

My thanks to those who have taught me, have shared their secrets, have helped me and have trusted me (they know who they are). On your own you can do nothing, the future will prove it.

(There are probably some anachronisms or inaccuracies in the chronological order, certain facts are sometimes old, but even not in the right order the story stays the realty.)

PGO

Special thanks to Dominique and Jean-Paul for re-reading the original article and the update of memories, also to James for translation



The car in 1973 in the parking lot of my house

60 years of passion, Mechanics, and how to go from a Citroen C4 to a TRIUMPH TR5 PI with a big M for Mechanics

THE PRESAGES.

I used to see my Grandfather conscientiously turning the starter handle on his Citroen C4 to free up the engine before starting it, after having checked all the fluid levels. My active participation in this activity was to pass him the rags. Different times would you say ? (well yes, the C4 not that of today, that of 1932 with the thermometer on the radiator and a 'floating' engine)



Appreciate the only two graduations of thermometer: Summer temperature and Winter temperature.

Some years later, wandering around the mechanics who succeeded one another under the bonnet of his Renault 4CV, which lacked power (what a euphemism) and having thought about it for a long time (!) I decided to get involved.

« You need to look at the air filter » Everybody burst out laughing, teasing sniggers by the mechanics. Immediately my Grandfather asked to open the air filter. There was a nest in it. From then on, respect, it is still talked about in the family 60 years later. One -Zero, my first goal, I was seven years old, it was the beginning.....



Bird's nest or mouse nest my memory fails me

And the TR5 in all this ? In 1958 the TR5 didn't yet exist, not even the TR4, patience, first of all I needed to teach myself mechanics.

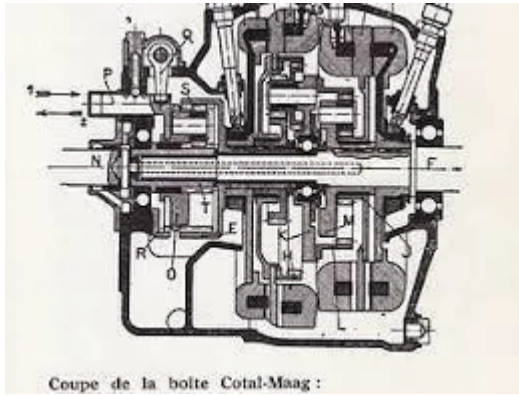
FIRST STUDIES, SELF-TAUGHT.

The story of the air filter wasn't too bad, but to do it again, I needed to understand what was happening in there inside. It was the end of the Fifties and information to the « general public » was by books and magazines. And I dived into everything that spoke about mechanics. Often they were old books rescued from the attic but the explanations were clear with, of course, drawings. I still remember a description of how a carburetor works « by the use of a connecting rod the operator opens the butterfly. Air which was waiting to do just that jumps into the carburetor !

At least it was clear, if the air was waiting to do just that, so was I.

(a side remark about accelerators, I still have a book from 1907 which explains the invention of the accelerator. It wasn't easy as up to then engines turned at a constant speed with a governor. An extraordinary story, of whom the children of one of the captains of industry, who was not a manufacturer of engines or cars and whose name is seen every day, were never aware of the hidden talents of their forbear. You know the story of this invention ??). If no one finds the answer, it could be the subject of a small post.

It needed some intellectual gymnastics to visualise in my overheating little brain how a differential or an epicyclic system worked. At night, pinions were spinning in my head. Life is like that at 13 years old - I knew everything about the Rateau turbo compressor fitted to aeroplanes in 1916, Mercedes injection, the Wilson preselector box, or the Cotal and Knight's sliding sleeves on Panhards etc.... In fact I thought I knew everything !! Afterwards I had to explain it all to my friends, some of whom fled thinking they were going to get their hands dirty, those who made out they understood in nodding their heads and those who found it all fantastic and joined me in my passion and who are still there today. !!



And the TR5 in all this ? It's way ahead, patience

THE FIRST PRACTICAL BITS.

It all started softly with « Mobylettes » 2 strokes/50cc, I got into just about everything, all the Solex range, clutchless Motobecanes, Automoto, Koehler-Escoffier, VAP, Peugeot Bima....That was easy Mechanics. After, we went up in horsepower, negotiated against some free labour we picked up motorbikes in barns, sidevalve or top valve Motobecanes, Terrot 125 and even a 500RGST, Peugeot 175 Bol d'Or with a twin exhaust, a Jonghi (with an unusual gearbox and a piston with a funny shape), a Puch (with a U shaped cylinder), scooters (there were brands other than Vespa, a 100cc 2 stroke lowered (with a separate gearbox under the seat and an exterior clutch with cork pads, 3 speeds on the reservoir - who can tell me what it was ?) An Isetta with a steering wheel hooked onto the door, the Vespa 400 with a crank handle in the reservoir to dose the amount of oil and even a Messerschmitt, 3 seats in tandem for which reverse consisted in restarting the engine backwards by changing the position of the ignition key, and so on.



Then it became more complex. You took everything apart, you tried to understand how it worked, you put it together again, of course it didn't always work again, you took it apart once more, but by observation one day you got it going. We were so proud to have penetrated the secrets of sometimes very strange mechanics, or at least unusual. Praise the designers. This incomplete enumeration as per Prevert means nothing to you ? Look it up on the web where you will find a « very old » one which will interest you. Our ancestors were geni. They had invented everything and tested it all 120 years ago. If you know this already, then we have had a career in common and you must feel the same thing as I. I'm not bigheaded enough to think I am alone.

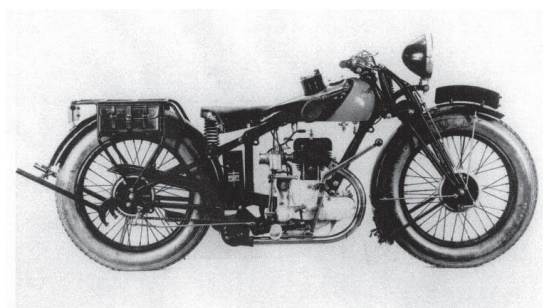


Peugeot 175 Bol d'Or, 2 Strokes with double exhaust



Jonghy 125

My pride and joy at the time was a 1929 Peugeot 350cc with sidevalves and gear change on the fuel tank. The valve springs were outside, (like hairpin springs ??, I think), a P104, 107 or 117 maybe. My mates put me on it and held me during the start up phase, because it weighed 3 times more than me. When I got back to the house obviously I couldn't stop to get off so I jumped at the last minute. Unfortunately my Father was there and so the adventure was ended. I still miss that machine which had a trailer with a single wheel, perhaps it is in a museum now. (When we went to go and collect the famous trailer in the cellar of the owner, he had just died, he was pretty old.) And when I regretfully abandoned it, it was in working order. I had managed however to keep a 125 Motobecane with sidevalves, a D45. The problem was that the gear lever was also on the side of the fuel tank and you had to take a hand off the handle bars to change gear. To cut the story short, it all got fucked up at the entry to a bend and I drove straight into a slurry pit with a colleague who saw everything happen over my head, as he was high on the pillion.



1929

Peugeot P107



Motobécane D45

Parts (or money) were n't very easy to come by and so we had to repair, adjust, make and above all clean, I say we, because I had a whole team of eccentrics with me. We even spent a night unwinding and rewinding a magneto by hand (from the Peugeot 350, I think), only the result counted and next day everything worked, when you have love in your arms



At last you can see what I look like, the big oaf, middle at the back

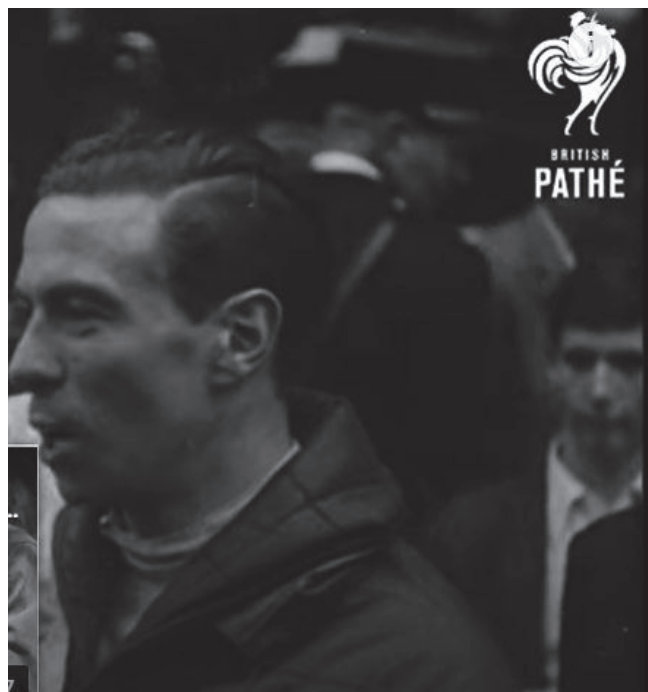
At the time I lived in the area around Pau, and there, there were Grand Prix. The most interesting was the F2 - 1000cc, particularly well suited to the circuit. We sorted ourselves out to be « Voluntary Stewards » placing people in the stands. I have to admit I didn't place many, as we tried to get into the paddock ! The smell of ricin, unforgettable Jim Clark (the Ayrton Senna of the time), Jochen Rindt, Graham Hill, Jack Brabham, Denis Hulme, JP Beltoise (I'll talk about him again later) Jacky Stewart (the Alain Prost of the time, the only survivor of the period at this moment of writing) and many others, all our heroes. And just a wink at the TR5, as there were carbies on the F2s but also some were using injection systems of which Lucas was one and it worked really well. Starting with the Cosworth DFV, Lucas PI was the key in competition, but we shall talk about it again. At any rate we had already met it already because Jaguar had used it for the Le Mans 24 hr race on the D type, 10 years before. The first Japanese Hondas also had injection in F2 with the derivative engine of the S800 (we'll talk about it too, later)



1966

GP Pau F2

Jack Brabham winner with a Brabham-Honda (the climb up past the Lycee)



JIM CLARK

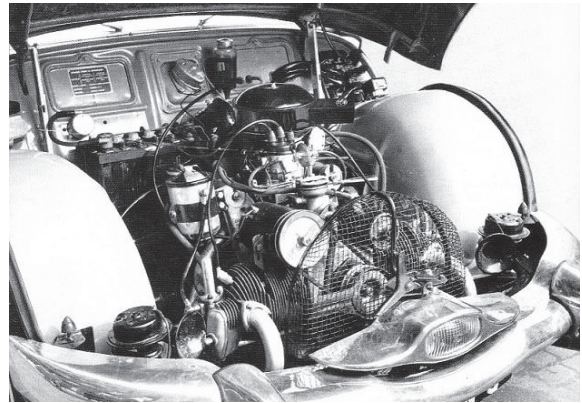
G.P.de PAU F2 - 1965.

