

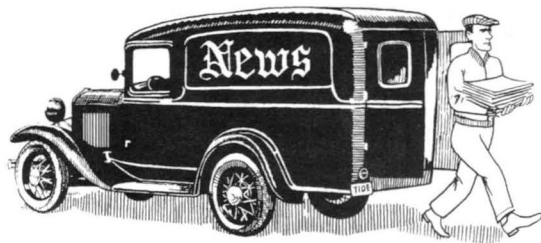
SAH JOURNAL

The Newsletter of the Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.

March-April 2000

Issue Number 185

SAH TOPS 900



The Society reached an historic milestone on Saturday, January 22nd, with the enrollment of the *Automobile Club de France* as a complimentary member, number 2362. At that moment, the active membership of the Society reached 900, a new high for our 30-plus years of operation. The ACF, host of our annual European meeting and dinner, and *Britain's Royal Automobile Club*, number 2361, were voted to membership by the directors last year; the memberships were formally presented at this year's Paris meeting on February 10th.

The membership didn't stay at 900 for long. A few hours later, the reinstatement of *Kenny Buttolph* of the *Old Cars* and Krause publications staff pushed the active number to 901. Kenny first joined in 1981, and was assigned member number 839. Welcome back, Kenny!

OLDSMOBILE/GM HERITAGE CENTER OPENS IN LANSING

At a function attended by a large number of persons, including local civic leaders, auto industry executives and SAH members, the new Oldsmobile/GM Heritage Center was formally opened in Lansing, Michigan, on Wednesday, December 1, 1999.

The new center, several years in the making, offers a unique perspective of Oldsmobile's contribution to automotive transportation. Housed in a recently remodeled early twentieth-century building, the center features an extensive collection of Oldsmobile automobiles, photographs, documents, artifacts and memorabilia. Many of these items have never before been seen by the public.

Located on the second floor of the building is the Oldsmobile History Center. The Center, staffed by SAH member *Helen Earley* and an associate, incorporates a comprehensive library and archives dealing with America's oldest carmaker. Helen states that the staff stands ready to assist historians and vintage car enthusiasts who are seeking knowledge about Oldsmobile, its history and its product.

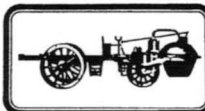
Following the ceremony Helen Earley served as a tour guide for the various other SAH members in attendance. Those persons included SAH President *Leroy Cole*, Vice-President *Richard Scharchburg*, immediate past President *Sinclair Powell* (and wife Sue) *Charles Blackman* and *James Neal*. Helen took the group through several meeting rooms, featuring historic Oldsmobile memorabilia. She expressed hope that automotive history groups would utilize these facilities for meetings in the coming months and years.

- Sinclair Powell

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EDITORIAL COMMENT



SAH JOURNAL

THE SOCIETY OF AUTOMOTIVE HISTORIANS, INC.

20th CENTURY'S MOST SIGNIFICANT, PART II

SAH Journal (ISSN 1057-1973) is published six times a year by the Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.

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PAST EDITORS

	Issues	Dates
Richard B. Brigham	1-29	September 1969-(undated) 1973
G. Marshall Naul	30-50	July 1973-December 1976
John Peckham	51-59	Feb 1977-July 1978
Walter Gosden	60-87	Nov 1978-Dec 1983
Richard B. Brigham	88-117	Jan/Feb 1983-Nov/Dec 1988
Kit Foster	118-157	Jan/Feb 1989-July/Aug 1995

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End of the Century survey number two was posted on January 4, 2000. This time I asked people “who was the most influential automotive writer of the 20th century?” I tried to make the question broad enough to cover most types of media including TV and radio. The answers came back and they were quite varied.

Forty-three names were voted on within the first day. Of the more than 400 people surveyed, 46 voted within 24 hours.

Top on the SAH survey was Ken Purdy, by a wide margin. The margin was so wide that I wondered if I shouldn't have stated the question “who's the SECOND most influential.”

The reasons were “for setting a high standard and an incredibly prolific, if tragically shortened career,” “as he summarized veteran classic and sports cars and provided a first look or basis for so many to get influenced with the automotive industry in all its aspects,” and “because he was the person who elevated auto writing from rather poor—for the most part—journalism to literature.” One person stated “*Kings Of The Road* is still a favourite bed-side book.”

Here's how the voting went:

1. Ken W. Purdy26
2. Tom McCahill15
3. Griffith Borgeson13
4. Floyd Clymer11
5. Beverly Rae Kimes10
6. David E. Davis, Jr.9
7. Denis Jenkinson8
- Karl Ludvigsen8
9. G.N. Georgano7
10. John Bond5
- Chris Economaki5
- Peter Egan5
- Henry Manney5
- Michael Sedgewick5
- Ralph Stein5

As important as these folks are, I don't know how good this survey is when yours truly gets a vote. But, to that voter, thanks!

Other than that one vote, all of the other votes had true merit for being great influences in automotive writing in the 20th century. Notables not making the top-10 were Dean Bachelor, Elaine Bond, Henry Austin Clark, Jr., *Jeff Godshall*, *Michael Lamm*, Richard Langworth, *David L. Lewis*, Laurence Pomeroy, and LJK Setright. And just like the last survey, Ralph Nader, for his book *Unsafe at Any Speed*, received multiple votes.

To sum up, as one voter said, “I believe as automotive writers go, I was most influenced by reading things these people wrote because I could truly feel the infectious quality of their zeal, their passion; they made me want to drive a great car and to feel an excitement about all things automotive...even when I did not agree with all they said.”

Preparations are moving at full speed in our race to California for our Automotive Conference. Your Board of Directors will meet on March the 8th to carry out the societies business.

My first two presidential letters focused on the conduct of the SAH Board to carry out our business. The exercise of the "golden rule" by gentlemen best serves our societies purpose and program. Now that the procedure is defined we can focus on the goals of S.A.H.

(1) The oft asked question among the aging S.A.H. membership; "Where can I preserve my one of a kind, lifetime collection of automotive literature?" Some will pass their collections on within their families, but to many the interest stops with the collector. What can the S.A.H. do to answer that question? We need to plan with a place.

(2) Where will future historians find the literature to research the present day cars. The automobile industry is moving toward paper less ad campaigning. Jeff Godshall brought to my attention the fact that more and more of the "details" are only being put on the Internet. Unlike the finely printed brochures which were printed by the millions, the electronic "literature" disappears with the model. How do we gather and store this information for future historians?

Contacts need to be made with the automobile industry. Who do you know???

As we gather the past and the present for the future, who do we have archive it??? The answer may lie in a cooperative effort with an existing archive. The need however, is permanence.

Do you have some ideas? Write me, and let's get something underway.

- Leroy Cole

25 YEARS AGO AT SAH

Issue No. 39 (March 1975) introduced the membership to SAH's new president, *Mike Lamm*. Mike congratulated *Stan Yost*, *John Peckham*, and John Martin Smith for putting together a constitution and a set of by-laws for the group. SAH was officially incorporated non-profit organization under Indiana state laws as of January 20, 1975.

Fred Roe introduced a \$25 award (from his own pocket) for the best contribution to the *Newsletter* or *Automotive History Review*. This award was to encourage more people to contribute to the SAH publications.

Perry Zavitz contributed an article in Issue No. 40 (April 1975) on, perhaps, the largest vehicle every outlined within the pages of this publication. Zavitz's "All Others Towered by Terex Titan Truck" featured a photo and a line drawing showing the sheer size of this behemoth. The Titan stood 22 feet and 7 inches tall with the bed lowered and with the bed raised (which takes 28 seconds) the vehicle towers 56 feet high. The Titan measured 66 feet-9 inches long and 25 feet-8 inches wide. Anyone want to write about the Space Shuttle Transporter?

CORRECTION

In the Editorial Comment from last issue, it was erroneously stated that "Charles" Demming, not Edward, was in the voting for most significant automotive person. My apologies.

- Sam Fiorani

AMONG THE CHAPTERS

One of the many assets of our Society is its Chapters. January 16 found SAH past-president, current president, and vice-president meeting with the Hoosier Heritage Chapter. The meeting was in the shadow of the granddad of speedways in Indianapolis. It was a useful meeting as well as entertaining. Director *Bob Barnard*, whose personality makes all feel welcome and comfortable, hosted the meeting. *Jim Hoggatt* held forth as to automotive history and the Indy connection. What a historical treasure! *Dennis Horvath* and *Alan Conant* contributed their experiences. As we were leaving, we were assured we would see some of them in California.

- Leroy Cole

IT HAPPENED YEARS AGO

One Hundred and Twenty-Five Years Ago...

April 2, 1875 Walter P. Chrysler was born.

One Hundred Years Ago...

March 5, 1900 Gottlieb Daimler died.

April 2, 1900 The first transcontinental roadway across the US was opened.

Ninety-Five Years Ago...

April 1, 1905 The first advertisement for a Packard commercial vehicle appeared.

