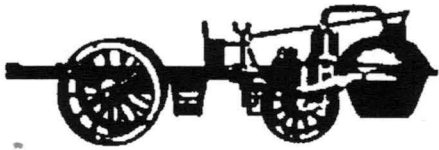


SAH Journal

The Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.
Issue 197
March–April 2002



www.autohistory.org

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The Story of the British Car Tag

by Bryan Goodman

The introduction of a completely new system of registration marks in September 2001 prompts this article. Doubtless there has been interference from Brussels involved as my country loses its independence to Europe.

The feature of our system so appreciated by motor historians is the fact that registrations are assigned to a vehicle for its lifetime regardless of subsequent owners or changes of domicile. We can look at pictures of early cars and positively identify them. It is only with the personal or cherished number owner where the system fails. In the early years some owners liked to keep their first numbers and transferred them to subsequent cars. A local friend drives with FX-3 on his car. This was his grandfather's number in 1904.

Until 1896 Britain had severe limitations on motor vehicle use with legislators pro-horse and anti-motor car. It was necessary for all self-propelled vehicles to be preceded by a man on foot. He carried a red flag, but in the last years before 1896 the flag was not strictly necessary. His job was to hold the heads of horses while the vehicle passed or to lead the horses past the vehicle. It was to celebrate the repeal of the 'Locomotives on Highways Act' on 14th November 1896 that the first London to Brighton run was held. The Act allowed vehicles of less than three tons unladen weight to travel at the dizzy speed of 14 miles per hour. Britain's restrictions had allowed Germany and France to be well ahead of Britain in 1896.

continued on page 7



This three and one-half horsepower Benz car was bought by a Reigate doctor in 1900 and first registered on 1st January 1904. The author purchased it from the doctor's son in 1957. The car is still in use and the author still lives in Reigate and the car still has its original registration of P-275.



Thomas S. Jakups, Editor

You could say 2001 ended with a bang at my household—the bang of my 18-year-old son with his three-week-old license ramming into the side of a car driven by a woman who expected him to see a signal she did not apply and then have the courtesy to stop when she turned in front of him. No one was injured, but my wife's 1991 Toyota Celica GT-S, upon which we had lavished \$1,000 in repairs two days earlier, was totaled.

After a respectable three days of mourning, Judy and I sat down to plan

The Thrill is Not Gone

the purchase of another car. This wouldn't be easy. After years of holding the normal, quite utilitarian view of the car as an individually owned, or leased, mode of transporting persons and cargo from one location to the next, she had come around to my rather abnormal view of the car as personal chariot. She had bought the Celica in 1995 specifically because of its styling and performance, and in the last few years they had bonded. A worthy replacement would have to be found, and, with that \$1,000 repair bill fresh in her mind, it would have to be a brand spanking new car.

Of course we hadn't bought a new car since 1986. So we excitedly pored over various car magazines and buying guides looking to be captivated. The cars seemed to fall into four categories: tempting but impractical two-seaters, unaffordable status symbols, SUVs and

vans, which we wouldn't even consider—on philosophical grounds, and all the rest. It seemed so easy to lump them all together—nondescript bodies, indistinguishable interiors, cutesy rear spoilers. Of course they all had fold-down rear seats, keyless entry and zero percent financing. Oh, where was the thrill?

Sobered to the new reality of car buying we visited several dealerships for test drives. What we found were cars with clean designs, strict attention to detail, excellent performance and great maneuverability. We bought a Honda Prelude, which had all of the above and a non-gimmicky style and common sense simplicity to its instrumentation. It was, dare I say it, a desirable car—and, oh yes, it was in its last year as a model—definitely a collectable in 20 years.

—Tom Jakups

SAH Journal

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SAH Journal (ISSN 1057-1973)

is published six times a year by the Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.

Subscription is by membership in the Society.

Membership dues are \$40 per year.

Send dues, membership inquiries and changes of address to

Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.

1102 Long Cove Road

Gales Ferry, CT 06335-1812 USA

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Copy Deadline for Journal 198

April 23rd



Dale K. Wells, President

Now is the time of the year when the auto shows are displaying new models and concept cars. The philosophy seems to be that unique, one-of-a-kind cars will bring out the public, and they will gaze at and thirst for a new car and buy the latest model of their choice.

Up until the 1930s it appears the auto industry was busy enough improving on the existing “concepts” and were content to leave most custom designs to the custom body builders for those who wanted something unique, different or personalized. The regular auto manufacturers had various roadsters and phaetons for the sporty crowd, but the everyday buyer opted for a practical family sedan or touring car.

Things changed during the Depression years when many manufacturers designed special show cars for the 1933 Century of Progress exposition in Chicago. The boxy carriage designs of the 1920s yielded to smoother flowing lines, which in my opinion are still some of the best designs ever. The star of the show was the Pierce Silver Arrow with its slab-side design and fast-back styling. Now the game was changing and manufacturers thought extraordinary designs would help create excitement and interest in buying new cars.

A few years later, Gordon Buehrig at Auburn was charged with the assignment to make the already attractive, sleek 1935 line even more exciting. The Auburn Boat-tail Speedster was the result, and was credited by the late Dave Hollis as being, “The most flamboyant U.S. car

Show and Tell—2002

design.” Although Ab Jenkins set more than 70 new speed records with those Auburns, the buying public did not visit the showrooms with enough buying enthusiasm to save the company.

By the end of the decade Edsel Ford commissioned the Lincoln Continental, and Harley Earl brought out the famous Buick Y-Job. The latter was strictly a concept car since it was never placed in production, but it served to introduce styling themes which became very evident when the 1942–1948 Buick models were designed for production. Those styling themes included the grille, the bombsight hood ornament and the fender line flowing onto the doors. This latter feature was used by Cadillac on the 1941 60-Special sedans and the other GM cars for 1942.

Not to be left out of the concept movement, Chrysler built several Thunderbolt and Newport models in 1941 and took them on tour to dealers’ showrooms.

Our local Chrysler garage had a Thunderbolt on display and every 15 minutes someone had to operate the electric convertible metal top just to please the visitors.

