

The



magazine

Vol. 1

No. 1



Special Article on the
ALPINE TRIAL

By

A. G. Douglas Clease
of "The Autocar"

**Issued by SS Cars Limited
Foleshill, Coventry**



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Getting Acquainted

By The Editor

D OUBTLESS many will have observed a custom—at one time widely followed by Editors—of stating the objects with which the publications they edited were offered to readers. Thus, the avowed intention of one journal would be to “Elevate and Instruct” as distinct from the desire of a contemporary to provide “Entertainment and Amusement.”

There was, we feel, considerable merit in this custom which left no possible doubt in the mind of the reader as to the Editor's intention—no matter how far short it fell of attainment. For ourselves, we doubt if it is within our province to seek to “elevate” our readers. Nor do we aspire to become “instructors” in the sense of teaching people their business. If “entertainment” and “amusement” can be derived from our pages then so much the better, but the prime object for the existence of this Magazine is indicated by the heading above.

We believe that in becoming better acquainted with our Distributors and Agents—and their staffs—we shall be better able to serve them in the many ways it is possible for Manufacturers to serve those who handle their products. Similarly, the better acquainted you, our trade friends, become with our organisation, products, plans and aims, the easier becomes your job of selling.

If an example were needed to support this belief, it is surely provided by a statement made to us some time ago by a visitor to our works. He came direct to us, he said, because he had called on his local SS Agent who “... didn't appear to know much about the car or the people who made it.” Quite frankly, we believe our caller was guilty of exaggeration, but, if there were a grain of truth in his statement, perhaps we should take some of the blame for the existence of such a state of affairs. Certainly we can strive to remedy it, and in the SS Magazine we trust the remedy will be found.

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I N an early issue we shall publish an article dealing with the origin, expansion and present constitution of our business. This we feel impelled to do in sheer self-defence—so varied and extraordinary are some current beliefs held concerning our activities. Whilst the Magazine is, perhaps, scarcely the proper medium for the dissemination of technical information of every kind, it is intended that articles of a technical nature shall appear from time to time in order to supplement information contained in the instruction book and technical bulletins. Among subjects of general interest, a series of articles is planned based on interviews with Distributors and

Agents on topics of the moment, whilst illustrated articles, paragraphs and news items dealing with SS cars on the road and in Trials and Competitions at home and abroad will serve to inform everyone of the performance of our products in the hands of owners throughout the world.

Articles on matters of mutual interest contributed by Distributors and Agents themselves will be welcome, although a word must be uttered concerning the desirability of avoiding ultra controversial subjects. As to what constitutes a controversial subject we, in our editorial wisdom, must decide; but we can promise that if it is thought the business of getting acquainted will be well served by an argument—then by all means let us have an argument!

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T HESE, then, are some of the matters with which the SS Magazine will be concerned in fulfilling its purpose of becoming a friendly link between our Agents and ourselves—bringing each month news, information and items of interest and assistance to all who are engaged with us in marketing SS cars. So, with this, our first number, we take up the pleasurable and important matter of “Getting Acquainted.”



and the

Alpine Trial

By A. G. Douglas Clease, B.Sc., of *The Autocar*

ONLY those who have actually taken part in the Alpine Trial can realise what a really gruelling test of a car it is.

Think of all the trials hills you know in Great Britain, and imagine them prolonged about ten times and then placed end to end. Next imagine that you are required to average 32½ m.p.h. up and down them for ten or twelve hours per day for six days, with two or three time checks each day at which you are allowed no early margin whatsoever and a late margin of only five minutes without loss of marks. If you are more than 30 minutes late at some checks, or 60 minutes late at others, you will be disqualified.

In addition, your radiator cap will be sealed, you will be given only ten minutes each day for adjustments, and finally your car must be a standard production job. If you yourself want food or drink you

must get it as and when you can find time.

Well! Imagine all that, and even then you will *still* be far from realising just how arduous "the Alpine" is.

