

miles, and engines were "revved" flat out in first and second for some 25 minutes before we were amid the snow on the summit. Then we had the Passo della Bernina, the Albula and the Fluela before we reached St. Moritz.

There had been many more retirements that day, but the British cars were doing well and our own team, by reason of their speed up the passes, were in a commanding position already.

St. Moritz is 6,000 feet up in the mountains and the rarefied air, a shower of rain and a cold night in conjunction were not likely to aid easy starting of motors left all night in the open.

As a matter of fact the rarefied air played havoc with carburation, most settings being far too rich and dozens of cars were in trouble from this cause — a few lost five valuable marks through having to make use of the starting handle — but luck was with us, for the Magnas started, as indeed they did during the whole period of the trial, at the first pressure of the starter.

That day we tackled the Julie Pass (7,500 feet), then the 6,700 feet of the San Bernardino and then the Ceneri at a mere 4,150 feet. Then came the Customs through which competitors were passed with all possible speed and we had practically a main road run to Turin, Italy's Coventry. Compared with the previous day's run and what was to follow we had had a fairly easy time.

From Turin to Grenoble we went by way of the Col de Sestrières, followed by the Col du Mont Genevre across the frontier to Guillestre, a frontier town crowded with very warlike poilus on those manœuvres which, nowadays, last all the year. After the control came the dreaded Col d'Isoard. This pass was certainly the worst of the lot: a military road with an atrocious surface reminiscent of Beggar's Roost, with the camber sloping the wrong way and no barrier at all between the road and the valley hundreds of feet below. We were all glad when the summit was reached without incident. Before us was

the Galibier, the third and last of the timed climbs and certainly the most difficult. Only three cars, a supercharged Bugatti, a supercharged Alfa-Romeo and H. J. Aldington's Frazer-Nash succeeded in averaging the required speed up this pass, so its difficulty will be appreciated.

The Magna team could afford to take things more easily — though all three cars shot up the pass like scared cats — for by now we were leading comfortably, and, bar trouble, the coveted trophy was ours. W. E. Belgrave, who was competing with a J.3 M.G. Midget for the Glacier Cup in the 1,100 c.c. class, had lost only two points and was leading for this award — a particularly fine effort, since he was also up against stiff opposition.

The Galibier was not the last obstacle of the day's run, however, for there followed the Col du Telegraph, the Col de la Croix de Fer and then the descent of the Col du Glandon. It was a race against time, for we were all some twenty minutes behind our schedule and this last pass, for those in a hurry, was a fearsome business, and drive as hard as we could few had more than a few minutes in hand at the Grenoble control.

On the following day we set out on the final section, the run to Nice. Once again the run to the first control was comparatively easy, but from Guillestre it was once more a race, the ascent and descent of passes, with their twisting sinuous corners, making high speed quite impossible, and testing brakes, steering and road-holding to the utmost. There was one serious crash, one of the German Rohrs overturning on an S-bend. Many



L. A. Welch and D. F. Welch on Galibier Pass

of the British competitors stopped to render assistance — a sporting action which very nearly made them late at the final control.

So eventually we drove along the Promenade des Anglais — the finish of the most strenuous reliability trial ever held.

There only remained the final inspection, marks being deducted for cars with bent axles — and there were not a few of these — gears not operative and "dud" lights. None of the Magnas or the Midget lost points on this score. The Magnas, against severe opposition, had won the Coupe de Alpes and the Midget had won, from opposition no less severe, the Glacier Cup.

The cars were in excellent condition, and on the way back to Calais showed that 75 m.p.h. and more was still within their powers even after the five days' "caning" they had received.

The International Alpine Trial is an admixture of the London-Exeter and the London-Land's End quadrupled in severity, the Le Mans 24-hour race and a Donington Park meeting, with the addition of a few passes which cannot be compared with anything else at all. Any car which can get through this trial successfully *must* be above the average.