After World War II there was little immediate need for concept cars since the public wanted new cars of any style, size or shape. However, by the 1950s manufacturers began making so-called “dream” cars to test new ideas and the public’s acceptance. A bevy of such cars made the show circuits and many were displayed in dealers’ showrooms. Again, some of these cars ultimately influenced new model designs or resulted in sporty personal cars. Perhaps initially conceived to draw traffic to showrooms, Corvettes, Thunderbirds and Avantis went into production and won many loyal devotees as “personal luxury cars.” Their acceptance surely justified more modestly priced personal cars such as Mustang, Camaro and Barracuda.

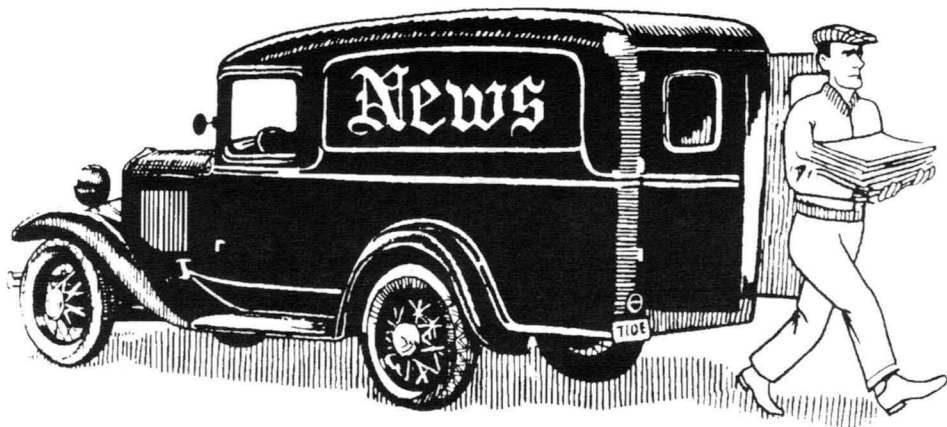
So what’s new for 2002? Our local

newspaper featured a front page article about a hydrogen fuel cell vehicle exhibited by GM. Interestingly, three of my friends attended the recent Detroit Auto Show and there were so many cars on display and such crowds in attendance only one of the three could find the GM car amidst all the new SUVs and pickup trucks. There may be two messages here.

First, alternative fuel vehicles seem to be in our future. Eventually, in 50 years, 100 years, or 1,000 years, the world will probably run out of economically available oil. It has taken 100 years to bring the automobile to its present state of high technology and efficiency. It seems only logical and prudent to develop some serious alternatives before the oil gets too expensive or runs out. Sad to contemplate, but as historians (and, many of us, car collectors) we will probably leave our descendants a nice collection of gasoline powered antiques suitable only for museum display for lack of inexpensive fuel substitutes.

The second message inferred from the popularity of SUV-Pickup-Van models is that people want and need vehicles that CARRY PEOPLE AND THINGS. Half of the market today is made up of buyers of these somewhat boxy vehicles with wide doors, lots of head room and gobs of luggage space for kids, furniture, camping gear and appliances from the discount stores. (Have you ever watched someone trying to load a computer or TV set into the back seat of a Honda or VW?) The swoopy, long-slung sedans and coupes are appealing to look at and aerodynamic for needed fuel efficiency, but they just do not fill the practical needs of half of our motorists. So we look at concept cars, dream of cruising down the superhighways and then buy an all-purpose car that will carry people and things!

—Dale Wells



SAH in Europe 2002— Paris and London

A couple of firsts marked the Society's seventh European meeting. For the first time the Paris meeting, as always on the eve of the opening of *Rétromobile*, was held in a venue other than the Automobile Club de France. This year the gathering, the largest convocation of members outside of the annual meeting at Hershey, was hosted by the Renault Collection at Boulogne-Billancourt, Paris, on Thursday evening, February 7th. This was a rare opportunity to see some of the automobiles in Renault's extensive collection, one not normally open to the public, and a singular opportunity to experience the historic home of Renault. By this time next year that site, which no longer manufactures automobiles, will have been closed entirely and the cars moved elsewhere.

A record turnout of 56 members and guests dined among the automobiles. The program for the evening was short, comprising the presentation of two of the publication awards announced at Hershey in October.

Simon Moore was presented with the Cugnot Award of Distinction for his three-volume work *The Legendary 2.3: Alfa Romeo 8C2300*. The book was published by Parkside Publications of Seattle, Washington, USA.

Also receiving a Cugnot Award of Distinction was *Nick Georgano*, editor-in-chief of *The Beaulieu Encyclopaedia of the Automobile*. The *Beaulieu Encyclopaedia* is published by The Stationery Office of London, England. In recognition of its quality as a collaborative work, the Society

presented certificates to each of the *Encyclopaedia's* twenty-three contributing authors, seven of whom were present at the dinner.

The success of the Paris dinner pays tribute to the efforts of *Laurent Friry*, who coordinates all local arrangements and acts as SAH's host for the event.

Many of us gathered at the Paris Expo exhibition hall at the Porte de Versailles the next morning for the opening of the 27th *Rétromobile* show.

Members of the fourth estate were introduced to the new CDROM set covering the French industrial heritage and French commercial vehicles. Introduced by *Paul Berliet*, head of the *Fondation de l'Automobile Marius Berliet*, the two-disk compendium, part of the "Mémoires Industrielles" series, contains 2,500 doc-



Kit Foster presents Cugnot Award of Distinction to Simon Moore (left) for *The Legendary 2.3: Alfa Romeo 8C2300*.

uments, photographs, posters, catalogs and interviews, many from the Foundation's archives. *Patrick Fridenson*, Scientific Director of the *Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales*, participated in the supervision of the project.