*Ah to the right behind Jim Clark, that's me.....allways at the right place, at the right time
The link for the complete film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cL8S8woVDLY>*

Later, there were the first cars to repair, (paid in cash, too late for the taxman or the social security, but it didn't contribute towards my pension, shame really it would have paid a part of it). We stepped in where the garages were dubious (the 2CV, 4CV, 203, P60 they could manage but in deepest France they were wary of exotica) that were a bit bizarre at the time, a Matra Djet with a mid mounted engine, a Djet, the real thing, one from RB with the D, a Gordini engine, I think (just a blocked jet), Panhard PL17 and 24CT, fantastic engineering but a nightmare for mechanics , something English with SU carburetors (what is this thing, we had read about them but never seen one) we made enough money to pay for the petrol for our escapades, but I continued to learn on the job.



Real RB Djet, not Jet from Matra



Dyna Panhard

One time I removed the starter motor of my parent's Peugeot 203 because it no longer started. I had taken it to bits and put it together again, then I tested it with the 12v transformer of my electric train. 12v that should be OK ? Weelllll NO and the current ?



A starter motor like the one that refused to turn over with the transformer from my electric train set

Retrospectively, what still surprises me is that people at the time left us young folks in shorts alone, you had to be oblivious. Another period in time when there was less worry about youth.

And when there wasn't a GP we went to Biarritz for the weekend, lodged at the home of my mate's aunt. This took the two of us a good half a day on a Flandria 4 speed with foot change (thanks Jacques) . We had an asset, a spark plug FIRE INJECTOR with 3 electrodes, which everybody tried to extort from us. We never knew where it came from. It was something else compared to the BB

Peugeot with 3 speeds on the handle bar whose gearbox we seized in Jurançon. I'll have to stop if I get carried away by my enthusiasm there are 200 pages to write. I made a detour by Germany where I repaired a Gogomobil. Time passed then May 68, in the sticks it was great, no petrol, no tobacco but we had reserves....or at least we knew where to find them.

And the TR5 in all this ??

Patience , it had just been launched in France.

THE APPRENTICESHIP BEGINS

Block Release one would say today, I was still paid in black but in a Garage in the centre of France, not just any old garage but one that was « approved by Solex » if you please and we had a test bench for Solexes, incredible and when we had repaired them we tested them : 0.7hp !! (In fact it was practical for starting them) And there, between two kicks up the arse you learnt, tractors Ste Française de Vierzon. There were the old boys. Gruff with a maize papered fag, a swig of red wine at the break, but you watched, you listened, you don't weld cast iron, sharpening chains, the scraper, the glass hammer etc. And little by little they treat you better, they see that you aren't useless (but they don't say so). And you learn, again and again, to them all my thanks. They had suffered even more than I in their time. You needed to understand that to repair we weren't changers of parts programmed by a computer. Let's say that « fitting » was still human.



Solex Test bed



And the TR5 in all that ??

Have a bit more patience, I hadn't yet ever seen one. And you ? Perhaps you weren't even born

OFF TO THE ARMY FOR MORE TRAINING

Having been defiant against the system at school, I found another family in the military, but don't get me wrong - still in fettling mechanics. Common core for non commissioned officers, kicks up the arse, but not the same ones. Saved, one of my bosses had a Velocette Thruxton 500 which pissed out oil (nothing unusual) , we got along together, it got better. At 18 , quick, my driving license, got 100% in the practical part, true I hadn't waited to practise, but I failed the theoretical part. But got it at the following session (Thanks Jean Yanne). I had bought a car two weeks before, a 1951 Citroen Traction 11BL. I still have it. (It 's strange, why do the English call it the Citroen 15 ??) I ran a big end (lubricant problem, removed sludge blocked all oil galleries, when I intended to wash. well known problem at the time, with non detergent mineral oils). I had the crankshaft rectified and putted it all together with conrods and shells from an ID19. A bit of snake oil and I got my first ticket, excess speed at 110 km/h. « Still goes OK » said the Gendarme, fortunately he didn't know what was under the bonnet, I had fitted a Roots supercharger (Constantin, does that remind you of something ?) And then the military technical training, well structured, good equipment, good supervision, good atmosphere, you learn something different, tank magnetos, the first electronic regulators...! learnt more and more and 2nd in my year I ended up as an Instructor. Now it was my turn to teach others, don't get me start on the idiots. Another Citroen Traction, a 15/6 cylinder (it ended up in Yugoslavia, yet another subject for a book). And then I bought another bike, a Monnet & Guyon, Castor Y2, which I only bought because it had the Beaver emblem each side of the fuel tank !!! 115c 2 speed, there was a huge gap between the two !!. After some modifications, I ran it on heating oil which started it with a bottle of Camping Gaz placed in the tool roll under the seat. It smoked a bit for the first kilometer, then after, that apart from the smell it went OK. In the Army we had studied multi-fuel engines. (later on the TR5 didn't agree)



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1 MOIS A L'ESSAI

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No need for explanations

End of 1970, bad posting to Colombey, (*note 1) I had had enough of freezing to death and asked for an overseas posting.

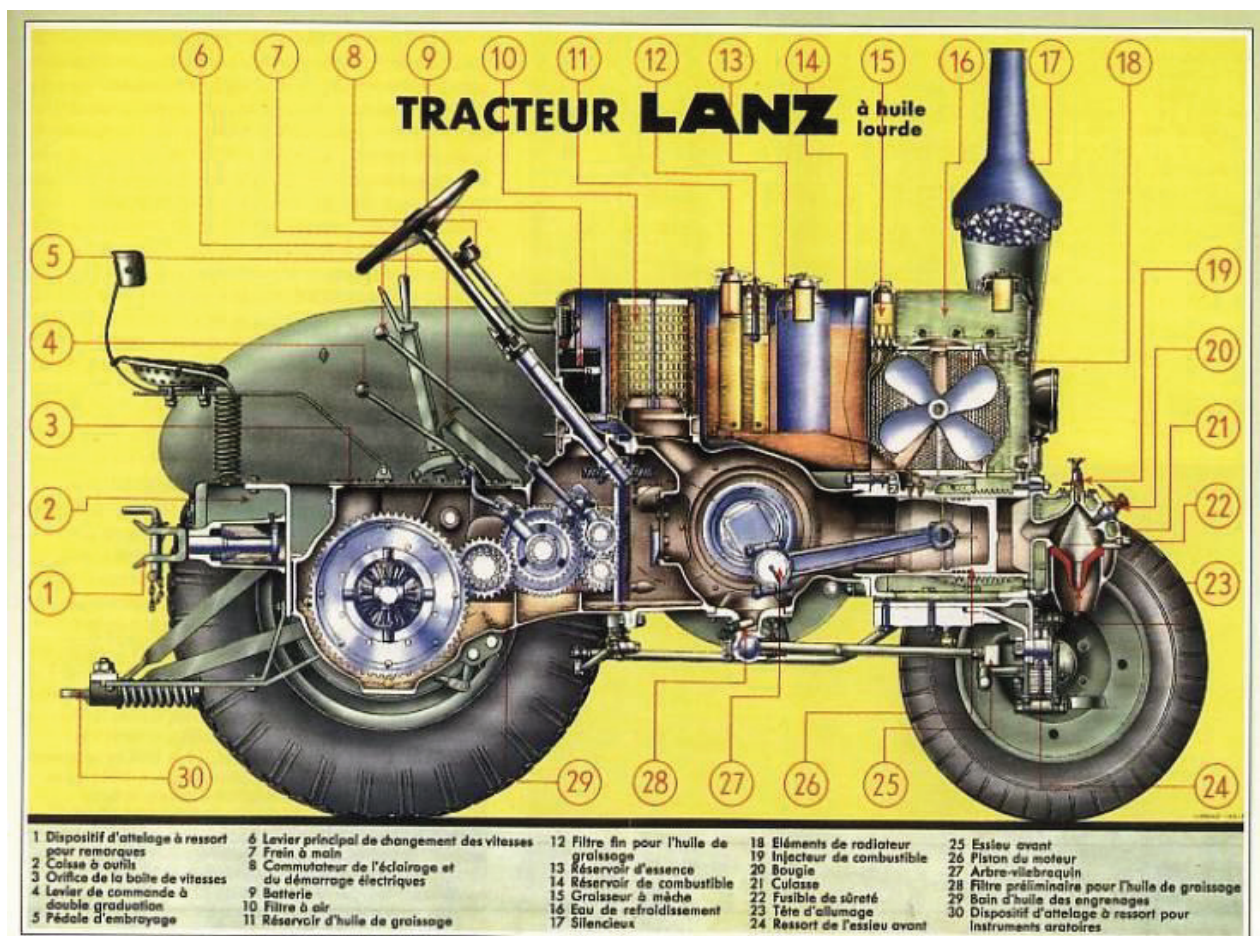
One day I got hauled in : - You want to go to the Reunion ? Which Reunion ? (*note 2)

- The Isle of Reunion, moron !!
- Euh I'll give you a reply this evening, Boss.

