



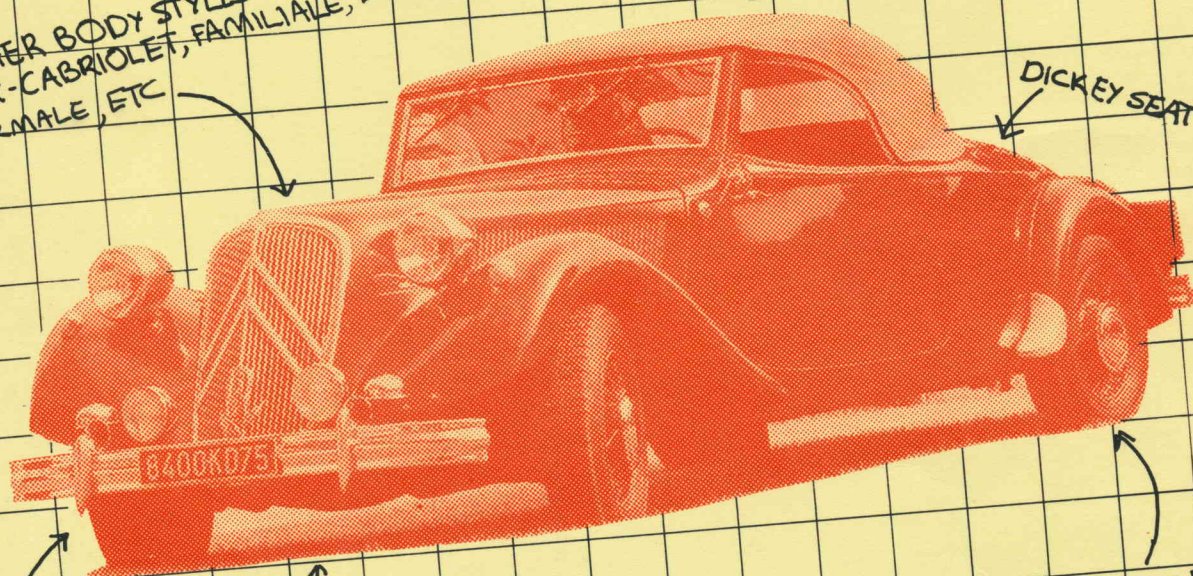
CITRACTION '84 CITROËN TRACTION AVANT 50TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

LA "TRACTION"

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FAUX-CABRIOLET, FAMILIALE, LEGERE
NORMALE, ETC

STYLING:
SIMPLE ELEGANT
LINES.

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SUSPENSION

MAY 1934 → 1956

CITRACTION 84
50th Anniversary
Traction Avant Rally



April 20-23, Ballarat Victoria

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We all have dreams, even if we don't always remember them in the morning. What do Citroen owners dream of on the eve of the half-century of Traction Avant Citroens?

A quick survey of CCOCA members (like the Editorial Sub-committee) revealed a fascinating range of fantasies, some of which were more suitable for magazines other than Front Drive.

We rejected the thought of following up these intriguing excursions into the realms of Art, Science and Literature respectively (guess who?) so as to extract the common element as a theme for this issue. What emerged was that two out of three typical CCOCA members dream of Cabriolets, Coupes or whatever (the other one likes VW's).

We hope you enjoy the dreams in the next few pages of the anniversary issue of Front Drive, we hope as many of you as possible enjoy Citraction '84, and we hope you all renew your memberships and enjoy another CCOCA year.

Bill Graham
Peter Fitzgerald
Peter Simmenauer

Whilst every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of information and advice in this magazine, and in replies to readers queries, neither the Citroen Classic Owners Club of Australia nor the officers and members thereof nor the authors accept any liability.

NEXT RALLIES:

MONDAY 26 MARCH - CCOCA ANNUAL DINNER - CAFE LUTECE - BYO

WEDNESDAY 28 MARCH - CCOCA AGM - NUNAWADING, 8.00 PM.

FRONT DRIVE DEADLINE: FRIDAY 20 APRIL, FOR MAY/JUNE ISSUE

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Annual Subscription: Full Member \$20.00

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CCOCA meetings are held on the last Wednesday of every month at 8.00 pm at the Coffee Shop Meeting Room of the Nunawading Civic Centre, Nunawading, east of Springvale Road.

COUPÉS DE GRACE

Within the ranks of Citroën enthusiasts (and even of lesser mortals), a fine automobile, especially a Citroën, is considered a stirring sight. This visual impact is greatly heightened if the car in question is one of the "Traction Avant" series, produced over the period 1934-1957.

These cars, with their advanced drive and suspension, obviously attract the attention of the mechanically minded. However, it is the jaunty, audacious rakishness of style which seems to so characterize the Tractions and cause them to stick in the memories of virtually all who have been fortunate enough to have seen one.

For some of course, the Tractions are memorable because of respect and shared experiences - the knowledge that the vehicle is essentially simple in its concepts (as are many good ideas) and rugged and reliable in its construction.

For many however, the "Traction attraction" is basically an emotional phenomenon - a thing of the heart and not the mind. This emotional attraction may easily reach the heights of irrational obsession when a susceptible individual is confronted with one of the rarest and sleekest of Traction models, a coupé or a cabriolet roadster (see separate notes on type names).

The perceptive writer Vance Packard noted in his book "The Hidden Persuaders" the special and seductive charms of the convertible or hard-top. Packard (no relation to the automakers as far as I know) considered these models as show-room sirens or mistress figures, which seduce the hapless motorist into the showroom where he, through financial or wifely pressure, usually ends up with the basic family sedan model. What the heck - a sale is a sale! But I'm sorry, I digress.

Origins: The history of the Traction coupés and cabriolets is to a large degree, the history of the Traction itself. Thus it is appropriate to consider these models in this the 50th year since Tractions were produced. The coupé and cabriolet body styles were of course part of the Citroën line well back in the pre-1934 Traction Arrière period (first coupé - 1919, first cabriolet - 1923).

The history of Andre Citroen himself is fairly well known, at least in broad detail. Born in 1878, son of a Dutch-Jewish diamond merchant in Paris, he was a student at the Polytechnique in 1898 and an engineering officer in the French army in 1900. He started his gear-wheel works in 1904 and joined the Mors motor car works in 1908. He

went to war in 1914 but soon returned to Paris to set up a large armament works on the old market garden site at Quai de Javel on the south bank of the Seine.

The factory at Quai de Javel was set up for mass production of artillery shells based on American lines, and at war's end, Citroen turned to motor car production under his own name to put this now surplus factory capacity to work.

His designs were basically simple and reliable rather than wildly innovative, and the key to his early success with them seems to be have been ease of mass production, good value for money with vehicles which were within the purchasing and operating budgets of a sufficiently large number of people. Many give credit to the inspiration provided by Henry Ford, the American mass producer of automobiles, and to the adoption of the Budd technique of all-metal monocoque construction. No doubt these factors were strongly assisted by Citroen's promotional flair and vigorous advertising techniques.

Perhaps equally or even more important to Citroen's later successes was his ability to gather about him people who could share his enthusiasm and help him to translate his ideas into vehicles of flair and innovation, coupled with performance and reliability. This was particularly true during the development of the Traction.

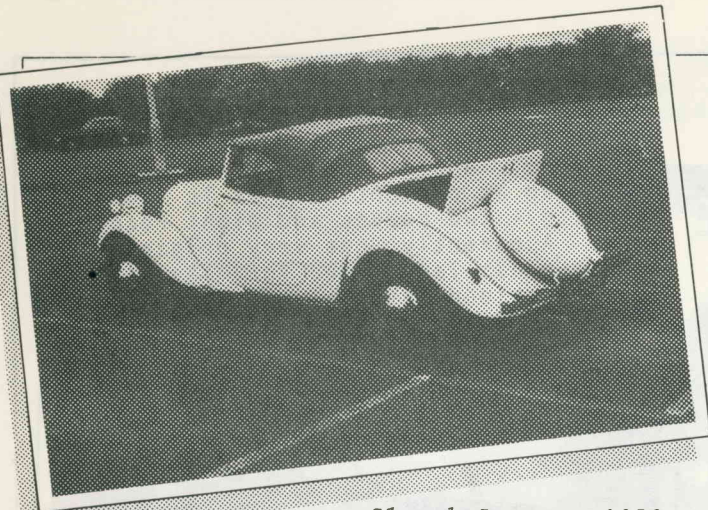
The most notable of his highly skilled collaborators, but by no means the only one, was Andre Lefebvre who is commonly regarded as the "father" of the Traction.

