

**1934**

**TALBOT  
OWNERS'**

**2005**

**CLUB**



Doug Lambert on the start line at Prescott in 1990.

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**THE STORY OF BWM 512, A TALBOT 75  
BY DOUG LAMBERT**

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Presented to Doug Lambert  
at the Talbot Owners' Club  
Annual General Meeting  
9th April 2005

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Written by Doug Lambert and published by John Ward.  
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## THE ARCTIC TALBOT

### Part 1

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This is a chronicle of a Talbot 75, bought by the first owner, Colonel Tom Knowles, of St Helens, Liverpool. BWM 512 was supplied by Bambers of Lord Street, Southport and registered on 25 March 1936, starting life as a sports saloon. I don't know the early history in detail. BWM 512 was used as the family car until 1939-45 when Colonel Knowles was recalled for army duty. During the war, the car was used as an ambulance for some time by Mrs Ivy Knowles. In 1954 the decision was taken to strip off the old body and restore the chassis, engine and running gear.

This work continued including the fitting of a Corsica tourer body. Colonel Knowles had suffered twelve heart attacks until in 1973 Tom and Ivy were told that in all likelihood, the next would be the end! The family took immediate action and made the car roadworthy but still incomplete. In the summer of 1973 Tom had his thirteenth attack and it was indeed his last.

Coincidentally my wife Maureen and Ivy Knowles were being treated by the same herbalist. Ivy asked if I would call, inspect the car and advise her of a suitable figure to sell. I took my family to see it thinking it was a Bentley. Having seen the car we sat down for a cup of tea. When I told Ivy what I thought she should ask for the car she said "Mr Lambert I would like you to buy the car. I like the way your family have treated it." I drove away, the unexpected owner of a Talbot which I never dreamed of owning, thus becoming only the second owner in 38 years. The rebuild continued to completion.

We used BWM 512 for pleasure, driving in a number of local rallies. Then in 1977 we entered the Manchester - Betwys-y-Coed Jubilee Rally and, to the amazement of my crew, we won! I must have thought how easy it was because I've never won another rally since!

The following year I started entering 'real' rallies starting with the Ulster (or Ards) TT Golden Jubilee. We went over to Ireland, met old friends and made new friends. Maureen was born and brought up in Belfast. Outside a photography shop in Bangor the car broke down. The owner came out, looked at the car saying "I've got a Talbot. Come to lunch with my wife and me and then we'll sort out the car." So started a lasting friendship with Chris and Joan Ward.

The 1978 re-run of the TT was for me the most astounding motoring memory. Fifty years on from the first Ards TT in 1928 there had been alterations to the road, but these were not insurmountable. For instance, Lord Dunleath negotiated with the council to take his digger to the pavement entering Conway Square, lay new flag stones and after the 'race' rebuild the wall and pavement by the same evening. Quite a few of the entrants of the 1928 race were still alive. Kaye Don had hoped to attend but subsequently had health problems. A. Powys-Lybbe arrived and was a passenger in, an Alvis Silver Eagle from the 1928 race. Eddie Hall - of Bentley and M.G. fame was there with his wife and presented the prizes at the celebration dinner after the race.

We stayed in Newtownards with Ronnie and Margaret Deering. Ronnie was my co-driver. Ronnie was an expert. After the 'race' he was all fired up and bought a Riley Sprite to drive in the next celebration. This was in 1986, the 50th anniversary of the last Ards TT. Ronnie had a vast collection of stationary steam engines.

The next year I returned to Ireland for the FIVA Irish World Rally. The rally started in Cork, then through beautiful country along the coast taking in Bantry Bay, Conor



Mountain, Killarney and the Dingle Peninsula. There could have been problems as there was a petrol strike but although the locals couldn't buy fuel the competitors could have as much as they needed - which didn't go down too well.

We pushed the boat out in 1979 literally when we went across to France to drive in the Paris-Deauville Rally. I had a crew of 3 this time and we stayed the first night in Versailles. Quite a few competitors were also staying in Versailles and believe me there were some rotten heads next morning, especially when engines were started in the basement of the hotel and smoke was everywhere. I lost my crew for quite a while when they escaped into the fresh air.

The start was in the Place Vendôme leading out onto the Champs Elysée where local 'moderns' were ready to race us between traffic lights until we reached the Bois de Boulogne. The route took us through Northern France with compulsory stops in villages to sample the local wine. Right of way through traffic lights was by courtesy of motor cycle mounted gendarmes. Incidentally the same gendarmes were guests at the final lunch and, in a rather intoxicated state, took young ladies on their motor bikes for 100 mph trips up the road and without a pillion seat!

I was to take the Talbot back to France many more times because they were good fun with some lovely machinery - Delahayes, Bugattis, Mercedes, Alfa Romeos etc. to feast one's eyes over. One thing did baffle me - they had a prize giving the night before the rally finished!

Gunnar Nilsson was a member of the Lotus Formula One team until he was struck down with cancer. He did not "throw in the towel" but, refusing drugs, he set up an appeal to raise money for the Gunnar Nilsson Cancer Treatment Fund. I decided to support this appeal and thus 1980 (and some of 1979) was occupied with the "North Cape Run". My idea was to drive a vintage car from Liverpool to North Cape passing through the Arctic Circle on the west coast of Norway The return was down the east side through 'Lapland', Sweden and Finland as far as Oslo and then west again to Stavanger for the ferry to Newcastle.

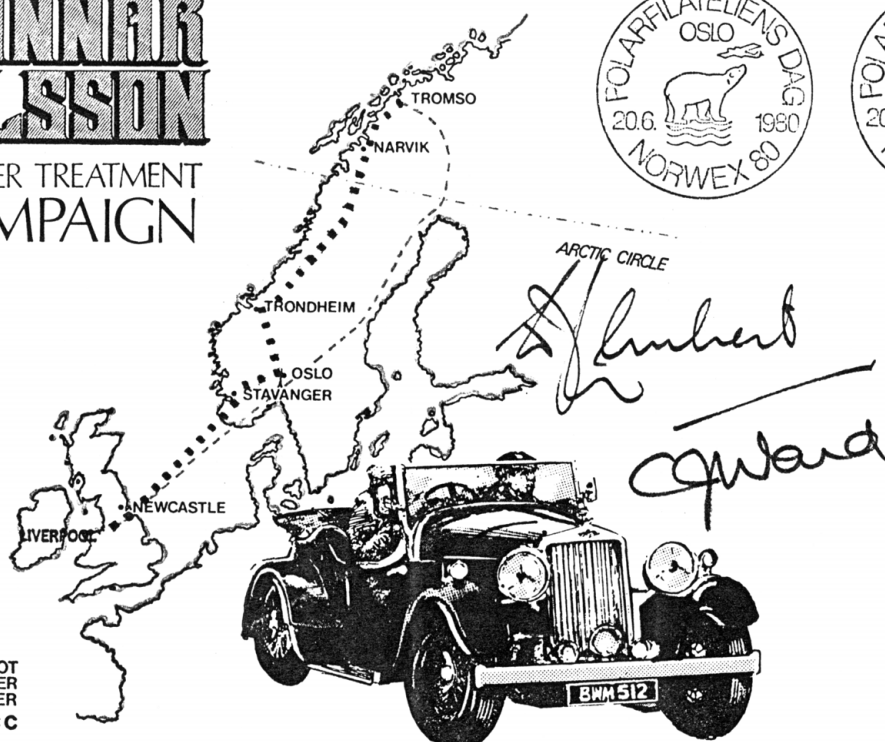
I had special envelopes printed with a picture of BWM 512. Celebrities were then invited to sign their names across the envelopes and in due course offer them for auction at Sotheby's. The idea worked brilliantly. First were idols of motor racing like Kaye Don, Sammy Davis, The Duke of Richmond and Gordon (Freddie March), Kaye Petre, Stirling Moss, Fangio, Gonzalez, Tony Brooks and Colin Chapman to World Champions Jack Brabham, Jackie Stewart, Mario Andretti, John Surtees, Alain Prost, Nicki Lauda, Michael Schumacher, Damon Hill, James Hunt and Nigel Mansell. Motorcyclists included Stanley Woods, Geoff Duke, Mike Hailwood and Barry Sheene. Champion golfers included Tony Jacklin and Ernie Els. Round the World yachtsmen such as Sir Alex Rose became involved and sportsmen like Sebastian Coe and Stephen Redgrave - the list is endless. The nice thing was that most of these people wrote to me or telephoned and I had the pleasure of meeting some of them.