Ninety Years Ago...

March 21, 1910 Thomas B. Jeffery, founder of the Rambler and Jeffery marques, died while on tour in Europe.

Sixty-Five Years Ago...

March 1, 1935 Production of the Polski Fiat 621 truck began.

March 7, 1935 Malcolm Campbell set a land speed record at 276mph.

Sixty Years Ago...

April 8, 1940 Ford Motor Company produced its seven millionth V8 engine.

Fifty Years Ago...

March 1, 1950 Nash introduced the Rambler.

Forty Years Ago...

March 11, 1960 Volkswagen France opened in Paris.

Thirty-Five Years Ago...

March 9, 1965 Volkswagen introduced the Type 147 van.

Thirty Years Ago...

April 1, 1970 American Motors introduced the Gremlin.

April 17, 1970 Lincoln-Mercury division first imported the Capri from Germany.

Fifteen Years Ago...

April 1, 1985 Hyundai established Hyundai Motor America.

CHARLES GRIFFIN

From Safety Fast, January, 2000:

"I regret to have to record the death of Charles Griffin at the age 81 years at his retirement home of Cross Inn, Dyfe on October 31st 1999.

"Charles Griffin's contact with MG began with development and testing of various MG Models at Cowley in the then Nuffield organisation. In particular the M.G. Magnette ZA along with its parallel Wolseley 4/44 under the direction of their designer Gerry Palmer. He moved to Longbridge Austin Works during the Leonard Lord / Alec Issigonis period of reorganisation being involved with many models, including the big 3 litre Austin. He became Director of Vehicle Engineering with an overall responsibility for M.G. design and development, although this was largely delegated in practice to Syd Enever and later Roy Brocklehurst. In 1973 he promoted Roy to chief engineer, vehicle engineering at Longbridge and Don Hayter to chief engineer M.G. at Abingdon.

"My own continuing contact with him started with the M.G. development in 1960-1 and particularly with the safety systems vehicle GT S.S.V.T., built to demonstrate primary and secondary safety technology in a small British sports car. I, and my colleagues, always found Charles approachable, good humoured, positive and having the ability to delegate action while keeping the firm overall eye on things.

"M.G. over the years have owed him a great deal of respect and debt for his input into the Marque.

"We extend our sincere condolences to his wife and family, son Brian is carrying on the family name and tradition at Rover in Gaydon Engineering..

"By Don Hayter."

Charles Griffin played a key role in the development of some of the most popular and successful British cars during the 1950's through the 1970's. He is credited to the Morris 1100, which was launched in August 1962. He also provided the leadership and major technical input in the design of the Leyland Princess, Austin Metro, Austin Maestro, etc. A famous man in the history of the British car, Charles Griffin probably will be remembered as the engineer who translated the ideas of Sir Alec Issigonis into prototype and eventually production-ready cars.

- Bengt Lydell

ADDITIONAL NEWS

WEB SITE WINS AWARD

The International Automobile Media Association has awarded its highest honor, the MOTO Award, to Golias Publishing and Ohio Media's www.wintonhistory.com for excellence in automotive media. This site features *Thomas F. Saal* and *Bernard J. Golias'* book "Famous But Forgotten: The Story of Alexander Winton" (*SAH Journal* No. 176).

SAH WEBSITE UP AND RUNNING

After a very long gestation period, the Society of Automotive Historians has a website. Located at www.autohistory.org, the SAH site hosts a number of articles from past *SAH Journal* issues and will be updated with *Journal* and *Review* articles as well as interesting new and original content.

The screenshot shows the SAH@AutoHistory.org website. At the top, there is a logo with a car and the text "SAH@AutoHistory.ORG". Below the logo, it says "Website of the Society of Automotive Historians, Inc.". The page has a navigation bar with "Visitor #146", "www.autohistory.org", and "March 09, 2000". The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column is titled "CONTENTS" and lists links for "About the Society", "SAH Mission and Services", "Join the Society", "You're Welcome to Join", "Society Resources", "Who, Where and How in the SAH", "Auto History Online", "Articles from the SAH Journal and Review", "Calendar of Events", "SAH and Other Dates", and "Links". The right column is titled "NEWS OF THE DAY" and contains an article titled "Why Automotive History?" with a sub-heading "SAH AutoHistory Debuts". The article text discusses the importance of history in understanding the 20th and 21st centuries and mentions the SAH's efforts in recording, preservation, and study of cars, trucks, technology, and people. At the bottom of the page, there is a footer that says "Please send comments to Dave Duricy at" and "Copyright SAH, 2000 - All Rights Reserved".

BMW PARTS WITH ROVER

Bayerische Motoren Werke AG (BMW) announced on March 16 that it would sell Rover Cars to a private group of investors. After six troubled years of ownership, BMW has decided to rid itself of the British manufacturer.

Rover Group, which comprises Rover cars, MG, Mini and Land Rover (among numerous famous unused brands), will be split into Rover/MG, Mini and Land Rover with BMW keeping Mini. Rover cars and MG will be renamed the MG Car Company under the ownership of Alchemy Partners. Also included in the sale is the largest automotive plant in England, the Longbridge facility. BMW would retain the Oxford plant and the new engine plant currently under construction.

With the sale, BMW will be forced to take a US\$3.1 billion charge on its accounts. Additionally, BMW would actually pay Alchemy Partners to take Rover.

Two days later, it was announced that Ford Motor Company would purchase Land Rover from BMW. Land Rover would fit well into Ford's Premier Automotive Group which includes Lincoln, Volvo, Aston Martin, and Jaguar.

All of this comes on the heels of General Motor's announcement that may keep them as the world's largest automaker. General Motors and Fiat Auto announced a stock swap that would make GM a 20% owner of Fiat Auto and Fiat would hold 5% of GM. The Italian-American alliance will help boost both companies in Europe and South America. It will also allow the two companies to share developmental costs of small cars and engines.

It just keeps getting more interesting.

NICHOLAS-JOSEPH CUGNOT AWARD

The Cugnot Award recognizes the best book in the field of automotive history published in the prior year. Nominations can be made to: Richard Scharchburg, Chair, 12147 Pine Row Lane, Grand Blanc, MI 48439. Phone: (810)694-5539. Fax: (810)762-9836. Email: rscharch@ket.edu

CARL BENZ AWARD

The Benz Award recognizes the best article in the field of automotive history published in the prior year. Nominations can be made to: Don Keefe, Chair, 6173 Doe Haven Drive, Farmington, NY 14425.

RICHARD AND GRACE BRIGHAM AWARD

The Brigham Award recognizes the best overall treatment of automotive history for a magazine as a whole. Nominations can be made to: Jeff Godshall, 406 Oakland, Apt. 5, Royal Oak, MI 48067.

E.P. INGERSOLL AWARD

The Ingersoll Award recognizes the best treatment of automotive history in media other than print. Nominations can be made to: James Wren, 5930 Glen Eagles Drive, West Bloomfield, MI 48323.

FRIEND OF AUTOMOTIVE HISTORY

The Friend of Automotive History Award recognizes exceptional contributions to the cause of automotive history by an individual. Nominations can be made to: James Wren, 5930 Glen Eagles Drive, West Bloomfield, MI 48323.

JAMES J. BRADLEY AWARD

The Bradley Award recognizes outstanding contributions to automotive history by an organization. Contact: James Wren, 5930 Glen Eagles Drive, West Bloomfield, MI 48323.

STUDENT PAPER AWARD

The new Student Writing Award recognizes the best treatment of automotive history by a student. Nominations can be made to: Sinclair Powell, 8 Ruthven Place, Ann Arbor, MI 48104-2612.

SAH AT RETROMOBILE BERLIET FOUNDATION 2000

by Taylor Vinson

On the rainy night of February 10, 32 SAH members and their guests met at the Automobile-Club de France for the fifth annual meeting coincident with the opening of that country's largest old-vehicle show, *Rétromobile*.

Spirits undampened by the weather, *les compatriots de l'automobile* as they were dubbed for the evening, met at 6:30pm for a tour of the Club's archives, arranged by Paul Berliet in his capacity as president of the Club's *Commission Historique*, and led by Hervé Charbonneaux. M. Charbonneaux manages the Rallye de Paris 2000 for the Club and is the son of the noted industrial designer, Philippe charbonneaux (see obituary, *SAH Journal* No. 177).

Following the tour, we gathered once again for dinner in the gilded Salon Bugatti overlooking the Place de la Concorde. This year, the view was enlivened by two once-in-a-lifetime sights. A giant brilliantly-lit ferris wheel (42 cabins) had been erected to one side of the Place, left over from the millennial celebrations. If you watched these on New Year's Eve, you'll recall the spectacular fireworks and strobe light show on the Eiffel Tower at midnight. The strobe lights will remain until the end of 2000, illuminating the Tower each night for five minutes or so, hourly from 5pm to 1am. This we could also see from the Salon Bugatti.