It is intriguing that the characteristics which Citroen fostered in the ranks of his supporters and employees have continued on to this day as the key to the company image and success, even though Citroen himself left the scene on his death in July 30, 1935.

Tragically, Andre Citroen's death came soon after the public release of the Traction and the purchase of his bankrupt company by Michelin. It is generally agreed that the dissipation of his resources during the development of the Traction caused Citroen's financial collapse. He was not to see the early problems of the Traction ironed out, and the car's universally acclaimed success, nor to see its innovative successors, still proudly bearing his name and displaying the symbol of his gear wheels.

Andre Lefebvre went on to become involved with developing the 2CV, the H van, the DS and many other projects. He died in 1963.

The mechanical details of the coupes



*Slough Legere, 1939
(Chas. Wallace, N.Z.)*

and cabriolets were identical to those of the corresponding sedans. Even the floor pan of the sedan was used without additional stiffening. The additional stress, coupled with the effects of rusting in the boxed side-members, made this model especially prone to structural failure. However the beauty of the two body styles is indisputable.

The origins of the mechanicals of the Traction, code named PV (Petite Voiture), seem fairly clear. The OHV wet-sleeve motor was designed by Maurice Sainturat, torsion bar suspension and material strength by Andre Julien, and Raoul Cuinet took charge of the bodywork with company stylists. The crucial constant-velocity joints of the drive-shafts were of double Hooke type from Glaenzer, following problems with those from Gregoire (Tracta) and surprisingly, with the subsequently very reliable American Rzeppa joints. Following very unsatisfactory trials with the Sensaud de Levaud automatic box, a three-speed manual box was prepared post-haste by Camusat to meet "Le Patron's" launch deadline, but it too remained a weak point of the whole design. From 1937, featured light-weight Michelin Pilote wheels.

The identity of the stylist for the coupes and cabriolets has been in dispute. Some suggest Henri Chapron, but it appears that Jean Daninos of the company body section prepared the design of a two-place cabriolet after giving up the idea of a four-place style because of strength problems. The coupe design appears to have come from Flaminio Bertoni, also a Citroen stylist. Again, a four-place coupe or "coach" was considered but abandoned. Perhaps in deference to the four-place concept, both cars featured "spiders" (dicky seats) to carry two more in good weather. The bigger (11A) coupes had a three-seat bench in front and could have two side-facing small folding seats behind the bench for children. Fitting the then unupholstered and separate boot with optional seats produced a seven-seat coupe (wow!)

The number of coupes built is not known exactly. Olivier de Serres notes that coupes and cabriolets were made both in Slough and Paris, while at Forest in Brussels, some cabriolets only were produced. Characteristically the Slough models had leather seats and wooden dashboards.

The total production of cabriolets produced in the period 1934-39 was over 4,000. The number of coupes produced was about 700. The cabriolets surviving are about 390 (less than 10%), plus about 20 special bodied versions. The more robust coupes fared better, with about 90 surviving (13%), including four re-done as six-cylinders. In France, cabriolets continued up to 1939 in 7C, 11BL and 11B versions. Coupe production stopped in 1938. In Britain, only the 7C (Light 12) and 11L (Light 15) versions were made. However, a Big 15 roadster was announced in the British line-up for 1940, and at least one survives - see separate note.

Several "Six-cylinder roadsters" exist, though not all are genuine (see above). Perhaps as few as five genuine six-cylinder bodies were produced in 1939. Only one which is considered to be genuine exists today, at Vernon near Paris - see separate note.

Cabriolets and coupes were included in the model line of the fabulous V-8 22CV when it was displayed at Paris and Brussels in 1934. None are known to survive, though a cabriolet 22CV is claimed to exist in the United States. Possibly this refers to a 15-6 cabriolet in Milwaukee which may be genuine.



*Langenthal Normale
(Louis Stevenin, Switz.)*

The Traction was a valued starting point for others who wanted to produce their own versions, including cabriolets and coupes. The incentive became even greater when the supply of factory-built examples dried up after World War II. These modifiers used various combinations of Traction power units and body parts, and overall, were quite numerous.

Lucien Rosengart released his pretty "Supertraction" at the Paris Motor Show in 1938, based on his own chassis and

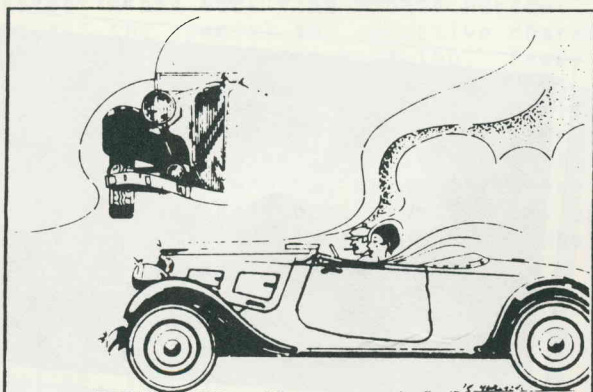
and body, with the 11CV power unit. It was available as a four-seat "coach" or hard-top, as a cabriolet and as a four-door sedan. Other producers of Traction derivatives as coupes and cabriolets were Georges Irat, Deutsch & Bonnet, Figoni et Falaschi, ACB, etc.

An interesting group of Traction modifiers appeared in Switzerland in the early 1950's, and the striking surviving examples of their work have an enthusiastic following - see note from Dieter Ackerknecht.

These cars use considerable floor strengthening in the four-seat cabriolets, as anticipated by Citroen designers.

A particularly striking home-built cabriolet was produced from a Light 15 by C.D. Walters in the U.K. in 1948. Jack Weaver, now in Melbourne, built a coupe from a sedan - see Max Poole's letter. The car is still on the road in New Zealand. A second such coupe was destroyed by fire in Melbourne before Jack could complete it.

It would appear that a small number of Traction coupes and possibly cabriolets did come to Australia. However, few details exist, and many people still hope to find one. The Roberts coupe, which seems to be a genuine "Australian" example, is still to be fully restored, and was recently purchased by Les Francis in Sydney. The maroon 7CV coupe of the late Mrs Flora Smith in New Zealand is now owned by John Vanechop, also in Sydney.



**découvrez le charme désuet et rarissime
de rouler en « cabriolet traction »...**

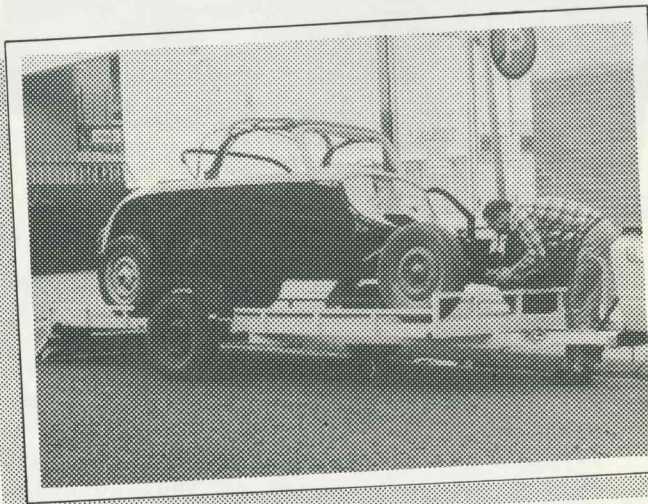
CABRIOLET T.A. voiture finie 71.530 F
nous vous proposons également la transformation
à la carte de votre propre berline T.A. en cabriolet
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New Zealand seems to have fared better in both original numbers and survivors. Again, the exact number is not known at present, but it is thought to be 10 - two coupes and eight roadsters. Apparently, one very original roadster has languished for many years in an Auckland automotive garage.



*Langenthal Legere
(John Groen, S. Africa)*

Obviously, the surviving Traction coupes and cabriolets around the world will be treated with tender loving care. Hopefully, those which are at present in "ill-health" will be lovingly and thoughtfully restored and brought back onto the road. For example, Olivier de Serres describes how a rare but decrepit coupe might be salvaged, using the front and undertray of a sound but more common sedan - see separate note.

Another way to go is to purchase a fibre-glass roadster conversion kit from France and attach it to a cut-down sedan. It is certainly intriguing that here in 1984, 50 years after the Traction's birth, the demand for such a kit still exists.

Although the production of cabriolets was effectively killed off around the world about ten or so years ago by crash-test requirements, public demand and relaxed regulations have permitted cabriolets to creep back into many manufacturer's catalogues, as factory or post-production versions. PSA, the Citroen parent company, has a cabrio version of the Talbot Samba, for example.

