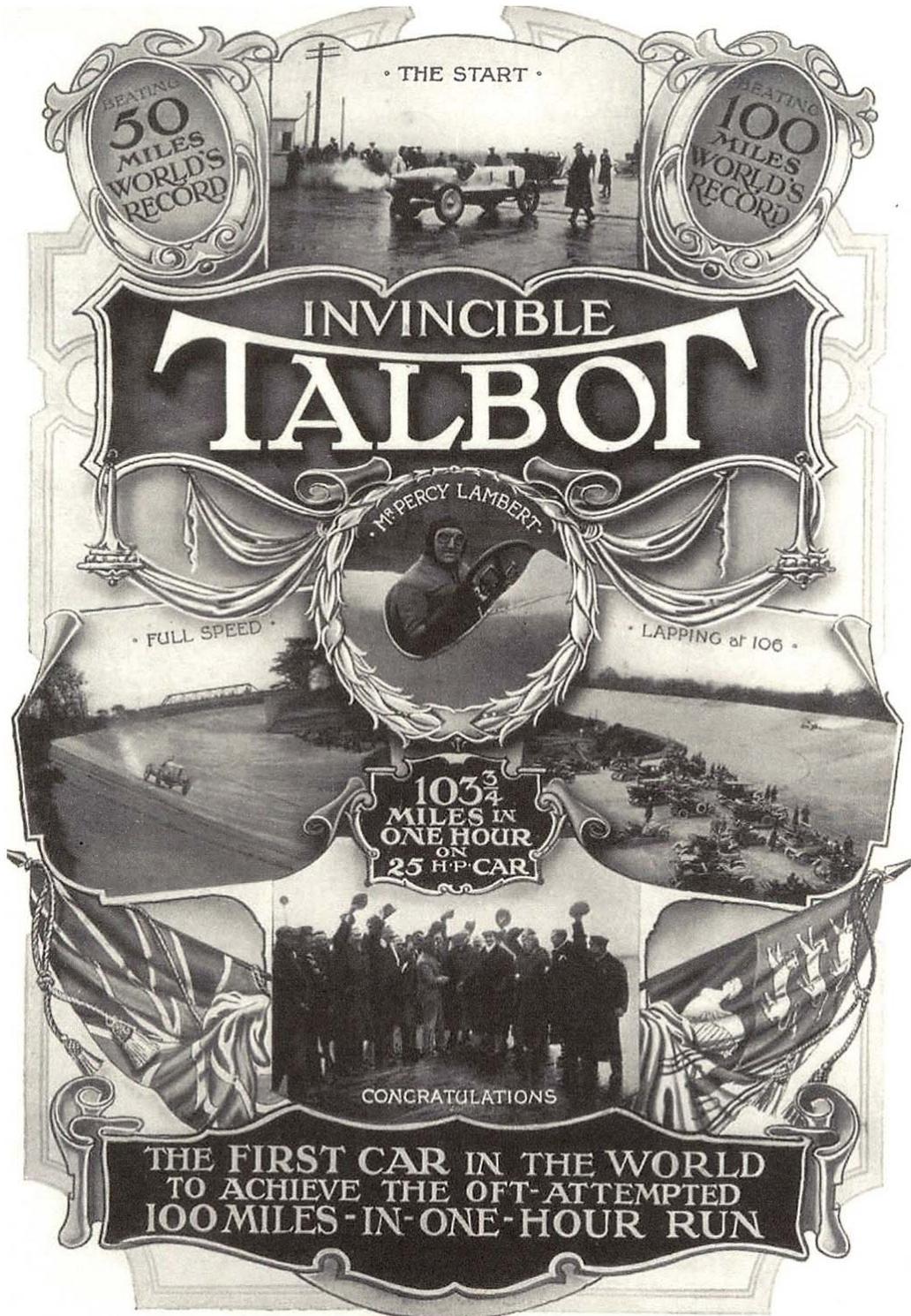


1934

TALBOT OWNERS'

2013

CLUB



1913 - 'ANNUS MIRABILIS'



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Registered Trade Mark.

1913

ANNUS MIRABILIS

Written and compiled by Martin Bryant

With original material drawn from
The Motor, The Autocar and other contemporary sources.

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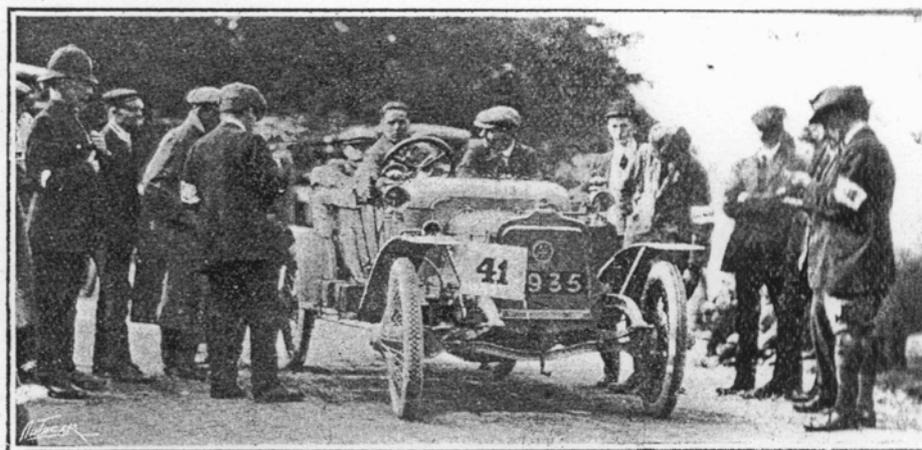
Brooklands and Percy Lambert bookend Talbot's 'annus mirabilis' of 1913. The two are inextricably linked in triumph and tragedy. But there is much more than firsts and lasts to this, the most successful competitive period of our illustrious marque. This is the story of that fateful year.

First, some background on motor sport one hundred years ago. Britain stood aside from Continental Europe (no change then!) in enacting a strict ban on competitive events held on public roads. The establishment mood was still very anti-motorcar and it was only in 1896 that the overall speed limit had been raised from 4mph to 20mph, where it remained until 1926. Brooklands opened in 1907 and initiated the concept of circuit racing, usually on a handicapped basis. It also became a mecca for record breaking, as we shall see later in our story.

Beyond Brooklands the motoring sportsman in Britain (but not Ireland or The Isle of Man) had to take to the hills. The first recorded hill climb was at Petersham in 1898. In the early days hill climbing was an integral part of the long distance proving trials – a test of endurance rather than speed. The 1900 One Thousand Mile Trial tackled four hills, including the infamous Shap Fell in Cumbria – still a good climb on the A6. It also introduced the innovation of the first timed speed trial. This was held on the Clipstone Drive of Welbeck Abbey, Nottinghamshire, courtesy of the Duke of Portland. (Won by a certain C.S. Rolls on a Panhard at the impressive speed of 37.6mph.). The scene was set. In 1901 there were four timed hill climbs. In 1902 the first seaside promenade speed trial was held at Bexhill and three years later sand racing commenced at Filey. The competitive craze took off and in the year that Brooklands opened (1907) there were sixty four speed hill climbs and sprints, compressed into the summer season.

This marked the high point. Competition from Brooklands, opposition from the authorities following spectator injuries and a slump in the car industry reduced the number of events to only 23 in 1910. The climbs that survived became better run, putting more emphasis on open classes with sheer speed as the objective. RAC rules requiring cars to be fully laden were waived. Outright racers from Brooklands began to appear and by 1913 the number of events had risen to 30, involving the active support of 20 manufacturers. Pre-eminent amongst these were the famous English firms of Sunbeam, Vauxhall and Talbot.

The drivers from Barlby Road were regular participants, with George Day in particular picking up many class wins for the factory. As early as June 1906 The Autocar wrote:



*"The performance of the **invincible** 12/16hp Talbot in the Fromes Hill Climb is, to say the least of it, remarkable, and it is striking proof that engine dimension is not everything." Thus was born our striking cognomen and tradition that size isn't everything - both of which remained with the marque until the end.*

Above: Mr.G.Day 12hp Talbot, first on formula in Class III and fourth on time. This car also won the special prize for the best handicap performance of the day.



HMS Invincible

It can be no coincidence that our nickname was first used in the year that HMS Invincible was laid down. She was the world's first all big-gun battle cruiser and in those jingoistic times her name would have been a household word. She had an illustrious career taking part in the first naval battle at Heligoland Bight in August 1914 and then pulverising the German Scharnhorst and Gneisenau at the Falklands in December that year. In May 1916 she took direct hits at Jutland and blew up, leaving only six survivors from a crew of one thousand.



*Above: HMS Invincible.
The world's first all big-gun battlecruiser.*

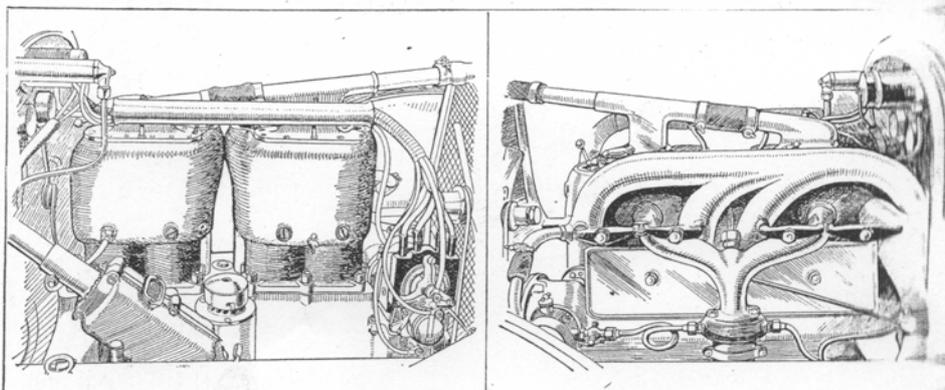


Above: George Brown the designer of the record-breaking Talbot.

