

BEVIS 67

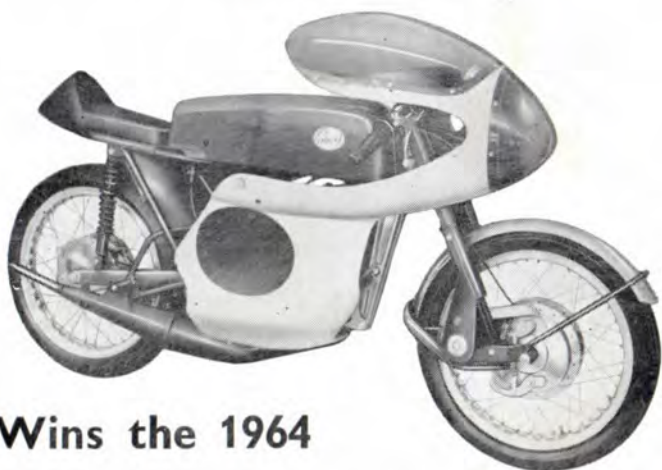
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THE JOURNAL OF THE
BRITISH MOTOR CYCLE RACING CLUB

Bemsee

EDITORIAL

Many of us are asking ourselves what of the future of road racing for, make no mistake about it, the future of racing in this country determines racing throughout the world. One must accept that racing will change radically within the course of the next decade. If I was a little bit braver I might stick my neck out and say the next three years. Of one thing we can be sure—there will be racing while there are motor cycles. The sale of motor cycles is forever on the decrease as everyone is now changing to a vehicle more suited to larger families and more comfort. It is questionable how long this trend will continue and, if one accepts the trend, how long it will be before those with cars will begin to buy a motor cycle for their enjoyment and not for their necessity. Two wheels will always have a great advantage that no other form of transport is likely to equal within our term of existence.

At the riders' meeting with the A.C.U. at the motor cycle show it was noticeable that there was little joint approach to form a common aim, each rider speaking from a personal viewpoint and quite often contradicting the previous speakers. Despite what may have appeared to the contrary, the meeting was not organised by the riders but was purely permitted by the A.C.U. with the objective of providing the riders with an outlet to air their views. A brief description of the proceedings are aired elsewhere in this issue.

OH MRS. CASTLE!

Jim Swift

I never thought I would see the day when scotch was watered quite so much or when previously heavy drinkers would restrict themselves to tomato juice—or give up altogether. Yes, I guess I'm one of the latter much to my continued regret but there can't be any half measures in this battle of the sexes.

I think few of us would disagree that the principle is wrong. Human nature being what it is we are all reluctant to accept dictatorship in our personal rights. From what we saw on the idiots lantern last month we must realise there is really no prevention or cure to the effects of alcohol so we must therefore expect what we get if caught. This doesn't make it any easier. Pub crawls are the part of many people's lives but now one has to do it on foot or carefully planned coach outings.

Sweden, Germany, Russia and many other notable countries throughout the world lead a crusade against the drunken driver. Russia take things a bit too far in that even the degree of drink is left to the individual policeman to determine. Few drivers will risk coming up against the police in Russia whose courts dish out such sentences as two years in a labour colony for offences which would not even come before a British court. We gradually drift towards communism!

Funnily enough I doubt that our government has considered the other side of the coin. I have yet to read any statistics which state the percentage of accidents which were caused by drunken driving. Perhaps these are in a minority? And yet everyday we see dangerous roads, dangerous bends, dangerous signs going up all around us. In Kingston they've now started to paint the yellow boxes at intersections—they must have built up the boxes with cement first and then painted on top. The first motor cyclist to brake in the wet on that will surely be off quicker than he knows what. Money can be better spent on improving what we have already first and by improving the control on dangerous driving. Of course, the latter would be difficult without giving the motorist some protection against biased complaints, but we see dangerous driving on the roads every day which hasn't been caused through drink.

Have they ever considered the effects of repealing the licensing laws completely? It might be one way of spreading the load more evenly throughout the day and reduce the risk of drunkenness.

In the meantime either we take a chance or are finding another vice. After all, we men must have at least one, mustn't we?

The life of a cab driver is interesting; one can never quite tell what the next job will be or where the job will take you, as in one instance a London “Cabby” had a job which resulted in him being taken to America, and this the result of picking up a fare in the West End.

