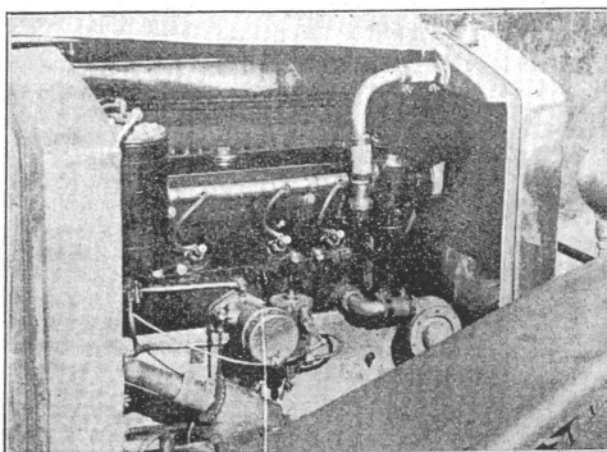


CARS ON THE ROAD

By EDGAR N. DUFFIELD

CCIV.—THE 15.5 H.P. (2-LITRE) DIATTO

SOME men," said honest Izaak Walton, speaking of anglers, "are born so." Some of us really believe that nothing can be favourably comparable to a first-class English car. Others look to France, others to Germany or Austria, yet others to America; but I have never come across anybody really experienced among the world's cars who did not esteem very highly everything proceeding from Italy. Alfa-Romeo, Ansaldo, Aurea, Bianchi, Ceirano, Diatto, F.A.S.T., F.I.A.T., Florentia, Isotta-Fraschini, Itala, Lancia, O.M., Rapide, Stella—was there ever, is there now, a bad car built in Italy? Was there ever, is there now, any but a really *good* car produced there? I cannot think of one, although I have quite an international black-list of my own, at the back of my head. A number of very good Italians have met very middling luck in the matter of their British representation, but that is relatively unimportant. There is no getting away from the fact that a representative Italian is a very sturdy yet very seductive machine, and the two-litre Diatto of today is an excellent exemplification of this fact. Handled in Britain, ever since the War, by Captain Cyril Durlacher, A.M.I.A.E., it is more widely and more favourably known than are many cars on which almost infinitely more "boosting" has been brought to bear; but then Durlacher did not "drift" into the motor-car business. He was a Wolseley apprentice when those words meant very much; he went from Wolseley to Rolls-Royce, from there to Sheffield-Simplex, always falling on his feet, always dropping down among motor-cars decidedly out of the common run, and always learning the essential lesson that the best car buildable could not be for ever of good repute unless backed by efficient and prompt "service." He probably has still a fortune to make, but he must be making it very pleasantly. A doctor in Kingston-on-Thames has been running a Diatto 2-litre saloon

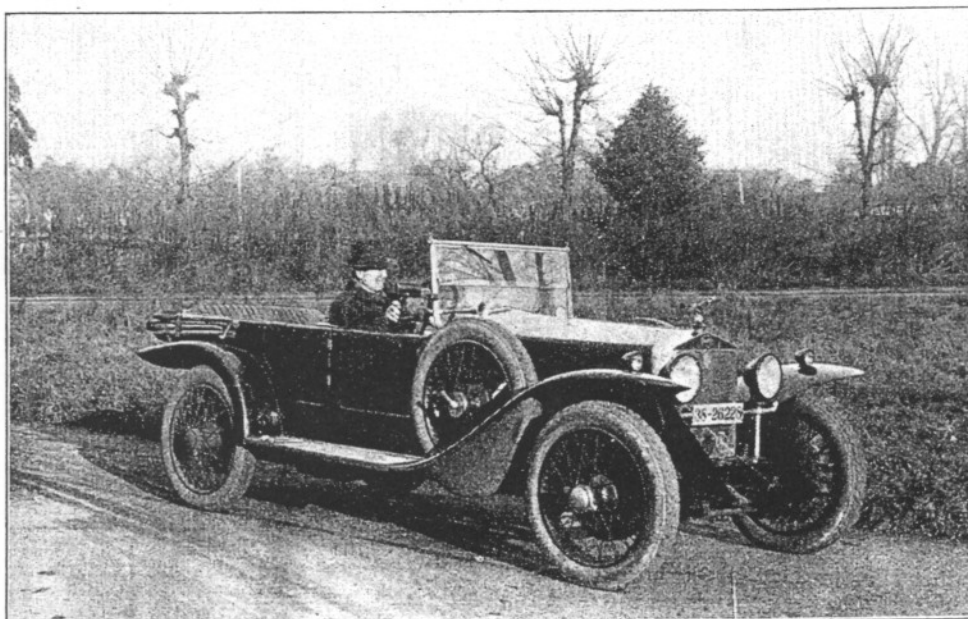


Only the Autovac and t.d. Zenith are carried on the off side of the Diatto power plant. Magneto, dynamo and starting motor, all by Robert Bosch, are on the exhaust side of the block.

for two or three years now. I meet him, or overhaul him, or am overhauled by him, every time I venture from home. He must do tens of thousands of miles every year, during his professional visits alone. His car is always a picture, and is always running like a—like a catalogue-description! And that's the sort of stuff that car-buyers value. They all expect it, of course; some get it, and must be counted very happy men.

For 1927 the 2-litre Diatto remains very much as it was, the chassis modifications being unimportant, indeed—at least so far as I am concerned—almost impossible to discern. The motor, clutch and gear-box are integrally assembled. The bore and stroke remain 99.7 by 100 mm., giving a piston-displacement of 1,995 cc. and a Treasury rating of 15.5 h.p. A detachable head is fitted, but its junction with the

Capt. Cyril Durlacher, A.M.I.A.E., the British concessionnaire for the car, at the wheel of a 1927 15.5 h.p. sports two-litre Diatto.