Might we look forward to cabriolet and coupe BX's and the like, as worthy successors to their rare Traction ancestors over the next 50 years?

Bill Graham.

Footnote: Information above is taken from several sources, but particular tanks are owed to Fred Annels and Olivier de Serres. Olivier's forthcoming book on the Traction should add to and up-date this information considerably.

LA

7

A TRACTION AVANT

résoud les grands problèmes
de l'automobile

L'ÉCONOMIE...
d'achat et de consommation
(9 litres aux 100 kilomètres).

LA SÉCURITÉ...
par l'abaissement du centre de
gravité et l'emploi de la carrosse-
rie "Monocoque" sans châssis.

LA VITESSE...
100 kilomètres à l'heure.

L'AGRÉMENT DE CONDUITE...
par une tenue de route impec-
cable, même dans les virages pris
à grande vitesse.

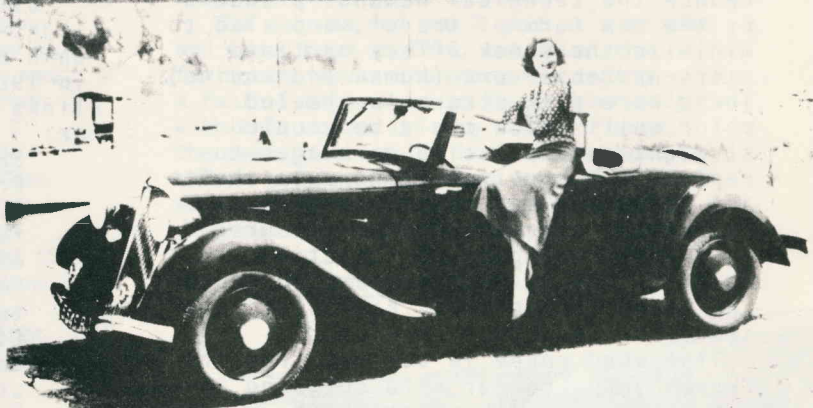
LA DOUCEUR DE SUSPENSION...
par la suppression des ressorts à
lames et leur remplacement par
des barres de torsion plus souples
et plus solides.

LA BEAUTÉ DES LIGNES...
par l'aérodynamisme intégral de
la carrosserie.

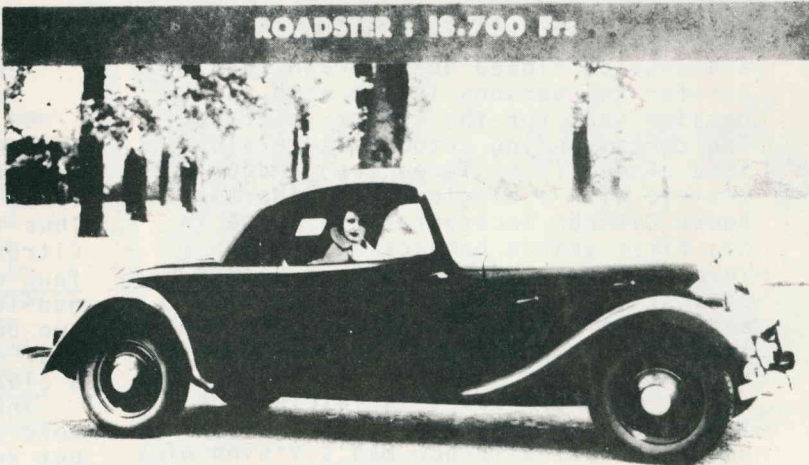
Les 3 modèles "7" se font
(moyennant supplément)
en TYPE SPORT
moteur plus puissant
115 A L'HEURE



BERLINE : 17.700 Frs



ROADSTER : 18.700 Frs



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Grand Prix au Concours d'Élégance de Paris (15 Juin 1934)

PLUS DE CINQ MILLE "7" ROULENT DÉJÀ, RAPIDES, CONFORTABLES,
SUR TOUTES LES ROUTES DU MONDE

PRODUCTION ACTUELLE : 250 VOITURES "7" PAR JOUR

CITROËN

COUPÉ/CABRIOLET/WHATEVER

What's in a name? If you're talking about types of motor cars, there can be quite a lot. Quite a lot of confusion, that is!

Since many early automobiles ("self movers") were thinly disguised adaptations of their horse-drawn predecessors, it follows that many descriptive terms should have carried over from the earlier period. This appears to be especially true for those parts of the automobile which, initially at least, changed little in the transition.

The general coachwork of early automobiles was often adapted straight across in both appearance and terminology, no doubt thereby serving to reduce the technical demands produced by the new form of travel, and also to minimize the shock effect on timid users and observers (human and equine). There were even steerable wheeled motor units which could be coupled straight onto existing carriages to replace the previous front axle/shafts and horse (making them literally "horseless carriages" and of course very early examples of "traction avant"). Let us look in particular at the words "coupé" and "cabriolet" and see if we can clear them up.

The word coupé is derived from the French verb, couper = to cut, and probably is an abbreviation of carrosse coupé, literally a cut-off coach. Originally, it would have been a 4-wheeled closed horse-drawn carriage for two persons inside, with an outside seat for the driver in front. The corresponding automobile version is a closed (i.e. fixed top) 2-door vehicle with a single seat compartment. André Citroën incorporated a coupé in his first year's production in the form of "Le Coupé Docteur", a rather upright 3-seater providing dignified and secure transport for the man with the little black bag as he visited his patients.

The word cabriolet is fascinating in its derivation, and illustrates rather beautifully how Man's vision of the beauties of nature were to become incorporated into the ideas of the beauty he saw in the things which he made himself.

Cabriolet and the many related words can be traced back to the Latin word for goat (truly!) i.e. capra, as in Isle of Capri (= Isle of Goats). Think of young goats at play - sure-footed, joyful, gamboling, springing from rock to rock with utter confidence and no sense of danger. Hence we have words such as caper (= dance, prank), capricious (= unpredictable), capriole (cabriole) (= a gymnastic manœuvre, also the delicate compound curved leg of a fine chair (as in the

foreleg of a capering animal)).

Thus cabriolet (the diminutive of cabriole) will refer to something small which by its appearance and motion, will suggest a skipping lightness. Hence a cabriolet was originally a light 2-wheeled one-horse carriage with a single seat, a folding leather hood, a large rigid apron, graceful upward curving shafts, and usually with a rear platform for a groom. The automobile equivalent generally resembles a coupé in appearance and capacity but with a folding top, i.e. it is a "convertible coupé". Cabriolet side windows are wind-up.

Citroën captured perfectly the light-hearted spirit of the cabriolet when he introduced it to his line-up in 1923, and clearly appreciated its links with its horse-drawn predecessor:

"5HP Cabriolet:

Practical and light, the cabriolet of our fathers came into fashion with the elegant elite of the post-Directory period. For modern needs, people of good taste give their votes to the Citroën 5HP Cabriolet.

Rapid, flexible, practical, of strong construction and needing minimum maintenance, ready at all hours; for the man of action, it is the faithful helper in his business, and companion for his leisure."

• So the terms coupé and cabriolet entered automotive and Citroën terminology, though the words became modified by Citroën and other users. Thus for some strange reason, the Citroën coupé also became known as a faux-cabriolet (literally a false or non-lowering cabriolet). Where the two-door coupé has acquired a further rear seat it is more properly called a club coupé (probably U.S.).

The English seem happy with the word coupé (despite its French origin) but don't appear to have accepted cabriolet. Thus the English call the cabriolet a roadster (also in U.S. and (rarely) in France) or drop-head coupé. (So as to leave no doubt, and for "symmetry", they often call the coupé a fixed head coupé!).

In Europe, especially in Germany, the term cabriolet (or cabrio) came to embrace vehicles with more than one row of seats (as in the Langenthal Traction conversions). The French, looking for linguistic purity in this case, prefer décapotable ("removable hood") to describe these larger cabriolets (though not always!). The Americans call such machines convertibles when they have wind-up windows.

A soft top on a 4-door produces a tourer, while if top and rear (but not the sides) of the hood are removable, one has a découvrable ("uncoverable"). If the rear only of the hood can be lowered, one has a landaulet, and if the front only can be lowered, one has a coupé de ville (town car). An American hard-top convertible generally looks like a convertible but isn't!

And so it goes, with numerous variations. At least I hope to have cleared up cabriolets and coupés. In Australia, Citroëns in these body styles are so rare that we will gladly take them, no matter what anyone may choose to call them!

Bill Graham.