This of course was the exception as was my first acquaintance with Brooklands, not by the way of racing motor cycles, but fare. Two men called me in Piccadilly and asked me to take them to see the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace and one or two other places of interest in the West End. On taking them back to their hotel I was asked would I be prepared to take them to Brooklands after they had had lunch, which I agreed to do. I picked them up after lunch and set off for Byfleet. The event they wished to see was the R.A.C. rally being held at Brooklands, and we duly arrived and the entry fee, car park fee, etc., was paid by my fares who, by the way, were engineers and had been out in India for a couple of years supervising the building of a dam. They intended to have a holiday in England while on leave, this being evident as after lunch they had become very merry having had a considerable amount to drink. We arrived at Brooklands and on being wrongly directed as to parking we finished up in the enclosure, complete with marquee, run by one of the London clubs of which I have forgotten the name. My fares, on insisting I went with them, gate-crashed into the marquee, had some drinks, and proceeded to make a nuisance of themselves so that we were ushered out, not without a bit of a scuffle with the commissionaires on duty. I was also told to take my cab away and



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found that the public enclosure was alongside separated by a fence, which, by the way, was continued out on to the actual track at the Byfleet banking. I decided to drive round the fence up on to the track and reached the public enclosure that way. Unfortunately, as I tried to turn the cab round after getting on the track, I nearly overturned it on the gradient and if it hadn't been for my now well and truly sozzled fares, who decided to lean out of the windows to wave to all and sundry the cab would have overturned. Thus my first experience of Brooklands nearly resulted in a crash as strangely enough did my second, but this time in race practice.

On returning to London my friends (by now) suggested I continued to drive them all over Britain, eventually to finish with a tour of Scotland, but unfortunately I had to say no, as at that time I owned about seven taxis and would have been unable to arrange for their maintenance while away. Opportunity did knock but I was unable to accept the prize.

In the 1930's cabbing was very bad, and if one earned £5 a week one could count oneself as fortunate. In my case I normally started work at Liverpool Street Station, ranking for the Hook of Holland—Harwich boat train due to arrive at 8.45 a.m. and to try and make sure you obtained a job you had to be on the ranks at Liverpool Street by around 6 a.m. Even then you might be the fiftieth cab, with later many others ranked behind you. When the train arrived it was just ones luck after waiting all this time as to where the job took you. Many a time I have got off at London Bridge Station, a mere 1/9d. on the clock, or the Waldorf Hotel in the Aldwych, which brought the fare up to 2/3d., with an extra passenger or a piece of luggage making 9d. more; less than a 1/- per hour, without running costs, and already partly spent at a coffee shop near Liverpool Street while waiting for the trains arrival. Many are the arguments that ensued when some drivers tried, and did, sort out the jobs, only accepting those who had several pieces of luggage and desired to go longer distances, thus making the wait worthwhile for these drivers.

One also envied the cab drivers who had regular jobs, especially from Covent Garden, when they loaded the cabs inside and on the roof with boxes of flowers and, in some cases, vegetables and delivered these to the shops for the purchasers. But this was nearly a closed "shop," as no one who wasn't "in" could hope to obtain this kind of lucrative work.

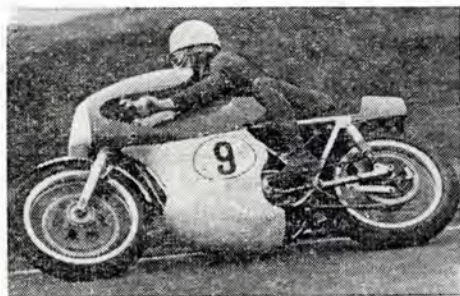
Usually after the boat train fare, cabs finishing up in the vicinity of Waterloo Station, ranked there for the next job, and the entrance for the cabs were in York Road, nearly opposite the County Hall, which held around eighty cabs, and was known as the "Rats Hole." With this being underground and fumes from the exhausts, it was like a dungeon, although it had a coffee stall where one could buy tea, cakes, etc., which did a good business as many an hour had to be spent in the "Rats Hole" before proceeding up a slope to the main station above. This

slope was cabled, and it was quite an effort on a wet day to climb this, as naturally the rain of the cabs made it slippery. With the narrow tyres and poor tread in those days, one could slide all over the place, and should this happen and a cab got stuck and a train had arrived in with plenty of fares available, the unfortunate driver was advised in no mean language what to do with himself and the cab, and then manhandled up the slope.