The catalyst that propelled Talbot from being one of the best to the 'primus inter pares' was the arrival at Barlby Road of George William Alston Brown in July 1911. Of the three engineers that directed the course of Clement Talbot (Brown, Coatalen and Roesch) it is Brown who is the least well known. After graduating from Glasgow University he spent his first working years at John Brown on Clydebank. Seeing the car industry as the future he joined the Scottish Argyll Motors in 1905, moving to Humber the next year. Here he became involved with competition, designing and driving the famous "Four Inch Humber" in the 1908 Isle of Man TT race. In 1909 he became engineer in charge of the experimental department at the Austin Motor Company. In July 1911, at the tender age of 31, Brown alighted on the promising soil of Barlby Road. He designed the "Pearley" series of racers that did so well at Brooklands, driven by Percy Lambert. (It was this association

that brought Lambert, already a famous driver, into the Talbot fold in 1912.)

Here he set his well developed tuning skills to work on the 25hp model. This was a typical touring engine of the period, sporting four cylinders, side valves and dimensions of 101.5mm by 140mm, for a capacity of 4531cc.



Magneto side of the 25hp Talbot engine.

Carburettor side of the 25hp Talbot engine.



Under his careful fettling it became a world beater, propelling Clement Talbot to unknown levels of success before the first World War, and still holding its own in competition until the mid 1920s.



Above: Mr Percy Lambert in his record breaking Talbot at Brooklands.

All this broke on an unsuspecting public on 16th November 1912 when a pencil slim, streamlined single seat Talbot 25 roared round Brooklands smashing all records in sight. The Motor was fulsome in its praise: *"The 25hp Talbot set out to create a startling record for itself on the famous track. It succeeded in the most striking manner and all the short records, anywhere at all within the regions of the power of the Talbot, disappeared at one fell swoop and the new figures put up by this car are wholly remarkable."* The Autocar reflected the astonishment of the Brooklands establishment: *"Few people connected with Brooklands even knew what was in the air, and the result is one of the greatest surprises we have had for many a day. Few but "Pearley" could spring such a surprise."*

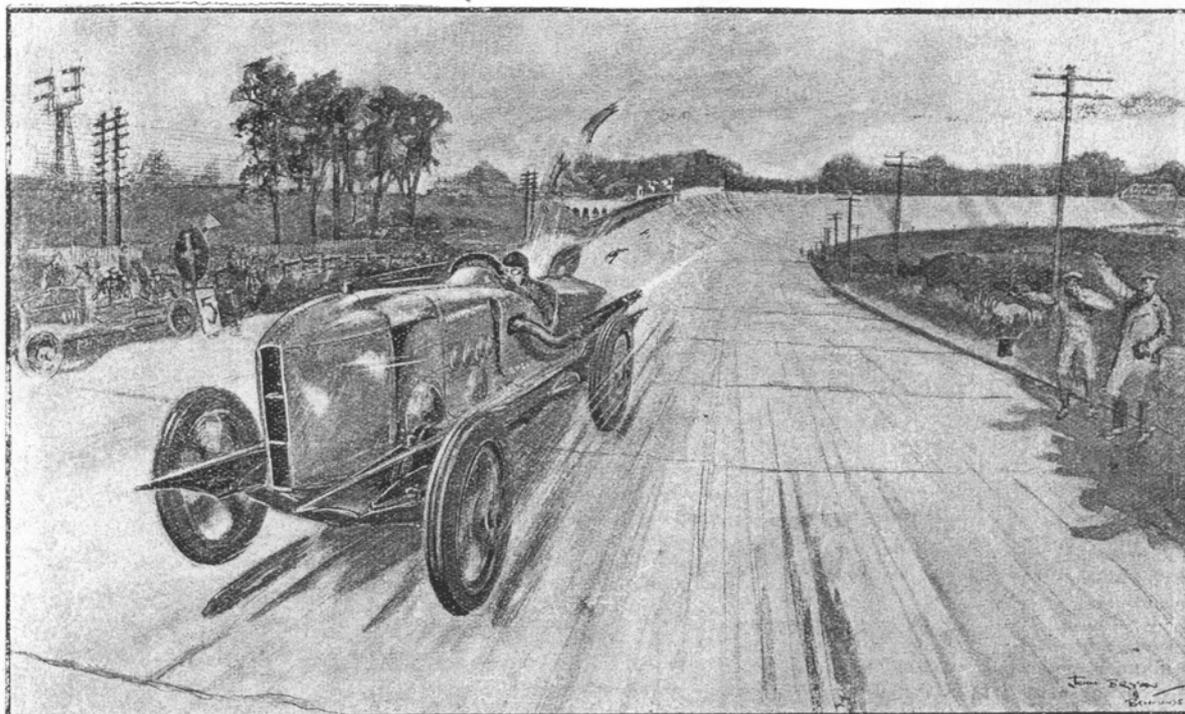
The records that tumbled that day were:-

- Half Mile: 113.28mph
- Kilometre: 112.81mph
- Mile: 111.73mph
- Lap: 109.43mph (fastest for which a Brooklands certificate was issued)

The Motor correspondent was unusually perspicacious when he wrote: *"This striking Talbot success is so pronounced that we feel justified in assuming the role of prophets, and predicting that more will be seen of Talbot cars on Brooklands track in the coming season."* The 'annus mirabilis' had begun.

Brooklands closed for December and January to carry out repairs to the already degrading surface. It was not until February that it opened its gates to the speed demons of 1913. First in the queue was Percy Lambert – the cigar bodied 25hp Talbot being set up to attack the one hour record. He set off at 2.45pm under the watchful gaze of prominent men of the motor world, such as Hugh Locke-King and Charles Jarrott. His opening lap was 1 min. 52.4 secs. After which he settled into a regular pattern of 1 min. 35-36 secs. At 50 miles the world record was his, at an average of 102.83mph. The Motor was eulogistic: *"What a wondrous speed for such a distance! What a brilliant performance! What a battle of man and machine against materialistic matter! And what of this wondrous racing monster? Well may one query it! What of it? Forsooth 'tis little more than a standard 25hp Talbot. This was no racing monster in which efficiency losses are swallowed up by the mere magnitude of the engine. Rather was it the essence of excellence in high efficiency motors, as great in the power output of the engine, as the motor itself was comparatively insignificant in size."*





Above: With the 50 mile record secured at 102.83mph a burst tyre denied Lambert the 100 mile prize.

Alas on lap 31 a rear tyre burst on the home banking at 105mph. Despite a spirited drive on the rim to the pits and a rapid wheel change Lambert was unable to make up for lost time. He finished the 100 miles in 1 min 37 secs over the magic hour, an average of 97.37mph. There was much lamentation on the caprice of lady luck and The Autocar expressed the sentiments of all: *"As was generally conceded on Saturday, the record is really already won, for the car demonstrated its ability to secure it, and was robbed of success by a mere chance."*

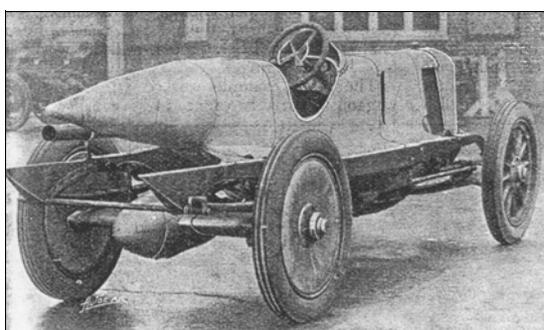
Lambert was not long in putting the record straight. The next Saturday in fact. On a cold and foggy day he made history, covering 103.4 miles in an hour. The Autocar hit a note that resonates today: *"Others may, nay will, build cars that will travel more than 100 miles in an hour, but we predict that this record of Mr Percy Lambert on the Talbot will stand out in the history of motoring as a thing in itself."*



Percy Lambert seated in the victorious Talbot



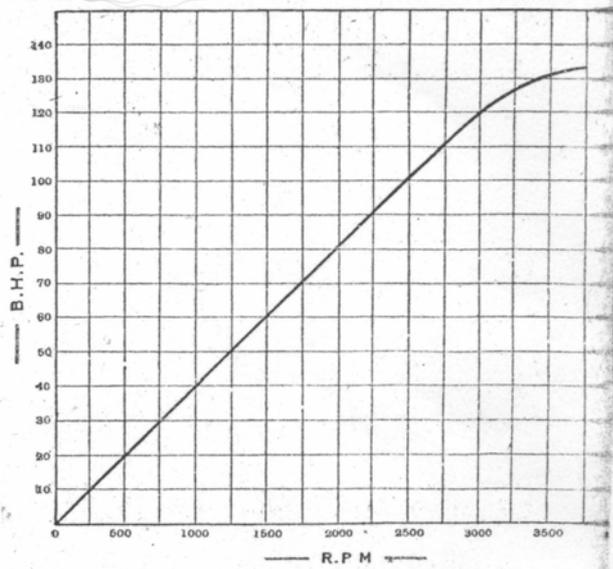
Percy being congratulated by the Earl of Shrewsbury.



The record breaking 25hp Talbot lightened and streamlined.

Little matter that Jules Goux on a Peugeot beat the record within two months. Lambert and Talbot were the first and that guarantees their fame forever.





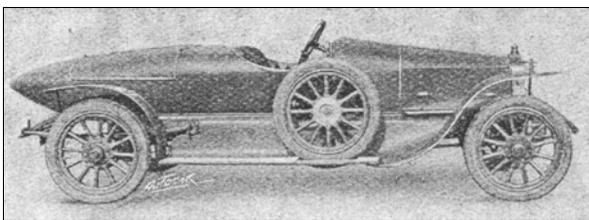
The power curve of the 25hp Talbot engine showing straight-line increase from 20hp at 500rpm to 120 at 3000rpm i.e. six times the hp at six times speed. At 105mph with a gear ratio of 2.43 to 1 880 wheels the engine made 2500rpm, plus with a petrol consumption of 17 ton miles per gallon.

