

THE most interesting articles in MOTOR SPORT are certainly those that have appeared on the old-type racing cars, and on the various sports models, and I hope that either Mr. Clutton or Mr. Heal will give us some more articles in due course. May I suggest one class of car about which no one has written? The type to which I refer were those wonderful old "Prince Henry" jobs that appeared between 1909 and 1913.

Of the regular articles appearing in MOTOR SPORT, I think the experiences of those who have written under the title "Cars I Have Owned" are, perhaps, the most interesting, and I am wondering whether an account of cars owned by my family and myself from 1901 might be of some interest.

The first car my father ever purchased was a Vipen, which he bought in Hull. It was basically a Prunel with a 10-h.p. single-cylinder Aster engine fitted to it.

The next car was a 7/8-h.p. 2-cylinder Spyker, and a very good car it was. It had, I believe, been exhibited in the Paris Motor Show the year before and, of course, like the Vipen, had a back entrance body; this car was painted a dark red in front and a dark green for the rear seats. It was whilst owning this car that registration numbers came in, and we were allotted FA27. We kept this car for about two years and, in 1921, when calling at Burton-on-Trent, my father and I saw a body in the corner of one of the hotel yards, and to my intense interest, I discovered it was the body off our Spyker, the colours still discernible under their coat of dirt; conclusive proof was that the original number plate was still attached.

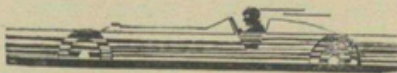
Our next car was a "16/18" 4-cylinder Daimler of about 1904 or 1905 vintage. The engine was very unsatisfactory as far as I remember, and I believe we had it changed for one of their later 14/20-h.p. engines. After this was done the car was very satisfactory and reliable and would do about 45 m.p.h. under favourable conditions. I well remember as a small boy, when the car was going "all out," being asked to hang on to a chain, which, if it was pulled, delivered extra oil to the engine.

Our next purchase was a 28-h.p. Decauville landaulet. The height of the body was an object of wonder. This car had an engine of 114-mm. bore, and, I believe, a stroke of somewhere about 128 mm., but as far as the latter dimension is concerned I am not quite sure. It was a smooth-running car and had a quadrant gear-change.

I well remember the excitement when my father announced he was part-exchanging the Decauville for one of the 1907 "35/40" Mercedes landaulets of 110 by 140 mm. bore and stroke. This car was fitted with 22-tooth sprockets, which gave it a very high top gear. We later exchanged these for 18s with another Mercedes owner who had an open tourer. At that time we had an extremely clever chauffeur-mechanic who converted the low-tension ignition to high-tension and removed the extra oil and water tanks, the latter being fitted for the purpose of water-cooling the two foot brakes, one of which operated on the end of the gearbox and the other on the countershaft to the driving sprockets. I believe the

CARS I HAVE OWNED

A. R. Linsley recalls the cars he and his family have owned since 1901, terminating in a Type 55 Bugatti.



idea was that when the brake pedals were depressed a jet of water sprayed on to the shoes and helped to keep them cool. When all these various gadgets had been removed the car was remarkably free from rattles, and functioned with great reliability until we sold it in 1921. The gear-change was interesting, inasmuch as the gate-change was so designed that first and top speeds were forward, and second and third were at the rear of the gate. It had a metal-to-metal clutch which required delicate handling. There was no speedometer on this car, so I cannot give any accurate information as to its maximum speed, but it was a really fast car for those days.

The first car I was allowed to drive with any regularity was an "18" Ariel of 95 by 115 mm. This car, I believe, was one of the 18 Enfields which were on the hands of the makers when they ceased to build any more cars, and an Ariel radiator was substituted for the former Enfield radiator when Ariels bought up the cars. This car had a big leather hood over the rear seats, which, whilst looking attractive, created a tremendous draught for the rear seat passengers. It would do mile after mile between 42 and 45 m.p.h. (timed), and I well remember in my earliest days driving this car between Lincoln and Brigg and doing the 24 miles in 40 minutes.