Since those days this entrance has been closed, and the cabs rank moved to the top entrance of the station, fares being assembled by a notice and take their turn for a cab. Thus a lot of the "sorting" out of the fares has stopped when, as previously, you arrived at the top of the slope, a single passenger had come towards you whereas people with luggage still remained at the front end of the station platform entrances. Many a person has had to make a quick dive out of the way of the cabs who all charged forward towards the "extras" (these being more than two persons) with luggage, and thus more lucrative. The "City" gentlemen of regular fares knew the ropes, and as soon as the cab reached the front of the station claimed it, many heated arguments following only to be settled by the station police.

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In one instance I fell foul of one of these. Admittedly it was my fault, but over something I have had many a laugh since. The story was that usually plenty of jobs were available when a boat train arrived and if one had just set down a fare at Waterloo you usually crawled past or stopped at the main vehicle exit in the station hoping a porter would call you, usually with a truck full of luggage. In this particular instance I had stopped, but a police officer told me to proceed, which I did for a few yards but stopped again. He again told me to move, and a little argument started, finishing with my name and address being taken, and later a summons being issued, and my appearance at Tower Bridge Police Court.

During the constables evidence, he told the magistrate that I had told him "to fetch a proper copper." The reaction on the part of the magistrate can hardly be described—pointing at me with his pen, leaning forward the full width of the bench and quivering with suppressed anger he asked me who I was to tell him to fetch a genuine constable. Didn't I know that all railway police were sworn in by the Courts, and were regular policemen? Well, if I'd committed a murder I couldn't have been more guilty in his eyes, and realising that I had no chance to avoid a conviction I said that I told him to *act* like a proper policeman, and not to act in the manner he was doing. I proceeded to dance up and down in the dock, wave my arms about and generally act the clown, and the resultant laughter and appreciation by the people in the Court was worth every penny of the £2 I was fined, and the stern warning as to what could happen should I not respect the railway police.

For all the bad times experienced before the second World War, I feel a cabman's job is interesting, and except for the police whose duty is to see that one was a fit and proper person to hold a licence, we were our own governors. Once outside the garage the cab was yours to do with as you pleased. You worked when you desired, you stopped when you felt like it, and were answerable to no one but the police and the law governing you as a driver. The fun and laughter, the seamier side of life, and the way London lives through the eyes of a driver were all worth many extra pounds.

One more experience that befell men owing to the poor return for one's hours of work around the 1930-1938 years, was when I was driving for a 'gumnor' while my own cab was in overhaul.

I had the cab out on the "flat," that is I paid so much per night for it, also the petrol I used, and whether I covered the cost of this was my gamble. Usually one could just beat the 'gumnor' by this method, although on his side he was assured of a certain sum both by the day or nightman which enabled him to show a return on his capital outlay. In this particular job, I arranged to take the cab off the day man at the Savoy Hotel rank in the Strand, but this fellow was always late, and instead of 6 p.m. the change over time more often than not was at 6.30 and even later, increasing his chances of earning more, and lessening mine. The expense of hiring the cab remaining the same the evening he arrived at around 7 p.m. and he excused himself by the fact he had a "set" (a cabman slang for an accident) and in proof, I was shown that

the rear offside mudguard was torn away from the body, but retained in place by one of the luggage straps. After a little argument, and 2/6d. towards my loss of earnings, I decided to go to work and my first job took me through Regent Street.

At one of the junctions another cab came out and, unable to avoid me, caught the rear nearside mudguard nearly tearing this off, so with the other luggage strap this was secured to the low handle straps of the door handle. Opening the doors, letting the fare get either in or out, and replacing the straps, fun eh! All went well until in the Haymarket at the burst of the theatres. It was also raining, and in the rush of customers to obtain cabs, two claimed me at the same time—on opposite sides! The long suffering mudguards come off completely! Without further ado I placed them both on the roof rack, and finished the night's work without them. I shall never forget the two spumes of mud and water passing forward past me each side of the cab like a fountain. I wonder if we would get away with it today without being pulled up by a police car, and made to take a breathalizer test! They wouldn't believe you weren't drunk!!