Last year five SS1 cars entered, and at their first attempt they did well to secure 6th, 8th and 11th positions in their class. This year four SS1 open tourers entered, C. M. Needham, S. H. Light and myself forming a team and F. W. Morgan being an individual entry. For the first three days no marks were lost by any of the four. On the fourth day Light's car was unfortunately put out by a crash, through no fault of the driver of the car, for on a fast bend with a loose surface an enormous nail was picked up by the off front tyre and as a result the car left the narrow road and was hopelessly ditched.

My own car developed a mysterious ignition fault which defied rapid diagnosis, but I was able to keep

going although losing marks on the timed hill-climb up the Stelvio and on the speed test. Inevitable on four-and-a-half cylinders! Eventually the trouble was rectified, and Needham and I had the satisfaction of finishing second in our class, so winning the silver-gilt Alpine plaque.

Morgan also finished high up amongst the individuals, winning the silver-gilt Glacier plaque.

To appreciate what this means, consider the following. The roads are narrow and loose, and zig-zag their way up the mountain side, with a wall of rock on one side and a sheer drop on the other. A mistake on one of the innumerable hairpin bends may, in fact, probably will, mean a horrible death for the crew. The Stelvio, for example, has 48 hairpin bends and rises to about 10,000 feet

Cooling has to be above suspicion, for every 1,000 feet above sea level means a drop of 1°C. in boiling point.



The SS Alpine Entrants photographed at Coventry before setting out on the great adventure.

My car only once touched 80° C.; usually it got only to 70° or 75° C. on the long climbs. We could all four have completed the trial without breaking the first day's seal. We were allowed to add water each night.

Engine and gearbox must stand being "all out" for miles. One stretch of 25 miles meant second gear and 3,500 r.p.m. all the time, for the descents are more trying than the climbs. It is a case of accelerating down hill in second, braking before reaching the hairpin, rolling round the hairpin—you dare not touch the brakes on the loose surface, and accelerating to the next bend. Brakes are tested to the utmost. Save them as you may, they are bound to get hot and lose some of their efficiency. Although only once did I have to adjust them to take up wear.

Steering also is severely tried. From lock to lock it has to be pulled, violently, the wheels on the roughest of surfaces. A single fracture and—well! you don't have to think of such things or your nerve would go.

As the trial progressed one could only marvel that tortured metal would

stand so much. Surely a spring must break over such road surfaces! Or a valve! Even a conn. rod! Or the crankshaft itself! But nothing seems

to have any effect on the sturdiness of the car, although you can feel the power falling off as you climb up, and up, and up. The rarefied air of 8,000 or 10,000 feet means a smaller charge per cylinder, less oxygen, and therefore less power. It is inevitable, and it is the reason for the invention of supercharging, which was originally to allow aircraft engines to develop more power at high altitudes, to "raise their ceilings," in fact.

But these are not supercharged cars; they are standard models, with full four-seater bodies and big wings. Not with narrow light bodies and small close-fitting wings, as so many of the German cars were. My car, in fact, in running order, weighed 27½ cwt., say, 30 cwt. with two up!

I ought to add that the steering lock was ample for even the sharpest, hairpin, whereas one car no longer in wheel base, had to reverse on seven of the Stelvio bends. Altogether, I felt very pleased with its performance, and any car which survives the trial is indeed a good car, while a car which figures in the awards is a car of which to feel proud.



Courtesy The Autocar

ROUGH GOING!

A. G. D. Cleave "wagged" after negotiating one of the immovable hairpin bends. Note the appalling road surface.



Here is the SS Team. From left to right they are: C. M. Nieldham and H. Gill; A. G. Douglas Cleave and Mrs. Cleave; S. H. Light.

Concours Successes *are* Valuable

Many awards gained by **SS** Cars over higher priced products



AT a time when owners and buyers are paying increased attention to appearance, it is interesting to note the consistent manner in which **SS** has gained awards in coachwork competitions both at home and abroad.

Outstanding among these successes is the award gained by **SS** in the famous Monte Carlo Rally. This event, as is well known, attracts entries from all over Europe, and is the occasion for the keenest rivalry by owners possessing examples of coachwork from eminent Continental coachbuilding houses. Despite this keen competition, an **SS** gained first place in the unlimited class—the runner-up being a car costing nearly double.