The SAH Board of Directors at its October 1999 meeting in Hershey authorized a Complimentary Membership for the Club. A handsome certificate was presented to the Club's representative, M. Berliet, at the end of the evening. Members present in addition to M. Berliet who reside in France included *Patrick Fridenson*, *Jasmine Borgeson*, and *Laurent Friry*. From Switzerland and Germany respectively came *Ferdinand Hediger* and *Georg Amtmann*. The UK Chapter was represented by *Bryan Goodman*, *Victor Lane*, *William Morrison*, *John Warburton*, *Malcolm Jeal*, and *Ken Ball*. From the US we had *Jules Heumann*, *David Brownell*, *Yves Berliet*, *Richard Adatto*, *Tom Solley* (who lives in England), and the writer of this article. Two French guests subsequently became members: *Marc-Antoine Colin* and *Jean-François de Laitre*.

We expressed our appreciation to Laurent Friry for arranging what, to judge by the comments, was the most warmly received of our meetings to date. At the suggestion of some of the members, we are exploring the possibility of having next year's dinner at the Renault Museum in Billancourt. I understand that the Museum's inventory contains 500 vehicles. A tentative date for our next Paris meeting is Thursday, February 8, 2001.

The highlight to this observer of the 25th annual *Rétromobile* was "the world's oldest car," a Lenoir which is documented as having been sold as a used vehicle in 1882 and which may have been built as early as 1863. Also notable were two presidential conveyances, a 1924 40CV Renault, and an early 1970s Citroën SM convertible parade car, perhaps the one used by President Chirac at his 1995 inaugural. M. le Président's daily driver on the day I saw it was an unassuming grey slightly-stretched contemporary Renault Safrane sedan with smoked rear window glass, almost indistinguishable from two similar cars that form the remainder of the *Élysée's* discreet convoy about town.

Finally, thanks to Laurent, I discovered the *Salon des Anciens Documents*, an annual old-paper fair coincident with *Rétromobile* and handily located at the exposition hall, Porte de Champerret métro stop. Though only a few auto ads and catalogues were being offered, the real fascination of the flea market is that it's a history of French 20th century in print. Some examples: a photo from 1931 showing World War I's Maréchal Joffre laid out on a catafalque; copies of *Der Adler*, a propaganda magazine in French, distributed by the German authorities during the Occupation; and, yes, even magazines of a certain type that our fathers might have tried to smuggle into the U.S. before World War II.

More reasons than ever to come back to Paris next year!

THE AUTOMOTIVE CENTURY: MOST INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE

AUTOMOTIVE WRITERS

by Beverly Rae Kimes

Editor's Note: The results of an informal, online survey are outlined on page 2. As the living person with the most votes in this survey, Bev Kimes was asked to provide some insight into why the top-four people (Beverly rounds out the top five) made the impact that they have.

KEN W. PURDY

During his lifetime, Ken Purdy was considered the dean of automotive writers. Following his death in 1972 he became a legend. An automobile enthusiast since he was able to drive, Ken wrote his first article about cars in 1949. *True* magazine bought it, commissioned ten more, and then stole the author himself away from *Parade* to be *True's* new editor. In the mid-fifties he turned free-lance and began writing about wide-ranging subjects (acupuncture, bull fighting, manners, morals, etc.) as well as short stories. But nowhere did the Purdy brilliance of style shine more gloriously than in his articles about automobiles. He was a deeply devoted enthusiast, which showed in his work, and no one knew better than he how to tell a story. His first book, *Kings of the Road*, published in 1952, remains required reading for anyone interested in writing about automobiles on a professional or avocational basis. Some years back *Automobile Quarterly* published my biography of Ken Purdy. The number of people who wrote me afterwards that Ken's articles were the reason they had become interested in the world of old cars was simply astounding. Ken Purdy had a profound influence on the cause of automobile history.

TOM MCCAHILL

He was called "King of the Road Testers." And since his death in 1975, no one else has been able to claim the title. Tom McCahill's first road test appeared in the February 1946 issue of *Mechanix Illustrated*. Its subject was one of the first postwar Fords, which he had bought for himself. Over the next three decades, more than 600 road tests followed. McCahill was objective, matter-of-fact and wonderful fun to read. He could turn a phrase better than anyone in his field, and was especially fond of simile and metaphor. A 1950 Oldsmobile was "hot as a hornet's kiss." A 1947 Kaiser had the "agility of an elephant in the Ballet Russe." A 1951 Jowett "cornered like a porpoise with heartburn." A 1957 Buick on the road was "a fat matron trying to get out of a slippery bathtub." After reading a McCahill road test, one knew precisely what the car under scrutiny was all about. Needless to say, he has been researched and oft-quoted since by any historian writing about a car that Tom McCahill drove and wrote about when new.

GRIFFITH BORGESON

His first automobile, at the age of sixteen, was a new Mercedes Nurburg. Born in 1918 and raised in the San Francisco Bay area, Griff Borgeson followed the Nurburg with a stable of cars that was extraordinary and about which he began to write in 1949. He also began developing a relationship with many of the people who had made automobile history - Abner Doble, Wilfred Leland, Leo Goossen, Laurence Pomeroy, W.F. Bradley, Pininfarina,



Vittorio Jano, Ernesto Maserati, Stutz's Fred Moskovics, among others - or who were behind the scenes and saw it happen. Further, he possessed a fine engineering mind, was an indefatigable researcher, and had a wonderful writing style. All this combined to make his articles compelling reading. One could recognize a Borgeson piece without even looking at the byline. His first book, co-written with his friend Eugene Jaderquist and published in 1955, was *Sports & Classic Cars. The Golden Age of the American Racing Car*, published in 1966, was considered a landmark and won

the AACA's Thomas McKean Trophy. Fluent in several languages, Griff moved to France in 1963. His historical articles appeared in publications worldwide, significantly in the United States in *Automobile Quarterly* for whom he served as European Editor for many years. His first article for *AQ* was called "The Charlatan Mystery...the enigma of Ernest Henry and the true origins of the classical racing engine." The title neatly defines his probing approach to automobile history. Among his later books was his study of Ettore Bugatti and the cars he built (subtitled "The Dynamics of Mythology") published by Osprey in 1981 and Errett Lobban Cord and the cars in his empire, published by *AQ* a few years later. It would be hard to imagine any automobile historian writing today who has not been influenced by the work of Griff Borgeson.

FLOYD CLYMER

Floyd Clymer was there when it was happening. Indeed, he was involved. In the early twenties in Denver, Colorado he was manufacturing through-the-windshield spotlights for the automobile industry. At the age of twenty-eight, he sold his company for a quarter of a million dollars, investing it in real estate and assuming that he could retire as a landlord. Alas, this did not work out well. So he returned to the automobile business, dabbling in other accessories, among them manufacture of the headlamp for the Hanson built in Georgia in exchange for George Washington Hanson's patent. In 1926, amid the many records being made or broken for Walter Chrysler's new Imperial, was the run in an E-80 by Floyd Clymer over the 702 miles from Kansas City to Denver at an average of 51.8 mph. Ultimately, he became an automobile dealer. But it was when he turned publisher of "Books Pertaining to Automobiles, Motorcycles and Motor Racing" that Clymer made his most significant contribution to automobile history. Beginning just after World War II, Clymer began issuing volumes with alacrity: Prince Chula's biography of Dick Seaman, Sir Malcolm Campbell's recollections of

"famous motorists," Fred Wagner's recollections, two books on the record-making feats of Ab Jenkins, Tim Birkin's autobiography. His "motor scrapbook" collections of

Floyd Clymer's

STEAM CAR

SCRAPBOOK



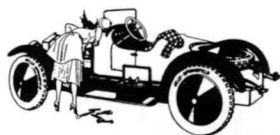
TIME
Says "To Americans for whom an automobile is a 20th Century work of art, and its evolution a nostalgic memory, Floyd Clymer's Scrapbook is a MUST."



This Williams steam roadster, a product of Williams Engine Company, Inc., of Ambler, Pa., is the most advanced of present day steam automobiles.

200 STEAM AUTOS
ANCIENT AND MODERN
ILLUSTRATED -- DESCRIBED -- INTERESTING ADS AND PHOTOS
HISTORICAL -- AMUSING!

WANTED: AUTOMOBILE LITERATURE, 1900-1975



WALTER MILLER
6710 Brooklawn Parkway
Syracuse, NY 13211 U.S.A.
PHONE: 315-432-8282, FAX: 315-432-8256

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

clippings and his own recollections about automobiles of the pre-World War II era were exceedingly popular in the late forties and invaluable references today. He published books on such esoteric subjects (for the American reader) as Shelsley Walsh and the Tourist Trophy. He published books of automotive advertisements. The most dog-eared of the Clymer books in my library is the *Indianapolis History Book* he published in 1946, which gathered together first-hand periodical reports and graphs of all the 500 races from 1909 to 1941. Some historians today downplay Clymer's importance by pointing to all the facts he got wrong, and there indeed were many. But this negates the importance of the original reference material which he put into print, some of which might have been lost otherwise. And the fact that automobile history, while it had been made, had not yet been born as a discipline. Somebody had to start the ball rolling, and Floyd Clymer did that, in spades.