I trust that these two articles about the London "Cabby" will have given you some idea of his work, and problems and should the richer members of B.M.C.R.C. be able to afford the use of a cab, remember that he is not always the villain he is painted, with exceptions of course. I could continue with my experiences although these are now getting dim as old age and rheumatism creeps on.



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Arthur Wheeler Trophy	Hutchinson 100	W. D. Ivy
Avon Trophy	Hutchinson 100	D. F. Shorey
Bemsee Trophy	Trophy Day	J. Hedger
Baragwanath Trophy	Barry's Day	C. S. Mortimer
BMCRC 3 Wh'lers Champ'ship	Hutchinson 100	A. J. Wakefield
BMCRC Senior Championship	Hutchinson 100	S. M. B. Hallwood
BMCRC 350 Championship	Hutchinson 100	R. E. Butcher
BMCRC 250 Championship	Hutchinson 100	S. M. B. Hallwood
BMCRC 125 Championship	Hutchinson 100	M. Carney
Bob Winter Trophy	Bemsee 1000	Not awarded
Bryant Bowl	Trophy Day	N. Bunard
Christopher William Trophy	Annual	Not awarded
Comerford Cup	Guinness Trphy	M. Ashwood
Dennis Lashmar Trophy	Hutchinson 100	O. E. Greenwood
Dunlop Trophy	Hutchinson 100	S. M. B. Hallwood
G. Reynolds Memorial Trophy	Hutchinson 100	S. M. B. Hallwood
Glover Trophy	Baragwanath	R.L.Ayres/J.G.Trustham
Guinness Trophy	Guinness Trophy	D. J. Nixon
Hector Dugdale Trophy	Guinness Trophy	D. J. Nixon
J. S. Moore Trophy	I.O.M. T.T.	J. Hartle
Lambretta Trophy	Guinness Trophy Day	C. Jones
Les Graham Trophy	Metropolitan	J. C. Lancaster
Mellano Trophy	Hutchinson 100	J. Hartle
Metropolitan Trophy	Metropolitan	R. C. Chandler
Minnie Grenfell Trophy	Baragwanath	C. S. Mortimer
Motor Cycle News Trophy	Hutchinson 100	J. Hartle
National Benzole Trophy	Long Marston Sprint	
Noel Pope Bowl	Annual	G. Brown
50 c.c. Trophy	Metropolitan	Not awarded
125 c.c. Trophy	Metropolitan	M. Carney
Peter Walsh Memorial Trophy	Baragwanath	A. Manship
Power and Pedal Trophy	Hutchinson 100	Not awarded
Rex Judd Trophy	Long Marston Sprint	Not awarded
Rickard Trophy	Hutchinson 100	C. S. Mortimer
Riley Cup	Long Marston Sprint	Not awarded
Ron Watson Challenge Cup	Long Marston Sprint	Not awarded
Sidecar Trophy	Metropolitan	Not awarded
Slazenger Trophy	Bemsee 1000	G.R.L.Boret/P.J.Hardcastle
M. C. Tomkinson Trophy	Guinness Trophy	Not awarded
Torquemeter Trophy	Annual	P. J. Wright
Virtage Trophy	Metropolitan	S. M. B. Hallwood
Watsonian Annual Trophy	Hutchinson 100	Not awarded
		A. J. Wakefield

I read a very interesting article last Sunday concerning motoring in Russia. If, like me, you really hadn't considered that the U.S.S.R. was any different from any other leading country in the world, perhaps you would like me to give a brief precis. If you would prefer to read the article fully, then I have no doubt that your newsagent would obtain a copy of the Sunday Times Colour Supplement.

Up to the reign of Brezhnev and Kosygin, the automobile, as befitting a communist colony, has been an embarrassment to many a communist country and, most of all, to the parent country itself. Apart from the production statistics (200,000 passenger cars manufactured in 1965) which show that they are way, way behind ourselves who have a total annual output of 1,600,000 cars, a petrol station is very much a thing of attraction, especially tourist attraction, as throughout Russia there exists fewer than 2,000 stations. Of these twelve are in Moscow catering for the 72,000 private cars, three in Leningrad and some cities really haven't any at all. This might deter many a motorist who is thinking of a car trip through the Soviet Union! The only thing which makes one feel a little happier is that, when you have found your station, petrol is about one shilling and sixpence a gallon, cheaper than anywhere else in the world.

