

THE ALLARD REGISTER

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THE BULLETIN

January/March, 1986

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Our Hon. Secretary writes: "Having regard to the fact that personal circumstances had not permitted me the time to attend to the Register Christmas card, our Asst. Hon. Secretary Jim Donick jumped into the breach at very short notice and produced a very smart card. I must say that it came as quite a surprise that I should have been the subject of the 1985 card. The event at which the photo was taken was the 1963 Inter-Club Team Hill Climb at Shelsley Walsh, and shows my Palm Beach Mark II which was fitted with a Jaguar XK 140 engine. (This car is now owned by Dick Stilwell of Maryland, U.S.A.) Regarding the number 1/4 this indicates that I was in Team No. 1, and car No. 4. The teams ran in alphabetical order. The three other Allard cars in the team had large V8 engines. To conclude, let me say very many thanks, Jim, for your prompt action in supplying all our members with a pictorial Christmas greetings card." -----

Member Bob Lytle, our L.A. area rep. writes:-

Report from the left side of the States, or the land of milk and honey.

"October 6 weekend marked the last Vintage races to be held at the old Riverside Raceway, here in California. One hundred and fifty sporty cars showed up for one last go before the course is torn up to make room for more houses. Rumour has it there will be a few more big time Can-Am type races, then the bulldozers will move in to set a record for demolition times.

The Allard marque was represented by "Tea Time" Jim Degnan in his red K2, and "Balloon Fat" Bob Lytle in his black J2X. The local Club, Vintage Auto Racing Association, put on a super programme with lots of track time, two races on Saturday, plus two more on Sunday with plenty of practice added up to about 120 miles of high speed driving for each car. Degnan's K2 did an exceptional job by finishing with the old Cadillac still running on all eight cylinders. The old girl got a little hot from Jim's excessive application of the throttle pedal. However, upon returning to the Paddock Jim immediately took advantage of the situation and promptly dunked a tea-bag in the boiling radiator.

Lytle's J2X ran all its races in its usual impeccable style. However, its driver 'lost it' in the slowest corner on the entire course. Luckily, this occurred on the last lap and was found to be caused by a slow leak in the left rear tyre. He was able to just make it back to the pits going bumpity-bump.

A few Allard lovers stopped by the Paddock to offer encouragement and help drink up any surplus beer. At the conclusion of Saturday's events it was party time. The sponsoring Club, V.A.R.A., treated all participants to a big Chinese wok fried dinner, with lots of beer and Chablis on the side. Are we having fun yet? You bet! More news as it happens."

Thank you very much, Bob for your most interesting and amusing report. ED.

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On the next page is an article kindly sent us by Dr. Tom Turner, our Southern States rep. concerning member Bob Valpey's J2. This article is reproduced by courtesy of "Autoweek", America's leading motoring weekly. On the back of this sheet, (Page 3) are photos taken by member Charles Bang of Dean Butler's car, the ex-Curtis Le May's JR Le Mans car, chassis 3404.

Very many thanks, Tom, for sending us this article and photos. ED.

# Escape Road

## Valpey's J2: The first Cad-Allard

By John Matras

When Sydney Allard introduced the Allard J2 in 1949, it was to be powered by war surplus Mercury flathead V-8s. It wasn't a bad engine as flatheads go, producing 110 bhp and certainly better than the flathead English Ford Pivot V-8 of the J1 of 1946-47, which was no great competitive or commercial success. But the Merc was basically a truck engine: Those V-8s had, after all, been sent to England for use in military vehicles.

Nor was the flathead particularly responsive to modifications, limited as all flatheads to relatively low compression and also a poor breather. But it was the best thing available in England, with some still in the crate. It would be even better—to the tune of 140 horses—with Zora Arkus-Duntov's Ardun overhead valve conversion, even if postwar austerity measures limited their availability to those that could be slipped into the country through loopholes.

But race driver T.L.H. "Tommy" Cole had a better idea. The new OHV Cadillac V-8 was rated at 160 bhp right out of the crate. Real output may have been only about 135 bhp stock, but who said it had to stay that way? The paint was hardly dry on the prototype before Cole ordered a production J2 *without* an engine.

The car, according to factory records, was begun in August of 1949 and shipped the end of October. It was delivered to Frick-Tappet Motors of Long Island (Frick was an acknowledged master of getting horsepower out of American iron) where the Cadillac engine and Oldsmobile three-speed manual transmission were installed. It was actually the second J2 to be sent to the U.S., the first going to Duntov for a FoMoCo engine.