Reviving a tradition begun a few years ago, a number of us embarked on a rail trip on Monday, February 11th. Taking the Eurostar high-speed train through the Channel Tunnel, we arrived mid-morning in London for luncheon at the Royal Automobile Club. The luncheon, which marked the first SAH event at the RAC, was hosted by *Lord Montagu of Beaulieu* and sponsored by *Karl Ludvig-*



A bloc of writers: Editor-in-Chief *Nick Georgano* (back row, second from left) stands with contributing authors of the *Beaulieu Encyclopaedia*. Back row (left) *Pál Negyesi*; front row (left to right) *Halwart Schrader*, *Alvaro Casal Tatlock*, *Ferdy Hediger*, *Ken Ball*, *Erik van Ingen Schenau*, *Kit Foster*. Not present: *David Filsell*, *Austin Maxwell Gregory*, *Margus Hans Kuuse*, *Mike Lamm*, *Mike Lawrence*, *Volker Christian Manz*, *Keith Marvin*, *Hans-Otto Neubauer*, *Paul Nieuwenhuis*, *Jan Norbye*, *Harold Pace*, *Robert Przybylski*, *Chris Rees*, *Marian Suman-Hreblay*, *Frans Vrijaldenhoven*, *Nick Walker*. (both photos by Taylor Vinson)

sen. Sixteen members and guests enjoyed a tour of the Club headquarters, which was led by librarian Trevor Dunmore, noting SAH publications prominently on hand in the library.

A planned visit to the Royal Mews, home of the United Kingdom's state motorcars, to be led by *Bryan Goodman*, had to be canceled due to closure of the facility for renovations.

As have previous European SAH events, this one owes its inspiration and continuity to the efforts of *Taylor Vinson*. It is expected that the eighth such gathering, with at least one new attraction, will coincide with *Rétromobile XXVIII* in February 2003.

—*Kit Foster*

SAH Award Nominations Deadline Reminder

Nominations for Cugnot Award for book in other than English language are due April 30th and should be mailed to *Taylor Vinson*, 1314 Trinity Drive, Alexandria, VA 22314-4726. Nominations deadline for all other awards is also April 30th. See *Journal 196* for committee chairs.

Silent Auction Donations Due NOW!

I am happy to report on the success of the 2001 Silent Auction.

Our catalog consisted of 500 lots of which 441 sold. The gross sales were \$6,107.75. Deleting the cost of the catalog and other miscellaneous expenses resulted in a net profit of over \$4,500.

There were 30 donors and 115 bidders, 89 of whom were winning bidders. Of these 89 successful bidders, 77 came from the United States, 2 from Australia, 5 from Great Britain, 2 from Canada and 3 from the Netherlands.

Members who wish a copy of the SA report, listing what each item went for, can send a SASE to the address listed below.

The call has gone out, and is repeated here, for donations for the 2002 Silent Auction. Remember, the deadline for donations is NOW. When you have some items, send them NOW. Our system of cataloging is continuous, and in the fall we will print the catalog and hold the auction.

We are caretakers of automotive history and should make every effort to ensure that all documentation is preserved and made available to our colleagues. Your generosity also contributes to the continuing sound fiscal health of the Society.

Mail your donations to
**SAH Silent Auction
c/o Leroy Cole
P.O. Box 183
Goodrich, MI 48438**

—*Leroy Cole*

Where Is My AHR?

If you live in the U.S. and haven't received the Spring 2002 *Automotive History Review* by the time you read this, please inform the editor, *Taylor Vinson*, 1314 Trinity Drive, Alexandria, VA 22314-4726, e-mail Taylor.Vinson@nhtsa.dot.gov.

Cadillac Station Wagon Builder Unmasked—Maybe

Kit Foster's challenge to identify the builder of the Cadillac station wagon on the back cover of *Journal 196* was quickly met by several members.

Yann Saunders wrote in that the car was designed by Brooks Stevens and (possibly) built by his favorite European coach builder, Spohn of Ravensburg, Germany. The rear compartment was lined with all new (at the time) formica fascia, including even the spare wheel cover. The fins were copied from those on the 1959 Eldorado Brougham, not the 1960 cars. This car is featured in "The (new) Cadillac Database" (Dream Cars section, 1959) http://www.car-nection.com/yann/Dbas_txt/Drm59.htm.

Lee Miller thinks that the builder was James Young, which was a property of Jack Barclay, a major London Rolls-Royce dealer.

Ken Eberts and *Rich Gibbs* wrote in that the car is a 1959 "Estate Carriage" that was offered by Hollywood carrossier Peter Stengel. This conversion of a four-door sedan cost about \$14,000. Although the Estate Carriage was marketed through selected Cadillac dealers, Ken doubts that more than one of these was made.

Member News

Bill Warner, chairman of the board and founder of the Amelia Island Concours, has been selected to receive the 2002 Meguiar's Award as the collector car hobby's Person of the Year. Nominees for this award are evaluated on their contributions to the growth, quality, visibility and respectability of the hobby, their assistance with legislation affecting the hobby and their community involvement.

Steven Rossi has been elected chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Model T Automotive Heritage Complex (T-Plex). T-Plex centers around the historic Ford Piquette Plant, the site where the Model T Ford was conceived, designed, developed and manufactured.

Christopher David has an essay entitled "Kids and Cars Today" in the April issue of *Special Interest Autos*. Let's just say if I could have written such an article when I was 11 Sister Mary Alicoque would have been very pleased.

Clarification

The news article "Limousine Body Plant Destroyed" in *Journal 196* was originally written by *David Lyon* for the Kalamazoo Antique Auto Restorers Club newsletter, *Arc & Spark*. David's name had been inadvertently omitted from the Editor's Note at the end of the article.

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Gerald Palmer: Multi-talented, Quiet Achiever

by Gavin Farmer

Most motoring enthusiasts have heard and read much about famous British motor industry personalities like Sir William Lyons, Sir Alec Issigonis, Walter Owen Bentley and Donald Healey. But how many of them are as familiar with the name Gerald Palmer? By comparison, very few I would think.

That really is a shame because Palmer was an extremely talented designer and engineer whose achievements have rarely been recognised. He was a retiring kind of man who never sought the public spotlight, a man who was content to do his job and avoid the internal politics of the industry. He will be best remembered by those who know of him for three cars, two of them related with siblings.

