

DERRICK CHARLES ASTLE

WE regret to record that Derrick was killed when his Austin Healey 3000 left the road while on a Special Stage on the Tulip Rally in the evening of Tuesday, April 23rd. He leaves a widow and four children.

He was a man of varied interests, and most of us knew him as a top-line Rally Driver who would compete in anything from a Mini to a thundering Healey. Although he usually drove a Works car, he liked to enter one or two rallies a year privately, so that he could do just as he pleased and take or go with whichever car or friend he wished.

He steadfastly refused to be an official of our Club, but as a Committee member he did more work than most officials, and was the epitome of the old saying: "If you want something done, then ask a busy man". He was, for instance, largely responsible for the start of this magazine, and a steady contributor thereafter.

These pastimes and more always came second to his business interests. He was, in the best possible way, a self-made man, quite capable of enjoying the benefits he had earned for himself. Most of us will never know how he managed to run his business, race, rally, write, go caravanning, dabble in a score of other activities, and yet nose out bargains from the newspapers or information from acquaintances as if he did nothing else all day.

Everyone who knew him will remember a smile which could be impish and a voice which said what its owner thought. We offer our deepest sympathy to his family for we have all lost a very good friend.

BISHOP'S MEDITATIONS

SOMETIMES I sits and thinks . . . they say that Fords have twelve works cars in the Acropolis, if they don't get some results soon, I imagine that questions will be asked in the House . . . Sutcliffe and Fidler are teamed up for the Alpine. It looks like being an excellent outing this year . . . The small car class at Silverstone was a benefit for Cooper S drivers, I wonder when they were homologated? . . . The first thing I knew about the Morecambe was that it had been cancelled. That's not the way to get entries . . . Don't be taken in by a book entitled "Bishop on Safari", it's not what you might think . . . Will somebody please organise an Imp for me to road test? . . . It is rumoured that plans are going ahead for a Northern concern to build a Formula One car for the new formula when it is announced. A good deal of the finance is already forthcoming . . . I get the feeling that a well-prepared private entry should do well in the Targa Florio—who is interested for next year? . . . Stop Press News on the Acropolis . . . Gunnar Anderson and the new Volvo in winning form, Henry Taylor provisionally 3rd and Pat Moss 5th . . . Team prize probably to Mercedes because Tom Trana's Volvo tangled with a bus . . . All five Russian cars and crews finished, but not well placed . . . P. Easter and D. Thompson a class win in their much rallied Austin 7—well done . . . and sometimes I sits.

CARAVAN CONTORTIONS

HAVING been invited to participate in the National Caravan Rally, I went along to the starting point at Chapel-en-le-Frith with mixed feelings, to meet Harry Sturgeon, a Sprite Caravan test driver, who was to be my weekend partner, and get acquainted with the outfit. This consisted of a Cortina Super Estate Car supplied by Fords, and an Alpine Caravan manufactured by Sprite Caravans Limited and entered by them.

At the outset, let me say that the enthusiasm of the competitors and the preparation of the outfits is intense and meticulous. Briefly, there are separate classes based on sizes of caravan, and a handicap based on the capacity of the car against the weight of the caravan. The Rally started from several points, converging on a central point at Staveley, near York. From here the Rally was split into two loops, one into the Dales and the other into the Wolds. The odd numbers away on one loop, and the even numbers the other, and vice versa later on.

These night sections surprised all as the averages set were higher than ever before, and included three and four minute sections at 30 m.p.h. average. Unfortunately, for the even numbers, one of the first competitors broke down, blocking the road on a one in eight hill near Pateley Bridge, and this caused long delays with subsequent loss of marks for late arrival at the next control. Names like Little Blakey, Rosedale Abbey, Hutton-le-Hole, Old Byland, Flaxby, Kewick, etc., etc., all "Yorkshire" country, were taken in, and by early morning, not many crews were "clean" on the road. Many people were surprised by the nature of the roads, and just like all events, both cars and vans were bearing damage and signs of minor excursions. Incidentally, no damage penalties. Hard work, good fun, especially with a van on the back!

