

THE ALLARD REGISTER

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THE BULLETIN

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Page 1.

In a letter from new member Thomas F. Dohl of Aptos, California, we extract the following:-

"...As to Fred Wacker and his machine - anyone that has followed the marque over the years, as I have, knows of his efforts. I doubt that he knows me, however. In those early days we toured our TC to the event, dropped the windshield, reversed the headlamps and competed away in grand style. Seat belts were rare, roll bars unheard of and technical inspection not too technical.

My only experiences at speed in Cad-Allards were due to the kindness of two owners of great faith and small knowledge of my skills. Giving an MG/TC a fair ride is poor credential to trust someone with your Allard, but that's how people acted in those days.

I didn't manage to break anything on their machines, but I surely strained them. All I really remember was ungodly torque and a front end that refused to track at most any speed. That I loved it dearly and remember it still is a tribute to the car.

I owned, drove, raced and built a number of sports, sports-racing and racing machines over the years - but none left the lasting impression of brute power and a willingness to GO that I remember with the J2 and J2X.

The need for more - more power, more speed, more flash lead to the XK-120. Also, as the only car with a top, side-curtains and heater made it the obvious choice over Allard. A move West in the mid-fifties started me on a long line of specials, based in the main upon MG-TD components. This choice was arrived at after much thought, detailed engineering considerations and - the availability (for very little cash investment) of a rolled MG-TD.

The tracks that we ran on reads like a litany of nostalgia - Torrey Pines, Paramount Ranch, Del Mar, March Field, Golden Gate, Santa Barbara, Laguna Seca and a host of no-names airfields in Arizona and California. We ran events organised by the SCCA, California Sports Car Club, Road Racing Register (a blackleg attempt to get some prize money to driver and not all to the sponsors - a most illegal act in the eyes of the SCCA and CSCC). We never did well, but we usually finished - there were fellows around in those days like Ken Miles, Phil Hill, Johnny von Neumann. But we enjoyed it - time passes, racing gets expensive, wives complain, babies arrive, we get older. We try Formula Jr. as a poor man's way back - no luck, the class never really catches hold. We try productions - MGA and Alfa okay, some fun, but not like the old days. We finally come full circle, back to first loves and maybe - just maybe a bit of racing again and the sounds, the color, the smells of 30 years ago will return...."

Very many thanks, Tom, for your interesting and nostalgic letter. ED.

Member John Peskett of Leicester, England writes us as follows:-

"...We had a great time at the Bugatti O.C. July Meeting at Prescott Hill Climb. In practice on the Saturday it was very wet and the Allard was faster than several Jaguar XK's and Aston Martin DB4 GT's, but on Sunday it was dry for the official runs, and the more powerful cars went very much faster. Several Americans were at the meeting (they had come over for the International Bugatti Rally) and I was very pleased to meet Dean Butler from Cincinnati who owns the J2 I had in 1967 (the Larrinaga car LLP 797).

Al. Moss who imported Allards into California also had an interesting chat.

Ronnie Symondson, one of the vice-presidents of the Bugatti O.C., who was as usual driving his type 57S, recalled the Allard he bought immediately after the war. Sydney could not supply a complete car at the time so Ronnie bought a chassis and had a special body built for it. He was in the habit of holding impromptu races with another Allard owner on a local airfield. This went on for some time with Ronnie always winning. When he was next in the Allard service department, he was asked if he would please let his friend win for a change, as he had apparently been plaguing the service department to make the car go faster. Ronnie also recalled the common Allard problem of bump kick-back through the steering. He largely eliminated this by fitting Hartford friction shock absorbers.....

Incidentally, last year at the same meeting my best time was 66½ secs. using very old crossply tyres. This year Len Thurston bought a new set of Cinturatos and I could do no better than 68 secs. - very irritating!!..... Keep up the good work - the Bulletin does help keep everybody in contact..."

Many thanks for your letter, John. So glad that you met member Dean Butler, also Al. Moss, and Ronnie Symondson. ED.

"THE SPORTS CAR STORY" by John Bentley. PART IV.

GIANT'S DESPAIR - A MAN KILLER

The 1951 Eastern season opened with a revival on May 11 and 12 of the famous Giant's Despair Hillclimb at Wilkes Barre, Pa. Not since Ralph de Palma's record run up this 5700-foot chassis buster on June 14, 1910 had any organized attempt been made to tackle the Giant. Ralph's time at the wheel of a huge 190 hp Fiat was then 1:28.4, an average speed of 45.61 mph, helped by a flying start.

