

THE INSIDE STORY OF THE 1934 MILLE MIGLIA

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in the mountains. Slowly the dawn came, and with it a white blanket of mist. A right angle bend not fifty yards from where I stood was completely obscured.

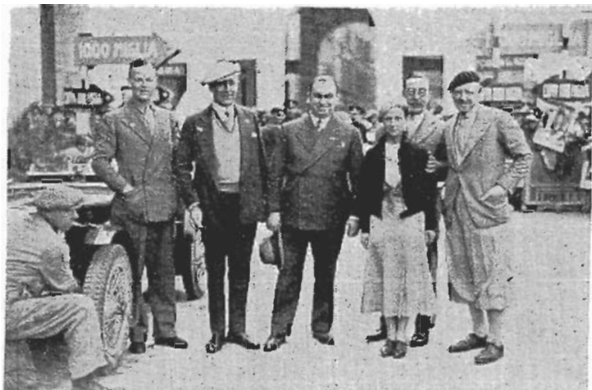
Then a hush fell on the scene. The little group of villagers beside me ceased to chatter. Suddenly the silence was broken by a distant bugle call, which was taken up and repeated by a carabinieri standing on a rock. The notes echoed away up the mountain.

Now we heard a sort of vibration in the air, which grew into the whistling roar of a supercharged engine. The note rose and fell as the driver accelerated and braked between the corners. Then out of the mist came a small green car, an M.G. Magnette, with Eddie Hall, wearing a rain-soaked linen helmet, at the wheel, looking as comfortable as if he were at home on the Yorkshire moors. My stopwatch clicked. Four whole minutes passed. Again the bugle sounded. In the growing light we made out another green car, a second M.G.; here was Lord Howe, determined of jaw, cornering at speed on the slippery road while the faithful Thomas leant far out like a racing side-car passenger. Two M.G.s leading! "Taruffi!"

The villagers yelled with excitement, for there, close on the Englishman's tail, was a low, red car. The Maserati!

A quick glance at the list of starters showed that the Italian had lost four minutes to Hall and

more than eight to Howe. As the mist rose I looked across the valley, over the roofs of Lojana, and saw Howe's car speeding up the zig-zag mountain road, the red Italian racer still a little distance behind. Another cry of "Emma Jay" made me turn. Ah! Here were Lurani and Penn Hughes, well up on schedule, the latter obviously so comfortable and happy in the mechanic's seat that he turned twice and waved to us, grinning cheerily.



The M.G. equipé. Left to right: C. Penn Hughes, Earl Howe, Signor Ferrari, Mrs. E. R. Hall, H. P. McConnell and E. R. Hall, photographed on scrutineering day.



COUNT G. LURANI  
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staying. The concierge said, "Lord Howe has had a terrible accident and Hall's car is on fire." Bad news travels fast.

With my heart very full, I went very quickly to the outskirts of the city, past the two odd, leaning towers, to where a banner proclaimed the M.G. pit. McConnell was on the 'phone—how he blessed the telephone that day!—and when he had finished he told me the true facts.

Thomas himself had rung up. He was quite unhurt, but Lord Howe had a lacerated arm and a cut forehead. He was in hospital in Florence, awaiting an X-ray examination. Apparently Taruffi had driven at terrific speed down the other side of the Futa and had got in front of Howe. The latter was chasing him down the winding road when a bank of fog, drifting across the road, blanked out everything ahead. In the swirling mist Howe suddenly found himself facing a wall at a right-angle bend. He tried desperately to save the car, but, skidding on the wet road, it went straight for a telegraph pole. This broke in half and fell on the driver's head, knocking him out. The car, with supercharger smashed and front axle torn off, scraped along a wall until its impetus was exhausted. Howe's life was saved by his crash helmet, which was split from back to front. When he came round, the driver exclaimed crossly: "Thomas! What are you waiting for? Get on with it!"

Only a little way beyond, Hall's engine began to splutter. A quick glance showed that the petrol tank



Ready to start. H. P. McConnell wishes the drivers luck. Earl Howe is on the left of the picture.