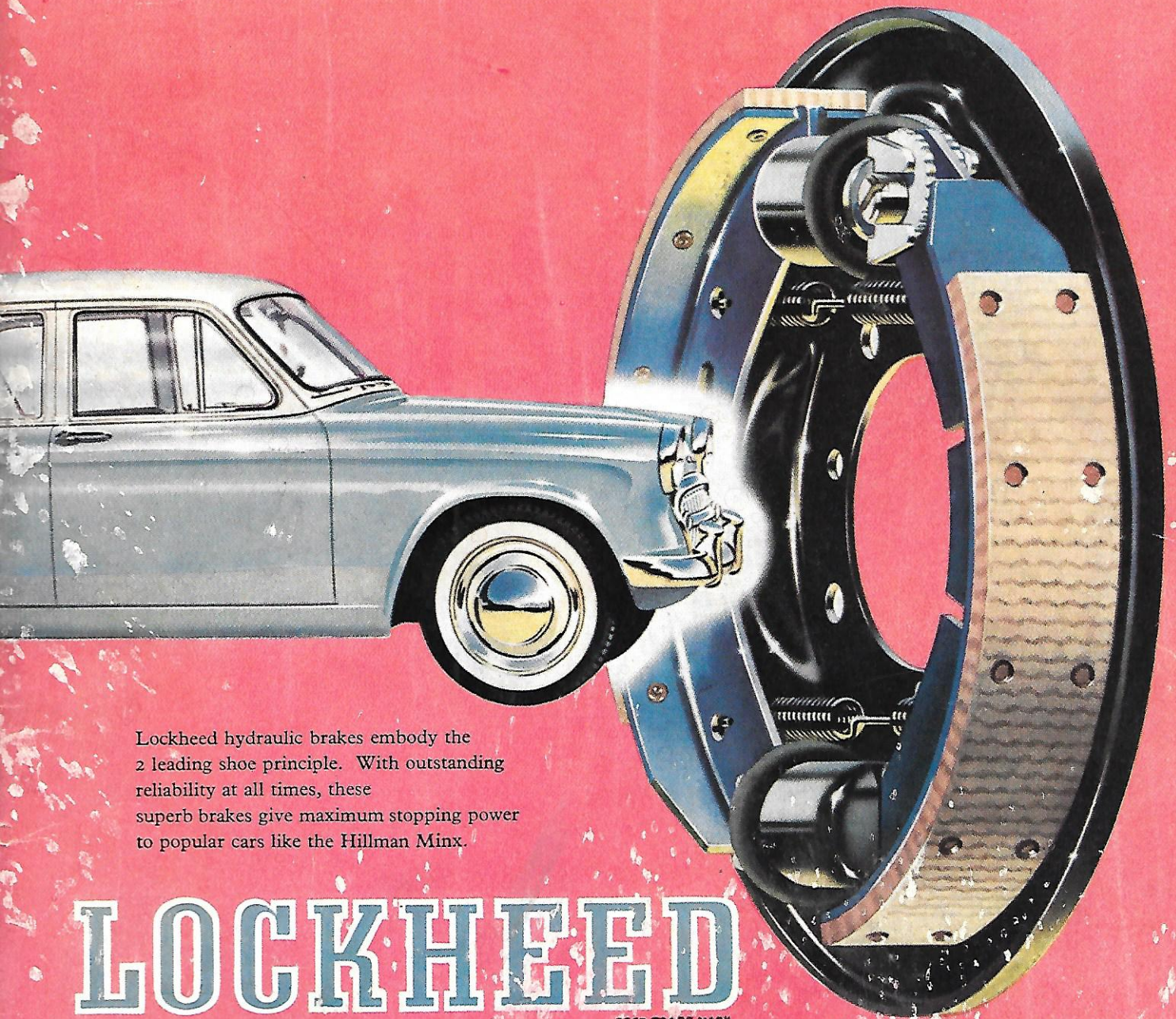


The Motor

EVERY WEDNESDAY
ONE SHILLING

The extra safety feature on popular cars



Lockheed hydraulic brakes embody the 2 leading shoe principle. With outstanding reliability at all times, these superb brakes give maximum stopping power to popular cars like the Hillman Minx.