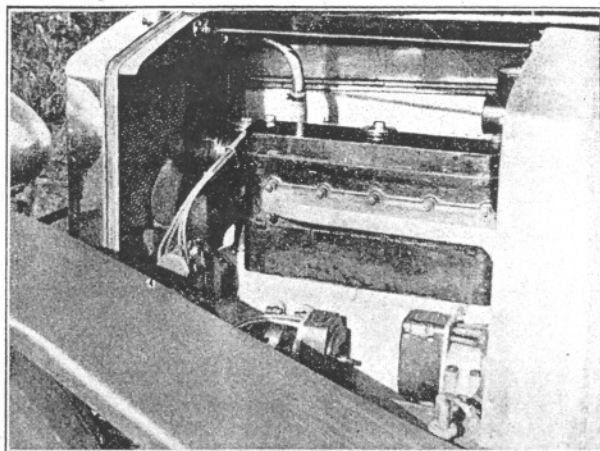


cylinder block is not gasketed, gas-tightness being secured by nice "facing" of the surfaces opposed. The overhead camshaft is carried in three bearings, and both valves and rocker-gear are, of course, interchangeable. The constructors continue to use four "idle" cams, whose function is merely to steady the camshaft, these idle cams having double noses, against which the corresponding pairs of extra rockers are held, by strong springs. Camshaft, water pump, magneto, cooling fan and dynamo enjoy a common drive through a vertical shaft skew-gearred from the crankshaft, and an extension of the same distribution shaft operates the oil pump. Lubrication is by pressure, with a really accessible relief-valve outside the crank-case, plus an oil-level indicator on the base-chamber and a needle-type gauge on the instrument board. The sump is replenished through one large filler centred in the cover of the valve-gear, and the pump-feed is very thoroughly filtered.

Three phosphor-bronze bearings, white-metal lined, carry the crankshaft. Iron pistons are fitted on the normal and aluminium on the sports models. Connecting rods are tubular on all models. By the way, the car which I tried most recently was the new two-litre "sports."

Cooling is effected by pump-pressure, by a wooden-bladed propeller-type fan, positively driven, and by a very large and slightly cellular radiator. Ignition is by Bosch magneto, and the lighting and starting installation are also by Robert Bosch. A Zenith triple-diffuser carburettor is fitted on the sports and a Solex on the normal chassis. Fuel supply is by Autovac, fitted, like the carburettor, on the off-side of the chassis, the magneto, lighting dynamo and starter being on the near, or exhaust, side. The ignition wiring is very neatly conduited, and the plugs are slightly inclined, but are *not*—as are so many cars' plugs nowadays—at all "socketed" in the block.

A single-plate, Ferodo-faced clutch is used, pressure to grip the driven plate being supplied by a series of peripheral springs. The centrally-controlled gear-box furnishes four forward combinations, and trans-



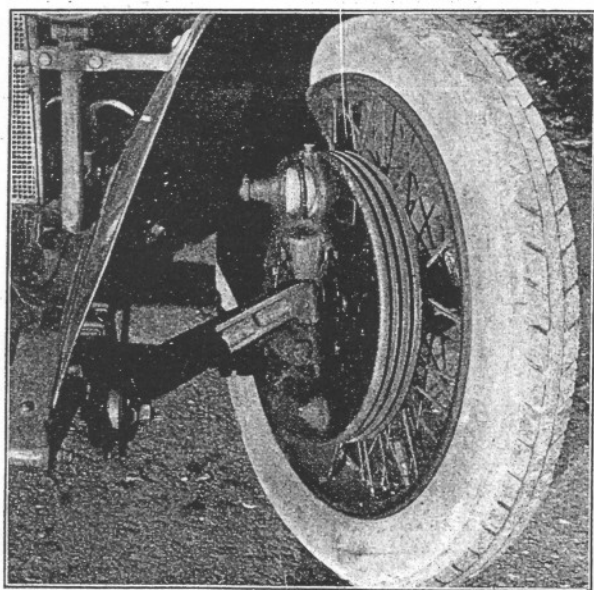
A glimpse of the electrical accessories, the encasement of the vertical shaft driving the overhead valve gear, the magneto and the positively-driven cooling fan on the 15.5 h.p. sports two-litre Diatto of 1927.

mission is through a propeller shaft encased in a torque tube which is rigidly attached to the rear axle. Final drive is through spirally hobbled gearing, with very large ball bearings, and a type of filler is used for the differential casing to which it is impossible to give too much oil. At the fore end the propeller shaft has an enclosed mechanical coupling, automatically lubricated, and the torque tube is anchored to the gear-box by means of a spherical housing. After removal of the driving shafts, the differential set may be withdrawn in one assembly from its casing. Steering is by worm and segment, and the rake of the pillar is adjustable. Suspension is by semi-elliptics all round.

Diatto-Perrot four-wheel brakes are brought into action by the use of the pedal. There is next to nothing to adjust, and very little to lubricate. The brake lever expands shoes only in the drums on the rear hubs. Six Rudge-Whitworth wheels, fitted with 820-120 mm. Dunlop cord tyres, are standard equipment, and other British units of the equipment are a Smith speedometer, revolution-counter and clock. Both electrical and bulb horns are provided. The body standardised is a roomy four-five-seated tourer, with a very staunch treatment of things like screen-supports, spare-wheel carriers, grid, etc. The one-man hood has (plated) steel "sticks," the screen is V-sectioned, and the upholstery and finish as a whole are first-rate.

A nicer thing to handle than this car it would be difficult to meet. Capt. Durlacher evidently makes great use of his ignition lever, and the degree of compression maintained is such that one must, but for a 70-75 m.p.h. car this Diatto can be driven very slowly on top gear. Two sets of ratios are available, 4.5, 6.4, 10.4 and 17.5 to 1, or 4.16, 6, 9.6 and 16.1 to 1. There is clearly just the difference that will be useful in legislating for the use of open or closed bodywork, and this is as well, because although the chassis has a wheelbase only of 9 ft. 4½ in., it has a surprising body-space, rather tempting one to fit a saloon, or other enclosed type of four-six-seater. The wings fitted are, as can be seen from our pictures, such as to help speed not at all, yet a perfectly standard 2-litre sports Diatto, with the coachwork and equipment illustrated, will lap Brooklands at 70 m.p.h. all day long.