One person who made contact and became a personal friend was Rob Lawrie. Rob was primarily an Alpine Climber who wrote books and made climbing equipment for international expeditions. He decided after the war that he wanted to drive at Le Mans (never having raced anywhere!) but was told that the roads were too bad and there wouldn't be a race for many years. In fact there was a race in 1949 and Rob drove an Aston Martin into 11th place. He entered again in 1950 driving a Riley and finished 20th. In 1951 he drove a Jaguar XK120 and finished 6th. In 1952 a Morgan Plus 4 which didn't



**GUNNAR  
NILSSON**  
CANCER TREATMENT  
CAMPAIGN

1936 TALBOT  
75' TOURER  
6 CYLINDER  
2276 cc



*An example of one of the signed envelopes auctioned to raise funds by Doug Lambert and the "The Artic Talbot". This one is signed by his fellow Talbot owner friend Chris Ward.*

finish. Rob never drove again. He made a personal cash donation to the trust and introduced me to all sorts of eminent men from the Alpine Club who helped.

"Collector's Car" published the following article in September 1980.

### "COLD START- DOUG LAMBERT'S ARCTIC ADVENTURE".

On Saturday June 14 Doug Lambert and two friends took off on a run up the Arctic Circle which would have tested not only the best machinery of today but, Doug being a motoring enthusiast decided to use his 1936 Talbot.

Always a keen long distance driver, this journey had been an ambition, particularly in a vintage car, and having decided, more than 12 months ago that he was going to do the run, he wanted to do it for a good cause. "The Gunnar Nilsson Cancer Campaign seemed the right sort of cause", he said "so the last few months have been spent planning the journey, finding the money and organising the sponsorship".

Doug is only the second owner of the Talbot he bought nine years ago. The first was a retired army colonel who ran a clothing business. He bought the car and had it rebodied in 1954. It started off as an overhaul but while the body was off he was offered a Corsica Tourer body.

This is his own diary of the journey up to the Arctic Circle, and what was most surprising was the amount of interest the car created, and he soon discovered that the people there are collectors themselves.



Saturday 14th June 1980 After all the months of preparation we finally got underway with an official send-off by the Lord Mayor of Liverpool. But first, let me introduce the crew, my co-driver is Chris Ward (38) from Bangor, Northern Ireland and the driver of the back-up car is Norman Pemberton (45) from Blackpool. The back-up car is a Talbot Horizon kindly loaned by Talbot (UK). Finally the principal member of the crew is the 1936 Talbot Tourer.

Our route from Liverpool to the ferry at Newcastle took us across the Yorkshire Dales. The rain started at Ingleton in the Dales and became heavier and heavier.

#### Sunday 15th June 1980

The boat arrived at Stavanger two hours late due to the rough weather. After quickly disembarking the Stavanger cars, we sailed again through the islands to Bergen. It is still raining. Amongst the cars to disembark at Bergen was a Rolls 1933 pulling a very large caravan. The owners were on a three week holiday in southern Norway.

Eventually we were on the road at 7.10 pm, with it still pouring with rain. We took the road to Voss climbing to 2050 ft. up a series of S bends over the Hamlagio mountains. Stopped at a little inn for a drink only to find it crowded with folk watching Liverpool F.C. on television playing a Norwegian team in the European Cup - it's a small world. By the time it was midnight we were crossing the Vikafjell mountain at 3235 feet where there was still quite a lot of snow in drifts. Eventually, reached the hotel at Vik at 12.30 am,

where the light is sufficient to read a newspaper although it was overcast with heavy rain.

#### Monday 16th June

We caught the ferry to Hella and started the fabulous climb up Sognefjell mountain which rises to 4700 feet. At the base of the climb we blew out the jets, and cleansed the carburetor filter because the engine was misfiring. We pressed on to Trondheim where we were met, and entertained overnight, by Bard Nielson, owner of a 1949 Barker bodied Daimler D/H and a 1954 MG YB. The rain had stopped by now and the sun was out.

#### Tuesday 17th June

We did a quick tour of the city taking in a visit to the Royal Palace, the largest wooden building in Europe. In the beautiful sunshine we made good progress as far as Formafoss where the engine cut out and wouldn't restart. This was diagnosed as high resistance in the starter and a fault on the starter switch. We removed the starter motor and restarted at 4.30 pm with still 200 miles to go, arriving at Mo-I-Rana at 9.30 pm with no more incidents.

During the run we passed through a village named Majavatn which was a centre of the Resistance during the 1939-45 war and where 24 villagers were taken out and executed one



night. The weather was good all day except for a thunderstorm while we were working on the car.

#### Wednesday 18th June

Left Mo-I-Rana at 10.30 am after seeing the Talbot agent and leaving the faulty starter motor with him with instructions to forward it to Talbot Norge to be collected on arrival at Oslo repaired, such was my trust.

We arrived at the Arctic Circle in brilliant sunshine - sent off Gunnar Nilsson envelopes and pressed on. Two ferries to cross with beautiful mountain views.

Once we got into the snow line we realised why one couldn't do the Arctic Circle/North Cape run before June. Passes had been cut through the ice and packed snow and at times the frozen snow was up to 15 feet on either side. It is also interesting to note that the roads are not tarmac but then the surfaces were sprayed with a bitumen oil to prevent the surface freezing and cracking.

Fuel starvation was the next problem and this turned out to be a blocked fuel pipe. Cleared and pressed on to Narvik, arriving at 7.30 pm at Talbot dealer. Weather good all day.

#### Thursday 19 June

An uneventful day, marvelous views. Roads started off good and deteriorated to terrible. Left at 8.45 am and arrived at Alta 7 pm. Drove along Alta fjord where Tirpitz was cornered and sunk by torpedo planes of the RAF.

Fantastic drive and views over Kvenanesfjell mountain. Plenty of Lapps about with skis and reindeer skins tempting tourists. Weather started off good and over mountains drove into electrical storm and the rain stayed with us all the way. 280 miles. So far approx. 1600 miles. We were now 600 miles north of the Arctic Circle.

#### Friday 20th June

Left Alta after visiting the Talbot dealer. Driving eastwards towards Finland we could pick out field guns and similar on ledges and in crevices all pointing to the east i.e. for the Germans to protect themselves from a Russian advance.

Then south into Sweden. The countryside on this part was uninteresting until we came to the Swedish Lakes near Sundsvall. Encountered various isolated Lapp settlements and reindeer.