Even with the advent of the much publicised Fiat motor plant at Togliatti and the contracts which have been made with other leading European manufacturers to modernise existing plants, there are only three makes of car from which to choose. The biggest, the Volga, resembles the American car which we used to see about ten years ago on gangster films. Then there is the Moskovitch and Zaporet. The prices are astronomical and cost less in this country—well below half the cost. One would pay £2,300 for the Volga which makes one wonder if communism is prevalent throughout even Russia, especially as cash is the only acceptable mode of payment. Beyond even this discouragement, it often takes three years before delivery is made. Between 1956 and 1963, all order books were closed to allow for production to catch up with the demand, and this bearing in mind the fact that the average wage for a skilled industrial worker is only £40 per month. With the new "presidential" era, plans have been advanced to increase the 200,000 car production of 1965 to one million by post 1970.

Service is non-existent as it is claimed that it is too expensive to do. Petrol pumps are often worked by hand. Spares and oil are not stocked at garages but must be bought at special stores by the customer and given to the mechanic—pre-supposing that it is a major breakdown necessitating repairs of a major nature. One can therefore only wonder that people still want to own a car.

For the motorist, the Soviet Union is very much a police state. They enjoy nothing better than to catch the motorist out and the sentences imposed are unjustly severe. The driver who injures a pedestrian is invariably convicted, whether it be his fault or not. Any infringement of the law, down to your tyre touching the white line is eagerly pounced upon and involves considerable abuse. If necessary ones driving licence is taken away and only returned after a monumentally tedious lecture which takes up six hours of your Sunday. In the country speed is not limited, except by the police who may consider that your speed has been excessive, and book you according to their nature.

Trade vehicles, being state owned, are forbidden by law to help out a motorist who is out of petrol and who might otherwise use some from the tank. Until recently petrol had to be paid for in advance in the form of chits, the stubs of which had to be saved so they might be checked against the speedometer to determined whether the car was being driven on legally purchased petrol or on fuel supplied by the black-marketeers, stolen from the State.

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Like most other people I read of the proposed meeting between riders and the A.C.U. in the technical press. For the first time I went along mainly because it was intended to be objective and at a time when there were a few more people in a position to be authoritative. I had reservations about the intentions of the meeting, borne out by Mike Hailwood's opening comment to me of "what the . . . 's this all about?" He knew about as much of the meeting as I did which confirmed my opinion that the A.C.U. had acted pretty smartly. Representing the A.C.U. were Ken Shierson, Mary Driver, Les Archer and J. C. Lowe. The riders were represented by whoever chose to speak. Only a few did so and many who didn't even voice their views despite having done so on many occasions previously at a time when it was obviously intended that their views would be carried. Norman Dixon held the Chair remarkably well for the A.C.U. and I was one of the few who were astonished that more representatives from the Competitions Committee were not present. This helped of course.

Rex Butcher opened the proceedings for the riders by asking why more advertising could not be put into the sport by commercial firms who had money to spend and would willingly do so. It seemed to him an idiotic rule that machines could not carry advertising and be only to the detriment of the sport as a whole. The sport needed money and the present rules opposed it. He also wanted to see the riders represented at world championship events. The latter provided the foundation for an hour of argument and eventually the principle was agreed that one representative would be appointed to serve on the T.T. committee as a start. As was expected, a great deal of discussion was given over to the T.T. and the necessary expenses incurred by a rider. Various avenues of providing home riders with expenses were gone into but, as was expected, nothing ever came of the discussion except an appreciation by the A.C.U. members present of the serious financial position. The argument for national sponsorship and more advertising was noted.

The position of issuing International licences only to those with sufficient competence to deserve one was a great topic for the riders who felt that too many people with insufficient experience were able to achieve sufficient points to obtain one under the present system. The A.C.U. admitted that only random checks were made to validate the entries made on the application forms and Bill Smith quoted an un-named instance where some riders obtained their licences through false pretences.

