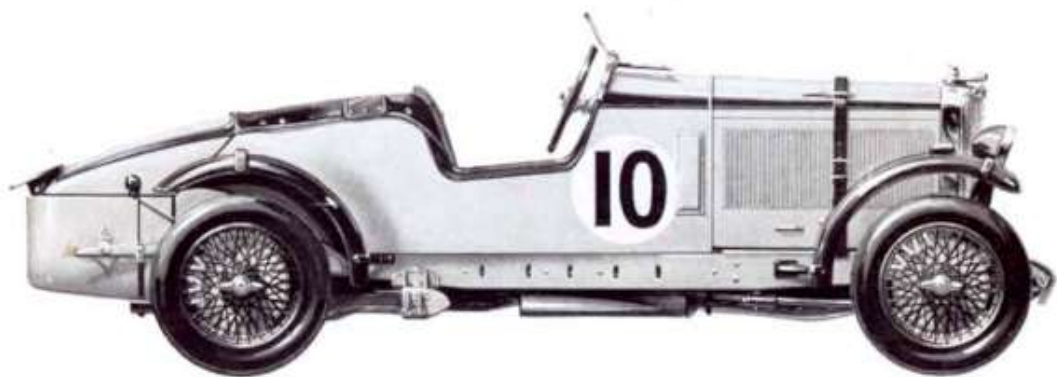


The Talbots 14/45 - 110



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THE 3-LITRE TALBOT '105', based on the car which came 2nd in its class in the 1931 J.C.C. Double-Twelve Hour race at Brooklands at 77.65 m.p.h. and 13th overall. Drivers: the Hon. Brian Lewis and John Hindmarsh. Present Owner: Anthony Blight Esquire.



The 14/45 Talbot and its successors may be said to have been born and bred in the Alps by proxy, since their designer, Mr. Georges Roesch, was born in Switzerland and personally did much testing there. Here an early Weymann Sunshine Coupé poses beside some bullock carts after an Alpine foray. Note that the opening of the sliding sunroof extends down almost to the windscreen.

(Photo: Montagu Motor Museum)

by D. B. Tubbs

The Talbots 14/45 - 110

The 1930 Le Mans race is often remembered for the struggle in which one Mercedes defeated the Blower Bentleys but was itself vanquished by the 6½s, whereas the most telling, and also the most significant performance, historically, came from the brace of Talbot 90s which came third and fourth, ahead of all save the two Speed Sixes. Using a plain unsupercharged production engine of only 2½ litres, with pushrod overhead valves, not overhead camshaft, and fitted with a single updraught carburettor, they beat every Bentley below 6½ litres, together with the 38/250 Mercedes, Earl Howe's supercharged twin-cam Alfa Romeo and a 5-litre Stutz. Somewhat naturally they won the *Indice de Performance*. The great Charles Faroux called their performance *stupéfiant*, and he was right. Not only were the two Talbots tremendously fast and reliable, they were practically silent as well, making no more fuss than a rolled umbrella.

Mr Georges Roesch, who was personally responsible for the design of all Talbots from the 14/45 of 1926 until the 110, is one of the great artists of the automobile. His productions have an integrity seldom

The generous opening of the sunshine roof on this early (1930) Talbot 75 shows up well in this posed publicity picture.

(Photo: Montagu Motor Museum)



found elsewhere and he can always be counted upon for an elegant solution to any problem. He himself has written that the development of the motor-car is a fight against noise, vibration and unnecessary weight on the one hand, and on the other a search for increased performance. There is no excuse, he feels, for an engine to be noisy, rough or heavy, and no need whatsoever for it to be big. Roesch was one of the first to see the possibilities of high revs and high compression ratios; that is why any Roesch engine turns out to be about 50 per cent smaller than its performance would suggest and far more refined and simpler in design than its competitors.

AN EXPERIMENTAL ENGINE

In order to understand the dynasty of cars which started in 1925 with the 14/45 Talbot and culminated in the Talbot 110, it is necessary to go back a few years further and inspect a most remarkable experimental engine evolved by Georges Roesch that embodied many of the ideas used in the most modern high-compression pushrod engines of today. In 1922 the 1½-litre Talbot-Darracq racing engines were giving 50 b.h.p., using twin overhead camshafts. Twin o.h.c. had always seemed to Roesch unnecessary, as it ought to be possible, by lightening all the moving parts, to make a pushrod o.h.v. arrangement rev just as freely. He therefore went to work on the production 10/23 Talbot engine of 60 × 95 mm. bore and stroke, 1,070 c.c., which produced 23 b.h.p. at 3,000 r.p.m. on a 4·85 to 1 compression ratio. He retained the rigid cylinder block and crank case, together with the sump, accessories drive and camshaft. A new cylinder-head was designed, with very large valves in what is now called a 'bathtub' recessed combustion chamber, and porting arranged—a splendid piece of self-confidence this—for one carburettor only. The crankshaft was counterweighted and case-hardened, the connecting rods were tubular and the pistons were very light and fitted with thin rings. At a time when 5,000 r.p.m. was considered very fast, Roesch ran this little Talbot at 6,000 on the highly intrepid compression ratio of 8·5 to 1, using pure benzole. At