I looked it up in my Illustrated Petit Larousse. « Ex French colony, capital St Denis.... ..Indian Ocean». I asked around, anybody know this place ?? An old sergeant major said « I don't know it, but I was in Madagascar, not very far away and it was good » Obviously if it was good not very far away, then I had to go (Who knew Reunion 48 years ago ?) And that is how it all started

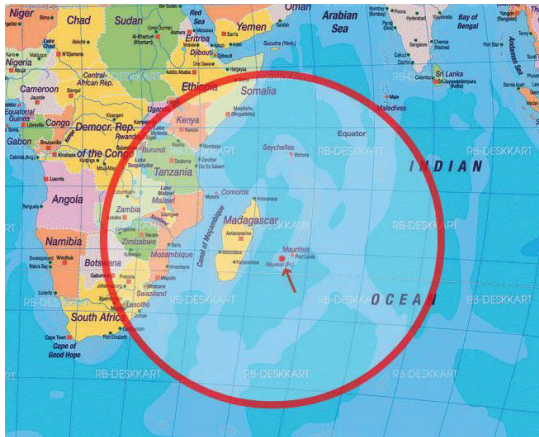
IN THE TROPICS

1971. I arrived in December, it's hot it's summertime, I was 20 and knew everything, you're going to see what you're going to see. My boss, an old Sergeant Major, picked me up at the old airport with a Simca 1100 and took me to the mess. Loads of questions during the 7 km ride and he dropped me off saying « they've sent me yet another incompetent » I replied « you need to have a look at your valves clearance » ! We finished by finding common ground in discussing Lanz Bulldog Tractors and he didn't manage to catch me out and he left me in peace.



Half diesel with a hot bulb

He explained what La Reunion was all about « here it's simple, there are two types of people, the Bezoutes and the Rakoutes. The Bezoutes are the Reunionnais who when they speak they always start by « baise oute something » and the Rakoutes are the Malgaches, their name always begins with Rakoto. You, you are a Zoreil. (*note 3) The creole language is easy, all the nouns are masculine except sand, poison and tunnel. Right ! Now you know everything let's get to work !!



(*)There were a lot of Malgaches, relations with Madagascar were very close, as it was the model of France in the Indian Ocean. Hospitalisations were in Tananarive, for example, nowadays it is the other way round.

I took up my responsibilities as Maintenance Workshop Foreman for cars and trucks. He presented me to my personnel. Two youths from France who had arrived a few months before and all the other people, about 15 civvies, average age 40, who spoke a dialect that I couldn't understand. Wait a minute, I was 20 years old, I'm their Boss and they looked at me as if I had arrived from outer space. Two objectives, master the language and find a means of getting about, the means of locomotion enabling me, amongst other things to more easily recruit a teacher of the beautiful creole language.

I bought a Peugeot 404 saloon with Kugelfischer injection (for info it had an electric geared fuel pump like the Lucas version, fitted at the front of the car, like the first TR5s. Well, well we never heard of any problems with vapour lock with that one....) 999 ME 974, opening roof. I tried several different teachers, (pillow teachers are the most efficient !), one month later with the support of the older lads, I managed to master my team. With the exception of the Peugeots 204s and the Renault R16s of the officers and the Jeeps, all the other equipment was new to me, again lots of things to be learnt. We received Ferret scout cars and had to convoy them to St Denis for the Gendarmes. There I used for the first time the Wilson Preselector box that I had read about in my books when I was 13 ...



Kugelfischer injection in the 404

You can see the fuel filter in front. The vacuum reservoir for the hydrovac at the back in the photo on the right

OK, OK that's all very well but where is the TR5 ??

Patience we have never been so close.

OUR LEGENDARY CLASSICS

The 15HP

At La Reunion, it's hot in summer, the opening roof on the 404 was great, especially for getting out when it was lying on the doors on a tight bend at Boucan Cannot ! As Bourvil would have said" it didn't go so well" (*note 4) . At any rate I needed more air. We found an American car with electric soft top, a real American, it was a Chevrolet Malibu, it wasn't the price that put us off because it wasn't very expensive, nobody wanted a barge like that (I say WE, because at one time there were two of us buying it together). It was common sense that took priority ; the fuel consumption, parts availability, the automatic box and as John-Paul said, driving up to Cilaos at the wheel of the Titanic! (FYI, road to go to Cilaos from coast has 400 sharp turns in 36 kilometers)

And then a rarity, a Peugeot 404 with soft top which would become a legend. Black top, a yellow stripe. We installed an Auto Bleu induction kit, found heaven knows where, with a Weber 40 DCOE, planed the cylinder head, put the cam shaft from a 504 Injection which lifted and overlapped a bit more and then nothing. It wouldn't go, the fuel wasn't getting there. To be expected, the camshaft for injection had no drive cam for the mechanical fuel pump (unlike the TR5!!). Yet another lesson !! I fell back on an electrical pump from a Honda 800, whose owner was on extended leave in France, it worked fine and we avoided the vapour lock problems., until the day that the pump gave up. To get home we fed fuel to the carburettor by gravity, the passenger holding up high the windscreen washer reservoir which he filled with fuel, a matter of principle as we never abandoned a vehicle at the roadside. (The Army was also having problems with vapour lock with a GMC. I sorted out the problem in a radical manner with aspirin tablets. It could be another story to be written. On request : special recipe, how to remove vapor lock with aspirin).

It accelerated well as we had fitted a short ratio worm and pinion axle from a van, we burnt the thing out six up on a steep hill going up to Salazie. To come back down was OK but once on the level I think we finished up towed by someone, if I remember.



1972 John Paul on the 15HP in front of the barracks (photo JPR)

But we had another card to play. The first orderly breaker's yard in Reunion, who tried to a decent job. It was a Chinese guy with some ideas who had arrived from France a few months before me. He had been John-Paul's neighbour on a plane flight and that is how they got to know each other. He had brought a Facom tool box with him. We became friends, he introduced me as « Workshop Manager for the Military Barracks » and so we gave him a hand and had the keys of the yard 7 days a week. Everything we dreamed of (he has since died,). The next day the axle was changed and the 15HP operational again. One day our bespoke gear change system on the floor gave up the ghost, no problem we opened up the access on the tunnel and it was the passenger who changed gear with a stick of sugar cane.

A demonstration that a passenger can be useful, not only for putting fuel in the windscreen washer tank.



*The 15HP, well loaded, in front of the suspension bridge on the East river.
Note the registration number 97-4 the hyphen disappeared later (photo JMV)*

The 5 LU.

Our reputation as mechanical wizards was made !! Two mates doing VSO instead of their military service asked us if we could do something about their Fiat 850. No problem, that car rapidly became a competitor to the Abarths and it pleases me to believe that the record for the descent at night from Cilaos to St Louis was held by these two clowns and has never been beaten. It was a bit easy as we had never had time to look at the brakes.

You can see it in the photo two different colours, it was John-Paul who had cut it in half and welded on another front end (thanks to the breaker's yard) as the new owner had shortened it by hitting my TR4 hard up the arse. Brakes always brakes, it wasn't a car for amateurs.



5 LU with its new nose, my TR4A (at last a Triumph), the Honda S800 of Jean-Marc and Jean-Paul's coupe 850 (photo JPR)

Ah ! Jean-Paul who was my second in command, and what a second ! We rapidly overcame the criteria of hierarchy and understood that we had points in common and also complementary, we ended up renting a place together. A lad with a good head, more mature, calmer, more organised than me, he was involved in all the escapades, fortunately often as a restraining element. Formidable efficiency. We went our separate ways, we met up after 40 years, as if it was yesterday to talk mechanics and recall our youth. He used to take photos, Jean-Paul, slides with an Instamatic. When he returned to France, he bought a Spitfire. Greetings Jean-Paul and thanks for the photos. He also continued his career in mechanics under other skies

And the others

There was a well known car that we often came across, but we weren't in the same class. One was a soft top Peugeot 403, (same as inspector Colombo) , the 5 FL 97-4. It was part of our fantasies, because it was the one that Jean-Paul Belmondo drove in the film the Mermaid of Mississippi with

Catherine Deneuve, but we never touched it (For info the Registration N°s 1 to 10 were reserved for the Administration or the Authorities and were never stopped by the police)

English girls.

We specialised in English cars. Minis, Spitfires, GT6, Sunbeam Alpines with positive earths - we too. The SUs, no longer a secret we polished the needles to change the profile. Nearly everybody who drove an English car came to us. One day we found a rather moth eaten red TR4A IRS in a garage. I bought it and was had, too expensive and fiddled about with, I had lost my reason. It had been too fiddled about with, the engine had the most awful vibrations and the girls who jumped into the 15HP no problem, fled when they saw the Triumph coming. Not the best thing when you are trying to pick up a bit of skirt. We improved some things but lacked time to do everything even if we were the lucky ones. Our working hours were 6h15 - 13h15 I think, many envied us. At 14h we were shoved out and we headed for the breaker's yard, our annexe. When night fell on the way home every evening we came across, in the Avenue de Paris, a red Fiat 124 Spider, Italian, as long as the roof was off it was OK but.... Greetings Bill, becoming my friend, he has just retired at 70 years. And night time rides could begin

In the past in Reunion there were breaks in the supply of petrol, the boat hadn't come. For the marriage of a colleague, disaster, the guests wouldn't come for fear of running out of fuel. No problem, we got things organised. We let everybody know that we had loaded the TR4 with 150 litres of petrol in jerricans on the back seat and in the boot. We already had stocked fuel on the balcony of my bedroom, just in case, like May 1968. Everybody came and the party was a success. He died last year, I saw his wife a month ago and we talked about it again, also the story of the stick of sugar cane. Hello Maryse and Pierrot ! Then I sold the 15HP to one of the volunteers with 5 LU, (the model of which is on display at his house, everything is right, the black bonnet, yellow stripe and even the registration number) ! After, they sold 5 LU to a Martiniquais, it was he, who hit my TR4 up the backside at the junction stop in Butor, still with a braking problem.



A nous les petites Anglaises, Spit 1500, Sunbeam Alpine, always the –' (photos PGO)



GT6 in front of banana plantation. (photo PGO)

Maybe now we're beginning to talk about Triumphs.....

JAPANESE GIRLS

The second of the VSO boys had bought a yellow Honda S800 roadster, which we went over to have a look at. The car leaned to one side and the Mauritian seller (note 5) tried to hide it « it leans, it leans ?? » said he, but no of course not it's the soil that slopes ! » And so we got involved in Japanese cars. The S800 was everything concentrated, small, light, no brakes, a short quick joystick for a gear lever, but with its 4 Keihins well adjusted it would go up to 10 000rpm, fantastic. The engine of the S800 developed from the S600 was the basis of the injected 971cc seen at Pau in F2. Hello Jean-Marc & Suzy !