There was huge interest in the car and much marvelling at the relatively modest size of its engine. Brown's magic was to combine a light and streamlined body with an engine capable of high revs and compression. The pistons and connecting rods used a super strong and light BND steel. The connecting rods were tubular instead of I section and had a wall thickness of only 1mm. Fuelling was by an enlarged Stewart-Precision carburettor, but of a standard type. The power output was extraordinary, as shown in the graph reproduced by The Autocar on 22nd February 1913. At a maximum of 3500 revs output was in excess of 130 bhp. Extreme attention to streamlining reduced windage to 6 sq. ft. and allowed the car to pull a 2.4 axle ratio. Derihon hydraulic shock absorbers were a novel and important feature in keeping the relatively light car

(22½ cwt) on the bumpy track. So not quite a standard model, but not a Brooklands monster either and quite tractable enough to motor from Kensington to Weybridge.

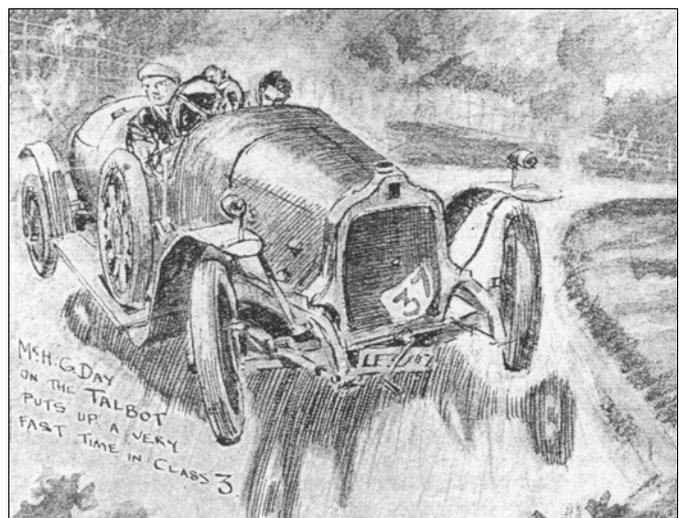
In mid May an attempt to reclaim the one hour record was thwarted by high winds and a damaged piston put the car out of action. With that we shall leave Brooklands for the moment and follow the Talbot team to the hills of Britain.

The season opener in May 1913 was the Herts A.C. climb at Aston Hill. This was supported by one of the country's richest men, Alfred de Rothschild, and guest of honour was the superstar opera singer Dame Nellie Melba. It was quite the social outing of the year with 800 guests taking tea at Mr Rothchild's nearby home. Clement Talbot had a modest entry, but proved very effective in the results. The redoubtable George Day in the works 15hp took first on time and third on formula in Class 3. In the big banger class Mr S.S. Barber took first on formula in his



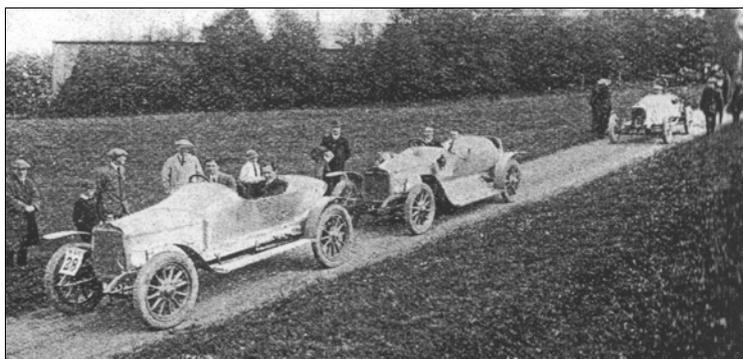
Above: George Day's rapid 15hp Talbot as seen by the camera.

Right: George Day as seen by the artist.



standard 25hp Talbot, thereby winning the Jay Cup for the best placed privateer. Fastest time of the day went to Vauxhall works driver A.J. Hancock. The 30-98 had thrown down the gauntlet. It would not be long before Clement Talbot picked it up.



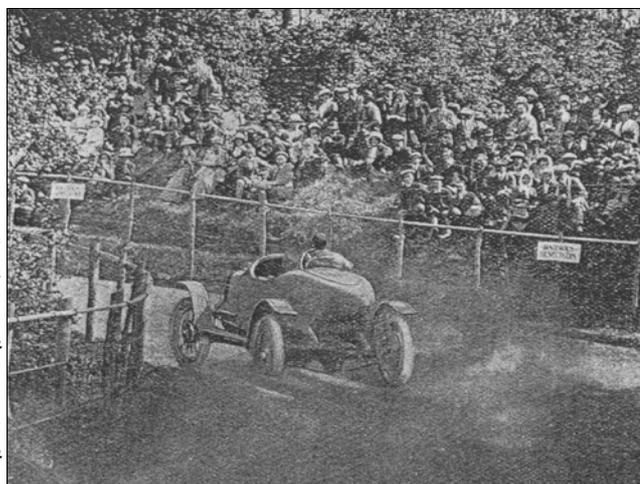


Above: The Talbot Team ready to take Shelsley by storm. Hands' 25hp ahead of Day's 15hp.

In fact, only a fortnight later, battle between Luton and London was joined at Shelsley Walsh. The magic of this historic place was recognised even then. The Autocar commented: *"It will be seen from this (hill description) that it is not without cause that the Shelsley Walsh event is regarded as the hill-climbing contest of the year, as we have a really severe hill not only in gradient but also as requiring great*

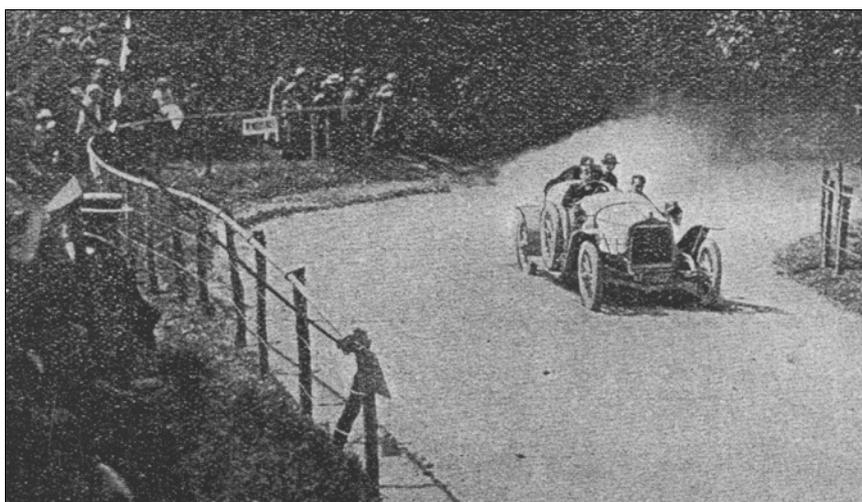
skill and judgement." In 1913 the RAC had waived its rule that cars had to ascend fully laden. The works teams took full advantage sending slim bodied racers and resulting in the hill record being broken seven times in the course of the meeting.

First off in the Open category was A.J. Hancock, his 30-98 Vauxhall setting a new record at 59 seconds. Last up was Leslie Hands, the rising star of the Clement Talbot team. He hustled the two seater 25hp up in 57.4 seconds earning the following deserved praise from The Autocar: *"The 25hp Talbot, driven by Mr Leslie Hands which scored the fastest time in the open event was driven with extraordinary skill. It was the only one of the fast cars which made perfectly clean circuits of both turns on the S bend. It seemed to be driven at just the limit of speed possible without losing grip on the road at these two critical points."*



Above: Hands hustling the big 25hp to fastest time of the day.

Below: George Day packs the 15hp with passengers to win on formula.

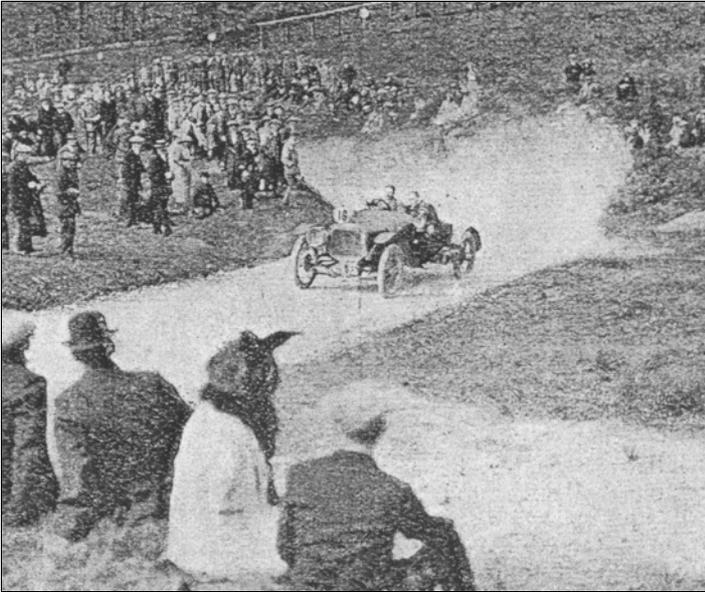


George Day, taking full advantage of the formula rules, packed the 15hp Talbot with three passengers, thereby achieving a laden weight greater than any car competing. Needless to say he achieved an emphatic win in the formula competition. The Motor was quite overcome with the performance of the Talbots: *"We now turn on the limelight for the Talbot – limelight from each side of*

the stage – as this car shared twice in the open event. What a feast of honour! Almost a surfeit of glory, one would think. Two cups available to be won: two cups won. Surely "Veni, Vidi, Vici" is out aphorised!"



There was little time for the victorious Londoners to rest on their laurels for on the 19th June the circus moved down to South Wales for the Caerphilly Hill Climb and Porthcawl Sands Speed Trials. The South Wales Auto Club event was highly popular and well liked. Autocar: *"It would be difficult to find a better hill than Caerphilly for a hill climbing competition, as the contour of the road, and the three difficult bends are exceptionally suitable for testing the hill climbing abilities of the cars and the skill of the drivers."* Clement Talbot was out in force with 12hp and 15hp cars for George Day and the fearsome 25hp for Leslie Hands. Vauxhall was also there, the 30-98 being piloted by Hancock again.