Left: The best-known motoring photographer of the Vintage period and early 1930s was W. J. Brunell, who covered all the important races and trials. It is significant that for his personal transport Mr. Brunell (seen here) used this 1927 14/45 open tourer, a lively, amusing and utterly reliable motor-car. Right: This Brunell photograph, taken on Darracott in an M.C.C. London-Land's End Trial in the 'thirties, shows the 1933 '105' car driven by H. A. Nash. (Photos: Montagu Motor Museum)



Left: A recent picture of a beautifully preserved 1933 '90' tourer. The man at the wheel is Georges Roesch, father of the modern high-compression pushrod-o.h.v. engine. Right: In 1931 the chassis price of a Talbot 90 was £495; the standard tourer cost £635, the saloon £695. Or, of course, customers could have a body built to their own ideas by an outside coachbuilder. This coupé, complete with warning-bell on the stepped running-board, was by Grose. (Photo: Mr C. W. P. Hampton)



6,000 revs he obtained 56.5 b.h.p., or 53 b.h.p. per litre—as against 50.71 total b.h.p. from the racing twin-cam Talbot-Darracq of 1.5 litres. This engine was safely run up to 7,650 r.p.m.

The secret of these high revs lay in the very light valve gear, which became the basis of future Talbot practice. Every ounce of unnecessary weight was eliminated from the moving parts, which no longer carried the tappet-adjustment. Instead the rocker simply oscillated on an adjustable eccentric bush. This engine was fitted to a 10/23 chassis (of Roesch design derived from the 8/18) designed in Paris, with a Hawker single-seater body. Driven by Segrave it lapped Brooklands at 90 m.p.h., but it gave him such a rough ride that work on the project was dropped. But Georges Roesch had made his point. He left Barlby Road at this point and in 1924 designed a 2-litre 6-cylinder engine with hemispherical cylinder head and mutually inclined valves (as in twin o.h.c. designs) operated by vertical and inclined pushrods from a single side camshaft. The arrangement was patented (No. 224822) on his behalf by a friend H. W. Watts whose kindness had brought him to England in 1914. It was subsequently employed with great effect by Anthony Lago on the Grand Prix Lago-Talbots, and has since been used by Peugeot, Armstrong, Humber, Fiat and Chrysler. It is likely to reappear. In 1925 Coatalen asked Roesch to go back and take over the Barlby Road works, where

production of Talbots had ceased and morale was at basement level. He was to have a free hand. He took it.

THE 14/45 TALBOT

The result was the 14/45 Talbot, a full-sized four-five seater saloon on a wheelbase of 10 feet capable of 65 m.p.h. on only 1,666 c.c., whose chassis was used, almost unaltered, for the 75, 90, 105 and 110 which were to follow. The situation when Roesch arrived was desperate indeed. Many of the machine tools at Barlby Road dated back to 1902, and their running depended upon home-made electricity generated by dynamos driven by large diesel engines which could be seen from the stately entrance hall at the factory. Roesch realised that as the machinery was so erratic he must see that the work itself was accurately controlled. So everything was made on jigs. He also realised that the success of the small engine in which he was putting his trust to do a large engine's work would depend, since it would be revving remarkably fast, on the quality of the materials used and the precision of manufacture required. So he chose all his alloys most carefully, set up a metallurgical lab., and laid down the most rigid specification for every part. 'The design', Mr. Roesch has said, 'flew from my pencil.' There was no time for development and testing. An order for 1,000 cars was put in hand purely on drawings before a single car had been made:



In 1931 Humphrey Symons driving a Talbot 105 went through the Alpine Trial without losing a mark, thus winning a Coupe des Glaciers. Inspired by this, Fox & Nicholl Ltd. entered a works prepared Talbot team in 1932 and won the Coupe des Alpes. The drivers (left to right) are the Hon. Brian Lewis, with Arthur Fox as passenger, Tim Rose-Richards with Don Wilcockson, and Norman Garrad with Jack Playford. Over the three years 1931, 1932 and 1934, seven 105s were entered, every possible award was won, and not a mark was lost—a unique achievement. (Photo: Rootes Motors Ltd.)

in fact the prototype went on test for the first time just before the Olympia Show in 1926. The 14/45 Talbot was the hit of the Show; order books were filled, and amongst those who sought out the young designer on the Stand to congratulate him (Roesch was then only 35) was Laurence Pomeroy senior.

