

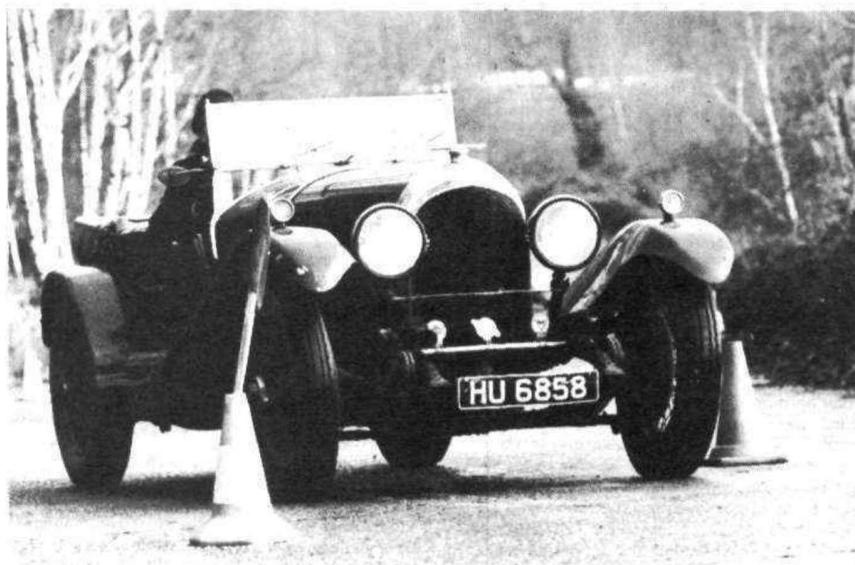
The VSCC Visits Brooklands

BEFORE THE WAR the VSCC had race-meetings at Donington Park but not at Brooklands. It has since discovered this famous venue, rather late in the day, and on February 5th held its second Driving Test session within the hallowed grounds. The space available made it possible to run nine tests concurrently, so that a lot was packed into the winter afternoon. First to arrive at the "Mit and Spike" at Byfleet was Price, his Austin Nippy having been trailed all the way through the rain from Wales, behind his willing Ford Cortina. The weather cleared for the timed frolics, which I watched from the Test Hill, which competitors had to climb from a standing-start at the foot, with a re-start a short way up, this being the kind of test which could have happened at Brooklands before the war.

The meeting had been over-subscribed, entries closing at 70, and the Paddock was soon full of the pre-war scenes and atmosphere, on a day which, apart from the over-growth of Industrialism, might have been the occasion of a JCC or MCC event at the Track long, long ago. Cars which caught the eye were Cooksey's C-type MG, nicely endowed with quick-action fillers, which Goldie Gardner drove in the 1931 "Double-12", the ex-works Ulster Aston Martin of Derrick Edwards, now unblown, and Mrs. Cooksey's quaint 1930 Morris Minor, which ran as a two-seater sans dickey in the tests, for the ample reason that it has a Duple body originally convertible into a van or four-seater tourer at the owner's convenience—it went away with its replica Wholesale Wine-merchant's van in place!

The Test Hill, with its 1-in-5 gradient, steepening to 1 in 4, had a coating of slippery moss on the concrete, to make things interesting for the more urgeful cars. For a time it caused little trouble, although Golder's Riley Sprite sounded a bit fluffly, Edwards slid a little, and Robbie Hewitt stalled her Amilcar's engine at the re-start. Barry Clarke's Ulster Austin, with a lightweight battery to help it, leapt away, Peter Binns' smart 1100 HRG did very well, his wife later driving it in the appropriate white flying helmet, and Wilkinson was not afraid to use plenty of revs from his J2 MG. Seymour Price's Austin Nippy took it quickly, but McCall's Ulster Austin stopped halfway up, beyond the re-start, but contrived to carry on unaided. This was just as well, because this time there was no Recovery Vehicle and to reach the further tests on the Members banking it was essential to ascend the Test Hill, up which a modern Honda motorcycle rushed every so often, intent upon expediting the time-sheets for the (human) results' computers.

Mason took Aston Martin LM21 up more slowly than expected, Mrs. Mason in the Le Mans Aston Martin, screen flat and no spare wheel, got immense spin from the off-side rear wheel, Lee's 1926 Alvis 12/50, with "Oriental" headlamps, popped back on being requested to get on with it, to make a noisy ascent, Joseland's Frazer Nash jumped off to a hand-brake-controlled getaway, climbing



Chris Pack's 1926 3-litre Bentley negotiating a test at Brooklands. Colour photographs appear on page 328.

quickly as a Fast Tourer should, Harding's Super Sports Frazer Nash was fastish, but Gahagan's Type 37 GP Bugatti failed high up the hill, and had to reverse ignominiously down.

