for the year totalled \$2,159.97 and expenses were \$1,781.66, for a year's balance of \$378.31 in the Treasury. Mr. Roe reported that the Society had published two issues of Automotive History Review and six Newsletters. A note of thanks was offered by the membership to Dick Brigham and Marshall Naul for the publications.

Secretary Vernon Vogel reported that the Society had assigned membership numbers through 239. The Society has over 200 paid members in 1974. The Secretary then read the minutes and the Treasurer's and Secretary's reports were approved as read.

Mr. Frank Taylor distributed free copies of the 1975 Car Classics Yearbook and Thunderbird Illustrated.

A discussion of the Society's publications brought forth several suggestions. John offered to work with several others volunteering paste-up and typesetting services. A suggestion was submitted to ask several members to edit one issue per year of the Newsletter.

The unsolved problem of writing the Society's By-laws was presented to the membership. After considerable discussion, it was agreed that a committee consisting of John Peckham, Fred Roe, John Martin Smith, Fred Soules and Keith Marvin would draw up the By-laws. Previous drafts and suggestions from the 1972 Annual meeting will be acquired from Past Secretary Perry Zavitz, and the Committee will attempt to present a written draft to the membership by Jan. 1, 1975 for approval.

The content for future issues of Automotive History Review and Society monographs was discussed. Dr. Charles Bishop reported that his translation of the Cugnot pamphlet was delivered to Marshall Naul in March 1974. Discussion of the state of the work on "The Automobiles of New York" followed. These two works are being considered for publication in the near future.

Howard Applegate presented the Cugnot Award Committee's Report for the 1974 Award. Books and articles published prior to July 1, 1974 were eligible for this year's awards. The Committee's selections were:

BEST BOOK: Mack by John B. Montville. Published by Haessner Publishing, Inc., Newfoundland, N.J.

BEST ARTICLE: "Body by Briggs" by Michael Lamm. In Special-Interest Autos, Nov.-Dec. 1973

HONORABLE MENTION: The Coachbuilt Packard by Hugo Pfau. Published by Dalton Watson, London

"Being almost entirely photographs, this book did not meet all of the requirements for the award. However, it is such an excellent compendium of original photos with such precise and informative captions, the Committee feels an "Honorable Mention" is in order."

CUGNOT AWARD COMMITTEE
Mary Cattie, Chairman
Ervin Seltzer
Howard Applegate

ANNUAL MEETING (Continued)

Mr. Lamm was not present. Mr. Montville accepted his award from Mr. Applegate, and the congratulations of the membership. H. Austin Clark, Jr. contributed 20¢ for mailing the awards when ready.

Secretary Vogel announced he would receive dues payments for 1974 and 1975 at the close of the meeting.

President Yost arrived at 8:55 PM and promptly called the second meeting to order. Mr. Yost offered his apologies for missing the first meeting, and relayed Best Wishes from Vice President Michael J. Worthington-Williams who could not attend this year's meeting.

The matter of elections and election procedures was presented to the membership. John Peckham moved and Fred Roe seconded the motion that the present officers serve until the By-laws have been passed by the membership in 1975. This motion was passed.

The President read the following report from Marshall Naul:

Report of the Librarian, Oct. 1973 - Oct. 1974

The S.A.H. Library has continued to grow during the past year with the addition of more than thirty new and old books. A large number of these books were received for review, mainly from Motorbooks International to which we owe thanks. Thanks are also due the several member-authors who kindly have donated copies of their works. Unfortunately, many of these books have remained un-reviewed. Other donations of books, pamphlets and magazines have been received from Guy Seeley, Dick Brigham and others. It is unfortunate that the Library has been of no assistance to any of the members, and while it is still of modest size, there are available a large number of the more significant books which have been published during the past three or four years, as well as a scattering of new and old magazines, manufacturers' catalogs, etc. It no doubt would be of benefit to the members if a catalog of the Library was available, and it is hoped that during 1975 that such a catalog can be put together. The time which is available to the Librarian is limited and the Librarian must admit to being little more than a storage custodian.

Needless to say, the Library will be glad to accept all donations of automotive material, either new or old, and members will be reimbursed for postage, within reason.