The chassis was remarkably neat, with none of the afterthought odds and ends that mar most British designs. It also, to use a phrase the motoring papers were so fond of, 'bristled with interesting features'. At the heart of its performance was the valve gear; rockers oscillating on knife-edge fulcrums, and ball-ended pushrods as slim as knitting needles. This being the day of 'horsepower' tax based only on piston area, the six-cylinder engine had a relatively small bore, the dimensions being 61×95 mm. The four-bearing crank had disc webs and was machined all over, the camshaft was gear-driven to dispense with noisy chains, and thermosyphon cooling was used, which people said would not work on an o.h.v. engine, but it did, of course, and that without a fan-belt (so unreliable in those days), the fan being integral with

the flywheel. The radiator was mounted direct on the crankcase, eliminating flexible hoses liable to fail without warning. The unit gave 41 b.h.p. at 4,500 r.p.m. on a compression ratio of about 5.5 to 1. Revs were of the essence, for the car was large, with a steel body on a wood frame and very heavy. The rear axle ratio was 5.87 to 1, profiting by the engine's appetite for revs.

The clutch was an original Roesch design by which the presser plate was attached to the flywheel by three leaf springs spaced out around its periphery allowing only axial movement—an arrangement which, apart from the type of spring employed, foreshadowed the 'diaphragm' clutch. The four-speed gearbox was in unit with the engine but easily detachable from it, and was lubricated with engine oil under pressure, a system which worked very well but was to cause many young heads to shake forty years later when adopted on the Mini. The oil pump ran at engine speed and was fitted with what we now call a full-flow filter. This innovation was combined with the oil-filling orifice, and the dipstick on being pressed down

The Irish Grand Prix was a handicap race for sports cars held on a road circuit in Phoenix Park, Dublin. It almost goes without saying that the 'silent Talbots' won their class in 1930. This scene at the temporary pits shows Rose-Richards and his mechanic Playford (back only); Hugh Eaton and his chauffeur, Oliver, who rode as mechanic, and Lewis and his mechanic N. C. Lloyd. (Photo: Montagu Motor Museum)





In 1930 the Talbot 90s of Brian Lewis and H. S. Eaton (above), Hindmarsh and Rose-Richards, finished third and fourth at Le Mans, defeating everything except the two 6½-litre Bentleys and winning the Index of Performance. Running as quietly as touring cars they made a tremendous impression.

acted as a tap for draining the sump. All the oil ways were drilled, so that the engine had no external oil pipes, and the engine lubrication system took care also of the clutch withdrawal race and the universal joint. The propeller shaft ran in a torque tube which was attached to the rear end of the gearbox through a hemispherical bearing, the whole housing enclosing the universal joint. The centre of the prop shaft was supported by a ball bearing fitted in the torque-tube, the whole assembly giving a completely enclosed drive.

THE 14/45 CHASSIS

The chassis was as full of novelty as the engine. The pressed steel frame was deep, and was designed 'to

follow the body contour and taper'; ensuring that any body fitted should fit firmly and rigidly upon it. There was an X cross-bracing member amidships, and stiffness at the front came from bolting the engine direct to the frame—which is only acceptable practice when the engine is perfectly smooth. The rear suspension was by wide 'semi-cantilever' (i.e. quarter-elliptic) springs, reducing unsprung weight, and the front was sprung with very wide thin-leaved semi-elliptics, anchored at the back and shackled at the front, an arrangement which gave splendidly precise steering and first-class road-holding. Talbots are the complete answer to those who have been told that torque-tube drive causes oversteer. The 14/45 had many features we look upon as modern, and several that we should

now enjoy if we had them, such as a 14½-gallon fuel tank, completely silent starting, and permanently lubricated steering joints, the sealed joints drawing their oil from hollow steering rods that acted as reservoirs. Roesch also set a fashion (and stirred up a storm amongst the die-hards) by fitting Delco-Remy coil ignition instead of magneto, together with automatic ignition control. He also fitted a warning light instead of an oil gauge, believing rightly that if owners are



Le Mans, 1931: by the following year the 2½-litre '90' had given way to the 3-litre '105'. GO 53 (no. 11), seen here before and during the race, was driven by Tim Rose-Richards and A. Saunders-Davies. They came third in the G.P. d'Endurance and were runners-up in the Rudge Biennial Cup.



told when to add oil or clean a filter, all other lubrication problems can be left to the engine-designer. This was the highly ingenious model which went into production untested. Hard-driving tests in the Alps followed, with the designer at the wheel, for Georges Roesch likes nothing better than motor-ing fast in his native Switzerland. Few changes were needed. Soon an output of 50 cars a week was reached, later rising to a maximum of 100 a week, still utilising many of the 1902 machine tools. Morale was now fully restored, and Barlby Road was once more a 'happy ship'.