1940 BIG 15 ROADSTER

"Mike" Couper relates the story of his Traction ...

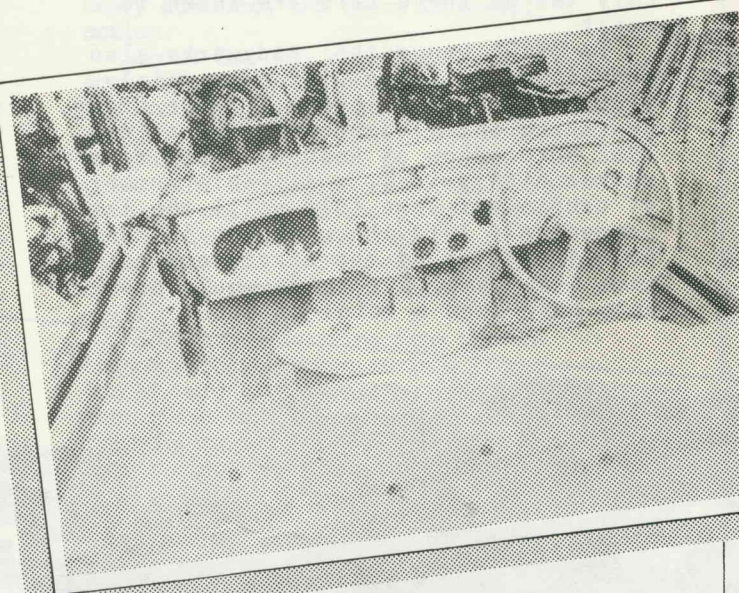
During October 1940, I was stationed in Lincolnshire and one day my manager wrote to me to say a man was after BGH 23 and had a 1940 Citroen coupe for part exchange. Could I get leave and do a deal? The man turned out to be Peter Whalley (who later used Motor Sport correspondence columns to throw out various challenges!), his Colonel refused to let junior officers use a car (some colonels were hell!) and if he had to store a car for the war it might just as well be something that would give him a lot of fun later on. Leave I got - the excuse of seeing accountants about income tax generally worked - and saying to myself, surely I don't want a Citroen, I arrived in St. Albans.

I fell for the Citroen right away and fixed up an exchange which later proved a very good one. The Citroen was definitely of 1940 series and possibly the only one of its kind in the country - a drophead coupe on the long "Big 15" chassis of 10 ft. 1½ ins. and fitted with what Slough called De Luxe equipment. I have never seen another one like it and as long as petrol rationing lasted and sometimes on leave even when it didn't, I had a very happy time with this car. I kept it until June, 1947, doing 18,933 miles, though I very rarely managed to make a silent gear-change from second to first when on the move. Once, being on a course at Feltham, I left the Citroen at Slough for a three-day check and on getting the car back got a speedometer reading of 88 mph. Unfortunately this was found to be between 10 per cent. and 12 per cent. fast, but nevertheless I think the car was good for 80 mph. Front tyres lasted for 10,000 miles and by the time they had done more mileage on the rear wheels a complete set saw about 14,000 miles. I never had anxious moments with the front-wheel-drive and even if it was necessary to take

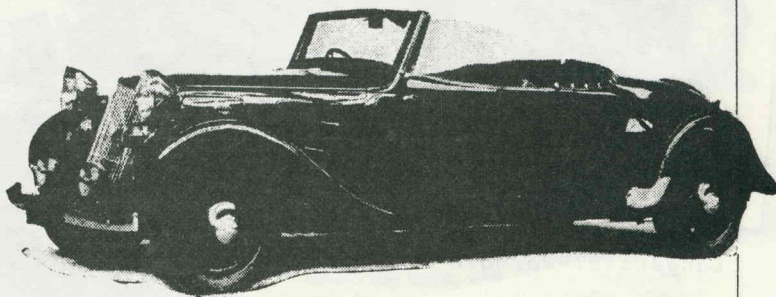
the foot off the throttle when going into fast bends nothing untoward ever happened that was at all odd.

The car was red and I gave it a repaint and a new hood in 1946, but found that a few months later the paint was fading - a fault I believe to be found frequently with this colour on many makes of cars. The rear panel of the hood was detachable and on hot days with this removed it was an ideal way to travel. (Other makers of drophead coupes please copy.)

From Motor Sport April 1951, p.167.



Fred Annells' Roadster under restoration



SWISS CABRIOLET BODY TYPES

Original cabriolets and coupes with two inside seats were only built in France by Citroen itself, using as a basis Traction models from 1934 to the Second World War (1940). It would be less well-known that special bodies for the Traction Avants were also built in Switzerland.

Early in the 1950's, there appeared a general demand for cabriolet models in Switzerland. Some of the well-known larger body builders began to fit special bodies on various foreign cars, particularly modifying them to coupes or cabriolets. It should be remembered that Switzerland at that time had been without a car manufacturer for some time. Only trucks like Saurer, Berna and FBW were being built.

In 1948, Worblauten Bodyworks began the first modification of Citroen 15-6 sedans to cabriolets. Earlier, in 1939, an 11BL was modified. At the Geneva Motor Show of 1949, Fritz Rams-eir presented his 15-6 cabriolet, with four inside seats and four side windows. He had received several orders by the end of the show, and eventually modified a total of 16 Tractions. Today, only two of these cars are known to exist.

In 1950, Langenthal Bodyworks also commenced modifying Citroens, mainly 11B's, 11BL's and 15-6's. Fritz Grogg presented one 11B and one 11BL at the 1952 Motor Show at Geneva. Despite the rather high prices, a sizeable number of cabriolets were sold until the last Langenthals left the workshop in 1952-53. The files of the exact records have been lost, but there would probably have been a total of about 50

cars, most being produced in 1951. To date, 13 Langenthals have been located, including one in South Africa, but not all are roadworthy or restored.

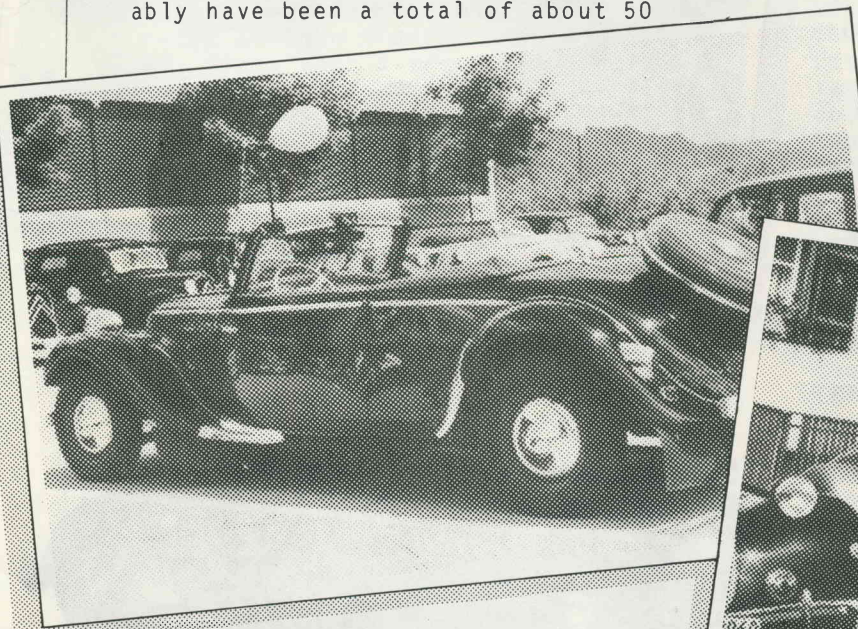
Finally, Beutler Bodyworks produced a single coupe based on the 15-6 in 1953. It was a very elegant car which hardly revealed its Traction origins. This car disappeared only a few years ago.

At the International Traction meeting in Orbe in Switzerland in 1977, Rene Mauron and I decided to document the Swiss Traction-bodied cars and survey those still in existence. In August 1977, M. Mauron organised the first Langenthal meeting in western Switzerland. At this occasion, the "Amicale Citroen Traction Cabriolet et Coupe Carrosserie Suisse" (Friends of the Swiss-bodied Citroen Traction Cabriolets and Coupes) was founded. Each owner received a description of each of the cars still existing. Also, the three body builders were asked to supply further information, particularly technical details, as far as was possible. At an appropriate time, it is intended to issue a small report. If you are aware of any Tractions with Swiss bodies, would you please let us know.

Dieter Ackerknecht (Trans. Irwin Weinmann).