The Library has made exchange arrangements to receive copies of The Veteran Car from Great Britain.

Report of The Newsletter Editor

There have been issued but six numbers of the Newsletter since Number 31 which was dated September 1973. According to the S.A.H. regulations, this number should have been at least eight issues per year. Eight issues could have been published during this period if sufficient material had been received to make up the additional issues. This has not been the case and it is somewhat frustrating to have to await the pleasure of the few donors of material in order to justify the printing of ten or twelve pages. At this writing there is just one two or three page article in the backlog and absolutely nothing else to work on for the next issue. It would be a pleasure for a change, to have authors be justified in writing

ANNUAL MEETING (Continued)

complaints about their material not being published. If members wish to have the Newsletter published on a regular basis, then a few of the members should start writing. Certainly we are not looking for great literary talent - merely interesting automotive material. To those who have contributed to the Newsletter the editor extends grateful thanks. It is hoped that more will deserve this thanks in the coming year.

I would like to also thank Fred Roe who has been of great help in the printing and mailing of the Newsletter, which assistance makes the editor's job much easier.

Personal Remarks from Marshall Naul:

I regret that I am forced to miss this annual meeting, the first such absence since the initial meeting in 1969. I shall miss greeting the many friends I expect will be there.

If I were present I would make the following remarks in person, but under the circumstances I ask that they be read at an appropriate time to the membership.

On its fifth birthday, the S.A.H. is still a young organization, even an immature one. It still lacks direction, and this possibly is the normal status of an immature and informal collection of individuals with quite diverse interests. However, the participation in the organization is still much limited to our publications. The participation is still much limited to our publications. It is idealistic to expect 100% participation, but on the otherhand it should not be limited mainly to the few officers of the S.A.H. Even a hot controversy would show that the organization is alive!

Some decision must be made on the future of two works which have been in abeyance for a good long time. One is the translation of a French booklet on the original Cugnot steam vehicle. Rights to this were obtained more than two years ago and illustrations are on hand. The translation and notes have been done by the expert in the field of the French automobile, Charles Bishop. This publication is all ready to "go" - all that is needed is a signal from the membership that it is wanted. From the beginning it has been considered that it could be sold to other organizations and even through advertising. If John Peckham is in the meeting, he can furnish particulars.

The second work is a lengthy and scholarly work also by Charles Bishop, entitled "The Automobiles Of New York". This is a meticulous piece of research and is nearly 100 typed pages in length. Walt Haessner has proposed that he publish and distribute this book. The cost of such a project to the Society would probably be beyond our immediate resources. In my opinion, we should either accept Walt Haessner's proposal or return the manuscript to Charles Bishop.

Both of these publications would enhance the stature of the S.A.H.

(G.M.N.)

The By-laws, Roster of Automotive Makes, and the Cugnot Awards were again discussed.

Fred Roe generously offered a \$25.00 award to be presented to the author of the best article appearing in a Society publication from July 1974 through June 1975.

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 PM. Respectively submitted,
Vernon W. Vogel, Secretary.

LETTERS -

From: Frank Snyder, 748 West Laredo St., Chandler, Ariz. 85224

Just a few notes for your file -

ROTARY, 1922-1923 ; Bournonville Rotary Valve Engine Co., Hoboken, N.J.
(per G.N.Georgano's American Automobiles)

I have found nothing to indicate that this company built cars. I have a copy of their catalog which is on engines only. I also have a photo of their test car which was a FIAT. This will need more checking.

SPHINX, -1915 ; Sphinx Motor Co., York, Pa.

Both Georgano and American Cars Since 1775 carry this make only to 1915. The enclosed xerox copies prove that this make went to 1916. While the folder could have been published in 1915, the 2-17-16 letter is ample proof.

(Ed.: Frank's references include an advertisement, undated, which describes 1916 SPHINX models, and a xerox copy of a letter with heading "Sphinx Motor Car Sales Company, York, Pa." This letter signed by H.R.Averill, Sales Manager, is dated Feb. 17, 1916. By a coincidence a note was received from Donald Paul of Muscatine, Iowa which included a copy of an unillustrated ad for a SPHINX by Sphinx Motor Car Co., Middletown, Iowa. This ad was in an Iowa newspaper in March 1915. Are these two items for the same auto make?)