Out of 109 entries, only 19 fell by the wayside, which speaks well for the crews, although it was quite evident, many rally navigators were being called in by the trade (works) entries. Thence to the tests, width judging, uncoupling, braking, parking, hill-climb (1-6) and a full-blooded one mile speed test at Olivers Mount, Scarborough (including the hairpin), which many thought dangerous, as no indication of corners was given, and which proved the undoing of one outfit in the biggest possible way! Unfortunately, after a good night run, the tests proved our undoing, and bonus points proved hard to obtain, but to be among the "pots" it was imperative to have been clean during the night.

Speeds in the 70-75 m.p.h. region were attained on the speed test, and with the latest vans very fast cornering is possible, and quite eye-opening to a first-timer.

The Cortina proved an excellent car for the event, and all three in the team were outstanding on the hill climb. The cars were in standard trim with the lower axle ratio.

On the Sunday morning, the concours were held, and after plenty of "spit and polish" the caravans lined up on the Scarborough sea front. To the caravan type, this is just as high, certainly comparable to a "Vintage Concours". And with the awards presented at 12 noon, the long line moved off in all directions after a good, entertaining 48 hours, and to me an eye-opener to say the least.

To finish off, let me say that any rally driver who could witness the driving of Ian Mantle, who won the event outright, would have been very impressed at his skill and judgement.

Next year the Caravan Rally is at Mallory Park, and I certainly hope to be there.

PHIL CRABTREE

THE TULIP RALLY

AFTER several weeks of careful preparation and swotting of regulations and Blue Book to make sure we had not infringed the rules and regulations for Group 1, we departed for Lydd on Sunday morning, 20th April. Saville had been in training for several days and signed the pledge. Thus he had not slept for several nights, but was persevering and looking remarkably fit under the circumstances.

After a liquid lunch, for which I allowed two pints, we arrived in Lydd five hours after leaving Manchester. Application for an early plane, application granted, forty minutes later touch down at Ostend, swinging! Saville did not want to leave the plane, however, and if you had seen the Air Hostess, neither would you. So handcuffed to the car, he was persuaded to put her down and do a little driving. Finally, after weaving our way through queues of traffic in Belgium, who were acting as though they were all going to Blackpool, we arrived at Noordwijk in time for a late dinner and straight to bed.

Not before we had caught up with all the latest gossip, however. Tom Paton had cracked his cylinder head on the way to the start, whereupon Roy Dixon used some very choice words, nearly cracked Tom's own head, but decided to go on a binge instead. This incidentally, lasted for about fourteen days, during which time he allowed light into his head on no more than two occasions, or so it would appear, for every time we saw him, his eyes were closed. On his binge he had, of course, recruited his "partner in crime" Dave (wasn't it expensive) Ralphs, who sobered up very quickly after a quiet night in Amsterdam. Barry Hughes was looking very forlorn as he had had his suitcase stolen in London, along with Charlie Nesbitt's out of Charlie's car. In typical Hughes fashion, however, he managed to end up the best dressed man in Holland. All this, and the Rally hadn't even started!

Monday was very uneventful, what with scrutineering and nerves for most people. The Lotus Elan of Arnold Burton was not allowed to start as it had not been homologated, but after much discussion, he was given a Press plate to follow the route. Numerous people were taking bits off they shouldn't have had on, including the three unofficial works Vauxhalls. Denis Masters, co-driving a Triumph Spitfire, was hastily removing an electric fan, whilst some kind soul had dashed off some 20 or 30 miles for a proper one.

An excellent meal, treated with George Humble's irrepressible sense of humour, two sleeping pills and bed.

