

## Old Rumbleguts

(Continued from page 41)

that counterfeiters were known to add it to Cricklewood's dimmer products with felonious intent to boost their secondhand value. Fast, though it was, a genuine Super Sports didn't take liberties from anyone. That priceless tome, *Technical Facts of the Vintage Bentley*, compiled with infinite love and labor by the Bentley Drivers' Club, allows that "This very short chassis was not to everyone's taste," and had a reputation for being "difficult to handle, particularly in the wet." When the B.D.C. — not the most impartial of authorities — admits that a Bentley was difficult to handle, you can reckon it was really a rogue.

### WINNING A NAME

Bentley racing history predated the company's commercial debut. F. C. Clement, one of W.O.'s earliest collaborators in the car field, who was later to take a fifty-fifty driving share in the first of the marque's Le Mans victories, won a Brooklands sprint for Bentley in the spring of 1921. W.O. had raced motorcycles himself in his youth and it was his consistent belief that the way to sell fast cars — and to stay one technical jump ahead of the competition — was to race as often and as determinedly as you could afford. In pursuit of this policy, he entered a lone three-litre for the 1922 Indianapolis 500 and later that year ran a three-car team in Britain's own top classic, the Tourist Trophy. The Indianapolis essay, although it didn't exactly set the bricks on fire, satisfied the aspirations that were behind it; the car lasted the distance and placed thirteenth at somewhere around 80 mph average.

The T. T. was something else, though. In contrast with Sunbeam and Vauxhall, who put in undisguised racing cars, Bentley relied on stock chassis modified only to the extent of having high compression pistons. This apparently optimistic recipe was triumphantly vindicated. The Bentleys, manned by W. W., F. C. Clement and W. D. Hawkes, all survived the full 302 miles of mountainous roads and were the only make to do so. Clement finished second, behind Jean Chassagne on a straight-eight Sunbeam, W. O. Bentley was fourth and Hawkes fifth — a convincing demonstration of stamina that scored the London marque a coveted team prize in its very first production season.

(Continued on page 59)



Photos by Joseph E. Petrovec

## The Day Man Beat A TR-2

**I**N 1936, Jesse Owens made a spectacular run against a race horse in a one hundred yard dash — and won. This long standing record was recently shattered at LISCA's auto cross and acceleration meet when another runner, stocking-footed and pebble-pricked, left ninety horses digging at the post. The sprinter was Kenneth Denston, president of the Long Island Sports Car Association, and the routed horses were part of Sandy Roggensburg's TR-2.

The contest, which began as a private bet between Ken and Sandy, developed into one of the major events of the day. Paul McDermott, racing chairman seized upon the opportunity to give the spectators some diversion and had a small dash plaque engraved, "Man versus TR-2." It was a case of winner take all — plaque, glory, and fame — what there was of it. But who would be the winner? After all, we all know that the TR-2 is capable machinery in its class, and with some slight coaxing can razz its exhaust at some pretty fast contenders. Where, then, did mere Man, who is easily winded drinking down a short beer, come off to place himself in a race with such superior company? Obviously, he'd lost his reason, or so it was thought. Then the odds were evened up. The distance for the run was set at twenty feet. Now the question was, who could get the better bite — TR-2 or Man?

This was the imponderable. True, Man cannot develop torque-power. And it's a good thing, too, for if he could, his grandmother might well have been the proverbial trolley car. But Man can attain his top speed in a split second, whereas a car may take several seconds. So, with the odds fairly on a par, speculation pervaded the air.

Sandy roared up to the starting line, slammed on his brakes and waited. When the dust had cleared, Ken, shoeless and confident, pawed out a mound upon which to back up his starting foot. There they stood, waiting upon the start.

The flag went up, the bets went down, and suddenly all hell exploded in all different directions. The magnificent machine raised its note, produced a very impressive roar, transferred its power from engine to wheels, beclouded the entire area with dust, and scratched, and scratched—and scratched. Kenneth, that poor two-legged animal, had no such tremendous power to push him, and, so, when the dust had cleared, was at the finish line first, modestly accepting both ovation and plaque.

Albert Prokop