Born and raised in South Africa

Palmer was born on January 30, 1911, and raised in South Africa. He migrated to England in 1927, where he studied to become an engineer and became apprenticed to Scammell, manufacturers of large commercial vehicles. While still at Scammell he and a colleague designed and built the Deroy sports car, a car of advanced specification that they tried to interest AC and Aston Martin into producing but to no avail.

Palmer went to MG in 1935 at the invitation of Cecil Kimber and worked on the YA series but it was never produced because of World War II. During the war Palmer met Charles Calcott Reilly, managing director of Jowett Cars, Ltd. Reilly offered him a clean sheet of paper to design and develop a completely new middle-class saloon to be produced when hostilities ceased. Palmer took the job and moved to Idle, Yorkshire, the location of Jowett's factory, in 1942.

Here he set out his ideas that, with no basic changes, became the Javelin.

A car ten years ahead of its time

The Javelin was his most controversial design; the car was generally recognised as being ten or more years ahead of its time. If the British component industry was up with Palmer's thinking, the car would not have suffered the ridicule by the media that it did. And if the engineer recruited from Singer Motors had been put back in his place and not permitted to manufacture the four-speed gearbox in-house. . . .

Imagine England in 1947, a country emerging from six years of conflict, population decimated and many cities in ruins, its industry converting back to civilian goods, including motor cars. Beavering away in the north of England was Palmer with a couple of draftsmen who drew what he conceived—a four-door family sedan with styling based on aerodynamic calculations, a semi-monocoque body structure, torsion bar suspension and a 1.5 liter four-cylinder overhead valve horizontally opposed engine mounted as far forward as possible to provide as much passenger room as possible within its given dimensions. It could be driven at speeds of up to 80 mph and had a roadholding capability that was years ahead of its British competitors. And this from arch-conservative Jowett! It even had a very successful career in production sedan racing and rallying.

Return to MG

But it was not to last—Jowett's was forever on the brink financially. Palmer felt that the company was wasting money on the Jupiter racing program (he wanted the funds to be spent on refining the processes for manufacturing the Javelin), and he left Jowett to go back to the Nuffield organization from which he'd originally been recruited.

Upon his return to Cowley he was given the responsibility of designing the MG Magnette and Wolseley 4/44 twins



Gerald Palmer

followed by the Riley Pathfinder and Wolseley 6/90 duo. His involvement with MG included the design and development of the MGA Twin Cam engine and a DOHC version of the forthcoming C-series six-cylinder engine.

Like his Javelin design, inspired according to Palmer by the prewar Lincoln-Zephyr, the Magnette's styling was heavily influenced by the Lancia Aprilia. The Magnette and the Wolseley 4/44 both exhibited his characteristic soft, rounded shape that suggested aerodynamics but, of course, did not as neither Jowett nor Nuffield were so sophisticated in their approach to design. One cannot help but ponder whether the Nuffield design was already in Palmer's mind as perhaps the successor to the Javelin had he stayed in Idle.

Both held in high regard by enthusiasts

The MG Magnette and Wolseley 4/44 are both held in high regard by enthusiasts for the marques today, and the Javelin has enjoyed something of a revival in interest for its advanced design and typical "Britishness." It's a quirky design that has responded to modern technology, such as new gasket materials, new oils and a host of other component refinements, which now allows owners to ven-

ture outside the city limits without the fear of a major breakdown.

Interestingly, the larger Nuffield cars, in particular the Riley, became well known for entirely different reasons. The Pathfinder was cruelly referred to as the "Ditchfinder" by the English press because of a handling malady. Investigation by Palmer proved his suspicions—his coil spring rear suspension design was fine; the vendor that made the chassis frame had welded the Panhard rod bracket incorrectly and some broke away causing the car's handling to falter. But the real story never hit the headlines. History did repeat itself with the Pathfinder—Palmer wanted to further develop aspects of its specifications but was denied by management—so an unfortunate reputation for unreliability was acquired by the last of the real Rileys.

The Wolseley 6/90, by comparison, became a TV star as the car for Scotland Yard and was frequently seen in various series around the world.

With the merger of Austin and Nuffield in 1952 Palmer found himself embroiled in corporate politics. New boss Leonard Lord did not see the need for the Palmer-designed cars in the model lineup—Lord's Austin people were top dogs in the new corporation and the Morris people were subordinates. The environment was not to Palmer's taste so he departed for Vauxhall in Luton. There he spent the remaining years of his professional life.

More than just an engineer

Palmer was really more than just an engineer. He designed his own home in Iffley, Oxford, and owned and restored a Bugatti T44 as well as the actual Mercedes-Benz that won the 1924 Targa Florio.

Palmer passed away on June 23, 1999, but he has left a legacy that many would feel proud to own—the many Jowett Javelins and Jupiter sports cars, the ZA/ZB MG Magnettes, the Riley Pathfinder and the Wolseley pair, the 4/44 and 6/90. His passing has brought to an end the era of the forward-thinking almost maverick-like designer/engineer within the British automobile industry. ■

Car Tags continued from page 1

From 1st January 1904 all motor vehicles had to carry registration plates on front and back with the rear one illuminated at night. The background of the plate was black with white figures three and one-half inches high. Drivers had to have licenses from the same date. Each licensing authority (mostly counties or cities) was assigned one or two letters and these were issued with consecutive numbers. There was usually a hyphen between the letter(s) and figures, which were going to be limited to three but quickly become four in practice. Further two-letter combinations were issued as necessary until 1932 when the first three-letter plate was issued. The third letter was added *before* the original two, and the figures were reduced to three.

By 1953 these two- and three-letter combinations were largely used up and reversals began (three figures and three letters). The hyphen had gone out of use in the twenties. There were a few four-figure and one-suffix letter plates issued between 1953 and 1964.

From 1963 we had an additional letter issued for each year (originally calendar years but later changed to the period from August of one year to July of the next year to prevent the bottleneck of everyone wanting new registrations each January 1st). From 1963 to 1983 the letter was a suffix to a reversion to the three-letter, three-figure system. Since 1st August 1983 this was transposed again to a prefix letter before three figures and three letters.