The motor is notably quiet, the clutch and gear-box

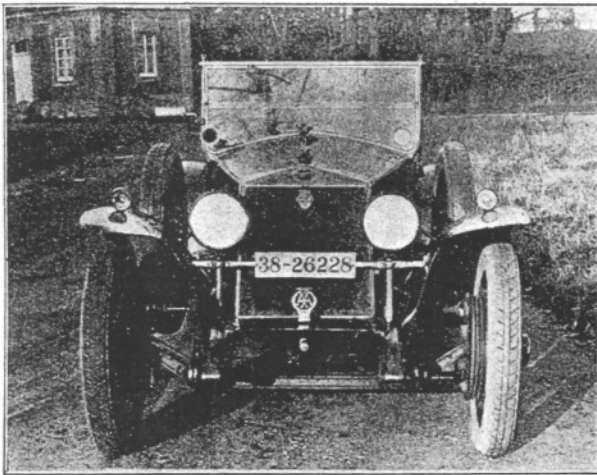


Diatto-Perrot four-wheel braking and the sharply castored steering pivot are the features of this photograph, with, additionally, the very liberal lock available.

could not be bettered, steering is perfect, and suspension faultless—except from the standpoint of those who like to rise or fall 1 ft. for every 3 ft. they progress! But people of that kind do not, I suppose, buy the Diatto, which is just as well both for them and it.

Braking is first-rate. Here are some of the very few four-wheelers of which not even I am afraid, so that one can drive this car as rapidly as it is safe, or at least prudent, to drive anything on British roads. One need never get windy.

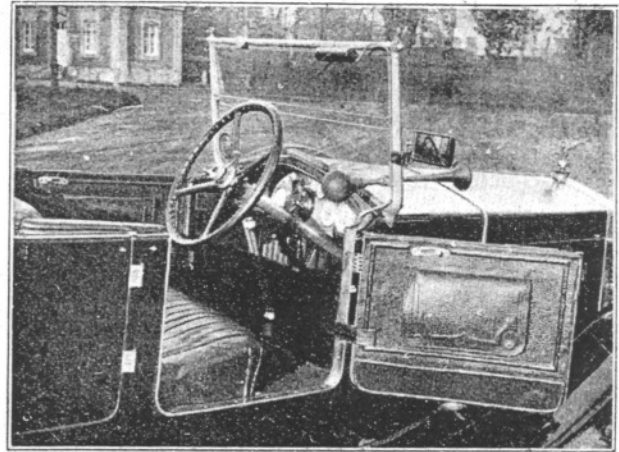
The engine-power still available, *after* one has decided that one may as well cut-out, is astounding. I should like very much to see a Diatto enginegraph, and particularly like to pin it firmly down in front of the noses of the poor fish who say "But you *must* have a six nowadays, my dear fellow!" This engine has better acceleration, far more power, and incom-



In this picture one enjoys to the full the clean drawing of the 15.5 h.p. Diatto's "front," with the radiator now characteristic of Italian ideas, a very straight-forward axle, and a (detachable) mud-shield between the dumb-irons.

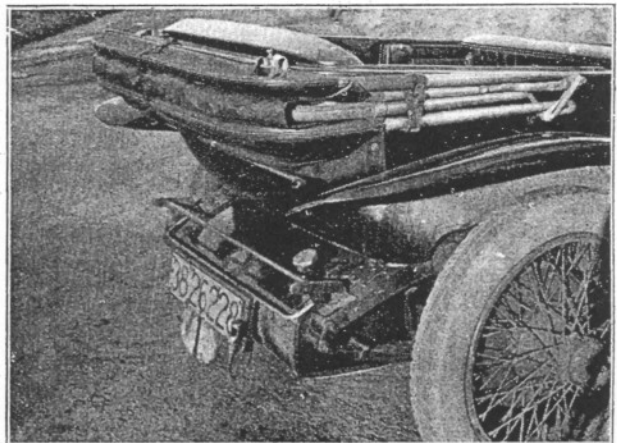
parably more silence and refinement of running than at least one very vehemently boomed six of the same cylinder capacity, despite the fact that the claims advanced on behalf of that car would really make unthinking people believe that a car must be good because it has six cylinders. Fortunately for lots of us, there is much in the idea that if people say certain things sufficiently long and sufficiently loudly, they come to believe these things themselves. One does not need to exercise any psychological stunts, however, on the Diatto. The car does the work. One does not have to say "How splendid! How I love to drive the Diatto!" One enjoys its use automatically, must do so even if one approaches the car with prejudice.

The chassis price is £525, and the complete car illustrated costs £695, with the *lira* where it is. The Diatto is therefore not selling on price-appeal. It will not, for a long time, do so. It is not a car for



Italian nattiness of instrument-board lay-out, joinery trimming and upholstery on the Diatto two-litre. Note also the easy reach of the left-handed change-speed and brake levers.

people who say "How much shine and glitter and pinkiness can I get for my money?" It is a machine appealing only to discerning, *educated* motorists, and therefore we shall be a long while reaching the point at which we say "Another of those infernal Italians!" every five minutes; but I know no two-litre which I should like better to own, and very few which I should like so well to be mine. Anybody who has £695 to spend, and does not feel obliged—as so many do—to buy a British car, wants to try the 15.5 h.p. Diatto. It is among those which do their own conversion, and although I did not ask Capt. Durlacher what sort of cruising consumption he obtains, this should be very light, because the chassis weighs only 17½ cwt., and the completely equipped car, with all reservoirs filled and two spare wheels and tyres, inside 25 cwt.