Dickie's fabric-bodied M-type MG, with outside exhaust, was slow, as was the aforesaid "universal" Morris Minor, Cooksey used high revs from the very Brooklands-looking C-type MG (actually, they called them "Montlhéry's"), and Cochrane's magneto-Chummy Austin did a notably smooth take-off. Cliff's hooded Riley Gamecock only just made the summit, where it was necessary to stop at the finish-line, precluding the faster cars from literally "flying" over the brow, Chester's blue 750 Special (Austin), with oversize rear tyres, which had made its debut at this event in 1977, performed satisfactorily, Bullett's 1929 Austin Seven, perhaps encouraged by its OP registration number, 'opped away, on a neat climb, Bull's J2 MG was revvy and fast (nice to see so many folded-flat windscreens), Neill Bruce's well-known 1930 Chummy Austin jumped away in the best Seven-fashion, to make a sedate ascent, Blake took his CGSS Amilcar up slowly, in contrast to Bateman's J2 MG, which was in an excellent hurry.

Baker's 1932 Riley Nine Special couldn't defeat Col. Lindsay-Lloyd's 69-year-old gradient, but Mrs. Hogg made it, in the Ulster Aston Martin, the other two Golders took their Riley Sprites up rapidly, Mrs. Ashton had no bothers, in Gardner's PA MG, but Rainey's aggressive 1936 Alfa Romeo 6C crawled up, emitting a smoke-screen, awaiting his daughter, who put up the better show. The Model-A Ford coach of Tom Threlfall rushed up with entire nonchalance, Angela Cherrett sheltered within her 1931 Alfa Romeo 6C saloon, Scholes' Riley Kestrel didn't care for the re-start, Rolfe's nice 4½-litre Bentley and Pack's 3-litre Bentley trundled up, the latter at zero revs, Merriott's i.f.s. open Alvis Speed-20 had no trouble, Marsh's 30/98 Vauxhall Wensum spun its wheels derisively, Lincoln looked backwards from whence his 16/65 OM had come, Tony

Jones put on plenty of power in his 30/98 Vauxhall, and Elder's 3-litre Bentley took it slowly, or should I say sensibly carefully? Dods seemed intent on FTD in his castor-oil-burning AC Special, labelled "EPA (which might just as well have read "ERA" judging by its ability), Hugh Conway put up a fine performance in his Type 43 Bugatti, scorning wear on its rear tyre treads, but Clear's Riley Lynx muffed the re-start, whereas Charnock's beautiful cream open-tourer 3½-litre Bentley took it all in its Rolls-Royce silent stride.

Burrell's Derby Bentley Special was impressive, what with spin and getting out of line, the rare Husky Hillman tourer of Baker made it, Wallis' Riley 12/4 was very good, but Smith's "everyday" Rolls-Royce 20/25 found it all too embarrassing and having got almost over its ordeal, had to reverse down. Mrs. Shapland then showed how it should be done, in her unobtrusive 10/23 Talbot two-seater, Rouse coaxed his Singer Junior saloon within feet of success before it failed, Creed-Mills' delightful 1923 Cloverleaf 14/40 HE looked absolutely in its element and even disdained to pause at the top, Collard's immaculate 1921 disc-wheeled Calthorpe tourer disappeared snail-like over the summit, and the only Edwardian, Roger Collings' 1912/13 Brixia-Züst performed zestfully, hood up, cut-out open, just as it might have done here at Brooklands before the Kaiser War.

With other tests on the steep banking and on part of the old Finishing straight the ancient place came alive again, thanks to the VSCC, for one brief February afternoon. And I noticed that even the skate-board has discovered Brooklands.—W.B.

First Class Awards: B. M. Clarke (1929 Austin Seven), P. J. E. Binns (1939 HRG), J. C. Wilkinson (1939 MG J2), N. Mason (1935 Aston Martin Ulster), D. J. Ellison (1938 Riley 12/4), M. H. Dods (1936 AC), Mrs. M. Shapland (1928 Talbot 10/23).

Second Class Awards: D. J. P. Edwards (1935 Aston Martin Ulster), L. Bull (1933 MG J2), R. Adnams (1930 Austin Seven), A. D. Jones (1923 Vauxhall 30/98), R. J. Burrell (1936 Bentley), R. A. Collings (1912/13 Brixia-Züst).

Third Class Awards: M. F. Eyre (1929 Austin Chummy), P. Gardner (1934 MG PA), D. S. Price (1935 Austin Nippy), A. Geggus (1928 Amilcar CGSS), C. P. Marsh (1923 Vauxhall 30/98), H. G. Conway (1928 Bugatti 143).