Reflective plates come into use

A big appearance change came in 1967 when the use of reflective plates was approved. It was maliciously rumoured at the time that the idea was a sales exercise of 3M. Soon these reflective plates with the black three-inch digits on a white front plate or a nasty yellow back plate were mandatory on new car registrations, but pre-1967 cars are not affected and may keep their traditional plates.

In 1974 all vehicle registrations were transferred to a centralised com-

puter at Swansea in South Wales. The changeover from local motor taxation offices took three and one-half years and over 27 million vehicles were involved. Some older vehicles not in use at the time were in danger of losing their registrations if not recorded on the computer before November 1983.

The letter S was nearly always Scottish but the Swansea computer does not recognise such tradition any longer. I and Z are always Irish. Q was originally kept for temporarily imported vehicles (from about 1930). But since 1st August 1983 the prefix Q was re-introduced for vehicles which had been used before. It is commonly seen on kit-cars but is still not used on normal registrations.

Before Swansea and its computer the county of original registration of a car could be recognised by reading the second and third letters only.

Fun with numbers

Cherished numbers become fashionable post-war when embassies (CAN 1, AUS 1) dealers (BUY 1, BUY 12), entertainers (RAD 10, COM 1 C) and companies (VAT 69) used them. Only numbers that had been issued could be transferred. The Lord Mayor of Liverpool had LM 2 so the Lord Mayor of London had to go one better with LM 0 (LM 1 was already taken) which looks silly as this is not a number at all. Her Majesty's official car carries no registration.

The government has encouraged cherished numbers in the last few years, holding sales through auctioneers to raise revenue. Plates such as the following have been offered: J1 MMY, ACT 10 N, P15 TON, ANN 1E, D 10 ES, S 15 TER CHR 1S, A51 MOF

Prices have ranged from a few hundred to many thousands of pounds sterling.

Upon changes of vehicle ownership the buyer must inform Swansea but the number stays on the vehicle.

The Isle of Man issued MN from 1906 and MAN from 1935. These letters are still used. In the Channel Islands, Jersey has always used J with up to five figures following. The county of Durham

continued on page 10

Obituaries

Manfred W. "Terry" Ehrich III (1941-2002)

Terry Ehrich died on January 10, 2002. Terry was a good friend, a wonderful, generous person, and although I'd known for some months that he had inoperable lung cancer, it came as a shock when I heard he'd passed away.

I met Terry in 1969, a year after he and his father-in-law, Bayard Ewing, and Bayard's friend George Waterman bought *Hemmings Motor News* from Ernie Hemmings. Terry was put in charge of *Hemmings*, and one of his first acts was to move it from Quincy, Illinois, to his adopted hometown, Bennington, Vermont.

Back in 1969, I'd written to Terry and asked whether he'd be interested in helping me publish a new magazine, *Special-Interest Autos*. He consulted with his partners, and together they decided yes. I promptly flew out to Bennington, met Terry, Bayard and George, and we all hit it off famously.

These were wealthy men, except perhaps Terry at the time; he became rich later. Yet they lived on a modest, unpretentious scale. Terry was quite liberal, both politically and socially, and always cared a great deal about giving back to Bennington, to Vermont, the nation and the world.

Terry was born June 26, 1941 in New York City. His family moved to Arlington, Vermont, in 1944, where he grew up. After high school, he enrolled in Harvard College, graduating in 1964 with a bachelor's degree in English. Not wanting to teach, he landed a job as ad manager for the prestigious *New York Review of Books*. While there he married Jill Ewing, and by the time I met them the Ehrichs had two daughters, Gillian and Shannon.

After four years in Manhattan the call came to take over *Hemmings*. Terry and his partners bought an old schoolhouse on the outskirts of Bennington, and that plus some buildings they added later still serve as the magazine's headquarters.

The SAH made Terry a Life Member in 1975. Though never a dyed-in-the-wool car enthusiast, he did like cars

and he drove a succession of middle-aged pickups and sedans, notably a 1948 Ford woody and a 1952 Chevy half-ton. He also owned a Miata. Some years ago he bought an old filling station on Bennington's Main Street, where he opened an informal museum and country store. The museum housed a number of vintage vehicles, including the well-known fleet of green Hemmings panel trucks. Terry and I would often meet at Hershey and walk around together. We rarely talked about cars.

Hemmings Publishing always had its share of suitors. I remember David E. Davis, Jr., describing how he'd gone to Bennington to buy HMN for his employer, Ziff-Davis. Terry, who always wore Levi's, invited the very proper and fashionably dressed Mr. Davis to lunch at what David E. called a "Bennington macrame restaurant." Terry, liberal idealist that he was, wanted to talk about the state of humanity and the world, while the conservative and practical Mr. Davis wanted to get down to business and fathom what the partners might consider a reasonable price for HMN.

When it became obvious that he wasn't going to get an answer, Davis asked Terry what, in the best of all worlds, he would like to be. Terry first answered, "... that's not a fair question." After Davis pressed him further, he finally said, "If I didn't have *Hemmings* and all these responsibilities, I'd like to be a blacksmith."

Terry did a tremendous amount of genuinely good work. He was named a trustee of the Vermont Law School, a trustee of the Institute for Sustainable Communities and a director for the Vermont Business for Social Responsibility. He also served on the Bennington Board of Education and a local public radio station.

I remember in 1997 at Hershey, Terry told me excitedly about "First Day of School," a program he dreamed up initially for North Bennington. He funded the First Day Foundation and also brought in American Express as a major sponsor.

"First Day of School" asks businesses to give parents the day off to meet with teachers and be with their children on each school year's first day. Terry recognized that parents and teachers often

meet as the result of a crisis. He felt that families should get involved in school before a crisis hit. The idea soon spread all over Vermont and is currently observed by 300 schools in 48 states. Terry's "First Day" efforts won him a President's Service Award in 1999.