A festival of colours with the S800 (photo JMS)

PEGASUS

It was here that I met Dominique, forever and still my partner in crime. Bit of Class, Dominique with a black Lotus Europa (with a windscreen signed by Colin Chapman, if you please !!) and also a VW 181 whose steering went into a terrible resonance shimmy at 95kph, at least we knew not to go over that speed, but as it was a convertible he was partially excused. He lived on a property with a beautiful traditional Creole house with a garage with an inspection pit, and there started a new adventure. Wired as he was into mechanics, we had to get along, and still do. We got interested in Rallies. First, assistance for a Datsun 240Z with him and « Dionny » our driver who founded the Pegasus team, we'll talk about it later.

At any rate there were only the three of us who understood each other immediately when we talked mechanics : Dominique, Jean-Paul and me, and that hasn't really changed since.

This is desperate, still no TR5, but it is in some ways the end of the story. Let's get on with it.

RIGHT HERE WE ARE

One Sunday on the beach at Boucan, a guy came up to me and said 'it gives a lot of pleasure to see one's old car'

It was one of the old owners of the TR4A. We talked and then suddenly he said « I've got a master cylinder for a TR5, which I don't need, perhaps we could fit it » Thanks and exchange of addresses and we went our ways. TR5, TR5 we didn't know a lot about them. We did some research, totally different, the master cylinder is not the same and won't fit.

You need to know that communications at the time were not easy. I'm not talking about mobile phones which were inexistent; when you called France you dialled first 10 and asked how long the wait to call France ?? - 30 minutes. OK, right I'll call you back. 30 minutes later the switchboard girl called us back and we could speak for about 3 minutes (more if you knew her !)

You had to wait for the delay before speaking back as it was all by Single Sideband Radio. It was short wave and at the house, with my autotradio and a good aerial we could listen to everything that went out, like Radio St Lys for sailors. Satellites hadn't arrived yet. At the house I still have some glass valves from the amplifier of Radio St Denis, big 30cm valves.

Some time later in a smoke filled room, which passed for a night club, in the hills at Avirons somebody came up to me and said :

I see you have a Triumph, I've got a friend who has one too and he's doing nothing with it

- What is it ?

I don't know but he's over there, I'll go and find him. The guy came over

- What's your Triumph ? »

A TR5, !

- A what ?

A TR5PI

- Ah a TR5, a TR5

You interested ?

- I don't know, where is it ?

St Pierre in the A.L. garage

- OK, I'll have a look

But what is this story about this TR5 ?

Next day was Sunday, the vapours of alcohol having cleared, we decided to go back to St Pierre, we opened up the Chinese guy's garage and there was the car. 882 MR97-4 (still with the -) Wire wheels, up on blocks, tyres well worn, a bit dusty, hood closed, Triumph Racing Green - 25) no apparent problems, about 30 000kms or less.

We opened the bonnet and surprise, surprise, the master cylinder was missing ! Six cylinders and I recognised immediately the Lucas fuel injection that I had studied in my documentation in the sixties and seen on F2 cars at Pau. An injection system used on racing cars, I had to have this car ! On its blocks the car was impeccable and maybe hadn't moved for six months or more. I made out I wasn't too interested, I didn't sleep all week, the Lucas injection coming and going in my mind. The TR5 I didn't know but Lucas injection had no secrets for me. At least in theory. At any rate a car with Lucas injection could only be something fast, and from the technical point of view I found the idea wonderful and it corresponded to my philosophy : Simplicity is efficiency.

And after all, the TR4 was getting a bit tired, the conrods were fragile. They had been cobbled together and were well undersized. What should I do ?? I would have needed to change the crankshaft. We had already had it re-cut beyond the recommended repair dimensions and had melted antifricition alloy on the big-ends, and ajuste dit. (Is there anybody around nowadays who now able to do this ?) In fact the opposite of what I had done to the Traction a few years before. It worked but it was delicate, you didn't need to try too hard with it.

And the next weekend there we were at the TR5 owner's house, who welcomed us wearing a Dodo beer bottle capsule as a monocle. He had bought the TR5 new in July 1968, the time to get it to La Reunion, it was October. Single owner

- Yes, yes, not bad your car but the tyres have had it, but there is no master cylinder, no battery and how do we know it runs ? And at 14HP (fiscal) the road tax at the top rate. And you know I don't really need it I already have a TR4 and I'm a bit short financially

OK, OK ! You are the only one than can buy this kind of car

- Oh yeah, and why ?

I have asked around

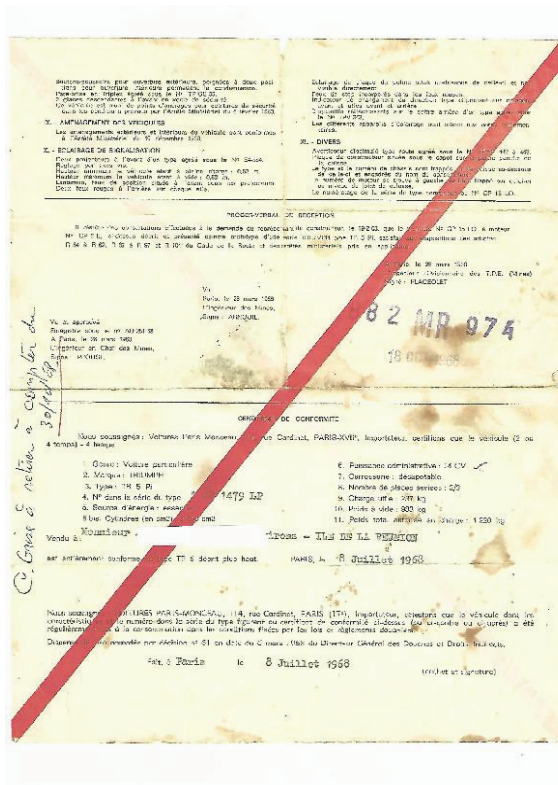
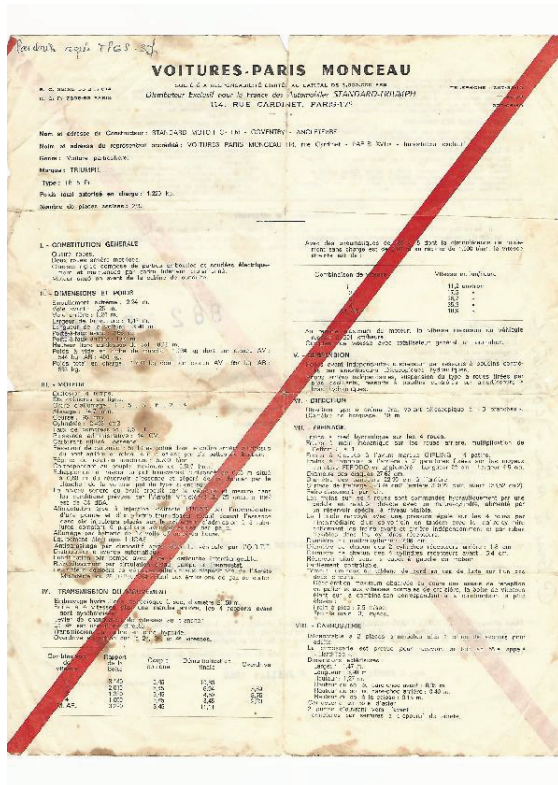
- !!??

2 millions (*) and I'll fit new tyres and you can pay in two parts. (*) At the time the CFA franc was still in use in Reunion. 1000 CFA = 20 FF

- Right OK 1.5 and you throw in the road tax and I'll sort out the battery

OK then I agree, you'll see, you won't regret it.

200kph for 20 000FF in Europe and here you had to add in the freight costs! I had my TR5 for 3 000 FF, (457 Euro today !). I retrieved the Constructors Certificate, I still have it. 1CP 1479 LP, everything was in order, I changed the log book.



VIN : 1CP 1479 LP. The original French Certificate of Conformity from 8/7/1968. It was thus a CKD from Malines. Still current registration number 882 MMR 974. This year BMHTI confirmed me matching engine number.

He was right, I have never regretted it, but it wasn't so simple. First to know if it really went up to 200kph. Action stations all week. I called France to get a Workshop Manual, because even if we were mad dogs we had learnt something. Always read the literature first and then work on it afterwards. We started have some discipline.

We retrieved the master cylinder, there was even a set of windscreen wipers with it. It seemed to be the right one. We were told that a guy had brought it back from France for the owner, but there was some kind of argument and he had kept it. I got it insured, found a battery at the breaker's yard and filled a jerry can with petrol and the next weekend the happy outfit did the 95km to St Pierre.

The car was still there, clean, impeccable with its new tyres. The road tax stuck on the windscreen. We changed the oil, the coolant, cleaned the spark plugs, checked the points, the fan belt, we fitted the master cylinder - yes it was the right one. We put in our 20 litres of petrol we bled and rebled the brakes and the fuel lines. The fateful moment had come. Whirring of the pump in the boot. It coughed, spluttered and started.

Oil pressure OK, it turned over well. We let it warm up, revved it up a bit, what a wonderful noise.

And that is how it all started

And so we set off, a detour by the service station and return to St Denis. For those who, knew the road at this time, it was not bad, a few bends, the only road bridges were those constructed alongside of the railway, as all the ravines were crossed with concrete slabs.

And there was the first coastal road, the well known as Corniche road. You had two possibilities, either you went slowly to avoid the stones that fell or you went flat out to pass before they fell. Guess mine. There was however another solution, Dominique had a Chinese colleague with I think an S800, he used a safety helmet !

Generally speaking I don't remember the roads being in a poor state, not too overcrowded, acceleration -brakes, just enough to amuse oneself with the TR5, at least for the acceleration. The brakes were good by the standards of the time because servo assisted and we mustn't forget the drums on the 404. In fact on the 15HP I had fitted Thermostables from the Injection Saloon with a Hydrovac. The problem with the Thermostables is that without assistance there is no movement of the brake shoes, no brakes at all. But we'll talk about the servo-assistance on the TR5 later.