Journey enlivened by party of American motorcyclists on V Twin Harley Davidsons, Hondas and Suzukis, one of whom had a TC MG in the States, an elderly UK couple thoroughly enjoying themselves in an immaculate Morris Minor and a 1926 Chevrolet which I seemed to remember from the 1979 FIVA Rally in Ireland.



Met a couple of British cyclists in Skilletea who had cycled from Oslo to Hammerfest and back but were entraining to Stockholm.

Rather curious to find so many potential drag racers at traffic lights including a Shelby Cobra - this was at Skelleftea and Sundsvall, i.e. half way down Sweden on the Baltic coast.

#### Sunday 22nd June

Changed oil, cleaned filter and changed rear tyre due to split caused by loose stones. Left Sundsvall in pouring rain and put hood up for the first time since day we arrived - rain torrential for over 300 miles.

Some elks crossed road in front of us in forests by Mora. Saw a restored late '40s Mercedes, an 1920s Oldsmobile on back of lorry near Sundsvall and early 'E' type Jaguar near Mora. Porsche Carrera on road near Sundsvall.



#### Monday 23rd June

Crossed border back into Norway and went straight on to Oslo where we visited the Kon-Tiki Farm and Frogland Park with its rather bizarre statues. Jorgen Seeman Berg, with whom we were staying met us at 6.30pm and during the evening first went out to see a 1932 bc, 1750 GTC Alfa Romeo in last stages of restoration and then Jorgen's own F1 MG 1932 also nearing completion. The MG is in a mill which a number of local enthusiasts have rented and also under restoration are a 1928 6 cylinder Auburn Saloon, 1916 6 cylinder Studebaker Tourer, 1927 Ford T Saloon. Jorgen Berg also has for restoration a 1932 MG C Replica and 1961 Lancia Appia Zagato.

Starter motor arrived having been routed to Jorgen from Mo-I-Rana. Fitted back to the car and left for Drammen to visit Talbot Norge and local Talbot dealer - dealer has 1934 Talbot 65 under restoration and for which he has just paid £1100 for a new crown wheel and pinion!

#### Wednesday 25th June

Bucketing with rain so press on to Kristiansand for night. Some of the boats from the Tall Ship Race arrived together with the Norwegian and Ecuadorian Sail Training Ships. Local enthusiast driving round in beautiful condition Model T Ford.

#### Thursday 26th June

Left Kristiansand and took diversion to Jossing Fjord, scene of the "Altmark incident" in 1940 when HMS Cossack rescued British prisoners of war from the German ship. Diversion well worthwhile, terrific climbs over steep passes. Arrived Stavanger early evening, sailed later that evening.

Total mileage 3504 "troubles" were limited to a burnt out starter motor, a sticking starter pinion, two split tyres and a few blocked jets and pipes.



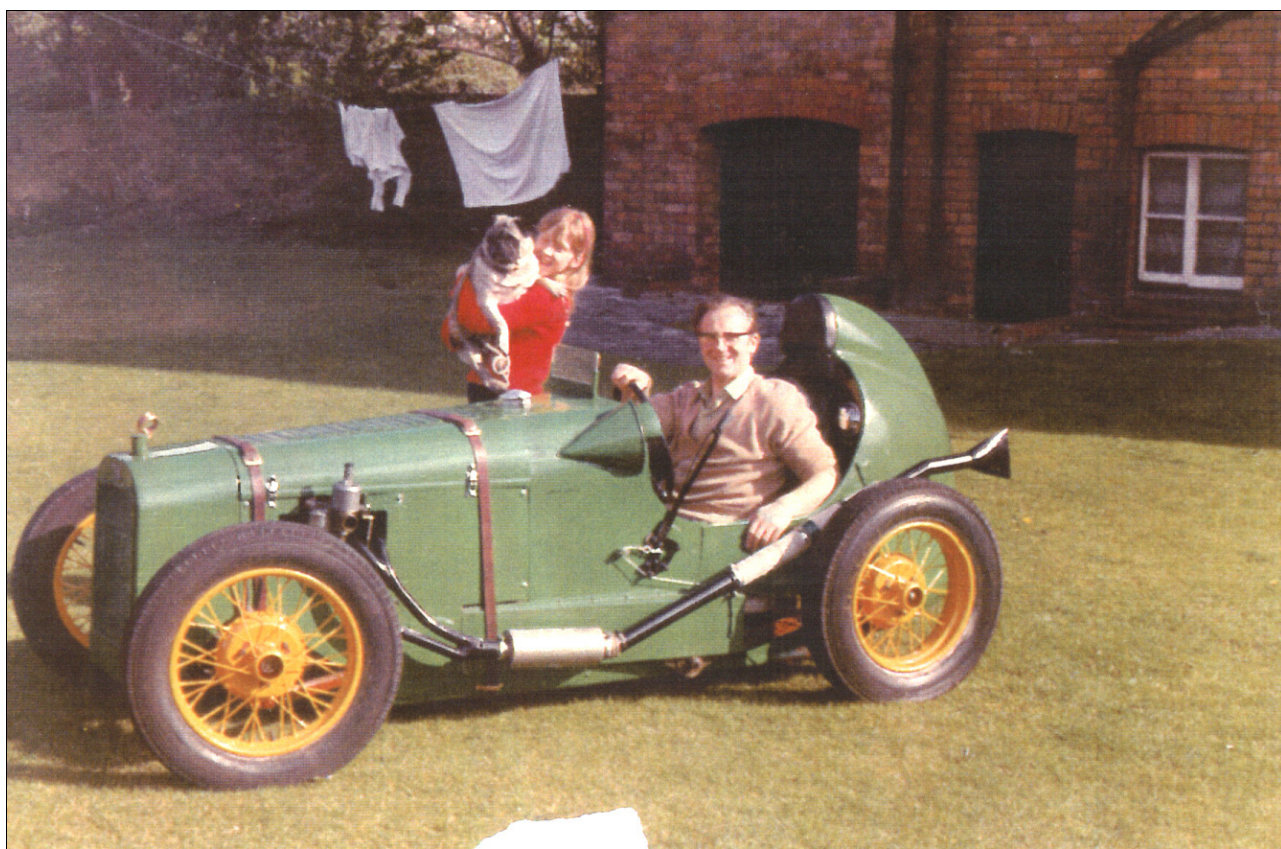
## THE ARCTIC TALBOT

### Part 2

Before I start writing about the Talbot let me digress about a project which took several years to complete, and was started just before I bought the Talbot. In early 1970 I received a phone call, from a young lady friend of my brother, who invited me to her house on a Saturday morning to see an old MG 18/80 which she wanted to sell. She had lost her father, mother and brother over the previous year and wanted to sell everything and move on. When I got there I found the MG was too far gone, in the garden was an early Talbot with a tree growing through it and the chassis well rotted, there was also a canal barge which didn't appeal to me and a Calthorpe Motorbike - so far no joy.

We retired to the morning room for a coffee and I noticed something impossible! Was that the rear end of a racing car poking out behind the settee? To cut the story short, yes it was and there were other parts behind the settee also. The outcome was I bought everything in the room except the settee for £100; collected everything by lorry and dumped it in my cellar.

I probably got about 70% of an Austin Seven which had been converted for racing. The axle had been cut to allow a lower sitting position. The rebuild was completed in 1974 and we raced the car at most of the circuits but, every time, the engine blew up. I sold it and then it vanished, turning up in 1980's in Barry Clarke's back garden. When Richard Campbell bought it, he threw the Austin engine away and fitted a Fiat Ballila 1100 cc engine. He went to town winning all sorts of races and hill climbs and eventually, the Brooklands Trophy. The car is described in John Bateman's book "Vintage Specials".