A 13-gallon fuel tank of very stout gauge, feeding through an Autovac installation, and the luggage grid (included in the standard equipment) on the 15.5 h.p. Diatto.

Another German Fusion

WORD comes from Berlin that the Siemens-Schuckert and the N.A.G. companies have combined forces. The former produced Protos cars and the latter N.A.G. cars and commercial vehicles. After the present series of cars are completed, the vehicles produced will be known as N.A.G.-Protos, and the manufacture will be concentrated in the N.A.G. factory.

The Season of Goodwill

"In view of the approaching festive season, and the preparations that have to be made for it, I hope you will take a lenient view of this case," pleaded a motorist who was summoned at Bradford for obstruction. It appeared that he had gone into a music shop to change some pianola rolls. A kindly-disposed Bench took the hint and dismissed the summons.

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Ansaldo 12-40
h.p. J.1
Ansaldo 14-50
h.p. H.S.3
Argyll G.1
Armstrong-
Siddeley G.2
Armstrong-
Siddeley,
(Fourteen) .G.1
Arrol-
Johnston J.1
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Clyno J.2
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Crossley Sports F.15

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Daimler, New
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De Dion-
Bouton J.1
Delage 14 h.p. 313
Delage
40-50 h.p. H.S.3
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Diatto J.1
Dodge G.3
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Essex J.1
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Fiat H.S.1
Fiat 40 h.p. H.S.4
Ford Ford Model
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G.W.K. G.1
Gwynne G.2
Hampton J.1

H.E. H.S.4
Hillman H.S.1
Hispano-
Suiza J.1
Horstmann G.1
Hudson J.1
Humber J.1
Hupmobile G.1
Imperia J.1
Isotta-
Fraschini J.1
Itala J.L.B.
Jowett J.1
Kissel G.3
Lagonda G.1
Lagonda 2 litre H.S.4
Lancia J.1
Lancia-Lambda H.S.4
Lanchester J.1
Lea-Francis J.1
Lorraine J.1
Mathis H.S.1
Maxwell G.2
Mercedes 321
Minerva J.L.B.
Moon G.3

Morris Oxford
and Cowley G.2
Overland G.5
Packard G.3
Paige-
Jewett G.3
Palladium J.1
Panhard-
Levasseur E.L.B.
Peugeot H.S.1
Phoenix G.1
Pierce-Arrow G.3
Renault J.1
Renault 26.9
and 45 F.7
Rhode 11 h.p. J.1
Riley J.1
Rolls-Royce K.1.R.
Rover "8" J.1
Rover 9-20 J.1
Rover 14-45 H.S.3
Salmson H.S.4
Senechal H.S.4
Singer J.1
Standard J.1
Star J.1

Steyr J.1
Straker-
Squire G.1
Studebaker G.3
Sunbeam
14 h.p. 366.A
Sunbeam
14 h.p. Sports 369
Sunbeam
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Sunbeam
20 h.p. Sports 369
Sunbeam 3 litre 371
Swift J.8
Talbot H.S.4
Trojan J.1
Unic G.1
Vauxhall J.1
Vauxhall
(30-98) H.S.1
Voisin J.1
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Knight J.1
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CONTRIBUTIONS

Articles on automotor technology and touring, or of other interest to motor vehicle users, are invited, especially from overseas

Photographs of beauty, curiosity or other interest are also in request, whether made in the British Isles or elsewhere in the Empire

All contributions should be addressed to The Editor, should bear the name and address of sender, be adequately protected against damage in transit, and accompanied by directed and stamped covering for their return if unsuitable

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Matter and blocks for insertion in each Thursday's issue should be in the Offices by first post on each Saturday, if proofs required, or on Monday if not. Small corrections can be accepted up to 12 noon on each Tuesday

REMITTANCES

Cheques, Postal Orders, etc., should be made payable to the Proprietors of the "AUTO." and crossed "London County and Westminster Bank, Ltd., Account Payee Only." All communications upon Advertisement or Commercial Matters should be addressed to The Manager of the "AUTO."

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DIARY OF CURRENT AND FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Club Secretaries and others desirous of announcing the dates of important fixtures are invited to send particulars for inclusion in the following list:—

1926	
Mar. 27	Redditch M.C. and Car Club Trial
Apr. 2-3	M.C.C. London-Land's End Trial
Apr. 17	J.C.C. Spring Meeting at Brooklands
Apr. 21-May 8	International Oil Exhibition at Crystal Palace
May 30	Indianapolis 500-mile Race, U.S.A.
June 5	J.C.C. High-Speed Reliability Trial at Brooklands
June 27	French Grand Prix Race at Miramas
July 17	J.C.C. Long Distance Production Car Race at Brooklands

INDEX FOR VOL. XXX

The Index for Vol. XXX of "Auto" (January to December, 1925) is now ready, and can be obtained from the Publishers, 36, Great Queen Street, Kingsway, W.C.2. Price 1s. per copy (1s. 2d. post free).

EDITORIAL COMMENT.

Contrary to Practice

Now that the police authorities are making "dangerous driving" the basis of summonses against motorists, an important point in procedure has been raised. While it must be admitted that it is, generally speaking, much better to prosecute on the ground of dangerous driving than for the mere technical offence of exceeding the speed limit, it should be recognised that there are cases in which there may be very strong conflicting opinions. If justice is to be done in these cases it is essential that both points of view should be fully investigated. It rather looks as though the police authorities were inclined to be much too keen on ensuring the success of their new tactics, as they are refusing to divulge the specific acts of dangerous driving which are alleged. When application is made for these details it appears the Commissioner of Police replies that it would be contrary to practice to furnish the particulars asked for. Surely that is a new line in British justice, and we can hardly think that, now attention has been drawn to the point, the Home Secretary will do otherwise than speedily put the matter on a more reasonable footing. In all other cases where a person is charged with an offence, the specific acts in respect of which the prosecution is launched have to be set out. "Dangerous driving" by itself is much too wide-sweeping to be used as a sufficient description of the offence, and if the defendant does not know until he stands before the Bench what acts the prosecution will seek to prove, he is unfairly handicapped in regard to his rebutting evidence or material witnesses.


