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(Affiliated to the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs)

OLDEST ROAD-GOING RAZOREDGE FOR SALE

Bernhard Ruest, a member from Glattfelden in Switzerland, and regular correspondent, writes: "Now and then there is a Razoredge coming into my sight and then I let you know. This time it's a classified advertisement in 'Swiss Classics', a magazine here.



Triumph-Town-Country, 1946, seltenes Fahrzeug in Top-Zustand. Ab MFK Veteran. Der Rolls des kleinen Mannes in England. Von Privat, Fr. 34'500.-, 079 257 49 69

It must be a very early car and could be a Swiss first registration.

They were imported by AMAG, now Volkswagen, as mine was in fact (TD 409 DL) and an even earlier car, TD 161 DL, now owned by a Mr Gyger, who is a member of our club. However, I don't think that Mr. Gyger has yet finished his restoration."

Bernhard has since contacted the seller of the car, and has identified it as TD 302

DL. He continues: "It was first registered by Mr. Pedrolì, a butcher from Locarno in the Italian part of Switzerland (this must have been a rarity there). The present owner and advertiser is Erwin Räss. Erwin Räss was a member of the TROC a long time ago and still has many copies of 'The Globe', dating as far back as about 1987. He has full documents for the car.

Among all the documents, there is a letter from Bob Parsons, giving some information about the car, then said to be the oldest one known to the club. Erwin Räss is 68 now and has a collection of cars, which he wants to reduce (don't we all?). You surely will want to know the new owner. I'm confident that Mr. Räss will help to keep the register complete.

This car might not be a good offer for repatriation because the price shown is about £23,000; but that is not terribly unrealistic for a good car here.



For your enjoyment I add a picture of my own car at a classic week-end here.

Best wishes, thanks for all the work for the club, Bernhard."

We thank Bernhard for his work investigating this historic car, and I can confirm that it remains the oldest road-going car known to the club, depending on whether the work on Mr Gyger's even earlier TD 161 has been completed. We hope to have news on

this sale, and hopefully information about Mr Gyger's car, in the next edition. ITEMS FOR SALE AND WANTED; OFFERS OF SERVICE

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**A TALE OF WOE** from Alan Walton

A year ago last August, I was attending a show in Blenheim Park (just 3 miles from home).

When I came to go home, I couldn't get the car to start, so I called the recovery organisation. When the engineer arrived, he set off immediately to the area where the modern cars were parked and I had to race across the area to redirect him to my Renown.

Once I had informed him of the problem, he went back to his van and produced a can of proprietary starting aerosol. One squirt of that and the car started immediately; I was able to drive home.

The car ran quite well for the few outings I manage to get out to during the season, although the temperature gauge did go up to 100 before returning to its normal running temperature. I considered that the problem was a sticking thermostat, although in the end this proved not to be correct. At the time I did not know that easy-starting aerosols burn extremely hot. As I had been copying the breakdown engineer, and using starting spray to initially start my engine, a hole had been burnt in the cylinder head gasket. This came to a head this year in Blenheim Park again, when the temperature gauge went up to 100 and stayed there. It seemed to me that Blenheim had put a 'Jinks' on my car! I managed to get it the 3 miles home, with blue smoke coming from under the bonnet, as the rocker cover gasket had also blown, and steam coming from the exhaust.

Our local garage repaired the car, and they showed me the cylinder head gasket, which had a considerable blackened hole in it between cylinders 2 and 3. The garage recommended in no uncertain terms *never* to use starting spray again. So please, everyone, take heed from my misfortune.

FOOTNOTE: our club experts doubt that occasional or even frequent use of starting spray could have this effect. It would certainly raise the combustion temperature of the vapour going into the cylinder initially, but would only last for the first few revolutions of the engine, when it is cold anyway. To have any significant effect, you would have to spray it continuously into the engine while it was running, when it would then indeed have the same effect as high levels of ethanol in the fuel mix – raised cylinder temperature.

What is much more likely to have been the case with Alan's engine is that the deteriorating head gasket would cause fouling of the plugs and starting problems, and would also cause overheating in the early stages of driving; then in the early stages of the blown gasket might close itself up as the engine reaches full temperature, and appear to be running normally. The use of starting spray enabled him to keep the car running for a while, but eventually the hole in the head gasket deteriorated to a point where, after a short 3-mile run when it never did get a chance to close the hole up, the gasket was burned away and blown for good.

However, readers must consider the evidence and, with the guidance of professionals with experience of working on classic cars and engines, draw their own conclusions. The moral of the story: if your car is experiencing regular starting problems, there is an underlying cause – which is worth tracing and fixing.

Tom Robinson's travels in New Zealand, continued from the August Globe.

### SOUTH ISLAND

Severe weather in the Cook Strait caused all ferry crossings to be cancelled on the day before we were scheduled to travel, but our allotted sailing was maintained from Wellington and three hours later we were on South Island at Picton and picking up our Toyota hire car.