A few years ago, Terry was joined at Hemmings by his brother, Perez. Perez made a lot of changes, adding to HMN's internet presence and starting up some new publications. In June 2001, after Terry was diagnosed with cancer, both brothers decided to put the entire Hemmings empire up for sale.

On October 21, 2001, after the citizens of Bennington learned that Terry had incurable cancer, the town staged a special parade in his honor. Terry had reservations at first but finally agreed to be honored. He rode at the head of the long column in the Hemmings 1924 American La France fire truck. Half the citizens participated in the parade; the other half stood along Main Street and cheered. I wish I could have been there.

—Michael Lamm

Larry J. Lehmkuhler (1945-2001)

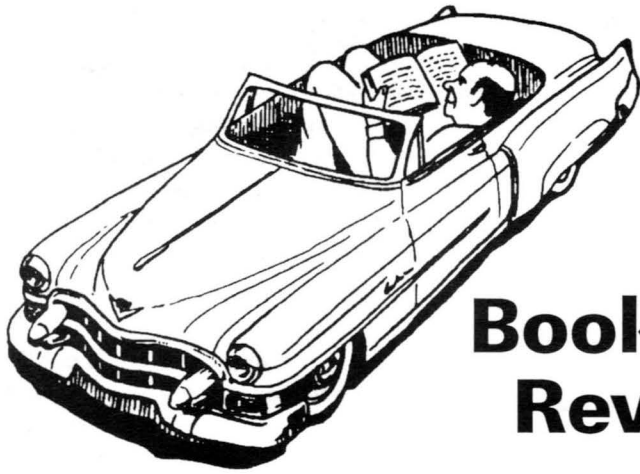
JoAnn Wright Lehmkuhler

It is my sad responsibility to report the passing of Huntingburg, Indiana, member Larry J. Lehmkuhler on December 9, 2001. His wife, JoAnn Wright Lehmkuhler, died on December 23rd.

The Lehmkuhlers' deaths resulted from severe injuries they sustained when a home furnace they were working on inexplicably exploded. Both suffered extensive body and facial burns and they were rushed to Wishard Memorial Hospital Burn Center in Indianapolis for treatment.

Larry was a long-time supporting member of SAH and the Hoosier Heritage Chapter, having joined in 1992 as member 1611. Although only 56 years old, he had retired from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management in 1998. A mechanical engineer, he previously worked for NASA in Huntsville, Alabama, on rocket propulsion systems and the Sky Lab project.

—Jack L. Martin



Book Reviews

One Man's Vision: The Life of Automotive Pioneer Ralph R. Teetor, by Marjorie Teetor Meyer. 1995 ISBN 1-878 208-66-7. 224 pages. It is available by mailing \$21.95 for hardcover and \$16.50 for softcover (ISBN 1-878208-67-5) plus \$2.00 shipping to the author at P.O. Box 90262, Indianapolis, IN 46290.

"If anyone in the whole world has had more fun out of life than I have had, I should like to meet him."

—Ralph Teetor

Marjorie Teetor Meyer has done a commendable job with a difficult subject: the life of her father. She has averted the pitfall of hero-worship and sticks to the facts while still presenting a very human story for the reader.

Born in 1890, Ralph Teetor's life paralleled that of the automotive industry; his childhood coincided with the birth of the auto and at the time of his death in 1982 the automobile industry had also reached its full maturation. From the age of three, when Ralph remembered the Columbia Exposition in Chicago with its giant engines, dynamos, trains and the one horseless carriage on display, his life, by choice, was always closely tied to engineering and the automobile.

Ralph's father, John Teetor, started a company with his brother Charlie in 1895 to manufacture bicycles to travel on railroad tracks. In 1900, the name was changed to The Light Inspection Car Company and a small gas engine designed by Charlie was powering the vehicles. In 1902, at the age of 12, Ralph

used one of these engines and with the help of his cousin Dan, built his first car.

The company began to specialize in manufacturing engines for cars and in 1913 changed its name to Teetor-Hartley Motor Company. During this time Ralph always had his hands on something in the machine shop, through high school and during college as he earned his engineering degree.

With the introduction of Henry Ford's mass-produced Model T in 1908, two things became apparent to the Teetor-Hartley Company: building engines one at a time was not going to be profitable for long and specialization was one way to success in the growing automotive field. Piston rings became its specialty and by 1926 the company's name was changed to Perfect Circle, and it was soon known worldwide.

Ralph Teetor became President of Perfect Circle Corporation in 1946 and later was inducted into the Automotive Hall of Fame. His legacy, in one sense, lies in the fact that he invented cruise control. But in another sense, and perhaps more important, it is that he persistently and continually worked for the betterment of the automotive industry and his community as a whole and was never afraid to fail. Most of his numerous patented inventions never "made it" from a commercial standpoint.

A small, family owned company since 1895, Perfect Circle made the hard decision in 1963 to merge with Dana Corporation and, in a way, gave credence to the old business adage that the

"first generation builds it, the second runs it and the third loses it." Ralph, who was 73 at the time, retired from the company but not from life . . . he still had important work to do; nobody had designed a mechanical nutcracker for the Brazilian babassu nut!

Ralph Teetor was a remarkable and gifted man, and his accomplishments were due to hard work, hard thinking, and a generous community-minded spirit. *One Man's Vision*, the title of this book, is especially fitting, illustrating the concept that vision is more than the use of eyes. Ralph Teetor, you see, was blind.

—Tom Hull

Bristol Cars—A Brooklands Portfolio, compiled by R.M. Clarke. ISBN 1-855-205 630. 320 pages, 16 colour photos, 500 b/w. Published by Brooklands Books Ltd. PO Box 146, Cobham, Surrey, KT11 1LG, England. 01932 865051, Fax: 01932 868803, e-mail info@brooklands-books.com, www.brooklands-books.com. £24.95 plus £10 air post to the US. Full colour catalogue and price list available upon request.