The Trade and Competitions

To the many attempts which have been made from time to time to preserve club competitions for the amateur driver, pure and simple, the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders are now adding one which will have the weight of the mighty Olympia bond behind it. To the amateur that may mean little, but the manufacturer "takes notice" when he hears the word "bond," for he knows that it is a powerful and far-reaching instrument. The new action was foreshadowed by Mr. J. K. Starley in the recent dinner at the B.A.C. at which the Dewar Trophy was formally presented, and although we gather that it will not affect the Easter competitions—it is recognised that arrangements have already been made for these—it seems likely that it will considerably affect other meetings this season. It is true that with the ban on hill-climbs held on the open road there has been a considerable curtailment of competition activity among local clubs, but Mr. Starley mentioned that the S.M.M.T. was recently confronted with a calendar in which no less than

CARS ON THE ROAD

By EDGAR N. DUFFIELD

CXLV.—THE 15.5 H.P. TWO-LITRE DIATTO

 CAPTAIN CYRIL DURLACHER, A.M.I.A.E., started to represent the Società Anonima Autocostruzioni Diatto di Torino, in the British Isles, very soon after he was demobilised from the R.A.S.C.

I do not know, but I do not suppose that he has sold more than 100 Diatto cars and chassis all the while that he has been handling them, but he is very happy, because every one has "found a good home," has fallen, it would seem, into the hands of somebody who loves it, and treats it accordingly. As consistent readers of my impressions will be aware, I have a very high opinion of the Diatto, because although its producers may even, today, be turning out only 40 or 50 chassis per week, of the standard models—apart, I mean, from cars built to purchasers' personal specifications, for racing, or other particular purposes—they have in quite a few years won their way to a position of very real importance in Italy, and throughout Europe as a whole. I should, indeed, call the Diatto folk the Bentleys of Italy. Other firms are immensely bigger, financially and as to output, but no Italian judge of cars has anything but nice

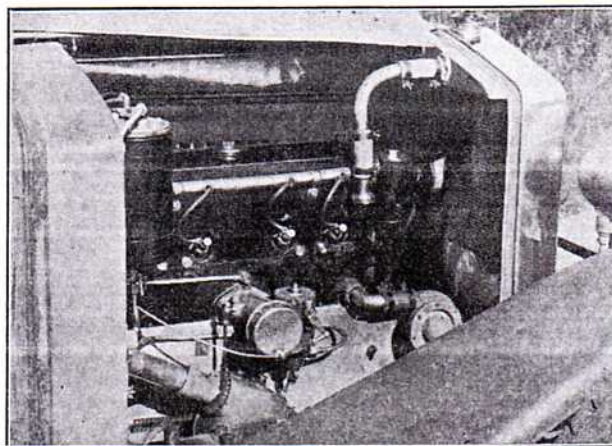
words to express his opinion of the Diatto, and one has only to drive 10 miles upon a 1926 chassis to know why this is so.

The engine-dimensions are highly unconventional in their ratio, because a bore of 79.7 mm. is very seldom found in association with so short a stroke as

100 mm. Why these proportions were employed one does not know; it cannot have been merely to keep within the 2,000 c.c. Probably the Diatto designers think that the long-stroke tendency has been overdone. Anyhow, in the result one gets a remarkably smooth engine. Cranking it, one meets a very high compression, but the motor's performance remains perfectly smooth until one has exceeded 3,000 r.p.m., as registered on the instrument-board. After that one knows that one is behind a four-cylindered engine, but up to 3,000 revs., at which the car's speed is

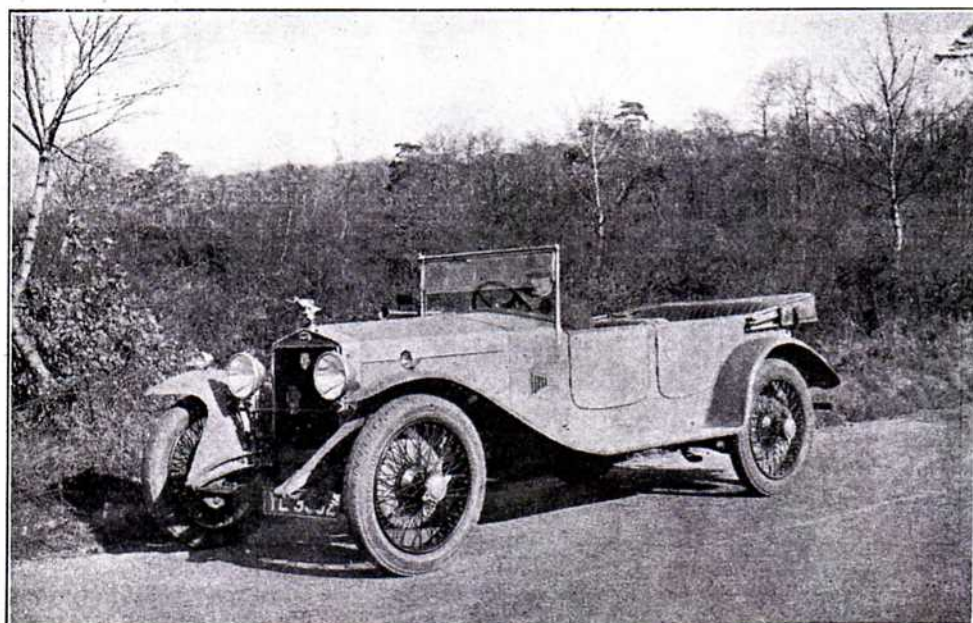
above 60 m.p.h. (65, according to the speedometer), the performance of the motor is very silky indeed, bearing in mind that it is professedly a sports job.