From: Michael Sedgwick, 'Pippbrook', Chichester Road, Midhurst, Sussex
GU29 9PF, England

Re Newsletter 36, "The American Mathis", I can add a few points:

(1) The photo does not show an AMERICAN MATHIS, but is a French factory publicity shot used freely in their 1931 display ads in journals like La Vie Automobile and L'Illustration.

(2) The car to have been made in America was the PY type with a short-stroke engine of 70 x 80 mm (the latter closer to 3 1/8" than to 3 1/4", by my reckoning). It was announced with hydraulic brakes, but not, I think, ever made with them; French-built PYs were however available in Britain in 1931 and 1932, and an example was road-tested by Autocar in the former year, attaining 57 miles per hour. U.K. price of a "faux cabriolet" similar to the one in your photograph was £220 (\$1000) but very few were sold over here. I have an idea that the make did rather better in Ireland, where an agency was functioning in Dublin until 1931-1932. The PY was not produced after 1932, though a smaller 935 cc, short-stroke baby car, the 5CV TY, persisted until 1934 and maybe (just) into 1935.

(3) It is a matter of opinion whether Continental made the MATHIS PY engine or whether they merely tested prototypes with a view of making engines for the AMERICAN MATHIS run. Continental themselves sent me a data sheet and type test schedule for a PY engine dated 8-21-30, which is their only surviving piece of documentation on MATHIS, and this, incidentally, gives the piston stroke of the engine as 3.149 cm and not 3.25 cm. What we do know by inference is that Continental did supply some engines to MATHIS, mainly big sixes and eights in-line, during the period 1930-1933. I feel sure a Continental was fitted to the huge KFON-series "Super-Mathis" 8 of 1931-1932. Its capacity was 5.3 liters, which fits exactly with Continental's big eight, and only six of these cars were made. As Mathis' finances were already creaky, he couldn't surely gone to the expense of tooling up for a big eight of 30 taxable chevaux vapeur.

(4) I am almost certain that no AMERICAN MATHIS cars were made. In fact, I am dubious of actual MATHIS manufacture in any foreign country. In the early 1920s SPYKER of the Netherlands imported MATHIS cars to which they added their own radiator badges, but none of this was actually made in Trompenburg. The British 9 HP B.A.C. of 1921 was also a MATHIS with a different radiator, though later (1922-1923) B.A.Cs were assembled cars using the Belgian Peters engine.

(5) Finally, bumpers were fitted in Europe; catalogs show a 4.85 gear ratio, and the car tested by the British press in 1931 had a 5.1/1 ratio.

(Ed.: Michaels information and opinions are certainly sufficient to "sink" the AMERICAN MATHIS as a fond hope of Durants rather than an actuality. The subject is also questioned by the following note.)

From: Fred Roe, 837 Winter St., Holliston, Mass. 01746

I liked your story on the AMERICAN MATHIS, complete with photograph. May I question whether this car is in fact an American-built prototype or a model imported from France and given a little Americanization. True, it may have Good-year tires, and a Continental engine is specified. It also has bumpers, which the specifications deny. What evidence do we actually have that there was an AMERICAN MATHIS? Perhaps someone can delve into the trade magazines of the time and come up with an eyewitness description of the car displayed at the New York Show which will give us some facts. The Jan. 1931 MoToR Show Issue is no help.

I might also comment in a similar vein about a discussion in the Newsletter several years ago regarding the 12 cylinder AMBASSADOR. In support of the existence of this car a photo was supplied, but since the car was posed outside and the hood was closed, how can this be proof? If someone has a trade magazine description from a show reporter or a photo with the hood up showing 12 "pots", that would be proof to me. The same comments apply to the "Line-o-Eight" KEN-WORTHY. If someone has the references listed, I will look them up and report.