*The Austin Brooklands in our back garden with daughter Sally and pug.*



Having joined the Brooklands Society some years previous, I managed to attend the Reunion in June 1981. Obviously I was eager to see as much as possible and wandered round the existing buildings particularly the Club House. I took the Talbot up the Test Hill with no problem at all and also entered the sprints along part of the track.



*Ascending the Brooklands Test Hill - 1982.*

Four months later we departed for the south coast where we embarked for Le Havre on the overnight ferry.

#### XV Paris Deauville 3rd to 5th October 1981

My old school friend and golf companion, Peter Watson, was my travelling companion. An easy drive to Southampton. This was the first and only time I put the Talbot on a transporter which we left with the tow car, a D type Citroen on the transporter itself in the hotel car park, Southampton. The rally was the same pattern as previous years. Unfortunately I've lost my notes on the incidents and details but I note Alison Moores was there in her 1930 Austin "Ulster", Nick Mason of Pink Floyd fame in his 1935 Aston Martin Ulster and a French entry in the name of M. Louis Bleriot driving a 25/30 Rolls-Royce. Could this be a relative of THE Louis Bleriot? Quite a few of the old names were there - Bruce Dowell, Mike Collis and Brian Deardon-Briggs. I recall that Peter Moores was there in the very large Sunbeam 'Dreadnought' fitted with a bed in the back seat, and a driver. Peter was very ill but determined. As I said, I recalled that Peter was there but there was no note in the programme.

On day 2 we burst a front tyre and left the road to almost turn over into a ditch. But



probably the most exciting incident happened when we returned to the Citroen and transporter. Not realising that the Citroen would sink on its suspension on the transporter, we had to devise a method of getting into the car so we could start the car and raise the level beyond the transporter rail. We broke a window!

In 1982 we started off with the Norwegian Vintage Car Fjord To Mountain Rally, held in the central mountain area around the ski resort of Geils and the salmon fishing centre of Laerdal. To get to the start we drove across to Newcastle and sailed to Bergen. From there, we crossed the mountain range to get to the start at Hemsedal. We were the only Talbot in the entry and with Bunty Scott Moncrieff in a Pontiac and Gavin Coulthard from Cumbria in a Norwegian owned Derby Bentley, the only British starters.

The entry was representative of the strong American influence on cars before the war in Norway with fortunately a strong German entry, including not only Mercedes but an Alvis 12/50 and SS 100, also a lone Bugatti all the way from Australia. The Rally was a good mixture of road sections and tests - 17 in all. The route was chosen to take us through beautiful mountain country with some particularly steep passes. Some of the older cars had to be helped up at the end of a tow rope.

Up to the third day we had been having an interesting and eventual personal competition with the German entered Alvis and SS 100 when our rear nearside shock absorber came adrift and put a large hole in the petrol tank. Fortunately, I had a small reserve tank and very soon had fitted pipes from which we could run direct. The shock absorber was reassembled and we were away again. Unfortunately the reserve tank hadn't been used for ages and had accumulated a layer of sludge which quickly blocked not only the jets but the pipes themselves. This dropped us down the lists and caused us to stop every few miles not only to the finish but until we were home.

In spite of the problems it was an excellent rally, well organised, probably the best I had been in to date and with the most hospitable and friendly people one could ever meet. Only one problem - everything was very expensive particularly beer and spirits.

The final problem occurred after return home. I had left the set of side screens in a garage in Bergen where I had propped them up against a wall on the first day. I thought it was worth a 'phone call to the Norwegian owner of the Bentley. They were still where I had left them and my friend dispatched them to me!

Once home from Norway permanent repairs had to be done immediately to the petrol tank and shock absorber because we were off again with the Talbot. This time Maureen, my wife, was my navigator and we were off to Brooklands for the 1982 Reunion with two other cars (moderns) coming for the ride.

Brooklands was a fascinating place with the ex-Loch Ness Wellington bomber being rebuilt in one of the old hangers, the old Members' Pavilion and many workshops being restored. In the Members' Pavilion there is a plaque commemorating Percy Lambert breaking the 100 mph in 24 hour record when he clocked 103.84 miles in a Talbot in the given time on 15 February 1913 only to be killed next day on the track. There is a connection in names, with both my grandfather and Percy Lambert being born in Kingston, Surrey. I say the connection is not true blood because my grandfather was orphaned and adopted by an Aunt who was married to a Mr. Lambert.

The banking is very much overgrown with very little drivable. Incidentally, have you ever tried to walk to the top of the banking - you can't, at about three quarters up the angle is too steep. There was later a short sprint on a section of level banking which had to be



brief because the end was a sheer drop where the banking had been removed during the war. Cars were paired off, and in this case, I was paired against a 4½ litre Lagonda driven by Bill Boddy. Much to my surprise I beat him only to find in his write up in the July 'Motor Sport' that the Lagonda's clutch was slipping! After Brooklands we departed for a holiday in Salcombe, Devon and later Oxford with friends.

1982 closed with me entering the Talbot for the proposed Peking - Paris Rally. This was the project proposed by Wilton Dickson, an Australian entrepreneur. I started preparing the car and asked Norman Pemberton to navigate. We even paid our entry fee and joined up with a group of Frazer Nash drivers. Freddie and Jan Giles in one Nash, Martin Stretton and Chris Chilcott in another. As it happened, the project became political when the French Government started to impose their presence on the preparations and it inevitably collapsed. Probably just as well as I had overheating problems with the Talbot and, in fact, only sorted it out in recent years. Inevitably we would have overheated and burst the radiator in the middle of the Gobi desert.

As it was, towards the end of 1982 a friend of mine was attending a meeting with Bristol Motors, the fleet hire car firm, at Blenheim Palace, Woodstock and asked if I would help by taking the Talbot and whilst the men talked would I take the ladies on tours around the beautiful Vanburgh planned gardens. This was hardly around the world material but I agreed, and on a lovely bright day I took elegantly dressed ladies around the gardens and over the famous white bridge. Not something you get the chance to do every day.