Above: George Kenshole was a remarkable privateer in the older 12-16hp model.

In the Open Classes 3 and 4 George Day was invincible in the smaller Talbots – the 12hp recording 1st on time and 2nd on formula and the 15hp 1st on time and 1st on formula. The Park Hotel Challenge Cup, the Cardiff Exchange Challenge Cup and Miss Starkey's Silver Chronograph were taken away for the Barlby Road treasure chest. In the Closed (amateur) Class Mr George Kenshole kept up the Talbot superiority with a 1st on time and a 1st on formula in his older 12-16hp car.

Open Class 5 was the run off of the fast cars – Hands squaring up to Hancock. The Autocar captured the moment: *"Mr L. Hands, driving the 25hp Talbot, gave a most sensational exhibition of high speed cornering at this bend, and nearly turned over on the banking. As a back tyre burst owing to the violence of the skid, he finished on the rim. Mr Hancock took the bend in his usual masterly way, and although he appeared to be travelling at a higher speed than Mr Hands he hardly skidded at all, and very cleverly took his Vauxhall completely round the inner edge of the bend."*



Above: Hands' exuberant cornering lost him a rear tyre and fastest time of the day.



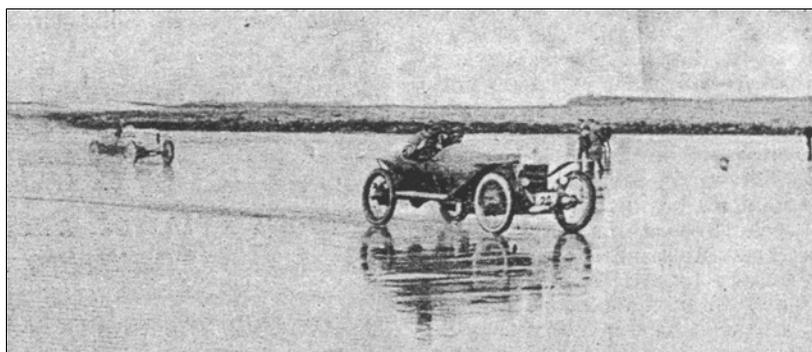
Victory this time was Hancock's, beating the three-tired Talbot to the line by nine seconds. Hands however had his revenge on formula, pushing the Vauxhall down to second place. Both were miles ahead of the next nearest competitors. The Autocar had no doubt about what it had witnessed that day: *"The success of the Talbot cars was an outstanding feature of the meeting, for it will be noticed that they were placed first on formula in every open event in which they competed, as well as being first and third in Class 7."*

On the Saturday much the same crowd moved to the inviting sands of Porthcawl, northwest of Cardiff. The Motor regarded this as one of the best speed venues in the country, commenting on the natural grandstand provided by the cliffs, the great width of inter-tidal sand and the drying winds. It also had an acute eye for the social niceties of the day: *"Certainly, it was a holiday crowd which lined the shores to the west of Porthcawl on Saturday, and, moreover a varied crowd, for there was the obvious tripper or patroniser of the train and the cheap confectionary shops and bars, and there was the lordly motorcar party fully prepared for the occasion. It is no exaggeration to say there were 5000 people witnessing the sport."*

What sport they witnessed. As The Motor wrote: *"it resolved itself into another Talbot – Vauxhall match."* The Londoners took no chances, bringing down their ultimate straight line weapon – the mighty Brooklands 100mph single seater. Driven by Mr E. Stokes it was lined up against Mr P.C. Kidner in the 30hp Vauxhall for top honours.

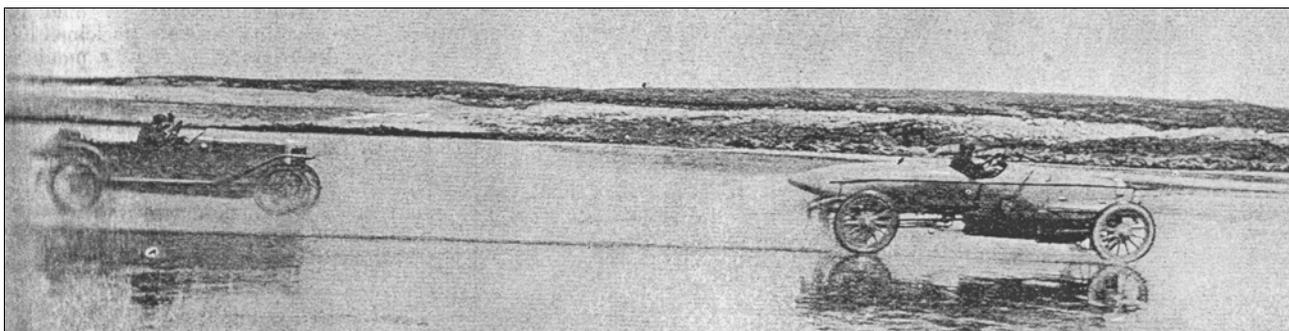
Once again George Day was unbeatable in the smaller cars, taking home Mrs C.H. Bailey's Silver Cup in the 12hp and Mr R.F. Wakley's Silver Cup in the 15hp. Here is how The Motor described the thrilling Open Class 5: *"Mr Kidner on the 30hp Vauxhall was again fastest away after the fall of the flag, but after about 300 yards had been traversed, the record holding 25hp Talbot driven by Mr E. Stokes had warmed up to its work and was going great guns. It got on terms with the Vauxhall soon after, and then, assuming the lead, went away, passing the finishing post at a speed estimated at about 80 miles per hour. The Vauxhall was an excellent second."*

So Talbot took home the Porthcawl Chamber of Commerce Challenge Cup.



Left: Stokes on the winning 25hp Talbot, about to swallow up Kidner's 30hp Vauxhall.

Below: George Day in the 15hp Talbot powers ahead of the 16-20hp Vauxhall.



PATELEY BRIDGE 1913

A mighty Edwardian racing car team in their pomp. It is September 1913 and the Talbots line up in Pateley Bridge at the foot of the Greenhow Hillclimb. At the time they were the most successful racing cars in the land, having recorded a string of victories on the hills and beaches around Britain. Clement Talbot sent no less than five works cars to contest the open class of the Yorkshire Automobile Club Hillclimb that year. Their chief opposition was the factory supported 30hp Vauxhall of Mr J. Higginson.

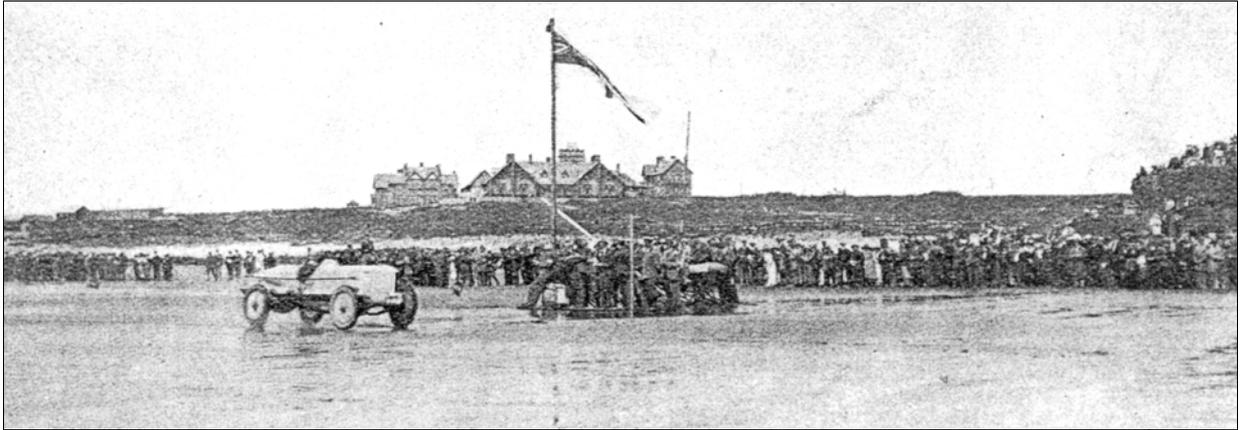
On the far left of the picture is the 15hp driven by George Day. Unusually it did not place in this event, but enjoyed many successes in the season. Next is IC105 the factory's regular 25hp two seater hillclimber driven by Leslie Hands. This car had an extremely successful season and on this day recorded third fastest time and beat the previous hill record. IC109 is the 12hp model driven by Mr H.A. Ransom. It secured first place on formula in the open event. Next to this is IC104, the mighty Brooklands record car, sporting its slimmer "sprint" nose. Percy Lambert was unfortunately indisposed on race

day, but Leslie Hands hurtled the car up the hill to set fastest time of the day and an outright record for the hill that stands to this day. Next along is George Day's regular 12hp mount, a consistent winner in the formula competitions that year. In this event it placed second on formula driven by Mr E. Stokes. Completing the line up is the older 12-16hp model driven by George Kenshole, a privateer who regularly supported the Talbot team in 1913. He helped the Yorkshire B team secure second place in the closed competition.

The result at Pateley Bridge was the high point of an incredibly successful season for the Invincible Talbots. As the Motor wrote: *"Five Talbots were entered in the open class (two of 12hp, one of 15hp and two of 25hp) and they succeeded in scoring first and second places on formula, made the fastest ascent of the day and secured first and third place on times."*

We shall be re-creating this historic photograph in Pateley Bridge on the TOC Yorkshire Tour in June 2013.