South Island is quite a contrast to its northern neighbour. Here the traffic is much lighter and the further south one travels, not only does it become colder, but the road traffic becomes sparser. Indeed, from Franz Joseph Glacier, in 43 miles [distances here are measured in kilometres] we passed one caravan and one lorry with nothing coming the other way! Under these conditions, not only can the driver admire the scenery, but we old vehicle enthusiasts can scan the fields and farmyards for anything interesting that might occur.



*Another chance encounter was in Hokitika, the main street was occupied by several versions of the TR. I learned that the local group was having an outing.*

Triumph and Rover saloons of the sixties and seventies were quite common and in daily use, but now and then some rare car such as an Austin Atlantic or Jowett Jupiter would speed by.

Wanaka has a fine vehicle museum, just outside the town alongside the airport and air museum where many vintage aircraft put on flying displays from time to time. No razor edges are at this museum, but some excellent examples of British vehicles; cars, buses, lorries and fire engines are to be seen. My favourite was a Daimler limousine from 1937 that had once been the official vehicle for the Lord Mayor of Christchurch. It ended its working days as a builder's runabout before restoration, which is on-going.

After several days touring over familiar ground in a southerly direction, we came to a road junction at Milton where we turned north realising that at this point we had begun the long trek home to England, some 11,000 miles. Our journey north was on the east coast alongside the sea. A turn off on to a quiet road near Shag Point for lunch produced a Vanguard Phase I gradually falling to pieces amid tropical vegetation beside the Pacific Ocean.



Remote smallholdings would reveal for example, an old Ford van or a derelict Land Rover, so far from its birthplace in Solihull; once, diving down a side road when chasing a freight train to photograph near Oamaru, I found a farm with some fine examples of just Post-War British cars parked outside and all in restored condition.



At Ashburton we encountered a garage which appeared to be unoccupied, but the absent owner had a fondness for English cars. Not only was an Austin 10 on the forecourt, but also two Vanguards clearly in need of a loving home and an appeal along those lines was pasted to a side window of one of them.

*/ Continued on page 75, after the Rally photos*

FURTHER REMINISCENCES OF OUR RALLY AT BROUGHTON CASTLE

The Jubilee rally!

Despite dire weather the day before – indeed, for *weeks* before – a record number of cars and owners turned out to make this the best-attended rally for several years.

Joined by a dozen of our smaller but equally stylish cousins from the

Mayflower club, we enjoyed a hillside perch overlooking Broughton Castle across the moat. Lord Saye mentioned that this was the point referred to as ‘the Shakespeare in Love view’,

because it had been extensively used in the film, much of which was recorded here. Such is the antiquity of the building, and the origins of the family which has lived here in an unbroken though occasionally tangled line since centuries before Shakespeare’s day, it is perfectly possible that Shakespeare himself had stood where we did; although, I hasten to add, there is no evidence whatever that he actually did.



We were urged to make ourselves at home, and certainly did so.





We all seem to be holding glasses – it was just to drink the loyal toast, of course..

We were very patriotic.



Difficult to encapsulate the experiences of a day in just a few photographs. John Bath, our TROC historian, is a skilled hand with a camera, however, and most of these images are his.



Finally, we must not leave Broughton without commemorating the award made to our retiring editor, and one of the founding members of the Club, Tom Robinson. 37 years of service to the club – continuing service, let us not forget, for Tom remains on the committee and continues to see to the printing and distribution of the magazine; and whose perceptive and insightful article on travels in New Zealand we have interrupted with these photographs.



There were other awards and presentations.





*Tom and Patricia Robinson's travels in New Zealand, continued from page 70.*

Ashburton has a small motor museum just outside the town and although I knew that a fine TDB was stored there, yet again was I thwarted to get inside the building.

Gradually, traffic increased and we realised that we were approaching New Zealand's third largest city; Christchurch. In our opinion, perhaps our favourite place, with many buildings reflecting British styles of the thirties and the temperature range so much like the UK. You will be aware that Christchurch has recently suffered two devastating earthquakes and as we made our way to the car hire terminal we saw first-hand the damage that had been caused. Not only had buildings been destroyed, but the road ahead would suddenly tilt up and then twist sideways in a downward direction. Strange to our eyes was the fact that the roadside buildings would appear to be quite normal and then suddenly, one would encounter a space where a building had once stood, or on occasion, streets entirely fenced off by the authorities where buildings were considered unsafe for the owners to re-enter to claim their belongings.

For the next few days we were the guests of Rik and Lois Gant. As with the Fabers on North Island, we had met the Gants through TROC many years ago. Rik has a large collection of Razor-edge cars including an example of the rare TD model, No. 1495.



Many are non-runners and some are undergoing restoration. Maybe long-term members will recall that I related my adventures driving Rik's TDB on a rally though South Island in 2006. During our stay I was delighted to renew my acquaintance with the TDB 5913 which had given us such pleasure on the Rally.