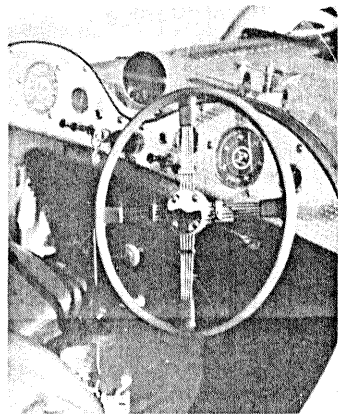
"Man, I sometimes wonder if Tommy realized just what he had unleashed." So wrote Carroll Shelby in his 1965 autobiography, *The Cobra Story*, and if there is anybody who knows about unleashing potent hybrids it's Shelby. One of the Texan's earliest rides was in a Cadillac-engined Allard in 1953, and he remembered it as a car with quirky handling and astounding acceleration. Zero-to-60, recalled Shelby, took six seconds. Great for 1950, said Shelby. Heck, that's not bad for today.

Anyway, Tom Cole immediately put the sports car set on its collective ear. At Bridgehampton in June of 1950, (which one publication referred to as a "classic" simply because it had survived to be run a second time) Cole won easily, repeating his victory in 1949's inaugural event in a much worn Jaguar SS-100.

Then it was off to LeMans to co-drive with Sydney Allard himself. It would be unfair to Cole to suggest that he was selected for reasons other than talent—which he most certainly had—but surely Allard had enough imagination to realize that having an American share the wheel would ensure good press coverage in what was sure to be his most important market. The fact that Cole was an Englishman living in the U.S. didn't deter a press eager to claim him as our own.

Another beneficial aspect of having Cole co-drive was his access to American speed equipment. On his way to LeMans, Cole was spotted at La Guardia with the Detroit Speed Equipment intake manifold from his own Allard J2, complete with twin Carter single-throat carburetors, tucked under his arm on its way to becoming carry-on luggage.

It's testimony to the great thumping torque of the Cadillac engine combined with the just-over-a-ton weight of the Allard J2 that the second 12 hours of LeMans was run, after transmission



problems, in high gear only. Cole and Allard finished first in class and third overall at LeMans behind a pair of Talbot-Lagos. The Cad-Allard was said to be the fastest car down the Mulsanne Straight, with a reported, and probably not much exaggerated, top speed of 145 MPH.

Cole returned to America to race his J2 at events primarily in the Northeast. In 1951, he again won at Bridgehampton, this time in a Chrysler-Allard owned by John Perona, hitting speeds as high as 130 on the Long Island track. His own car he shared with Paul O'Shea, a combination that garnered honors at events up and down the east coast, such as a first place at Vero Beach in a one hour event and a second in a companion 12 hour race. And Cole raced again at LeMans with Sydney Allard, this time to dnf with a blown Cadillac engine.

