I Was a Lodger With Roger

Readers may recall an enquiry from Bill Slater in SA about, inter alia, the strength of the crownwheel and pinions coming from UK (FD June/July 1995). Well, while I was in the UK after 10 ICCCR, I was fortunate enough to be able to stay with Roger Williams and his wife Wilhelmena (Wil) at their home at Beverley near Hull for a few days and see what he is up to.

Roger "retired" from local government, and has set up a very adequate (for his purposes) set of machine tools in a snug workshop in the yard behind the cosy and very functional house which he extensively modernised some years back. Set flush with the lane, and accessed through a solid carriage gate, none of this is visible from the outside.

Roger came to our notice through his technically well illustrated accounts of his fitting ID motor and four speed gearbox units to Traction Avants ("More glide for your stride" etc) in the Traction Owners Club (UK) magazine, "Floating Power". Our Prez, Leigh Miles, has said that these articles are the most frequently requested as reprints by CCOCA members after they were re-run in FD.

Roger's basic "products" are driveshafts, gearbox bits (particularly new CWPs) and gearbox reconditioning, clutch and engine bits and modifications, and reconditioning front suspension wishbone spindles. Generally, these products are provided for both four cylinder and six cylinder cars. These services and charges are shown on the adjacent price list. I understand he still does the odd four speed conversion on request.

Manufacturing is variously in his own workshop or farmed out to specialists in particular processes e.g. gear cutting and heat treatment, electron beam welding. In farmed-out work, Roger sets up product specifications and monitors production and product quality and adherence to specs. Where feasible/warranted (e.g. driveshafts), load testing to ensure strength matches up to current commercial standards has been carried out. Other production, assembly, overhaul and packing for dispatch are carried out at "home base".

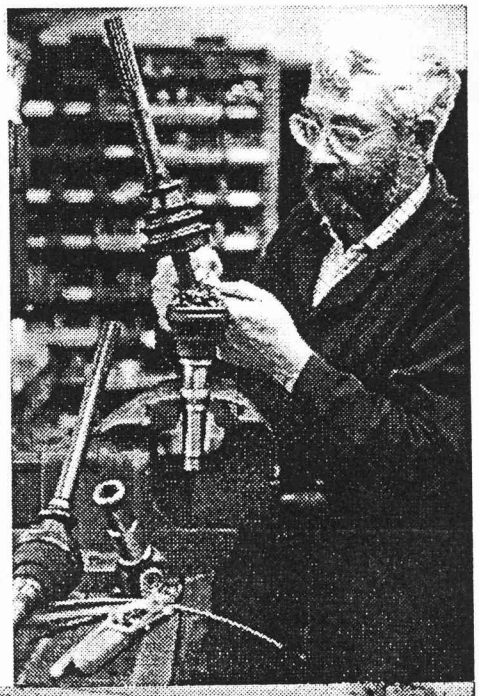
Adherence to proper current manufacturing quality is further enhanced by using existing critical sub-components e.g. driveshaft constant velocity joints and cardans as supplied to major manufacturers, or by having parts made by the same people and same line that make them up in the many thousands for the "big boys" (e.g. crownwheels and pinions).

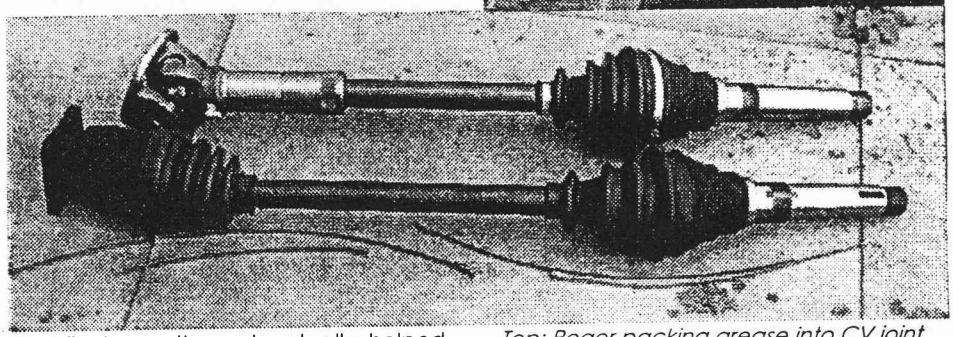
It is interesting to compare Roger's "low volume" prices (50 would be a big run for him) with the Australian prices for roughly the same items where they would be made up in the tens of thousands e.g.:

New Ford Falcon crownwheel and pinion: $A 569 + 22% tax = $A 694.

New Ford Laser driveshaft (2 CVJs) : $A 665 + 22% tax = $A 811.

Roger's prices don't include VAT (which we wouldn't have to pay), but we have to add freight and any duties/tax. Hence direct comparisons require a bit more research, but at 1 $A = say 47 pence and comparing pre-tax prices, Roger's prices are pretty reasonable, and in the case of the 2 CVJ driveshaft, it is actually about $A 28 cheaper than the "equivalent" item here. You might even say: "How does he do it?"