The handling was not too disconcerting after the TR4A, a bit heavier at the front, but the shock absorbers were in a better state and that compensated. The gearbox was the same, the engine had a real difference, it was smoother, vibrated less, pulled better, but something wasn't right. Ears and nose told us it was either too rich or the timing was out. This was rapidly confirmed by the fuel gauge, 20 litres for 95 km, perhaps that is why the gentleman sold it ?

We needed to get back to our den. Yeah, yeah, yeah...is this OK ? In competition the consumption of the Lucas Injection was not critical. And so our brains began to overheat. We had understood that it was very accurate and that we should not fiddle with the 'dosage screw' without knowing exactly what we were doing. I'll abridge the discussions and trial and error but the membrane had a hole in it, enriching it to a max. To check it out we doubled up the membrane with a piece of plastic which gave us 30hp more straight away. The tyres smoked, we had sorted it out.

- Hello Garage B (*) in Bordeaux, could you send me a membrane for a TR5 ??

Ah yes, a membrane for what, the fuel pump, for which car an R5 ?

- No, No, the injection pump for a TR5, Triumph

Injection yes, yes I'll have a look, do you have the part number ?

- No but on the drawing it's labelled 'XYZ', it's like the membrane for a fuel pump, it's bigger and it's black (the membranes for fuel pumps were often red)

Right, we'll have a look !

- Thanks

(*) It needs to be mentioned that one of the VSO lads came from the Bordeaux area and had a GT6 before coming to Reunion. One day he was overtaken by a wire wheel, it was his. (you know when you invert the sides of the spinners !!!!....), he had given us the contact of Garage B in Bordeaux, who was the concessionaire BL and sent us parts for the English cars.

The breakdown lasted 24hrs



Changeover from the TR4A to the TR5 viewed from the 2nd floor balcony (where we kept our petrol stocks) (photo JPR)

I remembered when the guy had said that only I could buy the car. To think that the car was immobilised for 10 FF of membrane. No hard feelings ! I was pretty pleased with myself, I had perhaps been had with the TR4 but I felt I had got my own back with the TR5, experience helps.

What now ? Still the TR5

The tyres that had been fitted, had clearly not cost a lot as the rear ones lasted three weeks. True that at the exits of the hair pin bends on the Mountain, they smoked a bit. I retrieved the front tyres as spares and fitted Michelin XAS 165 x 15, they still smoked but it wasn't the same smell. On bends co-passengers hung out to see the wire wheels change shape, yes, it was very visible.

Afterwards there was an flurry of incidents, which today would have led me to prison. No speed limits, seat belts weren't obligatory, fortunately the fact I wasn't wearing one saved me onetime.

One day I found a % page of a notebook stuck under the windscreen wiper. Ah ! perhaps a girlfriend suggesting we meet up, sometimes we found some sweet ticket. I unfolded it « if you continue like that, I'll throw the book at you », it was the Chief of the Gendarmerie, Motorbike Brigade. We had nicknamed him «monkey» because we had seen him once with a marmoset on his motorbike. Usually the Gendarmes didn't bother us too much, because it was we who looked after their mobile machinery. Perhaps I had upset him one day with a smoke screen. Anyway I calmed down a bit, when we saw them we slowed down and waved. That was Reunion in the Seventies and for us it was really good.

We worked on the shape of combustion chamber a bit, we fitted piston rings from a Diesel 204 (?!?!), we tidied up the inlet manifold and the ignition, we took off the bumpers and fitted an oil cooler(factory kit ordered at the Garage B.), and the chrome bezels from the TR4A



The roads at the time (la Grande Chaloupe). The TR5 alone on the beach at the Hermitage (at the time the Reunionais didn't go to the beach very often, they've caught up since !) (photo PGO)



44 351 km with chromed bezels from the TR4 (photo PGO)

200 kph for 3 000FF, Myth or truth ??

We couldn't die without knowing something about it, especially at this rhythm it might be rather sooner than later. Early one morning returning from the South, we tried it out. At the crack of dawn, air cold and still, light car, engine running a little rich, a 4 km straight and flat at Ermitage, windows closed, soft top in place, no bumpers. My mate Jean-Paul in the passenger seat with a stop watch calibrated on the km posts and off we went. Once in one direction then in the other. I only remember the wipers lifting from the windscreen, pushed by the relative wind they went past the automatic stop and started gesticulating. The smell and the smoke were awful, the rear axle nearly caught fire when we stopped, less than 19 seconds, 190 kph ++, not bad, but the configuration of the

factory chassis wasn't really up to it. 200kph was perhaps possible with a hard top and a few mods, but retrospectively even 190kph, we must have been completely loopy, in Reunion they say 'gassed' , it isn't much better, but it's kinder ! (*note 6)

-

At least we had done it

I know that there will be some who are sceptic too bad for them, because I doubt that they can check out the 'exploit' themselves on an open main road now. Except if they are even more 'gassed' that we were, certainly not with modern E85 fuel

The TR engine was a good basis for modifying, and we knew how to do it. Sometimes I raced against Porsche 911s. They beat me on the bends, no problem, because they went round them flat, but I caught them up with the engine. We never really managed to decide the winner, except when I put in the overdrive, we'll talk about that later.

So it was a good thing done.



1973 and I've grown a moustache (photo JPR)

What about power assisted braking ?

Without assistance it wouldn't stop, which is true for all disc brakes (including the S800 !) One day we went up to Piton Maito (2 000m) Double punishment for the Lucas injection MkII. It got too rich with the altitude, wouldn't pull, black smoke, we'll come back to that. We thought we would find petrol on the road at Guillaume perhaps, but it was closed. With the over-consumption, we quickly understood that we would have to economise in order to make it to the pump at Savannah at the bottom. So we went down in neutral not using the brakes. From time to time I slotted it into 3rd to have some engine braking and a little vacuum. You can understand what followed. When we got to the bottom it wouldn't start again. But there was enough petrol, time to think about it. (Don't forget that the Certificate of Conformity mentioned 2 places plus one spare, so we were often three up)

Out with the tool box, diagnosis, but of course !! When the engine turns with no ignition, no electric fuel pump., no fuel pressure, so the distribution rotor is no longer lubricated, it heats, it sticks and the plastic drive breaks. QED, the demonstration had been well done, what an idiot !. We had to get back home, no way we could leave the car in the bush. And so we returned with the roof off of course, Jean-Paul and I, but on the flatbed of the breaker yard truck. What a glorious return to St Denis !

We took the LUCAS fuel distributor apart and the rotor was seized. We tapped it out and we lapped the hard points with cigarette ash. With a hacksaw, and a file we cut off the handle of a Facom screwdriver and sculpted a new fake one. Two hours later the engine was working. Nobody should believe that I am making this up, I'll look at it again, the day I take it apart but I believe that this home made part is still in place. My witnesses are still alive. Yet another lesson !



Yes they are XAS tyres. On the left a GT6 on repair, parked in front of the same banana plantation (photo PGO)

PETROL

Petrol Injection, why Petrol ? Because in English, petrol that means car fuel. But how do you say petrole in English ? (kerosene. ed.) At the time the Caltex fuel stations in Reunion sold kerosene at the pump as there were still many kerosene lamps and heaters. (In Madagascar, today kerosene is still sold in service stations). So we stopped at the service station and added 20 litres of kerosene. It started but pinked, no power. OK finally we understood, no Octane number, no point in trying. We drained it all and afterwards used it to clean parts. But the Americans when flying speak of gas when they speak of petrol ? How do they manage to buy proper gas ? OK drop it, Petrol = Gasoline, it's obvious. (Apparently there were some problems at the beginning of the WWII with British pilots who wanted Petrol in France , you can understand what happened ...)

Higher still, and I fly

Deciding that the tyres skidded about a bit too much, I decided to go wider. There wasn't a lot of choice here at the time. I opted for XAS 185 x 15. As the rolling circumference is greater, I decided to fit the diff from the TR4 which was ready for the breaker's yard, 3.7 instead of 3.45, that should be alright. (For info I made a little Excel table with all the possible combinations of tyres, diff, gear box and overdrive, everything you could possibly fit to a TR4 / 5 /6, but it was the Excel of the period, Bill Gates was still at University). Crown wheel and pinion set up with red chalk, as in the manual and off we went. A little outing to run it all in and see the handling, but I promise not more than 150kph. Fortunately I went out alone. One of the other straights of the time, a sort of dual carriageway with a slight descent going towards Ste Marie, the old airport.

The tyres are warm, the roof down, lightly with the right foot, pressing progressively, I got ready to overtake a 403 Pick-up, which hadn't seen me coming (the rear view mirror of a 403 with a tilt, hah !) which decided to overtake an Ami 6 which was going like a chameleon. I was stuck, stood on the brakes, I gently pulled to the left, mastering the situation, but it was getting narrower. In the middle, to separate the 4 lanes there was a median strip of grass, with a curb in concrete each side, I braked, still pulling to the left, even after 45 years I still see it all in slow motion. Boum ! A memory lapse....

When I woke up I was sore everywhere, I was laid out on the grass with folk running around me

I was taken to hospital in a 403 ambulance, I was alone in the back, no nurse, the driver called « don't move, don't move ! , or you'll drop me in the shit » Even so I moved a little just to see if things responded, I looked at my right arm and saw the bone, but it wasn't not broken. A week in the hospital, a broken tooth, stitches in my arm, my back was well scraped on the left hand side, I was trembling a little.

I was declared fit, back to work rapidly, I had some difficulties with motricity with my left arm. Jean-Paul was my chauffeur with his 850 coupe.

What had happened during my blackout ? Reconstitution : I must have been at about 140 when I started braking. The left hand front wheel had hit the curb stone, which projected the car in the air, the energy having been liberated it turned in the air fell on the roof (and not on the back), on the lanes on the up side. Fortunately there was nobody there at that moment, I'm not even sure that anybody really saw what happened. The 403 and the Ami 6 had fled. When the first people arrived the car was upside down, the windscreen, not even broken, was in the grass, petrol everywhere as the fuel cap had been decapitated (you know where it is). Folks looked for me at the side of the road, thinking I had been ejected, in fact I was still in the car. They rolled it over and got me out of there, I don't know how. In the impact with no safety belt I had slid right side and under the steering wheel on which I had broken my beautiful front tooth and was stretched out on the right hand side. The

wooden steering wheel had been planed by the road, my back also. Call it what you will, there was a God that that day, who didn't need a mechanic immediately

As soon as the alert had been given, my partners in crime sorted it all out. The car was taken to the annexe and we went to evaluate the damage.