I was occasionally permitted to drive a 15-h.p. Mass which had two small bucket seats with a petrol tank fitted behind them, which to me looked like a real "racer." This model was illustrated in *The Autocar* in 1908 in their article on "How to Recognise Different Makes of Cars," and I well remember the thrill of driving it at about 49 m.p.h. It had an open exhaust and a quadrant gear-change, and it had to be driven with one's foot on the gear-lever when in top to ensure the gears remaining in engagement.

In 1913 my father next acquired an "18/24" Siddeley-Deasy. It was fitted with a Daimler 20-h.p. sleeve-valve engine, 90 by 130 mm., and had a most beautifully-built mahogany cabriolet body by Connaughts. I do not think I have ridden in any car more silent or more smooth running. Its maximum speed when delivered to us was guaranteed at about 49 m.p.h., but when we found the petrol consumption was somewhere about 10 m.p.g., alterations were made to its carburation which gave us a consumption of about 19 m.p.g., with a maximum of about 45 m.p.h. This car was purchased by us in Lincoln, and I well remember the trial run up the narrow twisting roads that lead to the top of the hill by the Cathedral. I can imagine that the low

third gear (about 24 m.p.h. maximum) was well suited to the twisty nature of the road, which showed the car off to its best advantage in hill climbing.

One of the cars which I remember with the most affection was a 16-h.p. Clegg-model Darracq, which was acquired in 1913 after selling the Ariel. This car was fitted with what was then regarded as a "streamline" body, and was one of the fastest cars of its type in those days. Its maximum speed was somewhere in the neighbourhood of 54 m.p.h. on top and 37 m.p.h. on third. The gear-change was an extremely good one, but rather slow in operation, and I remember that it was in the days of driving this car I first really learned the art of double-clutching. I remember when benzol fuel first came out, owing to my complete ignorance of the proper use of this spirit, I had the petrol tank filled with neat benzol and proceeded to have an extremely fast run between Nottingham and Hull, the result being a distorted exhaust valve. The use of Benzol, whilst vastly improving its hill-climbing propensities, somewhat reduced its maximum speed on the level owing to the rich mixture. Hills that the car would only climb on second gear were easily surmounted on top, but after the valve trouble my father insisted on a return to petrol.

On leaving school at the commencement of the last war, before I was old enough to join the Army, I worked in a London garage repairing Belgian cars from the Front. During this time I managed to get an exhaust cut-out for the Darracq which greatly thrilled me, and I had many runs on the car before I was sent to France. I remember the great sorrow I felt in 1917 when I received a letter from my father saying he had sold this car, but my enjoyment at riding the Army Triumphs and Douglases and driving the various makes of lorries at that time soon made me forget this.

In 1921 my father did a part-exchange with the old Mercedes for a 30-h.p. 6-cylinder Armstrong-Siddeley tourer which gave about 59 h.p. on the brake. This car, being one of the earliest models they made, naturally suffered from teething troubles, but Mr. Cyril Siddeley, whom I had met in France during the war, very soon had this car put right, and it gave us excellent results. Its maximum speed was about 63 m.p.h. and it had a petrol consumption of about 14 m.p.g.

The first purchase I made myself after the war was a 6-h.p. "Military Model" A.J.S. This was one of the models that were built for the Russian Government, and I learned subsequently from the Stevens Brothers, at Wolverhampton, that although this model had been turned out in a hurry by them for military purposes, it was one of the new models that had given the least trouble. I believe I rode this machine for nearly 100,000 miles, during which time I used it for competition work. I received very great help from the Stevens Brothers, and I was persuaded to try, in succession, steel pistons and aluminium ones in their early stages and, needless to say, I learned a very great deal about the advantages and effects of each type.