Contact: D Ackerknecht, Postfach 304, CH-8053, Zurich, or:

R Mauron, Entre-2-Rivieres, CH-2114, Fleurier.



Langenthal Normale



Langenthal Legere

The AUTOCAR ROAD TESTS

Owing to the fact that the Citroen known in this country is the result of Anglo-French combination, it remains as one of the very few cars of basically foreign extraction that is still available in any numbers to buyers here. In view of the position of economic reciprocity prevailing between France and Great Britain, and because the whole building up of the car concerned (from major components imported from France), down to its final finishing and equipment, represents a considerable proportion of British labour as well as materials, the Citroen occupies a special place at the moment and does not have to be regarded as simply a "foreign car".

Interest has been added to this particular test of the Light Fifteen roadster model, first by the fact that in the past only saloon models have been tried, and, secondly, because the car in question was taken over brand-new from the Slough factory and the running-in process carried out prior to the performance figures being recorded and final opinions formed.

The roadster is a type that in some respects is essentially a Continental style of body. It is neither strictly an ordinary open two-seater with hood nor a drop-head coupe. With its winding glass windows in the doors it is more substantial than the former, yet less elaborate than the latter.

It opens up as an admirable fresh-air car for settled fine-weather use, and for the rest of the time provides satisfactory all-weather protection for the inside seats. For general purposes it is really only a two-seater; there is a roomy external dickey seat, comfortably upholstered, but carrying the usual disadvantages of such a seat. Except for the finest weather, when passengers could travel there, the space concerned is chiefly useful for luggage. When the action of the various folding arms has been grasped, it is not difficult to put the hood up and down, and it has the merit of not flapping even in quite a high wind.

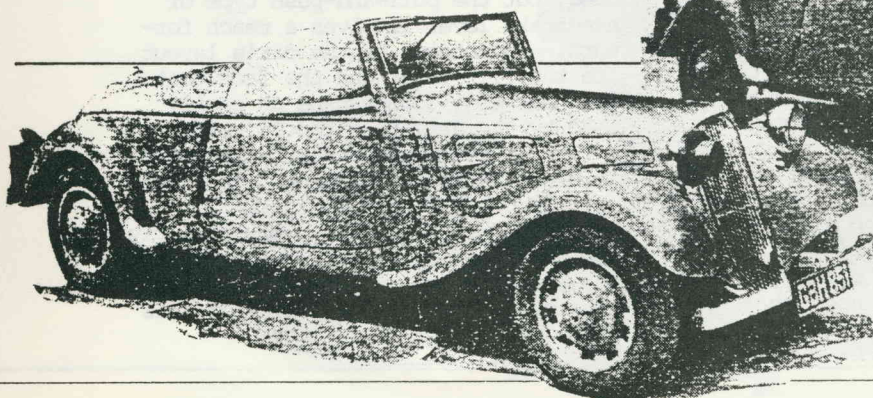
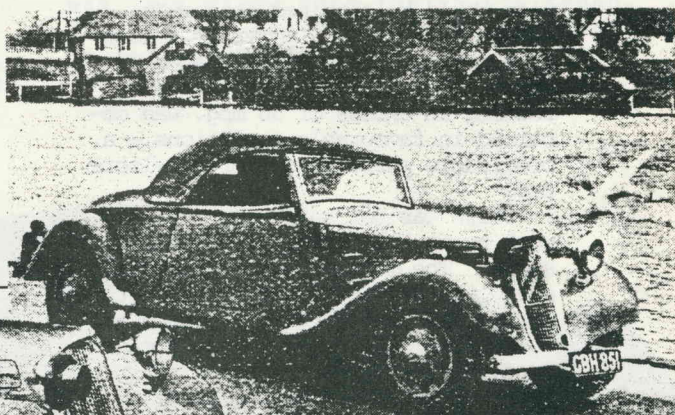
In appearance this car is appealing, the lines being smart, and in

general "feel" on the road as well as in performance it has much of the sports machine about it. This impression is largely contributed to by the tautness of the special torsion-bar suspension that has been a feature of the front-wheel-drive Citroen for several years. The front wheels are independently sprung. An outstanding suggestion of safety is afforded, and few, if any, cars can be cornered faster within their limits if a driver's tastes lie in that direction.

It would be possible to handle the machine for a considerable time and not realise that the drive is to the front wheels. As deliberate tests have shown, no difficulty arises within the performance available according to whether corners are taken pulling or on the overrun, irrespective of whether the roads are wet or dry. One can cut the throttle in or out with impunity. The present - f.w.d. Citroen will restart on any gradients that the majority of owners are likely to encounter. There is no abnormal pull on the steering accountable to the drive; also, it is not noticeably heavy steering, and there is caster action.

Almost the only clue for those not acquainted with the design would be the unconventional gear lever, projecting through the instrument board and working vertically in an open gate. The connection from this lever runs, of course, to the front of the power unit, where the gear box is situated. The synchromesh provided on top and second gears works very well.

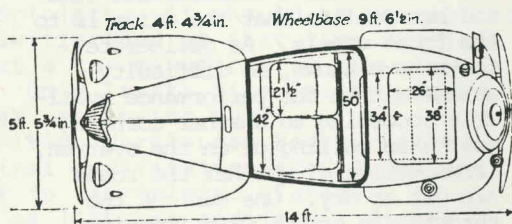
Advantages deriving from the unorthodox construction include reduction of weight. It will be remembered that there is no separate chassis frame, integral or unitary welded-up construction being employed, and, as



The Citroen closed and open. In the open position an envelope neatly encloses the hood, and the door windows can be used to check draught. The unusual type of Michelin broad-base steel wheel will be noticed. They carry low-pressure tyres.

this design was introduced some six years ago, it was one of the earliest examples of the practice now increasingly adopted.

The favourable power-to-weight ratio results in lively acceleration, including a brisk top gear pick-up in spite of the quite high ratio of 4.3:1. This, in turn, makes for ease of running at the higher speeds. The natural rate on a main-road journey is around 50 mph., which the car holds with an entire absence of effort, having always the reserve to allow the speed to be increased usefully, and taking the gradients with little reduction in speed.



As one moves off from rest there is a highly satisfactory impression of liveliness even with moderate use of first and second gears in the style that commends itself at the moment for reasons of economy, and within obvious limits the faster the Citroen is driven the better it runs.

It would be hard, indeed impossible, to label the engine as being a four-cylinder - and a fairly large four - anywhere between 30 mph. and the maximum. At lower speeds it is not free from a suggestion of snatch, and at all events as far as the setting of this particular car was concerned, 20 mph. on top gear was just about the lowest speed pleasantly maintained without changing down.

Under acceleration there was slight pinking, but never enough to be disturbing. Consumption tests were made at various speeds and over different types of roads. Once again it was established that better results could be obtained at speeds around 50 mph. if a moderate amount of coasting were used than at a steady 30 mph., and more than one reading in excess of 30 mpg. was obtained in favourable conditions - a creditable performance for a 2-litre car.

There was not sufficient room to work up to the proper timed maximum speed. The mileage covered at this stage was still insufficient for the car as a whole to be in the freest condition. The highest speedometer reading reached was 74, the instrument having an optimistic error of slightly less than 5.5 mph at 70; the discrepancy ranged between 4 and 5 mph. right down to 10.

Even the more limited running allowed by present circumstances gives

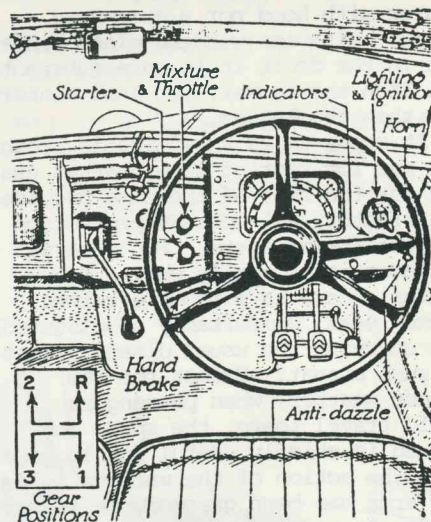
a clear idea of the average speed capabilities on long journeys of pre-war type. The steady speed which can be held largely irrespective of bends is an important factor in this. Tyre scream does not occur when cornering fast providing that the pressures are kept well up.

It is a car which gives the driver the feeling of being closely in touch with the control. The handling is not in the least vague. The steering is quite high-g geared, slightly less than $2\frac{1}{2}$ turns of the wheel being necessary from lock to lock, and small movements of the wheel count.