LOCKHEED

REGD. TRADE MARK

HYDRAULIC BRAKES

The safest brakes in the World

SPORT IS THEIR
BUSINESS—No. 4

The "GANG WARILY" Club



By DENNIS MAY



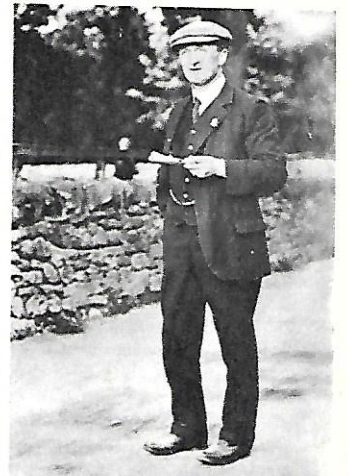
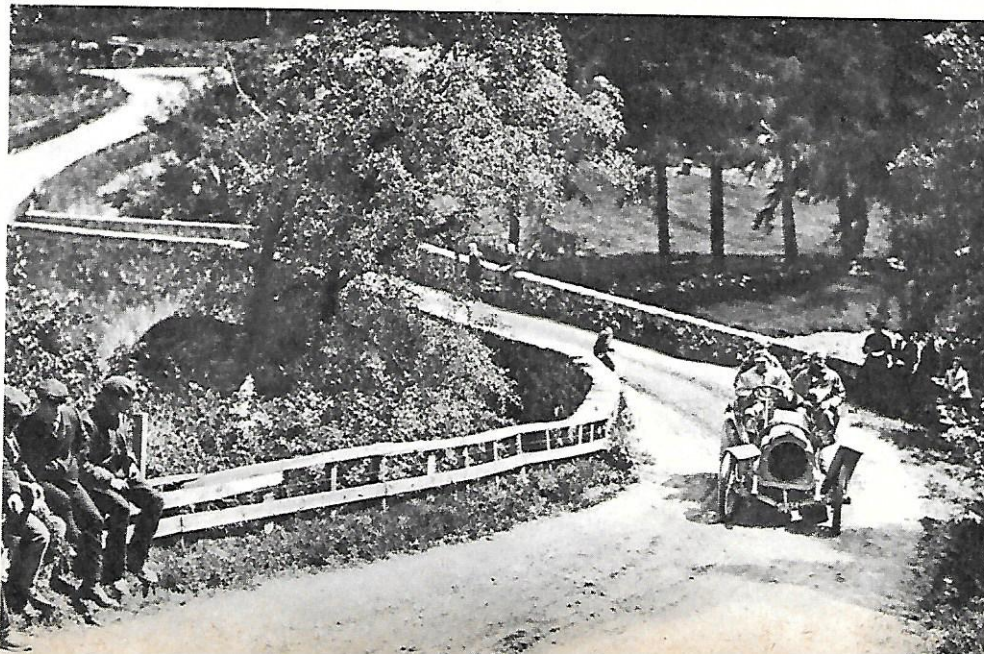
Rest-and-Be-Thankful has been a sporting hill for many years, but at the time of the 1907 reliability trial it was also the main road, and continued as such for more than 30 years. Cars in the trial were fully laden throughout.

TO the Royal Scottish Automobile Club, as to its venerable aunt in Pall Mall, motoring sport is a sideline. Almost throughout the club's 58 years' history, nevertheless, it has been a bonny and fruitful sideline, produce of a national geography "by nature for frolic designed." And when it came to designing frolics, nature had eager allies in the pioneers of the Scottish Automobile Club, as it was called in its pre-royal era: notably in the great Robert J. Smith, who fathered the S.A.C. and was its brilliant secretary for forty-two years. In planning routes for the long-distance Scottish Trials of the years 1905 to '09 inclusive, Smith proved himself a man who would turn a competitor's hand to pretty well anything.