On May 11, 1951, practice day, De Palma's mark was broken 25 times. The following day 30 more hardy souls tumbled the 41-year-old record during official climbs. Del Lee of the SCCA Detroit Region, driving a Cad-Allard, set a new mark as he thundered up in 1:07.5, averaging 53.18 mph from a standing start over a mile course which was 140 yards shorter than De Palma's. Lee had only once before competed in any kind of event and this was his first hillclimb.

Despite blustery weather and intermittent showers, 63 cars faced the starter and a crowd of around 20,000 braved the elements from exposed vantage points on both sides of the punishing course.

The camber of Giant's Despair, together with patches of loose surface, a 700-foot rise, grades of 10 to 22 per cent and the dangerous right curve known as Devil's Elbow, spelled really tough going.

A MILESTONE FOR THE WEST AT PEBBLE BEACH

The second annual Pebble Beach Road Race on May 27, 1951 firmly established itself as the best organized and planned event of its kind in the West and was generally recognized as a milestone in the development of the sport. The entry list was larger than in 1950, including several out-of-state cars making their first local appearance.

An increase from 8,000 to 25,000 (last year) spectators at this event indicated a healthy trend in crowd appeal for the sport. Improvement of the course was provided by Del Monte Properties Company, which removed several trees along the 2.1 miles and erected some fences for spectator control and as safety precautions.

Winner of the Pebble Beach Cup (100.8 miles) was Bill Pollack, who drove his Cad-Allard to a well-earned victory. Jack Armstrong (Cad-Allard) and Bill Breeze (Jaguar XK-120) followed in second and third places.

BRIDGEHAMPTON - MORE ENTRIES - LESS ATTENDANCE

A month later, on June 9, the third annual program of road races was held on the four-mile Bridgehampton, L.I. course. Attendance leveled off at the 1950 figure, but entries jumped from 62 to 87 for the five races culminating in the Bridgehampton Cup 100-mile hassle for the first four finishers in each class from the previous races.

Tommy Cole in John Perona's Chrysler-Allard did an extremely polished job of driving and won outright for the second year in succession. Averaging 86.9 mph, Cole beat his own 1950 record by seven mph and was never remotely challenged. Phil Walters, in Briggs Cunningham's 2.3 Ferrari Berlinetta, held, lost, then regained second spot after a ding-dong battle with Goldschmidt (Cad-Allard); and John Fitch placed a deserving fourth at the wheel of Coby Whitmore's beautiful Le Mans XK-120 Special.

Probably the outstanding car of the three qualifying races was Perry Boswell's dynamic Lester MG making its first U.S. appearance. Moving way out front from pole position in the Sagaponack Trophy, Boswell led by 300 yards at the end of the first lap and by half a mile on the second lap. It looked like a walkover for the sleek metallic green machine, when on lap three the clutch gave out. Honours in this one finally went to Jim Stiles, Jr., a competent newcomer driving a beautifully prepared TC-MG from Don Millager's shop in Mineola, L.I. Fritz Koster's fast HRG held the lead for six laps until the plugs fouled up, forcing a pit stop.

SECOND ANNUAL ELKHART RACE

About six weeks later, on August 26, the Chicago Region of the SCCA held its second annual road race at Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin round a greatly enlarged 6.75-mile course with a beautiful straight of over two miles. Placed on the National Calendar, this meet attracted entries from all over the country, including the West Coast, and brought 39 cars to the starting grid for the main event of 30 laps (203 miles). The truly imposing array included three Cunninghams, fresh from Le Mans and Chrysler re-powered; two America 4.1 Ferraris (Kimberly and Spear); two Cad-Allards (Michael Graham and Roy Scott; Spear's two-liter Ferrari and Ted Boynton's immaculate Le Mans Frazer Nash; Barlow's inimitable Simca; Hector Scheffer's Farina-bodied Siata 1400; Otto Linton's Siata-Crosley; Dick Gent's Bandini-Fiat with a De Dion rear end; and by no means least the two beautiful, factory-prepared XK-120 Specials entered by West Coast Jaguar distributor, Chuck Hornburg and driven by Phil Hill and Argentinian George Malbran. This galaxy of star drivers and outstanding machines (several of which were making their U.S. debut), drew a crowd of over 75,000 people who watched John Fitch thunder his way to victory at the wheel of a Cunningham.

Driving what was unquestionably his finest race, Fitch held the lead on all but two laps and romped home nearly a minute ahead of the field at an average of 80.82 mph with a lapsed time of 2 hrs., 30:19.1 despite several yellow caution lights.