This special edition portfolio has been brought out by Brooklands Books to commemorate the 55th year of Bristol Cars. Compiled from their extensive, worldwide library of magazines, this collection of contemporary road tests and articles has been put together with great care. It contains a foreword from company chairman, and former grand prix driver, Tony Crook. The book covers all models built between 1946 and 2000 plus special editions, with good coverage of the Arnolt cars, in 320 information packed pages.

For the car enthusiast and historian the amount of information in this book would take years, and quite a lot of money, to put together. It helps to put Bristol into historical perspective as the world's major seller of hand-built "dignified express travel for four six-foot persons and their luggage" (Bristol's words).

This is not a coffee table book but an authoritative reference source and represents excellent value.

—Andrea Green

Richard (Rick) Lenz (1932–2002)

Rick Lenz was born May 29, 1932 in Homerville, Ohio. He worked in a variety of jobs in several states, including New York, before moving west in the fifties. He spent several years living and working in Las Vegas before settling in the San Bernardino, California, area, working in the school district audio-visual department for many years.

Rick was a contributing photographer to *Automobile Quarterly* for many years and, in more recent years, was a contributing correspondent for *Automobil Revue*, the Swiss publication.

He especially appreciated the true classics, and had a special fondness for, and considerable historic knowledge of, the lesser-known makes of U.S. cars that either saw limited production or were planned for production but never made it that far. He never gave up his search for any factory literature on the 1932 Durant, which he was convinced existed but which eluded his quest.

Rick loved to discuss automotive history and to share his vast knowledge, and we're fortunate that we'll be able to enjoy his superb automobile portraits and his informative articles for many years to come.

Rick was a first-rate automotive historian, a real gentleman and a great friend.

—Alden C. Jewell



Car Tags continued from page 7

also used J from 1904–1922. Guernsey uses figures only—up to five—and Alderney uses AY with up to four figures. Leicestershire issued AY from 1904 to 1922.

Plates originally cast aluminum

These plates themselves were originally of cast aluminum with raised numbers left polished and the background painted black. Many cars had the rear numbers hand-painted on the petrol tank and some had the front numbers painted on the radiator matrix. Pressed aluminum plates, pressed steel plates and steel plates with applied letters were the norm for the thirties. Plastic letters appeared after the war and then plastic plates with the letters integral and an “easy-clean” surface. These we still use in the new colours with the reflective colours on the back surface of a clear plastic plate. ■

YA02 JDB

On 1st September 2001 our system changed again. We now have two letters, two numbers and three letters. The first letter shows where the car was first registered but as cars are re-sold this will not have any usefulness.

The second letter has only local interest and the last three are random. The second numeral is supposed to indicate the date of first registration but from the start is designed to be nearly 20 percent inaccurate because the car tag number is to change on the first of March each year.

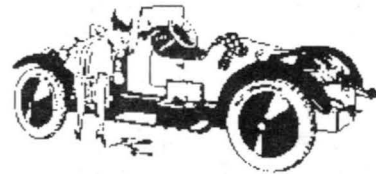
The Euro symbol and C.B. plate to the left on the plate is supposed to be voluntary but remember my view on Brussels in paragraph one!

WANTED: AUTOMOBILE LITERATURE 1900-1975

I buy sales brochures, repair & owner's manuals, books, showroom items, artwork, models & toys, posters or any items pertaining to automobiles, trucks or motorcycles...
I travel to purchase collections.

Walter Miller

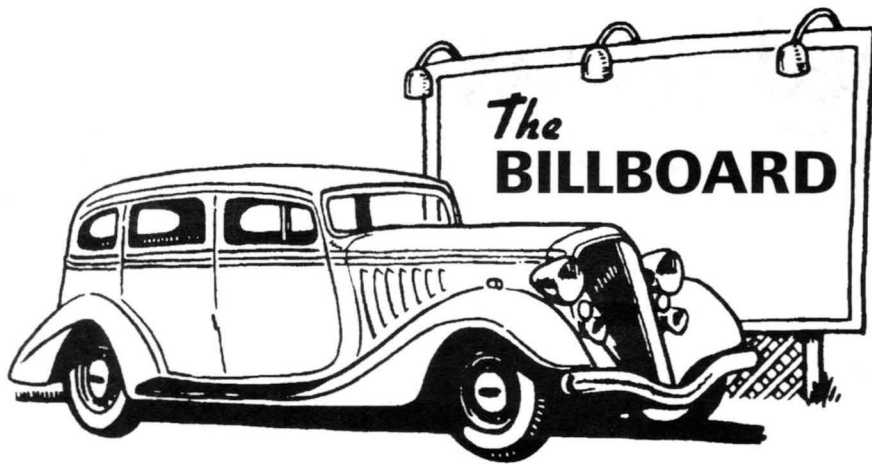
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Books Wanted *The Motor Camping Book*, Elon Jessup, 1921; *Motor Camping*, John D. and J.C. Long, 1923/1926/others?; *Trailer Ahoy!*, Charles Edgar Nash, 1937; *Touring with Tent and Trailer*, Kimball and Decker, 1937; *Mobile Homes and Travel Trailers*, Griffith and Lilian Borge-son, 1959; *Travel Trailer*, Wally Byam, 1960; *Ford Treasury of Station Wagon Living*, Reck and Moss, 1957/1958 two volumes; *Homes on Wheels*, Michael Aaron Rockland, 1980; *Roll Your Own*, Pallidini and Dubin, 1974; *Galloping Bungalows*, David Thornburg, 1991; *Home Free*, Fiona Cunningham, 1994; other books and magazines concerning the history of the motorhome and trailer. **Chris Burlace, 6 Rookes Close, Letchworth Herts. SG6 2SN England, (0)1462-672378**

Articles Wanted *American Machinist* magazine articles on production methods at the R.&V. Engineering Co. of East Moline, Illinois. There were a series of four articles done in 1913. Good photocopies are acceptable. **Donald Paul, 1952 Ward Ave., Muscatine, Iowa, 52761 email dhlypaul@muscanet.com**

