



## To Brighton on a Wolseley

### The Editor Goes on the Run in a Leyland-entered 1901 10-h.p. Model

THIS year I went on my 26th Brighton Run as a driver or co-driver, thanks to Mr. Charles Maple and Mr. Richard A. Westcott of Leyland Cars, in the 1901 10 h.p. Wolseley tonneau entered by Leyland Historic Vehicles Ltd. and prepared by Don Joyce and his assistants. The old British Leyland cars awaiting restoration are now housed at the new Rover factory at Solihull and include all manner of vehicles, from the 1901 Lanchester that was not ready in time for this year's Renault-sponsored Brighton Run, to much later Rovers, including a very fine 14/45 Rover coupe, a Riley Adelphi, etc.

Not liking to be embroiled in the Brighton Run Sunday traffic in a strange car I had not previously handled, I drove a few days beforehand to Birmingham and had a short spin round the factory roads in this veteran Wolseley. I found it to be one of the two-cylinder 10 h.p. models that Herbert Austin had made for Vickers Sons & Maxim until they grew tired of his insistence on horizontal engines and changed to vertical-engined Siddleys, in about 1905/6. An enlargement of the well-known single-cylinder Wolseley model of the period, the two-cylinder car was a very well-made, if agricultural-running, motor car for its day. Of it the late Anthony Bird has said: "The horizontal-engined

Wolseleys may not have been particularly fast (though they were by no means sluggards), nor were they notably refined in the manner of their going; but they went on doing what they were designed to do with rather less of the grief, rage, anguish and expense which several more ambitious motor-car designers of the time inflicted upon their hapless customers".

This was reassuring, on the eve of our 56-mile run to Brighton in a car that was now 77 years old. It is one of the earliest of its kind but a type not entirely unknown to me, because in 1956 I did the Run as a passenger in Peter Pointer's 1902 version and we had a trouble-free journey on that occasion. I see it was entered this year and driven by Mario Andretti, no less. Leyland's Wolseley, Reg. No. O 4156, seems to have been owned at one time by Anne Cowbury of Manchester, judging by a neat little brass "coin" so inscribed, screwed onto the o/s. of the body. It was presumably registered in Birmingham by its makers, who then had their factory at Adderley Park. It is typical of all these solid, dependable 10 h.p. Wolseleys, and carries a high four-seater tonneau body on its 7' wheelbase, devoid of windscreen, and it is finished in yellow-and-black. The wooden-spoked wheels with fine brass hub-caps, are shod with solid tyres, a

*The Town Crier, Lord Julian of Shepherd's Market, leads von Raffay's 1896 Delahaye and Flather's 1897 Daimler out of Hyde Park.*

modification I think, but the rest of the car seems original. The typical Wolseley bonnet composed of gilled cooling-tubes has a rear-hinged lid that opens to reveal the engine with its cylinder-heads or "breeches" pointing forward. It is a transverse power-pack, as in a Mini. There is a sparking-plug in each head, fired by a l.t. wipe-contact distributor and trembler-coils, one coil for each cylinder, the coils being in a wooden box on the engine side of the dash. Above the cylinders are the automatic inlet valves, one per cylinder, through which a Wolseley carburetter feeds *via* a square-section alloy manifold. The exhaust valves are mechanically-operated and live beneath the engine, closed by abnormally long coil springs in tension, although on most of these Wolseleys laminated leaf valve springs were used, as on Parry Thomas' much-later Leyland Eight and other engines. A form of air-cleaner is attached to the carburetter.

The engine is wound-up from a handle inserted in a hole on the n/s. of the car and this handle afterwards clatters about on the floorboards. Lubrication is by a multiple bevy of drip-feeds before the driver, 12 in all, the oil being lost after it has completed its task; the big-ends are fed centrifugally. The ignition switch is before the front-seat passenger, maybe as a reassurance. The petrol tank sits on the engine side of the dash and has a lever-type tap on the floor and a glass sight-feed above it. The radiator



tubes encircling the engine are so efficient, aided by a low-speed pump, driven by shaft, that 1½ gallons of water suffice, poured in before a journey through the tops of two small cylindrical tanks, one on each side of the scuttle. To drive the Wolseley you climb up to the high but close-fitting seat, to be confronted by a four-spoke steering-wheel, the spokes of brass, on a tall, slightly inclined column. Beneath the wheel are the little hand-control for the slide-throttle in the carburettor and a matching advance-and-retard lever. The car is now driven mainly on the ignition lever and with much use of the r.h. gear-lever, controlling, through an exposed rack and pinion, a quadrant change. Fully forward the lever gives reverse, it then pulls back through the four gears and neutral.

So far a driver used to veteran cars finds nothing abnormal. But driving along the Solihull factory roads I was to realise that not only is the steering *extremely* heavy, but that to use the clutch, which to complicate matters is worked with the *right* foot, has very little movement, and is also very heavy, I had to almost stand up on the pedal to disengage the cones. The gears then go in nicely, when changing down, but the action is so slow going up through the box that crunching in the cogs seems to have been normal practice for all but the most patient Wolseley exponents. However, the quadrant had positive stops for the long movement of the gear-lever.