Ancestry of the contemporary Scottish Rallies, which have latterly graced the international calendar, is directly traceable to the Highland Ordeals that Robert J. Smith conceived and

carried through with the precision of a military operation, half a century ago. The link between these epochs is personified by Andrew K. Stevenson, O.B.E.—"A.K." for short—whose record of uninterrupted service to his club has no parallel in the entire annals of motoring sport. Smith hired young Stevenson as office boy in 1904. In 1920 A.K. was promoted to assistant secretary. On the death of his chief in 1942 he became secretary and general manager, posts that he still occupies today.

In spite of the heavy demands made on his time by the more prosaic activities of the club—social, residential, touristic, legal, get-you-home and so forth—Mr. Stevenson's personal contribution to British motoring sport has been enormous and continues to be. As Scotland's representative on the R.A.C. Competitions



Founder of the Club, and its secretary for 42 years, Robert J. Smith is seen here officiating at the 1907 trial. On the left, Peacock's 16-20 Chenard-Walcker is seen at Bridge of Avon on the third day of the 1907 event bearing the marks of its inversion in a ditch at Cairn o'Mount on the previous day.

The "GANG WARILY" Club



Only one more six-day trial was staged by the club after the first world war, and that was in 1922, confined to light cars of less than 1,600 c.c. Two scenes from the event show (above) T. Shaw's 10 h.p. Charron-Laycock tackling the loose surface of the Lecht between Tomintoul and Braemar, and (below) C. M. Harvey's 11-40 Alvis at Glendoe, near Ft. Augustus.



The Scottish Rally has varied little in character over the years; in 1935 the route included the bleak, sinuous Pass of the Cattle between Torna-press and Applecross.

Nevertheless if there was need to prove Falstaff's dictum that "eighty yards of uneven ground is four score and ten miles" the early Scottish Trials certainly did it. As implied above, incidentally, competing cars were indeed fully laden throughout, this being a condition of entry. One of the occupants was an official observer appointed by the club, whose primary duty it was to record all involuntary stops and minute details thereof. These observers were swapped around from car to car at the end of each day's stage as further assurance of the purity of their neutrality. One of Stevenson's functions was the posting of the travelling "eyes"—a favourite practical joke of his, befitting his immature years, being to install fat officials alongside fat drivers in lean cars with imaginable results. But in general, levity was not a prominent feature of competitions organized by the magisterial Robert J. Smith, who was a chartered accountant by training and profession.

Stepney Lass

So insistent was the club on the fully-laden rule that when a crewman was unavoidably detained at the Edinburgh control in the 1905 trial, a girl was intercepted on her way to work, persuaded to surrender her bicycle to the temporary custody of the S.A.C. and coerced into the vacant seat. On arrival at Aberdeen she was railed back to Edinburgh at the expense of the club, which had meanwhile explained the abduction to her parents.

The 1908 trial, although shown on the records as a six-days event, actually kept the English contingent busy at the controls for three weeks. By arrangement with the R.A.C., competitors from the south made the London-Glasgow journey under contest conditions, then did the six-days stint on S.A.C. competition numbers, and afterwards chuffed home, again in loose battle order, under R.A.C. surveillance. To wrap everything up finally, the survivors engaged each other in exhausting races round Brooklands.

As befitted their severity, the pre-first-war Scottish Trials were virtually the exclusive preserve of works-entered teams; their knell was eventually sounded when two prominent manufacturers, who are still in business and shall therefore be nameless, made we-shan't-play noises in unison, fearful of the loss of prestige that retirements or other forms of failure would entail. The club, which became royal during the 1914 war, thereafter staged only one further six-days trial, in 1922, and confined it to light cars with a 1,600 c.c. engine capacity limit.

These, too, came under the sitter-to-every-seat ruling, which made things tough indeed for four-place models of the requisite modest horsepower. With pleasantries like Amulree, Glencoe, Cockbridge Ladder and Cairn-o'-Mount to try their teeth on, even factory-backed experts from the Midlands found their faces getting awfully red as forward motion was recurrently arrested.