Again, the Lockheed hydraulic braking system is extremely good. A dead-straight and very rapid emergency pull-up can be made without applying heavy pedal pressure, and for general use the braking effect obtained is exceptionally smooth and well graduated.

Even when a pull-up has been left a little late the car can be brought up with certainty "on the dotted line". The pedals are unusual in being of what may be called piano type as opposed to the normal forward pushing design. It is desirable to depress the clutch fully for quiet engagement of first gear when starting.

The Autocar



The driver sits well up to the wheel, receiving firm support from the separate type of seat. The gear lever is more convenient than might be supposed, but the pull-and-push type of handbrake lever involves a reach forward. Advantages of the car's layout are the flat floor and the fact that the near-side door can be as easily used by the driver as the off-side.

The Citroen torsion-bar suspension is exceptionally efficient. That this springing makes all road surfaces, apart from the extreme, seem of nearly the same quality is very much part of the steady, easy swinging along that is a predominating impression of this

car's travel. Wavy roads, setts, level crossings, none of them causes shock. Few suspensions as well combine stability with comfort.

General arrangement, finish and equipment conform to the British pattern for reasons mentioned at the outset. The 1940 model, which this roadster represents, has an attractive wood polished instrument board, and the leather upholstery is of obviously

good quality. Satisfactory access is given to the engine by a normally hinged bonnet. Instant starting from cold is obtained.

A simple form of interior heater is fitted, a conduit the mouth of which can be closed and opened from inside the car leading warm air from the radiator. The arrangement of horn and traffic indicators switch on a steering column arm is very convenient.

Autocar, May 10th, 1940. Pp. 503-504.

DATA FOR THE DRIVER (Wartime Test on Pool Petrol.)

10-5-40

CITROEN LIGHT FIFTEEN ROADSTER.

PRICE, with two-four-seater roadster body £208. Tax, £18 15s.

RATING: 15.08 h.p., four cylinders, o.h.v., 78 x 100 mm., 1,911 c.c.

WEIGHT, without passengers, 21 cwt. 3 qr. 3 lb. **LB. PER C.C.**: 1.23.

TYRE SIZE: 165 x 400 on bolt-on pressed-steel wheels.

LIGHTING SET: 12-volt. Automatic voltage control.

TANK CAPACITY: 9 gallons; approx. fuel consumption, 25-29 m.p.g.

TURNING CIRCLE: (L. and R.): 40ft. **GROUND CLEARANCE**: 7in.

ACCELERATION

Overall gear	From steady m.p.h. of			
	10 to 30	20 to 40	30 to 50	40 to 50
4.30 to 1	11.1 sec.	11.8 sec.	14.2 sec.	
7.30 to 1	0.5 sec.	8.8 sec.		
13.10 to 1	—	—	—	—

From rest to 30 m.p.h. through gears

To 50 m.p.h. through gears 7.3 sec.

To 60 m.p.h. through gears 19.6 sec.

To 70 m.p.h. through gears 34.9 sec.

* Insufficient timing run available.

SPEED

Mean maximum timed speed		m.p.h.
over 1/4 mile	...	—
Best timed speed over 1/4 mile	...	—
Speeds attainable on indirect gears (normal and maximum)		
1st	...	15-26
2nd	...	30-48

BRAKE TEST: Mean stopping distance from 30 m.p.h. (dry concrete), 33.5ft.

WEATHER: Dry, warm; wind light, S.W.

Performance figures for acceleration are the means of several runs in opposite directions, with two up.

(Latest model described in "The Autocar" of August 18th, 1939.)

DATA FOR THE DRIVER (Wartime Test on Pool Petrol.)

1940-41

CITROEN LIGHT FIFTEEN ROADSTER

PRICE, with two-four-seater roadster body £208. Tax, £18 15s.

RATING: 15.08 h.p., four cylinders, o.h.v., 78 x 100 mm., 1,911 c.c.

WEIGHT, without passengers, 21 cwt. 3 qr. 3 lb. LB. PER C.C.: 1.23.

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ACCELERATION

Overall gear ratios	From steady m.p.h. of
	10 to 30 20 to 40 30 to 50
4.30 to 1	11.1 sec. 11.8 sec. 14.2 sec.
7.30 to 1	0.5 sec. 8.8 sec.
13.10 to 1	
From rest to 30 m.p.h. through gears	7.3 sec.
To 50 m.p.h. through gears	19.6 sec.
To 60 m.p.h. through gears	34.9 sec.

SPEED

Mean maximum timed speed over 1/4 mile	m.p.h.
Best timed speed over 1/4 mile	—
Speeds attainable on indirect gears (normal and maximum)	
1st	15-26
2nd	30-48

* Insufficient timing run available.

BRAKE TEST: Mean stopping distance from 30 m.p.h. (dry concrete), 33.5ft.

WEATHER: Dry, warm; wind light, S.W.

Performance figures for acceleration are the means of several runs in opposite directions, with two up.

(Latest model described in "The Autocar" of August 18th, 1939.)

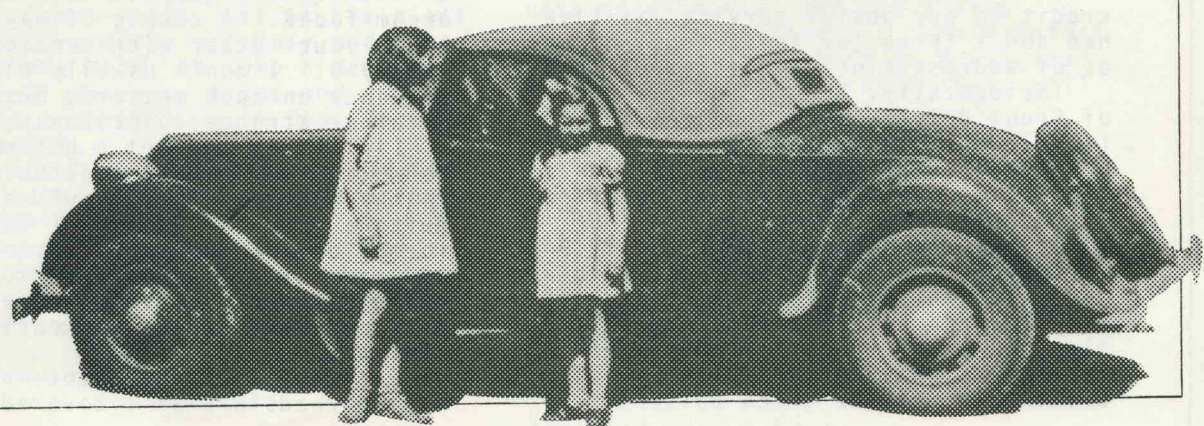
SIX CYLINDER CABRIOLET

M. Denys Joannon is the Citroën agent at Vernon (near Paris). He is engrossed in the marque, as one in an order, by his love of the 15-six. He is an undeterable collector who seeks items rare or of exceptional quality. M. Joannon possesses the only true cabriolet 15 known today. He discovered it in Paris in March, 1966. It was standing in front of "The Dome". Despite all his efforts, he could not buy it. It was not for sale. Six months later, he rediscovered the cabriolet through a small advertisement in "Automobile Action". This time, it was for sale for 6000 F (about \$1000). The owner, a Swiss, assured him that it had belonged to Madame Michelin.

Automobile historians claim that

only five cabriolet 15 bodies were built. Three had been assembled before the war, and two had been hauled into a Citroën basement in Rue d'Auteuil before vanishing. Other cabriolet 15s are false, having been made up from 11 large (Normale) cabriolets and the fronts of 15-six sedans.

(Robert Puiseux, son-in-law of Edouard Michelin, obtained a 15-six cabriolet from Citroën via Pierre Boulanger in 1946. He noted that it was less rigid than the 15-six sedan. The car was destroyed in an accident in October, 1947.)