One or two people overslept, including the drivers of a beautiful Fiat Abarth, who disappeared down the road at a fantastic rate of knots, despite having already lost innumerable points for a late start. The first test did not prove very much except giving people a good idea of how much faster everyone was than themselves. The true flavour of Rallymanship. Pat Moss said they had de-tuned her Cortina so much, we the V.W. 1500's were faster. Just shows, doesn't it?

On to Nurburgring, and what a fantastic circuit that is, platting your arms like mad and taking every corner wrong. A beautiful Dutch owned "E"-type was to be seen off the road, but at the ball the drivers managed to get well and truly sloshed. Presumably on the Insurance Company (not George Humble's).

So through the Col do Struthof and the Trous Epois where everyone was so shocked and sorry to hear of Derrick's fatal accident. Many crews were deliberating whether or not to carry on, including Stuart Turner and all the B.M.C. cars. However, after a lot of thought it was decided that Derrick would not have wished anything else than for everyone to carry on, and this is what they did. Albeit with great sorrow in everyone's hearts which I am sure will last forever in many.

The Ballon d'Alsace was cancelled due to fog and an uneventful run took us through the Col du Mont-Saleve to the longest of all the timed stages, the Chamrousse. It was about this time that various teams started to develop faults. Rapiers in particular, which no one was happy with, except us in Vauxhalls. These grouses proved to be quite justified when the two "Peters" went out on the Col de la Roche.

From the Chamrousse, on to Mont-Saleve, la Faucille and the major time control at Champagnole. Before Champagnole, however, we decided to choose some small village cafe and have a good meal, cheap, as the one we had had at Champagnole on the way out had cost the earth. We chose St. Laurent du Pont, but please do not follow our lead as all the pirates do not live in Penzance or Champagnole, there are some in this village as well.

From Champagnole the route took its tiring crews on to the Ballon d'Alsace, which was "on" this time in reverse direction, the Cols de d'Alsace, which was "on" this time in reverse direction, the Col de Breitenbach, du Nideh and the final climb of La Roche, where the Ford Zodiac's engine of the Dutch crew decided it didn't like the idea of performing without oil, and burst its seams.

Thus there remained a short sprint at Spa, and a long journey through Holland to Zandvoort. Near here, Paddy Hopkirk could be seen doing some fancy talking to a gendarme who had caught him for speeding. We will not relate here how he talked himself out of that one. Needless to say he was still clean when the results were published.

Finishing up back at Noordwijk at approximately 4 p.m., the crews had various ideas of what to do then. Some could not wait to get off into Amsterdam, others had a drink first, but yours truly was content to enjoy a bath, half a bottle of brandy, a good meal, some more brandy and er . . . er . . . bed — I think!

And so to the Grand Finale, the Tulip Ball, when everyone gets his fill of food, drink and the other if he is lucky. This really is a fabulous affair which never loses its glitter, and there are so many bars to choose from. Saville ended up like the proverbial Ooslam Bird, as indeed did many others trying to keep up with him. George Humble could be heard over four bands, the reasons why his car had been so slow after stalling at the start, that it was as fast as the works Healeys up to 60. His partner Bobby, who had heard it all before, decided to sit on a stool and carry on drinking until he fell off, which he did. Nobody bothered very much though, except have you ever tried striding over somebody every few minutes when you are sloshed. You miss eventually and end up the same way with about another dozen on top of you.

I don't remember what time this would be, but it was the hardest job I have ever done, getting up at 6 a.m. the following morning and returning home, which, thankfully, was uneventful.

SOCIAL NEWS . . .

June 12th—Dance at Oldham Rugby Union Football Club, Keb Lane, Oldham. Tickets 5/- including refreshments, are available from Social Committee members.

July 7th—Treasure Hunt. Start 2-30 p.m. High Tea at Crimble at 5 p.m. This will be a good do.

September 20th—Dinner Dance at Far Flat Head Farm.

THERE WILL BE NO CIRCULAR IN JUNE BECAUSE
OF ANNUAL HOLIDAYS IN ROCHDALE