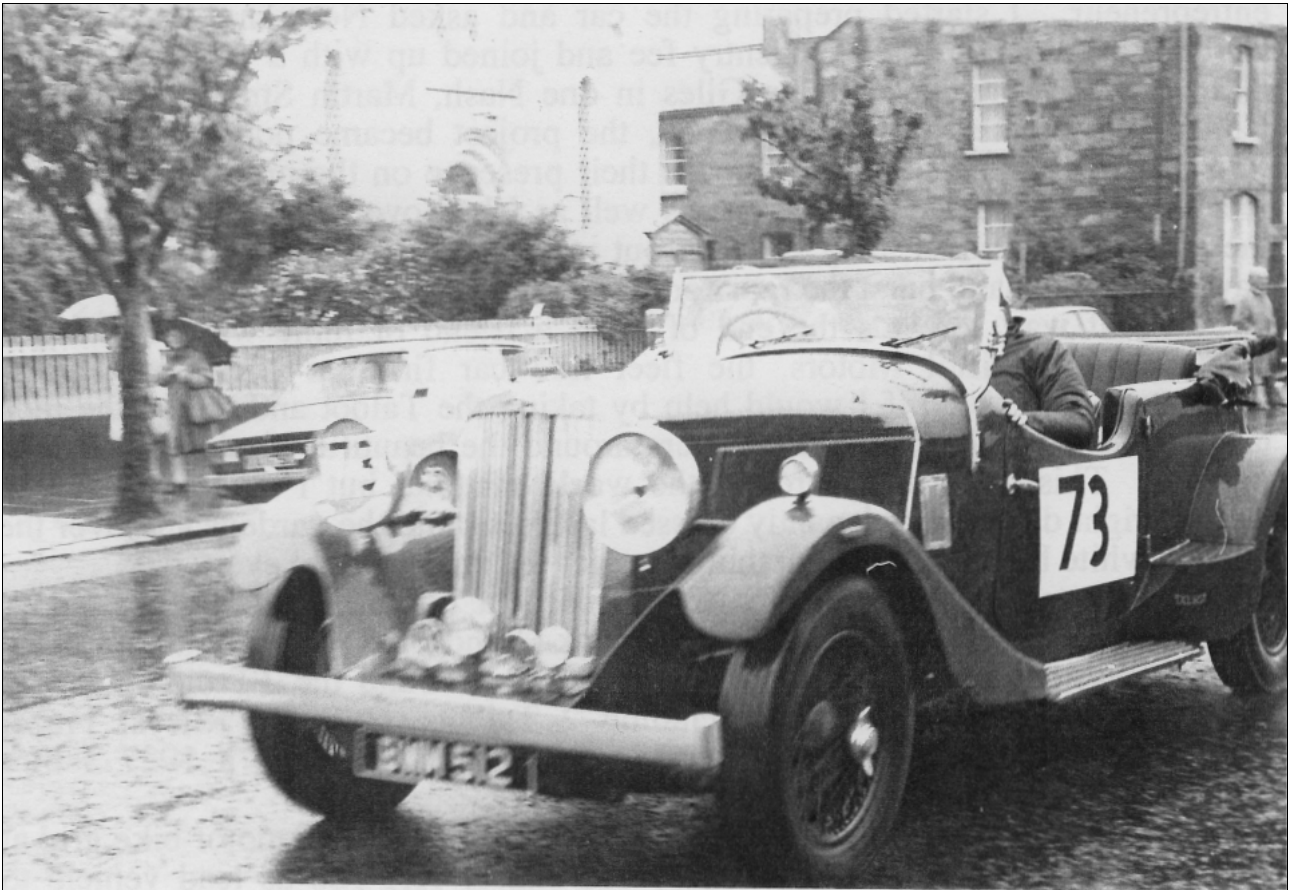
In September 1983 the VSCC organised a one off event lasting 5 days celebrating the Diamond Jubilee of the Manx Grand Prix. The event comprised a road rally, driving tests but principally a 'race' around the TT circuit, 37¾ miles. There were 56 entrants including 2 Talbots, Bugattis, Rileys, Frazer Nashes, a Lagonda and many other sporting makes including a 1927 3 litre Bentley with identical Corsica body to my Talbot.

At 5.30pm 3rd September we were lined up on the TT motor bike grid at the top of Bray Hill, with a race prepared Jaguar XK 120 as lead vehicle to ensure we didn't go too fast! Inevitably we went flat out and 3 Bugattis, 2-37Bs and a type 55 passed the pace car on the Sulby straight at reputedly 130 mph.

Highlights of the week - the arrival of a very, very, large American car at the Liverpool Pier Head, with elderly gent and voluptuous young blonde inside, out of the rain, open Bugatti with luggage tied to bodywork, driver and wife soaked to the skin and with a lisp driver and looking at the American car, utters the immortal words in disbelief "such stupidity is solely 'w'served for Americans". My 3 passengers in rear seat (which is over the rear axle) watching everything to start with and quickly burying themselves beneath the tonneau and blankets - forgetting to slow down for Ballaugh Bridge and crash landing many yards further on, and overshooting Governor's Bridge, the last bend.

The driving tests on Sunday, the next day, were quite fun if you don't mind driving with a bucket over your head. The Navigation Run was interesting until my clutch started slipping. A nice touch was on the Monday when the authorities provided a steam train outing from Douglas to Port Erin. Tuesday we packed up and returned home leaving the family and friends to continue the holiday without car.





*Ards T.T. 50th Anniversary Event 1978.*



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## THE ARCTIC TALBOT

### Part 3

Apart from small local rallies and sprints BWM 512's 'work' for **1983** started in June when we headed for Harwich, crossing the North Sea to Gothenburg for the Autohistoriska Rally. Norman Pemberton, my map reader, and I set off to board the ferry on the 6th of June, covering the 295 miles to Harwich without a problem. The boat sailed at 9.00pm. We were pleased to meet Frank and Vera Smith from Wilmslow with their well rallied 1914 Darracq. A nightly social drinking group evolved! After an easy crossing we disembarked at 10.00am and drove in convoy to the Europa Hotel.

On Wednesday the cars were assembled at Volvo Torslanda for scrutineering whilst we had a tour of the factory and enjoyed a reception. Many desirable cars arrived including Keith Tamms and Philip Evans with their 4½ litre Bentleys. A 1929 Mercedes SS arrived from Berlin and Philip Mann (one time President of VSCC) was there with his 1932 S type Invicta. Among the smaller cars there was a brace of Riley Sprites and Lynxes.

The rally 'proper' started from Volvo Torslanda on the Thursday. Our start time was 9.56 with tests along the route at Singalhornet. All was well. The next day we started from Varnamo, after the car had been weighed! In the afternoon we had Bjorn-Eric Lindh's adopted Vietnamese daughters as passengers. The evening was spent at Folk Castle with a sailing trip on an 1887 steamer. A tour of Folksam Auto where Swedish car crashes are examined was fascinating.

On the Saturday we had an easy start from Vaxjo taking a route through the beautiful Swedish Lake District, check-in Atvidaberg. Miscellaneous problems arose:- the petrol pump 'played up', we had to adjust the brakes and I had cartilage trouble. Next day we checked the pump, readjusted the brakes but could do nothing about my leg. After driving tests in the afternoon, at dinner I was delighted to find that I had been awarded 3rd prize in the Post Vintage section for the Saturday stage. There was no rest, for on the Monday we started from Atvidaberg and went through some very rough forest roads. The morning section caught out many people, resulting in some fast driving before checking in at Eskilsfuna.

Tuesday saw the start of last run to Stockholm including a ferry crossing. The fuel pump was still giving trouble and in the heavy traffic of Stockholm the clutch overheated and smoked but we soldiered on. That night we stayed aboard Barbara Hutton's old yacht now called "Malandrottringer".

The next two days were spent exploring Stockholm in lovely weather. We shopped at NK (Harrods of Sweden) and enjoyed an evening meal in old Stockholm with Michael and Peter Crosbie (Bentley). We cruised around the Stockholm archipelago in a 1911 coal burner the "SS Blidosund", landing at an island and lunched aboard ship.

The evening banquet and prize giving were held in the Gold Room of City Hall, where the Nobel prizes are presented. This amazing room is a complete mosaic made up from 18½ million tiles. We were awarded a prize for coming 5th overall and then had the added experience of travelling to Malardrothingen in a 20ft. long air conditioned Cadillac - complete with television.

Next day was 'home time', travelling in convoy with Frank & Vera Smith in their 1914 Darracq, Michael & Peter Crosbie in a 1949 Bentley and Morris & Anne Mager in a 1937 Riley 12/6. On a day that started wet but ended beautifully, we reached Ulrichehamn - 243



miles from Stockholm - and stayed the night. The Darracq had a fuel blockage on the way but all was well. On the Saturday we left this beautiful country, boarding the boat at Gothenburg.