RESTORING A COUPÉ

Source: Olivier de Serres in *Javel*

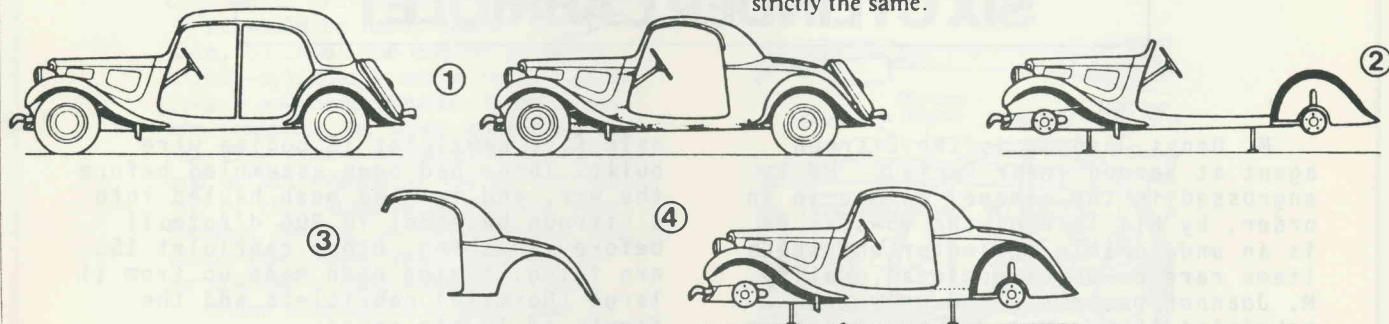
A fixed-head coupé, sound in mind and body doesn't present any more problems than a saloon to restore. However, although more solid than the drop-head coupé, it hasn't the same rigidity as the saloon at all, as the rear end has a slight overhang. It is better then to be very wary at the level of the lower body members. It isn't a waste of time to open them up so as to weld in a stiffener, as well as to verify the condition of the soldering on the rear part of the blister. But when an enthusiast decides to attack the restoration of a sadly neglected fixed-head coupé the situation is very different. Collectors have sometimes discovered wrecks slowly decomposing in the nettles, sometimes just the body-work lacking all its organs. What to do? The situation isn't desperate, there are two solutions. The first consists of rebuilding the car bit by bit, scrap of sheet-metal by scrap of sheet-metal. Unfortunately the body in question can be so eaten away by corrosion that the work is impossible. In this case there is the second solution, which consists of reconstructing a car with the aid of basic materials drawn from a saloon. Here, and it isn't always the most simple solution, it is indispensable to obtain a saloon of the same type as the fixed-

head coupé, which must be dismantled, though many details vary from year to year at the level of the sheet-metal work and the body-shell rigidity lines.

Afterwards we proceed as in the diagram

- 1) Prepare the two vehicles by dismantling all the main elements: doors, wings, wheels, etc.
- 2) Cut the saloon at half the height of the windscreen pillars, cut the base of the center pillar and clear the rear around the wheel-arch and at the level of the skirting.
- 3) After having very carefully taken the dimensions and clearances of the trunnions previously prepared, cut the body-shell of the fixed-head coupé at the same level as the windscreen pillars, then the rear panel from the door just to the wing, then from the wheel-arch and along the skirting.
- 4) It only leaves the problem of welding the two parts together! But be careful: in theory this operation appears childish, but it is in reality a delicate job which requires a great deal of care and most of all good welding experience.

The rest of the restoration doesn't present any particular problems in relation to the saloons, since the body elements at the front, wings and the mechanical parts are strictly the same.



LETTERS

Dear Bill,

I was most intrigued to receive your very interesting letter which found me on January 10th. All credit to our postal service, as I've had about three (or is it four) changes of address since my letter of 1978.

Incidentally, thanks for the copy of *Front Drive* - very good reading (love those T-shirt designs). I can't believe it's as long ago as 1978 that I wrote to Kym - give him my regards if you're still in contact.

I like the sound of your Family 9 - virtually or probably extinct in this country. Which reminds me, I had a very vivid dream just recently that Alan, my younger brother and I were in Rotorua when we saw drive by, of all things, a lime green coloured

Family 9. Not having ever seen such a beast at close quarters, we set off on foot to get a closer look, but of course we never did find it and the dream faded. A couple of days later, I got your letter with mention of your Family 9! I don't usually place much credence on such matters, but it was a rather strange coincidence, I thought.

I will try and get a bit more information and photos together for you in the not too distant future - I have quite a good collection of Citroen information and memorabilia stored hither and yon. I will endeavour to obtain the old photo albums and negatives and pick out what's most appropriate for your needs.

I cannot tell you a lot more about my own roadster, as I covered it pretty

thoroughly in my 1978 letter to Kym. However if there's anything else about it you want to know, or if you want some more photos, just ask. In fact I will try and get a few more colour shots with the hood both up and down.

I'll try and answer your questions in the order you asked them.

Yes, I know Jack Weaver well - he is indeed a Kiwi and is a good friend of my brother Roy (1972 DS21 and GS Wagon - both LHD). Yes, Roy runs his own business doing Citroen serviceing, though mainly on D's, GS's, CX's etc. No, that is not Jack Weaver in that photo (F.D. 1978) but a chap named John Brook whom I just recently met after about 15 years - he owned the coupe in the photo, a 1938 (12 hp I think). Jack's coupe was a cut-down saloon which is the one which Ernie Sklenars now owns. When you see this car beside a factory coupe there is quite a lot of difference, although if seen alone, it is a pretty fair imitation. Not as pretty as a genuine factory coupe though.

A giveaway is that the factory car doors had a rake forward effect at the hinge post area whereas the saloons were perpendicular.

From what I can remember about Jack's car, it came into the hands of Peter Akroyd of Rotorua who raced it with some success in the early to mid-sixties. Peter had dropped in a DS19 motor and I'm pretty sure a four-speed ERSA gearbox as well. (A pirate-made conversion - very popular in France during the Traction's reign.)

The car had, I believe, not only been cut down, but had also been cut longitudinally - lowered through the bonnet line, cabin and boot area. I do have a photo of it racing, and will get it for you if I can.

There are a couple of places doing ID conversions on a "to-order" basis. One is Phil Jones, a long-time Traction enthusiast of Papatoetoe, and the other is a veritable wizard named Rod Gilbert of Hamilton. Nothing appears to be impossible to Rod. His masterpiece is a Citroen Six that he has fitted with - wait for it - hydropneumatic suspension all round plus DS gear change and disc brakes. It also runs 15 inch wheels (wire) and 180 x 380 XAS Michelins, D size, also power steering. When I was last at his place some months back, he was busy modifying a L15 for his wife, to take a Renault 16 motor, GS gearbox, discs and a Renault R4 push/pull (a la Deux Chevaux) gear selector.

As far as I know, Shorter's roadster is still gathering dust somewhere in their establishment.

These days, I'm running a '73 Renault R16TS, having had it since I sold my ID, R4 and R6. I have decided that I will probably go back to a Cit. - hopefully a DS21 Pallas or D Super 5. Not that there's anything wrong with

the Renault (a poor man's Citroen I'd say) - they ride nicely, handle in true Cit. style, have very comfortable seating and probably a smoother and freer-revving motor coupled with a really nice column change, though no better than Citroen. It took me about ten years to get to like the look of them, but then again, some people take that long to make up their minds about a D - and of course, some never do!

I'm still building my 1/32 scale Citroen Six model, although to be quite honest, haven't touched it in about 18 months. It is sitting on its wheels with the motor/transmission installed and with that beautiful grille fitted, but of course, still a lot of work. I have also bought three Matchbox 1/32 scale models that can be built as either Roadster or Faux Cabriolet. These will be built as two roadsters, one with hood up and one lowered, while the third will be a hard top.

Well Bill, I've rambled on somewhat - hope it's been of some help to you. So had better close, however I will endeavour to get you some pictures etc.

All the best,

Max Poole.

P.S. Your Family 9 isn't Lime Green by any chance, is it?

Stop Press: Alan was talking to a chap who had just driven one of the new Citroen BX's and says it was very disappointing. Very un-Citroen, very flimsy plastic dash that was already starting to buckle and warp, and a very ordinary ride bordering on hard! Not a very good sign for the future.

FROM A.O.M.C. Newsletter, No.14, November 1983.

NEW REGISTRATION PLATE POLICY

The T.R.B. have advised us that the past practice of holding registration plates for the owner's future use has changed to some extent. The practice was free in the past and limited to approximately one year - it was also risky, as plates were occasionally destroyed or lost, much to the disappointment of the owner.

The new policy will allow you to hand in your registration plates to the M.R.B. to be held until further requested. There is a charge of \$20 p.a. (payable in advance and no pro rata adjustments) and the plates can be stored indefinitely. Upon eventual renewal of registration your original plates, regardless of condition, will be returned to you.

Despite the \$20 fee we consider this to be a far safer and more secure system than that of the past. Many enthusiasts have paid hundreds of dollars in registration fees in the past rather than risk losing a valuable historic registration plate. Thankfully the new scheme will make this unnecessary.

(Note that this scheme applies in Victoria only - Ed.)

COMMITTEE REPORT

1983 has been an excellent year for the Citroen Classic Owners Club of Australia, with attendances at meetings and events being consistently high all year.