Motor, clutch-pit and gear-box are one assembly, three-point slung from the main frame. The monobloc cylinders have a detachable head, the junction



Of course, the power-plant of the 15.5 h.p. Diatto is very sightly. Viewed from either side, everything is extremely box-like, although none of the "bits" is at all inaccessible. On the off-side the carburettor is the only accessory.

Capt. Cyril Durlacher, A.M.I.A.E., at the wheel of a 15.5 h.p. Diatto Sports Two-Litre, unpainted, but selling when thoroughly well-finished at £695.



of it and the block being gasketless, thanks to good facing. In the head are the three bearings of the camshaft, which keeps the valves busy through rocker-gear that is conventional except for the employment of a set of "idle" rockers intended to damp-out any vibration set up by the "working" set, the principle being that the extra rockers are opposed to doubly-nosed cams, so that the former can be moved only against the resistance of fairly stubborn springs.

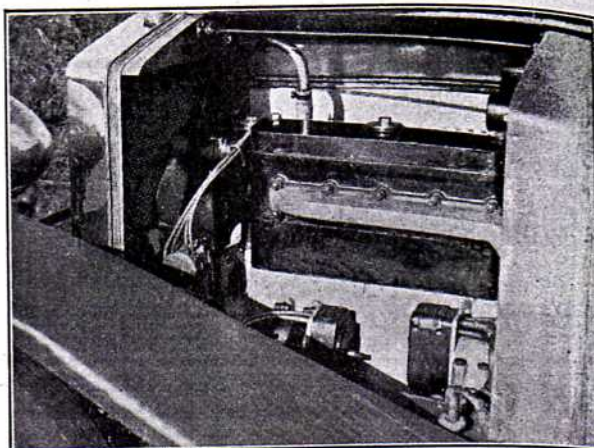
Camshaft, water-pump, magneto drive, cooling fan and lighting dynamo are all driven through a single vertical shaft, helically geared to the crankshaft. Aluminium alloy pistons, and tubular duralumin connecting-rods are employed. The main shaft has only three bearings, but the journals are uncommonly lengthy and also of liberal section, their work being assisted by a double-duty ball bearing which looks after after-thrust.

The engine is oiled by a gear pump also driven off the vertical shaft operating the valve-gear, etc. There are an external relief-valve, a level-gauge on the side of the crankcase, just inside the steering box, so to speak, and a needle-type pressure-gauge on the instrument-board. The crank-case is replenished through a large filler in the valve-gear cover, topsides.

Fuel feed is by Autovac, ignition is by magneto, and cooling is effected by a gear-type pump and a positively-driven propeller-type fan rotated by the fore-end of the camshaft, and the handsome radiator is of such ample area as to demand the use of blanking-off sheets in Britain at this time of year.

A single-plate Ferodo-to-steel clutch communicates the drive to a centrally-controlled four-speed gear-box, the engagement of the various combinations being very clearly certifiable, although the mechanism is of the rocking ball-joint type. From the gear-box transmission is by a tubularly enclosed shaft with an encased universal, automatically lubricated, on its forward end. In the rear the torque tube is bolted rigidly to the axle casing. Final drive is by spiral bevels, and after drawing the axle shafts the differential, with the propeller shaft, may be removed from the housing when the upper half of the casing has been unbolted.

Use of a pedal actuates brakes in drums upon all four wheels. That of the brake lever expands shoes



On the near side only the dynamo and starting motor break the perfect smoothness of the 15.5 h.p. Diatto's engine. The magneto is located at the extreme fore-end of the block, on the near-side, because of the source of its drive.

in the rear drums only. Both foot and hand brakes are pleasantly progressive. At 40 m.p.h. the four-wheel brakes will bring the car safely and steadily to a standstill in about 25 yards.

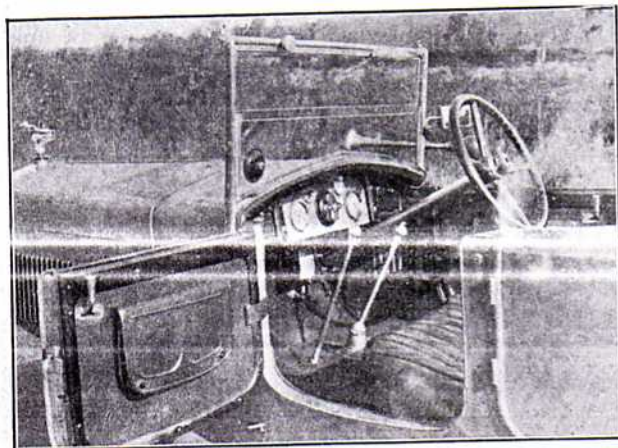
Semi-elliptic springs are fitted back and front. All springs are very camberless. They function admirably; in fact, I should say that the outstanding merits of this car, apart from its smoothness of engine, are the suspension and steering. Both are excellent. Three, if not four, steering-rakes are available, and although (from outside) the steering gear appears to be merely an ordinary, worm-and-segment outfit, it is evidently well equipped with ball races, and beautifully made.

The fuel-tank is said to hold roughly 13 gallons. In its rear is quite an unusual detail, a bumper-bar which on examination proves also to be a luggage carrier, the protector being mounted telescopically upon two robust spindles which protrude beyond the spare-wheel carrier, so that by releasing two thumb-screws and pulling the bumper farther out, or pushing it inward, one gets a grid of varying dimensions. A very neat fitting, this, and one quite new to me.