Next day it took us 7½ hours to drive the 305 miles home to Blundellsands leaving us very satisfied with ourselves and the Talbot.

The car troubles were interestingly largely fuel related - my pump, blockages and flooding on Riley, Darracq, Invicta and Packard, and charging/overheating/clutch/starter/brakes for others.

## ARDS TT RACES 1986 COMMEMORATION

When the Ulster Vintage Car Club organised a week of events to commemorate the last Ards TT of 1936, I decided that this was an event I couldn't miss. We had entered the 1978 event and in spite of a week of incessant rain, we'd enjoyed ourselves so much with typical Ulster hospitality that I sent my entry off right away.

The format started with the Craigantlet Hill Climb then successively, a sprint meeting at Kirkistown, driving tests at Ballywalter Park, a race meeting - again at Kirkistown - and finally three laps of the Ards TT circuit - 42 miles of 'racing' on public roads.

We arrived in Belfast on the night of Friday, August 1st in the usual pouring rain and after a very, very wet practice on the hill we were whisked away to Billy Galbraith's house at Craigantlet where hot soup, wheaten bread and alcoholic beverages abounded. Saturday dawned dry and racing commenced on the hill in earnest. Talbots were represented by Chris and Nicky Ward and Stephen Curtis, all in 105's. Nick's car has the ex-Dr Roth chassis. Stephen was in BGH 22. Chris took 3rd place on handicap.

Monday, the sprint day at Kirkistown airfield, consisted of a full circuit, with an added chicane to make things more difficult. Talbots were represented again by Chris Ward, Nicky Ward and me in BWM 512. The fastest time was by Rodney Felton's P3 Monoposto Alfa Romeo. A splendid day's sport and the sun actually shone. After the racing we had a mad dash across country to Bangor to collect our wives and go out to dinner with Des and Avis Burnett. Des had just completed a most immaculate rebuild of his Van den Plas tourer Talbot 105 which, though bodyless at the time, was clad for the TT later in the week.

Wednesday, the day of the driving tests, started off dry but later deteriorated. There was a good entry of 27 cars varying from blown MGs, AC-GN and Frazer Nashes to yet again the three Talbots. Lord Dunleath came first in his Frazer Nash. Chris Ward upheld Talbot pride by coming second. Third was a blown N type MG.

When the racing returned to Kirkistown on Thursday we took the day off and went touring with friends along the beautiful Antrim Coast, through to Glens and over to the Giants Causeway. This really is as fantastic as I've always believed. After that we went on to Portrush in time to see the lifeboat go out and then we had dinner. Returning to Bangor we found that the Talbots of Chris Ward and Stephen Curtis had had a very spirited dice at Kirkistown with only a couple of lengths separating them at the finish. Friday - TT day - was actually sunny again. Although the organisers had worked so hard to get the roads closed, it was not to be. However, the police co-operated tremendously and held traffic back from entering off side roads.

The entrance to Conway Square in Newtonards was ramped to follow the original circuit.



Traffic lights were manned by Police and therefore ignored by the entrants so that generally speaking very little 'non vintage' traffic got past them.

The start was a 'Le Mans' type followed by the usual frantic mêlée as we all tried to get away together heading for Quarry corner, through the lovely sweeping bends of Bradshaws Brae into Newtownards, across Conway Square and along the Comber straight, around the right hander missing the well known butcher's shop, over the level crossing and on to Dundonald. Around the hairpin and in a few moments the pit straight. Here, despite pleas from the race marshals, the crowd pressed forward leaving a very narrow passageway - at least it seemed very narrow at 75 mph.

Three splendid laps, during which I battled with a blown Lea Francis and a 3 litre Bentley. For the Bentley driver and me, our race finished when a policeman foolishly flagged us down with near disastrous results as we both anchored up and our brakes locked. Fortunately I veered right whilst the Bentley veered left. My wife, watching from the banking, was not happy. However, overall it was a wonderful event.

In **1987** we had the **FIVA World Rally** which was held in Scandinavia, starting in



*FIVA World Rally 1987 - Arriving in Denmark*

*The three cars are Phil Evans and Keith Tams 3 Litre Bentleys and Doug's Talbot 75.*

Denmark, crossing into Norway and back through Sweden. There was a good contingent from Britain - Bentleys (3 and 4½ litre) Alvis, Rolls Royces, Bugattis and our Talbot. The route was from Ribe on the west coast of Denmark (rather flat country with windmill upon windmill) to catch a ferry at Fredikshavn. There were only enough cabins for half the passengers so many people opted to spend the night in the bar. When we landed in Oslo it was bucketing down. We went through the Royal Palace Grounds where King Harkon took the salute. On through Geilo to Geiranger where we had a precipitous descent to the fjord, many cars restrained by jeeps and ropes. Once down, we had to get up the other side the next day but that was not as difficult.

We drove through Litlehamner to the Swedish border and thence to Goteborg. I have forgotten to mention that when I arrived at the Danish start, my navigator had left a message crying off.



A local enthusiast was very good but he could only stay with me for a couple of days and then another stranger

*Adopted navigator for the Rally.*



would take his place and so on. Needless to say this didn't work and I did over half the rally without a crew. When I reached the Swedish boarder, the Swedish official in charge, Bjorn-Eric Lindt again insisted that I take his adopted Vietnamese daughters. They couldn't map read but they were superb company. They stayed with me to the end - would you trust your daughter with an almost complete stranger and foreigner to boot? However, we finished 4th in the PVT class.

**1985 to 1989** had been occupied with an obsession I had, to recreate as near as possible, the 1889 Land Speed Record car - "La Jamais Contente", using drawings supplied by the Montague Motor Museum and the French National Museum. I had developed a fascination for this project because it linked my professional qualifications and business career in Electrical Engineering with my hobby - "La Jamais Contente" being an electric car driven by Camille Jenatzy.

Like most projects it took far longer to complete and was more expensive than I had ever imagined. However, my ambition was achieved when the speed of 67.62 mph for the flying start kilometre beat Jenatzy's 65.79 mph. What a great satisfaction that was.

Over those five years I did manage a few events, for example the Ruthin Rally and the Exeter and John O'Groats to Lands End Trials - where we received a 'gold medal' (actually a piece of paper saying it was a gold medal). BWM and I also did a couple of very enjoyable Norwich Union Rallies.



*Doug's recreation of La Jamais Contente.*

Years later in about **1995** I had a call from the BBC. "Do you own 'La Jamais Contente II' ? "No", I said, "the purchaser preferred to remain anonymous". "Never mind", they said "we'll find out", and a few weeks later they rang to say the Bamfords of JCB were the

owners and would I arrange to check the car and bring it to their film site.



*RAF Elvington - On the way to breaking Jenatzy's record.*

When I contacted JCB they said they couldn't find the car but would contact me when it was found! Eventually they located it and I went down to see it. It had been stored in a shed at the works from the day they bought it. When I took the nose cone off, because that's where the



batteries were located, I was nearly overcome by the poisonous gases discharged from the 10 batteries.

Nobody, in all those years, had thought to take the batteries out! It took three visits to tear out the damaged wiring, check controls, fit new batteries and do a trial run.

On the day before filming they said a well known racing driver would be driving. I tried to be helpful and advise the driver to be careful as the batteries were only good for one kilometre. He didn't take much notice and flattened the batteries leaving the filming to be done using a tow car and an 'invisible' rope. A busy day of filming ensued with the Land Speed Record Delage of Jonty Williamson. Quite why 'Babs' wasn't there I don't know. No other land speed record cars were available. I was able to complete a few laps around JCB's own circuit with the Talbot, where the programme was filmed.