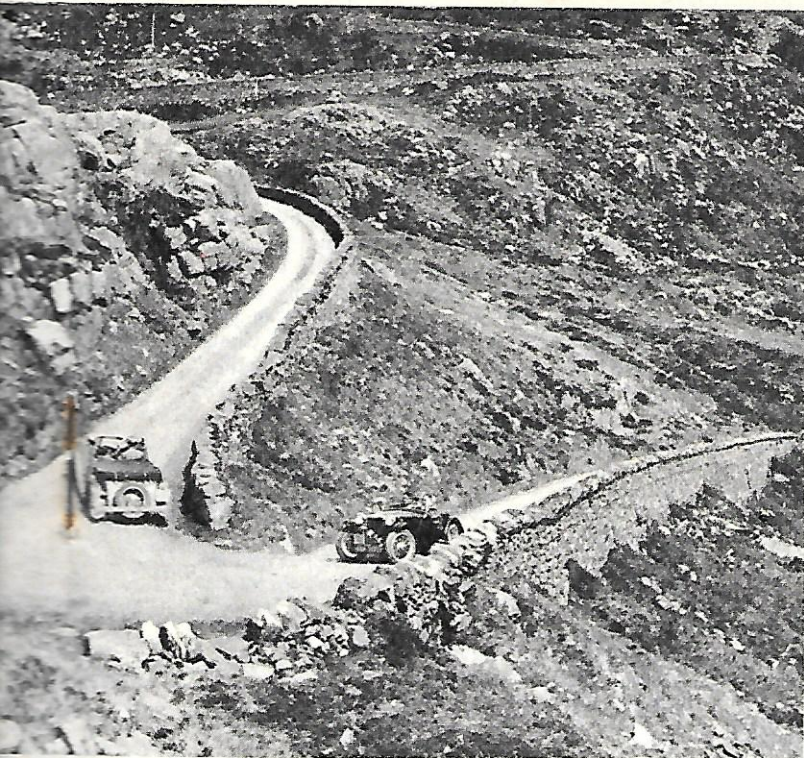
Earliest of all the S.A.C.'s trials of mechanical endurance had

Committee, his sphere of influence is by no means bounded by the Tweed, either.

On the sporting side, one of A.K.'s first assignments was to pant at the heels of his ubiquitous boss as Smith ranged Scotland's unkempt byways and mountain passes in search of suitable hazards for the Four-Day Trial of 1905. This quest, which produced such teasers as the Devil's Elbow (1,226 yards long and an average gradient of 1 in 8.9), Rest-and-Be-Thankful and Cairnwell, gave the youthful workhorse his first practical introduction to Scots geography, and initiated the heart-hardening process which was to be of such value in his later career as a trials and rally organizer in his own right.

The five Scottish Trials of the century's first decade, of duration increasing to five days in 1906 and six days thereafter, were trail-blazers in the fullest sense. The S.A.C. didn't take a leaf out of anybody's book, for the simple reason that that sort of book didn't exist. True, the R.A.C. had run its celebrated 1,000 Miles Trial in 1900, but that, with its prim traversals of main-road itineraries, was just patacake compared with the Highland gruel that Smith and associates put on the hob to cook. It may be that the S.A.C. conspirators, who had seen men on horseback cheerfully ascending Caledonia's hairpinned horrors, just didn't know they were asking the impossible by routing fully-laden cars up them and over the pot-holed network of narrow tracks connecting them. And sure enough, by the same token that faith moves mountains, it can also—as events proved—move automobiles up mountains: by implying that these heartbreakers were climbable, the club made them climbable, and lo! people duly climbed them. If bottom gear wouldn't do the trick, there was always reverse. And if a single sweep of steering lock wasn't enough for the tighter, steeper turns, a succession of adroit backs and fills would usually lick the problem.





actually preceded the 1905-'09 series. In 1902 a two-day event was run along the Glasgow-London axis, the field of eight vehicles including a municipal bus, which averaged 10 m.p.h. This fairly painless *épreuve* had an echo in 1910, when the Arrol-Johnston people invited the club to send an observer along on a non-stop trip they proposed making from their factory at Alexandria (the Scots one) to London. Stevenson was detailed for the job, and the non-stop objective was duly achieved; A.K., exposed to biting weather for twenty-one hours in an open tonneau, only regained his health after three months' sick leave.