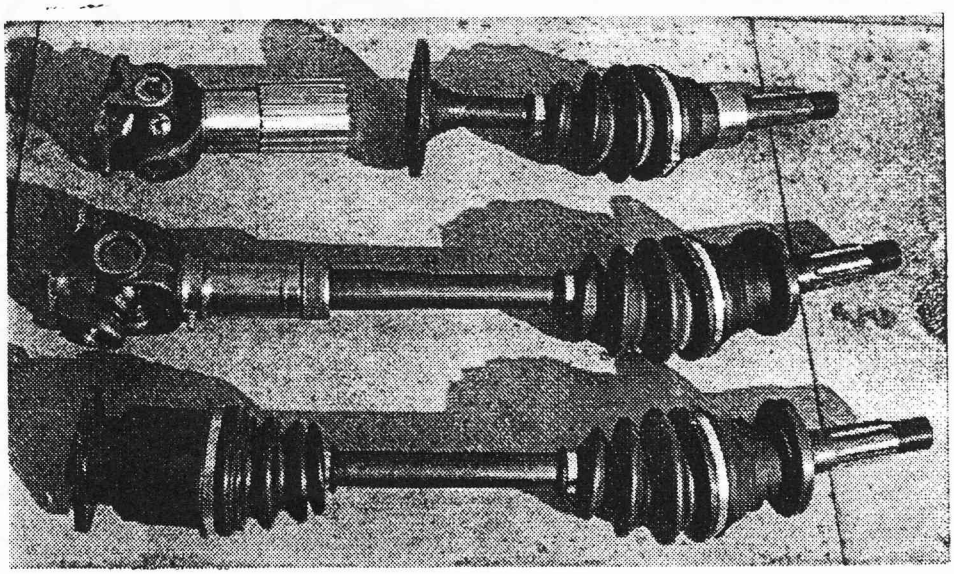




While I was there, I actually helped Roger in overhauling the gearbox for Mel Carey's Big Six (CCOCA Vic.). Many thanks to Roger and Wil for their warm and generous hospitality, and for the opportunity to see this valuable Citroën service.

Bill Graham.

Top: Roger packing grease into CV joint of new 4-cylinder driveshaft.
Above: Four-cylinder shaft inner joint options — cardan (top) or plunging CV.
Below: Options for six-cylinder shafts — to accept standard bibax coupling (top); with inner joint as a cardan (centre) or as a plunging CV(bottom).



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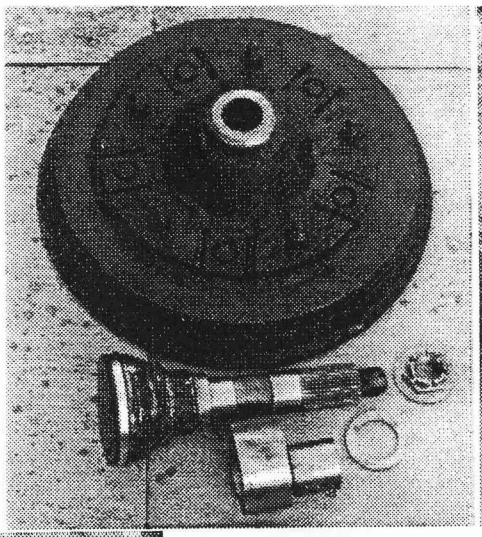
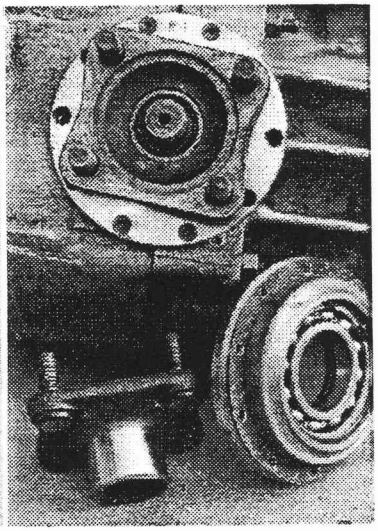
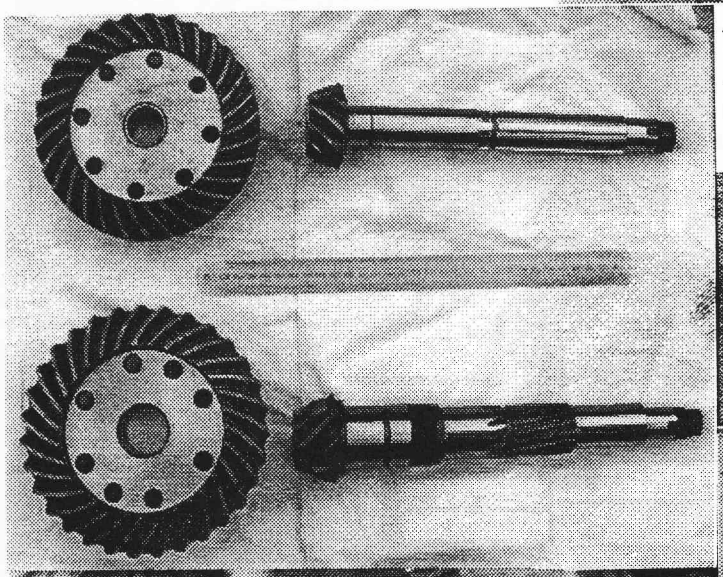




Anti-clockwise from below:

- *New CWPs for four (top) and six.*
- *Grinding synchromesh gear cone.*
- *Machining taper on synchro bush.*
- *New gearbox bushes.*
- *Output flange restored using roller bearing inner race.*
- *Restored upper suspension arm pivot.*



Above left: Stub axle for four-cylinder shaft, splined to suit worn taper in brake drum.
Above right: Auxiliary outer bearing and seal for four-cylinder gearbox.