Information Wanted Regarding a company called "Cars and Concepts" that was located in Michigan. This conversion company worked with the Monte Carlo SS, Buick Grand Nationals, Pontiac 2+2 and possibly the Olds 442. I am particularly interested in the 1986 model year in regard to the "aerocoupe" conversion of the Monte Carlo SS. Any pictures, literature, articles and/or advertisements would be

very much appreciated. **Kevin Knowlton, Kevincarnut@aol.com**

Information Wanted About C. Dudley Cooper. He was a manufacturer's representative in Sydney, Australia, in 1902 and was authorised to start a branch of the Automobile Club of America. He organised a motor display and races in April 1903 and was involved in a newspaper correspondence fracas as a result, then disappeared from local record. Anything known about Cooper (or

Dudley-Cooper) in the U.S.? **David Manson email davidmansion@hotmail.com**

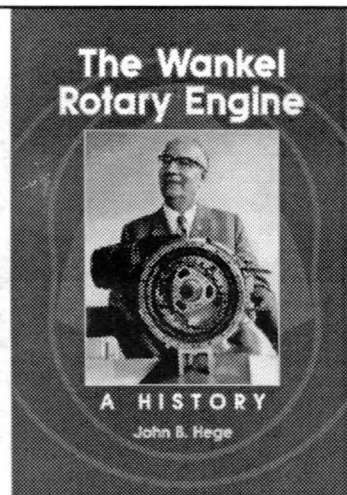
Information Wanted About the DeKalb Wagon Co, in business in various forms from about 1890 to 1968. The company was first a wagon builder, then bought Randolph Truck Co., out of Flint, Michigan, in 1913. They built trucks under the DeKalb name for less than a decade, but continued building truck bodies, changing the name of the company to DeKalb Commercial Body in 1940. **John O'Halloran, PO Box 465, DeKalb, IL 60115 (815)758-3085, HETLibr@aol.com**

For Sale 1905-1913 March issues of *Automobile Trade Journal*, each with that year's Annual Car Review, which includes illustrations and specifications for automobiles, commercial vehicles and motorcycles. Nine consecutive issues for sale as a unit only, \$750, shipping included. **G. M. Naul, 209 Glen Street, Chestertown, MD 21620**

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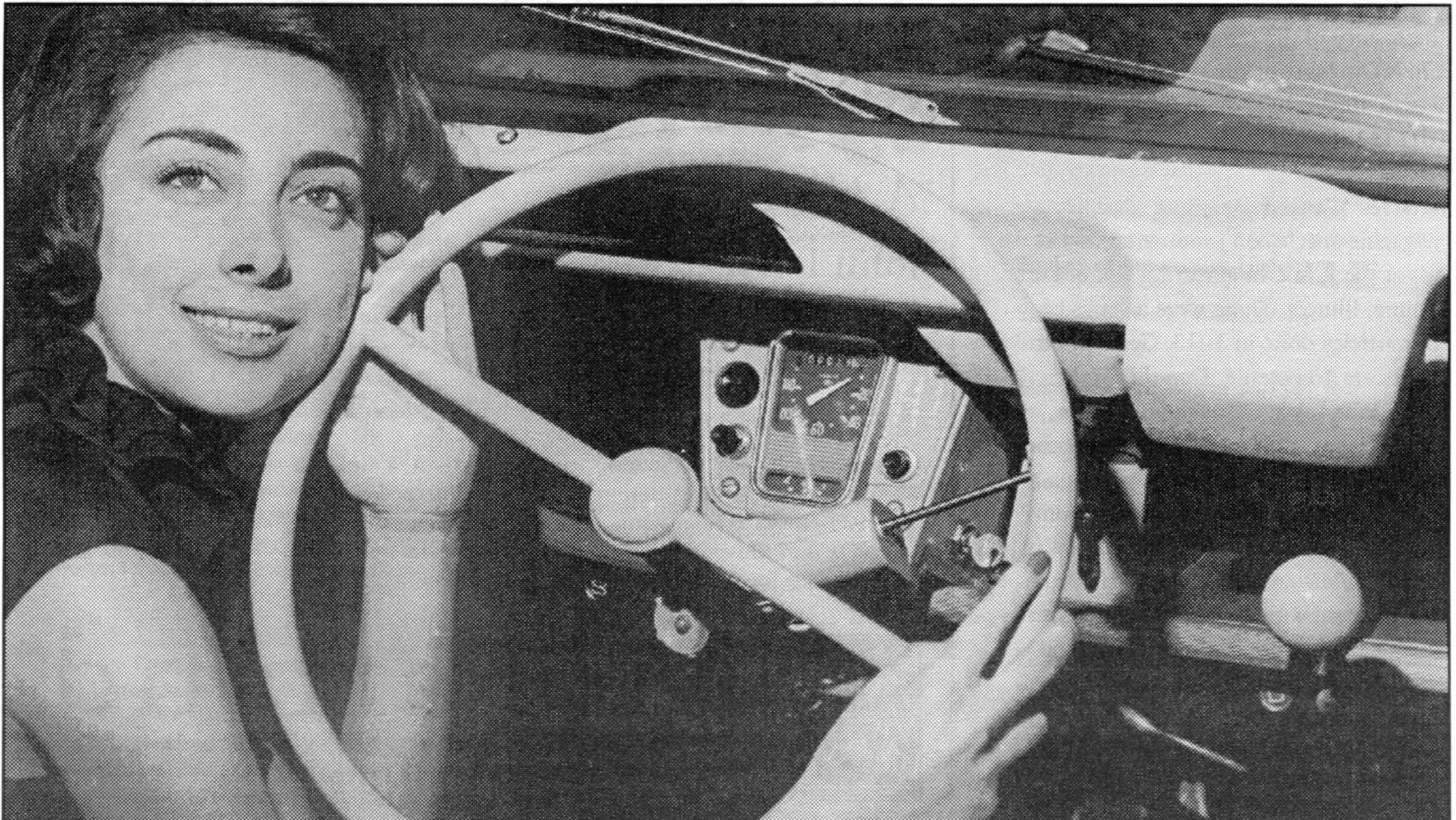
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The Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.
Issue 197
March-April 2002



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