In 1922 I purchased my first Bugatti. It was a Type 23 with an 8 ft. 4 in. wheel-base, 11.4-h.p. plain-bearing engine of

1,452 c.c., 68 by 100 mm. It was fitted with a 3-seater clover-leaf body and its speeds were approximately 72 on top, 53 on third and 40 on second. This car was used by me for hill-climbs and speed-trials, and when being driven reasonably for touring, it would do about 40 m.p.g. on a mixture of aviation petrol and 25 per cent. pure benzol. It was a very delightful car and I remember when I first bought it I ran it about with two aeroplane bucket seats costing 5s. each, and a small strip of wood tied across the chassis with string, which one used as a foot rest, as I was unable to afford a body for the first 2,000 miles' running. Soon after acquiring the car I remember turning up at my father's house when he had some friends for lunch. They had been informed that I was arriving during the afternoon with a most marvellous car. I well remember their amazement and disgust when I turned up with my luggage piled on the top of the spare wheel which lay at the rear of the chassis; I must confess my luggage consisted of handbags, Sidcot flying suit, tins of Castrol R, raincoats, and an unfurled umbrella, all fastened on by a clothes line wound round the chassis. I should like to say, however, that their first disgust soon vanished when I showed them the engine, and they saw the car in action on the road. The opinion they

then formed was obviously a very different one!

In 1924 I purchased one of the first "Modified Brescia" Bugatti cars. This car would do about 77 on top, 63 on third and 53 on second. The petrol consumption was in the neighbourhood of 26 to 27 m.p.g. This car was also fitted with a clover-leaf body, but, as usual, I ran it in first of all as a chassis. The dynamo was driven by a flat belt from the back of the camshaft, and I had a certain amount of trouble with the belts because they would persist in wearing on one side and riding over the rim of the pulley. This car was used for competition work.

In 1922 my father purchased one of the 10-h.p. Wolseley coupés. I believe I am correct in saying that the body of this car cost nearly as much as the chassis. It was certainly one of the most beautiful cars of its type and I well remember the great excitement amongst the family when I brought this car to them at Scarborough. Its coupé body was fitted with a leather hood which was most perfectly balanced, and it could be opened and closed with the utmost ease. Its absolute maximum speed in favourable conditions was about 45 m.p.h., but I well remember that we were supposed to cruise at between 30 and 33 m.p.h., at which speed it was extremely silent and

economical. Its radiator was quite the nicest shape of any Wolseley I have ever seen, and was silver-plated. Needless to say, this car did many years' good service.

In 1926 I exchanged my "Modified Brescia" for a "Full Brescia" Bugatti. This car, on the Track, would do nearly 90 m.p.h., but under road conditions and as used in hill-climbs and speed-trials would do 53 on second, 72 on third and 80 m.p.h. in full touring trim. Its maximum engine speed, although one was asked not to exceed 3,200 r.p.m., was 3,800 on second, 3,600 on third, and 3,500 on top. I remember taking delivery of this car; after running it in I opened it out to test its maximum speed, and to my horror I found I could do no more than 63 m.p.h. The car went back to Bugattis, and they could find nothing wrong with the engine, although the car could not be made to give a greater speed after being looked at by them. The cause of the trouble was that a Ghost silencer had been fitted by the coach-builders, and after this was removed the car immediately gave its proper speeds when fitted with the 4-in. Brescia pipe.

In 1926 we exchanged the Armstrong-Siddeley for a "28/80" Panhard Sports. This car had a 4-cylinder sleeve-valve engine of 105 by 140 mm. bore and stroke and three carburettors, and was reputed