THE TALBOT 75 AND 90

At once there arose a demand for increased performance, and Roesch set about designing, in 1928, a much more powerful engine, to be interchangeable with that of the 14/45. The first of this series was the '75', with bore and stroke of 69.5 by 100 (2,276 c.c.), with six cylinders as before, but now with a seven-bearing crank fully counterbalanced replacing the earlier four, but taking up no more room. This engine, christened the '75*', gave 76 b.h.p. at 4,500 r.p.m. on 7 to 1 compression ratio, and 93 b.h.p. in competition form using benzole fuel and 10 to 1. The large, light, vertical in-line valves were made of austenitic HR 1 Hadfields steel, 21 per cent chromium, 7 per cent nickel. The rockers oscillated on easily adjustable knife-edges, and the pushrods were made of thin steel bar oil-hardened to 130 tons ultimate (Vibrac V 45). They were made by a knitting-needle firm in Redditch, so that the 'knitting needle' description was no mere nickname. This valve gear is probably the lightest ever, and can still give modern o.h.c. designs points and a beating. The recessed form of the bathtub combustion chamber was recently adopted by Volvo. It would be a good idea if all modern engines could be made independent of the fan belt, as Roesch Talbots were: in those engines it was the water-pump that drove the fan-belt, not the other way around. If the belt broke the engine would not overheat. The radiator was mounted on the cylinder block as before, and radiator shutters were fitted, to keep the water temperature as constant as possible, and the 'modern' feature of pressure cooling was introduced, in 1929.

* This model was called originally the 20/70, then the '70'; the name '75' was adopted in mid-1930.

1931 Brooklands 500 miles race 105s: (Left to right) John Cobb in GO 54, Tim Rose-Richards in GO 53 and Howard Wolfe in GO 52. Cobb was sixth in the race and Rose-Richards 7th. GO 52 (Hindmarsh) ran a big end and retired.

(Photo: Montagu Motor Museum)



A single-seater Talbot 90 was built for the B. R. D. C. 500 Miles Race at Brooklands in 1930, in which it was driven by Brian Lewis and Earl Howe, who finished 4th at an average of 104.76 m.p.h. Later International Class D (3-litre) records up to 1,000 kilometers and six hours were taken at 105 m.p.h. Lewis's single-seater was on parade for the March meeting at Brooklands in 1931. It is seen winning the March Mountain Handicap, passing the supercharged Austin Seven of 'R. Ormonde' (R. O. Shuttleworth) which was third.

(Photo: Radio Times Hulton Picture Library)

These cars had a single Zenith updraught carburettor instead of the Smith 5-jet fitted to the 14/45.

With increasing performance certain changes were made to the running-gear. The brakes were enlarged from 14 to 16 in. drums, with steel shoes instead of die-cast aluminium, and self-servo shoes at the front. The front brakes were now cable operated, the cables being completely enclosed to keep away dust and water, and lubricated with oil from the engine. By this time centralised chassis lubrication had been fitted, so that the Talbots of 1929 were as free from lubrication points as the latest designs. The clutch was of the same type but somewhat larger, the four-speed gearbox had a silent third, and the chassis had hydraulic shock-absorbers. That splendid petrol-tank now held 16 gallons, giving a range of at least 300 miles. Modern designers please copy.

It was not Talbots' policy to race, and Roesch did not regard the '75' as a racing car at all. But when the enterprising firm of Fox & Nicholl Ltd., of London and Tolworth, on the Kingston By-pass, suggested entering a team for the 1930 Double-Twelve (hours) race at Brooklands, Roesch saw it as a challenge and the cars were in fact a works team, prepared entirely by Talbots at Barlby Road. The transition from '75' to '90' was an easy one. As we know from the 1922 engine, Roesch never feared high revs and high compressions. By using domed pistons (Y alloy crown and thin cast-iron skirt as before) and removing the sides of the 'bath tub' a compression ratio of 10 to 1 was obtained, the engine giving 93 b.h.p. maximum at 4,500 and 90 at 5,000. The single updraught Zenith had larger choke and jets, but ignition was still by coil, and after modifications to the exhaust valves the engine would run at full song for 24 hours. Unfortunately, two of the cars collided, causing a fatal accident in the Double-Twelve, but the 90s gave of their best at Le Mans in June of 1930, as we have seen. Brian Lewis and H. S. Eaton, Johnny Hindmarsh and Tim Rose-Richards came in third and fourth after the winning 6½-litre Bentleys to win the 'Index', having purred quietly round the Sarthe Circuit for 24 hours like a couple of pussy-cats.