Second and third men home were both Californians: Michael Graham of Los Angeles

/continued from Page 2.

wheeling his Cad-Allard and Phil Hill of Santa Monica with a Special XK. Malbran, the Argentinian Firebrand, ran fourth in the other XK-120 Special; and Phil Walters placed fifth after taking over Briggs Cunningham's machine when his own Cunningham lost a rod bearing on the eighth lap.

WATKINS GLEN IN ITS FOURTH YEAR

No sooner were the boys home than preparations began anew for the fourth annual Watkins Glen Grand Prix, held three weeks after Elkhart, on September 12. Two days before the Grand Prix, Watkins Glen was already packed to capacity with sports cars and family sedans. There wasn't a bed to be found within a 20-mile radius and on Friday night tents, bivouacs and campfires cast their glow into the darkened skies all round the 6.6-mile course.

Local estimates set the crowd at 200,000 people; 100 per cent more than in 1949 and ten times as great as the 1948 attendance. The 85 cars that faced the starter in three events represented a 12½ per cent entry increase over 1950 and the standard of driving was the highest and most sportsmanlike ever witnessed at the Glen.

Nor was this all. Records fell like ninepins in every category, starting with George Weaver who easily took the Seneca Cup race (8 laps, 52.8 miles) in his blown Type RI Maserati at 75.79 mph, beating by over eight mph the winner's speed in the corresponding 1950 event. Weaver went on to scoop the next race in the Le Mans Jupiter imported by Max Hoffman. This was the Queen Catharine Montour Cup (11 laps, 72.6 miles, 33 cars), featuring a Le Mans start and limited to machines of under 91 cu. in. Averaging 68.96 mph and getting the checkered flag before the second man home came into sight, Weaver not only improved by five mph on the previous year's winner of this event, but became the first driver at Watkins Glen ever to win two races on the same day.

In the Grand Prix (15 laps, 99 miles) which had to be shortened because trains disgorging countless fans blocked the railroad crossing, Phil Walters with one of the three big Cunninghams got the flat at a phenomenal average of 77.65 mph after a magnificent drive. Walters broke the previous year's winning record by over five mph, and on his 14th circuit shattered the lap record at 80.5 mph.

John Fitch (Cunningham) was second, Bill Spear took third in his 4.1 Ferrari America and Briggs Cunningham placed fourth in another Cunningham. These impressive, thunderous machines thus registered their second victory in succession, while the first four finishers in the Watkins Glen Grand Prix all broke the winning 1950 record average of 72.08 mph.

TO BE CONTINUED.

We thank Trend, Inc. (Speed and Sport) for their kind permission to reproduce this article. ED.

Member Jim Donick of Dover, New Jersey, U.S.A (formerly of Paris, France) writes as follows:-

"...My K2 arrived in good order.....I can happily report that the work of Mr. John Colburn of Westbourne Motors, Hove, Sussex, which was carried out on it has proved to be excellent. He replaced head gaskets, freed up the clutch, repaired the brakes and also got the car running. The cost was reasonable but it did take a long time due to difficulty in obtaining parts. I would recommend him to anyone, as his skill, honesty and integrity are of the highest order.

I have been in contact with member Fred Aibel. I have yet to see his J2 but he has been over to see my K2. His is going to a restoration shop in the near future to be completed, but is running and has been raced at Lime Rock Park in the last twelve months.....Fred told me he thought that a J2 was being restored in a Sussex (N.J.) garage, so we set off to investigate..... The J2 is chassis no. 1574 and belongs to Mr. Leslie Newell of Meridan, Connecticut. It looks like a major restoration, with many new parts, including grille and, curiously, the chassis plate. Perhaps the original plate was too dirty for a Concours d'Elegance? The engine is being changed from Ardun to Cadillac, which brings me to the best part of my find in Sussex, N.J. The garage, Mark's Autobody, specialises in Flathead (Sidevalve) Ford Motors. Mark, the owner, claims to have the largest stock of competition parts for flatheads on the East Coast. He was familiar with the Allard Dual Carb. manifold on mine, and even knew exactly what it looked like. He was able to provide me with a new dipstick and appraise me of the availability of motor parts. Mark is a pleasant sort and I would be pleased to put any of the members in contact with him, or would be willing to act as intermediary to procure required Ford or Mercury parts for any Allard member in need."

Very many thanks for your letter, Jim. I've written to Mr. Leslie Newell but have not yet heard from him. The J2:1574 was driven by J. Davidson into 2nd place behind winner Fred Wacker (J2) in the 1950 Sebring race. ED.

We extend a very warm welcome to the following new members:-

Thomas F. Dohl	of Aptos, California, U.S.A.
Keith Beers	" Dallas, Texas, U.S.A.