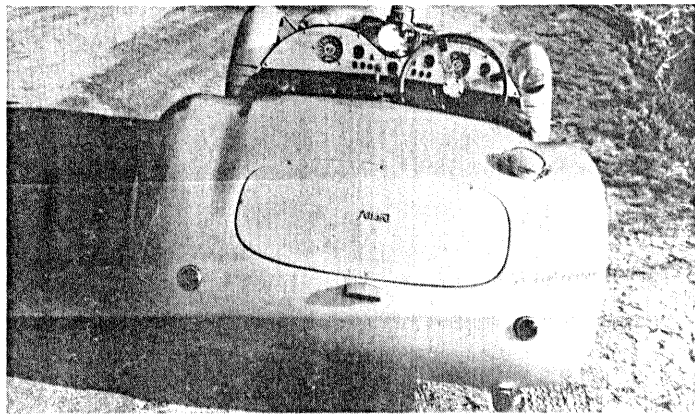
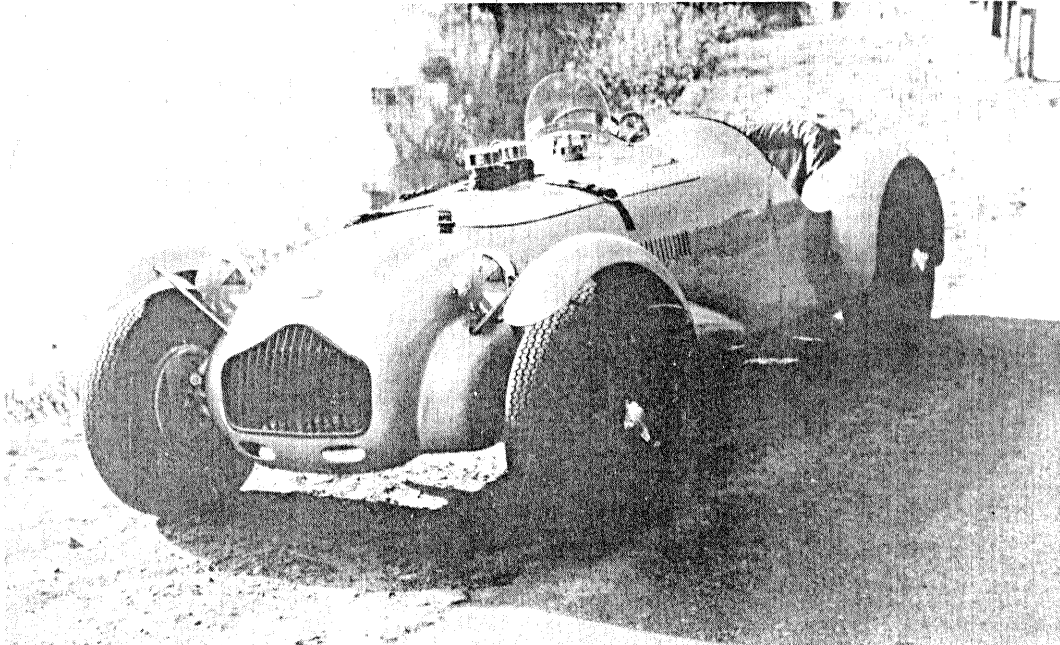
Tommy Cole went to LeMans in 1953 to drive a Ferrari. He didn't come back to America. A crash at Maison Blanche proved fatal.

Exactly what happened next to Tom Cole's Allard isn't known. Present owner Robert Valpey knows, though, that in 1954 it was bought by a New England family, not for racing but for use as a road car, driven daily up through the mid-'60s. It was, in fact, transportation for the lady of the house.

"She had a great time with it, I guess," muses Valpey. I'll bet she did. When she went to get groceries it gave a whole new meaning to "fast food."

It was hit at one time and at another had a full envelope body of some sort and then she just stopped driving it.

In November of 1983 it was found by



John Matras photos

Valpey, of Center Harbor, N.H. It was, as all great finds are supposed to be, in a barn, less paint on its aluminum panels and sitting at about two thirds its original height. The doors were in the weeds some 20 yards away from the car and the hood so concave it looked like a write-off.

A year and a half later it would be hard to recognize it as the same car. "We tried to do it the way it probably looked," explains Valpey. Especially helpful was a cover photo of the car airborne over the bridge at Bridgehampton on the January, 1951, issue of *Motorsport* magazine. The original silver body color had been determined from spots of paint left on protected areas of the car, but the orange-red grille, often questioned by those who *know* Allards and *know* that the grille *should* be chromed, was proven with some certainty.

The car had 72-spoke center-lock wire wheels, replacing the original steel discs, but Bob prefers the wires so those have stayed. Also non-original are the front fenders, as the early photos don't show louvers. But thoroughly genuine is the engine, which if not the first one, was one fitted during its racing days, and so is the Detroit Racing intake manifold, the one that went to LeMans.

Valpey's Allard does not have the characteristic blister over the carbs as do almost all later J2's, and also missing are the chrome portholes along both sides of the engine compartment, Valpey's car having simple louvers. It was, certainly, one of the first two or three made out of 90 J2's and 82 J2X's, a later revision that moved the engine forward and changed front suspension geometry.

The J2X was reputed to have much improved handling over the J2. The rear suspension on both versions was De Dion, which could take the torque of the big V-8's without histrionics, but it was the split axle (swing arm) front suspension that gave the car its bad reputation. The theory goes that wheel travel causes camber change which causes camber thrust and bumpsteer of the worst kind.