Also from Fred Roe:

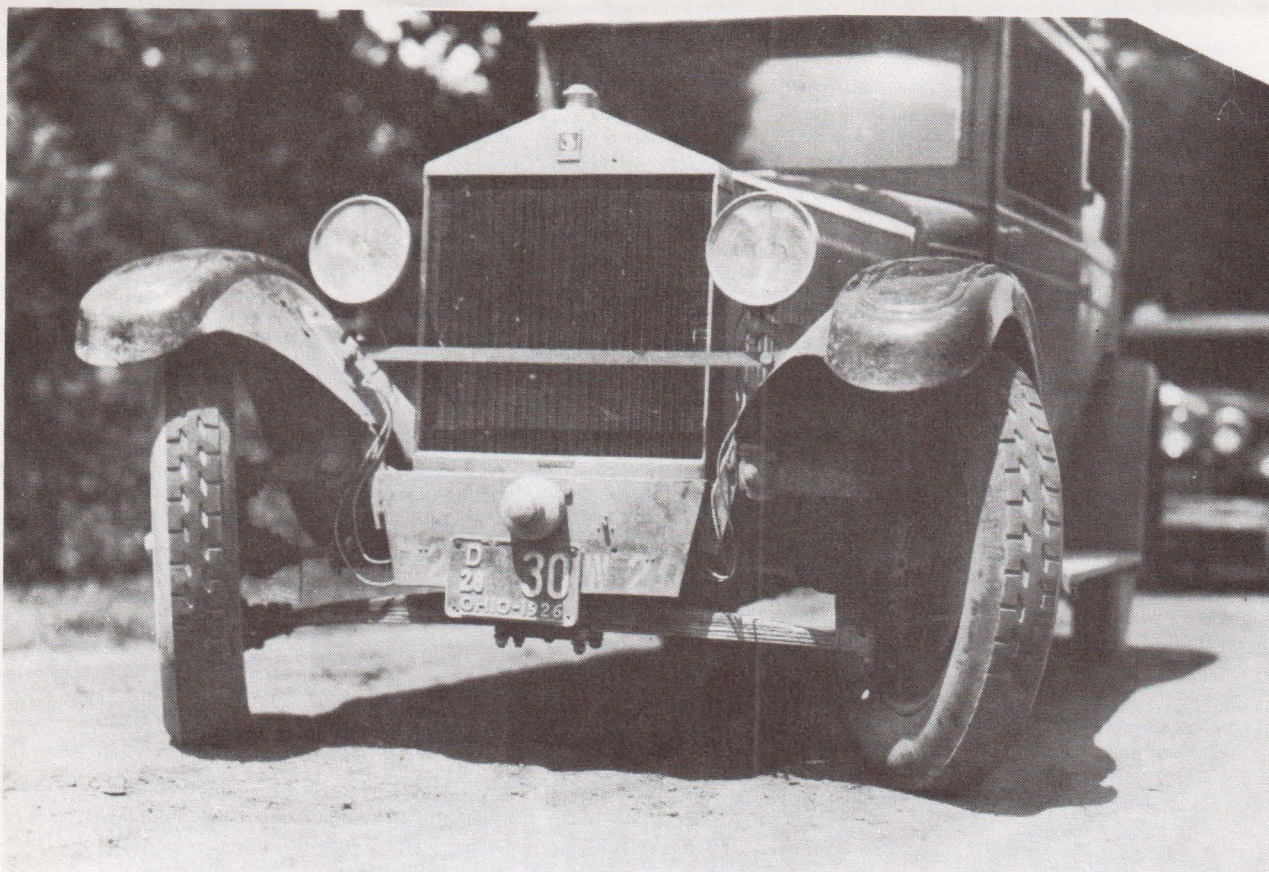
May I pose a question in your letters column regarding an article issue of our Automotive History Review?

Mr. Knudson carefully details the beginnings of the MG car and describes several versions which were built before the first MG sports car, but he leaves us hanging. As historians we want to know what these cars were. If they were not MGs then what were they? How were they registered? To say that an MG is a sports car is fine, but if the name was placed on previous models which were not sports cars does not mean they were not MGs. If they were registered as MORRIS Cowleys or Oxfords, then the question disappears, but were they? I should like to have a clarification.