Another noteworthy success was gained in the coachwork competition held at the conclusion of the Scottish Rally. In this competition, an open **SS** gained first place in the class for cars up to £350; whilst in the Eastbourne Rally and Concours, **SS** created something of a sensation by taking all three prizes for closed cars up to £350! At the same meeting, two **SS** cars tied for first place in the open sports car class.

The Bexhill Concours was the scene of yet more **SS** triumphs, for in the class for closed cars up to £400 an **SS** took the premier award, whilst in the closed sports car class (a separate category), first and second places went to **SS**. In yet another class—that for the most

distinctive car up to £500—**SS** again took first and second prizes. In all these instances **SS** was competing with higher-priced cars.

At the Ramsgate Concours, **SS** again won the first place for closed cars up to £350, and followed this up by taking first prize in the local residents' class.

To continue this story of consistent success beyond the events mentioned would result in wearisome repetition. It is only necessary to study the few examples given to see that, when in competition with high-priced cars, **SS** holds its own in no uncertain manner; and that, when pitted against cars in its own price class, it literally "sweeps the board."

Right: An **SS11** open 4-seater in silver and blue which won First Prize in the Eastbourne Concours d'Elegance leading the procession of cars.

Below: The fine collection of Trophies won by Captain PLUGGE—an **SS** enthusiast.



Plans for 1935 Production well Advanced

Growing Demand calls for Increased Output

BECAUSE the question of deliveries is so closely bound up in the matter of production, it is felt that some indication of our plans for 1935 will be of interest at this period of the year. We fully realise that, for many, interest may centre less on *how* cars are to be produced than on *when* they can be secured; therefore, let it be stated at once that the twin problems of production and delivery have been the subjects of the closest study for many months.

Whilst we have no wish that this article should take the form of an apology for such delays that may in some instances have occurred, we do feel that some reference should be made to certain problems—peculiar to ourselves—which have, in the past, rendered the work of production an extremely difficult and complex task.

In the first place, it must be remembered that the **\$5** is not a "volume line"—which does not so much mean that the total sales volume is low, than that it differs widely from the "popular" type of mass produced motor car. Furthermore, the range of choice offered is particularly wide. Consider, for a moment, the possibilities of selection from the 1934 range. There were two main chassis types—the **\$5L** and the **\$5LL**—with four distinct engine units. On each of these

chassis were three body styles: coupé, saloon and open four-seater. Of these, the closed cars were offered in no less than twenty-six separate colour schemes and the open cars seven.

Now, any attempt to work out the commutations and permutations possible in this range of choice would be an interesting exercise in mathematics but a totally useless procedure from the point of view of planning production schedules. Yet some method of forecasting demand *must* be put into practice or production assumes the absurd form of turning out cars "one at a time to order."

\$5 \$5 \$5
ABSOLUTE accuracy in forecasting demand is, of course, impossible. What will be the trend in closed model demand? . . . More saloons? . . . Fewer low h.p. jobs consequent upon tax reduction? . . . An "all-black" rage in colour schemes or a pronounced swing over in favour of two-colour schemes?

These are but a few of the problems that beset those responsible for pro-

duction—problems which, in the past two years, during which the **\$5** has been "getting on the map," have been akin to those confronting a mariner attempting to set a course in an uncharted sea.

But 1935 sees a number of these problems—if not swept entirely away—at least materially lessened. It is generally granted that **\$5** in forming rather than following a vogue has virtually created a new market of which the possibilities are far more clearly seen than was possible two years ago. Again, we now enjoy the inestimable advantage of our Distributors' and Agents' experience of handling our products in direct contact with the buying public over a period of time which has enabled certain judgments to be formed.

These two factors (which time alone could make available for calculation), taken in conjunction with reorganised factory procedure and new offices, enable us to assert that many problems of the past have been removed, and to prophecy that, with 1935 production so well advanced, a bumper year for **\$5** Distributors and Agents will result.



A corner of the trimming section.

*Characteristic of **\$5** are the long sweeping wings. Here are a few undergoing the ribbing down process.*

How do You Display **SS** Cars?

Good Showroom Display DOES Sell Cars

WE were once asked, "Which is the best way to display a car in a showroom?"—a question just about as easy to answer as "Which is the best place for a piano in a drawing room?" It depends on circumstances.