It's a shame to ruin people's long-held beliefs, but if Bob Valpey's J2 is any measure, the complaints have been grossly overstated. The Allard tracks nicely around curves, even to the point where the 600-16 Dunlop Racing tires begin to slide on the asphalt. Bumps and ripples don't upset it to the extent that it can't be caught, and at speeds up to about 80 MPH the car is stable to a fault. Much of this is because of the Allard's stiff springing: You don't get camber change from suspension travel if the suspension doesn't travel. (Contrast this to early Lotus with split axle front suspension and Chapman-soft springs. Now *those* cars are exciting on a rough road.) Then again, it may be different at 145 MPH on the Mulsanne in the rain.

But Allards won races not so much on handling as on sheer overwhelming power. One would keep up on the corners and run away on the straights. The kick of the Cadillac is impressive even by modern standards, thumping out power in Harley-like lumps at low revs and rolling it out like crushed velvet in an Sedan de Ville as the tach swings around. Thank you, Sydney Allard, for your good idea, and thanks to you, Tom Cole, for your even better one.

Extracts from a letter received from our Assistant Hon. Sec. Jim Donick:-

"Organising the Watkins Glen event was quite a drain on my time, but was most enjoyable. We had 15 Allards, 6 racing and 51 persons at the Dinner. I point out that the listing of the Watkins Glen gathering in 'Vintage Motorsport' has an interesting point on the name of the organisers, i.e. 'The Allard Register will join the SVRA at Watkins Glen'....."

"The week after Watkins Glen I took the car to Lime Rock for the Vintage race weekend. Also present were members Syd Silverman (J2X and JR), Bob Valpey (this week with a 1917 Chalmers), Bob Girvin (with Taraschi, Formula Jr.), Harry Wilson (J2X replica), John Aibel (pre-war Allard Special). Other members present included Don Milligan, Ray Holtzapple, Dave Cavicke, Dave Du Brul. I'm sure I've missed somebody but - what can I say? Syd Silverman won his class, Girvin placed in the top three in his, and John Aibel drove the pre-war to second place in his class. Yours truly managed to spin a couple of big-end bearings early in practice and destroyed a connecting rod as well....."

"Syd Silverman called last night with news that the missing JR has been located and is now in the hands of member Duncan Emmons, an active Allard racer on the West Coast. It is said to be in good shape and quite complete except for a Ford engine (OHV) rather than the original Caddie..."

"Did you hear that member Bob Valpey has acquired another Allard? The car is a 1952 Le Mans bodied J2X. He did a super quick restoration and had the car ready in six weeks for the Watkins Glen meeting. It is red (aren't they all?) and powered by Cadillac....."

"It's been a long season and in many ways a frustrating one as my engine was a source of irritation often, primarily with over-heating. Other than Watkins Glen's great Goldschmidt anniversary reunion, the high point may have been my first ever outright race win at the Canadian International Vintage Racing Festival held at Mosport in Ontario at the end of June.

"Member Henry Wilson and his son drove up behind us in the J2X replica. It was a very pleasant sight in my rear mirror as we motored through New York State. Henry has done a workmanlike job with the reconstruction right down to duplicating the front suspension. The educated eye can see the car has never come from Clapham because of differences in interior and wheel size, but a quick glance is very deceiving. Henry is a first-rate mechanic and he and I spent Saturday's practice sessions dodging raindrops and trying to sort out my brakes which were locking at quite inopportune times. By the end of the day the brakes were fixed and the track under several inches of H<sup>2</sup>O. Our tents blew down in the storm and we found shelter in a nearby motel.

"Sunday brought a dry track and beautiful weather. In the morning was a Concours d'Elegance which Henry had entered in the modern car class. His competition included a Cobra and a Maserati, among others. I am pleased to report that in this class and the people's choice award went to Henry, and it was richly deserved.

"Early afternoon saw my K2 out for the pre-war and early post-war handicap. The class included a few MG's, a Bugatti Type 37 GP, a couple of XK120's and yours truly. The previous day's work paid off handsomely as the car was both stopping AND going, and I was about 3 seconds per lap faster than I had been, and led the final three laps to the checker. I'm not sure who was more amazed, Carol and the kids or I! Henry and I were quite obviously overjoyed to have both brought home a trophy and to have been as fortunate as we were in representing the marque."

Very many thanks for your letter, Jim, and congratulations to one and all. ED.

Our Hon. Secretary writes:-

"I should like to thank all those members who sent me such a delightful selection of Christmas cards, and apologise for not writing them an individual note of thanks, but through The Bulletin to be able to cordially reciprocate their wishes.