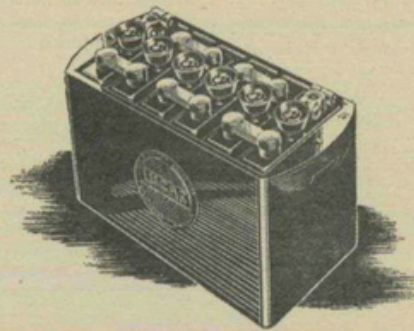
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to give off nearly 150 h.p. on the brake. One drove normally on one carburetter, but if one wished to use the full power of the engine, by pressing very hard on the accelerator pedal one could open up the other two carburetters, when the acceleration was extremely good. The three carburetters could not be used under 60 m.p.h., but the speeds according to the speedometer were, under favourable conditions, approximately 92 on top, 65 on third, and 40 in second. The petrol consumption varied between 15 and 17 m.p.g., but the less I say about the oil consumption the better. I remember travelling on this car on more than one occasion from Whitby to York in about an hour to an hour and five minutes. It was fitted with an extremely effective silencer and it also had, operated by a cut-out valve, a large 4-in. pipe which produced a very fine exhaust note. The open body was one of the most comfortable and most luxurious I have ever seen, and the rear seats were fitted with a screen. The car had a dynamo-starter fitted to the front of the crankshaft, and there was a special reduction gear for starting the engine by the handle, which made starting when cold extremely easy. I had an auxiliary coil for starting purposes fitted to the magneto, which was button-operated either from the dashboard or from a front mudguard. The latter switch could be operated when the starting handle was used, and it was a very easy way of getting the car to start, as the batteries were often somewhat reluctant to turn the big engine over. I am surprised that this model Panhard, or its later edition, the "30/150," has not been previously written-up in *MOTOR SPORT*. I may add, the car weighed nearly 2½ tons.

In 1927 my father purchased one of the "25/70" sleeve-valve Vauxhalls, and a very comfortable car this was. It did approximately 64 on top and 53 on third. It was fitted with a most luxurious body and was extremely trouble-free throughout its life.

In 1928 I exchanged the "Brescia" Bugatti for the 1924 "Targa Florio" Alfa-Romeo, already referred to in *MOTOR SPORT* in Mr. Biggs's article on Alfa-Romeo [June, 1940]. Originally it had engine dimensions of 80 by 120 mm., but when I purchased it it had one of 22/90-h.p. blocks fitted to it, of 77 mm. bore, but it differed from the sports model, inasmuch as it had a 7-bearing crankshaft. This car was registered XX5060 and had changed hands on several occasions before I purchased it, but according to its record, none of the previous purchasers had kept it for more than a week or ten days. [Driven by Coe at Shelsley, it is now owned by the Whineops. A sister car owned by Peter Clark, was illustrated last month.—Ed.] It had a right-hand gear-change and the hand-lever (outside) operated the four-wheel brakes. It had dry-sump lubrication and a 5-gallon oil tank fitted on the dashboard. The lowest speed in top was 40 m.p.h., and under 20 m.p.h. bottom gear had to be used. On one occasion a piston broke on the road, and after it had been overhauled and new pistons fitted, it was impossible to turn the engine over when cold, and always after this the crankshaft had to be turned over at night so that the pistons were half-way on their travel, as

otherwise neither the starter nor the handle could move the engine. The maximum speed of this car was approximately 98 m.p.h., although, I believe, when it was driven by Rosa it was supposed to have touched 115 on Brooklands. As far as I can remember, the maximum speeds were about 96-98 on top and 75 on third. Its petrol consumption was extremely good, and on long journeys I could get about 17 to 18 m.p.g. One of its weaknesses was that it would persist in shearing the pin in the water-pump drive. In the end I used to carry several spare pins with me, and it was not very much trouble to have one fitted even if it broke on a journey. The clutch was metal-to-metal, and, if the car was driven very far in traffic, it used to get red hot and refuse to disengage. This was rather trying. I kept this car for four years, and enjoyed many thousands of miles of delightful motoring.

In 1929 the Wolseley was exchanged for a 12-h.p. Singer saloon, which my sister still has. This car has one of the easiest and nicest gear-changes of its type that I have ever driven. The maximum speed was only about 45 to 48 m.p.h., and 28 on second, but it has been in service some 12 years.

In 1932 I exchanged the Alfa-Romeo for a Type 55 2.3-litre Bugatti, which car I still have, although I am sad to say it has been laid up since 1939. This is the most delightful car I have ever owned, and its performance is far too well known by readers of *MOTOR SPORT* for me to discuss in detail. I should like to say this, however, that this car has on two occasions done 67 miles in one hour and has actually averaged 74 m.p.h. for half an hour on the road. There has been so much said about Bugattis that I feel somewhat diffident in making any observations, but as an owner of these cars more or less continuously since 1922, I should like to say that if only owners would warm up their Bugattis slowly, and drive them steadily for the first four miles, and leave them in the condition that the makers intended, they would never experience any trouble at all.