In displaying an **SS**, the first and most obvious thought is so to place the car that full regard can be given to its beauty of line, but this is not always easy owing to exigencies of space. Wherever possible, however, it will surely be agreed that an **SS** should be placed "broadside on" to the window. Many and various are the ways of "dressing" a display, from an elaborate setting involving the use of a number of "peeps" to the mere placing of a bowl of flowers, and ingenious indeed are some of the ideas put over by Distributors and Agents throughout the country.

How do you use your windows? In particular, how do you display **SS** in them? We are more than ordinarily interested in this matter of showroom display, and—as will be noted from the adjoining panel—we are offering £5 in prizes this month to members of your staff for the best photographs received of an **SS** display. Furthermore, a special Display section of our newly-formed Publicity Department is in the process of creation and very soon we shall be publishing particulars in this magazine of a Display Service of which we hope the fullest advantage will be taken. In the meantime, if you would like any help or advice on any matter relating to showroom display, just direct your enquiry to the Publicity Department and practical suggestions and ideas will be yours for the asking.

AWORD or two concerning the value of showroom display may not be out of season, even though the majority of our Agents are already firm believers in bright and original methods of presentation. True, there are some who never alter the appearance of their showrooms from one year's end to another, nor make any attempt whatever to "feature" any particular make or model. This is frequently due less to lack of enterprise than the belief that such activity has no sales value, and is summed up in the phrase, "Oh, showroom stunts are no good—a man doesn't buy a car because it looks pretty in a window."

Well, put like that one might find this contention difficult to dispute. But, if we may be permitted to join issue in friendly debate with those who hold to such a belief, we would open our case with the question, "Then why have a showroom at all?" Surely, if it is felt that a potential purchaser is uninfluenced by the appearance of the things he sees on the other side of a plate glass window, it is a little illogical to provide the window and pay heavily for frontage.

We know the counter to this is that stock must be put somewhere, and that if it is merely warehoused behind blank walls one might as well go out of business; and at this point it is only fair that we should cease to carry on what must be—in an article of this kind—a one-sided debate; but if any of our Agents care to let us have their opinions on the subject of showroom display, pro and con, we shall be happy to publish them in our next issue. So come along, let us know what you think about it—and don't forget the photographs!

£5 for a Photograph

We want photographs of special SS window displays, and for the best one received will award a prize of £5 to the member or members of the Agent's staff responsible for the planning and arrangement of the display.

Consolation awards of one guinea each will be paid for any other photographs received which are published.

Please send your photographs and address all correspondence on this competition to:—

**PUBLICITY DEPARTMENT
SS CARS LTD.
Foleshill
Coventry**

Closing Date: JANUARY 21st



*An arresting showroom display staged by Imperial Autocore Ltd., of Northampton. This was a clever publicity fish-up with the International Alpine Trial and resulted in numerous enquiries for **SS**.*

"A Little Knowledge . . ."

Is Mechanical Data a Necessity for Salesmen?

TO those who have glanced at the heading above and, in consequence, feel impelled to write and tell us that we have got the quotation wrong—stay your hands! We know that the correct quotation is "A little learning is a dangerous thing," but we like our own version best, having regard to our subject, which concerns technical knowledge and Salesmen.

How much technical knowledge should a Salesman possess concerning the cars he is selling?

We will come out into the open at once and state that we share the opinion of some of the most successful Salesmen we know, which is that every scrap of technical information is valuable. It is not often that an experienced Salesman is caught napping, but now and again a seemingly simple question from a prospect catches the best informed Salesman without a ready answer—which is not only disconcerting to the man trying to make the sale, but annoying to the prospect.

It may be held that the Service Department is the proper quarter in which to seek technical information, and that there is no need for a Salesman to become a walking encyclopedia when recourse can be made to the Instruction Book. Even granting this to be reasonable, every successful Salesman will agree that having your answers put in of immeasurable advantage in carrying a sales interview through to the point of clinching the sale.