-LH front wheel bent

-Windscreen frame bent

-Flat bit on the steering wheel

-Fuel cap cut off

-Top of the wings and the door on the left hand side, a bit scraped

-Engine turned over well

John-Paul continued to drive me about. I needed a car for the duration of the refurbishment.

An old Fiat 600 from the breaker's yard, all knocked about, it was heavy as the wings had been repaired with cement, it smoked blue quickly it gained the name of Polluxine. From the TR5 to the Fiat 600, that's a bit of a come-down, but I had a sore shoulder and had been cooled down a bit in my fervour. (One day the accelerator cable broke, to get home Jean-Paul installed himself half in the engine compartment, half on the rear bumper and dealt with the accelerator while I drove, still 'gassed'). Progressively things became as before after a passage by the starting point

This time the Authorities took their revenge. Driving Commission, a month's suspension of driving license for losing control of a vehicule, it was fair game.

Fortunately I still had my army driving license, so I had to drive a Jeep, but asz it still had a soft top, and you could even spin the wheels, my reputation was intact !

And so we started again

The TR4 supplied the windscreen frame and the steering wheel. The wire wheels from the back were changed to the front, behind a pair of 14 in. aluminium wheels with 195 or 205, I don't remember. (We couldn't possibly have used the steel wheels from the TR4....)



It's not John-Paul's legs you should be looking at but the aluminium wheel at the rear. The wires were at the front

We sent the wings of the TR4A to be used as mouldings for plastic ones? It was Gerald, an artist, a genius in plastics, who looked after this. (Later we became partners in other business). He had totally built (chassis and bodyshell) a kind of Buggy Buffalo, modified with a spicy engine from an R16TS with 2 x weber DCOE carburettors from an Alpine 1600, he needed us mechanics because he knew nothing about engines. He had it homologated at the Ministry of Transport as a prototype. (I'll come back to the Min of Transport later) The machine was called Duncalou and carried with pride a plate with VIN 0001. Hello Gérald !



Gerald's Duncalou Chassis N°00001

I am no good at bodywork, I said I would sort it out by tinning it with lead as a Rolls Royce. Well it is quite another profession! Hello Mr Filler. I didn't do such a bad job and rubbing it down was good physio for my arm. A blow over with some green paint and off we went, but more calmly, racing was finished, at least for the moment. One day I came out of Dominique's place at 3 Bassins. A small earth lane, I put my foot down, the wheels spun, when I got to the tarmac the tyres gripped. Bang ! Nothing, the engine turned but there was no drive. Easy diagnosis, the rear axle

We took it off, we opened it up, three quarters of the crown screws are intact and lying at the bottom, the others cut cleanly. I have never understood how the screws that had undone themselves, were waiting calmly at the bottom, without touching the pinions. Yet another lesson, we put it together using Loctite, that should hold it. In fact it is a well known problem. The WSM for the TR4 and TR5 don't mention it, just the washers to be changed but on the TR6 WSM 2nd edition they suggest Loctite. Usually, like for the conrods and the engine flywheel, start by putting in new screws each time you put you take it apart. It was from when we fitted the 3.7 axle, even so we had torqued up everything. And so we started again, life continued.

As time went by John-Paul returned to France.



Heading for the Airport at Gillot, Jean-Paul loads his luggage for France. His last trip in a TR5, 45 years ago. (connoisseurs will note the change in fixings of the softtop from the TR4 because of frame, following the accident) (photo PGO)

I co-rented with an ex VSO guy, to whom I had managed to sell a new yellow Spitfire 1500 (My bedroom was above a night club in a cellar, no comment, Le Viet-Nam, for those who knew it). I modified his overdrive so that it worked on 2nd as well. There were often problems with the gearboxes of the Spitfires, the circlips sprung off and the pinions would start to wander about. There was something that bothered me on the TR5 from the beginning when I went up in altitude, it was too rich, it got fouled up, it struggled and pulled badly. I got stuck into the problem and invented a choke which weakened rather than enriched the mixture. It wasn't very accurate, but it worked. I developed the system later to become fully automatic.

More on Pegasus

The Ecurie Pegasus built itself up. After the first rally with a Datsun 240Z, where we really had only a secondary role, both the team and the mechanics, but the interest was kindled and things got organised little by little. Timidly, with a standard Opel Ascona in Groupe 1, which had to remain original, we got to know all about the car, to fettle, to optimise in order to make a difference. The team was up to it, everybody at his place, refuelling, meals, public relations. Dominique and I shared the mechanical bit. Everybody was a volunteer, we were paid in Motul T shirts and caps, but money was not the objective, it was pleasure. For each stage, one of us was there at the start the other at the finish and then you tore on to the next test. It went fast, no mobile phones, you had to organise everything beforehand, top logistics. The TR5 was loaded up with tyres, tools, fuel and bits and pieces.

When you know the rear shock absorbers of a TR5, you can imagine it was sportive and what's more you had to go hard to be in the right place at the right time. At night it was OK, the most difficult was the morning. At the time rallies lasted more than two days and as we hadn't slept the two nights before, we had some strange looking heads, immortalised by the team's Super 8 cameras. I still have them. Fortunately we had someone who boiled up pigeon's straight out of the egg, it tasted awful and we downed it before the start. We called it « pigeon broth » and we didn't sleep for another two days. We never did get a copy of the recipe, perhaps fortunately. And when it was finished, after the podium, we drove around town hooting for two days. It all finished the next weekend at Dominique's Creole house with a big party, with our sponsors. mettre aussi sur la 2de.



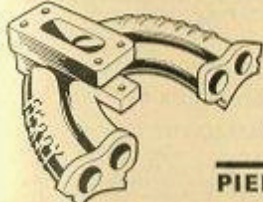
St Pierre, arrival of the 1 000kms 1974. Dionny - Yannick. In the background on the left, the TR5 always at the right place. (photo PEGASE)

Mid 1974, it was my turn, I had to return to France. I had already organised my departure from the army. Jean-Paul came to meet me at Orly in a Citroen 2CV. We were shortly arrested, in fact a hold-up, pistol in hand - by the police. Brutal landing in France.

While I was there, I went to see Pierre Ferry (father of the philosopher and ex-Minister). I had already been in contact with him in Reunion where I was his unofficial representative. A real gentleman, mechanical guru, whose reputation was made, a wizard, like Amedee Gordini. I got advice from a real preparer of cars. He, the teacher me the youngster.

When he saw that I understood straight away, we got on well and he relaxed. I got to know his secrets, I saw myself as an apprentice in his dark garage. And there, once again, I took courses from a great teacher. Thanks M Ferry, I still remember your advice (He had a carburettor kit for the 2500 PI saloons, because he considered the Lucas injection unsuitable for a family saloon and too sensitive for the general public).

We continued working with him later as a supplier of parts to 'improve' the Alpine (1860) and the Gordini 1300.



ACCÉLÉRATION - VITESSE

TUBULURES - ARBRES A CAMES
CULASSES PRÉPARÉES - SOUPAPES - RESSORTS, etc.

DAUPHINE, 1093, ALPINE, RB - SIMCA 1000, 1300, 1500 - RS, MAJOR,
CARAVELLE - PEUGEOT 404 - FORD ANGLAISES - AUSTIN - MG - MORRIS

TOURISME — RALLIES — COMPÉTITIONS



PIERRE FERRY S.A. 22, avenue d'Argenteuil - ASNIÈRES (Seine) GRE. 92-25 et 92-26

Rachetons stations régionales de montage

Then a visit to G.R. to see Greder, he was the Ascona and Opel GT wizard. If you were sharp you could see things that were not supposed to be seen ! One day I saw an oil cooler element that had replaced a heater. The oil cooler was not homologated everywhere



And I ended up by going to see a sort of carcass of a F2 that Dionny wanted to take back to Reunion, fortunately without any further action taken.

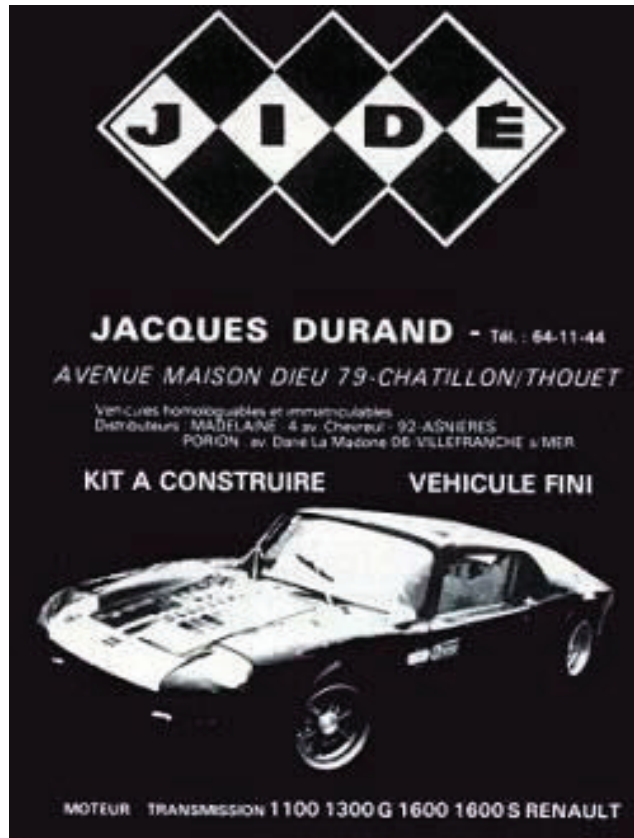
But I had to get back, the next rally needed preparation and things were beginning to get serious, Alfa Romeo believed in us and gave us a 2000 GTV, we went over to the Italians and we needed to learn everything again. In September I picked up Jean-Paul in Chateauroux with my Mini 850 (to which I had fitted a Ferry kit with a Weber DC !) and we went for a tour of Paris, a drink at the Publicis Drugstore on the Champs Elysees, we were kings and we escaped the bombing by Carlos by a quarter of an hour.

