

THE ALLARD REGISTER

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THE BULLETIN

September/October, 1978

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Our Hon. Secretary writes:-

"Whilst on holiday on the continent of Europe, my wife and I watched a speed hill-climb at Alle-de-Semois, Belgium, organised by the Belgium Racing Automobile Vintage Organisation. We joined up with member Dr. Pierre Haverland who was racing his Lotus. It was an extremely wet day and speeds were naturally slower than usual, but Pierre did well to reach 3rd fastest time of the day. It was a winding 2½ miles (4 kms.) course up through the heavily wooded Ardennes hillside and the finish line was at the Franco-Belgian frontier. One could imagine competitors speeding across the finishing line and having to brake extremely hard to prevent landing in the French Customs Post! The whole village of Alle-de-Semois was en fete for the day's racing - how these Continentalers enjoy their motor sport, with the snarl of open exhausts echoing up the village street which was, incidentally, part of the course!"

Member W. H. Dyer Jones of Rhode Island, U.S.A. is restoring a special-bodied Palm Beach Allard. He very kindly sent us a photo-copy of an article from "Old Cars", issue May, 1973 in which reference is made to this Frazer-backed Allard sports car in prototype form. We reproduce by kind permission of "Old Cars".

ALLARD WAS THE SPORTS CAR JOE FRAZER ALMOST BUILT, by Robert W. Forsyth.

In April, 1952 I visited the Ralph Horgan, Inc. Ford showroom in New York City to look at the new Ford Consul which had just arrived from England. My main interest in the car centered on its 4-cylinder 1508 cc Engine since I felt that with the incorporation of liners to reduce capacity it would be a real comer in the popular 1.5 litre competition class.

Larry Richards, a Horgan salesman, introduced himself and before long the talk turned to sports cars. It seemed that we both had the same plans for the Consul engine.

But what chassis should we use? Larry told me he had been in touch with Sydney Allard in England and that Allard was thinking about a small sports roadster based on the Consul and Zephyr engines, and before the afternoon was over I had been invited by Larry Richards to design the car. Naturally, I jumped at the chance.

My original design employed a tubular frame which was inspired by the layout utilized in the Jowett Jupiter 1.5 litre high-performance chassis developed by E.R.A. Ltd. The 95-inch wheelbase was sufficient to accommodate both the Consul and Zephyr engines with a reasonable front/rear weight distribution (54:46 for the Consul) which would give the car a desired understeering characteristic.

After a few weeks the plans were ready and Larry sent them to Sydney Allard. In July I entered the Army and that was the last I heard about the Allard project until March, 1952 when Larry sent me a letter. It stated that although the first batch of new Allard Palm Beach models were due in New York the next month my design had not been followed. Larry wasn't too happy about this, nor the fact that the front end design was "not satisfactory". Could I re-design the car in a hurry?

I applied for leave and rushed to New York. The sheet metal alterations were completed in two days and we hustled to the DeGuia Brothers in Connecticut to discuss the changes. The brothers were true sheet metal artists. Could they get the job done in less than a week? Yes, they said, by working around the clock and that's just what they did.

During the course of the re-design, Larry told me that Joe Frazer of Kaiser-Frazer fame had become interested in the project through his Graham-Paige Corporation and that he was anxious to produce a plastic-bodied version of the Palm Beach. Using the 96-inch wheelbase chassis as supplied by Sydney Allard I prepared a new body design for the car before returning to Fort Belvoir. While this design was not used at the time because of time constraints, I utilized it as the basis for the subsequent Allard/Dodge.

A visionary, and one of the builders of the American Automobile Industry, Joe Frazer in the late 1940's felt that there was a market for a well-built, compact car with a reasonable price tag. While Joe was a good salesman, he could not get the directors of Graham-Paige to get very enthusiastic about the fibre-glass Allard since most of these gentlemen were "Wall Street and Stock Market oriented and not action and manufacturing oriented". Still, Joe did not give up entirely. He had a summer home in Newport,

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Rhode Island, and heard about some experimental plastic work going on at Anchorage. Plastics up the Bay.