Much is made of the need for a Salesman engaged in any trade to be enthusiastic about the thing he is selling, whether it be a patent tin-opener or a motor car. Many Salesmen even go so far as to affect an enthusiasm which they do not genuinely feel but which they find effective none the less. But the Salesman who relies on enthusiasm

alone—real or assumed—unsupported by adequate knowledge of the product is bound to slip up sooner or later.

IMAGINE for a moment that you are interested in the purchase of a new wireless set and have got as far as the counter in a shop. The radio Salesman is full of praises for a particular set and apparently full of enthusiasm for its workmanship, performance, simplicity and so on. You naturally discount the praises, which you expected in any case, but you find yourself caught up by the man's enthusiasm for the product.

You ask a question. How many valves? The Salesman hesitates. He thinks there are three—no, four—no, three. Of course it's three, anyway, he will have a look. H'm . . . How does the thing open? . . . This catch? . . . No, that's for the accumulator . . . Must be here . . . No, that's for the H.T. battery . . .

Ah! Here we are . . . Yes, sir, as I thought, three valves—and a really wonderful set. I don't think I have ever . . . etc., etc.

He picks up the thread of his enthusiasm from the point where he lost it in a display of ignorance. But how much confidence is left in your mind concerning anything he says about the set now? Precious little, probably, since you are satisfied that he knows next to nothing about the thing.

If all this savours of a prelude to a sermon on "How to become a Salesman in Six Lessons" or advice on egg-sucking for grandmothers, please absolve us from any intention of assuming the guise of mentees. We merely state a case—and the case is that you cannot held a prospect's interest if you don't know, literally know, what you are talking about.

NOW, there is lighter reading available than an Instruction Book, and we would be the last to suggest that time devoted to committing the electrical wiring system to memory was well spent. But we do believe that every Salesman—"star" or otherwise—cannot help but derive benefit from a daily dip into the Instruction Books of the makes he is selling—if only to prime himself in readiness to confound the "Smart Alecs" whose chief joy in life is bowling out Salesmen!

A Guinea for a Letter

How do you feel about this question? Most Salesmen we have met have had views on the subject. What are yours? Write to us and let us know—we shall be pleased to hear from you, and will pay one guinea for what is adjudged to be the best expression of opinion. Please state whether or not your letter is for publication, and, remember, Salesmen only.

SS Car Club's Fine Start

Successful Rally and Trial at Bournemouth reveals splendid sporting and social spirit

BY staging a most successful Rally and Trial at Bournemouth, the SS Car Club has demonstrated that it is now well and truly launched and fairly on the way to becoming one of the most popular of "one-make Clubs."

This, the first "full dress" event of the Club, drew members from many parts of the country, and on Saturday, November 10th, they converged on Salisbury where they checked in prior to proceeding to Boscombe in accordance with a 25 m.p.h. schedule over an observed route with a secret check. Saturday's proceedings wound up with a dinner and dance attended by nearly 100 members and guests, and no more enjoyable termination could have been imagined. The affair went with a real swing until the small hours, and was marked by a spirit of cheery informality resulting in complete enjoyment.

On Sunday morning a Concours d'Elegance was staged as a prelude to a short reliability trial in the Blandford district and over a course which included Iwerston Hill—the sporting gradient of which was tackled with great zest. The trial over, competitors made their way to the Harbour Club, Poole, for lunch. Here, the prizes were distributed to the accompaniment of much good-humoured banter, and so ended a completely successful and highly enjoyable event for all concerned.

Before the next Club event, it is hoped that many new members will have joined, and that the venue may be located somewhere in the Midlands. Distributors and Dealers can help the Club enormously by becoming members themselves and by circulating owners in their areas. Club leaflets and application forms have already been sent to all Dealers, and further supplies are available on request to:—Publicity Department, SS Cars Ltd., Foleshill, Coventry.

We would like to see the Club secure a hundred new members by January 1st. Can it be done? With your help, we think it can.



SOME PICTORIAL IMPRESSIONS OF THE RALLY

1. The Dinner. Mr. W. Lyons, President of the Club, is seen standing.
2. A group of the Officials and Committee Members.
3. Some of the Concours Entrants.
4. Mr. Leslie Hatfield (of Ernest W. Hatfield Ltd., SS Distributors for Sheffield) climbing Iwerston Hill.