Apparently they don't still need mechanic up there.

A few days later it was my birthday and I arrived in Reunion, equipped with a bogus work contract as Workshop Manager for a garage that never opened.

At the time the « Debre law » applied, you could only go to Reunion with a return ticket, unless you had a work contract. The guy who had signed my contract had a JIDE 1600. Some said that he had brought in this car as it could go under the parking barriers of the company where he worked, without stopping.

I'll say, sure it was plausible, in any case, thanks Louis for the contract.



The Jide 1600S had Lucas injection, with a slide throttle !!

I got out of the plane, I was picked up, and we sped along to the garage of the Alfa representative, I put on my yellow tergal overall and slid under the car. The jack broke and I got everything on top of me. Fortunately I was thin and so it all started again, the pigeon broth, and the TR5, that I had left with Dominique, was used again for the assistance on the circuits. We were classy.

And the follow up, still the TR5, we're right in it.

To come back to the TR5. I had found an overdrive from a TR3, a type A-Series 22. It fits but usually you have to replace the accumulator with a smaller one. Because on the TR3 and TR4 it's the leaf springs that absorb the shock and that's OK. On the TR4A IRS, TR5 and 6, the engagement is so brutal that you can tear out the rear axle. But it can be reinforced. I had fixed up a sequential system with relays. Nowadays it's sold as a logic electronic box by Revington with the same features. I remade the same system one or two years later to fit to our Dolomite Sprint on which I had modified the J type overdrive to work on 2nd and engage quicker. But for me the type J wasn't too good, too gentrified, but with the 125Hp of the Sprint it held up OK. For me with the 3.7 axle, 14 in. wheels and overdrive you put your foot to the floor in second, then overdrive without lifting your foot off, then 3rd, you dropped 1000rpm at each change and you smoked out the 911s on acceleration.

Unfortunately, the rear suspension couldn't take it, rear springs worn out and the Armstrong shock absorbers shot.

More about Pegasus, without the TR5, but it was our bug

Right, a minor break on the subject of rallies, it really needs a book to be written, one of my favourite topics.

I cannot resist a few lines on the 1975 Tour of the Island. We had worked like slaves on the Ascona Group 2 and the Alfa 2000 GTV in Group 1. With Dominique, we had a lot of fun, another book to be written, (I even electrocuted the dog that was thieving the upgraded engine mountings, its muzzle was smoking, but it was a tough one as it also survived my getting him pissed at Dominique's wedding.)

A two day race in hell, full of unexpected twists and turns, we placed the two cars at the front, 1st and 3rd on scratch time and relegated J-P Beltoise with his Alpine 1800 to 4th in the last Special (I said I would mention him again). Not bad for a bunch of amateurs, but it was considered high treason. Bad losers. The last special was cancelled and we went down to 2nd and 4th.

What's more there were appeals. One against the Alfa for using slicks. YES, but they already were already slick at the start, we were the first to run on slicks, SB9s, whereas the others were on TB5s. We just had the audacity to do it and we came out on top, Bravo Marc(+)/ Christian & Dionny/ J. Claude

A reclamation against the Ascona was for a non-homologated bucket seat. It should have weighed the same as the original factory one. I had a little doubt about the weight of the seat, you don't take risks for a few grams ; a bit of a scrum occurred and I slipped into the closed paddock and slid a diver's weight under the seat cover. The seat was weighed, it was OK, the reclamations thrown out, too late for the others, the damage was done.

We Were Famous !

Fiche technique	
6e édition. Organisé les 19 et 20 juillet par l'ASAR, St Denis (Réunion) avec le concours de Gitanes. Coefficient 4 au championnat de France des rallyes par groupes. Droits d'engagement : 1 200 F. Prix : 3 000 F au lot de chaque groupe et ; 500 F au premier de la classe. Parcours : Deux boucles de 450 km comprenant 150 km de spéciales.	
Classements	
Groupe 1	
1. <u>Dionny-Garangeat J.-C.</u> (Alfa 2000) 3 h 28'19"9 - 2. Carrere J.-Christlain D. (Opel Ascona) 3 h 35'37"3 - 3. A. Sicard C.-Garsault A. (Alfa 2000) 3 h 38'37"0 - 4. Bangui I.-Vilot C. (Opel Ascona) 3 h 41'00"0 - 5. Ah-Sing F.-Ah-Sing R. (Opel Ascona) 3 h 43'32"6 - 6. Feyou J.-Canabacy P. (Opel Manta) 3 h 43'42"7 - 7. Hozzeau J.-Chamaud B. (Opel Ascona) 3 h 43'55"8 - 8. Manciet E.-Compeyre (Austin Cooper) 3 h 45'08"5 - 9. Sangaria R.-Dejean H. (Opel Ascona) 3 h 47'20"2 - 10. Milles Desvignes M.-O. Fayet D. (Austin Cooper) 3 h 55'42"6 - 11. Barnassamy L.-Ramassatoy A. (Austin Cooper) 3 h 59'16"6 - 12. Carre B.-Feire J.-M. (Fiat 124) 4 h 08'26"8 - 13. Nivet A.-Caza R. (Datsun 180 B) 4 h 17'33"8 - 14. Léoville-Robert J.-C. (Austin Cooper) 4 h 26'00"1.	
Groupe 2	
1. <u>Eugenie M.-Paize F.</u> (Opel Ascona) 3 h 28'06"1 - 2. Lebon S. Telegone K. (Opel Ascona) 3 h 30'28"2 - 3. Lefevre J.-P.-Hozzeau P. (Austin Cooper 1300) 3 h 37'39"1 - 4. Mmes Hoefner M.-Houselot C. (R 5 LS) 3 h 38'13"7 - 5. Chaze Sam F.-Montpote G. (Opel Ascona) 3 h 42'24"9 - 6. Vitry Y.-Wolff P. (Rallye 2) 3 h 46'59"0 - 7. De Gasquet L.-De Cotte F. (Fiat 127) 3 h 48'55"4 - 8. Balmert M.-Debeaulme B. (Volkswagen Golf) 3 h 49'57"3 - 9. L'Indien-Badat H. (Austin Cooper) 3 h 55'24"3 - 10. Riviere M.-Makda S. (Rallye 2) 3 h 56'31"0 - 11. Canal-Chamand A. (Datsun 120 A) 4 h 01'50"6.	
Groupe 3	
1. Massiau F.-Watson D. (Porsche 911 S) 3 h 45'08"3.	
Groupe 4/5	
1. Beltoise J.-P. Anjoulet J.-P. (Alp. Renault 1800) 3 h 21'19"0 - 2. Bache J.-Cassan Chenat A. (Datsun 240 Z) 3 h 38'09"1 - 3. Desmarais P.-Desmarais S. (Ford Capri) 3 h 37'06"5 - 4. C. Mico - Maillot P. (Simca Rallye 2) 3 h 40'58"8 - 5. Assing C.-Dialat Y. (Manda Rotax R 100) 3 h 41'46"3 - 6. Meralkon J.-P.-Baillif J.-M. (Fiat 124) 3 h 42'34"1 - 7. Arnaud C.-Aibany G. (Porsche Targa) 4 h 00'25"9.	
Scratch	
1. <u>Beltoise-Anjoulet (Alpine 1800) 3 h 21'19" (1er Groupe 4/5) ; 2. Eugenie-Paize (Opel Ascona) 3 h 28'06" (1er Groupe 1) - 3. Bache-Cassan Chenat (Datsun 240 Z) 3 h 38'09" - 4. Dionny-Garangeat (Alfa 2000) 3 h 29'19" (1er Groupe 1) - 5. Lebon-Telegone (Opel Ascona) 3 h 30'28" - 6. Carrere-Châtehain (Opel Ascona) 3 h 35'37" - 7. Lefevre-Hozzeau (Austin Cooper 1300) 3 h 37'39" - 8. Hoefner-Hozzeau (R 5 TS Gordini) 3 h 38'13" - 9. Desmarais et Mico (Ford Capri) 3 h 39'06" - 10. Sicard-Garsault (Alfa Romeo) 3 h 39'57". Etc.</u>	

The official results in green the Ecurie Pegasus



The heroes, Dominique and myself (without the tooth from the accident (photo PEGASE)



From R to L : Jean Lerust, journalist from the magazine Echappement (+), Maurice Grimaud TV (+) Dominique and myself, at the party at Dominique's place (photo PJ)

Orders flowed in for the preparation of cars for the next tours and rallies, (Jide, Mini 1275, Innocenti 120 prototype !! Ascona Gp 2.. perhaps we might make a bit of money. Both Dominique and I are solitary guys and we had a hard time keeping up. SEVEN THOUSAND FIVE -BAANG. ?? We found a bit of valve in the neighbouring cylinder. (It happens more often than you would think)

The follow-up, it's never finished

The TR5 was still there, but I was slowly lifting my foot off the pedal, I switched off, I stepped aside, would I become a wiser? Alfa Romeo offered me a place in their workshop, which I took. I had succeeded in getting a 1300 Spider as a company car (the suppository), but it made some jealous. An Italian came to do some training. It was interesting and I learnt a lot of things. And then at the end of six months it fell apart. We were offered a Dolomite Sprint. I picked up with Pegasus again, with my experience with Triumphs I couldn't refuse ; But Alfa didn't agree. Daytime with them, then Triumph in the evening and weekends didn't go down well. One of the boys drained the gear box oil from the boss's son's car at the lunch break. It was I who was responsible for the car, I was fired. A week later I started in the BL spare parts department, then became Workshop Manager.

A return to English cars.