Also I wish to thank all those who have sent reports of events and articles for inclusion in The Bulletin, and to those members who have introduced new members. Member Harri Sukman of Helsinki, Finland sent me a very nice ALLARD tee-shirt, and our Southern States rep., Dr. Tom Turner has had some Allard Register patches made and are for sale to our members. They are triangular with red lettering on a white background with blue edging. Just the job for attachment to racing overalls, sports jackets, etc.

Good luck and good motoring to all members in 1986.

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

D. W. Aase	of Orange, California, U.S.A.	J2X 3039
C. Bang	" Sandy Hook, Kentucky, U.S.A.	-
H. Sukman	" Helsinki, Finland.	J.2017 & J.2124
H. V. Wheeler III	" Fairbanks, Alaska, U.S.A. (re-joined)	99J 1558

We extract the following from a letter received from our Eastern States rep.

Ed Reed II:-

"...In past letters I told you that my Allard has not slowed down as it has grown older. It is just as fast on pickup and top speed as it used to be in the early 1950's. I thought you might be interested in reading how I stay in condition in order to drive and handle this potent Cadillac powered 1951 K2 Allard. I have included a copy of an Associated Press News article that appeared on the front page of the July 5th, 1985 Worcester Telegram which tells how I stay in tip top condition. The article is headed "Worcester man skis 43 miles in ocean". It states that the 61-year-old Mr. Ed Reed left Boothbay behind his son who was at the controls of the tow boat and water skied 43 miles down the Maine coast arriving at the Portland Yacht Club at Falmouth 2 hours and 10 minutes later, and was met by three television crews, a newspaper reporter and a wire service reporter. He said that he wanted to prove that if you are in good condition you don't slow down in spite of your age.

A winner of the Maine State Championship Slalom in 1952, Mr. Reed said he missed matching his 1953 time for the Boothbay-Falmouth run by five minutes. He says that he uses Sitka spruce skis which are especially designed for open ocean racing.

Many thanks for your letter, Edgar, and congratulations on your fantastic performance. ED.

FOR SALE

1948 ALLARD L type Special. Ford Flat head motor. Right-hand drive. Front cycle wings and P-100s. Project needs completion. \$10,500. Further particulars contact J. P. Donick, 5, Mary Road, Milford, Mass. 01757. U.S.A. ('phone 617-473-9327:evenings)  
oOo

1952 Cadillac engine just been completely rebuilt and ready for fitting. Price \$600 or near offer. John A. Howard, 17 Fenno Drive, Westminster, Mass. 01473. USA.  
oOo

Allard Register patches for overalls or sports jackets. Triangular red, white and blue (similar to windshield stickers). Price \$2.50 each from Dr. Tom Turner, 1100 Pebble Creek Road, Fort Worth Texas. 76107. U.S.A. ('phone 817-737-9493), or £2 each incl. air-mail postage from our Hon. Secretary.

The Hon. Secretary advises that particulars have been received from the Automobile Club of Brescia for the Mille Miglia 1986 meeting.

This event is based not on speed but on regularity, with transit checking and time checks to one tenth of a second. The three previous events held over this famous course were in 1977-1982-1984. Any make which had competed between 1927 and 1957 is eligible to take part in this event.

Our President, Tom Lush advises that the Allard car is one of the makes that is eligible to enter. The late Sydney Allard competed in the 1951 event with Tom as navigator/co-driver. As reported in his book "ALLARD - the inside story" he says that the start for them at 4.33 a.m. was very cold, dark and wet, and in the first hour they covered 78 miles, and 43 in the next 30 minutes. Just before dawn they misjudged a corner on a stretch of road running on top of a steep embankment and plunged nose first over the edge. After a crowd of people and carabinieri had got the car back on the road, it was discovered that as the car had spun it had hit a kilometre stone, which had damaged the axle-beam and steering, and they were forced to retire.

Members are invited to the John Harrison/Peugeot/Talbot Veteran Vehicle Rally on the 3rd May, 1986 at the Newark and Nottinghamshire Agricultural Society Showground, Newark, Notts. England. Entry forms obtainable from our Hon. Secretary.

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1986 ARE NOW DUE

THE ALLARD REGISTER

I enclose herewith £2 or \$5. (If Air Mail required, please add £1 or \$2)

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NOTE: If currency notes are sent it is suggested that a piece of carbon paper be placed in the envelope.