Pitwork during the 1931 J.C.C. Double-Twelve, a 24-hour event spread over two days because night racing at Brooklands was not allowed. This was the first outing of the 3-litre '105' model; Talbots finished one, two, three in their class and were the fastest finishers in this (handicap) race. No. 10 (GO 51) was driven by Brian Lewis. (Photo: Montagu Motor Museum)

These astonishing 2½-litre touring cars then went on to win their class—which meant in practice the class for cars up to 3 litres—in the Irish Grand Prix (a sports car event despite the name) in Phoenix Park, Dublin, the Ulster Tourist Trophy, and that splendid flat-out blind, the B.R.D.C. 500 miles race, which traditionally closed the racing season at Brooklands. The 90s averaged 103 m.p.h. and finished three out of a field of nine. There was then a record-breaking session at the track on October 23, during which the following International Class D (3 litre) records were broken by the single-seater: 200 kilometres, 200 miles, 500 kilometres, three hours, 500 miles, 1,000 kilometres and six hours, at over 104 m.p.h.

THE TYPES 105 AND 110

The logical next step was to enlarge the engine to 3 litres. In December 1930 the bore and stroke were increased to 75 × 112 mm., although the resulting engine was still interchangeable with the 14/45. The vertical o.h.v. were now staggered, and operated by still more ingenious means, in that the rocker now oscillated on a ball-ended stud. This Roesch novelty

Talbot 90 engine, 1931. Georges Roesch achieved an architectural simplicity in his engines. All the oilways are contained within the block, and by mounting the radiator on the crankcase he not only avoided distortion but also saved the untidiness of another hose-clip. His pushrod engines with one carburettor gave power outputs that his competitors found difficulty in rivalling even with twin overhead camshafts and a supercharger.

(Photo: Mr J. A. F. Blight)



GO 52 in practice for the 1932 Tourist Trophy. Just round Quarry corner a rear wheel hub broke off round the base flange, taking wheel, hub cap and all with it. Brian Lewis was driving and Arthur Fox passenger. (Photo: Montagu Motor Museum)

has lately re-appeared, on Panhard, on General Motors and Ford engines, on the Vauxhall Viva and on the V4 and V6 Fords. The 3-litre type 105 gave 105 b.h.p. at 4,500 r.p.m. on the touring compression ratio of 6.6 to 1. On a 10.2 to 1 compression as used for racing it gave 140 b.h.p. at the same speed, figures which may be compared with those of the far more expensive straight-eight Type 35 Bugatti single overhead cam supercharged 2.3 litre, designed for racing, which produced 135 b.h.p. at 5,300.

The first 105s were ready for the J.C.C. Double-Twelve the following Spring. Again they made a great impression by their quietness, and again came first, second and third in the 3-litre class. This time they were also the fastest finishers in the race, which was run on handicap. At Le Mans Rose-Richards and Saunders-Davies came in third and were runners-up for the Rudge Cup; the same pair came third in the T.T., behind two supercharged cars, and repeated their third place in 1932. In the 500 Brian Lewis and Saunders-Davies came in second at 112.93 m.p.h. Talbots were placed one, two, three in their class, and won the team prize. In 1932 they came third at Le Mans after making up for lost time, and came second in the Thousand Miles race at Brooklands, taking the team prize.

More significant, though, than the racing successes of the 105 was the performance of Humfrey Symons's lone Talbot in the Alpine Trial of 1931, in which he won a *Coupe des Glaciers* for losing no marks—a rare feat. Inspired by this Fox & Nicholl entered three Talbots the following year, driven by Brian Lewis, Tim Rose-Richards and Norman Garrad. The team of three cars finished without penalty, winning a *Coupe des Alpes*. The only other time a British team had won was in 1913, the year of the Alpine Eagle Rolls-Royce. The Talbots were plain open touring cars with long graceful wings, by no means 'works racers'. Talbots did it again in 1934 with a team of three 'Brooklands' Super Speed Models.

The most powerful of the Roesch Talbots was a 3.3-litre variant of the 105 engine known as the 110 (80 × 112 mm., 3,375 c.c.). In touring form on 7 to 1 it developed 123 b.h.p. at 4,500 r.p.m. The racing one, on 11.4 to 1, gave 164 b.h.p. at 4,800 revs. W. M. Couper won a Brooklands race at almost 120 m.p.h. in this four-seater touring car, BGH 23, which was the 1934 Alpine Team leader, developed and tuned



The fastest Talbot of all was the 3.3-litre four-seater '110' BGH 23. This was the 1934 Alpine Team leader, subsequently developed for racing by the Works and driven by W. M. Couper. It very nearly achieved a Brooklands lap of 130 m.p.h. It is seen here air-borne after the big bump on the Members' banking. (Photo: Motor)

by the Works. BGH 23 was therefore indisputably the fastest touring car made before the war. It is now owned and raced by Anthony Blight, to whom I am much indebted for information and proof-corrections.