THE AUTOMOTIVE CENTURY: MOST INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE

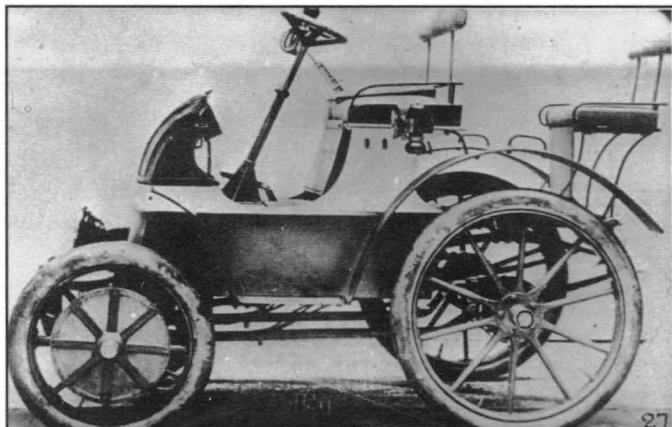
Ferdinand Porsche

by Prescott Kelly

The very first Porsche, a hand-built aluminum prototype, was completed on June 8, 1948. The history of Porsche automobiles goes back much farther, however, all the way back to 1900 when Dr. Ferdinand Porsche introduced his first design, a Lohner-Porsche.

Ferdinand Porsche, was born in 1875 in Mattersdorf, a village close to Reichenberg, in what was then North Bohemia, later Czechoslovakia. The young Porsche demonstrated excellent mechanical aptitude and, at age 18, was recommended for a job in Vienna with Bela Egger (later Brown Boveri). In Vienna, he sneaked into night classes at the Technical University, the only "formal" engineering education he ever obtained.

After five years in Vienna, he landed his first job in the automotive field with Jacob Lohner. In 1900, the 'System Lohner-Porsche' electric carriage made its debut at the World's Fair in Paris. This automobile set several Austrian land speed records. It did over 35 mph. Porsche then harnessed Daimler's



The early 1900's Lohner-Porsche, originally electric-powered, then with an internal combustion engine powering hub-mounted electric motors.

- courtesy of Prescott Kelly

and Panhard's internal combustion engines to power wheel-mounted electric motors in the new "System Mixt." More speed records were won, acclaim followed, and in 1905 Porsche won the Poetting Prize as Austria's outstanding automotive designer. He was now a famous automotive engineer in Europe.

Austro-Daimler (a licensee of the Stuttgart-based Daimler firm) recruited Porsche in 1906 to be its chief designer. One of his most famous A-D's appeared in 1910. Porsche designed an 85-horsepower, streamlined car for the Prince Henry Trial. Examples won the top three places in the 1910 trial, and Model 27/80 has ever since been known as the "Prince Henry."

For most of the next decade, Austro-Daimler concentrated on war materiel including aircraft engines, huge trucks, and motorized cannons. In 1916, Porsche became the firm's managing director. The next year, Porsche received what became his most cherished honor, an honorary doctorate from Vienna Technical University, the same institution where 24 years earlier he had sneaked into night classes. This degree was designated by the now-famous "Dr. Ing. h.c." which was forever to be part of the professor's persona and eventually part of his firm's name.

While Austro-Daimler principally pursued large luxury sedans in the '20s, Dr. Porsche moved toward light cars and racing. Porsche had competed in hillclimbs, speed trials and rallies since his first days in the industry. By 1922, Dr. Porsche had embraced racing as a way to improve his cars and the resultant Sascha won races throughout Europe with 43 wins in



Dr. Ferdinand Porsche when he took over as Technical Director at Daimler in 1923. In 1930 he launched his own design firm in Stuttgart.

- courtesy of Prescott Kelly

51 starts. Eventually, Porsche and Austro-Daimler's board differed on the future direction of its cars and Dr. Porsche triggered his formidable temper and left Austro-Daimler in 1923.

Within several months, he was in Stuttgart as Daimler's Technical Director. His early work at Daimler earned him a

second honorary degree, this time from the Stuttgart Technical University. A series of intimidating racing cars followed: the two-liter, eight-cylinder cars for 1925-27 in which Rudolf Caracciola won 21 races in 27 starts. After the 1926 merger of Daimler and Benz, the big 6.2-liter K, 6.8-liter S, and then the 7.0-liter SS, SSK, and SSKL models followed, dominating racing in 1928-1930. While Porsche's racing activities were successful, his push for small, light Daimler-Benz cars was not. The board objected. In 1929, Porsche left for a brief stay at Steyr, but the Great Depression was on and car manufacturing was not the place to be. Steyr collapsed. At age 55, Porsche had no job. Despite his broadly-acknowledged brilliance, his well-earned reputation for stubbornness was not going to help him find a good job in those hard times.

He returned to Stuttgart, an automotive center with firms such as Hirth, Mahle, and Bosch in addition to Daimler-Benz. In January 1931, he launched his consulting firm, 'Dr. Ing. h.c. F. Porsche GmbH Konstruktionsburo Fur Motern, Fahrzeug, Luftfahrzeug, and Wasserfahrzeugbau' ('Motors, Vehicles, Airplanes, and Boats...'). The staff was composed of men with whom the Professor had previously worked: Karl Rabe, chief engineer, was joined by Erwin Komenda (body design), Karl Frolich (transmissions), Josef Kales (motors), Josef Zahradnik (steering and suspensions), Francis Reimspiess, Han Mickl (aerodynamics), Adolf Rosenberger (business manager), and two relatives, Anton Piech (a lawyer, Ferdinand Porsche's son-in-law and later father of Ferdinand Piech, now chairman of Volkswagen), and Porsche's own son, Ferry.

Ferdinand Anton Ernst Porsche had been born in 1909 in Weiner Neustadt, Austria, the second child in the family behind a five-year older sister, Louisa. His first nickname was 'Ferdy' but (as he recounted 50 years later) his governess did not like the sound of the name and changed it to 'Ferry', actually a nickname for Franz.

Growing up, young Porsche was allowed to play in the Austro-Daimler factory. He was interested in matters automotive and paid attention to what he saw and heard in the factory. At an early age he accompanied his father to races for both Austro-Daimler and Daimler-Benz (including Indianapolis in 1923), and he had a half-sized two-cylinder car. Educated in Wiener Neustadt and then Stuttgart, Ferry was an excellent math student. In 1928, not yet 19 years old, he began an apprenticeship at Bosch. In 1930, he was tutored daily in physics and engineering in preparation for working in the new Porsche consulting firm.

The '30s were alternatively exhilarating and depressing for the Porsche family: times of impending financial disaster mixed with huge engineering successes, followed by the War, and the destruction of the European economy.

The new Porsche design firm had projects soon after opening, such as Professor Porsche's reputation. First was a new medium-priced car for Wanderer. Later, Porsche decided to undertake a new small car; one designed to be small from inception and not a scaled-down bigger car. Professor Porsche funded the project with a loan on his life insurance. It was an important design, being the direct antecedent of the Volkswagen. Later Zundapp was recruited to sponsor the project and three prototypes were built.

Zundapp lost interest when its motorcycle business boomed; then NSU took on the project. After NSU bowed out in the face of huge tooling costs, the small car project lay fallow until Germany's newly elected chancellor, Adolf Hitler, decided every German family needed a radio (to be able to listen to his dogma) and either a small car or a durable tractor. In June of 1934, the Third Reich signed a contract to build prototype Volkswagens. By the winter of 1936, three prototypes, the VW3, had been built in the garages of Professor Porsche's home. In early 1937, the Nazi 'oversight' organization, the RDA (Reichverband der Deutschen Automobilindustrie) recommended further development and that 30 additional prototypes be built by Daimler-Benz. During



On the left, a VW 30 prototype in front of a VW 3 prototype, both of them in front of the Porsche family villa on a rise overlooking Stuttgart.

- courtesy of Prescott Kelly

the testing of the VW30, the Reich selected an estate northeast of Hanover to become the site of the Volkswagen factory. "Die Autostadt" was born; today it is Wolfsburg, still the worldwide headquarters of Volkswagen.

While the Professor undertook co-general management (with a Nazi administrator) of the new plant, his son stayed in Stuttgart and ran the design business. The government gave the car a propaganda-oriented name, the "KdF" - short for Kraft durch Freude ("strength through joy"), the recreation arm of the workers' Labor Front. Refinements to the car were undertaken. Production started but was quickly switched over to the Kubelwagen and Schwimmwagen (a "jeep" and its amphibious counterpart) for the suddenly escalating World War II. In 1944, allied bombing destroyed over half of the plant. Only because two huge electricity-producing turbines were unscathed did the British rebuild the plant and restart production of the Volkswagen after the War.