Anchorage, under the direction of Bill Dyer, became interested in the possibilities of using glass and resin to make large marine shapes and had his firm, The Anchorage Inc. of Warren, Rhode Island, spin-off a company which he called Anchorage Plastics Corporation to build his famous dinghies out of reinforced plastics and to do experimental work with the material. In addition to the regular line of dhows and dinghies, Anchorage built a couple of thirty-foot landing craft for the Navy, three forty-foot picket boats for the Coast Guard, and the body for a thirty-two foot amphibious truck for the Army. At the time, these were the largest shapes that had ever been formed in re-inforced plastics, and Anchorage became famous.

On the basis of this back-ground, Bill Dyer and Joe Frazer got together and agreed that Anchorage Plastics would underwrite the cost of manufacturing a body to fit an automobile chassis which would be furnished by Graham-Paige.

Since Larry Richards had made contact with Joe Frazer previously, it was decided that the prototype Allard Palm Beach chassis would be a natural for the project.

Modified by the DeGuia Brothers in accordance with my redesign, the Allard was delivered to Anchorage by Larry and work commenced on the reinforced plastic body. The procedure was to make a reinforced plastic female mold using the hand-hammered aluminum body of the Palm Beach prototype as a plug and then cast a reinforced plastic body in the mold. This was accomplished successfully, the whole project setting something of a record from start to finish. Time did not permit the new design I had prepared to be used, however, Joe Frazer told me later that everybody he showed the drawings to was enthusiastic about the proposed new body configuration and that it was used for production planning.

On the basis of the success with the Allard, Anchorage in conjunction with Graham-Paige formed Glass Plastics International. This firm subsequently supplied men and materials to Simca in Paris for a reinforced plastic body program. In addition, the firm developed an oil storage tank and piping for oil pipelines.

Unfortunately, this pioneering effort of Glass Plastics was short-lived because of the principal's more pressing business interests.

Meanwhile, I was back in the Army. During that time the Allard Motor Company Inc. was organized with Larry Richards becoming its first General Manager. The principals in the firm were: Mr. Edger DeMeyer, Mr. Max Krumpholz, and Mr. Henry Szamota.

Mr. DeMeyer was Allard, Inc.'s first President and was succeeded in this capacity by Mr. Krumpholz. At the time Mr. DeMeyer was President of Cardee Distributing Corporation. Mr. Krumpholz owned a number of Chrysler Corporation and Packard dealerships in New England, and Mr. Szamota was the President of the H & S Truck Renting Corporation in New York City.

With my service time up in July, 1953 I joined Allard Motor Co. Inc. as its first sales manager. My primary assignment was to build an effective nationwide dealer organization. In addition, I was given the task of designing a new car since the Palm Beach, J2X, and K3 models simply weren't selling. In 1951 Allard, along with MG and Jaguar, was one of the "big three" among imported sports cars and the J2X's were mopping up the competition on road courses from coast to coast. But by 1953 the Allard escutcheon had become somewhat tarnished, mainly due to the inferior quality of the K3.

There were internal problems, too. The principals of Allard Inc. were impatient and disenchanted by the factory's profusion of models, lack of perception of the U.S. auto market, and the generally lackadaisical attitude of the factory executives.

We began exploring the possibility of teaming with a U.S. manufacturer. Since the J2X used Cadillac and Chrysler engines, our first thoughts were forming a relationship with one of these firms. We knew that the Corvette was about to be introduced and that Ford was working on their Thunderbird, but felt we had a marketable product with a proven name in sports car circles.

Our first contact with a U.S. manufacturer was provided by Joe Frazer who introduced us to H. S. Vance of Studebaker, who agreed to an Allard/Studebaker pilot project. The project, however, fell through and we turned to Chrysler. Our contact was A.G. Cunnings a New York Chrysler official who became extremely enthusiastic about an Allard/Dodge. With Mr. Cunnings' help, the project received generous Chrysler Corporation support.

My primary objective with the Allard/Dodge was to reduce manufacturing costs by minimizing assembly time. To this end, my original lay-outs employed a single-tube frame which, based on fabrication estimates, would have reduced the labor input by something like 50%. I looked at several improvements in the front suspension and decided to abandon the DeDion rear axle in favor of a less costly conventional design. To expedite the project, I even considered using the frame and suspension layout developed by Frank Kurtis for his highly successful sports-racing cars. His design was unique in that it employed a simple "solid" front axle with torsion bars and had an enviable competition record. With this in mind, I wrote to Mr. Kurtis to explore the possibilities of a license agreement.