The deep-freeze treatment having failed to kill him, it apparently had a long-term case-hardening effect. Today, at seventy, A.K. is a tall, erect, alert figure, in possession of perfect hearing, good eyesight and more stamina than many men twenty years his junior. As a regular Monte-Carlo Rally crew member in the late 20's and early 30's, he had reason to be thankful for this

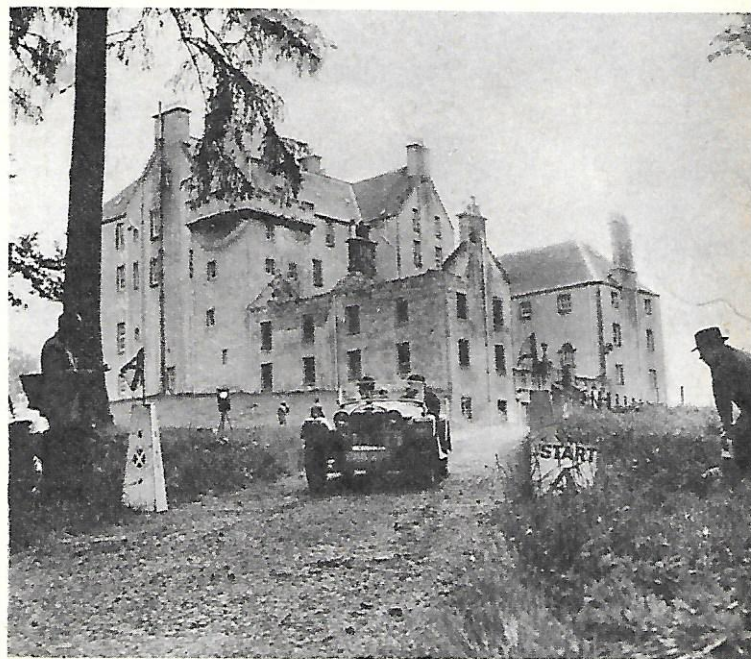
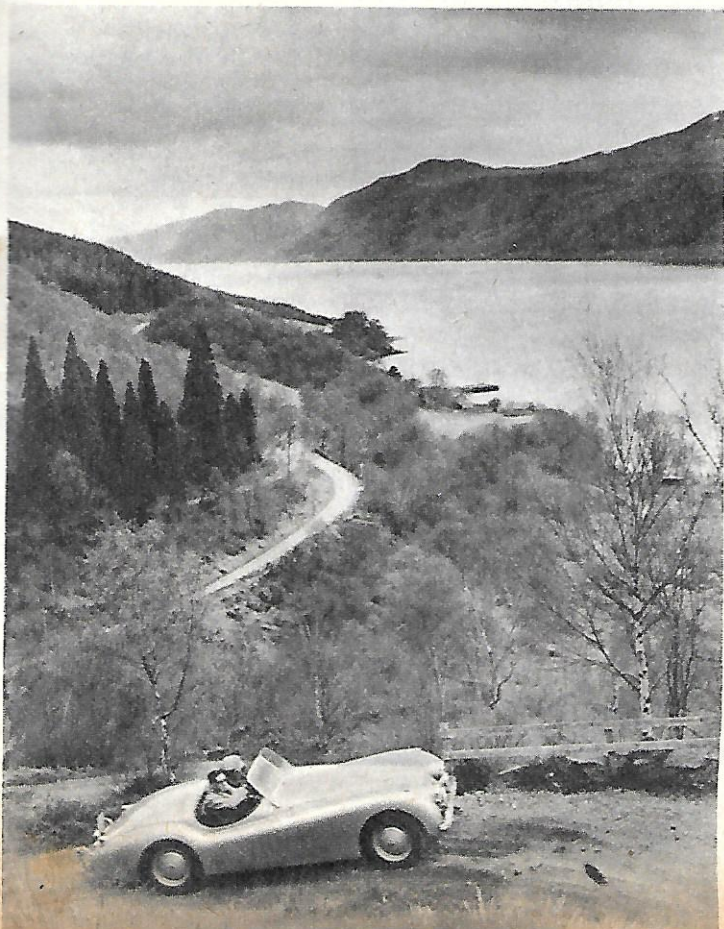
imperviousness to winter chills, gained, as it were, by experience. By reason of its geographical situation, the R.S.A.C., based in Glasgow, has indeed left an indelible stamp on the history of Le Rallye. In the person of (inevitably!) Andrew K. Stevenson, the club dispatched the outright winners in 1924 and '26, the light-car class winner in '25, and the Coupe des Dames winner in 1927.