I have a tape of the 'Top Gear' programme if anybody wants a copy.

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## THE ARCTIC TALBOT

### Part 4

In **1990** we entered the Prescott Hill Climb. I quickly came to the conclusion the Talbot had too long a chassis, was too heavy, had a less than generous steering lock and the wrong gear ratios. Otherwise it was perfect. Actually I enjoyed it in spite of these limitations.

**January 1991** found me at Ledbury, Herefordshire ready for the Measham Rally. Bernard Hoy was my navigator and neither of us imagined what was ahead of us. The Talbot was



*Above: VSCC Measham Rally with frost on the road and the roof of the car.*



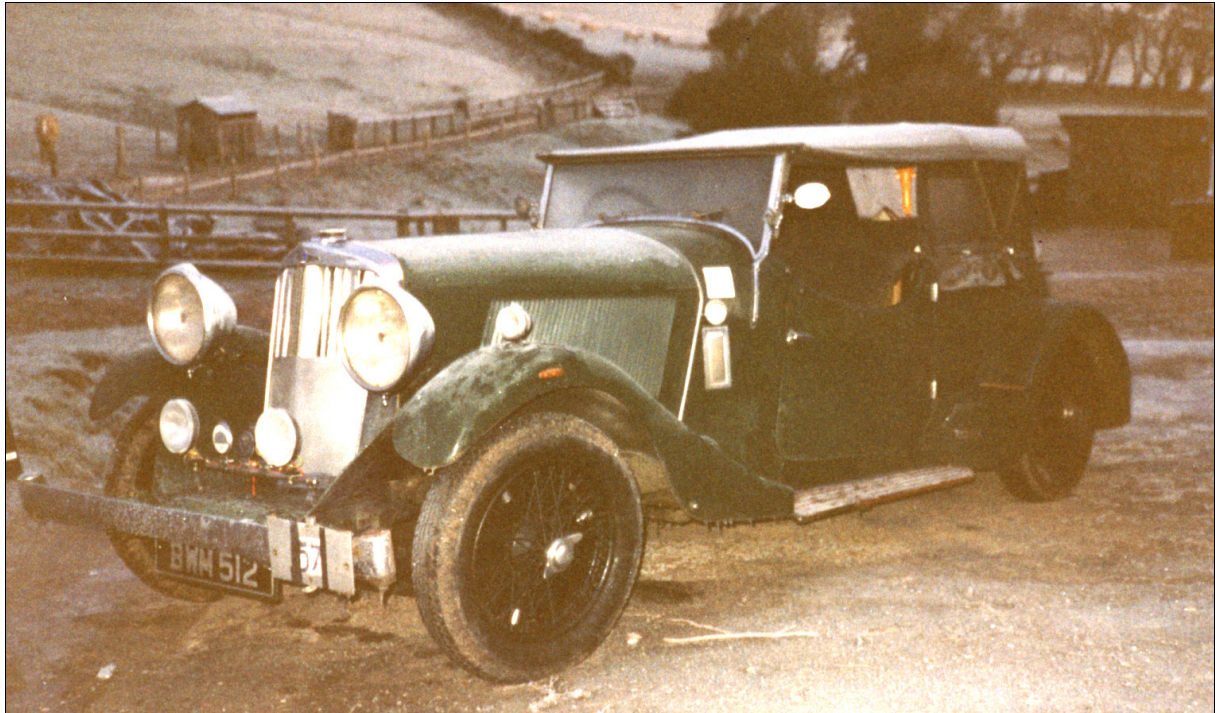
running with the hood up but no side screens. This was because although the temperature was 25°F, yes 7°C below freezing, we needed as much side visibility as possible and freedom to scrape the windscreen whilst on the move. We started about 10.30pm and were going well. We came across a Sunbeam Saloon in a ditch. We stopped but they waved us on. Many cars were in trouble but we were always waved through.

I remember coming to a check point at about 1.00 am where David Marsh said we were going well and making good time. How this was so I shall never understand because we were slipping and spinning the wheels on the ice. Inevitably something had to give - the half shaft broke at about 2.30 am. We realised we were off route, somewhere in a frozen Wye Valley with no heat.

Examination of the car revealed the distributor had popped out of its seating and the timing was awry. The car was undriveable and open and we didn't know where we were. There was no way to contact HQ so we wrapped ourselves in a blanket, pulled a bin bag up to our waists and waited. One other competitor arrived - Jo Moss in her Invicta saying she would alert HQ but nothing ever came.

When dawn broke we found we were in a farm yard and when a light came on in the farm house we knocked on the door. When the farmer asked why we hadn't knocked earlier, we said it was so dark we didn't know we were in his farm yard. After a welcome cup of tea and the use of their phone, the AA arrived and we started the long journey home on the back of a trailer. My navigator was splendid. How he managed to map read with the car skating in all directions I shall never know. 1991 had not started very well but John Brown's Historic Rally Club the "Targa Historica" was ahead of us and something to look forward to.

The Targa Rusticana, was a 2 day and through-the-night rally run in the wild parts of central Wales and organised by John Brown of international rally fame. I realised I was amongst the 'big boys' when I read that Pat Moss, John Sprinzel, Russell Brookes and many other experts were amongst the winners and Healeys, Jaguars, Mini Cooper S



*Above: VSCC Measham 1991 - Dawn breaking in the farmyard with temperatures down to -7°.*



types amongst the cars. Chris, my son, was navigator and we got off to a bad start when he was very ill, but he recovered and was very good thereafter. During the daylight all was well and although we couldn't compete with the Healeys and Jags we held our own, that is until night fall.

The Historic Rally Car events have stringent rules and are very serious. For instance, you have to let every car that catches you up go through and after dark there was a continuous stream of fast cars with headlights and many spotlights on our tail. I was continually up the grassy banks, not knowing whether I was on a cliff edge or whatever.

The event had lost its sparkle - it was too serious and decidedly dangerous. We struggled on and at about 4.00 am realised we were the leading pre-war car and far enough ahead on points to relax and take it easy. From then on we kept out of trouble, (more than one car turned over) and we won the Pre-War Class.

The first event in **1992** was the Irish Vintage Car Club Spring Rally. The start was Phoenix Park, Dublin and we opted to cross by the Holyhead to Dun Laoghaire Ferry arriving 6.00 pm. Michael Crosbie, who I'd met on several Swedish and Norwegian Rallies, met us and guided us to the Sherbourne Hotel, Central Dublin, very good but very expensive. The Rally was a very casual affair which followed clues from Phoenix Park to the finish at Slieve Russell. It tended to be an excuse for festivities in the evening. After dinner the prizes were given out and we won the class award and my wife was given a special award for bringing the only English person to compete - my wife being Irish.

The band finished at midnight when an ad-hoc band took over and they really started to enjoy themselves - mind you everyone had consumed some liquor by then. I had a business appointment next day in Wicklow and spent an interesting day crossing Ireland via Roscommon, Athlone and Naas. We caught the night boat with a gale blowing and torrential rain. On the journey from Holyhead to Bangor I had to strip off my wet clothes and just wear oilskins and when I returned the Talbot was being admired by Chris de Burgh on his way home to Dublin!

In June and July I did a couple of local rallies and in August we entered Prescott Hill Climb. Good fun and the car not really suitable, but I like to have a go at everything. My diary reminded me that I took my Talbot to France 6th July on business and I caught the overnight boat from Portsmouth to Le Havre and then on to Paris. I garaged the car at my hotel and went on to Lyon by the "Train Grand Vitesse" - which touched 200 mph then changed trains to Strasbourg. I returned on the 10th.