ROESCH TRANSMISSIONS AND MAINTENANCE

The 14/45 and the first '75s' and '90s' used a four-speed gearbox with right-hand control. Ratios on the 14/45 were 23·19, 13·45, 9·66 and 5·875 to 1. The larger cars had gearbox ratios of 3·4 bottom, 1·89, 1·36 and 1:1, with either a 4 or 4·363:1 axle. Later boxes had 'silent third', with helical constant-mesh pinions and dog clutches. For racing, the ratios were 2·466, 1·476, 1·166 and 1, with choice of 4, 3·8, 3·66, 3·461 or 3·3 final drive. In the early 1930s 'easy change' gearboxes were very much in the news. Two systems presented themselves: synchromesh and the Wilson Preselector, using planetary gearing and a pedal which engaged whatever ratio the driver had 'preselected' by moving a lever with his hand. Roesch redesigned the Wilson to his own ideas, producing a Talbot box that was cheaper, lighter, and stronger, while handling three times the power. Daimler employed the Wilson box with a hydraulic coupling

started if necessary and the engine could act as a brake below the speed of clutch engagement up to stop.

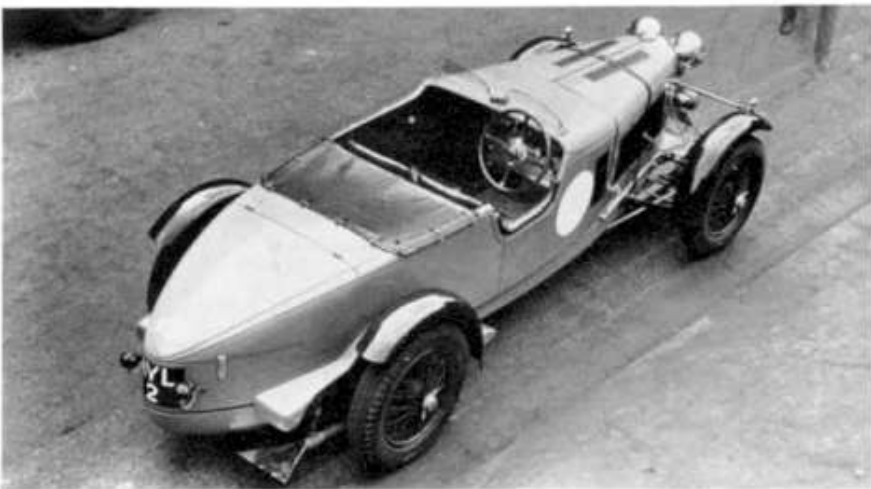
From preselection the designer's mind moved on to automatic preselection. As one engaged first gear with the pedal, the selector lever moved of its own accord into the second-gear notch. Changing-up became merely a matter of pushing a pedal—at the precise moment the driver, and not some little gremlin in Detroit, thought the change should be made. A final stage in the Roesch gearbox came when third gear was automatically preselected as one engaged top, and vice versa. The car could then be hurried through bends and mountains, getting maximum performance in the upper gears but without taking one's hands from the steering wheel.

The original chassis, as we have noted, had a wheel-base of 10 feet. A short chassis, of 9 ft. 6 in., was used on the more sporting models and on later versions of the 1·7 litre car, which began as the 14/45 but became known in later years as the Scout, and then as the 65. Some prices may be of interest. In July 1929 the 14/45 chassis cost £325, the tourer £395, Weymann Sunshine Coupé with sunshine roof £425 (Triplex glass £22 extra), while the most expensive model was the Tickford Sunshine Coachbuilt Sports Saloon at £610.

In 1931 the 75 Weymann Saloon cost £595, the 90 Speed Model tourer was £635; in 1933 a 105 chassis cost £525, or a Super Speed Model Brooklands Tourer £835. There was also an extremely pretty Airline 105 Saloon, which

A bird's eye view of Dr E. J. H. Roth's car, well-known both on the Mountain and Outer circuits, showing what an extremely pretty line was achieved for the '105' Brooklands Speed Models. Talbots set a fashion for mounting headlamps inboard to save drag. The Brooklands fishtail is prominent and the streamline fairing over the nose of the rear quarter-elliptic spring will be noted.

(Photo: Mr J. A. F. Blight)





The last of the Roesch-designed (as opposed to Rootes-styled) models—a 1935 '105'. All 1936 models had sloping radiators. (Photo: Montagu Motor Museum)

was a most graceful form of fastback, designed originally by Georges Roesch for his personal use.