It was his first-hand dealings with the "Monte" that gave A.K. the itch to endow Scotland with a rally of its own, and in or around 1931 he put up a proposition in this sense to his chief, Robert J. Smith. But Smith, in whom enthusiasm for the sporting side must have dimmed with the passing years, would have none of it. So A.K. bided his time, being privy to the fact that the R.A.C. was preparing to go into the rally organizing business in England in 1932. Well, the R.A.C. duly did so, whereupon Robert J. Smith, not to be outdone, instantly dropped the hat for a Scottish counterpart. Both of these series, as it developed, got off the mark in 1932.

The Scottish Rally

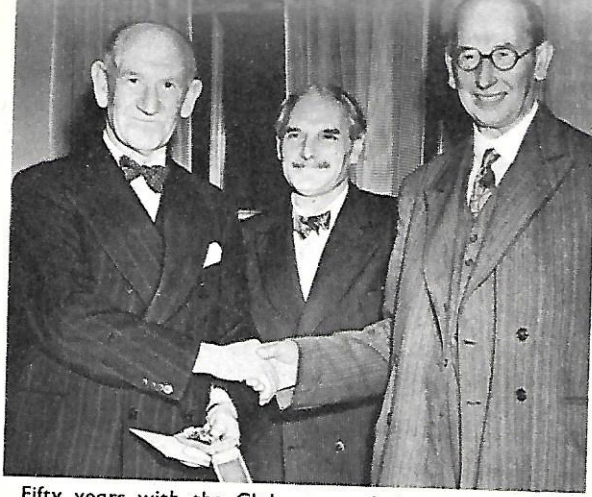
Motto of the R.S.A.C. is "Gang Warily" (it's even engraved on the whisky glasses at club headquarters in Blythswood Square, Glasgow), and the spirit of this device is conscientiously observed in all R.S.A.C. promotions on the public road. In the international Scottish Rallies, for instance, two potential sources of danger are eliminated by dispensing with night driving entirely and relieving competitors of all navigational responsibilities; routes, that is to say, are specified in full detail, it being thus impossible assuming normal sanity to prevail, for cars to meet each other going in opposite directions.

Although run under international permit, the modern Scottish Rallies are not, if the truth be told, madly cosmopolitan: three foreign crews is about the most that any one event has attracted. The organizers, however, don't fash themselves unduly on this account, the purpose of the "T" sanction being to ensure trade support. Primarily the club's aim in this series is to provide competitors with some pleasant and not excruciatingly arduous motoring (1,200 miles in five days) amid priceless scenery and with a sufficiency of interesting tests thrown in. In this they certainly succeed, the friendliness of the atmosphere being matched by the unobtrusive efficiency of the staffwork. In fact, the comment of a reporter who covered the 1907 Six Days could appropriately be made into a rubber stamp for present-day use. "The organization throughout," he wrote, "was of so perfect a



The first post-war Scottish Rally was held in 1951 and included the loose, narrow hairpins of an old favourite, Inverfarigaig (left) overlooking Loch Ness. Typical of Scottish Rallying is the scene above of a test at Castle Grant, near Grantown.