*TDB 5913 alongside the 'Kingston Flyer' near Queenstown on the 2006 Vero Rally*

Rik and Lois live in the suburb of Redcliffs and as the name implies, the cliffs come down almost to the Pacific and in places, there is just room for a road between the two. On the larger scale, the area is the side of an extinct volcano and the crater has formed the port of Lyttleton. It is all so unusual to our English eyes.

Redcliffs had not escaped the earthquakes. We were shown the sad sight of leaning and abandoned buildings; here was a large block of offices already condemned before a tenant had moved in; and there, someone's lifetime devoted to a house, the contents of which were exposed for all to see. To protect the road from further rock falls, a double row of rubble-filled shipping containers, two deep had been placed along the roadside.

Another use for shipping containers became apparent to us when Rik and Lois took us to the city centre – well at least as far as we were allowed to go. Barriers erected by the authorities prevented access to all except those authorised to do so. Demolition was going on apace; fortunately, we were spared the sad spectacle of the cathedral with its collapsed tower which at the time of our visit was the subject of extremely emotional discussion as to whether the remains should be demolished or rebuilt. On the cleared sites, we visited prefabricated buildings which comprised the ever-useful shipping containers; some stacked above each other and some in a single storey. In most cases, the container framework had been retained, but the sides and ends had become windows or doors. This was a really imaginative way of providing quick replacement buildings.

Rik's fleet of cars was housed nearer Christchurch city centre and although these buildings had not suffered structurally, Rik's Jaguar was damaged by timber falling from a shelf. He was able to quickly repair the damage. Alongside a Singer saloon was the TDB, under a sheet. As we removed the cover, Rik found some damage to the roof where something must have fallen off a shelf during the tremors. Another job to tackle sometime.

Beyond the city boundary in a westerly direction is the Yaldhurst Museum. Here is a wonderful collection of bygone New Zealand transport. The best examples of cars, lorries and fire engines are under cover, but some really interesting relics lay scattered about in the adjoining paddock. Little had altered since my last visit, except that the vehicles outside had perhaps rotted a little more and tantalisingly I peered over a gate where the 'reserve stock' was located. Visitors were not permitted in this area, even though Rik applied his utmost charm to the staff. A Leyland lorry from the late twenties was the only vehicle I could identify; who knows what else lies buried there?

In the semi-open shed was TDB 6124. Although complete, it would require a great deal of work to make it presentable again and somehow, I feel that it will never happen. Yaldhurst is quite near to the centre of the most serious earthquake that occurred, yet there was no apparent damage at the museum.



On our final day, Rik took me to the farm of an old friend of his where yet another extensive collection of British cars was housed. The passing motorist would not be aware of the wonderful assembly of cars lying just over the hedge. The owner was mainly a Riley man and he told us that he would shortly be going to an auction where he hoped to expand his collection.

There was an extensive workshop where all restorations had been undertaken to an extremely high degree by the owner and his assistant. The latter was the only sullen individual I met during our stay in New Zealand. It transpired that this taciturn character was really a Brit from Burton-on-Trent!



*Restoration underway in the workshop.*



*Lanchester, Jaguar and Rolls Royce in the workshop*

Finally, I must mention the open day for spares sales from the clubhouse of the Veteran Car Club of Christchurch. It is difficult to imagine such an organisation as this in the UK, but as I said earlier, the Kiwis have a fascination for old vehicles and if they cannot source the spare part required; then they can easily make one. This country is not yet caught up in the health and safety culture; consequently, keeping old vehicles on the road is easier.

But back to the club house. This is a large building with an extensive yard on the outskirts of Christchurch and we were fortunate that our visit coincided with a spares selling day. It is all organised and run by club members. The yard is filled with old UK cars, and their component parts. It resembled our scrap yards of the fifties. Here stood a patient wife by the wreck of a pre-war Hillman, underneath which, her husband was cursing the obstinacy of some item that was obviously reluctant to be parted from its life-long friends in order to breathe life into another roadworthy example back at his home. But it was the club house-cum stores that held the real fascination. One bay was devoted to engines. If you wanted a 1923 Calthorpe engine, then this was where you would find one! Sections were devoted to electrical, suspension and so on – you name it and it was there.



One visitor asked for a 1934 Hupmobile cylinder head gasket and the knowledgeable character behind the counter pointed his assistant to a whole range of gaskets hanging on nails from a beam. *'Not that one'*, he said, *'that's a Packard gasket, and it's the next nail along.'*

And so it was time to leave this friendly country where nothing is too much trouble for the locals to make your stay an enjoyable and memorable one. We can certainly recommend it; be brave and make the trip. Driving is on the left and they all speak English and an excellent system of motels makes travelling easy, so what is stopping you?

One day later and slightly confused by jet-lag, we landed at Heathrow where suddenly, the days were cold and the nights were long and spring was just about to start. Was it really only yesterday we had been walking in a Christchurch park dodging the falling leaves of autumn and trying to identify a Hupmobile gasket from a Packard one?

Tom Robinson