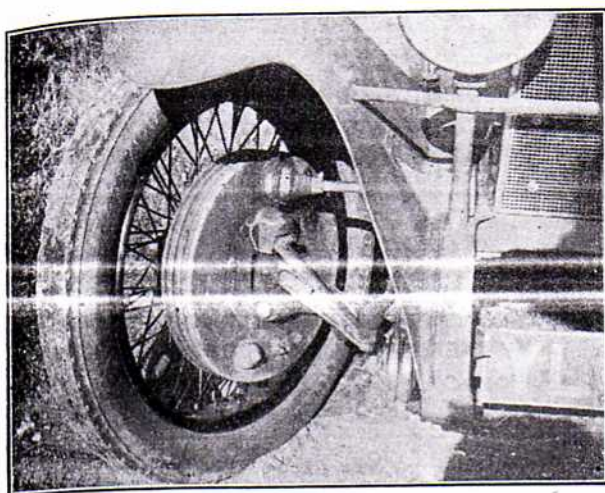
Rudge-Whitworth wheels are standardised, with 820-120 mm. tyres. The four-five-seated car illustrated weighs 25 cwt., to an ounce, filled up, but without human freight, so that it has a weight-to-volume ratio of approximately 1.4 lb. per c.c.

It is not, therefore, a particularly light car, and that fact makes remarkable its acceleration. On fourth speed it will mount from 10 to 30 m.p.h. in 10 secs., on third in 7½ secs., and on second in 5. It will do 36 m.p.h. on second, 59 on third, and a shade over 70 on fourth. At 40 to 50 m.p.h. it is a most pleasant companion, a musical drone of the exhaust smothering any other sounds. It will run perfectly smoothly at 8 m.p.h. on fourth, and probably still more slowly, as when I tried slowing the engine was decidedly coolish.

With a wheelbase of 9 ft. 10½ in. there is obviously body-space sufficing to give liberal leg-reach both for the front and rear seats' occupants. The body of the car tried was unpainted, as can be seen, but



Two lockable cupboards are provided on the instrument-board of the 15.5 h.p. Diatto, and change-speed and brake levers are comfortably within the driver's reach, though centrally disposed.



One of the brakes on the **Diatto** front wheels; a pedal actuates brakes in drums upon all the four wheels.

the doors had the nice cabinet-work panelling common on better-grade Italians for so long, and the treatment of instrument-board, hood-irons, upholstery, etc., was very creditable. As illustrated, but painted to choice, the price (with one spare wheel) is £695, but I was glad to see that the spare-carrier has a "bucket" or "shoe" for two wheels.

Now to performance. The starter is evidently positively driven. It works very quietly. Very little pressure is required upon the clutch pedal to effect complete disengagement, and the gears change most prettily. Steering is exceptionally light, with a nice degree of self-correction, and this car, run with three men aboard, is one of the best sprung which I have driven for twelve months. Such suspension is apt to mislead strangers. I take little notice of speedometers, so many of which exaggerate, but one needs to watch them on cars like this 15.5 h.p. Diatto. It gets going much more readily than one realises, with the consequence that, driving as I do on the hand-brake, when one wishes to slow down one is apt to find that one has been travelling very much more quickly than one knew.

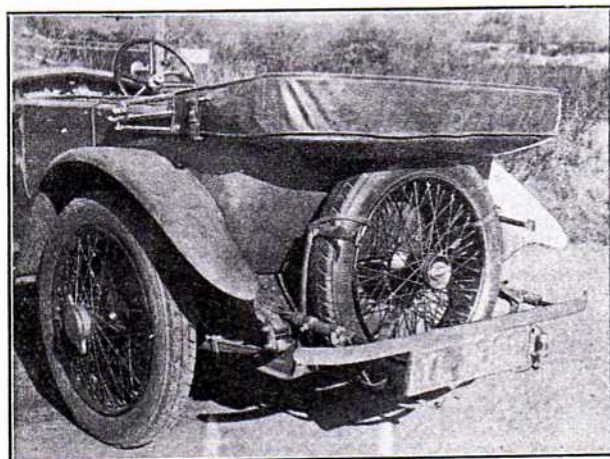
Good suspension and steering, associated with a smooth engine, play the very deuce with pace-calculation, so far as I am concerned. No; we had no "incidents," but after trying the car's speed, wishing to ease up for an unmarked cross-road which I know to be fruitful of surprise to the unwary, I was astounded to find how deliberately I had to use the hand-brake to get down to what I considered a safe pace.

And that is the wonder of the Diatto—that,

weighing what she does, she should get going so readily, and develop so much power with so little fuss. I wonder if we shall gradually swing back to short strokes, even to "square" cylinders? Nowadays one seldom meets an engine with a bore of 80 mm. (which, all but 0.3 of a millimetre, this is) with less than 130 mm. of stroke, and it is not very long since 80-140's (and even one 80-149) were to be met. I should suspect that much of the Diatto's smoothness proceeds directly from her short stroke. The duplication of rockers, their use as camshaft-dampers, will clearly go a long way to kill the sound commonly met with overhead valve-gear, but this engine has a smoothness as to its main shaft which is something quite apart from mere absence of noise. It is impossible to feel any crankshaft vibration whatever until the revolution-counter's needle gets to about 3,200, and even all out there is nothing but the punch of a lively, zestful "four."

On her gears, too, she is notably smoother than a majority of the Continental products of today. The price is not low, certainly; but this is a 70 m.p.h. car, it is very nicely finished as to its chassis, and we may be sure that the standard body, as completed by the Albany Carriage Co., Ltd., is just as sightly to those who like the gloss of coat after coat of fine varnish.

The 15.5 h.p. Diatto is not cheap, but it is very, very good, and a more tractable, docile machine of its capabilities one is exceedingly unlikely to meet at a lower price, this season.



An uncommon type of luggage-carrier on the 15.5 h.p. **Diatto**. The bumper is telescopically mounted, so that it may be pulled out, to varying distances, to provide a grid of the required capacity. When "set," its position is lockable by a couple of thumb-screws.