Back in the early '30s the Porsche firm launched a second internal project to design a car to meet a new Grand Prix formula. Hitler had announced a 500,000 RM (\$250,000) subsidy for a German firm that would build and campaign cars in the new formula. Daimler-Benz applied and won; Auto Union applied and lost. Auto Union reapplied and took Professor Porsche and his designs to meet with Hitler and his

staff. In the now-famous meeting, Porsche convinced Hitler of the merits of the Porsche design. Soon the Grand Prix wars of the Silver Arrows were on, and Mercedes and Auto Union took turns at ascendancy.

The car Porsche designed was very innovative: a V-16 4.5-liter engine placed ahead of the rear transaxle, tube frame, aluminum skin weighing 99 pounds, gas tank between the cockpit and the engine (in the center of the car so that weight gain or loss with gas load did not unduly impact handling), a front suspension of torsion bars and trailing arms, and a rear suspension of swing axles, semi-elliptical springs, and tube-type shocks.

The 750-kilo formula Auto Union P-wagens were fearsome race cars. With fewer than three pounds per horsepower and ultimately 650 horse-power from six liters, the cars could lay rubber accelerating from 100 mph. In various iterations, they were hillclimb champions, won Grand Prix races, and set land speed records.

Professor Porsche was heavily involved with designing the P-wagens. Then as his involvement shifted more to building the plant for the KdF/Volkswagen, his son took over development projects at the Stuttgart design firm. After the formula change in 1938 (3-liter supercharged or 4.5-liter normally aspirated engines), Auto Union took full control of the team under Eberan von Eberhorst, who continued to work with the Porsche firm.

Toward the end of the War; Porsche people were working in Stuttgart, Wolfsburg, the family farm in Zell am See (Austria), and in Gmund (Austria) where the Third Reich sent the firm to avoid the Allied bombing of Stuttgart. The younger Porsche had long foreseen the outcome of the War. He had grown up anti-military and stayed apolitical through the Nazi years. The old Professor was simply politically naive; he was consumed with engineering, and it's obvious that he did not mix engineering with morality. If there was a sponsor for an engineering project, be it a race car or a tank, he wanted to design and build the best there ever was.

When the Allies arrived in mid-1945, it was no surprise. That November; the French invited Professor Porsche to visit them at their occupation headquarters in Baden-Baden. There he was offered the opportunity to redesign the Volkswagen to be "more French" and to move equipment (which the French would claim as war reparations) from Wolfsburg to build cars in France. The offer was probably a sincere one; the French had already nationalized Renault, and had arrested Louis Renault as a Nazi collaborator.

Disagreement within the government ensued. French automakers, led by Jean Pierre Peugeot, wanted no part of a French Volkswagen. On December 15, 1945, while the invited guests of the French in Baden-Baden, Professor Porsche, Ferry Porsche and Anton Piech were arrested as war criminals. Ferry was soon released, but the Professor and Piech went to prison in Dijon. No charges were brought and no trial was scheduled, but "bail" was set at 500,000 francs each.

After his release, the younger Porsche went to work to secure a commission for the family firm, still in Gmund. With help from Carlo Abarth, Porsche secured a contract with Piero

Dusio, a wealthy Italian industrialist, for a new Grand Prix race car. The Type 360 Cisitalia, a 1.5-liter supercharged car smaller than, but reminiscent of, the Auto Unions was the result. The fees Porsche earned for its design bought the release of Professor Porsche and Piech. They were freed August 1, 1947 after almost 20 months in captivity, mostly in terrible conditions in the medieval Dijon prison. The Professor's health was poor.

While the Professor was in prison, the little Porsche firm did whatever it could to stay in business. Aside from the Cisitalia project, it repaired cars, built and sold water pumps and winches, and designed its own sports car, the first car to carry the name Porsche. Type 356 was the project number. The prototype followed the tradition of the Auto Union and Cisitalia Grand Prix cars with mid-chassis engine placed ahead of the transaxle, in this case using modified Volkswagen drive train components. Upon his return to the company from prison, Professor Porsche reviewed the designs his son and his team had produced. He approved of them, commenting frequently to the workers that he would have designed both the Cisitalia Grand Prix car and the Porsche prototype the same way Ferry did.

During the winter of 1947-48, a Zurich car distributor ordered five Porsches and the Type 356 was put into production in the old saw mill in Gmund. Built entirely by hand, these cars adopted a more Volkswagen-like layout in order to have vestigial back seats: the engine was moved behind the transaxle. While in Gmund the little firm ultimately built and delivered 49 of the aluminum skinned 356s plus five additional chassis which were delivered to the Beutler firm in Thun, Switzerland, for fitting with their cabriolet bodies. In the Spring of 1949, Heinz Nordhoff hired the Porsche firm as consultants for further development of the VW, and contracted to pay Porsche a royalty on every car built. Porsche also became the Austrian distributor for VW. With finances now more secure, Porsche made plans to return to Stuttgart and in September 1949, reopened offices in space rented from the Reutter body works. Steel-bodied 356's went into production there soon after. Initial plans were to build up to 500 cars a year. Eventually more than 78,000 356s would be built in 17 years.

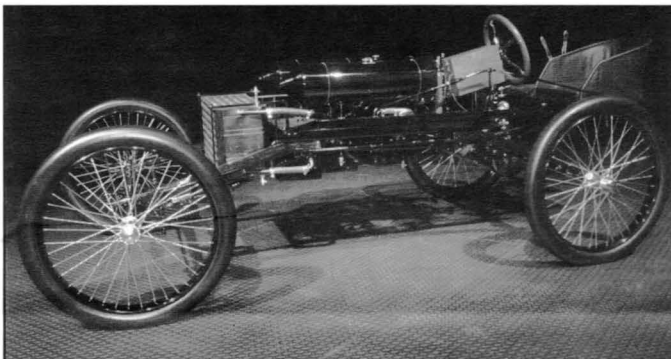
In September of 1950, Professor Porsche celebrated his 75th birthday. A huge party was staged, and the courtyard of the family villa was filled with friends and associates from years past...and with Porsches and VWs. In November, Ferry took his father for one last look at the Wolfsburg Volkswagenwerk, now literally humming full speed with production of the popular VW Beetle. It was the first time the Professor had seen the plant since the end of the War.

Later in November, Professor Porsche had a stroke. He never recovered, and he succumbed January 30, 1952. His legacy, that of an untrained and largely uneducated young man who became one of the greatest automobile engineers of all time, lay in countless design innovations, many of them now distilled down to one car which his son had designed, the Porsche sports car. It is fitting that a designer as fiercely independent as Ferdinand Porsche should father the last remaining independent sportscar manufacturer.

NORTH AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL AUTO SHOW 2000

by Taylor Vinson

The North American International Automobile Show, as it has been known since 1989, is now old enough to have a bit of history of its own. The press book for Detroit's 84th such exposition lists all the concept and production cars that have made their debut over the last 11 years. Sadly, the list is not likely to grow as fast from now on; the manufacturers decided this year that there is more bang to their bucks by spreading those introductions out over the Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York shows. But it was great, if you like SUVs, trucks, and everything in between. There seemed to be more than the usual number of SAH members around for the press conferences. In the order in which I spotted them they were *Bob Hall, Pat Foster, John Fobian, Rob McLellan, Robert Przybylski, Chuck Houser, Mike Lamm, Perry Zavitz, and Sinclair Powell.*



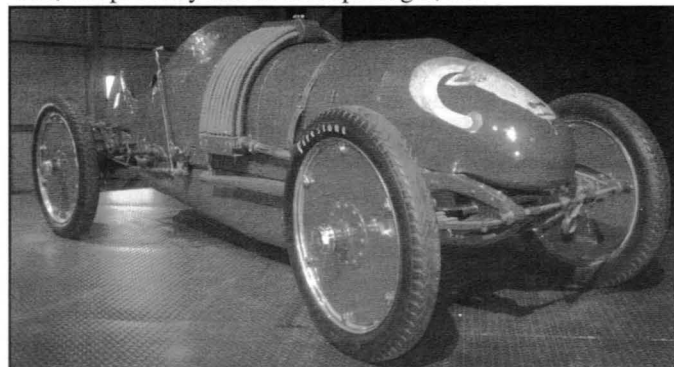
1903 Oldsmobile Pirate Replica
- courtesy of General Motors/Wieck

The approach I try to take in reviewing the show for the *Journal* is to relate how the manufacturers present their heritage, both in the older cars on display and the press kits. Saturn's seemed excessive this year, a 9-page list of great events in its short history, embedded in the kit on its '01 coupe (if Saturn were a person, it would be prepubescent). Bugatti gave its heritage short shrift; two of its four-pages were devoted to Artiooli and after. Jaguar, in presenting its F-Type concept, thoughtfully included histories both of its concept cars, and its open cars (and a CD-Rom containing photos of many of these). Volvo took to referring to itself as the wagon company, told of its history in the press kit, and mounted an instructive wall with side elevations of all its wagons, beginning with the Duett of the '50s and ending with the just-introduced '00 V70. The Mercedes display of a 190SL was in blessed contrast to the concept roadster, yclept "Vision SLA." Meanwhile, the large scale models of the 190SL, 300SL, and 260SL reminded the viewer of the company's early postwar styling triumphs. Over at the stand of the Center for Creative Studies, there sat students models of a 21st century Lincoln, Cadillac, and Delahaye. A representative of the Center, in his mid-50s I judge, asked me what I thought of the display. I replied that I was surprised to find a Delahaye there. He smiled, and asked if I worked for the company