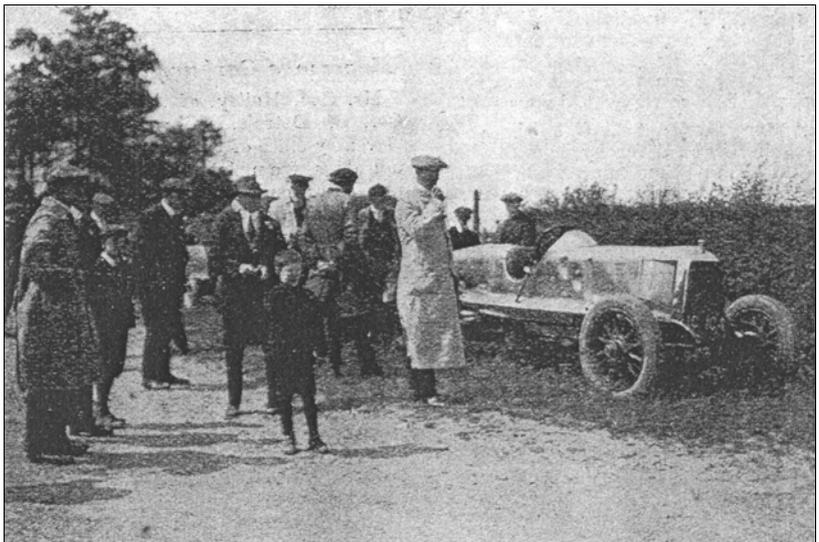




Above: Stokes takes the Brooklands Talbot across the line at 80mph.

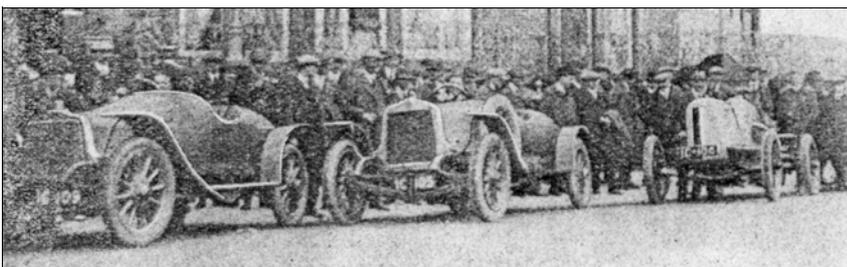
"The last of the Open Classes for 4 and 6 cylinder cars of unlimited capacity had produced a goodly entry, but the inclusion of the 25hp Talbot reduced the number of starters." With good reason! Stokes blitzed the course, beating his previous time by two seconds and setting an all time record for the Porthcawl Sands. He was awarded the RAC Special Medal and as The Autocar rather blandly stated: "The Earl of Shrewsbury's Talbot cars were greatly in evidence, and carried off the chief honours in the four largest classes. The fastest time of the day and a record for the course were also scored by a Talbot." I wonder if the 20th Earl was there in one of those 'lordly motorcar parties'?

A week later and the London – Luton tussle moved to the genteel surroundings of Welbeck Abbey in Nottinghamshire. The big guns were out – Percy Lambert no less - in the Brooklands car. The Motor captured the drama: "The sensational performances of the day were done by Mr Percy Lambert on the 103mph Talbot and Mr A.J. Hancock on the 30-98 Vauxhall. The former covered the flying kilometre in 22.6 seconds and the latter in 23 seconds but neither car could be driven all out, the course not being suitable for such high speeds. The performances, however, were very thrilling and made a great impression on the spectators." One up to Talbot.



Above: Lambert takes FTD at Welbeck in the Brooklands car. (Note lack of cowling)

The former covered the flying kilometre in 22.6 seconds and the latter in 23 seconds but neither car could be driven all out, the course not being suitable for such high speeds. The performances, however, were very thrilling and made a great impression on the spectators." One up to Talbot.



Above: The Talbot Team line up for an assault on the Saltburn sands.

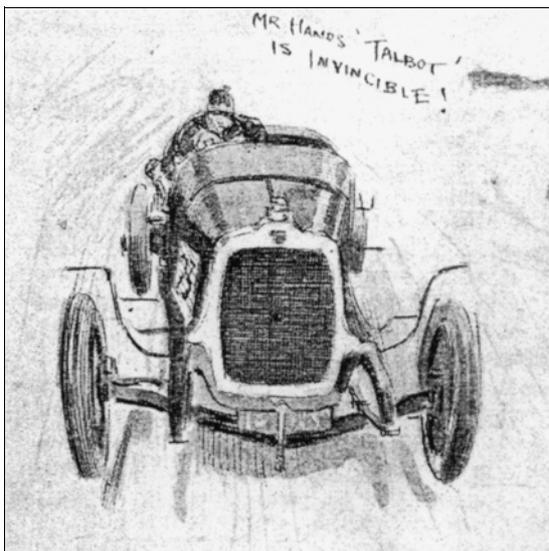
The next clash of the Edwardian titans came in July on the famous sands between Marske and Saltburn in Yorkshire. Conditions were not ideal as the tides and slow drying sands caused delays to the



start and compressed the ambitious nineteen event programme. The flag and stop watch timing system was considered archaic and an errant dog caused the 30-98 Vauxhall of Higginson to be put out of the running. Notwithstanding these problems the Talbot factory appeared in force. George Day in his hitherto unbeatable 12hp IC109, Leslie Hands in the 25hp hill climber IC105 and Percy Lambert in the Brooklands car IC104. Private owner S.T. Lea joined them in his standard 25hp. Against them were ranged the Vauxhalls of Hancock and the unfortunate Higginson.

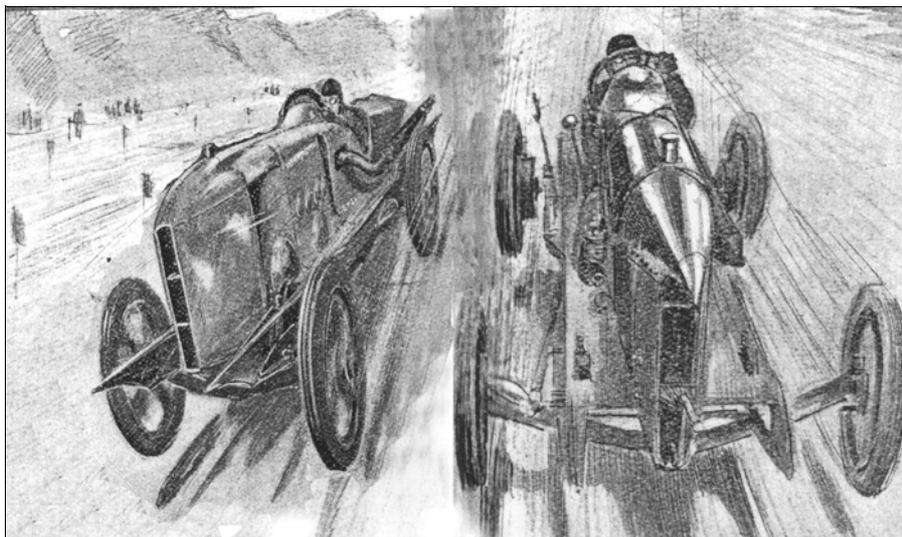
For once George Day was out of luck. Having won his heat he lost the final of Event I to Bianchi on a Crossley and promptly stripped his gears. The normally rock solid 12hp was hastily pushed aside with a little embarrassment. In the Closed events E. and F. S.T. Lea's Talbot 25hp (driven by Hands) won handsomely at 56mph, beating the Vauxhalls by some margin.

Attention now switched to the Open classes and the battle between Luton and London. In Event L for cars with a capacity of less than 4600cc Lambert shredded the opposition, leaving Hancock and Higginson well beaten. Hands was second. *"The Talbot, the same car that was the first to put up the 100 miles in the hour record at Brooklands, had things pretty much its own way, and won the race by fifty yards."* wrote The Autocar. Event M for cars of unlimited capacity saw Hands and Hancock squared off in the final. This time the result went to Hancock, he having dispatched Lambert in his heat by a mere twenty yards. His winning time of 60.13mph just failed to beat Lambert's standing start record of 60.78mph, set in the preceding match.



Above: Hands in the 25hp.

All eyes were now on the far end of the beach for Event R – the final run of the day for racing cars of unlimited capacity from a flying start. The cars thundered up from the Marske end of the beach, hitting the flying kilometre and then pulling up sharply to avoid colliding with the quaint Victorian pier at Saltburn. When the spray had settled Hancock

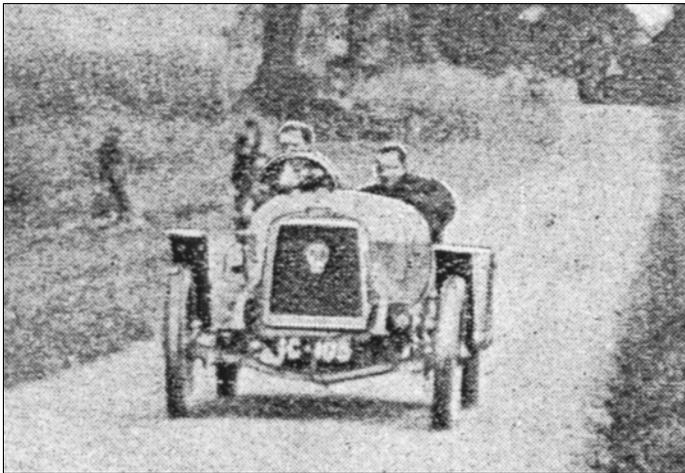


Above: Lambert and Hancock head to head.

had it from Lambert, the Vauxhall crossing the line at 106.52mph to the Talbot's 103.55mph. Third was Hands at 92mph. There was no time for any more. As The Motor remarked: *"The finish resolved itself into a contest between the officials and the tide, but the officials were successful in getting through, and thus bringing to a close one of the most successful events ever*



held on these sands." Overall the Talbots had carried the day as the most successful marque, but in the all important Open events they trailed the Vauxhalls 2 to 1. It would be the last time they yielded to the fluted bonnets.

