

surfaces and innumerable hairpins we came to a snowdrift which forced us to retreat. The bad road conditions had caused a small crack in the unprotected sump and had flattened the exhaust pipes. This showed that it was not a rally or GT car. The gearbox again proved not to be suitable for that type of terrain as one had to depress the heavy clutch pedal to effect quiet changes; also long spells in second gear caused the transmission tunnel and handbrake lever to get somewhat hot. The enjoyment of its impeccable road holding and all-round independent suspension was marred by a persistent tapping noise that suggested something was amiss in the valve gear.

After spending a night in Monte Carlo we took the E-type for repairs into the British Motors Ltd premises, who were busy repairing other exhaust systems and body dents in Jaguars that had taken part in a Jaguar DC Rally. They had also fitted a new universal joint to Bruce McLaren's personal E-type prior to his winning the Monaco GP in a V8 Cooper-Climax.

While there we encountered Edward Eves, who had travelled in his pre-war Miles Whitney Straight from Bagington in Coventry to Cannes, then by train to Monte Carlo. We also met Jenks, who took the Jaguar for a brief run up La Turbie hill and over the Turini and Col de Braus and was also impressed but declared it large, noisy and heavy as to steering and gear-change compared to that of his Porsche.

After watching two practice days and the GP itself we departed at 4am on the Monday, heading for Calais via Lyon and Chalon with three stops for fuel because of that small 14-gallon tank! The total distance of 777.7 miles took 12hr 20min running time; the car showed no sign of distress, the brakes as powerful as ever, oil pressure steady and the engine as responsive as at the start.

Two days later we took the car to Coventry to reset the ignition for English fuel as it had started to 'pink'. There we were told that 150 E-types emerged each week and they were all bench-tested, then the sumps were dropped for inspection of the bearings. The hoods were individually tailored, a slave hard-top was fitted to every car, and each completed E-type was road-tested before a final inspection, some 35 drivers being employed on these tests.

One matter completely baffled me – why there should be such a high insurance premium on a car that could not be safer, more docile or instil greater confidence than this stupendously clever 150mph Jaguar.



The Spirit of Brooklands in Sussex

The well-known Goodwood circuit originated in 1948 on September 18 as an experiment because Brooklands had been ruined by the wartime damage inflicted by military vehicles, and Donington was still an army depot. The circuit followed the perimeter road around the decommissioned Westhampnett airfield, measuring approximately 2.4 miles to the lap. The course was located in beautiful Sussex, within a mile and half from The Duke of Richmond and Gordon's home and the 'Glorious Goodwood' horse racing course. With a newly laid surface it made for fast lapping, and FRGerard in an ERA achieved 83.4mph in practice on the Friday. It had wide grass verges and only wire fences around the public enclosures, giving the public good views but rather close to the track in places; no grandstands, paddock shelters or even scoreboards were available but the organisers hoped to provide these things for the following year.

The paddock was grass with an anti-skid 'carpet' along its centre, sports cars one side and racing cars on the opposite side. It was rather cramped

but officials operated with a casual efficiency so an informal atmosphere prevailed. The Junior Car Club had the support of the *Daily Graphic* which provided and presented the prizes totalling £500 and the Goodwood Trophy. The races were of short duration, three laps except the last race which was five, and all scratch events, for a good variety of cars. The race groupings were cleverly worked out, but Formula 2 cars had to run with the blown 1100s and the large unsupercharged cars were not catered for. All cars started together in a grid formation but I suggested that an Indianapolis start would have been preferable. 'Bunny' Dyer was the chief marshal and a Jowett Javelin and numerous Mk VI Bentleys were used as official cars.

After my friend Monica Whincop presented a bouquet to the Duchess of Richmond and Gordon, the Duke opened the course by driving round it in a Bristol. Seven races followed for racing cars of various engine capacities. Stirling Moss in the under 500cc class won his first-ever road race, in a Cooper at 71.92mph, and Reg Parnell in a Maserati won the Goodwood Trophy Race at 80.56mph.

On my way home from this very successful day's racing I drove past a notice proclaiming 'Safety in the air – danger on the road' but sadly on this same day at a Battle of Britain Air Display 12 people were killed and 13 injured when a De Havilland Mosquito crashed into the crowd. ➤



Convincing period dress at Goodwood 2010 – or is it 1948 after all? Top: the very first race

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