The Trade and Club Events

As mentioned by Mr. J. K. Starley at the presentation of the Dewar Trophy to the Rover Company at the R.A.C. recently, the S.M.M.T. has had under consideration the possibility of restricting the number of events in which trade drivers may compete and it is likely that the control will take the form of making it an offence under the Olympia Bond to advertise successes in competitions which have not been approved. It is not likely, however, that such a scheme will be put into operation until after the Easter events have been run.

A Paper on Vibration

At a meeting of the Institution of Automobile Engineers to be held on Tuesday, March 23, in the Council Room of

the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, 83, Pall Mall, London, S.W. 1, at 7 p.m., Prof. J. J. Guest will give a lecture on "The Main Free Vibrations of an Autocar," illustrated by means of models, to be followed by a discussion. An invitation is extended to visitors interested in the subject to be present at the meeting and a résumé of the paper may be obtained on application to the Secretary, the Institution of Automobile Engineers, Watergate House, Adelphi, London, W.C.2.

Ferry Closed

THE R.A.C. learns that the Goole-Howden Booth ferry is now closed to all motor traffic, the boat which conveyed cars and motor-cycles having been sunk during recent rough weather.

THE PASSING SHOW



AS I write, I don't know whether to talk about the Budget or the general strike. Truly, we live in difficult times!

Let us talk about the Budget. I take it the Budget is still a good subject of discussion, even if its many incidences are submerged in the flood of much more urgent matters that have come to the notice of men since May 3rd. I think I am right here, because while the general strike is over the effect of the Budget will be with us for all time—or at least for a year, which nowadays seems to be about the same thing.

Well, what about the Budget? I take it that from the point of view of the motorist, it was not too bad a Budget, nor was it too good. It was really nothing more nor less than we had been led to expect by the prophets who seem to have been much nearer the mark than usual. We had been told that the Chancellor intended to make a raid on the Road Fund. I don't think it needed much intelligence to foresee that. The whole thing was, of course, a colossal wangle. In the old days of motoring we had two organisations and at the head of one was a well-known personality whose sole idea of finance was to hoard. He hoarded accordingly, and when the time came for his organisation to be taken over by a newer and more virile association, all he had to turn over was a comparatively large sum of money. So far, good enough.

In the fulness of time he succeeded to the virtual control of the Road Board, and here, instead of recommending that the money as it came in should be devoted to its legitimate purpose of road construction and maintenance, he advised that it should still be hoarded. Later, when we got down to our present-day organisation, the same policy of hoarding was continued, until, at the beginning of the last financial year there was a sum of something like nineteen millions sterling standing to the credit of the Road Fund at the Treasury. Now, I ask you, if you were the Chancellor of the Exchequer at your wit's end to make things balance, what would you do if you found everybody broke to the world but one solitary department of the Government, and that department in possession of a cool nineteen millions? Would you raid it, or would you leave it alone? You need not bother to answer, because I should remind you of the story of the

commercial traveller who—but I will not tell it here. You all know it.

I quite agree that the raid on the Road Fund is a most immoral and unjustifiable proceeding, but I would have raided it myself had I been in Mr. Churchill's position. We knew it was coming and we have saved about three millions on the estimates. We were told it was going to be ten millions and the Chancellor has only taken seven! So at least we have a bit to be thankful for, if it is not much. I take it that the rest of the announcements concerning motors and the motorist will leave the private owner quite cold, except for the inevitable feeling of satisfaction which must come of knowing that the heavy brigade has got it where they deserve. I am not vindictive, but I cannot forget how they threw the private owner overboard and went all out for the horse-power tax, which favoured them and hurt us. Now, after doing incalculable damage to the roads and to the cause of motoring in general, they have been discovered and are condemned to pay their share towards the common fund. It may be that they have now cause to reflect that if they had not divided the house their last case might not have been as bad as the first. Of course, the increased taxes they will have to pay will all be passed on to the public, but that is another matter, and scarcely concerns us at the moment. The point is that they have got what they deserved for letting down the cause of motoring as a whole.

What intrigues me more than anything is the Chancellor's announcement that during the life of the present Government he hopes to re-introduce the petrol tax. I wonder! I take it Mr. Churchill knows the weight of the opposition to such a tax. He is up against the Customs and Excise people, and it seems clear that the great oil groups don't want such a tax. In point of fact, the former have already demonstrated beyond a shadow of a doubt that the petrol tax is an utter impossibility—that it cannot be administered and is a complete wash-out. We know how powerful the oil interests are and the enormous pressure they can exercise upon any Government. So who wants to lay any odds about a petrol tax?

Anyway, the Budget leaves most of us quite cold. Even eels, they say, get used to being skinned.

CYNICUS



The London-Edinburgh Run

IN spite of the S.M.M.T. ban, the Motor-Cycling Club has received 240 entries for its annual run to Edinburgh at Whitsuntide, and of this total 101 are cars. It is a very representative entry, no less than 45 makes being represented, including 17 Rileys, eight Alvis, six Austins, five Amilcars, five Salmsons, four A.C., four G.N.; three each Senechal, M.G. Sports; two each Armstrong-Siddeley, Bayliss-Thomas, Delage, Fiat, Frazer-Nash, Lea-Francis, Morris-Cowley, Standard, Sunbeam, Swift; one each A.B.C., Alfa-Romeo,

Ariel, Aston-Martin, Bentley, Bugatti, Ceirano, Chrysler, Clyno, Crossley, D.F.P., Diatto, F.N., Ford, Galloway, Gwynne, Jowett, Lancia-Lambda, Metallurgique, Palladium, Peugeot, Rover, S.P.A., Talbot, Trojan, and Windsor.

The run will start from Wrotham Park, near Barnet, on Friday next at 7 p.m., and it will finish at Croall's Garage, Edinburgh, on Saturday next, the first man being due to arrive at 7 p.m. The route is via Biggleswade, Grantham, Doncaster, Ilkley, Buckden, Hawes, Askrigg (the beginning of the 2½ miles non-stop ascent to Windgates Currack), Tan Hill, Carlisle, Moffat and Edinburgh.