In 1934 the Panhard was exchanged for a 30-h.p. Siddeley-Special. This car was fitted with a close-coupled, 4-seater saloon body and was painted black and red, and was certainly one of the prettiest examples of this model I have seen. The speeds were approximately 92 on top and 72 on third. The only criticism of this car I could find was that the self-change box, I think, made the interior of the car in hot weather rather uncomfortably hot, but as my experience of self-change boxes is not very great, perhaps I am somewhat mistaken in this.

I now return to more orthodox cars. In 1930 I purchased one of the "Blue Train" 16-h.p. Rovers with a three-speed box. This car, under favourable conditions, would touch about 72 m.p.h., but it was ridiculously slow in second gear, which would just about give a maximum of 28 to 30 m.p.h. This car had a fabric body and a folding head and was extremely reliable, but it needed very regular decarbonising every 7,000 miles.

At the end of 1933 I purchased my first Ford V8, the model which had a radiator similar to the early-type 8-h.p. Fords,

and was fitted with a single downdraught carburetter. Of all the Ford V8s I have owned I think this had the most silent engine, and it was certainly a very delightful car. Its only trouble was that the guides to the rear brake rods, which were attached to the radius rods of the rear axle, had a habit of falling off.

In 1935 I exchanged this Ford for one of the later models, Canadian-built, which was a very fine, trouble-free car, and gave a very steady petrol consumption of 19 m.p.g. The maximum speed of my first Ford was about 75 m.p.h., but this one would do about 80 m.p.h.

In 1936 I bought my first English Ford V8, which in its early days had certain teething troubles, such as a very wavy windscreen and an engine with a bad period at about 47 m.p.h. The Ford Company very kindly exchanged my engine for one with a larger diameter crankshaft, after which it ran perfectly. This car would do between 19 and 20 m.p.g. and had a maximum speed of 85 m.p.h.

In 1938 I exchanged this car for the new model, and even after 35,000 miles without the engine being touched in any way, it would do 20 m.p.g., with an oil consumption of about one pint for 300 miles.

In 1939 I exchanged the Siddeley-Special for a 33-h.p. 8-cylinder Mercury. This car has a maximum speed of about 94 m.p.h. and a petrol consumption of about 22 m.p.g., and on one occasion travelled 210 miles in 3 hours 48 mins. on 10 gallons of petrol.

At the outbreak of the war I acquired a 10-h.p. Ford, and I must say that although I have been spoiled by the various types of cars I have owned, I have nothing but praise for this little car. The longer it runs the more economical it appears to get, and 35-37 m.p.g. is by no means uncommon. I often wish it had a four-speed gearbox, but I suppose one must accept it in the form in which the makers intended. It has certainly opened my eyes to the excellent value that is obtainable in the cheap car market.

In conclusion, may I endeavour to clear up a point which has been much discussed, whether the "11.4" or the "11.9" Brescia-Bugatti should be described as Type 22 or 23. From an old leaflet issued in 1922 the "11.4" (1,453 c.c.) model was sold in two chassis lengths. The Type 22 had a 7 ft. 10 in. wheelbase, and the Type 23 an 8 ft. 4 in. wheelbase. The Brescia model with the ball-bearing engine was sold as "Sports," with a 6 ft. 5 in. wheelbase, but this model could also be supplied in the other two lengths of wheelbase to order. I think I am, therefore, correct in saying that the "11.4" model was either a Type 22 or Type 23, and the Brescia was always described as a "Brescia" or "Modified Brescia."

[The Type 22, according to the Bugatti Owners' Club handbook, was the 1914 16-valve car, of 68 by 100 mm., while the Type 23 was the 1923 "Brescia," of 69 by 100 mm., made in "Modified" and "Full" versions. An English catalogue in our possession gives wheelbases of 7 ft. 11½ in. and 8 ft. 4½ in. for the Type 22 and Type 23, of 68 by 100 mm., respectively, however.—Ed.]