Having mastered the changing of the speeds I found that the brake pedal on the left of the clutch pedal, working on the transmission, was adequate; there is a push-on hand-brake operating on the back wheels up by one's right elbow, which has to be pulled sideways to clear its ratchet and is awkwardly placed, so is best regarded as a parking palliative, but is all too easily released as you get out of the car. Having noted the disposition of the old Wolseley's brake and clutch pedals I wondered if I should drive home with my legs crossed, to get used to them and was only prevented from doing so because I was using a Renault 5 devoid of a clutch pedal! The engine idles with simply enormous vibration but the clutch engages smoothly as you take pressure off the pedal and I was able to avoid the disgrace of stalling the machinery with Don riding beside me. The drive goes by Renold roller-chain to the gearbox and combined differential and then by side chains to the back wheels. Starting-up is facilitated by a big half-compression knob which you pull out from its hiding place by the n/s. step.

That was the Wolseley in which I had been invited to ride to Brighton. It is equipped with leather mudguards front and back, a fine pair of headlamps, Salisbury-Bleriot on the o/s., Salisbury Florio on the n/s., product of the Salisbury Lamp Works of London, and a Klaxon horn. The channel-section chassis is sprung on ½-elliptic springs all round, those at the back shackled fore and aft, the front springs shackled at the back only. The steering is unusual, as there are gears on the front axle itself, working a divided track-rod ahead of the axle, apart from a normal steering box. For the Run we had to be content with perhaps ten actual b.h.p., developed at 700-750 r.p.m., from the 114 x 127 mm. (2,605 c.c.) engine. But how nice to be making the pilgrimage on one of Britain's very first cars, of which this model is so truly representative. We were not quite fully laden for our spin to the seaside, for although Charles Maple, Mrs. Maple, David Gibb, one of four apprentices from the Cowley Body Plant Apprentices' Training School (who proved to be a tower of strength when there was roadside work to be done, and absolutely

determined to get the Wolseley to Brighton) and myself formed the crew. There was a folding-seat, for a fifth occupant, in the rear compartment.

After a brief delay while an ambulance drove away with a mown-down onlooker, we left Hyde Park at 8.15 hours, Maple driving. The weather was fine and warm and we seemed all set for a good run. I took over after we had ascended the Brixton acclivity on 2nd speed, but found driving more difficult in traffic and thrice stalled the motor. Gibb then had his stint and actually got onto 4th speed by Merstham. But there troubles set in. We came to rest on the hill out of Purley. The plugs were cleared and the mixture thickened and things seemed to improve. Incidentally, two drawers beneath the front seat carry the tools and here lives the battery for the trembler coils.

Charles Maple, back in the hot-seat, complained of terribly stiff steering, the car having retired at Brixton last year from this malady. The king pins were oiled, with very little effect. I believe Stirling Moss said of the little Renault he drove that it seemed the most difficult car he had ever driven and not safe for more than 8 m.p.h. — although I gather he finished well before 16.00 hours, the limit allowed. He should, however, have tried grappling with our Wolseley....

Near Crawley we stopped again, in real trouble, the distributor, down by the n/s. front wheel, having to be cleaned, the battery changed, the l.t. wiring inspected, and the drip-feed serving the n/s. chain-wheel bearing changed over to feed an over-heated engine main-bearing, as its own drip-feed was blocked. We got going eventually, but the Wolseley had become a sluggard, unlike those known to Anthony Bird, as it was on 1½ cylinders. Late numbers came by and we were overtaken by bicycles and an intrepid cyclist on a penny-farthing, even with Gibb dismounted and pushing the car up many

of the sinuous acclivities of the A23. Another stop for a roadside overhaul, with Gibb working like a Trojan, aided by Niell Stockford, a fellow apprentice, who was following in a Maxi, and we pressed on, whereupon the engine picked up and I was granted the doubtful honour of taking over for the run from the Pylons into Brighton. Whereas the Police all along the route had been absolutely splendid, here the traffic-lights were unmanned (or womanned) and no-one cared. As a final Brighton indignity, we were not allowed to walk down the Madeira Drive to our hotel... However, after six hours on the road we had arrived, the Wolseley playing its final trick by running its petrol tank dry before all those onlookers and Marsh's microphone.

Nevertheless, it was the greatest fun and the Leyland Historic Vehicles' 1904 20 h.p. Thornycroft, crewed by Alan Park and Richard Westcott, after some valve trouble was also safely home and dry. We had an escort between us of two Land-Rovers and trailers, Maple's chauffeur-driven Jaguar and the Maxi and clearly enthusiasm at Leyland Cars for its historic heirloom runs high, two other apprentices keen on their restoration being David Blackwell and Anora Sandarford. And at least we had started, which is more than 30 of the intended starters managed to do. All strength to Leyland and Historic Vehicles Ltd. for its worthy endeavours. — W.B.

#### Brighton Briefs

Roger Collings towed his Sixty Mercedes, now in touring trim, on to London for the Run on a trailer behind his R-type Continental Bentley.

Cecil Clutton was on the oldest car in the Run, Palumbo's 1894 1½ h.p. Benz, which arrived safely after a spot of temperament soon after the start. The 17-year-old Hon. Ralph Montagu had a successful run on the NMM's 1903 De Dion

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**BRIGHTON TAILPIECE:** The Tylers on their 1899 Decauville heading into the Sussex sun.