Around this time Allard, Ltd. of England was in the throes of a financial pinch so

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I decided not to wait for the complete redesign. Instead, we took a stock Palm Beach chassis and had a Dodge engine and transmission dropped in so a car could be ready for promotional purposes in the least possible time. This project was completed in two weeks. Meanwhile, besides the design work, my time was also consumed with my original duties as Sales Manager.

Larry Richards visited the Allard factory in December, 1953 and returned with photographs of the prototype in the process of construction. I was delighted to see that the configuration followed my design of the Allard/Dodge in every detail.

However, this was the last important trip Larry would make for Allard, Inc.. His association was terminated due to a policy conflict with the Directors and I suddenly found myself General Manager of the company, replete with a large inventory of unsold Palm Beaches, K3's and J2X's.

Months went by and still no sign of an Allard/Dodge from the factory. Sales of existing models were uninspiring, parts and service were virtually nonexistent, and the factory had shown a singular lack of interest in appointing responsible dealers. Allard Inc. was losing money hand over fist and the principals, who had entered the venture strictly as investors had been devoting immense amounts of their valuable time and financial resources to shoring up the company while neglecting their own enterprises.

I outlined these problems in an August, 1954 letter to Sydney Allard and also mentioned the enthusiasm which 52 Dodge dealers showed about the Allard/Dodge in a random sampling. A number were ready to write deposit checks on the spot to insure early delivery. I also pointed out that by placing one car in only half the existing Dodge showrooms at that time Allard could surpass present total production of all Allards built to date.

But after long, hard thought about these possibilities I decided this was wishful thinking and closed my letter to Mr. Allard by saying that I would recommend Allard Motor Company Inc. be dissolved at the next Board of Directors' meeting. And in September, 1954 that's exactly what we did.

The Allard/Dodge, like the Allard-Frazer project, died a-borning but the prototype did appear at the 1956 London Motor Show and was offered with a Jaguar or Ford Zodiac engine. Its name had been changed to Palm Beach Mk. II.

Today, I own a Palm Beach Mk. II and every time I drive it I dream of the business which could have been built on it, how it could have perpetuated the Allard marque, and what a delight it could have been for the motoring enthusiast.

(Editor's note:- Mr. Dyer Jones is restoring the glass-fibre prototype referred to above. We thank him for the article but regret that we cannot reproduce the excellent photographs. We look forward to hearing of the progress he is making on the job of restoration.)

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We extend a very warm welcome to the following new members:-

B. Horne, Jr.	of Houston, Texas, U.S.A.	-
J. W. Kasper	" Albany, Oregon, U.S.A.	91K 1806.
G. A. Rose	" Hornsey, London, England.	K 273.

SERVICE TIPS FROM CHAMPION.

POLICE CAR IS MIS-LEAD

A police car that cannot travel over 60 miles per hour is a poor vehicle for pursuing speeders. Yet one of the cars in a pursuit fleet was experiencing that very problem, reports Champion Spark Plug Company.

Technicians checked all ignition and fuel system components but could not find the source of the problem. Then a look at the gasoline pump used to fill the tanks provided the clue. By using leaded fuel in the car that was to run on unleaded fuel only, the vehicle's catalytic converter became completely fouled with lead deposits.

The lesson to be learned is constant use of leaded fuel in a car equipped with a catalytic converter is harmful to the performance. While most gas stations are now equipped with pump nozzles that cannot put leaded fuel in cars that require the unleaded varieties, private and fleet gas facilities may not have such provisions.

There, it pays to make sure to double check before putting leaded fuels in cars equipped with catalytic converters.

FOR SALE

Pair of water pumps for Ford V8 engine. Contact our Hon. Secretary.

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We have received a glossy pamphlet from Elegant Motors Inc., describing their new 898, 2 plus 2 boat-tail Phaeton.

This smart sportscar body in fibre glass can be fitted on to your FOMOCO, G.M., Chrysler, Jaguar etc. chassis.

For further particulars write them at 829A Broad Ripple Ave., Indianapolis, Indiana 46220. U.S.A.