The "GANG WARILY" Club



Fifty years with the Club, most of them as Assistant Secretary or Secretary, were marked in 1954 by a presentation to A. K. Stevenson (left) by the members. Representing them on this occasion was J. B. Talbot-Crosbie (right) who has been a member since 1900; in the centre is the Club chairman, Councillor Murray.

character that those subject to it were almost unaware of its existence."

The other important sporting event run annually by the R.S.A.C. is, of course, the speed hillclimb at Rest-and-Be-Thankful, to which, by treaty with the Forestry Commission, the club has exclusive rights. These meetings, in a setting of sheer grandeur that gives spectators an incomparable view of the dering-do, were inaugurated in 1949 and have always counted towards the R.A.C. hillclimb championship. And that reminds us that the Scottish Automobile Club started its own hillclimb championship right back in 1910, thirty-six years before the same idea occurred to our revered governing body.

The R.S.A.C. describes itself as the controlling body for motor sport in Scotland, but in fact it exercises only a limited authority. The R.A.C. issues competition licences to Scots drivers and permits for Scottish events, and appoints its own stewards thereto. There was a time when applications for permits were routed via the R.S.A.C. to Pall Mall, but the process was a mere formality and died a natural death. This is not to deny, of course, that the R.A.C. both seeks and abides by the guidance and advice of its Scots relative in all sporting matters pertaining to Scotland.

The R.S.A.C. set up housekeeping on its present site in 1910, and now occupies one whole side of Blythswood Square. Up until a few years ago it was true to say—and may be still for all we know—that the R.S.A.C., with a membership of over 7,000, was the biggest club of any kind in Britain, outside of London. Among the nation's motoring organizations its longevity record is only surpassed by the R.A.C.: it was founded in 1899, two years after the body which became the Royal Automobile Club. The S.A.C.'s original home was Edinburgh, and in a motion moved and seconded at the inaugural meeting in '99, the club modestly accepted the status of "the Scottish branch of the Automobile Club of Great Britain and Ireland."

Although the non-sporting roles of the R.S.A.C. are really none of our business here, it must be recalled that it was a suggestion by Mr. Stevenson during the last war that resulted in the birth of the Standing Joint Committee. This body, to refresh turgid memories, is the mouthpiece of Britain's three leading motor organizations, the R.A.C., A.A. and R.S.A.C., in affairs affecting the welfare of all private motorists.

It was not for initiating the S.J.C. marriage of minds, incidentally, that A.K. received his O.B.E. This commemorates his wartime work (in two wars, in fact) as Chief Transport Officer of the Scottish Branch of the British Red Cross. The girl drivers of the ambulances under his command during the 1939/45 disturbance came to be known throughout Scotland as A.K.'s Young Ladies, the vehicles themselves bearing the enigmatic abbreviation AKSYL. Following the presentation of some of these ambulances to France when war ended, at least one found its way to Indo-China, where the AKSYL markings led to much fruitless speculation. Quite recently, a visitor to Scotland from Indo-China paid A.K. a call because he felt he'd never be happy until the riddle was solved.

R.S.A.C. presidents, like secretaries, come to stay. Lord Weir, scion of a family with a famous engineering tradition in Scotland, has been the club's president since 1919, and he had but one predecessor—Sir John Macdonald, Lord Justice Clerk of Scotland, who was a founder. Lord Weir, his country's elder statesman of automobilism, doesn't have the longest personal record of R.S.A.C. membership. Not quite. Mr. J. B. Talbot-Crosbie, also formerly a Glasgow engineer of wide renown, heads him by a neck. Mr. Talbot-Crosbie enrolled in 1900.



Looking over the famous top hairpin to the long, snaking climb of Rest-and-Be-Thankful, an annual R.S.A.C. hillclimb venue and a regular timed section of the Scottish Rally each year.