Vintage and P.V.T. Talbots have sometimes been blamed for being difficult to work upon. This is not really fair, for to say this is to judge the cars outside their frame of reference. They were the first of the modern type of car, that is, designed to be maintained not by the owner in his backyard but by a properly trained and equipped agent of the manufacturers, as nowadays. As regards 'maintenance' in the literal sense Talbots almost maintained themselves, nearly everything being lubricated automatically, including the brake cables, steering joints and universals. It was intended that major overhauls should be a professional concern. This was little understood at the time, and it would be naïve to imagine that the make's closest competitors failed to make the most of the alleged difficulties in store for the amateur mechanic. Had the company survived and prospered under the Roesch direction, as it richly deserved to do, history's verdict would have been very different.

Alas, the story ends in 1934. The English Talbot company, having done exceedingly well financially as well as in competition, and carried the whole rickety

S.T.D. concern for a number of years, perished when that balloon burst. The Talbot assets were purchased by Rootes Ltd., and the splendid era of mechanical progress under Georges Roesch came to an end. Besides many thousands of 14/45s, 1,298 of the '65' model were made, 2,023 '75s', 102 '90s', 706 '95s' (the long-chassis 3-litre) and 375 '105s'*.

From this distance it appears that Talbots never received the applause they deserved. It may be that they carried reticence too far. Perhaps their achievement, though noiseless, was too nonchalantly complete, wiping more eyes and disjuncting more noses than was strictly diplomatic; one is reminded of the man who passed his neighbour's new sports car at the latter's maximum speed and then changed down. It seems, looking back on those days of the Great Slump, when Talbot kept the British flag flying after others had given up, almost as though Georges Roesch's Talbots were *too good, too far* ahead of their time, to receive the acclaim they

* These figures have been kindly supplied by Rootes Ltd. They may only refer to cars manufactured between the take-over and the outbreak of war. From 1936 all 3,377c.c. cars, whether sports or touring, were catalogued by Rootes as 3½ litres.

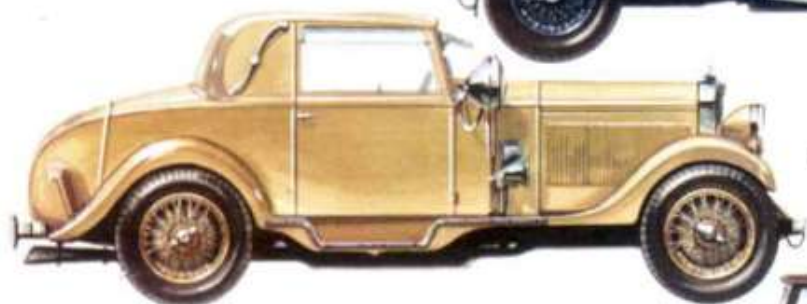


1929 14.45 h.p. Weymann Sunshine Coupé



1931 Brooklands Replica '105'

1933 short chassis '75' Saloon



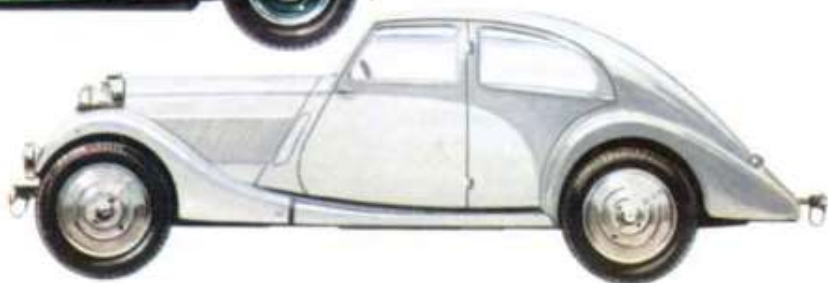
1930 '90' Fixed-head Coupé by Grose

1931 Sports 4-seater '105' by Vanden Plas



1937 3-litre Tourer

1934 '105' Airline Saloon





W. M. Couper's four-seater (above and on page 10) now belongs to Anthony Blight seen here, who rebuilt it in 1963. Its many successes have included winning the Pomeroy Trophy in 1966, while later in the year in the Coupe de l'Age d'Or at Rouen BGH 23 finished that 50-mile race on the 4-mile Les Essarts circuit on the same lap as the winning ERA., having averaged approximately 80 m.p.h.

(Photos: Montagu Motor Museum and Mr Ronald Barker)

deserved, and perhaps also *too* quiet in their manner of winning races to appeal to the rorty enthusiasts. Nonetheless they enjoyed a tremendous *succès d'estime*, and it was the London-built Talbots from Barlby Road, North Kensington, that kept the international Sunbeam-Talbot-Darracq concern alive. One can call it the triumph of Art over Commerce.

* * *

The writer wishes to record his cordial thanks to Mr Roesch for most generous assistance during the writing of this *Profile*.