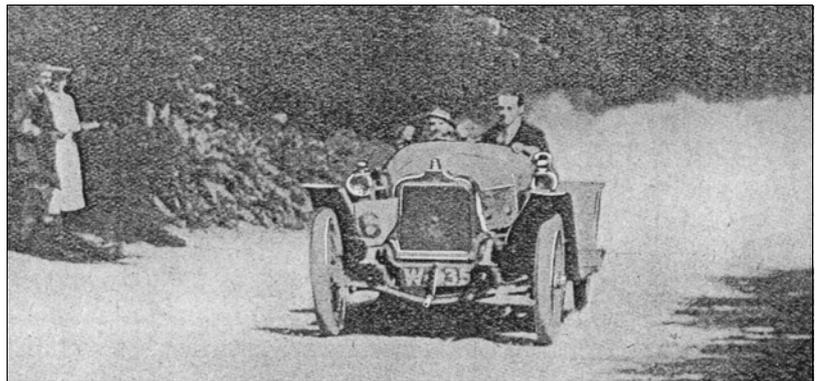


Above: Hands, heavily weighted, wins at Sutton Coldfield in the 25hp.

Next up, at the end of July, was the relatively minor Sutton Coldfield and Mid Warwickshire A.C. event. This was held on a modest hill of 1:14 gradient near Cropredy, Oxfordshire. The entry was sparse, but Hands took his redoubtable 25hp. As *The Autocar* wrote: "Mr Leslie Hands was driving a Talbot with the identical four cylinder engine used by Mr Percy Lambert in his historical hour record. In order to score on formula he had weighed the car with iron slabs, and it scaled at no less than 2 tons 1cwt and 13lbs." (for a 25 cwt car!) Amazingly he set FTD as well as winning on formula by a mile.

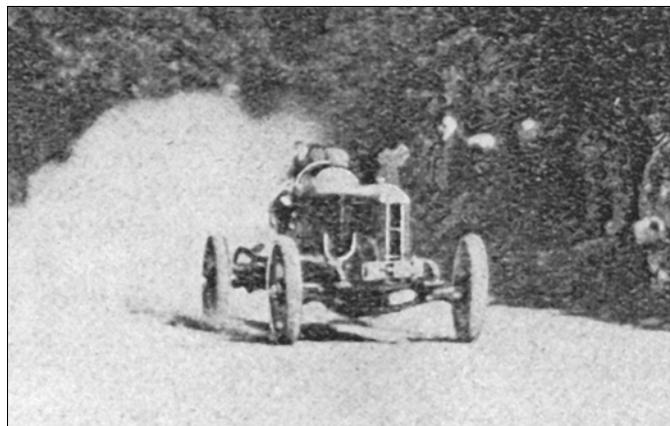
"All records went by the board again at Saturday's hill climb of the Leicestershire Automobile Club. Last year's fastest time was broken with ease by both the Talbot and Vauxhall cars."

So wrote *The Autocar* about the contest held on the 1450 yard Beacon Hill at Woodhouse Eves, Leicestershire. Hands stayed at home with Day and Lambert representing the Earl of Shrewsbury. The former was back to his usual reliable form in the 12hp winning Event A on time and formula and Event B on formula. In the Closed class he was ably supported by George Kenshole on the older 12-16 Talbot, whose consistency was rewarded with the Hartopp Challenge Cup. In the Open unlimited event Percy Lambert stormed the



Above: George Day wins on time and formula in the trusty 12hp.

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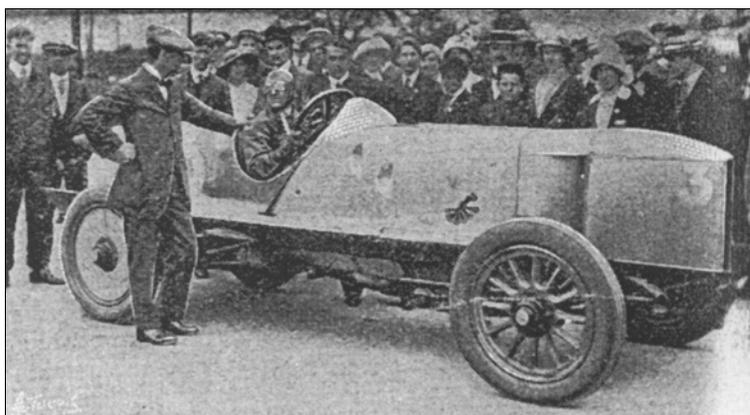


Above: Higginson has a lucky escape whilst Lambert makes another fastest time of the day.



Brooklands car to a new course record of forty nine seconds. Higginson was a valiant second on the 30-98, barely two seconds behind. Only his quick reactions avoided a tragedy when a spectator stepped in front of his car as he crossed the line: *"The car lurched horribly, skidded along for quite 20 yards and then swerved right round, with the bonnet facing the bottom of the hill."* It was this sort of undisciplined spectator behaviour that led to the ban on open hill climbing in 1925.

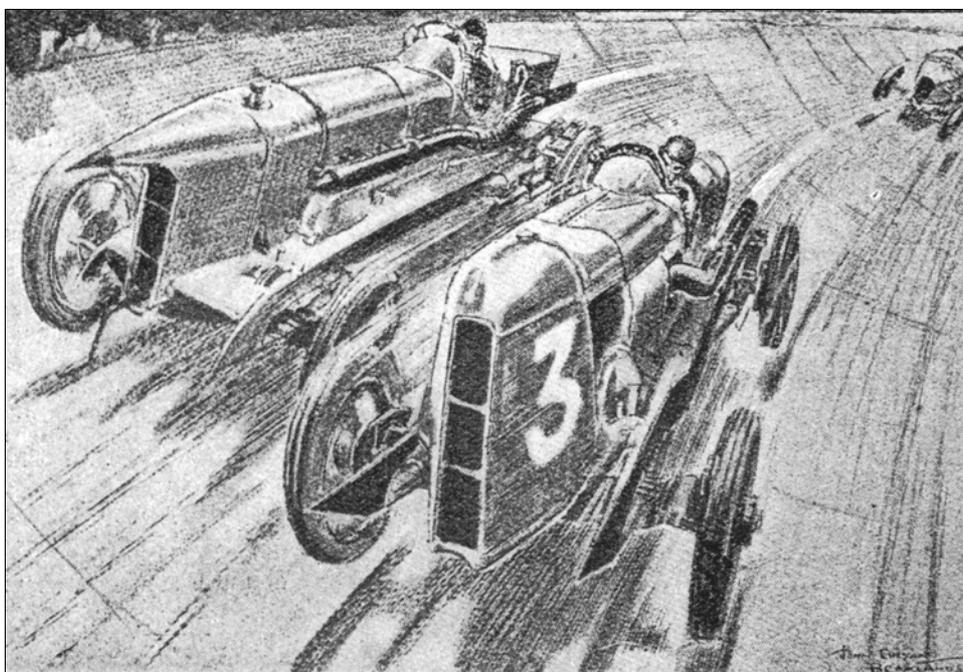
After a hectic summer on the hills and beaches of Britain the first weekend in August brought the 25hp Talbot back to its happy hunting ground of Brooklands. The handicapped nature of racing at the track often produced contrived results, but on the Bank Holiday spectators were in for a treat. The Vauxhall and the Talbot both started on scratch – head to head – may the best man win. The Autocar considered the meeting:



Above: Percy Lambert on the 25hp Talbot, with which he won 100mph Long Handicap. This is the famous one hour record car.

"the most brilliant in the history of the club" with "perhaps the finest exhibition of motor cars that has ever been brought together" and "sport that was of the best". There was no doubt about why it was such a special day: *"A wonderful, interesting, and indeed thrilling, duel was fought out between Lambert's Talbot and Hancock's Vauxhall – a duel which was better to see than anything which has before taken place at the track."*

The first coming together was in the fourth race, the 100mph Handicap run over 8½ miles. The Talbot started badly, a misfire allowing Hancock to take the lead at the Byfleet banking. Thereafter *"the Talbot then fairly got going"* and pulled out a 100 yard lead by the time they went past the aeroplane sheds. So it remained to the end – both cars lapping all the other competitors and both recording an average



Above: The Autocar said the Talbot - Vauxhall dual was the most thrilling race ever seen at Brooklands. We can see why.

of over 100mph. This was the first time this magic figure had been achieved in a standing start race at the track. Another landmark for the remarkable 25hp Talbot.



The Motor

Bank Holiday at Brooklands leads the motoring public interested in the sporting side of the movement to anticipate a day of glory and a feast of speed. What would you better than the battle-royal for supremacy 'twixt the Talbot and the Vauxhall? What finer than to see those two battling for victory as they hurtled round the track at speeds well over 100mph? What more popular event than the win of the crowd's idol Mr. Percy Lambert - at an average speed of 104mph? What more spectacular than to see this wizard of the track dive down the banking and cut inside another car at about 116mph? Surely here was enough excitement for the crowd, and here a feast of speed! The fight between these two exponents of high-efficiency engines were the events of the day - and the sight was one to be remembered.

The Autocar

Tenth Race : The Thirteenth 100mph Short Handicap

This was a most thrilling event, the penalty for winning the previous race, namely, eight seconds was a heavy handicap for the Talbot but this wonderful car carried its burden of time very lightly, and was quickly in full chase of its rival, the Vauxhall. A single circuit saw a distance between them of two hundred yards reduced to sixty, and it became clear that Lambert was a very likely winner. At the sheds, the field was however closely bunched together and with the Vauxhall naturally on the edge of the banking, there was no way for the Talbot to get through. In consequence Mr. Lambert was obliged to slow down, and, as he had no chance of getting past, he had to put up with second place to Hancock, whom he had been following radiator to axle. The finish was exceptionally fine, for there was not more than one hundred yards between first and last.