NEW MEMBERS:

Stefan K. Brown, 1518Y Clement Road, Lutz, Fla. 33549

Niels-Erik Pedersen, Bredebovej 37, 1 tv.,
2800 Lyngby, Denmark.



MYSTERY CAR OF THE MONTH

This photograph is from Stan Yost who adds these comments: ". . . obviously a front drive attempt. It is not a HAMLIN-HOLMES effort. It has someone's stock body attached to their MOON-like chassis. This was an H.-H. trick but it is not one of theirs. Note the "pound sterling" type of insignia."

There are some peculiarities to this photograph - the fenders, both front and rear, seem to be oversized for the tires and wheels; the headlights appear to be some attempt at high-intensity types and very experimental with exposed (and sloppy) wiring. The radiator shell and hood would indicate they could have been taken from a ROAMER, possibly. The transition to the cowl looks to be amateurish. And last, the auto behind and out of focus, seems to have more than the normal number of headlights. Could the Ohio dealer plates hint these were experimental cars for Delco of Dayton? The stencilled numbers either side of the license plate might suggest continental registry.

More of Stan's mystery cars will be forthcoming in a future issue of Automotive History Review.

NEITHER PLANNED NOR BUILT : TWO PENNSYLVANIA AUTOS WHICH NEVER RAN
by Donald J. Summar

In Automobile Quarterly's The American Car Since 1775, there are two entries in the "5000 Marques" for automobiles which were never built nor even planned. The entries are for the 1915 KRAMER, Kramer Auto & Carriage Company, Lancaster, Pa., and the 1902 BAILEY ELECTRIC, F.G. Bailey & Co., Manheim, Pa.

The Kramer Auto & Carriage Company was organized on Dec. 3, 1914 by two carriage makers, I. Newton Kramer and Edward McLaughlin. The company, which had a modest capital of \$5000, occupied the former S.E. Baily Carriage Works. The firm never employed more than twenty men. The company's first advertisement listed company activities as the repainting, remodeling, reupholstering and repairing of carriages and automobiles and the manufacture of carriages, commercial bodies, and pleasure bodies of all descriptions. The company was occasionally mentioned in the Lancaster Daily Intelligencer's weekly "Automobile Notes" column, always for repainting an automobile or for building a truck body or a 20-passenger bus body. The Kramer company did not do its own chassis work. For example, when a combination hose wagon and ambulance was built in May 1915, the PACKARD chassis it was to be mounted on was modified at the nearby Hawkins & Wild garage. Not a single item in the newspaper gives any indication that the company had any desire or plan to manufacture complete automobiles. After I. Newton Kramer sold his interest in the company to John McLaughlin, Edward's son, the firm name was changed to Mack Body Company in March 1916. The Mack firm concentrated on the manufacture of commercial bodies.

Unlike the Kramer company, F.G. Bailey & Company apparently never existed. The Lancaster County "Mercantile Appraisers' List" for May 1902 has no such firm in either retail or wholesale listing for Manheim Borough. There was an F.E. Bailey in Manheim at that time; this Bailey was president of the Manheim Electric Light Company. Bailey was mentioned in the Manheim Sentinel and Lancaster Advertiser only as an electric light entrepreneur. The fact that Mr. Bailey was never mentioned in any connection with automobiles and that no mention of any plan to manufacture automobiles in Manheim appeared in the newspaper leads one to the conclusion that no "Bailey Electric" was ever planned.

On the basis of facts gathered from local newspapers and other sources, it would seem that both the 1915 KRAMER and the 1902 BAILEY ELECTRIC should be deleted from any future list of automobiles manufactured in the U.S. The question must be asked: How many other entries are there for automobiles which were neither built nor even planned? (Plenty - Ed.) On the basis of these two entries, only local research can answer this question for many small and obscure automobile manufacturers.

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Another Replicar - The recent phenomenon of the manufacturing of new autos to resemble favorite passenger cars of the past, is no longer a peculiarity of the U.S. An announcement was recently made of the British-built PANTHER J-72, designed to resemble the BUGATTI Royale. (Although the frontal treatment leaves much to be desired from the aesthetic point of view.) This car, built as an impractical two-door is priced at \$40,000.