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ROESCH TALBOT SPECIFICATIONS

Talbot 14/45, 1926-1935

Engine: 6 cyl. monobloc. 61 mm. bore, 95 mm. stroke, 1,666 c.c. R.A.C. rating 13.9 h.p. Output 41-48 b.h.p. at 4,500 r.p.m. according to year. Four-bearing crankshaft with disc webs, machined all over. Pressure lubrication from pump driven at engine speed. Overhead valves with Roesch patent very light pushrod operation. Single updraught Smith 5-jet or Zenith carburettor fed by Autovac from 14½ or 16 gallon rear tank. Delco-Remy coil ignition with automatic advance and retard, 12-volt battery. Cooling: radiator mounted on crankcase, thermosyphon circulation.

Transmission: Single-dry-plate clutch. Four-speed and reverse gearbox lubricated from engine; right-hand gate control. Silent third introduced 1930. Overall ratios: 5.875, 9.66, 13.45 and 23.19 to 1. Reverse 17.39 to 1. Torque-tube enclosing propeller shaft, with ball-bearing steady-bearing. Spiral-bevel final drive, semi-floating half-shafts.

Brakes: Four-wheel brakes with Perrot, later cable operation; hand brake on rear wheels only.

Steering: Worm and nut. Turning circle (9 ft. 6 in. chassis) 37 feet. (10 ft. chassis) 39 ft.

Suspension: Front: semi-elliptic, anchored at back end, shackled at front end. Rear: semi-cantilever. Hartford friction shock-absorbers. Hydraulic shock-absorbers 1931.

Chassis details: Wheelbase 10 ft., track 4 ft. 7½ in. Overall length 14 ft. Overall width 5 ft. 9 in. Ground clearance 9½ in. Tyres 30/4-75 on artillery or wire wheels. Chassis weight 18 cwt.

Note: In 1930 and 1931 the 14/45 appeared with 9 ft. 3 in. wheelbase and was then known as the Scout; from 1932-35 it was called the '65', and had a 9 ft. 6 in. wheelbase.

Talbot 75 1930-37 and Talbot 90 1931-33

Engine: Six cylinders. Bore 69.5 mm., stroke 100 mm., 2,276 c.c. R.A.C. rating: 17.9 h.p. Output: 76 b.h.p. at 4,500 r.p.m. on 7 to 1 c.r. in the Talbot 75; 93 b.h.p. at 4,500 r.p.m. on competition Talbot 90 with 10 to 1 c.r.

Valve gear: Roesch pushrods and rockers. Seven-bearing counterbalanced crankshaft.

Cooling: Pump circulation: radiator mounted on crankcase; thermostatic shutters.

Transmission: Four-speed and reverse gearbox with silent third gear on early '75s' and '90s'; four-speed and reverse epicyclic gearbox with 'Preselector' change (Wilson Patents). Overall ratios:

'75s' 5.22, 7.15, 10.57, 19.26 to 1. Reverse 25.4 to 1.

'90' 4.36, 5.98, 9.95, 17.45 to 1. Reverse 24.25; or

4.6, 6.75, 10.48, 18.4 to 1. Reverse 25.57 to 1.

Chassis details: As 14/45 except: Wheelbase 9 ft. 6 in. Long chassis '75s' 10 ft. wheelbase. Tyres '75' 29 × 5.5 (1934, 5.50 × 19).

Talbot 95 1933-35 and Talbot 105 1931-37

Engine: Substantially as the '90' but with staggered vertical valves. Bore 75 mm., stroke 112 mm.; 2,960 c.c. R.A.C. rating: 20.9 h.p. Output: '105' in touring trim (6.6 to 1 compression ratio), 100 b.h.p. at 4,500 r.p.m.; competition cars with 10.2 to 1 compression (benzole fuel), 138 b.h.p. at 4,800 r.p.m.

Brakes: Perrot type until 1931, then cable.

Transmission: 'Preselector' as on '90'. Gear ratios:

'95' 15.64, 8.69, 6.25, 4.6 to 1. Reverse 19.56 to 1.

'105' 13.6, 7.56, 5.44, 4.0 to 1. Reverse 17.0 to 1, or

14.83, 8.24, 5.93, 4.36 to 1. Reverse 18.55 to 1.

Wheelbase of '95', 10 ft., overall length 15 ft. 3 in. Wheelbase of '105', 9 ft. 6 in. Tyres, '95' 30 × 6. Tyres, '105' 29 × 5.5.

Talbot 3½ litre, Speed 3½ litre and 110. 1935-39

Engine: Substantially as '105', but bore 80 mm., stroke 112 mm., 3,377 c.c. Output: On touring (7 to 1) c.r., 123 b.h.p. at 4,500; on 11.4 to 1 c.r. (benzole), BGH 23, Couper's car, gave 164 b.h.p. at 4,800 r.p.m. The Luxury Limousine 3½-litre had special low compression ratio, and lower final drive ratio.

Transmission: Gear ratios: as for '105'.

Chassis details: 'Drop' frame and lower radiator optional on sporting models.