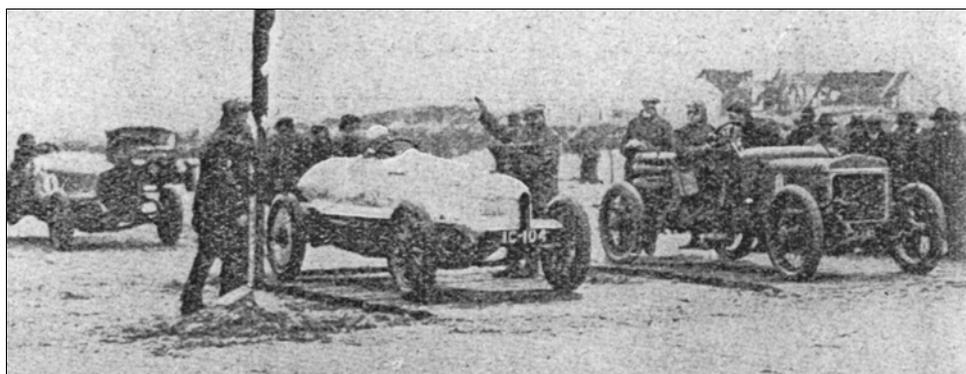
Above: The trophy awarded to Percy Lambert for his second place position in the tenth race: The Thirteenth 100mph Short Handicap. This was purchased by the Talbot Owners' Club October 2012.



The seventh race brought a rematch over the same distance. This time there was no misfiring from the Talbot and Lambert won by the length of the Railway straight. His performance was staggering. The Autocar wrote: *"It's speed for the standing distance was 104½ miles per hour, against the 102 of the Vauxhall. The Talbot was timed to lap at 112 miles per hour, and to cover the half mile at 120 miles per hour."* This, alongside the one hour record, ranks as Talbot's finest achievement in a year of quite exceptional results for the Barlby Road cars.

The third coming together was in the tenth race, a 5¾ mile short handicap. By now the handicapper had the measure of Mr Lambert and his Talbot. The Autocar again: *"The penalty for winning the previous race, namely eight seconds, was a heavy handicap for the Talbot, but this wonderful car carried its burden of time very lightly and was quickly in full chase of the Vauxhall."* Alas heavy traffic balked Lambert's overtaking manoeuvres and he followed Hancock over the line "radiator to axle", making up all his eight second penalty. A clear moral victory for London. It was the third race these cars had run at an average of over 100mph. No wonder The Autocar commented that the man whose taste for speed was not satisfied was *"an unreasonable glutton"*.

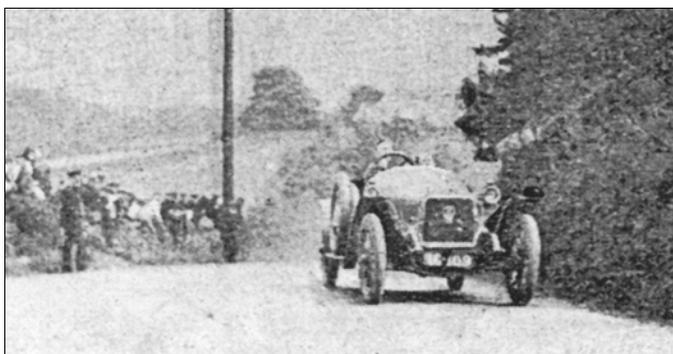
After the briefest of summer breaks the Talbot team were on their travels. This time to the Irish Automobile Club's speed trials at Rosslare Strand in the first weekend of September. Cars of 12, 15 and 25hp went – the Brooklands car sporting a smaller and more



streamlined "nose". The competition was not strong and the Talbots had things pretty much their own way. As Autocar wrote: *"The open section on Friday was remarkable for the successes of the Talbot cars, which won each of the team classes, and, consequently had the final for the 200 guineas Dunlop Cup to themselves."* More silverware for the Barlby Road entrance hall.

The last hill climb of the season was run by the Yorkshire Automobile Club on Greenhow Hill near Pateley Bridge. Five Talbots, including the Brooklands car, travelled up from London to contest the open events. Ranged against them was Higginson in the sole 30hp Vauxhall. George Kenshole did his usual sterling support in the amateur class.

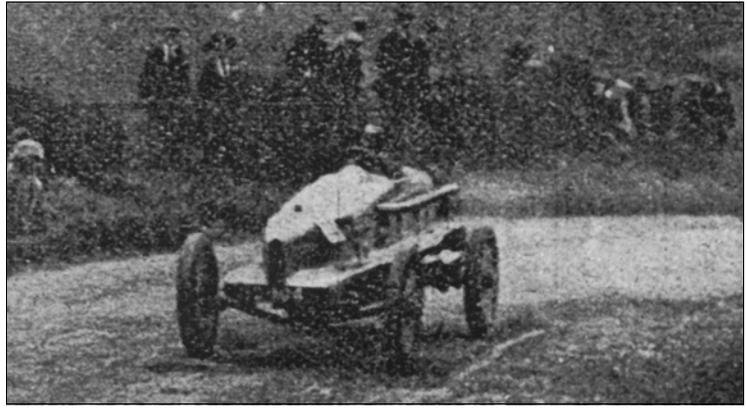
The result in the open classes was a foregone conclusion as The Autocar recorded: *"The Talbot Co. had altogether sent up a team of five cars besides the one entered privately by Mr Kenshole. In Event A they managed to secure first and second places on formula with the two "twelves" while the two "twenty fives" made fastest and third fastest times and secured the cup for the best ascent of the day. The driving of the Talbot drivers on*



Left: Ransom takes the 12hp to a formula win.



the bad bend was superb, each car coming up all out and then skidding up the hill nearly broadside on, but without an apparent diminution in speed." The course record went to Leslie Hands, standing in for an indisposed Percy Lambert, mounted on the slim nosed Brooklands car.



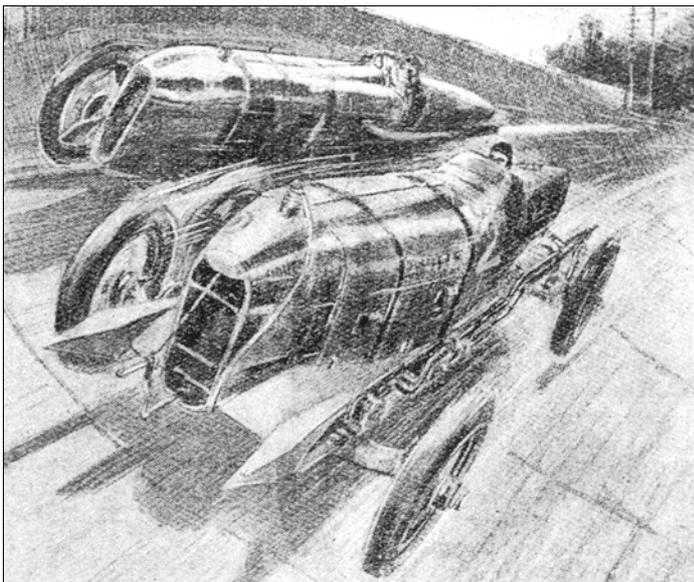
Above: Hands blasts the 25hp to FTD and a course record for Greenhow Hill.

The sprint season closed on 4th October on the soggy sands of Weston-super-Mare. "The sands were so heavy as to render high speeds impossible" wrote The Motor.

This did not deter the "fleet of Talbots" and in the open classes the Earl of Shrewsbury and Talbot's 12hp and 25hp cars won their respective events by large margins. A new amateur driver, Mr E.S. Pink, took the 15hp car to a win in the closed class. So with another clean sweep of victories to their record the Invincible Talbots left the hills and beaches of Britain and headed back to Brooklands for the final chapter in the 'annus mirabilis' of 1913.

For the last race meeting of the year on 5th October George Brown and his engineers at Barlby Road pulled out their biggest gun. The 25hp motor had its stroke increased from 140mm to 150mm, giving a swept volume of 4754cc. It was the ultimate development from Talbot and was perhaps the finest road based engine to come from Britain's Edwardian motor industry. It certainly had the measure of Vauxhall with the handicapper rapidly increasing the 30-98's cushion to 20 seconds. But, as so often happens, someone else had an even bigger gun. This time it was none other than Louis Coatalen who had installed a 9 litre V12 Sunbeam aero engine in a road chassis and was out for glory.

First clash was race three – the 5¾ mile Short Handicap. "What a feast for speed merchants" wrote The Motor. "First on the list comes Lord Shrewsbury's 25.5hp Talbot, with Mr Percy Lambert up and honoured with a scratch position. Then likewise on scratch



Above: Chassagne's daring overtake of Lambert at 120mph.

was Mr Coatalen's 47.6hp 12 cylinder Sunbeam, with Mr Jean Chassagne as its pilot." Lambert got away better and led by 200 yards on the railway straight. Chassagne caught up and the two were neck and neck – "Even a few yards away from the finishing line it was impossible to tell which was in front: but the Sunbeam obtained the verdict." The pace was the fastest yet seen at Brooklands. "The average speed of the big Sunbeam in this race was given as 105.75mph, and therefore, by a guess calculation that of the Talbot must have been 105.749mph." That was a full 1½ mph faster than its time at the August meeting – a measure of the improved power of the larger engine.



A rematch came in race five – the 8½ mile Long Handicap. Lambert again made a lightening start and positioned himself at the top of the banking. This time Chassagne was not leaving matters to chance. On the second lap he took the Talbot on the Home banking in a bold overtake described by The Motor: *"It was an astonishingly daring manoeuvre, the car shooting by partially sideways, quivering violently as it did so, and progressing in a semi-crabwise manner. As this piece of driving was executed at a speed of just on 120mph its magnificence can be gathered."* The Talbot was eclipsed and Chassagne went on to win at an unheard of average of 110.75mph. The Motor commented on the vastly different sizes of the two engines concluding: *"the marvellously good performance of the Talbot, in spite of its defeat, may easily be gauged."*

The speed of the enlarged engine gave Clement Talbot much encouragement and in the closed season for Brooklands they decided to have another go at the one hour record. To recap. This had been set at 103.84mph by Lambert in the 4.5 litre Talbot in February 1913. Two months later Goux raised it to 106.22mph in the 7.6 litre Grand Prix Peugeot and in October Chassagne had made it 107.95mph in the 12 cylinder Sunbeam. Given the performance at autumn Brooklands meeting 110mph looked in sight for the Talbot.