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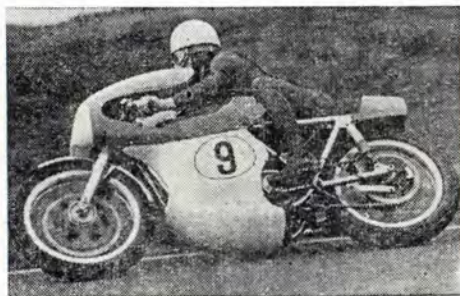
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The controversy of foreign entries, especially for world championship events, was discussed at length, it being finally agreed that riders would submit a list of their complaints giving the fullest possible details in order that the A.C.U. could take the matter up with the F.I.M. and endeavour to standardise a firm policy.

I suppose that these four headings were the backbone of the meeting. None of us other than Tony Godfrey (who had an obvious interest in having to pay for medical forms) kept a list of points as they were agreed or who thought of thanking the A.C.U. for their interest in arranging the meeting. As a whole it was as good a meeting as one could expect, chaired admirably by Norman Dixon who, on the whole, had the riders interests very much at heart and who admitted that the biggest problem with the sport was that there were insufficient young people coming into the administrative side.

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1968 CALENDAR

With this issue you will find the regulations for the first Bemsee meeting of the 1968 calendar. They are being circulated so early because with each of the succeeding magazines you will find enclosed a set of regulations for one of the future meetings, taken in date order. Some short explanation is needed for the two 'open' events at Brands Hatch. These are simply provided in order that those riders with 350 c.c. machines or machines within the 350—1,000 c.c. capacity may have an additional ride if they so wish. Providing other members with the ride is not possible due to the restriction on practice time available. Only those members who have already got a ride will be permitted the other ride for the obvious reason, i.e. it is impossible to take any more riders than we already do.

Eleven Club meetings during 1968 and the expectation of a further increase for 1969 means that your three guineas membership fee means more to you now than it has ever done. Entry fees remain high simply because the economics of Club meetings have never been very sound and it is impossible to provide more meetings without the stability of knowing that you can take a loss. Planning also costs money. Members are reminded that their membership entitles them to admission to the Club houses at Brands Hatch, Mallory Park, Snetterton, and also entitles them to free admission for themselves at all Bemsee Brands Hatch meetings with the exception that for the Hutchinson 100, tickets must be applied for.

If you have any friends who are thinking of taking up racing, get them to apply for the free booklet 'A Racing Start' published by the Club. Remind them also that with the circulation of the first set of regulations they will undoubtedly miss out on the first three meetings unless we receive their 1968 membership application now. Once paid for they will be accorded the facility of being sent regulations and the magazine.

If you know of anyone who is interested in becoming a race official or marshal get them to write in now. With the ever increasing expansion programme going on, reliable officials are needed more and more. Without them we can only eventually grind to a halt. They are that important.

1969 will see some additional benefits for all Club members. Make sure that you are around to see them! Safe riding!

Dear Sir,—Recent libellous statements in “Bemsee” would seem to suggest that the mighty Phobof marque is an offshoot of a Herr Phoebus, owner of a De Dion. Such horrific sacrilege cannot go unreprimanded.

The great Phobof was a product of one Mickanis Evansi, a journalist in a well known Motor Bicyclistes Almanacke of weekly issue. The very suggestion that the marque may have had a genuine origin is enough to cause blown gaskets amongst all two wheeled journalists in the country.

On relinquishing control of the Phobof, Evansi allowed it to pass into the hands of a nut of mighty imagination, none other than Ivanof Hackomanovitch (or namely myself). All further studies of Phobof history have been penned by me in the course of literary fits while seated in the throne room (or thunder box if you wish).

This mighty slander upon old Ephraim has so put me off my stroke that I am temporarily at a loss for a new Phobof instalment, but fear not, the beast will return! Once more you will be fobbed off (so that's where the name originated!) with stories of heroic exploits of past days. So beware! No more snide comments from the peasants, or I'll try and con Jim Swift into putting up your subscriptions.

Incidentally a comrade of mine is busy restoring a fearsome racing beast of great age and dubious origin. When complete it may be raced as a Phobof. You are hereby warned—all those who fail to beat it will be required to give up racing for life!

Yours, etc., IVAN HACKMAN, Stewartby, Beds.

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For Sale

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