Karmann returned this year, displaying a Beetle convertible and a Ghia coupe from the '50s. Ford had a Model T around,

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more than overshadowed by the '03 Olds replica, '57 Chevy convertible, and '41 Cadillac Sixty Special on GM's turf. Cadillac was almost invisible this year, not even a press kit provided. Citing the new slogan "The power of &," a friend called it "The car formerly known as Cadillac." But much to GM's credit was the instructive floor-to-ceiling display of 6 panels showing events in photos, ads, and literature of events in its corporate and divisional history, including Vauxhall, Opel, and Holden. Of particular note was a photo of Detroit's own Joe Louis, young and smiling, his hand atop the hood of a new Buick, showroom window behind proclaiming "1935 Buick \$795" on it. The foot of each panel related historical events contemporaneous with the panel above, such as the flight of Amelia "Earhardt." Oh well, she probably had trouble spelling it, too.



1910 Buick Bug
- courtesy of General Motors/Wieck

Retro styling themes continued to mark some GM concepts, having been abandoned this year by Ford and Chrysler (in the US, the "D" word is silent). We're used to seeing the falling-rising fender line, vertical grille, and ventiports in Buick concepts, but this year the Division found a new "heritage" theme to tap, going back to the '40s with a side-opening hood in its LaCrosse. Nicest of all to these eyes was the Chevrolet SSR, a contemporary El Camino but a droptop with clearly defined front and rear fenders and its grille an unmistakable descendant of Chevy's trucks of half a century ago.

Apparently in the '60s and '70s, drag races regularly occurred on Woodward Avenue in the suburbs, and the cars that competed are the stuff of local legend. Three of these "Woodward Avenue Racers" were on display in the Cobo Center lobby. One was a '69 Mustang Boss 302, originally built for Trans Am racing, and one of 1,629 built. Another was a '69 Pontiac "Royal" GTO, with 500 h.p. Ram Air 5 experimental engine, raced through Royal Pontiac of Royal Oak. Finally, the '67 Plymouth GTX "Silver Bullet", 487 cu. in. 650 h.p. 426 Hemi, never beaten. And this is the marque that Chrysler is throwing on the trash heap of history!

But, of course, the significance of the previews of any one year can only be judged as events unfold. What will mark NAIAS 2000 in history? BMW's hydrogen-fueled 750hL sedan? GM and Ford's rush to incorporate on-line technology in their vehicles? The galloping splintering of traditional vehicle categories into niche segments? These are stories to be covered by younger historians like *Sam Fiorani* who can look back from the vantage point of 2025 and say that it was none of the above, but something that completely escaped us at the time.



THE FIRST CENTURY OF THE DETROIT AUTO SHOW, by Robert Szudarek. 278 pages, softcover, 11 x 8 1/2 inches. Published by SAE, 400 Commonwealth Dr., Warrendale, PA 15096-0001. Price: \$15.95 plus \$6 P&H.

The first thing that catches your eye is the oversize format and slick paper. Generally each show receives two pages. This is a format book, a sort of fill in the blanks venue. Each show had Dates, Sponsor, Building, Admission price, Decor, Entertainment, Opening and an interesting summary called "Inside the Show." Most had a copy of the program cover and one or two photos.

Photo quality is slightly above average but still generally too dark overall. The only misplaced photo I noticed was a view of '36 Hudsons shown in the '35 section. The sample photos should be a help in identifying other period photos as the background decor changed year to year.

The book gives new (to me anyway) information about William Metzger's early history since he was instrumental in managing the earliest shows.

Probably the best thing about the book is its price. It is hard to find value in today's auto books but this one meets my criteria. The only frustrating thing historians will experience is the absence of the annual entry list. Even an incomplete list would be better than none at all but I guess engineers could not contemplate blanks in their format.

- DJ Kava



DESPERATELY SEEKING HELP!

I am seeking the help of SAH members with specialist knowledge in any of the following areas:

Information relating to the history Automobiles "OREL", 130 rue de Saint-Germain, Argenteuil (Seine-et-Oise), France, and also at 12, Boulevard de la Chapelle, Paris. It is believed the company operated from 1905 until 1914. Brief references have been found but they do not contain any technical detail or any reference to when the company was formed. It is known that they exhibited at the Paris show in December 1905.

The second point relates to the serial numbers stamped on the Selden Patent plates. Note, these are the stamped numbers that appear in the lower left-hand corner and not the patent number itself. Information on surviving plates and the cars to which they are attached would be appreciated if no definitive listing identifying the stamped number against a specific date is available. Where these plates issued to the manufacturers already pre-stamped and were they issued in batches?

Finally, The American Motor Carriage Company, 514 East Prospect Street, Cleveland Ohio, also known as "American Gas" Does anyone out there have details of the range of products? Through the kindness of a SAH member, I have details of the car in the Crawford Auto Museum, Western Reserve collection. This car conforms fairly well to the information published in such journals as *Horseless Age* and *Cycle and Automobile Trade Journal* but it differs in a great many respects to one of the other surviving cars. The *Standard Catalog* and *Golden Wheels* both cover the make but only refer in detail to the one model. *Horseless Age*, Dec. 4th 1901 records the formation of the company and the issue of 23rd September 1903 records a meeting of the creditors. Anyone know details of other models with single cylinder engines please? **Gordon Brooks, "Brandelhow", 22, Cinques Road, Gamlingay, Sandy, Bedfordshire, UK.**

MYSTERIOUS DUBER

In my Hudson roamings, I found mention of a car that apparently hasn't made the lists. It is all pretty vague but here goes.

The *Hudson Triangle* on 12/23/1911 did a profile of their Dayton, Ohio, dealers W.H. Yeazell and E.J. DeVille. DeVille was once head of the experimental department of the National Cash Register Company. To promote his experience it stated: "A decade ago he constructed a motor car for Duber, the watch maker, when the Duber Watch Company was located at Canton, O. And he had the ambition to manufacture cars, for he is a great technical man."

The *Standard Catalog* notes only a couple of Canton concerns in that era and Wager's *Golden Wheels* misses Canton completely. No one mentions DeVille or Duber.

While the days of old cars in old barns are gone they still seem to turn up on old paper. **DJ Kava, 1755 Bandera, Beaumont, TX 77706-2707. Email: djkava@tex-is.net**

MOTORING HUMOR

Peter Winnewisser's article [SAH Journal, No. 183] on motoring humour in books has driven me to clarify the description of Hammerton *Ja Mr. Punch Awheel* in my *Autobooks* quarterly catalogue of out of print books on motoring.

This book was one of twenty-five volumes in the *Punch Library of Humor*, others containing humour on golf, railways, etc. The selections were taken from *Punch*, a British humorous periodical which commenced in 1841.

Mr. Punch Awheel does not state a publication date. However, the humour selected is in my opinion from pre-1905 issues. The date the book was published could be anytime between 1905 and 1930.

A more modern version entitled *Mr. Punch's Motor Book* was published in 1931 and included motoring humour selected from the 1895 to 1931 issues.

A quick inspection of my shelves shows the following motoring humour books:

1. Vimar, A. *En Automobile*. Publisher not listed. Printed by Jean Boussod, Manzi, Joyant et Cie Asnieres, France, Undated. Claimed elsewhere as 1897 and 1900.
2. Cuenoud, Emond. *L'Automobile 217-UU*. Moliere, Paris, France. Undated, circa 1904.
3. Meader, Herman Lee. *Motor Goose Rhymes for Motor Ganders*. Grafton Press, New York, USA. 1905.
4. Cox, F.J. *Songs of the Car with "De Omnibus Rhymes."* Francis Griffiths, London, UK. 1906.
5. Grant, Ethel Watts-Mumford and Flaenzer, Richard Butler. *The Auto Guest Book*. Paul Elder and Company, San Francisco and New York, USA. 1906.
6. O'Connell, James Jay. *The Auto Guyed*. Dutton, New York, USA. 1906.
7. Mumford, Edward. *Bubbles*. Penn Publishing Company, Philadelphia, USA. 1907.

Kenneth Ball, 2 South Street, Ditchling, Sussex BN6 8UQ, England.

SIXTY YEARS AGO IN AUTOMOTIVE HISTORY

Let me offer a few comments on Harlan Appelquist's article about cars of 1940, in the interest of historic accuracy. After all, if SAH isn't scrupulously accurate on the subject of automotive history, who will be?