Last year in my annual report, I mentioned that I was amazed at the seemingly never-ending supply of old Citroens that continued to appear from garages, old barns, etc. During 1983 this trend was carried on with several "new" cars being unearthed. Included in the "new" cars was a Slough built post war Family 9. Out of the original 25 of these that were built (all of which came to Australia) we can still account for about 16 or 17 of them - not bad for a car that was built nearly 30 years ago.

1983 also sees the end of my third term as President of CCOCA. Those three years have involved a lot of work and time, but, with the help of an excellent Committee, have seen CCOCA reach its present high standing amongst Citroen clubs throughout Australia and the world.

Hopefully, in 1984, the 50th year of the Traction, we will maintain and possibly improve this position even further.

Throughout the year, membership numbers improved by about 10%, and reached a total of 118. All Victorian country members renewed, and there were increases in the number of interstate members, notably from NSW.

Mark McKibbin, who has been our Secretary since 1981, is not standing for re-election, so this is an opportunity for another member to help with the running of this very important aspect of the club.

There has been an excellent range of events mounted this year, which club members have attended in greater numbers than in previous years. Particularly outstanding have been the joint run with the CCCV to Werribee Park, the club Concours held at Como, the Spares Auction and the Christmas party held at the Anchor & Hope.

You will have received the Club Calendar for the remainder of 1984 by now, so you can see that there is an even greater variety of events being prepared to cater to members' ranges of interests during the next club year.

Front Drive is CCOCA's major means of communication with our members, particularly those who live outside the Melbourne metropolitan area (about half). This is why we spend more than one third of the club's subscription income on its production and distribution and take some trouble to make it as attractive and interesting as possible.

Judging from the favourable letters and comments we have been receiving lately, we must be on the right track. Deadlines, with one notable exception, have been maintained, and the Editor's arm-twisting activities have not been

quite as anguished as usual. The greater proportion of the content has continued to be original, and most issues have been organised around a particular Citroen theme or topic.

As two members of the Editorial Subcommittee (Peter Simmenauer and Peter Fitzgerald) will no longer be available except for casual assistance, two more members, preferably with some graphics expertise, are urgently required, so that the high standard of our magazine can be maintained.

Our thanks to Mike and the staff of Veevers Printing for the first-class job they have done in printing Front Drive again this year,

Financially, CCOCA has managed to stay in the black, and even finish the year with a small surplus. What this means to the members is that the annual subscription does not have to be increased for at least another 12 months. Good news, when you consider the cost increases in just about any field you care to name over the past few years. Full details of the financial situation can be seen in the Financial Report which will be distributed shortly.

Spare parts has continued through 1983 to be one of the major drawcards that CCOCA has to offer, especially to Traction owners. A number of problems were experienced by David Gries throughout the year with supply delays from overseas and his moving house - however these are now being ironed out. Because CCOCA is a relatively small club we cannot afford to keep a huge stack of slow-moving parts in stock, so if you order that non-stock item, please be patient and it will be forwarded to you as soon as possible. David has been known to produce the impossible almost immediately, but miracles usually take a little longer.

The big event for 1983/84 will be, of course, Citraction '84. Robyn and her (small) group of helpers have been flat out over the last six or eight months organising what will be the biggest and most important event yet held by CCOCA. The work will continue after Easter also with the tidying up of accounts, etc. When that has been done, the next big event will not be until the Austraction '85 rally in June 1985.

Finally, I must express my usual thanks to all the members of the Committee for their work and effort over the last 12 months, and look forward to an even better year ahead.

John Couche
President, CCOCA

NEW MEMBER

Welcome to: Phil & Lisa GALL
16 Henrietta St.
Hawthorn 3122

A PAGE TO BE READ

Contact:

Robbie Couche
2 Wimborne Crt.
North Bayswater 3153
Ph. 729 7470

Maria Boyle
35 Newman St.
Thornbury 3071
Ph. 480 3560 (A.H.)

All Mail Orders to: P.O. Box 377,
Boronia Vic. 3155.

Windcheaters & T-shirts:

New design - Light 15 - available!
Club design (as on back cover) also available.
*Supply your own windcheater or T-shirt and we
will print your chosen design for \$2.00 per
garment OR
*Order a T-shirt, printed from our stock for
\$6.00
PLEASE SPECIFY SIZE COLOUR AND DESIGN WHEN
ORDERING.

Windscreen Stickers:

Club Emblem. Cost: \$1.50

Cloth Badges:

Club Emblem in blue on white oval background.
Cost: \$1.75

Lubrication Charts:

High quality reprint of original Traction
"Oil and Grease" chart. Cost: \$1.00

Pamphlet Boxes:

These will hold all Front Drive issues pub-
lished to date, with room for more, or about
two years of almost any other A4/quarto sized
magazine. Available in:
- Black cloth binding, library quality,
28 cm x 8 cm x 23 cm. Cost: \$4.95
- Cardboard "Foldaway" 23 cm x 8 cm x 23 cm.
Cost: \$2.50.

Both can be supplied with free Front Drive
spine label, or plain.

Metal Grille Badges:

New stock available now! Club badge in blue
and white. Cost: \$12.

Front Drive Back issues:

Cost: \$1.00 ea. plus postage.
If issue requested is out of print, a good
quality photocopy will be supplied.

NEW! SPECIAL T-SHIRTS WILL BE PRODUCED
FOR THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF CITROEN
FRONT WHEEL DRIVE - TRACTION AVANT - 1984.
THEY WILL BE AVAILABLE AT AND AFTER THE
CITRACTION RALLY HELD AT EASTER 1984.

COST: \$6.50. ORDER NOW (SIZES PLEASE!)

Lapel Badges:

Coming soon!! Design will be similar to the
old double chevron Citroen badge. Cost:
approx. \$3.00.

ALL PRICES PLUS POSTAGE AND PACKING.

COMING RALLIES

26 March, Monday

Club Dinner and Presentations.
"Cafe Lutece", 556 North Rd., Ormond.
BYO, \$18.00 per head, ring Peter or
Maria Boyle for reservations.

28 March, Wednesday

CCOCA AGM, Nunawading, 8.00 pm.
Old members, new members, prospective
members - all welcome.

20-23 April, Easter

CITRACTION '84, Ballarat.

SPARES PRICE LIST

Gearbox

Pinion shaft rear bearing 500367 26.80
Output oil seals 4.55

Engine

Piston & barrel set 4 cyl. POA
Clutch

Flywheel bearing 4.40
Aux. shaft front bearing (pulley) 3.60

Front Axle

Outer wheel bearing 425654 (17mm) 16.08
Changeover driveshafts POA
Outer universal crosses POA

Rear Axle

Tapered roller bearing (L15/11BL) 8.80
Brakes

Front brake hose 11BL/11B 16.29
Rear brake hose 11BL/11B 12.55
Front brake hose 115/B15 POA
Rear brake hose L15/B15 POA
Rear wheel cylinders 1" (4cyl.) 40.70

Gaskets

Head 4 cyl. POA
Rocker cover 4 cyl. POA
Manifold 4 cyl. POA
Carburettor 32 PBIC 4.67
35 FPAI POA
Sump set 4 cyl. 9.24
Exhaust pipe/muffler 6 cyl. 1.00
Timing case 4 cyl. 2.10

Rubber Ware

Scuttle vent rubber 14.39
Big boot bottom rubber 5.50
Door seal rubbers (set) L15/11BL POA
B15/11B POA
Windscreen rubber L15/11BL 3.80
(Alum. frame) B15/11B 4.00
Big boot rubber clips (set 12) POA

Electrical

6 volt brake lam switch 2.70
12 volt wiper motor mount (exch.) POA

Cooling System

Radiator hose (pair) 20.34
Water pump overhaul kit (orig.) POA
Water pump shaft and rear bush
(local) 18.00

Body Fittings

Citroen name plates for 11BL POA
Door rubber bump blocks (set 8)
(dovetail bumpers) 6.96
Door springs ea. 0.65

Citroen Tools

Front hub/brake drum pullers POA
Lower ball joint extractors POA

CLASSIFIEDS

WANTED: One radiator grille for
Normale/Big 15 in good condition.
Big 6 grille suitable. See Les Hay,
Peter Huth at Citraction '84 or write
to "Rosalie", 30 Tableland Rd. Gayndah
Qld. 4625.

WANTED: Car storage space for rent.
Also wanted: Citroen 5CV parts -
anything and everything. Contact:
Greg Hocking (03) 555 8388 bus. or
589 2358 a.h.