So at the end of October Pearley and the Talbot set out to retake the hour record. The first attempt looked promising with laps of 110 – 111mph, but ended with a shredded tyre on lap 16. Three days later they tried again. The standing lap was taken at 94.86mph, the second at 109.94 and the third at 111.42. There was no doubt the car had the speed. Sadly on lap 23 a puncture brought a premature end to the run. However by then the Talbot had set a new world record for the 50 miles in 27 minutes 2.23 seconds. The average of 110.96mph was 2.5mph faster than the Sunbeam's previous record.

Now to the tragic denouement of our story. On the following Friday Lambert set out for the third time. The early laps were as high as 114mph and at 20 laps an average of 110.4mph meant a new record was in sight. Alas it was not to be. On the 21st lap the offside rear tyre burst. The car reared up the banking and then plunged down again, rolling over and over. The brave Lambert was thrown out onto the track and fractured his skull. He died on the spot. The motoring fraternity felt the loss of this popular man very deeply. The Motor summed up the mood: *"The wholly deplorable death of Mr Percy Lambert casts a mournful shadow on the season's history. Truly, death could have claimed no victim whose loss would be more generally and genuinely felt in the racing world."*

On this sad note ended a quite remarkable year for Clement Talbot. But for a failed tyre it would undoubtedly have begun and ended the year as the holder of the world one hour record. This amazing result from a humble four cylinder, side valve, touring engine of modest size, but one that thrived on revs and high compression. In the course of the year on hill, on sand and on track they had taken on the finest Edwardian sports racing cars and won. The 25hp Talbot had met the 30-98 Vauxhall 13 times head to head and come out victorious on 10 of them. It was not just the bigger car that shone. In the smaller capacity classes the 12hp and 15hp had shown themselves to be invincible too. A formidable racing team had coalesced around the works drivers of Lambert, Hands and Day – ably supported by enthusiastic privateers Kenshole, Vincent and Stokes. A Talbot team of 4 or 5 entrants was common with cars competing in open and closed classes. No other Edwardian factory came close to this level of professionalism and competitive dominance. It was truly an 'annus mirabilis' for the men at Barlby Road.



1913 Successes by Talbot Cars.

A.C. of Australia Reliability Trial.

March 28th-29th.

The only two TALBOTS competing out of an International entry of 24 cars finished FIRST and SECOND, the winning 12 H.P. TALBOT gaining FULL MARKS for Reliability, Hill-climbing, and Petrol-economy.

Brooklands Track.

February 15th.

50 Miles in 29 mins. 25 secs., 100 Miles in 57 mins. 49.38 secs.,
103 Miles 1,470 Yards in One Hour.

Beating World's Records for all types of cars.

Winning the ROTAX 100 GUINEAS TROPHY.

Aston Hill Climb.

May 24th.

Class 3. 15 H.P. TALBOT. FASTEST
Closed Event. 25 H.P. TALBOT. FIRST

Winning the JAY CUP.

Shelsley Walsh Hill Climb.

June 7th.

Open Event.

25 H.P. TALBOT. FASTEST

Winning MIDLAND A.C. CUP.

Open Handicap.

15 H.P. TALBOT. FIRST

Winning PRESIDENT'S CUP.

Mid-Staffordshire Hill Climb.

June 14th.

Closed Event. 15 H.P. TALBOT. FIRST
in FASTEST TIME

Winning CLUB CUP & 2 SILVER MEDALS.

Caerphilly Hill Climb.

June 19th.

Open Event 3. 12 H.P. TALBOT. FIRST
Winning GOLD MEDAL & PARK HOTEL CUP.

Open Event 4. 15 H.P. TALBOT. FIRST
Winning GOLD MEDAL and CARDIFF EXCHANGE CUP.

Open Event 5. 25 H.P. TALBOT. FIRST
Winning GOLD MEDAL.

Closed Event 7. 12 H.P. TALBOT. FIRST
Winning GOLD MEDAL and the BAILEY TROPHY and CUP.

Porthcawl Speed Trials.

June 21st.

Open Event 3. 12 H.P. TALBOT. FIRST
Winning GOLD MEDAL & BAILEY CUP.

Open Event 4. 15 H.P. TALBOT. FIRST
Winning GOLD MEDAL, the WAKELEY CUP,
& Special Award for the best formula score of the day.

Open Event 5. 25 H.P. TALBOT. FIRST
Winning GOLD MEDAL & PORTHCAWL CUP.

Open Event 6. 25 H.P. TALBOT. FIRST
Winning GOLD MEDAL and the R.A.C. MEDAL
awarded to the fastest car of the day.

Closed Event 8. 12 H.P. TALBOT. SECOND

Notts. A.C. Speed Trial.

June 28th.

Closed Event.

25 H.P. TALBOT. FASTEST
Winning GOLD MEDAL.

Saltburn Speed Trials.

July 5th.

Closed Event C.

12 H.P. TALBOT. SECOND
Winning GOLD MEDAL.

Closed Event E.

25 H.P. TALBOT. FIRST
Winning GOLD MEDAL and SILVER CUP.

Closed Event F.

25 H.P. TALBOT. FIRST
Winning GOLD MEDAL and SILVER CUP.

Open Event I. 12 H.P. TALBOT. SECOND
Winning GOLD MEDAL.

Open Event L. 25 H.P. TALBOT. FIRST
25 H.P. TALBOT. SECOND
Winning TWO GOLD MEDALS and SILVER CUP.

Open Event M. 25 H.P. TALBOT. SECOND
Winning GOLD MEDAL.

Open Event R. 25 H.P. TALBOT. SECOND
25 H.P. TALBOT. THIRD
Winning GOLD MEDAL.

Mid Warwickshire A.C. Hill Climb.

July 19th.

Event 9. 25 H.P. TALBOT. FIRST
in FASTEST TIME
Winning TWO GOLD MEDALS and BARKER CUP.



A group of cups and medals won by Mr. Geo. Kenshole's 12 H.P. Talbot in amateur events during season 1913.



1913 Successes (continued).

Leicestershire A.C. Hill Climb.

July 26th.

Event A. 12 H.P. TALBOT. **FIRST**
in FASTEST TIME

Winning **TWO GOLD MEDALS** and
DU PRE CUP.

Amateur Class. 12 H.P. TALBOT. **FIRST**
Winning **GOLD MEDAL.**

Event B. 12 H.P. TALBOT. **FIRST**
Winning **GOLD MEDAL.**

Amateur Class. 12 H.P. TALBOT. **FIRST**
Winning **GOLD MEDAL** and **HARTOPP CUP.**

Event E. 25 H.P. TALBOT. **FASTEST TIME**
Winning **GOLD MEDAL.**

Rosslare Speed Trials (continued).

Flying Mile. 25 H.P. TALBOT. **FASTEST**
Tieing on Handicap for the **GOFF CUP.**

Pateley Bridge Hill Climb.

September 13th.

Open Event A. 12 H.P. TALBOT. **FIRST**
Winning **SILVER CUP** and **R.A.C. MEDAL.**

12 H.P. TALBOT. **SECOND**
Winning **GOLD MEDAL.**

25 H.P. TALBOT. **FASTEST**
(Beating record for the hill by 14 secs.)
Winning **SILVER CUP.**

Brooklands— Bank Holiday Meeting.

August 4th, 1913.

100 M.P.H. Long Handicap
(8½ miles).

25 H.P. TALBOT. **FIRST**

120 Miles Per Hour was the speed attained over a flying half mile in the last lap the fastest ever before achieved in Brooklands handicap racing.

Winning **SILVER CUP.**



Five of the cups won by Talbot Cars in the South Wales Automobile Club Trials at Caerphilly and Porthcawl.

Biarritz Hill Climb.

September 16th, 1913.

Touring Class.

25 H.P. TALBOT. **FIRST**

Racing Class.

25 H.P. TALBOT. **FASTEST**

Winning **GRAND PRIX.**

Cairn o' Mount Hill Climb

Trade Event.

25 H.P. TALBOT. **FASTEST**

Winning **SILVER BOWL.**

Rosslare Speed Trials.

September 5th and 6th.

Open Event A. 25 H.P. TALBOT. **FIRST**

Open Event B. 15 H.P. TALBOT. **FIRST**

Winning **GOLD MEDAL.**

Open Event C. 12 H.P. TALBOT. **FIRST**

Winning **GOLD MEDAL.**

Handicap D. For Winners of Events A. B. C.
15 H.P. TALBOT. **FIRST**

Winning **DUNLOP 200 GUINEA CHALLENGE CUP.**

Amateur Event C. 12 H.P. TALBOT. **FIRST**

Winning **GOLD MEDAL.**

Newcastle M.C. Hill Climb.

September 14th.

Class 1. 25 H.P. TALBOT. **FIRST**

Class 3. 25 H.P. TALBOT. **FIRST**

Winning **J. R. SCOTT TROPHY.**

Weston-super-Mare Speed Trials.

October 4th.

Open Event 20. 12 H.P. TALBOT. **FIRST**

Open Event 21. 25 H.P. TALBOT. **FIRST**

Closed Event 15. 12 H.P. TALBOT. **SECOND**

Closed Event 16. 15 H.P. TALBOT. **FIRST**

Winning **3 Highest and 1 Second Award.**

A Total of 62 Highest Awards alone in competitive trials open to all makes of cars.



IN MEMORIAM

PERCY EDGAR LAMBERT. OBIT 31ST OCTOBER 1913

"A modest friend, a fine gentleman and a thorough sportsman."



*Above: Percy Lambert's death shocked the motoring world.
He was an immensely popular character at Brooklands.*