On the subject of the general state of improvement by 1940, I would add independent front suspension (except Ford products) and decent heaters. Some were following the lead of Nash and offering fresh air heaters, which was a giant step toward civilizing auto travel in the northern climes

But I don't think it is accurate to say that "some type of automatic transmission was offered by most builders". In fact, Oldsmobile was the only manufacturer to offer a fully automatic transmission (Hydra-Matic) and had only just introduced it that year. A semi-automatic predecessor without a fluid coupling had found few takers in 1937-39, but Hydra-Matic proved popular. The only other device available in 1940 was Fluid Drive on some Chryslers and then only in conjunction with overdrive. The associated gearbox was strictly manual. Fluid drive was not offered in 1940 on DeSoto or any other Chrysler products. While DeSoto and Dodge offered Fluid drive the following year, Plymouth didn't get any devices to reduce shifting until 1953 (unless you count overdrive). Hudson had some solenoid operated clutch and shifting devices, (an outgrowth of their offering pre-selector gearboxes) but that was about it.

We ought to spell Harlow Curtice's name correctly, because he really made Buick the leader it was in those years. Buick introduced a fifth series in 1940, the Super Series 50, a result of mating the Special engine with the Roadmaster body, on a shorter wheelbase. The Super quickly became one of Buick's best sellers.

It was the first year for the Olds Series 90, better known as the 98. (although in 1941 you could get some Series 90s with a six cylinder, which I suppose makes it a 96).

As to Ford, I would prefer to think of the introduction of the Mercury as a "bombshell" not a "bomb", because as the article points out, it was very successful in the marketplace. The Lincoln Zephyr line-up for 1940 dropped the convertible sedan and the two door sedan, and added a club coupe as well as the Continental. Before the year was out, a club coupe was added to the Continental line as well. But the majestic Series K was not built or in the line-up officially for 1940. K sales in 1940 were all left over 1939 models. The K engine was 150 hp from 414 CID; the Zephyr/Continental V12 was a 292 CID engine producing 120 hp (not 150) and had virtually nothing in common with the K V12, not even the angle between cylinder banks: 75 degrees vs. 67 on the K.

Enough picking of nits; it was a most enjoyable article.
Byron (Barney) Olsen, 1543 Grantham Street, St. Paul, Minnesota 55108.

One comment in reference to Harlan Appelquist's otherwise excellent summary of events relative to the industry in 1940: within the first introductory paragraph there is a statement that "...some type of automatic transmission was offered by most builders." Certainly the offering by Oldsmobile of the four-speed Hydramatic on 1940 models was the only true automatic transmission for the year - and its' use was expanded to include Cadillac for 1941.

I expect that Mr. Appelquist may well have meant to say "...some type of automatic clutch" or possibly "...some type of semi-automatic transmission". I would agree with either of the latter, considering the fact that Chrysler was marketing several variations of Fluid Drive, Packard and Hudson had developed semi-automatic systems, etc.

Possibly nit-picking, but it sometimes seems that once generalizations like this initially find their way into print, they seem to develop a life of their own. **Roy Nagel, email: roy.r.nagel@gm.com**

THEY STILL DON'T BUILD THEM LIKE THEY USED TO

I was interested to read the feature entitled "They Don't Build 'Em Like They Used To", on page 9 in the November-December 1999 issue of the *SAH Journal*.

While I was attending law school at the University of Pennsylvania in the late '60s, I worked as a law clerk during the summer in the office of David F. Maxwell, Esq., 1418 Packard Building. The name of the firm has been since the 1920's—and still is—Obermayer, Rebmann, Maxwell and Hippel. The Packard Building is at 15th and Chestnut Streets in Philadelphia. The law firm very recently moved from the Packard Building to another location in Philadelphia.

The law firm included a number of affluent Philadelphians among its clients. If you read the accident report carefully, you will see that Mrs. Lochhead (the owner of the damaged late-model Buick) listed her residence on Walnut Lane in

Philadelphia, but also listed a "country residence" on Church Road in New Hope, Bucks County, Pa.

At that time, the first letter of a Pennsylvania truck license plate number indicated the weight class of the truck. As I recall, a half-ton pick-up truck had a license plate beginning with "R", a three-quarter-ton truck had a plate beginning with "S", and so forth. The letters progressed upward with the weight class of the truck. (Heavier trucks used the letters "T", "U", "V", etc., with cement mixers using a "ZZ" prefix.)

The truck that struck Mrs. Lochhead's car must have been a pretty heavy one—the license plate number begins with the letter "U". This helps to explain why Mrs. Lochhead's big Buick was pushed into another car, and why she received injuries while the truck passengers did not. Undoubtedly Mr. Maxwell used this information to his client's advantage in pursuing the case of "Lochhead v. Nierenberg".

Lastly, I note that on the letterhead of Roth Buick Company, two telephone numbers are listed—one for the Bell system, and one for the competing Keystone system. Before the days of telephone monopolies, these were the two major phone companies in Philadelphia, and a business such as Roth Buick had to have a phone number with each company to be reachable by customers using either phone company. **Richard P. Sills, 5809 Nicholson Lane, Apt 801, North Bethesda, MD 20852.**

VICTORY MUSEUM

The Victory Museum in Belgium had to close its doors because there was not sufficient money from the government to keep it open. In *Nick Georgano's* book *World War Two Military Vehicles*, there are a lot of pictures from that museum. I heard that the collection was sold to an American, but had no idea who. In late November, on Belgian television, I learned that the entire collection (vehicles and weapons) was sold for \$120 million Belgian Francs (circa \$30 million dollars) to a U.S. company called Curiosa. There was no mention of a city or state, but the whole collection was already on a ship headed for the U.S.

Can anyone tell me anything about Curiosa? **Raymond Vaes, Gebr. Van Raemdoncklaan, 46, B-2650 Edegem, Belgium**

THE JOY OF COLLECTING READERS DIGEST ADS

I have been cutting car advertisement out of magazines since I was old enough to hold a pair of scissors. There has always been something captivating about the look of an auto ad, particularly when contrasted with ads from different decades or different countries. While it is common to come across vendors at North American swap meets selling ads cut from large format magazines such as *Life*, or even medium format magazines like *Time*, few people seem interested in collecting ads from the diminutively formatted *Reader's Digest*. Which is a pity as a great wealth of auto advertisements appeared in *Reader's Digest's* numerous foreign editions. Look inside the front cover of a recent issue and you will see a long list of all of the nations that the magazine is published in.

Reader's Digest began publishing in the mid-1920's but advertising did not appear in the U.S. edition until 1955. However



in many countries advertising started much earlier. Canadian advertising began in 1948 and the oldest *RD* ads that I have found are for Studebaker and Packard cars of 1941 in the Latin American edition. Around the world its seems that the golden age of automobile advertising in *RD* peaked in the mid 1960's. Magazines from that time seem to be chalk full of car ads. Today auto ads still appear in many

editions but not to the extent of earlier decades (perhaps due to the raise of television). Countries that had strong import substitution laws such as Brazil have some of the most interesting ads as all of the vehicles advertised are unique to that country. In the early 1960's, when GM and Ford only built trucks in Brazil, it is interesting to see lavish color ads pitching pickup trucks to middle class families.



Looking for back issues of *Reader's Digest* has become a feature of my infrequent trips abroad. While I rarely come across

decades old issues of *RD* here in the US & Canada, (in Australia, a used book store owner seemed appalled when I ask if he had any old *RDs*) I was pleased to find them being sold by street vendors on my visits to Latin America.



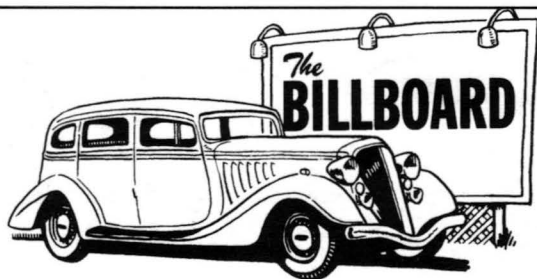
In my collection I have automobile advertisements from the following counties: USA, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Britain, France, Germany, Denmark, Italy, South Africa, Australia, Japan and Hong Kong.

Some of these countries may be represented by only a single ad, others I have had the opportunity to travel to and have been able to collect in large numbers. Still there are many countries that have eluded me.



While in recent years I have focused my collecting on Ford products, I continue to collect *RD* ads for all marques, they do not take up much space and they tell the story of the automobile in miniature.

Later this year I will be traveling to England with side trips to Dublin and Calais. Does anyone know of any shops or markets in any of those places that in which I might find old *RDs* for sale? **Michael MacSems, 1004 North Rogers St, Olympia, WA 98502. Email: IFHP@aol.com**



The Billboard welcomes non-commercial advertisements from members. Ads are free, and should concern items of interest to historians: information, books, literature, photographs, illustrations, memorabilia; offered, wanted or to trade. Ads for vehicles or parts are not accepted. To advertise regular sales or services, contact ad manager Sam Fiorani, 307 Kingston Drive, Douglassville, PA 19518 for display ad rates.