The Ruthin Rally with Peter Watson as my crewman yielded the Visitors Cup again! A very nice rally every year in pleasant Welsh countryside which sadly seems to have faded out now. The Lakeland Trial in November was always an event at which I liked to marshal. Sometimes the weather was good but this year it was very, very wet - I was on duty up Drumhouse and you can't get much more exposed than there. However, I enjoyed every minute and the Talbot always enjoys doing the Lakeland passes - Honister, Wrynose and Hardknott in particular.

**1993** entered the Talbot in the Colerne Sprint. Hood up to be classed as a saloon, but still not fast enough to really be competitive. Crossed the line at about 75/78 mph - but with a flickering speedo I can't be precise.

**The Ards TT Commemoration** was the 65th Anniversary of the first race in 1928 and of 75 cars entered, the Talbot was No. 58. Eight actual Ards TT cars were entered. Chris Delaney with 1926 Lea Francis Hyper, Nev Farquhar with Freddie Dixon's Riley, Adrian



Moore's with 1932 works Crossley, James Cartwright and John Gathercole with 1934 Riley Ulster Imps, David Bowles 1934 Ford V18 TT and Sidney Gilmore with the 1936 Lagonda LG45R team car (4th to finish). Des Burnett, Chris and Nicky Ward and P Heron were also entered with Talbots. The programme started on the Wednesday, 2nd June, with runs up Craigantlet, Thursday driving tests at Ballywalter, the TT on the Friday and Croft Hill Climb on the Saturday. My Talbot was entered for all but had to pull out of Croft due to cylinder head problems. This actually resulted in me leaving the car behind in the hands of Chris Ward.

As to be expected, the whole event went off perfectly. The weather was good. Ronnie Deering - our host who drove a Riley Sprite in the race loaned me his car to continue our holiday in Donegal. Chris brought my car back, as far as I remember, on his way to Shelsley Walsh Hill Climb and I met him off the Liverpool boat.

In **1994** I was persuaded to enter the Ulster VSCC National Trust Rally. This could have been a good rally but the Talbot didn't behave very well. It was well down on power and I couldn't follow the route up the steep hills - this turned out to be a fuel blockage and my wife, who was navigating kept wondering why we were meeting other competitors coming from the opposite direction. The ultimate embarrassment was at the prize giving when the Talbot Team won. Chris and Nicky Ward were 2nd and 3rd (or perhaps the other way round) and we were 36th - I don't know if there was a 37th! I declined to go up to collect the prize and embarrass them. They frog-marched me there!

The following day sorted out the petrol problem which stemmed from a new filter on the bulkhead which was so close that the nut on the inward flow couldn't be tightened sufficiently. Off to Rossnowlaugh in Donegal and then through Sligo to Westport in very heavy rain where an American diagnosed my wife as having pneumonia. The rain persisted as we splashed our way up the Dorlough Pass to Lennane where the film "The Field" with Richard Harris was shot. Going down the pass we came across several signs commemorating "The hungry poor who walked here in 1849 and walk the third world today" on their way to Westport and thence America. I also noticed my wife was sitting lower and lower in her seat. Examination showed the spring hanger had cracked in two.

Arriving in Lennane I contacted the AA who said, go to Galway and hire a car, continue the holiday, leave the car at Dublin airport and fly home. They collected the Talbot, took it to Belfast where Terry Murphy and Chris Ward repaired it. The AA accepted the expenses and all I had to do was fly back to Belfast and bring the car home on the ferry. Incidentally my wife didn't have pneumonia, thank goodness, but she was very wet and cold and after a few days in Leenane she was ready to go again.

Later in the year the Talbot went to Scotland to visit an old friend of mine who farms on the Isle of Islay. On the way we called at the now redundant "Rest and be Thankful hill climb". We made a climb but although it's used as a test piece in rallies, the surface is too rough for racing cars.

April **1995** saw the Talbot back in the south of Ireland for the Irish CC Spring Rally. This was good fun but not too strenuous. The route was from Dublin to Carrickmacross and on to the finish at Monaghan on the north/south border (with the usual wild festivities after dinner). Next day we crossed the border with friends and made our way to Inniskillen, along the edge of Loch Erne and on to Rossnowlaugh in Donegal bay for a few days. Then on to the Roe Valley in Tyrone, Limavady and along the coast to Portrush, Giants Causeway, through the Glen of Antrim to meet the ferry at Belfast and home.



The life of the Talbot began to slow down after 1995 apart from local rallies, like the Ruthin Rally, regular visits to Brooklands, with runs up the Test Hill and demonstrations along the banking and acting course car at Silverstone, Cadwell Park and Donington through to 2002.

I received an invitation to drive in the London to Brighton Veteran Car Run in November **1999**. The car was a 1903 Waverley (USA) owned by a Mr Paul Forster, living in Switzerland. The Waverley was an electric driven car carrying 6 people. We left Hyde Park at 7.30 am and within mile had passed a half a dozen breakdowns - to be expected when the youngest cars were 95 years old. I was elected to walk up two of the hills, Hammer Hill just after Crawley and Burgess Hill towards the end.

At a pre-arranged point near Cuckfield we stopped to charge up the batteries. This had to be quick:- a follow up car was waiting with 10 fully charged batteries and we used these to restore voltage on a principle of balancing our set of batteries with the follow up batteries. This took about 30/40 minutes. *(This reminds me of a La Jamais Contente which needed new batteries after 1 kilometre - as record runs are 1 kilometre each way within an appointed time - 30 minutes I think - a complete change of batteries was needed)*. We arrived at the finish at 4.20 pm, 10 minutes before the cut-off time to complete the route. A wonderful experience leaving Hyde Park at 7.20 am, arriving 4.20 pm, 9 hours, 57 miles average 6 mph!

One particular event we entered was the Montlhery invitation in **2000** when we entered five races, had wonderful experiences on the banking for which I was not fast enough and finished in the gravel trap. A long weekend I wouldn't have missed for anything especially since the track is now unavailable.

The year **2002** was an unfortunate time for me. The Talbot drove over me and crushed my legs and my Riley was written off by two cows along a dark country lane.

I was very pleased that the Ulster VSCC were able to run the **75th Anniversary of the**



*At the start of the Ards TT demonstration runs - I am in the line up somewhere !*





*Above: Huge crowds turned out to watch the cars around the circuit, here through Newtownards with other Talbot cars very much enjoying the drive.*

**Ards TT in 2003** because I had driven in the three previous events, 1978, 1986 and 1993 and had corresponded with Dame Mary Peters asking her to speak to the right people and hopefully have further events. She certainly spoke to the right people but the answers were not helpful generally because the police did not think they could cope with the extra traffic now on the roads and allow a TT to run simultaneously. I had a wonderful drive and I know the many Talbot owners who were there, did likewise. This was therefore my swansong.



*Above: The new proud owner Martin Bryant with the Arctic Talbot.*

The Arctic Talbot has passed to other hands - Martin Bryant - and is already keeping up the pace. I've had 30 years of fun driving the car which has competed in so many rallies, races, sprints and hill climbs and toured a lot. It has only been taken home on the back of a lorry twice in over a hundred events which says a lot for Talbots.



**ARDS  
TOURIST  
TROPHY  
RACES**

**75<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY**

2003

20TH JUNE 2003  
COMMEMORATION

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