The engine cooling fan disintegrated during the race. I calmed myself down again and decided to start another project with the TR5. I took off the bodywork and decided to rebody it completely in my own way in a roadster style with two seats further back, independent cycle mudguards a bit like a motorbike, I moved the engine backwards by 20cm, it was easy ; I must have been a little mad A car like that should never have been allowed on the road. At the time had a Bertone Simca 1200S coupe What a machine, it had come from the Simca competition department, prepared for the Tour of the Cevennes by a long time employee. The car had no doors, and really no sides either, the interior was stripped out, a fuel tank from a Renault 4L was placed on the back shelf. A really hot motor prepared by Barraquet and an exhaust to go with it. A close ratio gearbox and the suspension wishbones inverted ! I fitted it with Michelin XAS-FF tyres (Formula France Rubber for those who know about these things) I lived at Point Kilometrique 5.5 on a hill, so every lunchtime and every evening I had my little hillclimb on the way home. And it went flat out, the chickens couldn't keep up.

And the Build and Use regulations in all that, because the old bill were suspicious. It was easy, we went to see the Chief Engineer at the Ministry of Transport. He conscientiously measured the heights of the lights and various other things, the Homologation N° on the windscreen and a few other details of which only he had the secret. Good engineering fascinated him. He sent us to the nearby sugar factory to weigh the car on the weighbridge for the sugar trucks. It was no heavier than the original weight, it was accepted, the log-book was stamped with the magic 'Modified'. Yes it was a time when civil servants were ready to be responsible for their acts, but we were lucky, we could have ended up with an ignoramus or somebody horrified by engines. He finished his career very high up in the administration. Thanks J.C. who awaits my return for a tour of the island in the TR5. But I had to live.

Jean-Paul who had left the army came to see me in 1977 and was a little astonished to see the state of the TR5. There was a garage for sale in the West, he loaned me 10 000 FF to wrap up the budget and I bought it. I set up a tuning and preparation centre and anti-pollution station. But I went back to Pegasus when we were given an Alpine, « Hello M Ferry » The telephone had become automatic.

The garage went slowly, I took on a few people, I had the first electronic motor bench in Reunion (a Blackhawk Celette) and the first exhaust gas analyser. The TR5 was still immobilised, the regulations were changing and I finally understood that it would never be on the road again in the shape I had imagined. It stayed where it was.

The years went by, full of other stories, I set up an industrial company, still in the technical and mechanical line, I learnt other things, I was on the Jury for the Electronic BTS , I took my helicopter pilot's licence. The engine cut out in flight and stopped the flight.

Apparently they don't still needed a mechanic up there although.

I was on my way to find out ! That was enough. I needed to take things in hand. I went on a course in the USA to become a helicopter mechanic, and learnt more still, complementary to what I knew already.

At the end of 1998 I dropped everything and left for Madagascar, still in technology, still learning even more, including industrial refrigeration with a genius who made me test prototypes - at least I would know how to install aircon in the TR5. I still had the helicopter and it was I who maintained it.



Returning from the bush in Madagascar (photo SP)



Refuelling beside the sea (photo MB)

20 years in Madagascar and yet another book to write !!

In 2006, I went back to working for myself and set up amongst others an aeronautical maintenance business, then a charter company, still in action today. I'm still there today, I'm still learning, in the aviation business training is permanent, it's my passion and will continue to serve me.



My latest achievement, 1.5 years starting from scratch. Rare model from Peruvian Army. (photo SKS)



Big turbo (not intended for the TR5 !) (photos SKS)



(Bespoke avionics, surely intended on TR5 !)

My hair has gone grey, but the intellect hasn't changed (I hope so) ! And it was in this spirit that I got stuck into the TR5 again without being able to hear all the different noises. With age comes a selectivity in audio frequencies. During my last medical exam when I was still piloting, the doctor looked at me with a smile and wrote 'Fit' with the note 'Consistent with age'. Apparently experience compensates for lost faculties. And so I carried on.



Everything has an end, 65 years old, age limit for a professional pilot. Last flight with my children (photo JUR)

And now where are we ?

For the last two years, in plane maintenance, but I will have to slow down and hand it over. 60 years of experience, that means 60 years of mistakes, constructive failures, but successes also fortunately, joy sometimes alone and happily sometimes shared, all with the aim of having fun in advancing and succeeding. I hope it's not finished and it would be a shame to leave for egotistical reasons, the years will pass quickly, one realises this in seeing ones mates pass away.....

And so I have spent my life learning, it is my TR5 that will now gain from this.

I soon returned to Reunion, without completely abandoning aviation, the TR5 was waiting for me, like the air of the carburettor, the shrewd advice of Dominique and Jean-Paul. Jean-Paul says that it will be good motivation for a voyage next year. In the mean time, little by little parts arrived, new or used depending on opportunities, everything was got ready. I was going to put the engine back in its original place and using my experience, put it together as the engineers wanted to at the time. The car had been designed with budgetary constraints. Numerous solutions were available, known, tested, proven but never applied in production because it had to be built to a price for the masses. If we can forget the budget for a moment and look for their mindset. You need to dig a bit, find witnesses and archives in order to reconstitute what the engineers wanted to do, know how to read between the lines. I had been doing this for a long time, nobody knows everything.

The special feature of the TR5 is the Lucas MkII injection (the 2.5litre was only the 6cyl. 2.0 ex 1600 already known) The rest of it apart from the doors is TR4A. Too much has been said and written on the Lucas injection over the last 50 years. It's simple, it's efficient, it's extremely reliable, nothing needs to be added. However replacing the Lucas fuel pump by a Bosch electronic injection, OUPS !! Imagine the reaction of JW Churchill if he had been told that !!

In Reunion it gets hot and there are many bends to the left. In fact I was talking again about it by Skype with Jean-Paul, only recently. For a start it is not the pump, which is excellent, that overheats, it is the electric motor which transmits heat to the pump. For example, an answer is to separate pump and motor with an insulation block. The optional coil for cooling the motor reheats the fuel substantially, which is counter-productive. I assume, it worked, we have NEVER had the least problem with vapour lock or the pump overheating. But you have other options !



Shorten the motor on a lathe, an insulation block in methacrylate, and the heat is no longer transmitted. It's only common sense?

Prevention is better than cure.

For the chassis, the suspension, their weak points, there is nothing more to be added, all are well known from the TR3 to the TR6. Improvements to suspension and brakes can be found everywhere. Safety is a priority, you need to mix suppliers as there is some real crap about on the market and few are those who offer all the right parts. Here I share totally Neil Revington's philosophy about the rear suspension, even if, for me at least, speed is finished.

- For the brakes, I have a set of 4 piston calipers, plug and play. With grooved disks, that is sufficient.

- The same for the transmission. In Reunion there are no motorways, maximum speed is 110kph on the dual carriage ways, the rest is bends or mountain. The constraints and use are not the same as in Europe and I am no longer 20 years old ! As I have available every type of gearbox up to the last TR6, I shall use a mix of shafts, bushes and pinions to optimise everything and fit a 4.1 diff., with my TR3 overdrive with some improvements, but to my requirements !

-For the bottom end of the engine, there are a few points to sort out, the work of 45 years ago on the cylinder head needs to be checked and valve inserts and guides for leadfree fuel to be fitted. All that, together with the appropriate transmission, targetting acceleration rather than pure power (I've dropped the 190kph bit)

-The air intake is to be looked again respecting the criteria of the inventor of the Lucas injection, Harry Bottoms (« he was horrified to hear that 6 separate inlet pipes and butterflies had been fitted. His original design called for only one or at most two. Fitting six brings obvious synchronization problems »). For me, he was right, because the control of the butterflies is imprecise and brings other problems, among them the synchronisation of the butterflies. The solution is simple and you could gain in some power !!

-Talking about intake means talking about exhaust, I saw a good manifold at Revington's

-The Lucas injection to be put back to its true standard, simplicity - reliability first (but certainly with some small improvements). And of course install my new homemade altitude corrector, fully automatic and which also allows the richness to be adjusted. In Reunion, you can go up to 2 000m at Le Maito. The altitude problem was known at the period, it was a weak point on the MkII (The Lucas injection on the Maserati had an altitude corrector fitted, but to respect the cost budget for the TR5)

-And the 'lean spike', don't you think something can be done about it ?

-Wire wheels 5.5 with 72 spokes, but not chromed and nowadays they're tubeless.

-Even a little power steering (but certainly not electric !!!) especially if it can be a little more direct, my left arm is still a bit weak.

-And then, and then there are loads of little details, but shush, a little patience.

Right, I'm not going to get involved in the debate between traditionalists and modernisers, each should be respected. For me it will be a car to be used every day, with which I can have a lot of pleasure, but it is certainly not for commercial gain (except perhaps for my suppliers of spare parts !!) Which doesn't hinder me from respecting the traditionalists, the real ones, how many are there still remaining that don't have the Bosch pump, or the spin-on oil filter, or the poly bushes, or a reinforced whatever ? Where to start and where to stop is a huge debate.

Cars in 'Collectors' condition are sadly often in museums (except the Anglo Saxons fortunately), it's a pity. Go to New Zealand for example. One week the car is in a museum and on Sunday the owner comes to take it out for a run, and you overtake it, or a smoking 1913 phaeton on the motorway.

Moreover, breakdowns are part of the tradition and there I have played my part, but if I can avoid them.

The 8 July 2018, I will return to Reunion, and will start again from nothing, it's a symbolic date as it is the anniversary of the day it was registred 50 years ago !! Rendez-vous on the road in a year, or more, I hope !!

Even in adding in my aeronautical experience, I hope that 882 MR will not take off, it's already happened once before !!

If you don't have a passion in your life it's depressing. At least you have read about what it is like to be passionate about something, rest assured I am not alone, there are others, in all walks of life.

NOTES

- 1 : Dead of Général De GAULLE, the satiric newspaper « HARA KIRI HEBDO » published tragic bal at Colombey”, big scandall. Newspaper forbidden and closed, reoped next week, as « CHARLIE HEBDO »
- 2 In French, reunion means: meeting, so confusing, with Reunion Island
- 3 Zoreil- Zoreil in Creole language, means ears. Indeed the French who arrive do not understand anything and put their hand behind their ear to rehearse.
- 4 French film “ Le Corniaud” , “The Sucker “
- 5 There was several Mauritius people working at La Réunion, at the car sellers, because they had a reputation of “ nice talkers “
- 6 Gassed for a people in Reunion, come after WWI, for soldiers coming back and hurted by gaz. They had a strange behavior.....So it's passed into everyday language for "non-standard" people; « He's completely gassed »