NEEDED IMMEDIATELY: Advertising Manager for the *SAH Journal*. Responsibilities include setting advertising prices, tracking down potential advertisers, and selling space in the bi-monthly newsletter. Vacancy is open immediately. Anyone interested in applying for the position should contact: **Kit Foster, Treasurer, Society of Automotive Historians, 1102 Long Cove Road, Gales Ferry, CT 06335-1812. Email: foster@netbox.com.**

WANTED: Author of a book on the history of the automobile in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, is searching for any material which is related to this topic: photographs, articles, memories, ... Also material related to Amsterdam car builders: Spyker, Simplex, Econoom. Please contact: **Fons Alkemade, Surinamestraat 3/2, 1058 GJ Amsterdam, The Netherlands, fax: 020-6696096, Email: alkemade@kivi.nl.**

WANTED: Photographs and other materials on heavy-duty Ford trucks 1948-1998 for a book I am writing about this subject. Also, looking for information and photographs on the Ford assembly plant at Somerville, Massachusetts, that closed in 1958. **Paul G. McLaughlin, 2720 Tennessee NE, Albuquerque, NM 87110. Phone: (505)296-2554. Email: pmacautoart@uswest.net.**

WANTED: Information needed on a French coachbuilder Lavocat-Marsaud Carrossiers of Boulogne. Any scrap of information you might have would be helpful. Thanks. **David King, 5 Brouwer Lane, Rockville Centre, NY 11570.**

WANTED: Information on Vector, Dale, and CF vehicles. First-hand experience of the Vector or Dale cars or companies is requested in addition to any literature or information. Locations of any Vector cars are desired. Knowledge of the whereabouts of any people associated with the 20th Century Motor Car Corporation or the Dale car would be gratefully appreciated. Any information at all on the CF brand motorcycles (including locations of any such vehicles) and the company from Italy would be greatly appreciated. Please contact: **Sam Fiorani, 307 Kingston Drive, Douglassville, PA 19518. Phone: (610) 385-6990. Fax: (610)277-2505. Email: SVFiorani@AOL.COM or SAHJournal@AOL.COM.**

WANTED: Any literature, pictures or information relating to prototype cars, dream cars or concept cars as produced by the American auto manufacturers from the period of 1950-1970. **Joseph Bortz, P.O. 280, Highland Park, IL 60035. Phone: (847)433-7777.**

WANTED: Any information on the development and production of the 1955-56 Dodge automobiles. Especially interested in historical data and designer Maury Baldwin. **Ralph Larson, 3390 Millpond Road, Disputanta, VA 23842-4119. Phone: (804)862-7254.**

WANTED: Contributions to the *SAH Journal*. Short studies, book reviews, first-person historical perspectives, nearly anything automotive. Articles of 500-1000 words (plus photographs) are in immediate need. Please send, email, phone, or fax all contributions to: **Sam Fiorani, Editor, SAH Journal, 307 Kingston Drive, Douglassville, PA 19518. Phone: (610) 385-6990. Fax: (610)277-2505. Email: SVFiorani@AOL.COM or SAHJournal@AOL.COM.**

UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL 2000

April 27-30, 2000 - Spring Carlisle Flea Market, Carlisle, Pennsylvania. For more information call: (717)243-7855.

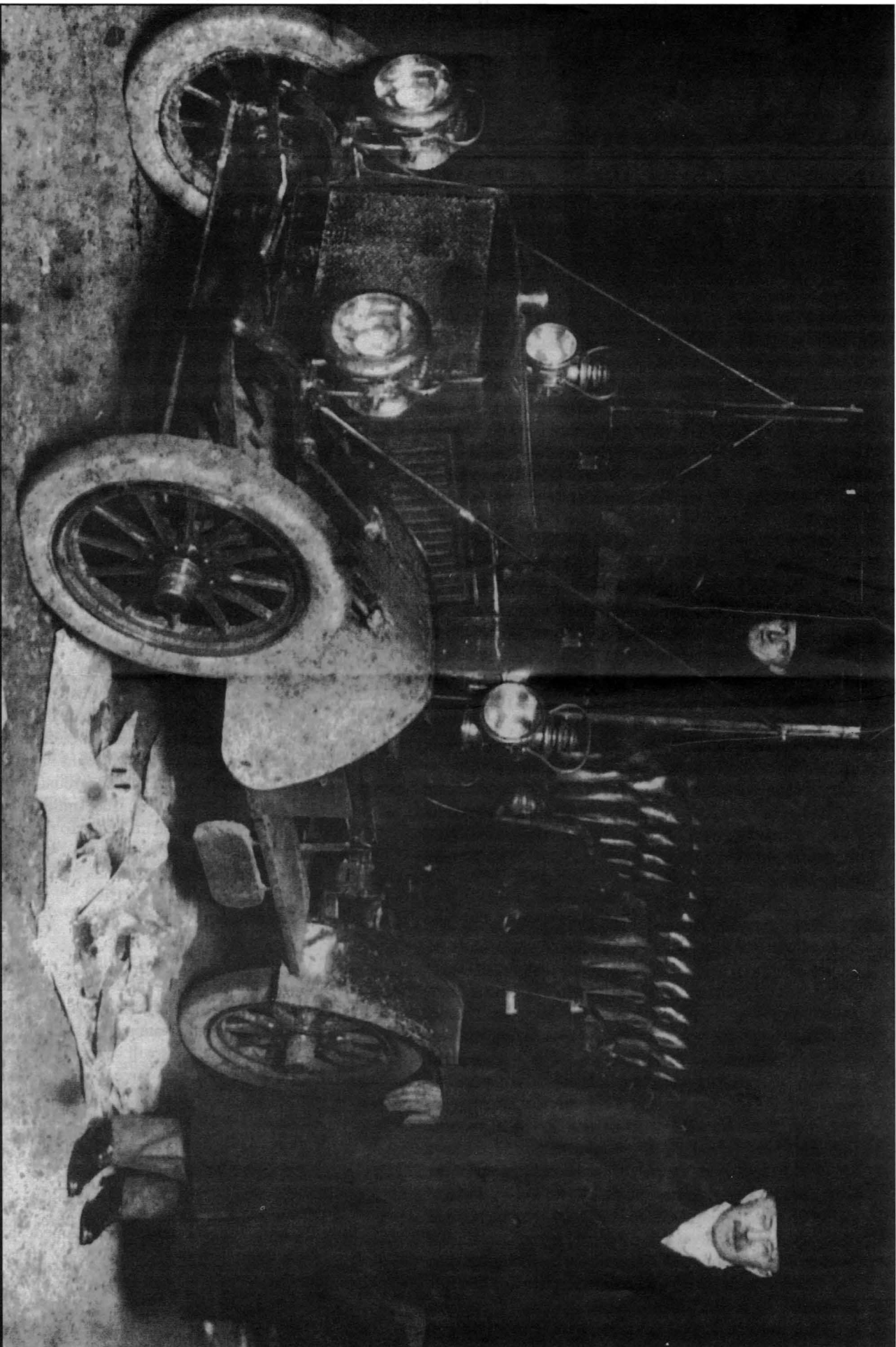
JUNE 2000

June 2-4, 2000 - "The 2000 Studebaker-Packard Meet in Europe" -- June 2, 3 and 4 will be the dates for the 2000 European Studebaker-Packard Weekend, which will meet at the Autotron Car Museum in Rosmalen, The Netherlands. A hotel and a campground with bungalows are available, all located on the museum grounds within walking distance of the museum. To receive information on the hotel rates, the participation fee, and the meet's itinerary, contact: Lou van Anne, US representative of the Studebaker-Packard Club Nederland at: lvasales@lightspeed.net

JULY 2000

July 14-16, 2000 - "The 2000 National Packard Museum Celebration" -- July 14, 15 and 16, 2000 will be the dates for the 11th Annual National Packard Museum Celebration in Warren, Ohio. This will be more than just an annual car show — it will run three days, and have the overall appearance of a festival. Contact the National Packard Museum, 1899 Mahoning Ave., NW, Warren, Ohio 44482. Phone: (330) 394-8484; Fax: (330) 394-7796; Email: Nat@PackardMus.org. Web-site: www.PackardMuseum.org

July 29, 2000 - Annual convention of American Motors Owners Association, Hawthorne Inn, 2387 Wilbur Cross Highway, Berlin, Connecticut. Contact Rick Sonnenstuhl, 145 Chestnut Tree Hill Road, Oxford, CT 06478-1406. Phone: (203)881-0079. Email: AMCOXFORD@AOL.COM



It's a dark photocopy of a dark picture, but arched top of the radiator shell which merges into the sharply angled sides can still be seen. The wheel hubs are round with smooth corners at the ends. It's also right hand drive. Anyone know what the car is?

- courtesy of Bob Hagin